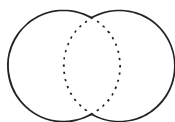


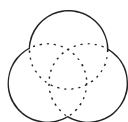
## Overview



### Transparency:

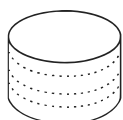
**34** /100

(Open Budget Index score)



### Public Participation:

**26** /100



### Budget Oversight:

**50** /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.

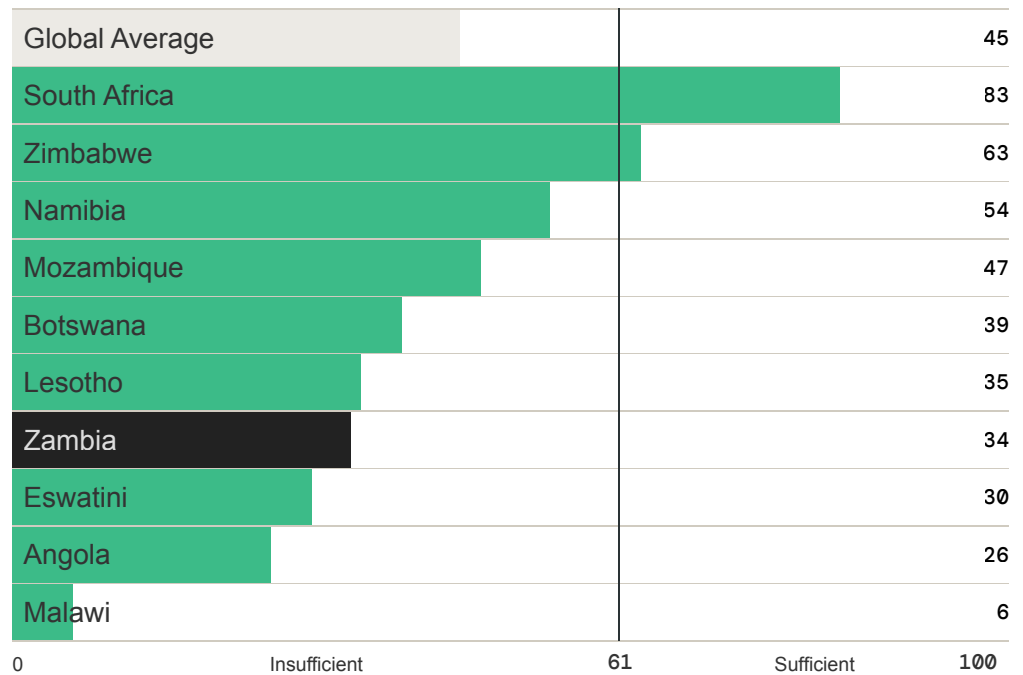
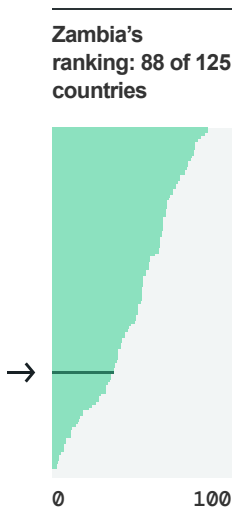
Visit [www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey](http://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey) for more information, including the full OBS methodology, the 2023 Global Report, findings for all surveyed countries, and the Data Explorer.

# Transparency

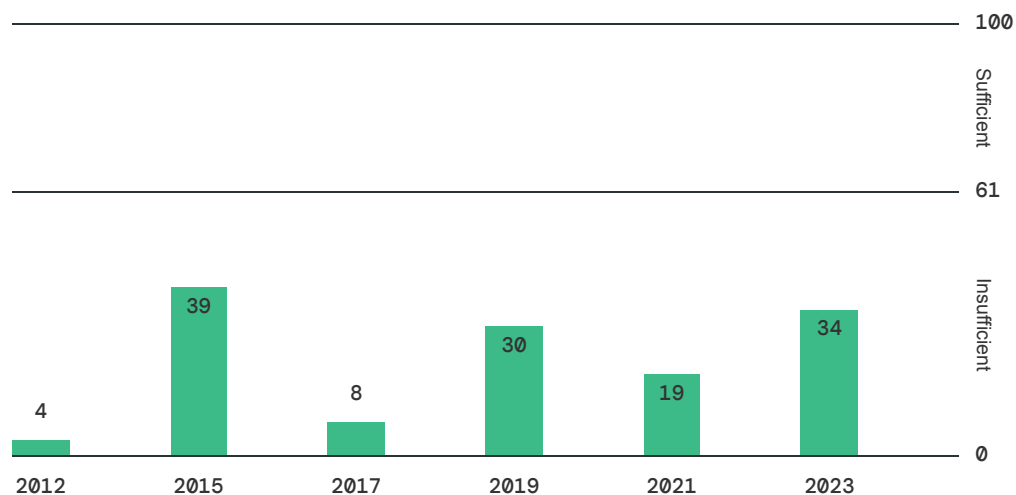
This part of the OBS measures public access to information on how the central government raises and spends public resources. It assesses the **online availability, timeliness, and comprehensiveness** of eight key budget documents using 109 equally weighted indicators and scores each country on a scale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

Zambia has a transparency score of **34** (out of 100).

## Transparency in Zambia compared to others



# How has the transparency score for Zambia changed over time?



## Public availability of budget documents in Zambia

KEY	
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Available to the Public
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	Published Late, or Not Published Online, or Produced for Internal Use Only
<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	Not Produced

Document	2012	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
Pre-Budget Statement	<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>
Executive's Budget Proposal	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Enacted Budget	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Citizens Budget	<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>
In-Year Reports	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>
Mid-Year Review	<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	<span style="color: red;">⊘</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Year-End Report	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Audit Report	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: green;">●</span>

# How comprehensive is the content of the key budget documents that Zambia makes available to the public?

KEY	
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	61-100 / 100
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	41-60 / 100
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	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.	2023-25	Hard Copy
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	43
Enacted Budget	The budget that has been approved by the legislature.	2023	44
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	Internal Use
In-Year Reports	Include information on actual revenues collected, actual expenditures made, and debt incurred at different intervals; issued quarterly or monthly.	2021 & 2022	Published Late
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	15
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	40
Audit Report	Issued by the supreme audit institution, this document examines the soundness and completeness of the government's year-end accounts.	2021	57

Zambia's transparency score of **34** in the OBS 2023 is substantially higher than its score in 2021.

## What changed in OBS 2023?

Zambia has increased the availability of budget information by:

- Publishing the Mid-Year Review online.
- Increasing the information provided in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

## Recommendations

Zambia should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

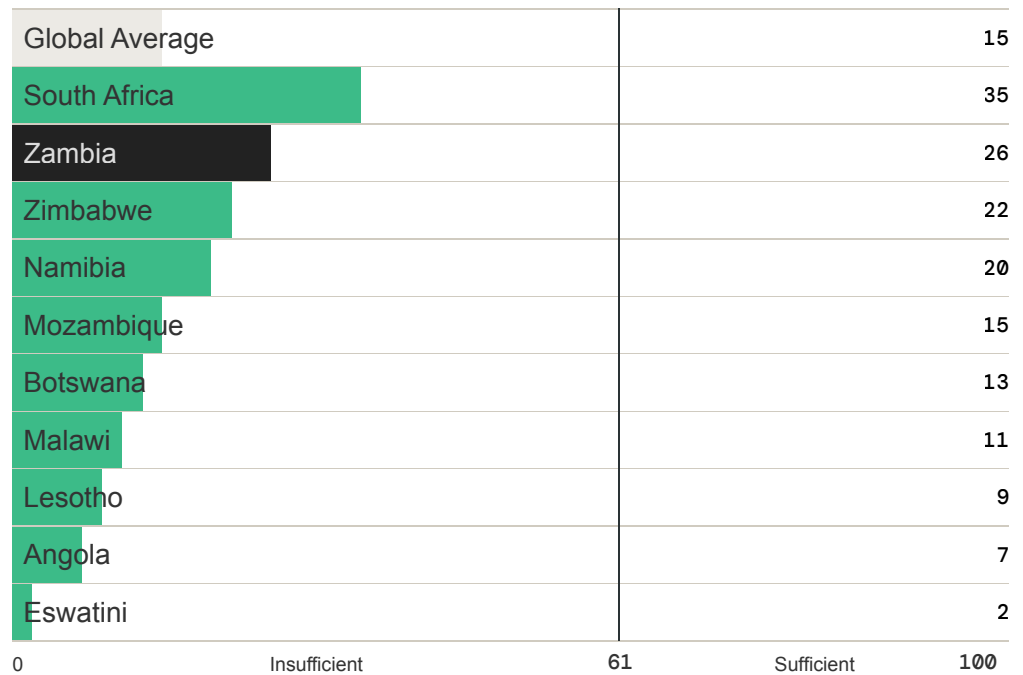
- Publish the Pre-Budget Statement, Citizens Budget and In-Year Reports online in a timely manner. The Pre-Budget Statement should be published online at least one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is submitted to the Parliament. The Citizens Budget should be published online in the same timeframe as the document it simplifies and the In-Year Reports should be made available online no later than three months at the end of the period they cover.
- Include in the Executive's Budget Proposal data on the financial position of the government and data on the macroeconomic forecast.
- Include in the Year-End Report detailed actual outcomes for expenditures and comparisons between borrowing estimates and actual outcomes.
- Improve the comprehensiveness of the Enacted Budget and Mid-Year Review.

# 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.

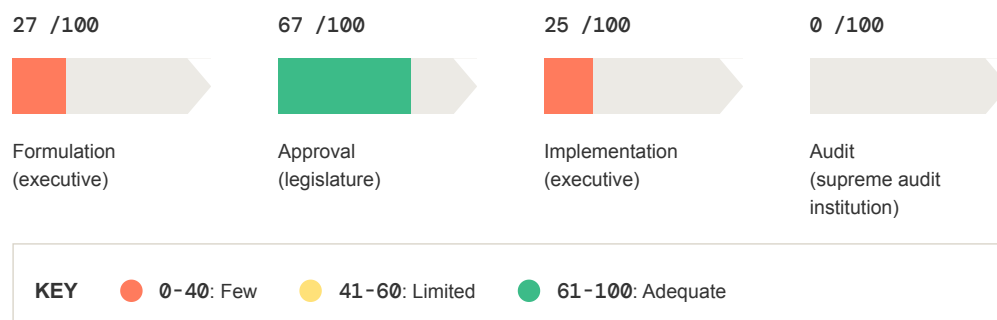
Zambia has a public participation score of **26** (out of 100).

## Public participation in Zambia 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

Zambia's Ministry of Finance and National Planning has established pre-budget deliberations, pre-budget submissions and online reporting during budget formulation and a council during budget implementation but, to further strengthen public participation in the budget process, should also prioritize the following actions:

- Expand mechanisms during budget implementation to engage any civil society organization or member of the public who wishes to participate. The Ministry of Finance and National Planning could also consider expanding the mechanism for feedback that speaks to why broader proposals have either been adopted, rejected or deferred during formulation. This helps in enhancing the quality of submissions from citizens and fostering meaningful participation.
- Actively engage with vulnerable and underrepresented communities, directly or through civil society organizations representing them.

Zambia's National Assembly has established submissions 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.

Zambia's Office of the Auditor General 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. We note the Office of the Auditor General's toll-free line, and the need for more awareness on it to encourage citizens sharing feedback.



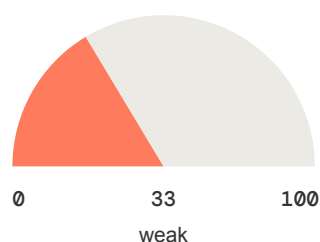


# Budget Oversight

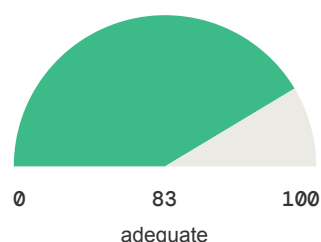
The OBS examines the role that legislatures and supreme audit institutions (SAIs) play in the budget process and the extent to which they provide oversight; each country is scored on a scale from 0 to 100 based on 18 equally weighted indicators. In addition, the survey collects supplementary information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

The legislature and supreme audit institution in Zambia, together, provide limited oversight during the budget process, with a composite oversight score of **50** (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

Zambia'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.
- A legislative committee should examine in-year budget implementation and publish reports with their findings online.
- In practice, ensure the legislature is consulted before the executive shifts funds specified in the Enacted Budget between administrative units or spends any unanticipated revenue during the budget year.

- A legislative committee should examine the Audit Report and publish a report with their findings online.

To strengthen independence and improve audit oversight by the Zambia Office of the Auditor General, the following actions are recommended:

- Ensure the supreme audit institution has adequate funding to perform its duties, as determined by an independent body (e.g., the legislature or judiciary).

### **The emerging practice of establishing independent fiscal institutions**

Zambia's independent fiscal institution (IFI) is the Parliamentary Budget Office. Its independence is not set in law, and it reports to the legislature. The Parliamentary Budget Office in Zambia is semi-independent and can be strengthened technically and financially to be independent to encourage the release of accurate, timely and useful fiscal analysis for fiscal accountability.

*The indicators on IFIs are not scored in the Open Budget Survey.*

# Methodology

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- 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:  
Muchimba Sarah Siamachoka, Social and Economic Development Programme Manager  
Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)  
Plot 3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park P.O Box 37774, 10101; Lusaka, Zambia  
manager.sed@jctr.org.zm; jctr.sed@gmail.com
- To further strengthen the research, each country's draft questionnaire is also reviewed by an anonymous independent expert, and in Zambia by a representative of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning.