

Overview



Transparency:

51 /100

(Open Budget Index score)



Public Participation:

2 /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 9th edition of the OBS covers 125 countries.

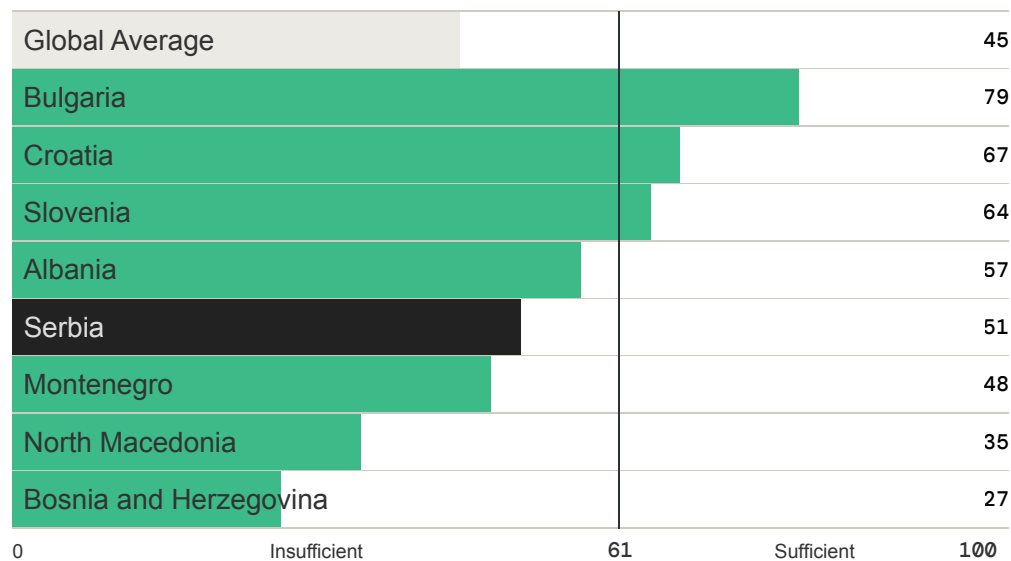
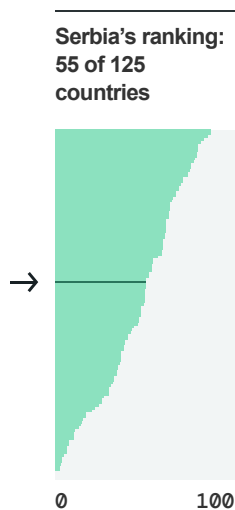
Visit www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey for more information, including the full OBS methodology, the 2023 Global Report, findings for all surveyed countries, and the Data Explorer.

Transparency

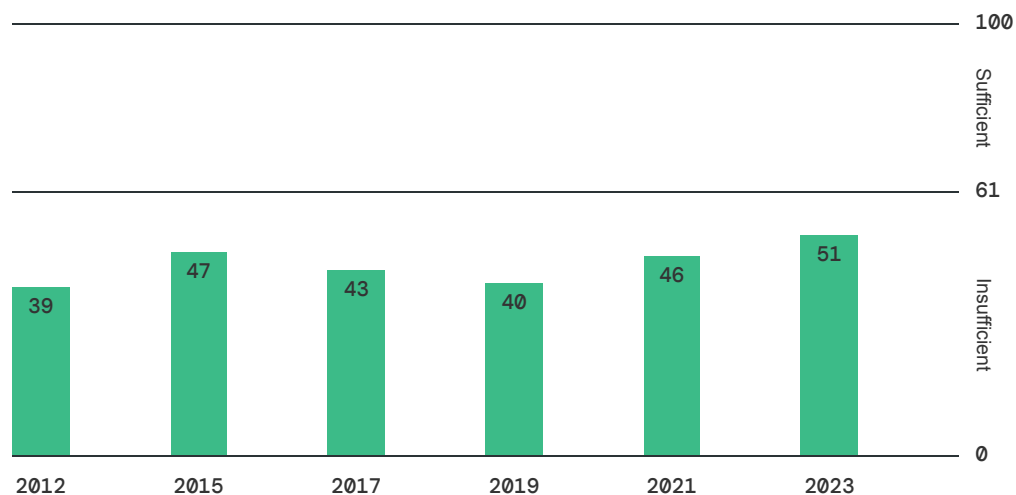
This part of the OBS measures public access to information on how the central government raises and spends public resources. It assesses the **online availability, timeliness, and comprehensiveness** of eight key budget documents using 109 equally weighted indicators and scores each country on a scale 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.**

Serbia has a transparency score of **51** (out of 100).

Transparency in Serbia compared to others



How has the transparency score for Serbia changed over time?



Public availability of budget documents in Serbia

| 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 Serbia 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 | 78 |
| 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 | 53 |
| Enacted Budget | The budget that has been approved by the legislature. | 2023 | 95 |
| 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. | 2022 | 25 |
| In-Year Reports | Include information on actual revenues collected, actual expenditures made, and debt incurred at different intervals; issued quarterly or monthly. | 2022 | 59 |
| 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 | Not Produced |
| 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 | 45 |
| Audit Report | Issued by the supreme audit institution, this document examines the soundness and completeness of the government's year-end accounts. | 2021 | 62 |

Serbia's transparency score of **51** in the OBS 2023 is near its score in 2021.

What changed in OBS 2023?

Serbia has increased the availability of budget information by:

- Publishing the Pre-Budget Statement online in a timely manner.

Recommendations

Serbia should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

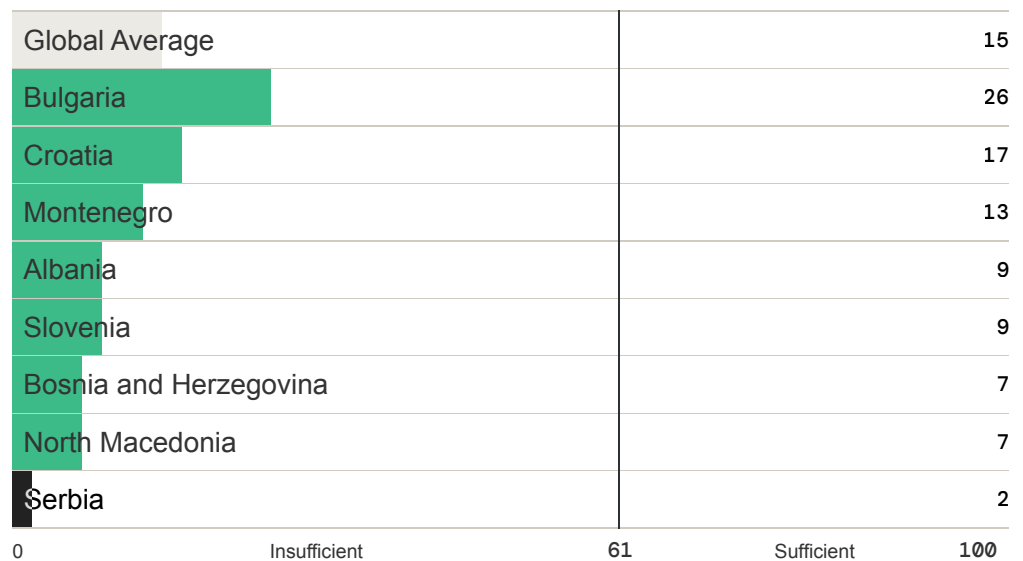
- Produce and publish the Mid-Year Review online in a timely manner.
- Include in the Executive's Budget Proposal data on the financial position of the government, tax expenditures and information on performance and policy.
- Improve the comprehensiveness of the In-Year Reports, by including information on actual expenditures by administrative classification, functional classification and individual programs.
- Include in the Year-End Report comparisons between borrowing estimates and actual outcomes, comparisons between planned nonfinancial outcomes and actual outcomes and comparisons between the original macroeconomic forecast and actual outcomes.
- Expand on the participatory nature of the Citizens Budget, for example, by identifying the public's budget information needs prior to the release of the document, publicizing it via additional methods of dissemination (e.g. billboards, radio programs), and publishing simplified budget documents for additional stages of the budget process.

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.

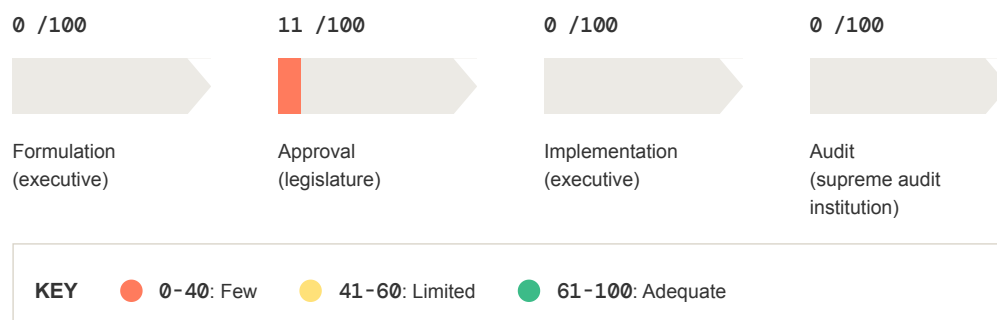
Serbia has a public participation score of **2** (out of 100).

Public participation in Serbia 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

To further strengthen public participation in the budget process, Serbia's Ministry of Finance should prioritize the following actions:

- Pilot mechanisms to engage the public during budget formulation and to monitor budget implementation.
- Improve legal framework and organize public consultation process on investments (capital projects) to be financed from the national budget.
- Actively engage with vulnerable and underrepresented communities, directly or through civil society organizations representing them.

Serbia's National Assembly has established public hearings related to the approval of the annual budget, but should also prioritize the following actions:

- Provide feedback to the public on how citizens' inputs have been used during legislative deliberations on the annual budget and the budget report.
- Organize public hearings in a timely manner, so they can potentially generate meaningful impact on the design of budget amendments and on the quality of parliamentary debate.
- Announce public hearings in a public manner, inviting members of the public to provide written inputs, as well as, inviting those who did it to testify during the hearings on the budget proposal prior to its approval.
- Announce public hearing in a public manner, inviting members of the public to provide written inputs, as well as, inviting those who did it to testify during the hearing on the Audit Report.

Serbia's State Audit Institution should prioritize the following actions to improve public participation in the budget process:

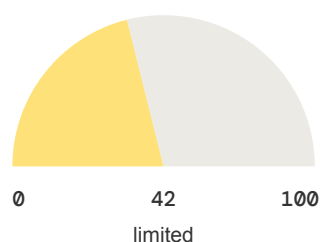
- Regulate formal mechanisms for the public to assist in developing its audit program and to contribute to relevant audit examinations.

Budget Oversight

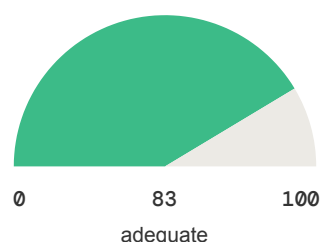
The OBS examines the role that legislatures and supreme audit institutions (SAIs) play in the budget process and the extent to which they provide oversight; each country is scored on a scale from 0 to 100 based on 18 equally weighted indicators. In addition, the survey collects supplementary information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

The legislature and supreme audit institution in Serbia, 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

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

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

- In practice, ensure the legislature is consulted before the executive shifts funds specified in the Enacted Budget between administrative units during the budget year.
- Legislative committees should examine the Audit Report and publish a report with their findings online.
- The Finance Committee of the Parliament should follow up quarterly on the fulfillment of the SAI's recommendations in audited institutions through public hearings, while other committees should organize such hearings following thematic performance audit reports.

To strengthen independence and improve audit oversight by the Serbia State Audit Institution, the following actions are recommended:

- Ensure audit processes are reviewed by an independent agency.

The emerging practice of establishing independent fiscal institutions

Serbia's independent fiscal institution (IFI) is the Fiscal Council. Its independence is set in law, and it reports to the legislature. It publishes its own fiscal forecasts and its own cost estimates of major new policy proposals.

The indicators on IFIs 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 Serbia by a representative of the Ministry of Finance.