



The Road to 61

Achieving Sufficient Levels of Budget Transparency

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last decade, successive rounds of the Open Budget Survey (OBS) have shown that the average level of budget transparency around the world has modestly increased. This progress has mainly been driven by countries that started from a very low base, as reflected by their low scores on the Open Budget Index (OBI).

However, a significant number of countries persist in only providing limited amounts of budget information to the public, scoring between 41 and 60 on the OBI. Many of these seem unable to progress to become sufficiently transparent in the management of public funds. Even countries that have made remarkable progress (for instance, countries in Francophone Africa) struggle to attain OBI scores above 60 — a rough benchmark for when a country can be considered to be publishing sufficient budget information to permit informed public discussions on budgetary matters.

Using data from the last four rounds of the OBS (2008, 2010, 2012, and 2015), this paper closely examines the countries whose scores fall in the middle of the OBI. It seeks to answer what these countries can do to increase their OBI scores above 60. Is it a matter of simply publishing more documents? Or must the comprehensiveness of the documents that are published be improved?

The middle category of the OBI has grown over the last four rounds of the Survey. It is now the largest of all the categories and includes almost half the countries surveyed in 2015. While the majority of these countries could be considered “stuck,” remaining in the middle category over two or more rounds of the Survey, in reality many countries have moved both in and out of the category.

The evidence is clear that there is room for countries in the middle category to improve their scores by increasing the number of documents they publish and by improving the comprehensiveness of these documents. Countries in the middle category frequently fail to publish documents they are already producing for internal use. The budget documents that they do publish are also less comprehensive than those published by countries scoring over 60. This is the main reason that the middle countries are lagging behind those in the next highest category.

The Executive’s Budget Proposal, which is heavily weighted in the OBI, is the biggest source of this gap in comprehensiveness. The presentation of basic expenditure and revenue information is similar across countries in the middle and those scoring above 60, but the gaps in published information related to debt, macroeconomic indicators, policy and performance data, and issues beyond the core budget are much wider.

Countries with OBI scores of 61 to 80 can serve as a useful benchmark for assessing countries in the middle of the OBI (with scores of 41-60) and in charting a course for improvements. The goal is to find the path of least resistance. That is, identifying the easiest path for a country to follow to get to a score of 61 or higher.

How to best to sequence reforms is key question this paper seeks to answer. Should scores be boosted by countries providing more information on areas where they already provide some information, but where higher-scoring countries typically provide more? Or should the focus be on practices that are not being carried out in a country, even though higher-scoring countries also struggle in these areas?

The analysis also includes six case studies of countries that have been in the middle of the OBI for the last four rounds of the OBS. They confirm that, while middle countries share many of the same general characteristics in terms of the publication of budget documents, they are not a monolithic group. Each country publishes a different combination of documents (although all publish the Executive's Budget Proposal and the Enacted Budget), with different levels of comprehensiveness. One needs to assess a particular country's status to determine and sequence the best steps forward.

It also includes case studies of five countries that had been in the middle category before boosting their scores above 60, and are now providing sufficient budget information to the public. These countries relied on different approaches. Some on the publication of more documents, some on increasing the comprehensiveness of existing documents, and others on a combination of the two approaches.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, successive rounds of the Open Budget Survey (OBS) have shown that the level of budget transparency around the world has increased, albeit modestly. Most of this progress has been driven by countries that started from a very low base of budget transparency, as reflected by their low scores on the Open Budget Index (OBI). Top ranked countries like South Africa, New Zealand, and Sweden have maintained their performance at a steady level over the years.

Among the countries in the middle of the distribution of OBI scores — those countries that provide only limited amounts of budget information to the public — a significant number seem unable to move forward to achieving sufficient levels of budget transparency. Even countries that have made remarkable progress (for instance, countries in Francophone Africa) have been unable to increase their OBI scores above 60, rough benchmark signifying that countries are publishing sufficient budget information to permit informed public discussions.

This paper uses OBI data from the last four rounds of the OBS (2008, 2010, 2012, and 2015) to look more closely at these countries in the middle of the OBI. It draws on OBI data to examine which budget documents they tend to publish and the comprehensiveness of the information in those documents.¹ We first examine these countries as group, often comparing them to the countries in the next higher OBI category. We then present brief case studies of 11 countries: six in the middle category; and five that were in the middle category but boosted their scores above 60 in 2015. These case studies are particularly useful in showing in which areas some countries have made progress to move from publishing limited to sufficient budget information.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to assess the political, legal, or bureaucratic circumstances that may be constraining a country from providing sufficient budget information to the public, or that allowed those countries that are now providing sufficient information to make that change. These are issues for future research.² This analysis instead seeks to determine which steps countries in the middle of the OBI can take to increase their scores above 60. Should they simply publish more documents or must the documents that they publish contain more comprehensive information?

¹ Although the first round of the OBS was in 2006, we did not use the data from that year because of the smaller number of countries covered by the survey.

² Helpful insights into strategies that budget offices follow to boost their OBI scores were provided by government representatives from the Philippines and Mexico, and could inform future research.

2. WHY AN OBI SCORE OF 61 IS THE BENCHMARK FOR SUFFICIENT BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

The OBI is the transparency section of the OBS. It assesses the public availability and content of eight key budget documents that cover the different parts of the budget cycle. The content of these documents is assessed through 109 objective questions, which are based on international standards for the availability of budget information.³ The resulting assessment is scored on a scale of 1 to 100.⁴

A country can achieve an OBI score of at least 61 if it publishes all eight documents and each document presents core budget information in a way that is consistent with international standards for good transparency practices (i.e., a score of 67 on most OBI questions). This includes information on expenditures, revenues, debt, macroeconomic forecasts, and non-financial performance. For information beyond these core budget data, countries only need to publish a minimal amount of information (i.e., a score of 33 on these questions) to reach the benchmark of 61.⁵ Calculated in this way, a score of 61 is a rough indicator that a country is making a range of budget information (including the essential basic information) available to the public. For this reason, a score of 61 is a benchmark indicating that a country's budget is sufficiently transparent.

In reality, no country providing sufficient budget information (with an OBI score above 60) does so in this precise manner. Many of the countries that score 61 or higher publish fewer than eight documents, but provide more core budget information than international standards require or more details on issues beyond the core budget. Further, there is some arbitrariness to the threshold, a country that scores 61 is unlikely to be appreciably more transparent than a country scoring 59. It is nonetheless a useful metric for assessing countries. The OBS 2015 found that only 24 of the 102 countries covered were able achieve this level of budget transparency; more than three-quarters of the countries surveyed failed to score above 60.

³ See the IMF Fiscal Transparency Code, the OECD Best Practice for Budget Transparency, and the PEFA among others.

⁴ For a more detailed discussion of the OBS methodology, see Annex A of the report *Open Budget Survey 2015*, available at <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/open-budget-initiative/open-budget-survey/publications-2/full-report/>

⁵ Information “beyond the core” are OBI questions 33-35, 37-46, and 95-96, covering issues such as extra-budgetary funds, intergovernmental transfers, contingent liabilities, quasi-fiscal activities, expenditure arrears, financial and non-financial assets, and tax expenditures.

We classify countries into five different categories according to the level of budget information they make available to the public:

- Countries that publish little or no budget information with an OBI score of 20 or less (C1).
- Countries that provide minimal budget information, with OBI scores between 21 and 40 (C2).
- Countries that publish some budget information, but not enough to ensure an informed public debate, with OBI scores between 41 and 60. This group is the focus of this paper (C3).
- Countries that publish sufficient budget information but still have room for improvement, with OBI scores between 61 and 80 (C4).
- Countries that are the most transparent countries in budgetary matters, with OBI scores above 80. Only five countries reached this level of transparency in the 2015 OBS (C5).

Annex 1 includes a list of the different countries in each of the five categories in 2015. Table 1 below shows that an increasing number of countries are close to scoring above 60 and providing sufficient budget information.

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF OBI COUNTRIES PER CATEGORY SINCE 2008

Country Category	2008	2010	2012	2015
C1	25	22	25	17
C2	16	19	16	17
C3	25	33	36	44
<i>% of total</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>44%</i>
C4	14	13	17	19
C5	5	7	6	5
Total	85	94	100	102
OBI Scores: C1=0-20; C2=21-40; C3=41-60; C4=61-80; C5=81-100				

Countries in the C3 category (with OBI scores between 41 and 60) make up 43 percent of the countries covered by the 2015 OBS. This percentage has increased steadily over the various rounds of the Survey: 29 percent fell in the C3 category in 2008, 35 percent in 2010, and 36 percent in 2012.⁶

⁶ The increasing number of countries scoring in the 41-60 range could have been influenced, at least in part, by the 17 new countries that joined the OBS between 2008 and 2015 if they scored in that range. But the trend of a growing number of C3 countries is also confirmed when looking only at the 85 countries that have been part of the OBS since 2008. As the table above shows, 25 or 29 percent of the 85 countries in 2008 provided limited information. Among those 85 countries, the number of C3 countries increased to 35 by 2015, or 41 percent.

These 44 countries arrived at the C3 category in 2015 in different ways. For instance, several countries moved up from the C1 or C2 categories, some have been in the C3 category for at least two previous rounds, and others fell from the C4 category when their scores dropped below 60. Finally, one C3 country (Hungary) joined the Survey in 2015. (Section 5 includes a more detailed discussion of the movement of countries across categories.)

There are two ways that C3 countries can increase their OBI scores: they can make more documents available to the public, or they can increase the comprehensiveness of the information provided in the documents they publish. Before identifying the best way for these countries to achieve an OBI score beyond 60, the next section presents the common limitations these countries share in terms of public disclosure of budget information.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF C3 COUNTRIES

3.1 THE PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS

C3 countries publish an average of just six of the eight key budget documents. Just three C3 countries (7 percent) published all 8 budget documents in 2015. In contrast, 47 percent of countries in the C4 category (with OBI scores ranging from 61 to 80) and 60 percent of C5 countries (OBI scores above 80) published all eight documents.

All C3 countries published the Executive's Budget Proposal (EBP) and the Enacted Budget (EB); nearly all (41 of 44) published In-Year Reports (IYR). However, this does not particularly differentiate them from lower-scoring C2 countries, which also routinely publish these documents.

TABLE 2. BUDGET DOCUMENTS NOT PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (2015 OBS)

Budget documents not available to the public	Pre-Budget Statement		Executive's Budget Proposal		Enacted Budget		Citizens Budget	
	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries
C1	13	76%	15	88%	4	24%	16	94%
C2	10	59%	1	6%	1	6%	9	53%
C3	20	45%	0	0%	0	0%	16	36%
C4	2	11%	0	0%	0	0%	6	32%
C5	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Budget documents not available to the public	In-Year Reports		Mid-Year Review		Year-End Report		Audit Report	
	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries
C1	11	65%	16	94%	10	59%	15	88%
C2	6	35%	13	76%	10	59%	9	53%
C3	3	7%	33	75%	9	20%	10	23%
C4	0	0%	5	26%	0	0%	1	5%
C5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Number of countries: C1: 17 countries, C2: 17 countries, C3:44 countries, C4: 19 countries, C5: 5 countries

Far fewer C3 countries publish the Pre-Budget Statement (PBS) and the Mid-Year Review (MYR). The PBS, which almost half of the C3 countries don't publish, often takes the form of a medium-term expenditure framework, including information which helps the public to understand the government's medium-term fiscal strategy. The MYR, which 75 percent of C3 countries fail to publish, offers an important mid-year assessment of the budget by providing revised macroeconomic projections and an update of expenditures and revenues for the rest of the budget year. In contrast, very high percentages of countries in the C4 category publish these documents: 89 percent publish the PBS, and 74 percent publish the MYR. Similarly, C3 countries do not routinely publish the final budget execution reports. While virtually all countries in the C4 category publish the Year-End Report (YER) and the Audit Report (AR), 20 percent of C3 countries do not.

Certain C3 countries can therefore clearly improve their OBI scores by publishing more documents. A first step should be to ensure that all of the budget execution reports are published, as that is common practice for countries with scores above 61. Most C3 countries also need to begin publishing the PBS and MYR. In total, C3 countries publish about three-quarters of the eight key budget documents. A key question when assessing how difficult it would be for a government to begin publishing a document is whether it is already producing it. This information is presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. PUBLICATION STATUS OF BUDGET DOCUMENTS IN C3 COUNTRIES IN 2015

Publication status	PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
Published	24	44	44	28	41	11	35	34
Internal use	8	0	0	1	2	5	3	2
Published late	1	0	0	1	0	4	3	2
Not produced	11	0	0	14	1	24	3	6

Of the 91 documents that C3 countries do not publish, about 65 percent are not produced, 25 percent are produced but not published, and 10 percent are published too late to be considered publicly available under the OBS methodology. The additional effort that a government must make to publish documents it already produces is relatively small, and a sizeable share of C3 countries that do not publish the PBS do produce it for internal use. On the other hand, the reasons behind documents being published late may reflect a gap between a country's budget law and international norms or merely that a ministry has been inattentive to its duties. Understanding why a document was published late will help shape a strategy for encouraging a government to publish the document within the acceptable timeframe.

BOX 1. THE CITIZENS BUDGET

Only a limited number of OBS questions focus on the Citizens Budget (CB). Consequently, the weight of the CB in determining a country's OBI score is small. Yet this document sends an important signal regarding a government's willingness to make budget information publicly available. As Table 4 shows, countries in higher categories are more likely to publish Citizens Budgets than countries in the lower categories. Of the C3 countries, 36 percent do not publish the CB. Although the publication of CB is not the most actionable way for these countries to raise their OBI score above 60, it seems to be, beyond making budget information more accessible to the public, a good step toward broader transparency reforms in a country.

Number of Countries Without a Citizens Budget

Citizens Budget (CB) <u>not</u> published	N. of countries	% of countries	Average CB's score
C1	16	94%	3
C2	9	53%	23
C3	16	36%	30
C4	6	31%	40
C5	1	20%	68

3.2 COMPREHENSIVENESS OF DOCUMENTS

While the previous section looked at the publication of budget documents, this section examines the comprehensiveness of information provided in published documents. The scores in Table 5 only reflect responses for countries that publish the document.

TABLE 4. OBI 2015 SCORE FOR THE EIGHT KEY BUDGET DOCUMENTS

Average score by budget document (only includes documents that have been published)								
Country category	PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
C1	56	29	68	50	48	48	31	31
C2	72	40	74	48	60	59	48	55
C3	61	55	79	46	69	55	54	56
C4	75	70	85	58	84	65	74	70
C5	98	90	72	83	90	91	82	91
Addendum: C3-C4	-14	-15	-6	-12	-15	-10	-20	-14

Country categories based on OBI scores. C1=0-20; C2=21-40; C3=41-60; C4=61-80; C5=81-100.

As can be seen in Table 5, the individual scores for the documents that C3 countries publish are between six (for the EB) and 20 points (for the YER) lower than for those that C4 countries publish. Notably, C3 countries score an average of 15 points lower on the EBP.⁷ So while the previous section showed that C3 countries fell short in publishing documents, the comprehensiveness of the information that C3 countries provide also lags behind C4 countries.

Although the OBI assesses the content of all eight key budget documents, it examines the contents of the EBP and the YER in more detail. There are 53 questions that examine the information that the EBP contains. These questions can be divided into six subcategories: expenditures, revenues, debt, macroeconomic assumptions that underlie the budget, performance and policy goals, and issues beyond the core budget. (The OBI questions included in each can be found in Annex 3.)

Table 6 shows how each country category scores on these subcategories of budget information. C3 countries provide less information than C4 countries across all six. For basic budget information related to expenditure and revenue, C3 and C4 countries have similar scores, suggesting they are providing similar information. For debt information, the gap is a bit larger. But the gaps are particularly large for macroeconomic assumptions, policy and performance goals, and activities beyond the core budget; C3 countries score an average of 20 points lower than C4 countries.

⁷ See Annex 2 for a discussion of these differences, adjusted by the weight given to each document in the Open Budget Index. The EBP has the greatest weight in the Open Budget Index, so the content of the EBP can significantly affect a country's score.

TABLE 5. EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL (EBP) OBI 2015

Average scores by subgroups of budget information (only includes EBPs that have been published)						
Country category	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
C1	30	57	17	25	21	14
C2	52	63	47	25	20	21
C3	68	79	62	34	40	32
C4	78	85	79	61	63	52
C5	91	97	100	90	89	79
Addendum: C3-C4	-10	-6	-17	-27	-23	-20

Country categories based on OBI scores C1=0-20; C2=21-40; C3=41-60; C4=61-80; C5=81-100.

The OBI uses 13 questions to examine the YER. Looking again at same six subcategories, C3 countries score lower than C4 countries across all these for the YER. Even when just examining the 80 percent of C3 countries that publish the YER, on average they provide less information than C4 countries. For revenues and debt information, the differences between C3 and C4 countries are roughly the same as for the EBP. The differences widen to 10 percentage points for other subcategories, even for basic expenditure information. Overall, the comprehensiveness of the YER for C3 countries lags behind that of the C4 countries considerably in most areas.

TABLE 6. YEAR END REPORT (YER) OBI 2015

Average scores by subgroups of budget information (only includes YERs that have been published)						
Country category	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
C1	41	65	14	0	0	7
C2	64	91	47	33	2	26
C3	69	92	44	21	15	36
C4	92	96	63	56	49	64
C5	96	96	60	47	58	97
Addendum: C3-C4	-23	-4	-19	-35	-34	-28

Country categories based on OBI scores C1=0-20; C2=21-40; C3=41-60; C4=61-80; C5=81-100.

4. A MORE DETAILED LOOK AT THE EBP QUESTIONS FOR C3 COUNTRIES

It is useful to look in more detail at individual EBP questions, particularly those that make up the subcategories where the largest gaps exist between C3 and C4 countries. These are: macroeconomic estimates, policy and performance information, and data beyond the core budget information. While C4 countries perform better than C3 countries across all of these, many transparency practices are not well entrenched in C4 countries. That is, C4 countries tend to score just somewhat better than the C3 countries on these questions, and both score poorly. (An entrenched or widespread practice is one in which a large percentage of countries are providing extensive information; that is, scoring 100.)

When working to improve scores in C3 countries to above 60, the question of how reforms should be sequenced is an important one. Does it make sense to focus first on improving transparency practices in C3 countries that are widespread in C4 countries? Or should areas where C3 countries are scoring most poorly, but where C4 countries score only marginally better, be the focus? The first approach entails encouraging C3 countries to publish even more information on areas where they may be providing sufficient information, boosting subcategory scores from 67 to 100. The second approach means encouraging C3 countries to begin providing information on areas that they currently provide little or no information on.

4.1 STANDARD BUDGET INFORMATION: EXPENDITURE, REVENUE, DEBT

The differences between the amount of basic budget information that C3 and C4 publish in their EBPs are generally not large. There are, however, gaps that C3 countries should still address. For instance, every C4 country presents expenditure data by functional classification (data disaggregated by government functions such as health and education), but nearly one-quarter of C3 countries fail to. Similarly, C4 countries are much more likely than C3 countries to provide program-level detail on all expenditures: 84 percent of C4 countries provide this information for the current budget year, and 74 percent provide it for the previous budget year; just 61 percent of C3 countries provide it for the current year and 41 percent for the previous year.

As noted above, there are large differences in the amount of debt information that C3 and C4 countries publish. Table 8 shows that the scale of the difference varies depending on the issue. For instance, one OBI question asks whether countries provide three basic pieces of information related to borrowing and debt in the budget year: the amount of net new borrowing required, the total debt outstanding, and

interest payments. Most C4 countries (89 percent) provide all this information, while less than half of C3 countries do so. This should be a relatively easy next step for C3 countries, as they are likely already producing this basic information.

TABLE 7. INFORMATION ON DEBT (PERCENT OF COUNTRIES)

Information provided (OBI score)	Borrowing and debt estimates		Debt composition		Debt in prior year (BY-1)	
	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries
None (0)	0%	0%	20%	5%	7%	0%
Minimal (33)	7%	0%	50%	32%	74%	47%
Sufficient (67)	50%	11%	14%	32%	9%	21%
Extensive (100)	43%	89%	16%	32%	9%	32%

OBS 2015. C3 countries score between 41-60; C4 countries score between 61-80. There are 44 C3 and 19 C4 countries.

For the other two debt-related questions, C4 countries are less impressive in terms of the information they provide. Only about one-third provide extensive information (scoring 100). Nonetheless, for both questions, more than half of the C4 countries provide either sufficient or extensive information, while only 20 to 30 percent of C3 countries provide this level of information. There is room for improvement in both C3 and C4 countries, but C3 countries should be providing considerably more information in this area.

4.2 MACROECONOMIC FORECAST

Virtually all budgets in C3 countries present information on the macroeconomic forecasts that underlie revenue, expenditure, and debt estimates. Compared to C4 countries, however, C3 countries provide less information. For instance, 79 percent of C4 countries provide extensive information (scoring 100) because they publish additional macroeconomic details beyond the core elements of nominal GDP level, inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates. Providing additional macroeconomic information on areas, such as oil prices, exchange rates, and unemployment, therefore appears to be a standard feature of budgets in C4 countries. C3 countries should consider publishing this information as a step to moving above 60.

TABLE 8. INFORMATION ON BUDGET CREDIBILITY (PERCENT OF COUNTRIES)

Information provided (OBI score)	Macroeconomic assumptions		Sensitivity analysis	
	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries
None (0)	2%	0%	80%	58%
Minimal (33)	34%	5%	18%	11%
Sufficient (67)	46%	16%	0%	16%
Extensive (100)	18%	79%	2%	16%

OBS 2015. C3 countries score between 41-60; C4 countries score between 61-80. There are 44 C3 and 19 C4 countries.

For both C3 and C4 countries, there is a lack of information on how budget estimates are sensitive to potential changes in macroeconomic assumptions: 80 percent of C3 countries and 58 percent of C4 countries fail to provide sensitivity analysis. Such information helps the public understand the impact of the economy on the budget; for instance, if GDP growth is slower than what was assumed in the budget proposal this can have a negative impact on revenue collection, which in turn might put pressure on public expenditures and fiscal deficits. Only one C3 country (Indonesia) publishes extensive information on the impact that different macroeconomic assumptions may have on the budget, as well as information on state owned enterprises' revenues. While more C4 countries provide this information, it is clearly not a standard practice even among these higher scoring countries.

4.3 GOALS AND PRO-POOR POLICIES

The EBP is the main policy document of the government and should include estimates on, and an explanation of, how the budget is linked to the government's overall policy goals. The EBP should also include information on the impact that the government's policy proposals will have on different segments of the population, including poor people.

Table 10 below shows that the practice of including such information is more deeply embedded in the budgets of the C4 countries than C3 countries. For four of the six questions, over half of the C4 countries provide extensive information (scoring 100), while between 60 and 80 percent of C3 countries provided no or only minimal information (scoring 0 or 33) on the same four questions. Clearly this is an area where C3 could improve their budget presentations.

TABLE 9. POLICY GOALS AND THE BUDGET (PERCENT OF COUNTRIES)

Information provided (OBI score)	New policy goals affecting expenditures		New policy goals affecting revenues		Linkages between the budget and policy goals in the budget year	
	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries
None (0)	30%	11%	32%	21%	5%	5%
Minimal (33)	48%	26%	43%	21%	55%	5%
Sufficient (67)	5%	11%	2%	0%	5%	11%
Extensive (100)	18%	53%	23%	58%	36%	79%
Information provided (OBI score)	Linkages between the budget and policy goals over medium term		Alternative displays of expenditures		Budget affecting the poor	
	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries
None (0)	43%	32%	64%	42%	14%	5%
Minimal (33)	30%	26%	25%	37%	55%	26%
Sufficient (67)	5%	5%	2%	5%	9%	16%
Extensive (100)	23%	37%	9%	16%	23%	53%

OBS 2015. C3 countries score between 41-60; C4 countries score between 61-80. There are 44 C3 and 19 C4 countries.

Both C3 and C4 countries are weak in showing how policy goals are reflected in the budget over the medium term. Similarly, too few countries in both categories are providing alternative displays of expenditures, for instance information disaggregated by age, gender, income, or region. For both questions, a majority of both C3 and C4 countries provide minimal or no information.

4.4 NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The OECD best practices for budget transparency recommend countries publish non-financial performance data for each program in the budget, including performance targets.⁸ Performance data are especially useful for governments to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of expenditure programs, as well as for citizens to hold their governments accountable.

⁸ See <https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/Best%20Practices%20Budget%20Transparency%20-%20complete%20with%20cover%20page.pdf>

TABLE 10. PERFORMANCE INFORMATION (PERCENT OF COUNTRIES)

Information provided (OBI score)	Non-financial data on inputs		Non-financial data on results		Performance targets	
	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries
None (0)	64%	47%	27%	21%	39%	21%
Minimal (33)	23%	32%	27%	11%	30%	5%
Sufficient (67)	7%	11%	25%	21%	16%	21%
Extensive (100)	7%	11%	20%	47%	16%	53%

OBS 2015. C3 countries score between 41-60; C4 countries score between 61-80. There are 44 C3 and 19 C4 countries.

Responses to the performance questions indicate that it is far more common for C4 countries to include this information as part of the budget presentation than C3 countries, particularly when it comes to performance data on results and performance targets. Roughly half of C4 countries provide extensive information (scoring 100); only one in five C3 countries provide that level of information. In fact, more than half of C3 countries provide minimal or no information on performance results and targets.

Neither C3 nor C4 countries provide much information on non-financial data on inputs, with roughly 80 percent of these countries providing minimal no information.

4.5 BEYOND THE CORE BUDGET

Information beyond the core budget is needed to understand the country's overall fiscal position. Non-core budget information can be divided into eight subcategories: extra-budgetary activities, quasi-fiscal activities, transfers to local governments and to public corporations, tax expenditures, earmarked revenues, and various forms of off-budget donor financing.

TABLE 11. ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE CORE BUDGET (PERCENT OF COUNTRIES)

Information provided (OBI scores)	Extra-budgetary activities		Budget on consolidated basis		Intergovernmental transfers		Transfers to public corporations	
	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries
None (0)	25%	6%	49%	24%	7%	0%	14%	0%
Minimal (33)	55%	41%	-	-	12%	0%	32%	18%
Sufficient (67)	13%	6%	-	-	40%	16%	34%	47%
Extensive (100)	8%	47%	51%	76%	40%	84%	20%	35%
Information provided (OBI scores)	Quasi-fiscal activities		Donors assistance		Tax expenditures		Earmarked revenues	
	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries	C3 countries	C4 countries
None (0)	55%	50%	24%	8%	50%	32%	27%	18%
Minimal (33)	36%	28%	31%	8%	34%	16%	24%	6%
Sufficient (67)	7%	0%	17%	38%	7%	21%	24%	24%
Extensive (100)	2%	22%	29%	46%	9%	32%	24%	53%

Number of countries: C1: 17 countries, C2: 17 countries, C3:44 countries, C4: 19 countries, C5: 5 countries

For five of the eight subcategories, roughly half of C4 countries provide extensive information (scoring 100); more than half of the C4 countries provide extensive or sufficient information (scoring either 100 or 67) on two other subcategories. C4 countries perform quite poorly on quasi-fiscal activities, with half providing no information. Roughly a third of C4 countries provide no information (scoring 0) on tax expenditures, one-quarter do not show the budget on a consolidated basis (combining budget and off-budget activities), and one in five provide no information on earmarked revenues. The general conclusion is that C4 countries still have considerable room to improve in presenting non-core budget information.

C3 countries perform noticeably weaker still on these questions. Reporting on intergovernmental transfers is a practice that is particularly ripe for improvement. While nearly all C3, and all C4, countries report this information, far more C4 countries provide extensive information (84 percent) than C3 countries (40 percent). Similarly, while 47 percent of C4 countries provide extensive information on extra-budgetary funds, only 8 percent of C3 countries provide that level of detail and a quarter provide no information at all. C3 countries also perform quite poorly on providing information on tax expenditures, half provide no information and another third provide only minimal information (scoring 33).

4.6 FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT

When monitoring and assessing economic and financial conditions and the behavior of governments, information on financial assets held by, and liabilities owed to, other entities is needed to be able to assess the financial risks and vulnerabilities that might affect the budget. The OBI assesses the transparency of a government's financial position through five subcategories of information: financial assets, non-financial assets, contingent liabilities, future liabilities, and expenditure arrears.

A significant share of both C3 and C4 countries provide no information on any of these five subcategories. In fact, 90 percent of C3 countries provide minimal or no information across all five. The problem is somewhat less dramatic in C4 countries. Even for these countries, however, the percentage providing extensive information — something fairly routine in most other areas — is very low. C4 countries score highest in providing information on contingent liabilities, but only 25 percent publish extensive information. No single C4 country provides extensive information on non-financial assets, and 58 percent provide no information.

TABLE 12. FINANCIAL POSITION (PERCENT OF COUNTRIES)

Information provided (OBI score)	Financial assets		Non-financial assets		Expenditure arrears		Contingent liabilities		Future liabilities	
	C3	C4	C3	C4	C3	C4	C3	C4	C3	C4
None (0)	36%	32%	66%	58%	72%	50%	58%	16%	80%	42%
Minimal (33)	52%	37%	32%	37%	15%	14%	37%	53%	11%	37%
Sufficient (67)	11%	16%	2%	5%	10%	21%	2%	5%	7%	5%
Extensive (100)	0%	16%	0%	0%	3%	14%	2%	26%	2%	16%

OBS 2015. C3 countries score between 41-60; C4 countries score between 61-80. There are 44 C3 and 19 C4 countries.

BOX 2. THE ROLE OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY ECOSYSTEM

The OBS not only assesses if governments make budget information publicly available but also if they have established effective mechanisms for citizen participation and if official oversight institutions are able to scrutinize the budget. Together they comprise the three pillars of the budget accountability ecosystem. The 2015 OBS global report found that only a limited number of countries perform well across all three measures of fiscal transparency, public participation, and strength of oversight institutions. The table below shows that as countries move toward greater budget transparency, scores on the two other pillars of accountability also improve. C3 countries score for public participation is 20 points lower than the score of C4 countries. The same can be said for the strength of the Legislature and the strength of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) where the differences are 17 and 12 points, respectively. C3 countries, when they promote budget transparency, should also strengthen these formal oversight institutions and create more opportunities for the public to participate in the budget process. While improving fiscal transparency is a high priority, these countries should also aim at strengthening their overall accountability ecosystem in order to improve the management of public finances.

Public Participation and Strengths of Oversight Institutions (Average Scores)

Accountability ecosystem	Public participation	Strength of the legislature	Strength of the SAI
C1	7	28	41
C2	16	39	54
C3	24	48	69
C4	44	65	80
C5	64	79	97

5. DISPARITIES BETWEEN COUNTRIES WITHIN THE C3 CATEGORY

The 44 countries in the C3 category in 2015 all publish a limited amount of budget information, which is not enough to allow for open and informed budget debates. Each of these countries followed a different path over successive rounds of the OBS to arrive at this level of limited budget transparency.⁹ C3 countries can be roughly divided into four different groups based on the budget transparency trajectories that they have followed (see Annex 4 for more detail):

- **Improved countries** are those that had OBI scores of 40 or lower in OBS rounds prior to 2015 (and changed categories only once over the four OBS rounds). There are 11 such countries, including many Francophone African countries.
- **Stuck countries** are those that have been in the C3 category for at least the last two rounds of the OBS (in 2012 and 2015), and changed categories no more than once over the four rounds. Within this category, there are 23 countries: eight countries have been stuck for two consecutive rounds (2012 and 2015), five for three consecutive rounds, and ten for all four rounds.
- **Regressed countries** are those that had scores above 60 in OBS rounds prior to 2015, and then slipped into the C3 category in 2015 (and changed categories only once). There are two such countries.
- **Volatile countries** are those that changed categories more than once prior to 2015. So a country that went from the C3 category in 2010 to the C4 (or C2) category in 2012 and then back to the C3 category in 2015 would be treated as volatile. There are seven volatile countries.

As budget transparency has progressed in different ways among C3 countries, a key question is whether this has had an impact on different budget transparency practices in these countries. An aggregated analysis of the publication status and comprehensiveness of budget documents in 2015 shows that there are generally not sharp differences between these different types of countries. (Note that because there are only two countries that have “regressed,” those data are less meaningful for comparison purposes.)

⁹ Hungary was first included in the OBS in 2015, and so is not included in this analysis.

Table 13 shows that similar percentages of countries in the different categories publish almost the same budget documents. The two main exceptions are the YER and the AR. A larger percentage of “stuck” countries publish the YER and the AR than “improved” countries. In terms of the content of published budget documents, scores on most documents are pretty similar, particularly for the EBP and the YER. Consequently, most C3 countries face similar issues, and a significant share of reforms to improve budget transparency are likely to be applicable to different countries, despite their budget transparency trajectories being distinct.

TABLE 13. DOCUMENTS NOT MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC (2015 OBS)

Budget documents not available to the public	Pre-Budget Statement		Executive’s Budget Proposal		Enacted Budget		Citizens Budget	
	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries
Stuck	9	39%	0	0%	0	0%	8	35%
Improved	6	55%	0	0%	0	0%	4	36%
Regressed	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%
Volatile	3	43%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%
Budget documents not available to the public	In-Year Reports		Mid-Year Review		Year-End Report		Audit Report	
	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries	N. of countries	% of countries
Stuck	2	9%	18	78%	3	13%	3	13%
Improved	1	9%	8	73%	4	36%	5	45%
Regressed	0	0%	1	50%	0	100%	1	50%
Volatile	0	0%	5	71%	2	29%	1	14%

Stuck: 23 countries, Improved: 11 countries, Regressed: 2 countries, Volatile: 7 countries

TABLE 14. COMPREHENSIVENESS OF BUDGET DOCUMENTS (AVERAGE SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT)

C3 countries	PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
Stuck	58	55	76	45	67	55	53	50
Improved	64	54	78	56	69	51	51	59
Regressed	84	64	89	33	83	48	51	76
Volatile	61	52	90	40	69	63	59	62

Stuck: 23 countries, Improved: 11 countries, Regressed: 2 countries, Volatile: 7 countries.

6. CASE STUDIES

It is useful to look in more detail at individual countries in order to dive into the problems and possible solutions to improving budget transparency. The previous section highlights that countries follow different paths into the C3 category, as some countries raised their scores to enter the category while others started with higher scores before slipping down. The largest group, however, are those have been in that category for two or more rounds of the Survey, those “stuck” in the middle. For the case studies, we have selected six countries in the C3 category that have been “stuck” in this category since 2008. These countries are Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana, Guatemala, Jordan, and Turkey.

We also examine five countries that had previously been in the C3 category for at least two rounds, but then moved up to the C4 category (OBI scores of 61 to 80) in a recent round. These countries are Georgia, Malawi, Mexico, the Philippines, and Romania. Here we look at what changes these countries made in the publication and content of budget documents to boost their scores up to 61 or higher. More detailed information about each of these countries, including OBI scores by document and detailed scores by subgroup for the EBP and YER, are presented in Annex 5.

6.1 COUNTRIES “STUCK” IN THE MIDDLE

In this section, we review six countries that are in the middle category, and whose scores in 2015 are similar to their scores in 2008. All six countries have had scores of 50 or higher (but not above 60) in previous rounds, although half these countries scored in the 40s in 2015. While there have been some significant point changes — for instance, Turkey rose from 43 to 57 between 2008 and 2010 — most of the movements have been fairly modest (fewer than 10 points between rounds).

TABLE 15. OBI SCORES FOR “STUCK” CASE STUDY COUNTRIES

	2008	2010	2012	2015
Argentina	56	56	50	59
Bosnia and Herzegovina	44	44	50	43
Ghana	50	54	50	51
Guatemala	46	50	51	46
Jordan	53	50	57	55
Turkey	43	57	50	44

With the exception of Bosnia, which published the same six documents during all four rounds, all of these countries changed which documents they published. Five of the six consistently published four documents in all rounds: EBP, EB, IYR, and YER; and four of the six also consistently published the AR. Ghana was the most volatile, publishing all documents but the PBS during one of the four rounds, but only publishing two documents (the EBP and EB) consistently in all four rounds. In 2015, all of the countries published the EBP, EB, IYR, YER, and AR. But only Turkey published the MYR, only Ghana and Jordan published a CB, and only Argentina, Bosnia, and Jordan published the PBS.

As a group, they published an average of five documents in 2008 and six documents in 2015. Yet their average score only increased by a single point over the period. The gains in score for publishing more documents were offset by weaknesses in comprehensiveness. For example, even though Argentina published two more documents in 2015 than in 2010 (when its score was 56) it was not enough to push its score above 60, as the comprehensiveness of other documents slipped.

The content of the EBPs in most of these countries needs to be improved. In 2015, Bosnia, Turkey, and Guatemala all score below the average for C3 countries on the EBP (with Bosnia scoring by far the lowest, with a score of 35 relative to a C3 average of 55 and a C4 average of 70). The other countries are close to the average; only Argentina is notably above the C3 average, with an EBP score of 64.

There are similar issues around the comprehensiveness of the YER. In 2015, most of these countries are either close to or below the C3 category average for the content of the YER. Argentina, in contrast, scores not only higher than the C3 category average but also higher than the C4 category average.

For the AR, Bosnia and Ghana both actually score above the C4 average, while Argentina and Turkey score below the C3 average. This indicates a great disparity in the content of this document across the countries. It's also worth noting that even within a country, the comprehensiveness of documents can vary widely. For instance, Argentina publishes two documents that score above the C4 average (EB and YER), but publishes two other documents that are below even the C3 average (PBS and AR). Similarly, Bosnia publishes an AR that scores above the C4 average, but an EBP that is well below the C3 average.

6.2 COUNTRIES THAT ROSE BEYOND 60 IN 2015

In this section, we examine five countries that rose to the C4 category. These countries achieved OBI scores of 61 or higher in 2015, but had lower scores in previous rounds. All were in the C3 category (with scores between 41 and 60) for at least two rounds between 2008 and 2015. Before rising to the C4

category, only two countries had scores that placed them in a category other than C3: in 2008, Malawi was in the C2 category (with a score of 28) and Romania was in the C4 category (with a score of 62).

TABLE 16. OBI SCORES FOR “BEYOND 60” CASE STUDY COUNTRIES

	2008	2010	2012	2015
Georgia	53	55	55	66
Malawi	28	47	52	65
Mexico	55	52	61	66
Philippines	48	55	48	64
Romania	62	59	47	75

A key issue is whether, in boosting their scores to above 60, these countries relied more heavily on publishing new documents or increasing the comprehensiveness of existing documents. Not surprisingly, countries relied on different approaches.

- The Philippines relied primarily on the publication of new documents in order to increase its score. It published all eight documents in 2015, four more than in 2012.
- Malawi and Mexico relied almost entirely on increasing the comprehensiveness of their budget documents, but most importantly the EBP. Malawi is unusual because it published only four of the eight documents in 2015, but its scores on the EBP and YER were very high.
- Romania relied on a combination of these two approaches, both publishing new documents and improving the comprehensiveness of existing documents in 2015.
- Georgia highlights the difficulty of making these assessments when countries are erratic in the publication of documents. Measured relative to 2012, the increase in Georgia’s OBI score in 2015 was due entirely to the publication of additional documents. But measured relative to 2010 (when it had the same OBI score as in 2012), the increase is almost entirely due to improvements in comprehensiveness of published documents. This occurred because Georgia failed to publish two documents in 2012 that it had published in 2010. When it resumed publishing these documents in 2015, it increased their comprehensiveness, so its score rose to 66.

7. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The number of countries scoring between 41 and 60 on the OBI (C3 countries) has grown over the last four rounds of the Survey. C3 countries represent a larger percentage of all OBI countries — 43 percent in 2015 — than any other category.
- While the majority of these countries could be considered as being “stuck,” because they have been in this category for two or more Survey rounds, in reality there is significant movement in and out of the category.
- The evidence is clear that there is room for countries in the middle category to improve their scores both by increasing the number of documents they publish (only three out of 44 C3 countries published all eight budget document in 2015) and by improving the comprehensiveness of the documents that they already publish.
- C3 countries frequently fail to publish the PBS and the MYR, yet roughly 40 percent of these countries already produce it for internal purposes. In addition, one-quarter to one-fifth of these countries fail to publish the YER and AR. By comparison, virtually all countries that have achieved sufficient budget transparency (C4 countries scoring 61 to 80 on the OBI) publish these two execution documents.
- Relative to the C4 countries, C3 countries publish documents that are less comprehensive. Indeed, the lower comprehensiveness of their documents is the main reason that these countries are lagging behind C4 countries. The largest source of the gap is the EBP, given the large weight it has in the OBI. (See Annex 2.)
- For the EBP, the differences between the C3 and C4 countries are smaller when it comes to the presentation of basic expenditure and revenue information. The differences are much wider in the presentation of information related to debt, macroeconomic indicators, policy and performance data, and issues beyond the core budget. In some of these areas, however, even C4 countries score poorly.
- The average scores of C4 countries can serve as a useful benchmark for assessing C3 countries and charting a course for improving their scores. A goal should be to find the path of least resistance. This is, to identify the easiest path for a country to follow to get to a score of 61 or higher.

- How reforms should be sequenced in a particular C3 country remains an important question. Should scores be boosted in those areas where a C3 country is providing some information (scoring 33 or 67) but where C4 countries typically provide extensive information (scoring 100)? Or should practices currently not being carried out in a C3 country (where it currently scores 0) be instituted, even though the practice may also not be entrenched in C4 countries? In the latter situation, a key question may be why C4 countries typically do not collect and publish the information, and if those barriers would also make it difficult for C3 countries to publish this information.
- The case studies confirm that, while C3 category countries share many of the same general characteristics in terms of the publication of budget documents, they are not a monolithic group, even among those countries that are the most “stuck.” Each country publishes a different combination of documents (although all publish the Executive’s Budget Proposal and the Enacted Budget) with different levels of comprehensiveness. One needs to assess a particular country’s status to determine and sequence the best steps forward.
- The case studies also showed that countries that had been in the C3 category, but then boosted their scores to above 60, relied on different approaches. Some relied heavily on the publication of more documents, some on increasing the comprehensiveness of existing documents, and others on a combination of the two approaches.

While the countries in the middle of the OBI (with scores of 41 to 60) have many common characteristics in terms of the budget documents they publish and the comprehensiveness of those documents, each country has to be assessed individually to chart a path that will boost its score to 61 or higher.

The first step is to identify which of the eight documents a country does not publish. For unpublished documents, the next step is to determine which are actually being produced for internal purposes and which were published late. Documents produced for internal purposes are perfect candidates for publication. For documents that are released too late, it is important to determine whether the delay is a function of the country’s budget process and law or whether it reflects poor performance by the agency in charge. The latter problem may be easier to address in the short term than one that requires fundamental changes to the country’s budget process.

For the documents that a country already publishes, the key question is how their comprehensiveness can be improved. Here it is useful to compare the contents of these documents to those of countries with OBI scores of 61 to 80, the next highest category. In areas where a country in the middle of the OBI is

lagging, it is important to determine whether the country is producing the information but just failing to make it public. For instance, a country that produces a macroeconomic forecast must make assumptions about inflation, economic growth, and other factors to make the projection, even if it does not make all of that information available to the public. The goal in this circumstance is to identify the roadblock to making the information public, and determine if it can be removed.

In other cases, the country may not be producing certain information. Again, the goal is to identify the roadblocks that are preventing the country from producing this information, which international standards indicate is needed to provide a full picture of the country's fiscal condition. Is there a capacity constraint that technical assistance could help to overcome? Are there legal issues which would require a change in the law to address the problem? (In some countries, a document is published only if it is required by the budget law.)

Once a thorough review has been undertaken, it is a matter of constructing options that are the most likely to succeed in moving the country to an OBI beyond 60. The OBS Data Explorer Calculator can help determine the impact that various improvements would have on a country's OBI score.¹⁰ There are likely to be multiple combinations that can achieve the goal. In addition, options could involve a number of actors, including the finance ministry, parliament, the supreme audit institution, donors, and civil society. Getting all of the key actors to agree on a path forward is an essential part of boosting budget transparency in a country.

¹⁰ See <http://survey.internationalbudget.org>

ANNEX 1: COUNTRIES BY OBI CATEGORY

C1 Scant	C2 Minimal	C3 Limited	C4 Substantial	C5 Extensive
Algeria	Albania	Afghanistan	Brazil	New Zealand
Bolivia	Angola	Argentina	Bulgaria	Norway
Cambodia	Dem. Rep. of Congo	Azerbaijan	Czech Republic	South Africa
Chad	Liberia	Bangladesh	France	Sweden
China	Macedonia	Benin	Georgia	United States
Egypt	Morocco	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Germany	
Equatorial Guinea	Mozambique	Botswana	Italy	
Fiji	Nepal	Burkina Faso	Malawi	
Iraq	Nigeria	Cameroon	Mexico	
Lebanon	Rwanda	Chile	Peru	
Myanmar	São Tomé e Príncipe	Colombia	Philippines	
Niger	Sri Lanka	Costa Rica	Poland	
Qatar	Tajikistan	Croatia	Portugal	
Saudi Arabia	Trinidad and Tobago	Dominican Republic	Romania	
Sudan	Yemen	Ecuador	Russia	
Venezuela	Zambia	El Salvador	Slovenia	
Vietnam	Zimbabwe	Ghana	South Korea	
		Guatemala	Uganda	
		Honduras	United Kingdom	
		Hungary		
		India		
		Indonesia		
		Jordan		
		Kazakhstan		
		Kenya		
		Kyrgyz Republic		
		Malaysia		
		Mali		
		Mongolia		
		Namibia		
		Nicaragua		
		Pakistan		
		Papua New Guinea		
		Senegal		
		Serbia		
		Sierra Leone		
		Slovakia		
		Spain		
		Tanzania		
		Thailand		
		Timor-Leste		
		Tunisia		
		Turkey		
		Ukraine		

Categories based on OBI scores. C1=0-20; C2=21-40; C3=41-60; C4=61-80; C5=81-100.

ANNEX 2: ADJUSTMENTS TO OBI SCORES

The analysis in the paper compares the scores of countries in the C3 category (OBI scores of 41-60) with those in the C4 category (scores of 61-80). The C4 category serves as an important benchmark for C3 countries on their “Road to 61.” The paper also presents comparisons of the document scores for countries in the C3 and C4 categories, as a way to try to better identify where C3 countries need to improve their transparency practices to raise their scores. Those document comparisons show all documents scored on a scale of 0 to 100. In addition, the discussion in the paper tries to distinguish between the two approaches to boosting an OBI score: publishing a new document, and increasing the comprehensiveness of an already published document. The standard OBI scores include all document scores, even when they are zero because a document is not published. Thus to isolate the differences in only published documents, we excluded those documents that are not published. The difference that makes to the scores can be seen in the top half of the table below.

2015 OBI SCORES FOR C3 AND C4 COUNTRY CATEGORIES

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
C3, all documents	48	33	55	79	30	63	13	43	42
C4 all documents	69	67	70	85	40	83	48	74	65
C3-C4	-21	-34	-15	-6	-10	-20	-35	-31	-23
C3, published only	57	61	55	79	46	69	55	54	56
C4, published only	72	75	70	85	58	84	65	74	70
C3-C4	-15	-14	-15	-6	-12	-15	-10	-20	-14
% of OBI questions	100%	5.5%	49.5%	5.5%	3.7%	8.3%	8.3%	12.8%	6.4%
Weighted average scores									
C3 countries	48	2	27	4	1	5	1	6	3
C4 countries	69	4	35	5	1	7	4	10	4
C3-C4	-21	-2	-7	0	0	-2	-3	-4	-1
C3, published only	57	3	27	4	2	6	5	7	4
C4, published only	72	4	35	5	2	7	5	10	4
C3-C4	-15	-1	-7	0	0	-1	-1	-3	-1

Totals do not add due to rounding. C3: 44 countries, score 41-60. C4: 19 countries, score 61-80.

For instance, the average 2015 OBI score for countries in the C3 category is 48, while it is 69 for countries in the C4 category, a difference of 21. But part of that difference reflects the fact that C3 countries publish fewer documents than C4 countries. When comparing only published documents, the average C3 score is 57, and the average C4 score is 72, a difference of 15. Thus the difference narrows, although it indicates that the bulk of the difference between the two categories reflects differences in the comprehensiveness of published documents rather than differences in publication status. (Note that the differences between the EBP and EB scores do not change, and that is because all C3 and C4 countries publish these documents.)

Because the scores of each of the documents are on a scale of 1 to 100, it masks their weighting in the OBI. Different documents receive a different weight in the OBI score by virtue of the number of questions about each document. By far the most questions are assigned to the EBP, representing nearly half of the total. Adjusting the individual document scores by their weight in the OBI, allows one to see more clearly the role each document plays in the total score. For instance, of the 15-point difference in the average score between C3 and C4 countries for published documents, nearly half (seven points) is due to differences in the content of the EBP. Differences in the content of the YER account for three points, while differences in the other documents account for smaller amounts. Thus the biggest gap between C3 and C4 countries in terms of content is in the EBP. The implication is that improving the comprehensiveness of the EBP for a C3 country is likely the most important step toward boosting its score above 60.

ANNEX 3: SUBGROUPS OF QUESTIONS IN THE OBS

Budget Information	OBS Questions
Expenditure	Q1-8, Q19-24
Revenue	Q9-12, Q25-30
Debt	Q13-14, Q31-32
Macroeconomic	Q15-16
Policy & Performance	Q17-18, Q47-52, Q36
Beyond the core budget	Q33-35, Q37-38, Q44-46
Financial position of the government*	Q39-43

**This subgroup is combined with "Beyond the Core Budget" in EBP and YER tables.*

ANNEX 4: OBI SCORES OF C3 COUNTRIES

	OBI Scores			
	2008	2010	2012	2015
Improved in 2015				
Benin	n/a	n/a	1	45
Burkina Faso	14	5	23	43
Cameroon	5	2	10	44
Dominican Republic	12	14	29	51
Ecuador	39	31	31	50
Kyrgyz Republic	8	15	20	54
Malaysia	35	39	39	46
Senegal	3	3	10	43
Sierra Leone	n/a	n/a	39	52
Timor-Leste	n/a	34	36	41
Tunisia	n/a	n/a	11	42
Stuck in the middle category*				
<i>For 2012-2015 rounds</i>				
Afghanistan	8	21	59	42
Bosnia and Herzegovina	12	11	53	43
Colombia	61	61	58	57
El Salvador	37	37	43	53
Kazakhstan	35	38	48	51
Mali	n/a	35	43	46
Nicaragua	19	37	42	46
Pakistan	38	38	58	43
<i>For 2010-2015 rounds</i>				
Argentina	56	56	50	59
Bangladesh	42	48	58	56
Bosnia and Herzegovina	44	44	50	43
Costa Rica	45	47	50	54
Ghana	50	54	50	51
Guatemala	46	50	51	46
Jordan	53	50	57	55
Kenya	58	49	49	48
Namibia	46	53	55	46
Turkey	43	57	50	44
Regressed				
Chile	n/a	72	66	58
Spain	n/a	63	63	58
Volatile**				
Croatia	59	57	61	53
India	60	67	68	46
Indonesia	54	51	62	59
Serbia	46	54	39	47
Slovakia	n/a	57	67	57
Thailand	40	42	36	42
Ukraine	55	62	54	46
New country in 2015				
Hungary	n/a	n/a	n/a	49
<i>*In middle category for at least 2012 and 2015 rounds</i>				
<i>**Changed categories more than once over 2008-2015 rounds</i>				
<i>n/a=not applicable because country was not part of the OBS in that round</i>				

ANNEX 5: CASE STUDY COUNTRIES

- Countries “stuck” in the middle category: Argentina, Bosnia, Ghana, Guatemala, Jordan, and Turkey.
- Countries that rose beyond 60 in 2015: Georgia, Malawi, Mexico, Philippines, and Romania

ARGENTINA

Argentina’s OBI score in 2015 is 59, the highest over the four rounds. It has been consistent in the treatment of six of the eight budget documents: always publishing the EBP, EB, IYR, and YER; and never publishing the CB and MYR. It released the AR starting in 2012, and the PBS in 2015.

There has only been modest changes in the content of published documents, with improvements in the YER and AR and a slight decline in the IYR. Notably the EBP, except for a slip in 2012, has largely stayed steady. But even though it publishes two more documents in 2015 than in 2010 (when its score was 56) it has not been enough to push its score above 60.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	56	0	61	100	0	88	0	53	0
2010	56	0	60	100	0	96	0	53	0
2012	50	0	54	100	0	96	0	50	33
2015	59	28	64	95	0	81	0	86	48

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	92	80	44	50	28	27
2010	84	80	78	50	28	27
2012	69	60	22	50	52	39
2015	78	80	55	50	47	42

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	84	67	0	50	33
2010	84	67	0	50	33
2012	84	67	0	50	67
2015	100	100	0	84	67

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina has not seen any notable OBI score changes since 2008. Its practices in publishing budget documents has been consistent: it has published all documents each round except the MYR and CB. While it improved the comprehensiveness of the EBP in 2012, it slipped back in 2015, and remains at a very low 35 (some 20 points below the average for C3 countries, and 35 points behind the average C4 country score for the EBP). There are some changes in the content of other documents as well.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	44	100	33	67	0	67	0	48	89
2010	44	100	31	33	0	75	0	48	95
2012	50	100	48	33	0	71	0	48	89
2015	43	72	35	67	0	67	0	56	89

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	43	60	33	84	0	17
2010	35	50	22	17	14	19
2012	55	50	11	17	53	21
2015	52	40	0	17	43	23

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	67	67	0	17	n/a
2010	67	100	0	0	n/a
2012	84	100	100	0	n/a
2015	84	100	0	0	n/a

GHANA

Ghana experienced extreme volatility in the publication of the eight key budget documents, publishing all but the PBS in one of the four rounds, but only EBP and EB were consistently published in all four rounds. Even as it increased the number of the documents it published, it has provided less information in those documents. For example, its EBP score is lower in 2015 than in 2008, as it provides less of the basic information on expenditure, revenue, and debt (its track record in other categories is mixed). Only its AR, since it was introduced in 2010, has seen a steady increase in its comprehensiveness.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	50	0	67	67	67	79	0	0	0
2010	54	0	68	67	0	0	84	37	67
2012	50	0	57	33	0	83	50	0	71
2015	51	0	58	50	50	63	0	57	86

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	84	100	67	34	57	50
2010	70	93	78	67	57	53
2012	63	93	67	34	43	44
2015	69	70	55	67	67	42

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	0	0	0	0	0
2010	33	33	0	67	33
2012	0	0	0	0	0
2015	50	67	0	17	33

GUATEMALA

Guatemala consistently published five documents — EBP, EBP, IYR, YER, and AR — over the four OBS rounds. It published the PBS and CB, but only in 2012; and it has never published the MYR. Regarding the content of the documents, the YER and the AR have been improved, although the content of the YER remains far from international standards; it has no information on macroeconomic data, non-financial performance data, and extra-budgetary activities. The content of the EBP remained largely the same over time, and is still lacking extensive information on macroeconomic forecasts and on non-financial performance information.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	46	0	53	100	0	79	0	20	10
2010	50	0	55	100	0	79	0	23	43
2012	51	55	55	100	50	79	0	27	38
2015	46	0	52	89	0	74	0	45	57

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	78	87	78	0	24	22
2010	90	74	78	34	9	31
2012	86	74	78	17	24	33
2015	83	80	55	17	24	28

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	33	33	0	0	0
2010	33	33	0	0	0
2012	33	33	0	0	0
2015	50	33	0	0	0

JORDAN

Jordan published the same six documents in each round; only the CB was published for the first time in 2015, and the MYR has never been published by the government. Although the contents of AR and the YER improved slightly, the country seems to be one of the C3 countries where the fewest changes have been observed. The content of the EBP has not changed that much apart from a slight variation in the information provided on expenditures and revenues, and a decrease in the information provided on macroeconomic forecasts.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	53	56	58	67	0	92	0	27	24
2010	50	44	54	67	0	88	0	37	24
2012	57	44	66	100	0	88	0	37	43
2015	55	50	59	89	33	78	0	48	67

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	71	80	67	33	38	33
2010	76	100	55	17	14	22
2012	100	100	55	17	47	8
2015	88	90	55	0	52	17

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	33	33	0	0	33
2010	67	67	0	0	67
2012	67	33	0	0	0
2015	84	67	0	17	0

TURKEY

After a significant jump between 2008 and 2010, Turkey's OBI score has declined and is getting to the lower threshold of the C3 category. It has published the EBP, EB, IYR, YER and AR in all four rounds. But it published the PBS only in 2008 and 2010, and the MYR in 2015; it has not published a CB. Since 2010, its EBP score has declined, and it is basically back to its 2008 level. This trend is evident across all the areas of EBP information. Concerning the YER there is an improvement in the information presented on actual revenues and expenditures, and some changes in information on actual non-financial performance data.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	43	55	48	67	0	96	0	3	14
2010	57	78	57	67	0	100	0	53	29
2012	50	0	53	67	0	100	0	50	43
2015	44	0	49	72	0	56	33	50	38

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	65	97	67	17	14	22
2010	80	100	33	34	28	22
2012	68	90	67	34	9	25
2015	75	90	55	17	14	19

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	0	0	0	0	0
2010	67	67	33	33	0
2012	67	67	0	67	0
2015	84	100	67	0	0

GEORGIA

Georgia's OBI score of 55 in 2012 was largely unchanged from the 2010 and 2008 rounds; it then rose to 66 in the 2015 round. In 2012, it published four documents: PBS, EBP, EB, AR. In 2015, it added three new documents: IYR, YER, and CB. The increase in Georgia's score is due entirely to the addition of these new documents, as the scores for the documents it had previously published actually declined slightly between 2012 and 2015. One can also assess Georgia's higher 2015 score with its 2010 score (which was also 55). In 2010, Georgia published the same documents it published in 2015 except for the CB. Looked at from this perspective, it was an increase in the comprehensiveness of various documents (relative to 2010), particularly the YER and AR, but also the EBP, that generated the increase in Georgia's score in 2015.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	53	67	56	67	33	59	67	41	28
2010	55	89	60	67	0	79	0	26	39
2012	55	100	76	100	0	0	0	0	72
2015	66	78	71	89	33	93	0	71	67

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	79	75	55	50	33	33
2010	76	80	67	17	38	45
2012	98	97	67	34	57	44
2015	100	80	78	50	71	46

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	33	33	33	50	NA
2010	17	33	33	0	NA
2012	0	0	0	0	0
2015	100	100	100	84	0

MALAWI

Malawi was in the C2 or “minimal” category in 2008, rose to the C3 or “limited” category in 2010, stayed there in 2012, and then rose to the C4 category in 2015. In 2012, it published five documents: EBP, EB, IYR, MYR, and AR. In 2015, it only published four documents, dropping both the MYR and AR, but adding the YER. The improvement in its OBI score is primarily attributable to the substantial increase in the comprehensiveness of its EBP (its score rose to 86, an increase of 21 points and a much higher EBP score than is typical for a C4 country). It is also notable that its YER was very high scoring (even above the average score for C5 countries).

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	28	0	44	100	0	0	0	0	5
2010	47	0	58	0	67	75	0	50	0
2012	52	0	65	100	0	84	50	0	33
2015	65	0	86	89	0	70	0	91	0

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	46	47	23	67	43	42
2010	73	74	0	34	67	42
2012	95	90	11	67	62	42
2015	100	100	55	50	100	61

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	0	0	0	0	0
2010	67	67	67	50	0
2012	0	0	0	0	0
2015	100	100	100	100	0

MEXICO

Mexico was in the middle category in 2008 and 2010, with OBI scores of 55 and 52, respectively. In 2012, it rose to the C4 category, with a score of 61, and its score rose further to 66 in 2015. Here it makes sense to examine the change between 2010 and 2012, when it rose into the new category. In 2010, Mexico published six documents: PBS, EBP, EB, IYR, YER, and AR. In 2012 it added the CB. But the major change between 2010 and 2012 was the increase in its EBP score, which rose 13 points (from 52 to 65). As the detail EBP table shows, it did this primarily by increasing information related to revenues and macroeconomics (and to a lesser extent in the policy/performance and beyond the core categories).

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	55	67	45	100	0	100	67	57	52
2010	52	56	52	67	0	96	0	47	38
2012	61	56	65	67	50	96	0	57	43
2015	66	56	67	89	75	100	0	72	67

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	77	27	0	34	33	31
2010	86	40	33	34	43	31
2012	83	80	33	84	52	39
2015	85	84	55	67	57	56

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	67	67	33	50	67
2010	67	67	33	50	0
2012	67	100	33	50	0
2015	84	100	33	67	0

THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines was stuck in the middle category between 2008 and 2012; it showed some progress in 2010 (rising from 48 to 55) but then slipped back to 48 in 2012. It then rose to 64 in the 2015 round. It is most useful then to compare its progress in 2015 with its previous high score in 2010. In that year, it published five documents: EBP, EB, IYR, YER, and AR. In 2015, it published the remaining three documents: PBS, CB, and MYR. The Philippines is one of the few countries that publishes all eight documents. Between 2010 and 2015, however, it made little improvement in the comprehensive of the EBP; and while its scores on the EB and IYR fell, they rose for the YER and AR. As a result, it appears

the increase in the Philippines score is attributable primarily to the increase in the number of documents it publishes.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	48	0	52	100	0	75	33	23	48
2010	55	0	62	100	0	92	0	23	48
2012	48	0	58	100	0	96	0	0	52
2015	64	61	64	45	67	74	63	64	67

0=Not Published

THE PHILIPPINES: DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	59	77	78	34	33	22
2010	57	77	78	34	57	36
2012	61	77	78	34	38	39
2015	60	87	100	100	52	42

THE PHILIPPINES: DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	33	33	33	0	0
2010	33	33	33	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0	0
2015	84	100	100	33	0

ROMANIA

Romania's score dropped in 2012, so for purposes of analyzing its improvement in 2015, it is most instructive to go back to how it has improved relative to 2008 and 2010. In those years, it published five documents: EBP, EB, IYR, YER and AR. In 2015, it published two additional documents: PBS and MYR. (Those had actually been published starting in 2012, but given significant problems with its EBP and YER

in that year, they did not have much impact on its overall score until 2015.) It sharply increased the information provided in the IYR and AR between 2008/10 and 2015, with some increase in the EB, but there was less change in the contents of the other documents. Thus Romania's improvement seems to be due to a combination of both publishing new documents and improving the comprehensiveness of previously-published documents.

OBI SCORES AND OBI SCORES BY BUDGET DOCUMENT

	OBI	Eight Key Budget Documents							
		PBS	EBP	EB	CB	IYR	MYR	YER	AR
2008	62	0	76	67	0	13	0	90	14
2010	59	0	72	67	0	21	0	80	28
2012	47	55	55	67	0	96	8	7	28
2015	75	89	78	100	0	78	56	81	71

0=Not Published

DETAIL OF EBP

EBP	Expenditure	Revenue	Debt	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	97	100	100	84	71	33
2010	95	100	78	17	57	44
2012	95	37	33	34	38	47
2015	90	100	100	67	71	61

DETAIL OF YER

YER	Expenditure	Revenue	Macro-economic	Policy and Performance	Beyond Core Budget
2008	100	100	100	100	100
2010	100	100	67	84	100
2012	0	0	0	0	0
2015	100	100	100	17	100