




Open Budget Index 2008 Botswana

Venue: GICC
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Open Budget Survey

- Comprehensive survey and analysis that evaluates public budget transparency
 - Specifically whether central governments give the public access to budget information and opportunities to participate in the budget process.
- The survey also examines the ability of Legislatures and Supreme Audit Institutions to hold their governments accountable.



Summary - Botswana

- Overall score: **62%**
- Government provides significant information to the public in its budget documents.



Open Budget Index 2008

- The Open Budget Survey 2008 was done in 85 countries using a standardized Open Budget Questionnaire.
- Open Budget Index 2008 evaluates the quantity and type of information available to the public in a country's budget documents.
- A country's placement within a performance category was determined by averaging the response to 91 questions related to information contained in key budget documents.



The National Budget

- One of the most important government documents is the executive's (annual) budget proposal.
- Assumptions about the budget proposal:
 - Should contain the executive's plans for the upcoming year along with the cost of the proposed activities.
 - Should be available to the public and to the legislature prior to being finalized, at least three months before the start of the budget year, to allow for sufficient review and public debate.



1. Information in Public Documents

- In Botswana, the executive's budget proposal provides substantial information to the public.
 - Citizens have a fairly comprehensive picture of the government's plans for taxing and spending for the upcoming year.
- Botswana's OBI 2008 score shows that the government provides the public with substantial information on the central government's budget and financial activities during the course of the budget year.
 - This gives citizens tools to hold government accountable for its management of the public's money.




2. Public Participation

- Beyond improving access to key budget documents, there are other ways in which Botswana's budget process could be made more open.
 - Opportunities for citizen participation in budget debates could be increased. For example, the legislature could hold hearings on the budget in which the public can participate.



3. Institutions of Accountability

- Botswana's Supreme Audit Institution (Office of the Auditor General) enjoys a fair degree of independence.
 - Has the discretion to decide which audits to undertake
 - However, it does not maintain formal mechanisms of communication with the public to receive complaints and suggestions to assist it in determining its audit program.



4. Benefits of open and accountable budgetary process

- Most people, including those in the most remote areas, are now having access to clean piped water.
- The following photograph shows two women from a rural village, Nshakashogwe at the north western side of Francistown (450 kilometres from the capital city Gaborone), fetching water from a stand pipe.

Clean piped water: Nshakashogwe





Areas for Improvement of budget performance (1)

- Somewhat difficult to track spending, revenue collection and borrowing during the year.
 - In-year reports published each month, but significant updating is only done each quarter.
- Mid-year review is not released.
 - Publishing this document could strengthen public accountability, by providing a more comprehensive update on how the budget is being implemented during the year.



Areas for Improvement... (2)

- Somewhat difficult to assess budget performance once the budget year is over.
 - A year-end report is produced, allowing comparisons between what was budgeted and what was actually spent and collected, but report lacks a detailed explanation of these differences.
 - Though Botswana makes its audit report public, it is difficult to determine whether the audit report's recommendations are successfully implemented.



Areas for Improvement... (3)

- Access to specific project or activity is limited
 - The highly detailed budget information needed to understand the government's progress in undertaking projects is unavailable.
- Botswana has not codified into law the right to access government information.



Thank you.
Public Sector Unit.

