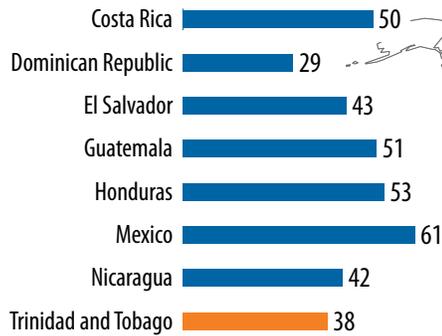


How does Trinidad and Tobago compare to its neighbors in Central America & the Caribbean?



81-100 Extensive

61-80 Substantial

41-60 Some

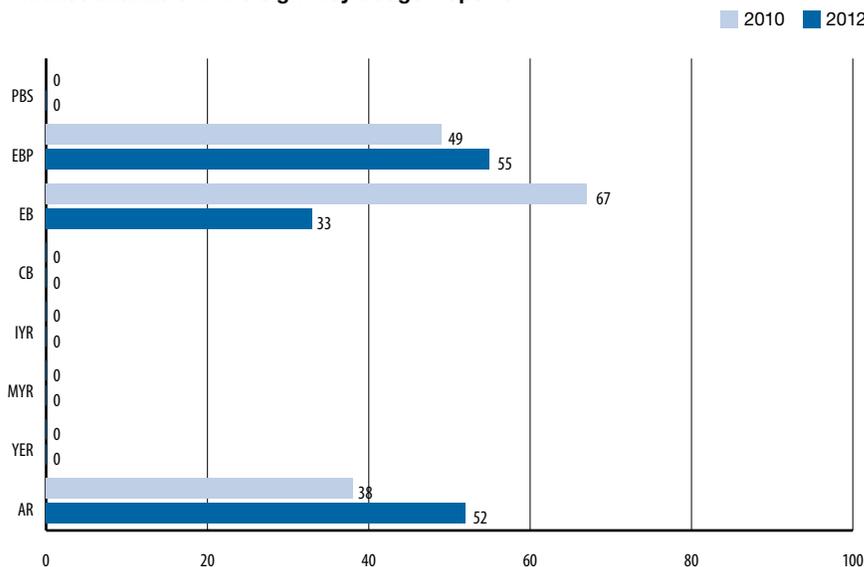
21-40 Minimal

0-20 Scant or None

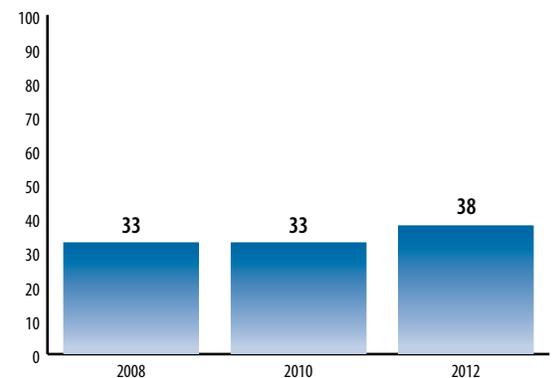
What are each of the eight key budget documents, and does the public have access to them?

Document	Description of Document	Publication Status
PBS	Pre-Budget Statement: 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
EBP	Executive's Budget Proposal: 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
EB	Enacted Budget: The legal instrument authorizing the executive to raise revenues, make expenditures, and incur debt.	Published
CB	Citizens Budget: 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
IYR	In-Year Reports: Periodic (monthly or quarterly) measures of the trends in actual revenues, expenditures, and debt, which allow for comparisons with the budget figures and adjustments.	Not Produced
MYR	Mid-Year Review: 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.	Produced for Internal Use
YER	Year-End Report: Information comparing the actual budget execution relative to the Enacted Budget.	Not Produced
AR	Audit Report: 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 Trinidad and Tobago increased the amount of information it makes available in the eight key budget reports?



OBI scores over three 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.

Trinidad and Tobago's score is 38 out of 100, which is lower than the average score of 43 for all the 100 countries surveyed. It is also lower than the scores of its neighbors Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Trinidad and Tobago's score indicates that the government provides the public with minimal 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.

Trinidad and Tobago's OBI 2012 score of 38 has gone up by five points from its score of 33 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

Trinidad and Tobago's score on the Open Budget Index has gone up from the last round of the Open Budget Survey, which is an encouraging development and for which the government is congratulated. However, with a score of 38 out of 100 on the Open Budget Index 2012, the government of Trinidad and Tobago 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 Trinidad and Tobago undertake the following steps to improve budget transparency:

- Publish the Mid-Year Review, which is currently produced for internal use only (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, 29 countries publish a Mid-Year Review, including Trinidad and Tobago's neighbor Honduras. 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 Pre-Budget Statement, Citizens Budget, In-Year Reports, and Year-End Report (detailed guidance on the contents of these documents can be found in these guidebooks: <http://bit.ly/QGzHv8> and <http://bit.ly/QGzFmJ>). As per the Open Budget Survey 2012, 47 countries publish a Pre-Budget Statement, including Trinidad and Tobago's neighbors Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico; 26 countries publish a Citizens Budget, including its neighbors El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico; 78 countries publish In-Year Reports, including its neighbors the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua; and 72 countries publish a Year-End Report, including all of its neighbors. 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 in the following areas:
 - classification and projections of future expenditures and revenue beyond the fiscal year (see questions 5-6 and 9-10 of the Open Budget Questionnaire);
 - total outstanding government debt for the budget year (see question 11 of the Open Budget Questionnaire);
 - macroeconomic forecasts and assumptions used in developing the budget (see questions 14-15 of the Open Budget Questionnaire);
 - linking the budget to the government's stated policy goals; improving the quality of nonfinancial information and performance data; and providing information intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations (see questions 16-17, 49, and 52-55 of the Open Budget Questionnaire);
 - extra-budgetary funds, quasi-fiscal activities, financial and nonfinancial assets, expenditure arrears, contingent and future liabilities, tax expenditures, earmarked revenue, and percentage of the budget devoted to secret items (see questions 35, 38-43, and 45-47 of the Open Budget Questionnaire); and
 - detailed dates and timetable on the budget formulation

process (see questions 56-58 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).

- Increase the comprehensiveness of the Enacted Budget by providing program-level details in it (see question 101 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).
- Increase the quality of Audit Reports by publishing reports that list actions taken by the executive to address audit recommendations and by providing legislators with detailed audit reports related to the security sector and other secret programs (see questions 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.

Trinidad and Tobago is an average performer among countries in Central America & the Caribbean in terms of budget oversight and engagement

Country	Legislative Strength	SAI Strength	Public Engagement
Costa Rica	Strong	Strong	Weak
Dominican Republic	Moderate	Strong	Weak
El Salvador	Moderate	Strong	Weak
Guatemala	Moderate	Strong	Weak
Honduras	Strong	Strong	Weak
Mexico	Moderate	Strong	Weak
Nicaragua	Moderate	Moderate	Weak
Trinidad and Tobago	Strong	Moderate	Weak

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

Recommendations

Although the overall legislative oversight in Trinidad and Tobago is strong, the Open Budget Survey 2012 finds that this can be further strengthened by:

- The legislature should have a formal pre-budget policy debate prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal; the executive should present its budget proposal to the legislature at least six weeks, but ideally three months, before the start of the new budget year, consult with members of the legislature as part of its process of determining budget priorities, and be required to seek approval from the legislature prior to shifting funds between administrative units and budget lines (see questions 59, 98-99, and 102-103 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).
- Empower the supreme audit institution by the following actions: require the final consent of the legislature or judiciary to remove the head of the SAI (see question 90 of the Open Budget Questionnaire).

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 Trinidad and Tobago are limited.

Trinidad and Tobago has much room to improve public participation

Requirement	Finding
Process Followed Before Consultation	
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
Process of Consultation	
Mechanisms developed by the executive for participation during budget planning (Q116)	Exists and is strong
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
Process Followed After Consultation	
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 Trinidad and Tobago expand public engagement in budgeting after considering the Open Budget Survey indicators on which the country performs poorly (see table below and questions 114-115 and 117-125 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 Malini M. Maharaj, The Sustainable Economic Development Unit (SEDU), C/O Department of Economics, The University of The West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad And Tobago, malini_maharaj@hotmail.com; malini.maharaj@sta.uwi.edu.

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