

OPEN BUDGET INDEX SCORE  
— OUT OF 100 —

81-100 Extensive

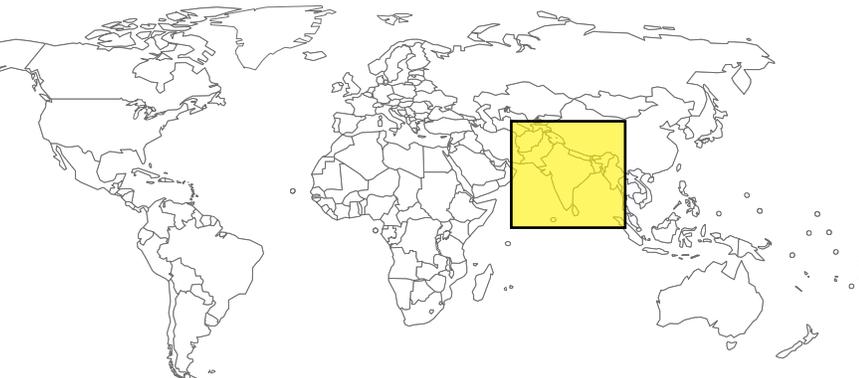
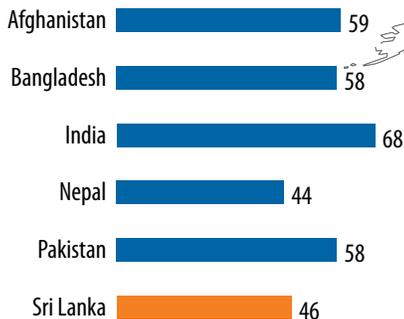
61-80 Substantial

41-60 Some

21-40 Minimal

0-20 Scant or None

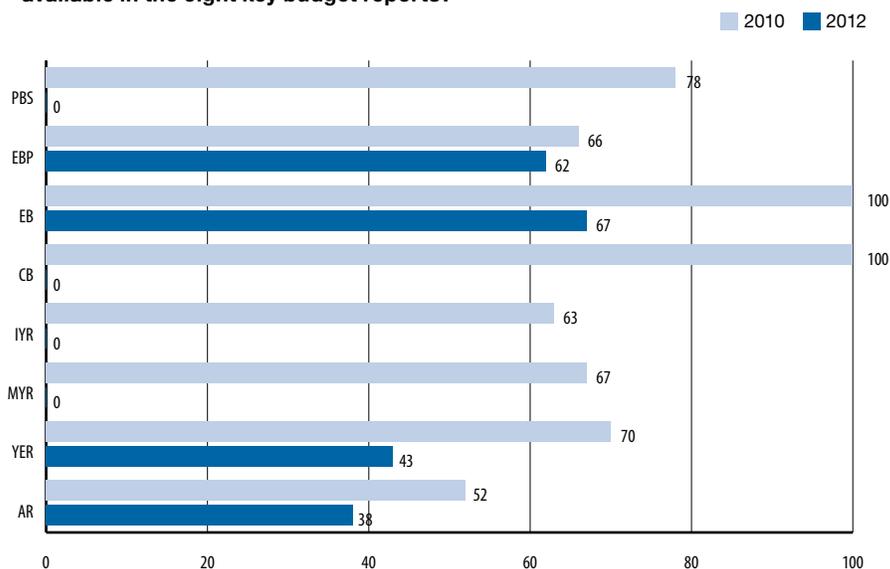
### How does Sri Lanka compare to its neighbors in South Asia?



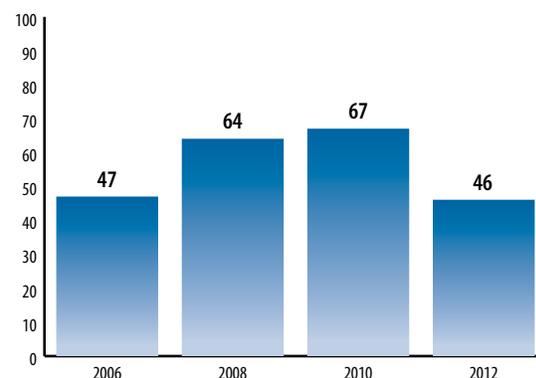
### What are each of the eight key budget documents, and does the public have access to them?

Document	Description of Document	Publication Status
<b>PBS</b>	<b>Pre-Budget Statement:</b> Provides information that links government policies and budgets and typically sets forth the broad parameters that will define the budget proposal that is presented to the legislature.	Not Produced
<b>EBP</b>	<b>Executive's Budget Proposal:</b> Presents the government plans to raise revenues through taxes and other sources and spend these monies to support its priorities, thus transforming policy goals into action.	Published
<b>EB</b>	<b>Enacted Budget:</b> The legal instrument authorizing the executive to raise revenues, make expenditures, and incur debt.	Published
<b>CB</b>	<b>Citizens Budget:</b> A nontechnical presentation to enable broad public understanding of a government's plans for raising revenues and spending public funds in order to achieve policy goals.	Not Produced
<b>IYR</b>	<b>In-Year Reports:</b> Periodic (monthly or quarterly) measures of the trends in actual revenues, expenditures, and debt, which allow for comparisons with the budget figures and adjustments.	Produced for Internal Use
<b>MYR</b>	<b>Mid-Year Review:</b> An overview of the budget's effects at the midpoint of a budget year and discusses any changes in economic assumptions that affect approved budget policies.	Not Produced
<b>YER</b>	<b>Year-End Report:</b> Information comparing the actual budget execution relative to the Enacted Budget.	Published
<b>AR</b>	<b>Audit Report:</b> Independent evaluation of the government's accounts by the country's supreme audit institution. It typically assesses whether the executive has raised revenues and spent monies in line with the authorized budget, and whether the government's accounts of its revenues and expenses are accurate and provide a reliable picture of the fiscal situation.	Published

### From Zero to 100: Has Sri Lanka increased the amount of information it makes available in the eight key budget reports?



### OBI scores over four Surveys



## Open Budget Index

The **Open Budget Survey** assesses whether the central government in each country surveyed makes eight key budget documents available to the public, as well as whether the data contained in these documents is comprehensive, timely, and useful. The Survey uses internationally accepted criteria to assess each country's budget transparency developed by multilateral organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic

Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI).

The scores on 95 of the 125 Open Budget Survey questions are used to calculate objective scores and rankings of each surveyed country's relative transparency. These composite scores constitute the Open Budget Index (OBI), the world's only independent and comparative measure of budget transparency.

Sri Lanka's score is 46 out of 100, which is a little higher than the average score of 43 for all the 100 countries surveyed but is lower than the scores of its neighbors Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Sri Lanka's score indicates that the government provides the public with only some information on the national government's budget and financial activities during the course of the budget year. This makes it challenging for citizens to hold the government accountable for its management of the public's money.

**Sri Lanka's OBI 2012 score of 46 out of 100 has reduced from its score of 67 out of 100 on the OBI 2010.**

The Open Budget Index is composed of subscores for each of the eight key budget documents assessed in the Survey. These subscores represent the average of the scores received on a set of questions in the Survey that measure the public availability of and amount of information in the documents. The subscores are comparable across all of the countries included in the Survey.

### Recommendations

Sri Lanka's score on the Open Budget Index increased from 2006 to 2010 but dropped in 2012 due to the late release of In-Year Reports and the failure to publish a Mid-Year Review that meets standards. With a score of 46 out of 100 on the Open Budget Index 2012, the government of Sri Lanka has the potential to greatly expand budget transparency by introducing a number of short-term and medium-term measures, some of which can be achieved at almost no cost to the government.

The International Budget Partnership recommends that Sri Lanka undertake the following steps to improve budget transparency:

- Publish In-Year Reports on time, which it currently produces but releases too late (detailed guidance on the contents of this document can be found in this guidebook: <http://bit.ly/QGzHv8>). As per the Open Budget Survey 2012, 78 countries publish IYRs on time,

including all of Sri Lanka's neighbors. Links to the budget documents published by these countries can be accessed from the IBP's website: <http://bit.ly/P8NPOV>.

- Produce and publish a Mid-Year Review, Pre-Budget Statement, and Citizens Budget (detailed guidance on the contents of these documents can be found in this guidebook: <http://bit.ly/QGzHv8>) and <http://bit.ly/QGzFmJ>). As per the Open Budget Survey 2012, 29 countries publish a Mid-Year Review, including its neighbors Bangladesh, India, and Nepal; 47 countries publish Pre-Budget Statement, including its neighbor Afghanistan; 26 countries publish a Citizens Budget, including its neighbors Afghanistan and India. Links to the budget documents published by these countries can be accessed from the IBP's website: <http://bit.ly/P8NPOV>.

- Increase the comprehensiveness of the Executive's Budget Proposal, specifically by focusing on providing information on the following areas:
  - present and prior year expenditures by functional classification, greater detail of anticipated revenues two years beyond the budget year, and present information related to the composition of government debt (see questions 2, 10, 13, and 19 of the Open Budget Questionnaire);
  - present the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget projections are based and show the impact of different macroeconomic assumptions (i.e., sensitivity analysis) on the budget (see questions 14 and 15 of the Open Budget Questionnaire);
  - present information for at least the budget year that shows how policy proposals, as distinct from existing policies, affect expenditures and revenues, linking the budget to the government's stated policy goals and to nonfinancial and performance data for expenditure programs (see questions 16-17 and 49-54 of the Open Budget Questionnaire);
  - present information on extra-budgetary funds, quasi-fiscal activities, expenditure arrears, financial and nonfinancial assets held by the government, and percentage of the budget devoted to secret items (see questions 35, 38-41, and 47 of the Open Budget Questionnaire); and
  - the timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal, to which the executive should adhere for the preparation and release of the budget (see questions 56-58 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).

- Increase the comprehensiveness of the Year-End Reports by explaining the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcomes for revenues; differences between the original macro-economic forecast, original estimates of nonfinancial data, original performance indicators, and enacted levels of funds intended to benefit the poor and their actual outcomes, along with actual outcomes for extra-budgetary funds (see questions 80-86 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).

- Increase the comprehensiveness of the Audit Report by including an executive summary, an audit of the annual expenditures, annual accounts of the security sector and other secret programs. Publish reports listing actions taken by the executive and legislature to address audit recommendations (see questions 88-89, 95-96, and 108 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).

## Strength of Legislatures and Supreme Audit Institutions in Budget Oversight

The Open Budget Survey examines the extent of effective oversight provided by legislatures and supreme audit institutions (SAIs). These institutions play a critical role — often enshrined in national constitutions — in planning and overseeing the implementation of national budgets.

The Open Budget Survey assesses whether legislatures provide effective budget oversight by measuring performance on 11 indicators, including: consultations with the executive prior to the tabling in the legislature of the draft budget, research capacity, formal debate on overall budget policy, time available to discuss and approve the budget, legal authority to amend the budget proposal, approval of shifts in expenditure budget and excess revenues collected, supplemental budget powers, authority to approve use of contingency funds, and scrutiny of audit reports.

The Open Budget Survey assesses whether supreme audit institutions are empowered to provide effective budget oversight by using the following four indicators: authority to remove the head of the supreme audit institution, legal power to audit public finances, financial resources available, and availability of skilled audit personnel.

## Recommendations

The International Budget Partnership recommends that Sri Lanka undertake the following actions to improve budget oversight:

- The legislature should have internal capacity to conduct budget analyses and have a formal pre-budget policy debate prior to the tabling of the Executive’s Budget Proposal, and it should scrutinize all audit reports. The executive should consult with members of the legislature to determine budget priorities and also seek approval from the legislature prior to shifting funds between administrative units, between line units, and prior to using contingency funds (see questions 59, 97-99, 102, 103, 106, and 107 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).
- The supreme audit institution should have full discretion to decide which audits it will undertake, and the budget for the SAI should be determined by the legislature with the funding level broadly consistent with the resources required by the SAI to fulfill its mandate (see questions 92 and 93 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).

### Sri Lanka is an average performer in its region in terms of budget oversight and engagement

Country	Legislative Strength	SAI Strength	Public Engagement
Afghanistan	Moderate	Strong	Weak
Bangladesh	Moderate	Strong	Weak
India	Strong	Strong	Weak
Nepal	Moderate	Strong	Weak
Pakistan	Moderate	Strong	Weak
Sri Lanka	Moderate	Moderate	Weak

**Strong:** average score above 66 of 100; **Moderate:** average score between 34 and 66; **Weak:** average score below 34

## Opportunities for Public Participation

Research and advocacy experience of civil society over the past 15 years has demonstrated that transparency by itself is insufficient for improving governance. Transparency along with opportunities for public participation in budgeting can maximize the positive outcomes associated with open budgeting. Therefore, the Open Budget Survey assesses opportunities available to the public to participate in national budget decision-making processes. Such opportunities can be provided throughout the budget cycle by the executive, legislature, and supreme audit institution.

Based on these indicators, the Open Budget Survey 2012 finds that opportunities for public participation in the budget process in Sri Lanka are limited.

### Sri Lanka has much room to improve public participation

Requirement	Finding
<b>Process Followed Before Consultation</b>	
Formal requirement for public participation (Q114)	Exists but is weak
Articulation of purposes for public participation (Q115)	Exists but is weak
Communication by the SAI of audit findings beyond publication of audit reports (Q124)	Does not exist
<b>Process of Consultation</b>	
Mechanisms developed by the executive for participation during budget planning (Q116)	Exists but is weak
Public hearings in the legislature on macroeconomic budget framework (Q119)	Does not exist
Public hearings in the legislature on individual agency budgets (Q120)	Does not exist
Opportunities in the legislature for testimonials by the public during budget hearings (Q121)	Does not exist
Mechanisms developed by the executive for participation during budget execution (Q117)	Does not exist
Mechanisms developed by the SAI for participation in audit agenda (Q123)	Does not exist
<b>Process Followed After Consultation</b>	
Feedback by the executive on use of inputs provided by the public (Q118)	Does not exist
Release by the legislature of reports on budget hearings (Q122)	Does not exist
Feedback by the SAI on use of inputs provided by the public (Q125)	Does not exist

## Recommendations

The International Budget Partnership recommends that Sri Lanka expand public engagement in budgeting after considering the Open Budget Survey indicators on which the country performs poorly (see table below and questions 114-125 in the Open Budget Questionnaire).

## Description of Survey, Methodology, Reliability, and Researcher Contact Information

The Open Budget Survey is a fact-based research instrument that uses easily observable phenomena to assess what occurs in practice. The research conclusions are typically supported by citations and comments, including reference to a budget document, a law, or other public document; a public statement by a government official; or comments from a face-to-face interview with a government official or other knowledgeable party. The Survey is compiled from a questionnaire completed for each country by independent budget experts who are not associated with the national government. Each country's questionnaire is then independently reviewed by two anonymous experts who also have no association with government. In addition, the IBP invites national governments to comment on the draft results from the Survey and considers these comments before finalizing the Survey results. The entire research process for 2012 took over 18 months between July 2011 and December 2012 and involved approximately 400 experts.

The Open Budget Survey provides a reliable source of data on national budget transparency practices for governments, development practitioners, the media, and citizens. Current users of the Survey results include the Open Government Partnership, Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative, INTOSAI, the World Bank in its Worldwide Governance Indicators, and a number of bilateral aid agencies and international and regional multilateral bodies. The publication of the Open Budget Survey 2012 has reinforced the Survey's preeminent position as a global data repository on budget transparency, participation, and accountability.

Research to complete this country's Open Budget Survey was undertaken by Mallawaarachchige Don Anthony Harold, Transparency International Sri Lanka, 6 37Th Lane, Queens Road, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka, [harold1@eureka.lk](mailto:harold1@eureka.lk).

Despite repeated efforts, the IBP was unable to get comments on the draft Open Budget Questionnaire results from the Sri Lankan government.