

PARTNERING TO MAKE BUDGETS WORK FOR THE PEOPLE

Instituto Brasileiro de Análisis Sociais e Econômicas (IBASE) – Brazil

IBASE, the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis, was founded in 1981 for the purpose of contributing to public debates around a diverse set of social issues in Brazil. IBASE seeks to build a democratic culture of rights, strengthen the associative fabric of civil society, and broaden citizen participation in policy making. One of the major civil society organizations in Brazil, IBASE’s work has involved massive public campaigns on such issues as race, participation, the environment, democracy, and hunger, among others. The organization is also one of the co-founders of the World Social Forum.

IBASE has nine programs, which comprise the main activities of the organization, and five support units. The programs are: Right to Cities; Youth, Democracy, and Participation; Social and Ethical Responsibility in Organizations; Food and Nutritional Sovereignty and Security; Democratic Alternatives to Globalization; The World Social Forum Process; Justice Economics; Development and Rights; and Social Watch: Rights and Diversity.

IBASE Forces Brazil’s Development Bank to Disclose Spending

Since 2005 IBASE has been using applied budget work to monitor the powerful *Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social* (BNDES), which is among the largest development banks in the world with an annual budget that exceeds that of the World Bank. IBASE aims to demonstrate how civil society can influence the policies and procedures of development banks, which have great power and influence but are characterized by their off-budget nature and lack of transparency and accountability.

In 2007 IBASE helped to create the BNDES Platform, a coalition of 35 civil society organizations and social movements, to monitor the activities of the BNDES. The Platform is leading a campaign to mobilize popular pressure on the BNDES to change its policies and practices and to strengthen the role of civil society in monitoring the BNDES’ budget and decision-making processes.

IBASE acts as a reference organization within the Platform, producing and disseminating information on the BNDES’ activities and impact and acting as the coalition’s convener. IBASE conducts specific studies on the BNDES’ operations, using the bank’s own information, as well as analyses and data from other

BRAZIL
Open Budget Index 2010
 Overall Score: 71
 Government provides significant information to the public on how it manages public resources.

Availability of budget documents critical for effective public input:	
Pre-Budget Statement	Yes
Executive’s Budget Proposal	Yes
Citizens Budget	No
Enacted Budget	Yes
In-Year Reports	Yes
Mid-Year Review	No
Year-End Report	Yes
Audit Report	Yes
www.openbudgetindex.org	

research institutions. As part of these activities, IBASE publishes a newsletter with information on the Platform’s BNDES monitoring activities. IBASE also conducts



awareness-raising campaigns on the BNDES' role in development and related budgetary implications.

Significant achievements have been made in improving the BNDES' transparency. For the first time in the history of the bank, some information on the projects it funds has been made available. In February 2009 the BNDES published a list of the projects contracted in the previous 12 months, which was updated quarterly. In October 2009 IBASE delivered a letter to the BNDES with new demands, one of which was met: the bank now provides information on all of the projects it funds, not just for the past 12 months, but since 2008.

The Platform's advocacy work also has contributed to changes in the content and frequency of stories about the BNDES in the media. When the Platform started its campaign, the press only published items submitted by the bank itself for the purpose of publicizing its activities. Today, the BNDES receives criticism in the media

from important opinion leaders whose views on the bank's policies and impact echo those of the BNDES Platform.

In November 2009 the BNDES Platform held the first South American Meeting of Populations Affected by BNDES Projects, which drew participants from 50 organizations and social movements from Brazil, and Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia – other countries where the BNDES also operates. The three-day meeting was attended by more than 200 people, who shared their experiences of the impact of BNDES projects. At the end of the meeting, a delegation met with the BNDES president and presented a set of demands for reforms in the transparency and decision making of the bank.

Most recently, in April 2010 the BNDES Platform published an Interactive Map of BNDES-funded Projects (www.plataformabndes.org.br/mapas), which provides project descriptions and locations, as well as the beneficiary corporations and

the share structure for each project, in order to highlight the relationship between corporations and equity participation by the bank itself. The map also features an important participatory mechanism for local communities affected by the projects to post their comments, videos, links, and other relevant documents.

With a presidential election coming up in October 2010, IBASE and its partners in the Platform intend to get the presidential candidates to commit to an agenda of changes in the BNDES' current operational policy. As part of this effort, the Platform will produce a short documentary on the BNDES that will address the bank's role in Brazil's development from a civil society perspective. The documentary will be broadcast on *TV Brasil* and will be designed to influence the presidential election.

IBASE's Participation in the Partnership Initiative

As described above, IBASE has chosen to focus its applied budget work program on monitoring the BNDES. With the support of the Partnership Initiative, IBASE will carry out awareness-raising campaigns around the role of the BNDES in development and its budgetary implications, build stronger coalitions to strengthen the role of civil society in monitoring the bank's budget and decision-making processes, produce and disseminate information around the bank's activities, impact and broaden the BNDES Platform through fast-paced communication and information dissemination tools (the *Development, Democracy and Rights* newsletter and the BNDES Platform website), and build the capacity of the BNDES Platform's participating CSOs and social movements.

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The IBP's Partnership Initiative is a collaborative effort that seeks to enhance the impact of civil society budget work in selected countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The initiative strives to contribute to the development of sustainable institutions; to increase public access to timely, reliable, and useful information; to enhance the effective participation of civil society in policy and budget processes; and to establish a platform of good practices on which future generations of civil society can build.