Module: Access to Information for Budget Work

In this module, you will find presentations, videos, guides, and exercises that can help you guide your workshop participants to think about the importance of access to information in budget work. The materials offer examples on access to information best practices, outline the contents of the basic key budget documents, and show how to track a specific development problem by looking at the information contained in the budget documents available at each stage of the budget process. You can also review recent access to information and budget transparency trends by region, according to the IBP's Open Budget Survey 2012.

Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

   i.   explain why access to information matters in budget work;
   ii. list criteria of sound access to information laws and transparency portals;
   iii. discuss the challenges to accessing information and how they can be overcome;
   iv. describe the content of the eight key budget documents;
   v.   explain how the information in key budget documents can be applied in advocacy and/or research activities; and
   vi. review if and how different governments publish key budget documents.

Structure

Duration	2 hours 15 minutes
Content	1. **Introduction (25 minutes)** Show the presentation: "Access to budget information. Examples from Latin America." 2. **Task 1: What information is contained in the eight key budget documents? (50 minutes)** Participants will explore the content of the eight budget documents. 3. **Task 2: Using budget documents in an advocacy strategy (40 minutes)** Participants will work in teams to discuss how the different budget documents can assist them with achieving their advocacy or research goals. 4. **Task 3: Finding key budget documents for my country (30 minutes)** Participants will explore the availability of key budget documents online and think about alternatives to obtaining information when it is not readily accessible.

Introduction (20 minutes)

Facilitator's Guidelines:

Objectives	Instructions	Duration
Introduce participants to the module by explaining the importance of access to information in budget work and show examples of one of the world's regions that has made significant progress in terms of	1. Connect to the Internet to show the Prezi presentation: Access to budget information. Examples from Latin America. 2. Open a space for questions and answers and go back to different parts of this presentation to clarify or review, as needed. (You may use this presentation to develop a similar introduction using information from another region, considering: - examples for classified and unclassified information,	25 minutes

access to public information best practices, and where civil society has played an active role in improving access to public budget information.	- challenges and opportunities to accessing public information, and - best practices).	
	3. Move on to Tasks 1, 2, and 3. OR Explore the Learning Tools section to learn more about how to use budget information to investigate a social development problem, or about access to information trends in different regions around the world according to the Open Budget Survey.	

Task 1: What information is contained in the eight key budget documents? (50 minutes)

Facilitator's Guidelines:

Objectives	Instructions	Duration
Describe the eight key budget documents and the information they contain by answering Questions 1 and 2 from Worksheet 1 collectively.	1. Divide the group into four teams and assign each team two of the eight key budget documents, making sure that the participants from the same organization are in different teams. 2. Distribute copies of the IBP's Guide to Transparency in Government Budget Reports: Why are Budget Reports Important, and What Should They Include?, along with copies of Worksheet 1 to each participant. 3. Ask each team to find the information in their two budget documents and answer Questions 1 and 2: What basic information should this document include? and How is this information useful for the work that I do? in Worksheet 1. Refer to the Guide and read Section B only of each of the documents assigned to your group.	20 minutes
	4. After completing Questions 1 and 2 in Worksheet 1, ask a volunteer from each team to share their answers with the rest of the group, and answer the questions for all eight budget documents together. 5. In a flipchart sheet in front of the room replicate the table with Questions 1 and 2, so that as participants share their answers, you can fill in the table. This way, participants can have a summary to refer to – and then use it to fill in the information on the documents that they didn't look at.	20
	6. Once all the teams had an opportunity to present, you can complement the answers as necessary before moving on to the next task. As a reference you can use the Guide to Transparency in Government Budget Reports: Why are Budget Reports Important, and What Should They Include?	5
	7. Close the session reflecting on how each of these documents are essential for a transparent budget process and for civil society to be able to participate in that process before moving on to the next task.	5

Task 2: Finding key budget documents for my country (30 minutes)

Facilitator's Guidelines:

Objectives	Instructions	Duration
Review how governments are doing in terms or producing and publishing key	1. Participants will need access to computers and Internet connectivity.	20 minutes

	budget documents in different countries.	2. Divide participants according to their country of origin. Alternatively, participants can work on their own if there is no other participant(s) from their country to work with.	
		3. Ask participants to look for the Executive Budget Proposal, the Citizens Budget, and the Audit Report of their respective countries.	
		4. Provide suggestions as to where these documents could be found. Ask participants to cross check the information with their current OBS results and correct if necessary.	
		5. Request participants to write up their responses on flipchart and paste it on the wall.	
		6. Ask participants to walk around the room to check the answers from other countries and compare their findings. You can refer to the Sample Worksheet to provide feedback.	10

Task 3: Using budget documents in an advocacy strategy (40 minutes)

Facilitator's Guidelines:

Objectives	Instructions	Duration
Answer Question 3 of Worksheet 1 in order to generate thinking around how the eight key budget documents can be used in specific research and advocacy activities.	1. Distribute copies of the IBP's Guide to Transparency in Government Budget Reports: How Civil Society Can Use Budget Reports for Research and Advocacy to answer Question 3 of Worksheet 1: How can the information in the eight key budget documents complement my organization's research and/or advocacy strategy? 2. Create new teams, where participants work with members of their own organization. This will allow participants to reflect with their colleagues on the relevance of the eight key budget documents for their organization's advocacy and research goals. Alternatively, if participants do not have a member of their organization to work with, participants can work on their own for about ten minutes and thereafter self-select to work with other participants to share their findings for another ten minutes.	20 minutes
	3. Ask a volunteer from each team to present their answers to the rest of the group and provide feedback. (For the team discussions, you can use the Supporting Materials. For example, you can print and distribute copies of the OBS results for the countries in question). 4. Invite other members in the team to complement the presentation.	20

Learning Tools

You may use the PPT presentation to show the importance of budget information to investigate a social development problem, choose one of the recommended videos to start a discussion about the importance of access to information, or delve into the access to information trends in different regions according to the Open Budget Survey.
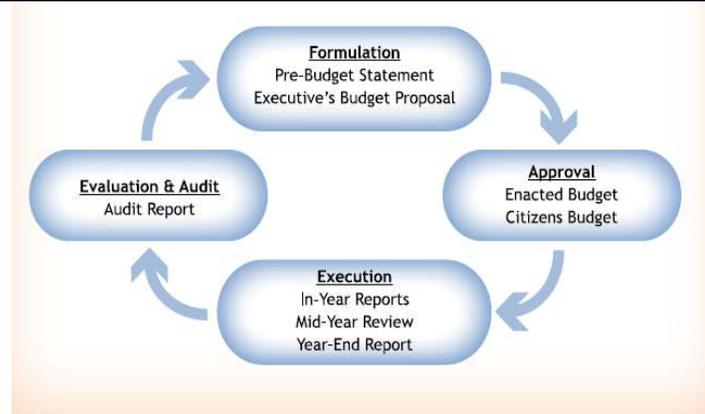
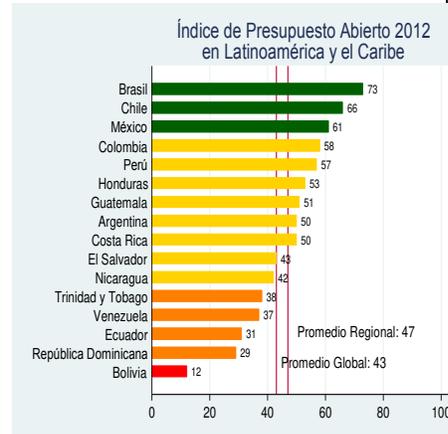| **Multimedia**	
The videos in this section offer current accounts from researchers and activists working to promote access to information in different contexts, as well as brief inputs that you can use to illustrate what is access to information or the importance of the right to access to information. IBP's Paolo de Renzio Discusses Open Budgets: The Political Economy of Transparency, Participation, and Accountability (2:46 minutes) Heather Brooke: My battle to expose government corruption (18:57 minutes) Derecho al acceso a la información pública (3:44 minutes)	 This presentation shows how to monitor a public education issue through the different stages of the budget process in Kenya.

Documentos presupuestarios clave. Resultados del OBI 2012 para América Latina: PPT Presentation (in Spanish/en español)	Key budget documents. 2012 OBI Results for South East Asia: PPT Presentation.	Key budget documents. 2012 OBI Results for Africa.
  This presentation (in Spanish) describes the content of the eight key budget documents, how they can be used by civil society, and if they are produced and/or published in 16 Latin American countries according to the OBI 2012.	 This presentation shows the OBI results for eight South East Asian countries with details about the production and publication of the eight key budget documents. The presentation also offers examples of public engagement in the budget process in Indonesia and the Philippines.	Click on the files below to learn more about: • Eastern Africa • Francophone Africa • Southern Africa • Middle East and North Africa

Supporting Materials

The materials listed below can be used to extract information and details that can provide participants with additional inputs for their team discussions and presentations.

Open Budget Survey Data Explorer – This tool allows users to compare the results of the Open Budget Survey among countries and across years. The 2014 calculator helps you predict the outcome of the next survey and see where transparency can improve.
Open Budget Survey Infographics – These infographics present the 2012 Survey's findings in an attractive format for easy printing and distribution.
Open Budget Survey Country Information – Here one can find a list of the countries participating in the OBS and access their country summaries.
Right2Info – This website offers information on the constitutional and legal framework for the right of access to information, as well case law from more than 80 countries, organized and analyzed by topic.
Open Government Guide – This guide highlights practical, measurable, and actionable steps that governments can, and are taking across a range of areas, including budgets, citizen engagement, right to information, and aid.