

Open Budget Survey 2019

Questionnaire

United States of America

April 2020

Country Questionnaire: United States of America

PBS-1. What is the fiscal year of the PBS evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:

FY 2019

Source:

The United States Government does not prepare a Pre-Budget Statement.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-2. When is the PBS made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for a PBS to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is submitted to the legislature for consideration. If the PBS is not released to the public at least one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is submitted to the legislature for consideration, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the PBS.

Answer:

d. The PBS is not released to the public, or is released less than one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is introduced to the legislature

Source:

The United States Government does not prepare a Pre-Budget Statement.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-3a. If the PBS is published, what is the date of publication of the PBS?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

Source:

N/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the PBS.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

N/a

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-4. If the PBS is published, what is the URL or weblink of the PBS?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:

Source:

N/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-5. If the PBS is published, are the numerical data contained in the PBS available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the PBS is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

d. Not applicable

Source:

N/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-6a. If the PBS is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the PBS is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question PBS-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question PBS-2)

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

d. Not produced at all

Source:

N/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question PBS-6a, please specify how you determined whether the PBS was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question PBS-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

For purposes of formulating the Executive Budget Proposal, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issues an annual memorandum setting forth "guidance" to agencies (for example, see OMB Memorandum M-17-28, "Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Guidance," July 7, 2017, 3 pages). In this budget formulation process, the broad alignment of policy with available budgetary resources appropriate for a PBS is first presented in the EBP itself.

Source:

OMB memoranda, arranged by year, are available at (www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-for-agencies/memoranda/).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-7. If the PBS is produced, please write the full title of the PBS.

For example, a title for the Pre-Budget Statement could be "Proposed 2019 State Budget" or "Guidelines for the Preparation of Annual Plan and Budget for 2018/19."

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

N/a

Source:

N/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

PBS-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the PBS?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:
b. No

Source:
n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EBP-1a. What is the fiscal year of the EBP evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:
FY 2019

Source:
The President is required to submit a budget for the United States Government to Congress each year by the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, as amended. The requirement is codified in Title 31 (Money and Finance) of the United States Code (see especially 31 U.S.C. 1105). The United States Code is available on the Website of the U.S. Government Printing Office (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/USCODE>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EBP-1b. When is the EBP submitted to the legislature for consideration?

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:
12/02/2018

Source:
Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1105(a), the President must submit the annual budget to Congress "[o]n or after the first Monday in January but not later than the first Monday in February of each year." The statutory deadline has been changed several times since it was established in 1921.

Comment:
In recent years, the President has tended to take advantage of all available time to prepare the budget, submitting it in February rather than January. In some instances, the President has submitted the budget days or weeks after the deadline without consequence. This delay often is attributed to the time needed to analyze the budgetary impact of a large amount of legislation enacted by Congress at the very end of the congressional session. For the FY 2019 budget submission, the first Monday in February was on February 4, 2018. The President submitted the budget on February 12, eight days after the statutory deadline. A newly-elected President, who does not take office until January 20 following the November election, may not submit the budget until one to several months after the deadline (but typically submits an informal budget or economic plan in February in conjunction with an address to Congress).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I would only add that until the last several years, the first Monday in February deadline was ALWAYS met, except for the new President exception noted above. But I think the Obama administration missed it twice, and the Trump administration, in addition to missing the FY19 deadline, did not submit the FY20 budget until March 11, 2019.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EBP-2. When is the EBP made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an EBP to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public while the legislature is still considering it and before the legislature approves (enacts) it. If the EBP is not released to the public before the legislature approves it, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the EBP.

The OBS definition of an Executive's Budget Proposal is a document(s) that (i) the executive submits to the legislature as a formal part of the budget approval process and (ii) the legislature either approves or on which it approves proposed amendments.

The OBS will treat the Executive's Budget Proposal as "Not Produced," in the following cases:

- *The executive does not submit the draft budget to the legislature; or*
- *The legislature receives the draft budget but does not approve it or does not approve recommendations on the draft budget;*
- *The legislature rejects the draft budget submitted by the executive, but the executive implements it without legislative approval; or*
- *There is no legislature, or the legislature has been dissolved.*

Answer:

a. At least three months in advance of the budget year, and in advance of the budget being approved by the legislature

Source:

The EBP and supporting documents are made available free of charge on the Website of the Office of Management and Budget (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>) on the same day that the budget is submitted to Congress. Also, the EBP and supporting documents are made available at the same time free of charge on the Website of the U.S. Government Printing Office (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/budget/2019>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EBP-3a. If the EBP is published, what is the date of publication of the EBP?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

In the comment boxes below, researchers should also list any supporting documents to the EBP and their date of publication.

Answer:
12/02/2018

Source:
The EBP is published in hard copy on the same day that it is made publicly available online.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EBP-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the EBP.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:
Ordinarily, the publication date is indicated under the President's signature in the "Budget Message of the President" appearing at the beginning of the document. It appears in this location in the budgets for FY 2018 and FY 2020. For whatever reason, it does not appear there in the FY 2019 budget. The publication date for FY 2019, however, appears under the document title in the presentation of budget documents by fiscal year at the Government Publishing Office's Website, cited below. <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/budget/2019>.

Source:
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/budget/2019>.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EBP-4. If the EBP is published, what is the URL or weblink of the EBP?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

In the comment boxes below, researchers should also list any supporting documents to the EBP and their URL or weblink.

Answer:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/budget-fy2019.pdf> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>

Source:
The URL provided above is for the EBP and supporting documents on the Website of the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, budget documents are available in an historical collection of such documents maintained by the Government Publishing Office (GPO) (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/BUDGET>). The GPO Website provides URLs for all documents in the collection, beginning with FY 1996, whereas recently the OMB Website provides URLs only for documents for the fiscal year currently under consideration and refers the user to the GPO Website for links to budget documents for earlier years. Accordingly, the EBP was available on the OMB Website until the FY 2020 was issued; at that point, readers had to access the FY 2019 budget through the GPO Website.

Comment:

The three main supporting documents of the EBP are: (1) Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, Analytical Perspectives; (2) Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, Appendix; and (3) Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, Historical Tables (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/BUDGET>).

Lesser supporting documents include: (1) Major Savings and Reforms; (2) Federal Credit Supplement; (3) Object Class Analysis; (4) Balances of Budget Authority; (5) Public Budget Database; and (6) Long Range Budget Projections for the FY 2019 Budget (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/BUDGET>).

In addition, executive departments and agencies submit materials that support the President's budget proposals. "Budget justification" documents prepared by each agency discuss relevant budget requests in much greater detail and are posted by each agency on its Website, generally within several weeks of the President's budget submission. With respect to the Department of the Interior, for example, there is a lengthy budget justification document for each bureau (called the "Green books") within the Department (<https://www.doi.gov/bpp>). The Green book for the National Park Service alone exceeds 400 pages (https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/fy2019_nps_budget_justification.pdf). Agency officials testify before the relevant House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees regarding the detail provided in the budget justification documents. The documents usually are tailored to the needs of the Appropriations Committees so that the necessary information is in a form that facilitates the Committees' preparation of the annual appropriations legislation. Agencies also prepare annual reports on agency performance that address progress made under the Strategic Plan and the Annual Performance Plan. These reports typically link budget data to goals and objectives. See, for example, the 2019 Performance Report of the Department of Health and Human Services (<https://www.hhs.gov/about/budget/fy2019/performance/index.html>). The Performance Reports typically are posted online at about the time the President's budget is submitted to Congress and sometimes is incorporated into the budget justification materials. Extensive performance information is provided for agencies collectively as well (<http://www.performance.gov>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EBP-5. If the EBP is published, are the numerical data contained in the EBP or its supporting documents available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>.

Option "d" applies if the EBP is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

b. Yes, some of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Source:

On the OMB Website, under the "Budget" tab, there is a link to supplemental materials (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/supplemental-materials/>). These materials include Excel (.xls) files and CSV (comma separated values) files pertaining to object class analysis, balances of budget authority, federal credit supplements, the public budget database, and the history of economic assumptions.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EBP-6a. If the EBP is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the EBP is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question EBP-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see

Question EBP-2).

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

N/a

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EBP-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question EBP-6a, please specify how you determined whether the EBP was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question EBP-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion:

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EBP-7. If the EBP is produced, please write the full title of the EBP.

For example, a title for the Executive's Budget Proposal could be "Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for BY 2018-19, produced by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development."

If there are any supporting documents to the EBP, please enter their full titles in the comment box below.

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019

Source:

Comment:

The current Administration has incorporated additional text into the customary title of the budget document (Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year ----). For FY 2019, the additional text was "An American Budget" and "Efficient, Effective, Accountable." For FY 2018, it was "A New Foundation for American Greatness."

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EBP-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the EBP?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

N/a

Comment:

Years ago, the United States Government used to publish a citizens version of the budget as a separate document. Although such a document no longer is produced, the EBP and its supporting documents include materials that assist citizens in understanding the budget and the President's budget priorities. For example, the main budget document includes several chapters that highlight different aspects of the budget, such as "A New Federal Budget That Works for the American People" (pages 13-22) and is accompanied on the OMB Website by an "Fact Sheets" that briefly summarize key budget initiatives, such as "Border Security" and "Lowering Drug Pricing and Payment. Additionally, the Analytical Perspectives volume contains chapters explaining budget concepts, coverage of the budget, and the budget process. Advocates for a Citizens version of the EBP generally do not regard these other materials as being adequate for this purpose.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree, and you can count me as one who does not view this as adequate. A report last year by Convergence, a nonprofit, included as one of its key budget process recommendations a citizens version of the budget. See <https://www.convergencepolicy.org/latest-projects/federal-budget-process-reform/>.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EB-1a. What is the fiscal year of the EB evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:

FY 2018

Source:

Public Law 115-141, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, March 23, 2018 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1625/text>).

Comment:

The federal budget is not enacted as a single document. Rather, the spending and revenues for a fiscal year derive from multiple legislative enactments during the current congressional session as well as from laws enacted in prior years. For purposes of this survey, the "enacted budget" is considered to be the appropriations acts enacted each year, which account for roughly one-third of spending and no revenues. In most recent years, some or all of the 12 regular appropriations acts have been incorporated into a single omnibus (also called consolidated) appropriations act. After a fiscal year has begun, Congress usually enacts one or more "continuing resolutions" to provide stop-gap funding until the unfinished regular appropriations are enacted into law. For FY 2018, several continuing resolutions were enacted into law covering nearly the first six months of the fiscal year until the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2018 enacted all 12 of the regular appropriations into law. This law is considered to be the EB for purposes of this survey.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EB-1b. When was the EB approved (enacted) by the legislature?

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

23/03/2018

Source:

The Senate took final legislative action on the measure on March 23, 2018, thus clearing it for the President's signature (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1625/actions>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: As there was no budget resolution for FY19, the Congress never completed action on the President's budget.

Comments: This represents not action on the budget, but final action on a piece of the budget (a portion of appropriations, which even in total represent only 30 percent of appropriations). The equivalent action to the President's budget is the congressional budget resolution, which did not pass at all for FY19.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher in citing the FY 2018 budget. The peer reviewer is also correct that action on the FY 2019 budget was not completed within the research period (which ended on 31 December 2018). Under the OBS methodology, the mostly recently enacted budget within the research period should be used for responding to the EB questions – in this case, the FY 2018 appropriations.

EB-2. When is the EB made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an EB to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public three months after the budget is approved by the legislature. If the EB is not released to the public at least three months after the budget is approved by the legislature, option "d" applies.

Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the EB.

Answer:

a. Two weeks or less after the budget has been enacted

Source:

The text of public laws, in "slip law" form with pagination for later inclusion in the Statutes-at-Large compilation, is made available on the Website of the Government Publishing Office, as indicated previously. The slip law usually becomes available on this Website several weeks to months after enactment, depending on the length and complexity of the measure and other factors. In the interim, however, the text (in enrolled bill form, without Statutes-at-Large pagination) can be accessed at <http://www.congress.gov> and found by bill number. Information on appropriations acts is available by clicking the link "Appropriations" at the top of the page.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: Again, if you consider the appropriation bills to be the budget, this is true. It is also true for all legislative action, so the spirit of the response is correct, in my view.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EB-3a. If the EB is published, what is the date of publication of the EB?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

06/04/2018

Source:

The enrolled version of the bill was made available on the congressional Website about two weeks after it was enacted into law (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1625/text>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP notes that, for purposes of responding to this question, it is also appropriate to cite the on-line version of the approved legislation, which was available when it was enacted and before the final enrolled bill.

EB-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the EB.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

For a high-priority measure like H.R. 1625, the Omnibus Appropriations Act, a hand-printed enrolled version of the measure is prepared quickly for transmittal to the President for his approval. The electronic version of the enrolled measure is made available online for such measures usually within two weeks. In this instance, I added 14 days to the date of final legislative action, the day the President signed the measure into law (March 23).

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

See discussion on EB-3a.

EB-4. If the EB is published, what is the URL or weblink of the EB?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1625/text>

Source:

Comment:

As indicated previously, in this case an electronic version of the EB was published in enrolled bill form about two weeks after the President signed it into law on March 23. The "slip law" version, with Statutes-at-Large pagination, was made available on the GPO Website much later (see Public Laws at www.govinfo.gov).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

EB-5. If the EB is published, are the numerical data contained in the EB available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the EB is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

c. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EB-6a. If the EB is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the EB is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question EB-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question EB-2)

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EB-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question EB-6a, please specify how you determined whether the EB was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question EB-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EB-7. If the EB is produced, please write the full title of the EB.

For example, a title for the Enacted Budget could be "Appropriation Act n. 10 of 2018."

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:
Public Law 115-141, Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2018

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EB-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the EB?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:
b. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

CB-1. What is the fiscal year of the CB evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

If more than one Citizens Budget is produced, for each CB please indicate the document the CB simplifies/refers to, and the fiscal year.

Answer:
FY 2019

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: But there is no Citizens Budget.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

CB-2a. For the fiscal year indicated in CB-1, what is the public availability status of the CB?

If more than one Citizens Budget is produced, please complete this question for one of them, specifying in the comment box below which document (Executive's Budget Proposal or Enacted Budget) you are referring to, and – in the same comment box – which other Citizens Budget is produced and its public availability status.

Remember that publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

*Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology
Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.*

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

Answer:

d. Not produced at all

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

CB-2b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question CB-2a, please specify how you determined whether the CB was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question CB-2a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

N/a

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

CB-3a. If the CB is published, what is the date of publication of the CB?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document. Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

If more than one Citizens Budget is published, please complete this question for one of them, specifying in the comment box below which document you are referring to, and – in the same comment box – which other Citizens Budget is produced and its dates of publication.

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

CB-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the CB.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

N/a

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

CB-4. If the CB is published, what is the URL or weblink of the CB?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

If more than one Citizens Budget is published, please complete this question for one of them, specifying in the comment box below which document you are referring to, and – in the same comment box – which other Citizens Budget is produced and its URL or weblink.

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

CB-5. If the CB is produced, please write the full title of the CB.

For example, a title for the Citizens Budget could be "Budget 2018 People's Guide" or "2019 Proposed Budget in Brief: A People's Budget Publication."

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

If more than one Citizens Budget is produced, for the other CB, indicate the document the CB refers to and, next to it, its full title.

Answer:

N/a

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

CB-6. If the CB is produced, please indicate which budget document it corresponds to.

If more than one Citizens Budget is produced, please complete this question for one of them, specifying in the comment box below which document you are referring to, and – in the same comment box – which other Citizens Budget is produced and which budget document it simplifies.

Answer:

N/a

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IYRs-1. What is the fiscal year of the IYRs evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:
2018

Source:
Monthly Treasury Statement (<https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/reports-statements/mts/>).

Comment:
The Department of the Treasury issues IYRs on a monthly basis. Additional Treasury Department IYRs, as indicated in the response to a later question, are issued on a daily and quarterly basis.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IYRs-2. When are the IYRs made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for IYRs to be considered publicly available, IYRs must be made available to the public no later than three months after the reporting period ends. If at least seven of the last 12 monthly IYRs, or at least three of the last four quarterly IYRs are not released to the public at least three months after the reporting period ends, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the IYRs.

Answer:
a. At least every month, and within one month of the period covered

Source:
The Monthly Treasury Statements for the final seven months of FY 2018 were released as follows:
(1) 10 October 2018 (for the entire FY 2018, through September 30, 2018);
(2) 13 September 2018 (through August 31);
(3) 10 August 2018 (through July 31);
(4) 12 July 2018 (through June 30);
(5) 12 June 2018 (through May 31);
(6) 10 May 2018 (through April 30) and
(7) 11 April 2018 (through March 31).

Except for the October 2018 report, the release dates were provided at the back of each report. For that report, the release date shown is the 8th business day of the following month.

Comment:
According to a statement routinely carried in the Introduction to the MTS, the report "is normally released on the 8th workday of the month following the reporting month." Exceptions sometimes occur, such as when a lengthy funding gap and partial government shutdown during FY 2019 caused the December, January, and February reports to be issued late.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IYRs-3a. If the IYRs are published, what are the dates of publication of the IYRs?

Specifically: if quarterly In-Year Reports are published, indicate the dates of publication of at least three of the last four IYRs that were publicly available. If monthly IYRs are published, indicate the dates of publication of at least seven of the last 12 IYRs that were publicly available.

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD Month YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05 September 2018. If the document is not published or not produced, please mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

The dates of publication are the same dates as the issuance to the public, as listed in the response to the previous question.

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IYRs-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the IYRs.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

As indicated in a previous response, the publication/release date usually is provided at the end of the document. If not, a calculation is made based on the statement that the report is released on the 8th business day following the reporting month (this method was used only for the October 2018 report).

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IYRs-4. If the IYRs are published, what is the URL or weblink of the IYRs?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Researchers should provide the weblink to the most recent In-Year Report in the space below, and – in the comment box underneath – the weblinks to older IYRs.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:

<https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/reports-statements/mts/>

Source:

The URL cited above provides access to the current Monthly Treasury Statement as well as to all prior issues back to FY 1998.

Comment:

The Treasury Department also issues two related in-year reports: (1) the Daily Treasury Statement (<https://www.fms.treas.gov/dts/index.html>) and the quarterly Treasury Bulletin (<https://fiscal.treasury.gov/reports-statements/treasury-bulletin/>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IYRs-5. If the IYRs are published, are the numerical data contained in the IYRs available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the IYRs are not published or not produced, therefore their machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

a. Yes, all of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Source:

The numerical data are available as ASCII text files for FY 1998 through February FY 2015 and as Excel files for March FY 2015 onward. These files are available at the same URL as the MTS documents (<https://fiscal.treasury.gov/reports-statements/mts/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IYRs-6a. If the IYRs are not publicly available, are they still produced?

If the IYRs are not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question IYRs-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question IYRs-2).

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.
Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.
Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:
e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:
N/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IYRs-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question IYRs-6a, please specify how you determined whether the IYRs were produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question IYRs-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IYRs-7. If the IYRs are produced, please write the full title of the IYRs.

For example, a title for the In-Year Report could be "Budget Monitoring Report, Quarter 1" or "Budget Execution Report January-March 2018."

If In-Year Reports are not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Researchers should provide the full title of the most recent In-Year Report in the space below, and - in the comment box underneath - the full titles of older IYRs.

Answer:
Monthly Treasury Statement of Receipts and Outlays of the United States Government
For Fiscal Year [2018 Through September 30, 2018], and Other Periods

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IYRs-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the IYRs?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:
b. No

Source:
N/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Comments: The executive branch does not prepare such an analysis. The Congressional Budget Office, as a matter of long-standing practice, produces a summary of the MTS which is more accessible than the MTS but probably still does not fit the definition here. See <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-07/CBO-55415-MBR.pdf>.

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

MYR-1. What is the fiscal year of the MYR evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:
FY 2019

Source:
31 U.S.C. 1106 requires the President to submit a mid-year review (referred to as a "supplemental summary") of the budget to Congress on or before July 16 of each year.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Comments: This is a little strange The document that is referenced in the next question and elsewhere in this section seems to have a different purpose than is anticipated by the MYR. That is, its focus is on what has changed with respect to the President's earlier proposal for a fiscal year that has not started (in this case, FY19) rather than a review of what has changed since the enactment of the current year's budget (in this case, FY18). So while there is certainly FY18 data in the FY19 document, the question is whether this really satisfies the spirit of what the OBS considers to be a MYR.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

Researcher Response

In the U.S. budget process, the Mid-Session Review (MSR) for a fiscal year principally serves a different purpose than the MYR in other countries. The MSR is oriented mainly to legislative action rather budget execution, and provides updates of information in the EBP at the mid-point of the congressional session (which largely coincides with the calendar year, not the fiscal year) and a few months before the start of the budget year. Thus, the MSR for FY2019 was issued on July 13, 2018, at the mid-point of the 2019 congressional session (and about 5 months after the submission of the EBP for FY2019 and 2.5 months before the start of that fiscal year). The MSR, however, also serves a secondary purpose -- providing updated information on the current fiscal year (FY 2018 in this case). Taken together with updated current-year information provided in the EBP, the two documents give Congress a clearer view of the budget status for the period encompassing on average about 5 to 9 months through the current year.

IBP Comment

IBP acknowledges that the situation in the US process is unusual, but accepts that information consistent with a MYR is available at an appropriate time for the US process.

MYR-2. When is the MYR made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an MYR to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public no later than three months after the reporting period ends (i.e., three months after the midpoint of the fiscal year). If the MYR is not released to the public at least three months after the reporting period ends, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the MYR.

Answer:

a. Six weeks or less after the midpoint

Source:

The fiscal year of the United States Government begins on October 1, three months before the calendar year with the same designation. Thus, FY 2018 ran from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018. The Mid-Session Review is published July 13, 2018, so about 7-8 months after the start of the fiscal year. Updated information about the current year is also provided in the President's budget, which was published about 4-5 months after the start of the fiscal year. So between these two updates, the desired information is available in a timely way around the midpoint of the fiscal year. Further, given the US budget process, the Mid-Session Review is timed to be at roughly the midpoint of the congressional session, which spans the calendar year. Overall, this is sufficient for an "a" response.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: d. The MYR is not released to the public, or is released more than three months after the midpoint

Comments: This seems pretty straightforward to me. The fiscal year runs October 1-September 30. The midpoint is March 31. July 15 is 3.5 months after the midpoint.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP acknowledges that the situation in the US process is unusual, but accepts that information consistent with a MYR is available at an appropriate time for the US process. Importantly, the revised estimates in the Mid-Session Review are based on data available in early June, so within six weeks of the publication of the document in mid-July.

MYR-3a. If the MYR is published, what is the date of publication of the MYR?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:
13/07/2018

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

MYR-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the MYR.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:
The date usually is provided on the transmittal letter for the Mid-Session Review signed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and included at the front of the document. For the FY 2019 document, however, no transmittal letter was included. The date was obtained under the "details" tab for the document on the www.govinfo.gov Website (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/BUDGET-2019-MSR/>).

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

MYR-4. If the MYR is published, what is the URL or weblink of the MYR?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2019-MSR/pdf/BUDGET-2019-MSR.pdf>

Source:
The document also is available on the Website of the Office of Management and Budget (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/19msr.pdf>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

MYR-5. If the MYR is published, are the numerical data contained in the MYR available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>.

Option "d" applies if the MYR is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

c. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

MYR-6a. If the MYR is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the MYR is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question MYR-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question MYR-2).

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

MYR-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question MYR-6a, please specify how you determined whether the MYR was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question MYR-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion:

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

MYR-7. If the MYR is produced, please write the full title of the MYR.

For example, a title for the Mid-Year Review could be "Semi-annual Budget Performance Report, FY 2017/18" or "Mid-Year Report on the 2018 National Budget."

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Mid-Session Review, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

MYR-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the MYR?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see:

<http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-1. What is the fiscal year of the YER evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:
FY 2017

Source:
The Financial Report of the United States Government is regarded in this survey as the YER but a second report, the Combined Statement (discussed below), also is relevant.

Comment:
Article 1, Section 9, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution requires the executive to submit a year-end report on receipts and outlays, which is satisfied by the annual publication of the Combined Statement of Receipts, Outlays and Balances of the United States Government ("Combined Statement") by the Department of the Treasury. See also the reporting requirement in 31 U.S.C. 3513(a). The Combined Statement for FY 2017 was issued on December 8, 2017 (<https://fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/combined-statement/cs2017/index.html>).

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-2. When is the YER made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an YER to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public no later than one year after the fiscal year to which it corresponds. If the YER is not released to the public within one year after the end of the fiscal year to which it corresponds, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the YER.

Answer:
a. Six months or less after the end of the budget year

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-3a. If the YER is published, what is the date of publication of the YER?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document. Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:
15/02/2018

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the YER.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:
The date was included in the "Message" signed by the Secretary of the Treasury located at the front of the document.

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-4. If the YER is published, what is the URL or weblink of the YER?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:
<https://fiscal.treasury.gov/reports-statements/financial-report/2017-report.html>

Source:

Comment:

In addition to the YER, agencies prepare annual performance reports that link budget data with proposals and evaluations regarding agency objectives and goals. Performance reports are made available on each agency's Website. The Department of Education, for example, issued its "Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Performance Report and Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Performance Plan" in February 2018 (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2019plan/fy17apr-fy19app.pdf>). The report assesses agency performance with respect to four strategic goals, and from three to five strategic objectives within each goal (e.g., Strategic Goal 1: Support state and local efforts to improve learning outcomes for all P-12 students in every community; Strategic Objective 1.2: Provide all P-12 students with equal access to high-quality educational opportunities). Appropriations for major discretionary programs and activities supporting goal 1 are identified in a table on page 26 of the report. Agency performance information also is provided at a centralized government Website (<http://www.performance.gov>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

YER-5. If the YER is published, are the numerical data contained in the YER available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the YER is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

c. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

YER-6a. If the YER is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the YER is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question YER-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question YER-2)

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:
e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question YER-6a, please specify how you determined whether the YER was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question YER-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-7. If the YER is produced, please write the full title of the YER.

For example, a title for the Year-End Report could be "Consolidated Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2018" or "Annual Report 2017 Published by the Ministry of Finance and Planning." If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:
Financial Report of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2017

Source:
31 U.S.C. 331(e) requires the Secretary of the Treasury, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to issue by March 31 of each year a Financial Report of the United States Government for the preceding fiscal year.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the YER?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

a. Yes

Source:

A Citizens Guide to the Financial Report of the United States Government formerly was included as a separate section at the beginning of that report but was discontinued after FY 2016. An "Executive Summary" and two-page "Results in Brief" in the current document effectively serve as a Citizen's Guide now (<https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/reports-statements/financial-report/2017-report.html>).

Comment:

Additionally, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a 52-page report in 2018 that serves as a citizens guide to the financial report, "Understanding the Financial Report of the United States Government," GAO-18-239SP, February 15, 2018. The GAO report may be accessed at (<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-239SP>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP notes that the Executive Summary is virtually the same format as the previous Citizens Guide.

AR-1. What is the fiscal year of the AR evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:

FY 2017

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

AR-2. When is the AR made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an AR to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public no later than 18 months after the end of the fiscal year to which it corresponds. If the AR is not released to the public at least 18 months after the end of the fiscal year to which it corresponds, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the AR.

Answer:

a. Six months or less after the end of the budget year

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

AR-3a. If the AR is published, what is the date of publication of the AR?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

15/02/2018

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

AR-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the AR.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

The audit report is included in the Financial Report of the United States Government discussed in the previous section and carries the same publication date. The "Statement of the Comptroller General of the United States" (on pages 32-40 of the Financial Report) pertaining to the audit report is dated 15 February 2018 on the first page.

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

AR-4. If the AR is published, what is the URL or weblink of the AR?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:

<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-316R>

Source:

Government Accountability Office, Financial Audit: Fiscal Years 2017 and 2016 Consolidated Financial Statements of the U.S. Government, GAO-18-316R, February 15, 2018 (<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-316R>).

Comment:

The audit report and a related statement is included in the Financial Report of the United States Government. See the "Statement of the Comptroller General of the United States" (pages 32-48) and the "U.S. Government Accountability Office Independent Auditor's Report" (pages 218-247) ([https://fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/financial-report/02142018-FR\(Final\).pdf](https://fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/financial-report/02142018-FR(Final).pdf))

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

AR-5. If the AR is published, are the numerical data contained in the AR available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the AR is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

c. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

AR-6a. If the AR is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the AR is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question AR-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question AR-2).

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

n/a

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

AR-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question AR-6a, please specify how you determined whether the AR was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question AR-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion:

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

AR-7. If the AR is produced, please write the full title of the AR.

For example, a title for the Audit Report could be "Annual General Reports of the Controller and Auditor General." If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

U.S. Government Accountability Office Independent Auditor's Report

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

AR-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the AR?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

Comment:

The GAO report on the Financial Report of the United States Government, cited previously (YER-8), provides useful information that might be found in a citizens version of the audit report.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

GQ-1a. Are there one or more websites or web portals for disseminating government fiscal information? If yes, please provide the necessary links in the comment/citation.

GQ-1a asks the researcher to list any government websites or portals where fiscal information can be found. For example, in New Zealand the Treasury website (<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/>) hosts important budget-related information, including the Pre-Budget Statement, the Executive's Budget Proposal, the Citizens Budget, In-Year Reports, the Mid-Year Review, and the Year-End Report. In addition, New Zealand's Parliamentary Counsel Office (<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/>) posts the Enacted Budget while the Controller and Auditor-General website (<http://www.oag.govt.nz/>) publishes the annual Audit Report. The New Zealand researcher would provide the links to each of these sites. Other countries have developed portals that include fiscal information, though not in the "documents" format. For example, these portals have been created by Mexico (<https://www.transparenciapresupuestaria.gob.mx/>) and Brazil (<http://www.portaltransparencia.gov.br/>). Some countries have both a website and a portal. The Brazilian government, for example, apart from the Transparency Portal, has a dedicated website for the federal budget, where all key documents and other information can be found (www.orcamentofederal.gov.br). Researchers should include details about all of the relevant websites and/or portals that they can be used to access budget information.

Answer:

a. Yes

Source:

Documents pertaining mainly to the President's budget and budget execution are found on the Websites of the Office of Management and Budget (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>) and the Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Fiscal Service (<https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/>). With respect to actions on budgetary legislation by Congress, key Websites include the Congressional Budget Office (www.cbo.gov) and the Government

Accountability Office (www.gao.gov). Congressional committees with jurisdiction over appropriations (the House and Senate Appropriations Committees); revenues, debt, and certain entitlement spending (the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee); budget plans (the House and Senate Budget Committees); and other related matters may be found generally at: (<http://www.house.gov>), (<http://www.senate.gov>), and (<http://www.congress.gov>). With respect to judicial review of budgetary legislation, the principal Website is for the U.S. Supreme Court (<https://www.supremecourt.gov/>).

Comment:

The budget process for the United States Government is very complex, involving the diffusion of authority among many different actors, including: (1) in the executive branch, the President, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of the Treasury, budget offices in dozens of departments and agencies, and others; (2) in the legislative branch, the two co-equal chambers (the House of Representatives and the Senate), congressional committees (typically with separate majority and minority sides), congressional support agencies (the Congressional Budget Office, the Congressional Research Service, and the Government Accountability Office), and others; and (3) in the judicial branch, the Supreme Court and lesser courts. The President plays a key role in submitting a budget for the United States Government and overseeing budget execution, Congress plays a key role in developing and enacting budgetary legislation (typically with the President's concurrence), and the courts play a key role in providing judicial review of laws with problematic budget policy and process issues. All of these entities have Websites that provide information related to budgetary matters and are too numerous to mention individually. For this reason, only a selected listing of the most important Websites is provided above.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

GQ-1b. On these websites/portals, can revenue and/or expenditure data for the current fiscal year be downloaded as a consolidated file (or set of files)? If yes, please provide the necessary links in the comment/citation.

GQ-1b, GQ-1c, and GQ-1d ask about whether governments publish specific types of content on their websites/portals: (a) consolidated files that contain revenue and/or expenditure information for the current fiscal year; (b) consolidated files that contain revenue and/or expenditure information for multiple years in consistent formats; and (c) infographics/visualizations or other similar tools used to simplify data access and analysis. Researchers should provide the links to relevant webpages and some explanations of what they contain.

Answer:

a. Yes, both revenue and expenditure data can be downloaded as a consolidated file

Source:

With respect to the President's budget, at the OMB Website (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>), see the links to "Historical Tables" and "Supplemental Materials" under the "Budget" tab. In addition, individual tables in the "Historical Tables" volume can be downloaded separately as Excel files at the Website of the U.S. Government Printing Office (<https://www.govinfo.gov>). The Website of the Congressional Budget Office (<https://www.cbo.gov>) also provides current and historical information on budget levels in a consolidated manner; see, especially, the annual Budget and Economic Outlook report (<https://www.cbo.gov/about/products/RecurringReports#1>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

GQ-1c. On these websites/portals, can consolidated revenue and/or expenditure data be downloaded for multiple years in consistent formats? If yes, please provide the necessary links and details in the comment/citation.

Answer:

a. Yes, both revenue and expenditure data can be downloaded for multiple years in consistent formats

Source:
See the discussion of the previous question, GQ-1b.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

GQ-1d. On these websites/portals, are infographics/visualizations or other similar tools used to simplify data access and analysis? If yes, please provide the necessary links and details in the comment/citation.

Answer:
a. Yes

Source:
See the previous discussion of information available at the CBO Website. Also, the most pertinent document on the OMB Website probably is the Analytical Perspectives volume, which makes use of traditional charts and figures

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

GQ-2. Are there laws in place guiding public financial management and/or auditing? If yes, please provide the necessary details and links in the comment/citation, and specify whether and where the law(s) contains specific provisions for budget transparency and/or participation.

GQ-2 asks about the existence of any national laws governing public financial management and auditing. These may include a public finance act, a section of the constitution, or an organic budget law. In some countries, fiscal responsibility legislation may also be relevant. For example, the Kenya researcher may include the link to its Public Finance Management Act, 2012 (<http://www.kenyalaw.org/lex/actview.xhtml?actid=No.%2018%20of%202012>), and the Macedonian researcher may include a link to its State Audit Law (<https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/u11/Audit%20law.pdf>). Researchers should provide links to websites where such laws are published, if possible, or an electronic copy of the law itself. They should also indicate if and where (e.g. which article) these laws include specific provisions for budget transparency and citizen participation in budget processes.

Answer:
a. Yes

Source:
Many different federal laws, some complex and lengthy, deal with financial management and auditing. Some of them are codified in Title 31 (Money and Finance) of the United States Code. Important financial management laws and related OMB circulars, memoranda, and bulletins, are listed individually by OMB's Office of Federal Financial Management (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/management/office-federal-financial-management/>). The Department of the Treasury provides information in the Treasury Financial Manual (<https://tfm.fiscal.treasury.gov/>). The Government Accountability Office also offers information on financial management and accounting on its Website (<https://www.gao.gov>), such as the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards, also known as the "Yellow Book."

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

GQ-3. Are there additional laws regulating: (1) access to information; (2) government transparency; or (3) citizens participation? If yes, please provide the necessary details and links in the comment/citation, and specify whether and where these laws contain specific provisions for budget transparency and/or participation.

The third and last question asks researchers to list any additional laws regulating access to information, transparency, or citizens' participation that are relevant for the promotion of budget transparency and citizen participation in budget processes. These might include legislation related to access to information, to planning processes, or to public administration more generally. India's Right to Information Act of 2005 (<https://www.ncess.gov.in/facilities/central-public-information-officer/rti-act-details.html>) is an example of this type of law. More information on access to information legislation (constitutional provisions, laws, and regulations), including examples of model laws, can be found here: <http://www.right2info.org/laws/constitutional-provisions-laws-and-regulations#section-1>.

Answer:
a. Yes

Source:

There are various federal laws and regulations that deal with such matters as access to information and government transparency. One major example is the Freedom of Information Act (Public Law 89-487), administered by the Department of Justice, Office of Information Policy (<https://www.justice.gov/oip>). Other key examples include the Government in the Sunshine Act (Public Law 94-409) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

1. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for the budget year that are classified by administrative unit (that is, by ministry, department, or agency)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 1 addresses the presentation of expenditure by administrative unit. This information indicates which government entity (ministry, department, or agency, or MDAs) will be responsible for spending the funds and, ultimately, held accountable for their use.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all administrative units, accounting for all expenditures, in the budget year. To answer "b," the administrative units shown individually, in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation, must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures in the budget year. In other words, the sum of the expenditures assigned to the individual MDAs (education, health, infrastructure, interior, defense, etc.) must account for at least two-thirds of the total expenditure budgeted for that particular year. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents administrative units that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by administrative unit.

Answer:

a. Yes, administrative units accounting for all expenditures are presented.

Source:

The main volume of the EBP, "Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019," and the three supporting volumes: (1) Appendix; (2) Analytical Perspectives; and (3) Historical Tables, all present expenditures for the budget year that are classified by administrative unit. They are available on the Website of the Office of Management and Budget (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>) and, for FY 2019 and earlier years (back through FY 1996), on the Website of the Government Printing Office (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/BUDGET/>).

Comment:

The main volume of the President's annual budget submission (the EBP), the "Budget" volume, presents relatively minimal information on expenditures by department and agency. After a discussion of broad themes in the budget (e.g., Modernizing Government for the 21st Century), it provides (1) brief narratives of spending by department and major independent agency that highlight spending initiatives and (2) summary tables on mandatory spending proposals (Table S-6, Mandatory and Receipt Proposals, pages 125-141) and aggregate discretionary budget authority (Table S-8, 2019 Discretionary Overview by Major Agency, pages 144-146), both also by department and major independent agency. More extensive information on spending is provided in the three supporting volumes. The "Analytical Perspectives" volume, for example, provides information in Table 27-1, Federal Budget by Agency and Account, which is not part of the printed volume but is available online as a separate PDF file. In the "Historical Tables" volume, summary information on spending by department and major agency is provided mainly in: (1) Table 4.1, Outlays by Agency: 1962-2023, pages 74-80; and (2) Table 5.2, Budget Authority by Agency: 1976-2023, pages 98-102. Finally, the "Appendix" volume provides extensive information for each account within administrative units; see, for example, the presentation regarding the Department of Health and Human Services on pages 415-485.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

2. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for the budget year by functional classification?

GUIDELINES:

Question 2 addresses the presentation of expenditure by functional classification. This classification indicates the programmatic purpose, sector, or objective for which the funds will be used, such as health, education, or defense. Administrative units are not necessarily aligned with functional classifications. For instance, in one country all functions connected with water supply (which fall into the "Housing" function) may be undertaken by a single government agency, while in another country they may be distributed across the Ministries of Environment, Housing, and Industrial Development. In the latter case, three ministries have programs addressing water supply, so three ministries contribute to one function. Similarly, some administrative units may conduct activities that cut across more than one function. For instance, in the example above, some programs of the Ministry of Environment would also be classified in the "environmental protection" function.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for the budget year organized by functional classification.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditures are presented by functional classification.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to the Question 1, especially the "Historical Tables" volume.

Comment:

Spending is presented by functional classification in various ways throughout the budget documents, especially in the "Historical Tables" volume. For example, see the following tables in that volume: (1) Table 3.1, Outlays by Function and Superfunction, 1940-2023, pages 50-59; (2) Table 3.2, Outlays by Function and Subfunction, 1962-2023, pages 60-73; and (3) Table 5.1, Budget Authority by Function and Subfunction, 1976-2023, pages 88-97.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

3. If the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation presents expenditures for the budget year by functional classification, is the functional classification compatible with international standards?

GUIDELINES:

Question 3 asks whether a country's functional classification meets international standards. To answer "a," a country's functional classification must be aligned with the OECD and the UN's Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG), or provide a cross-walk between the national functional

presentation and COFOG.

The OECD Best Practices for Budget Transparency can be viewed at <http://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/Best%20Practices%20Budget%20Transparency%20-%20complete%20with%20cover%20page.pdf>

COFOG can be viewed at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_84E.pdf or at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/ch6ann.pdf>.

Answer:

a. Yes, the functional classification is compatible with international standards.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to the Question 1, especially the "Historical Tables" volume.

Comment:

The functional classifications used in the President's budget volumes overlap considerably with international standards, although there are some differences, as is to be expected. The President's budget currently uses 20 functional classifications (the scheme has changed over time). Compared to the UN's COFOG, the President's budget uses a greater number of top-level functions, but fewer subfunctions. Because of the significant overlap, no crosswalk is provided. (See the discussion of budget functions in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume on page 84.)

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: Given the options provided, this is likely the right answer.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

4. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for the budget year by economic classification?

GUIDELINES:

Question 4 asks whether the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents expenditures for the budget year organized by economic classification. Economic classification provides information on the nature of the expenditure, such as whether funds are being used to pay for wages and salaries, capital projects, or social assistance benefits.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for the budget year organized by economic classification.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditures are presented by economic classification.

Source:

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, Object Class Analysis (available on the GPO Website at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2019-OBJCLASS/pdf/BUDGET-2019-OBJCLASS.pdf>).

Comment:

The Object Class Analysis is the primary source for this information and provides data on spending by purpose. The five major object classes are: (1) personnel compensation and benefits; (2) contractual services and supplies; (3) acquisition of assets; (4) grants and fixed charges; and (5) other. In addition, several chapters in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume discuss spending by broad economic purpose, including Federal Investment (Chapter 17, pages 227-232), Research and Development (Chapter 18, pages 233-241), and Credit and Insurance (Chapter 19, pages 243-261).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

5. If the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation presents expenditures for the budget year by economic classification, is the economic classification compatible with international standards?

GUIDELINES:

Question 5 asks whether a country's economic classification meets international standards. To answer "a," a country's economic classification must be consistent with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 2001 Government Finance Statistics (GFS). The GFS economic classification is presented here: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/app4.pdf>. To learn more about Government Finance Statistics also refer to the entire IMF 2001 GFS manual (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/all.pdf>).

Answer:

a. Yes, the economic classification is compatible with international standards.

Source:

See the "Object Class Analysis" volume of the President's budget cited in the response to Question 4.

Comment:

The economic classifications used for spending in the President's budget seem generally to adhere to international classifications outlined by the IMF document, as shown in Appendix 4.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

6. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for individual programs for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 6 asks whether expenditures are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should treat the term "program" as meaning any level of detail below an administrative unit – that is, any programmatic grouping that is below the ministry, department, or agency level. For example, the Ministry of Health's budget could be broken down into several subgroups, such as "primary health care," "hospitals," or "administration." These subgroups should be considered programs even if they could be, but are not, broken down into smaller, more detailed units.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures, in the budget year. To answer "b," the programs shown individually in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures in the budget year. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program.

Budget decisions for the upcoming year can also affect the parameters of future budgets. It is therefore useful to estimate revenues and expenditures for multi-year periods, understanding that these estimates might be revised as circumstances change. Sometimes referred to as a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), a three-year period – that is, the budget year plus two more years – is generally considered an appropriate horizon for budgeting and planning.

Answer:

a. Yes, programs accounting for all expenditures are presented.

Source:

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, Appendix

Comment:

The "Appendix" volume mainly provides information on the basis of the more than 1,000 accounts in the budget. In some (but not most) cases, an account might be viewed as a program. In most instances, however, separate programs are identified under each account and sub-program funding information may be provided as well. Classifications below the account level may be referred to as programs, projects, activities, or other designations, depending on the agency. Following the submission of the President's budget, much more detailed programmatic information is

presented to Congress as part of the "justification process," in which department and agency heads appear before relevant subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees (and other committees). Agency justification materials are put online at each agency's Website shortly after the President's budget is submitted.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

IBP Comment
Note that IBP accepts an account as meeting the definition of a program, under OBS methodology.

7. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditure estimates for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year) by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 7 asks if multi-year expenditure estimates are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditure estimates by all three of the expenditure classifications for at least two years beyond the budget year. To answer "b," multi-year expenditure estimates must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if multi-year expenditure estimates are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if multi-year expenditure estimates are not presented by any of the three classifications.

Answer:

b. Yes, multi-year expenditure estimates are presented by two of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

Estimates are made for a multiyear period by administrative and functional classification. See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, including, for example, the "Budget" volume (Table S-1, Budget Totals, page 117; the "Historical Tables" volume (Table 3-1, Outlays by Superfunction and Function, 1940-2023, pages 50-59); and the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Table 27-1, Federal Budget by Agency and Account). Estimates by economic classification, in the "Object Class Analysis" volume, are not provided beyond the budget year.

Comment:

Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1105(a), requires that the President submit a five-year budget covering the budget year and the four succeeding fiscal years. In recent years, the practice has been to submit a 10-year budget (although not all presentations in the budget cover a 10-year period). The fiscal year 2019 budget, for example, covers fiscal years 2019-2028. As noted under Sources, however, estimates by economic classification, in the "Object Class Analysis" volume, are not provided beyond the budget year.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

7b. Based on the response to Question 7, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications have estimates for a multi-year period in the Executive's Budget Proposal?

Answer:

Administrative classification
Functional classification

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to the Question 1 and the comment for that question.

Comment:

Administrative classifications of spending on a multiyear basis are provided throughout the budget documents. The "Analytical Perspectives" volume, for example, provides a table, "Federal Budget by Agency and Account," that provides budget authority and outlay amounts by administrative unit and account for the actual year, the current year, the budget year and the ensuing 9 fiscal years. [Note: a footnote in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume carried for several years indicates that the table is not included in the volume but is available separately as a PDF file online at the OMB Website and on a CD-ROM sold by the Government Publishing Office. Once the budget is archived, however, it is available on the GPO website, under "details" for the Analytical Perspectives.] Spending amounts also are provided in the "Appendix" by administrative unit and account for the actual year, the current year, and the budget year, but not for ensuing years.

Similarly, functional classifications of spending on a multiyear basis are provided extensively, especially in the "Historical Tables" volume.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

8. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditure estimates for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year) by program?

GUIDELINES:

Question 8 asks if multi-year expenditure estimates are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department. For example, the Ministry of Health's budget could be broken down into several subgroups, such as "primary health care," "hospitals," or "administration." These subgroups should be considered programs even if they could be, but are not, broken down into smaller, more detailed units.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaille. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures, for at least two years beyond the budget year. To answer "b," the programs shown individually in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures over the multi-year period. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents multi-year estimates for programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if multi-year estimates are not presented by program.

Revenues generally are separated into two major categories: "tax" and "non-tax" revenues. Taxes are compulsory transfers that result from government exercising its sovereign power. The largest sources of tax revenue in some countries are taxes on personal and business income and taxes on goods and services, such as sales or value-added taxes. The category of non-tax revenues is more diverse, ranging from grants from international institutions and foreign governments to funds raised through the sale of government-provided goods and services. Note that some forms of revenue, such as contributions to social security funds, can be considered either a tax or non-tax revenue depending on the nature of the approach to these contributions. Particularly because different revenues have different characteristics, including who bears the burden of paying the tax and how collections are affected by economic conditions, it is helpful when estimates for revenues are disaggregated and displayed based on their sources.

For more information, please refer to the 2001 GFS manual, in particular Appendix 4 (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/app4.pdf>).

Answer:

a. Yes, multi-year estimates for programs accounting for all expenditures are presented.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to the Question 1, especially the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (in that document, see supplemental PDF file, Table 27-1, Federal Budget by Agency and Account).

Comment:

While expenditure estimates at the account level cover the budget year and the two preceding fiscal years for all accounts, as presented in the "Appendix" volume, the cited table in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume provides estimates of budget authority and outlays for accounts over a 10-year period. In addition, 10-year estimates are made for some accounts in the "Budget" volume (see, for example, the Summary Tables) and the "Historical Tables" volume (see the aforementioned Tables 3-1 and 3-2). As mentioned previously, accounts equate to programs under OBS methodology.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

9. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present the individual sources of tax revenue (such as income tax or VAT) for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 9 assesses the degree to which the individual sources of "tax" revenue are disaggregated in the budget. The largest sources of tax revenue in some countries are taxes on personal and business income and taxes on goods and services, such as sales or value-added taxes.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present all individual sources of tax revenue for the budget year, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all tax revenue. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present individual sources of tax revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all tax revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents individual sources of tax revenue that account for less than two-thirds of tax revenues. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of tax revenue are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, individual sources of tax revenue accounting for all tax revenue are presented.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, especially the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 11, Governmental Receipts, pages 127-139) and the "Historical Tables" volume (Section 2, Composition of Federal Government Receipts, pages 32-49).

Comment:

The major sources of revenue are: (1) individual income taxes; (2) corporation income taxes; (3) social insurance and retirement receipts; (4) excise taxes; (5) estate and gift taxes; (6) customs receipts; and (7) miscellaneous receipts. Miscellaneous receipts amounted to less than 3% of total receipts on average in Table 11.1 in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (page 127).

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

10. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present the individual sources of non-tax revenue (such as grants, property income, and sales of government-produced goods and services) for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 10 assesses the degree to which the individual sources of "non-tax" revenue are disaggregated in the budget. The category of non-tax revenues is diverse, and can include revenue ranging from grants from international institutions and foreign governments to funds raised through the sale of government-provided goods and services.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present all individual sources of non-tax revenue for the budget year, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all non-tax revenue. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present individual sources of non-tax revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all non-tax revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents individual sources of non-tax revenue that account for less than two-thirds of non-tax revenues. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of non-tax revenue are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, individual sources of non-tax revenue accounting for all non-tax revenue are presented.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, especially the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 12, Offsetting Collections and Offsetting Receipts, pages 141-152).

Comment:

"Non-tax" sources of revenue are referred to in the Federal budget as offsetting collections and offsetting receipts from the public and are listed in Table 12-1 in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (page 142) and discussed in detail in the accompanying narrative.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

11. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present revenue estimates by category (such as tax and non-tax) for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 11 evaluates whether revenue estimates are presented for a multi-year period (at least two years beyond the budget year) by "category," that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present multi-year estimates of revenues classified by category for at least two years following the budget year in question.

Answer:

a. Yes, multi-year estimates of revenue are presented by category.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in response to Question 1, and especially the specific chapters and tables cited in the responses to Questions 9 and 10.

Comment:

None.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

12. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates for individual sources of revenue presented for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 12 evaluates whether revenue estimates for individual sources of revenue are presented for a multi-year period (at least two years beyond the budget year). The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present multi-year estimates of all sources of revenue individually, accounting for all revenue, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present multi-year estimates of individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents multi-year estimates of individual revenue sources that account for less than two-thirds of revenue. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of revenue are not presented for a multi-year period.

Answer:

a. Yes, multi-year estimates for individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue are presented.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in response to Question 1, and especially the specific chapters and tables cited in the responses to Questions 9 and 10.

Comment:
None.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

13. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present three estimates related to government borrowing and debt: the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year; the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year; and interest payments on the debt for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 13 asks about three key estimates related to borrowing and debt that the budget should include:

- *the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year;*
- *the central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year; and*
- *the interest payments on the outstanding debt for the budget year.*

Debt is the accumulated amount of money that the government borrows. The government can borrow from its citizens and banks and businesses within the country (domestic debt) or from creditors outside the country (external debt). External debt is typically owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF.

Net new borrowing is the additional amount of new borrowing that is required for the budget year to finance expenditures in the budget that exceed available revenues. Net new borrowing adds to the accumulated debt. It is distinct from gross borrowing, which also includes borrowing needed to repay existing debt that matured during the budget year; debt that is replaced (or rolled over) does not add to the total of accumulated debt.

Interest payments on the debt (or debt service costs) are typically made at regular intervals, and these payments must be made on a timely basis in order to avoid defaulting on the debt obligation. Interest payments are separate from the repayment of principal, which occurs only when the loan has matured and must be paid back in full.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present all three estimates of borrowing and debt. For a "b" answer, the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present two of those three estimates. For a "c" answer, the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present one of the three estimates. Answer "d" applies no information on borrowing and debt is presented for the budget year.

Answer:

a. Yes, all three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are presented.

Source:

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, "Budget" volume, Table S-10, Federal Government Financing and Debt, pages 148-149; "Analytical Perspectives" volume, (Chapter 4, Federal Borrowing and Debt, pages 29-44; and the "Historical Tables" volume (Section 7, Federal Debt, pages 131-135, and Table 3.2, Outlays by Function and Subfunction, pages 60-73).

Comment:

Interest costs on borrowing are reflected in Function 900 (Net Interest).

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

13b. Based on the response to Question 13, check the box(es) below to identify which estimates of government borrowing and debt are presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal:

Answer:

The amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year
The central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year
The interest payments on outstanding debt for the budget year

Source:

See the sources cited for Question 13.

Comment:

None.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion:

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

14. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information related to the composition of the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year?"

(The core information must include interest rates on the debt instruments; maturity profile of the debt; and whether it is domestic or external debt.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 14 focuses on the composition of government debt at the end of the budget year, asking whether "core" information related to its composition is presented. These core components include:

- *interest rates on the debt;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether the debt is domestic or external.*

The interest rates affect the amount of interest that must be paid to creditors. The maturity profile indicates the final payment date of the loan, at which point the principal (and all remaining interest) is due to be paid; government borrowing typically includes a mix of short-term and long-term debt. As discussed in Question 13, domestic debt is held by a country's citizens, banks, and businesses, while external debt is held by foreigners. These factors related to the composition of the debt give an indication of the potential vulnerability of the country's debt position, and ultimately whether the cost of servicing the accumulated debt is affordable.

Beyond these core elements, a government may also provide additional information related to the composition of its debt, including for instance: whether interest rates are fixed or variable; whether debt is callable; the currency of the debt; a profile of the creditors (bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions, commercial banks, Central Bank, etc.); an analysis of the risk associated with the debt; and where appropriate, what the debt is being used to finance.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to the composition of government debt at the end of the budget year as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the composition of government debt is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on the composition of the debt outstanding at the end of the budget year.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the composition of the total debt outstanding.

Source:

See the sources cited for Question 13 and the Economic Report of the President (Together with the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers), February 2018, available on the GPO Website at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/ERP-2018/pdf/ERP-2018.pdf>.

Comment:

The core elements identified in this question are addressed principally in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume, including a discussion of the maturity profiles of different types of debt and the division of debt held publicly and by government agencies, and by foreign and domestic entities. More detailed information on the debt of the United States Government is provided, outside of the President's budget submission, by the Treasury Department's Bureau of the Fiscal Service (<https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov>). Two of the publications distributed by the Bureau, the Daily Treasury Statement and the Monthly Treasury Statement, as well as various "Public Debt Reports," provide extensive information on the debt. Finally, the annual Economic Report of the President prepared by the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) provides information on Federal debt, including Table B-25, Bond yields and interest rates, 1947-2017, page 560. The President's budget documents together with the Treasury Department and CEA

documents, provide a wealth of information to form a detailed picture of the USG's debt status.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

14b. Based on the response to Question 14, check the box(es) to identify which elements of the composition of the total debt outstanding are are presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal:

Answer:
Interest rates on the debt
Maturity profile of the debt
Whether the debt is domestic or external
Information beyond the core elements (please specify)

Source:
See the sources cited for Question 13, especially the "Analytical Perspectives" volume.

Comment:
The EBP and associated Treasury Department documents present extensive information on the debt beyond the core elements, including factors driving change in debt levels, financing of the debt, the amount of debt held by the public versus debt held by the USG (e.g., trust funds surpluses generally are required to be invested in government securities), debt issued by government agencies other than the Treasury Department, and debt subject to a statutory limit.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

15. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget projections are based?"

(The core information must include a discussion of the economic outlook with estimates of nominal GDP level, inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 15 focuses on the macroeconomic forecast that underlies the budget's revenue and expenditure estimates, asking whether "core" information related to the economic assumptions is presented. These core components include a discussion of the economic outlook as well as estimates of the following:

- *nominal GDP level;*
- *inflation rate;*
- *real GDP growth; and*
- *interest rates.*

While the core macroeconomic information should be a standard feature of the Executive's Budget Proposal, the importance of some types of macroeconomic assumptions may vary from country to country. For example, the budget estimates of some countries are particularly affected by changes in the price of oil and other commodities.

Beyond these core elements, some governments also provide additional information related to the economic outlook, including for instance: short and long-term interest rates; rate of employment and unemployment; GDP deflator; price of oil and other commodities; current account; exchange rate; and composition of GDP growth.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to the macroeconomic forecast as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present

all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the macroeconomic forecast is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on the macroeconomic forecast is presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the macroeconomic forecast.

Source:

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 2, Economic Assumptions and Interactions with the Budget, pages 9-20); and Economic Report of the President, February 2018 (cited under Question 14).

Comment:

The core elements referred to in this question, and additional matters, are addressed in Table 2.1, Economic Assumptions, page 11, and the accompanying narrative. The Economic Report of the President, prepared by the President's Council of Economic Advisers, also is submitted annually by the President to Congress in conjunction with his budget submission. Current and past reports may be found on the GPO Website at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/erp/>.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

15b. Based on the response to Question 15, check the box(es) to identify which elements of the macroeconomic forecast are included in the Executive's Budget Proposal:

Answer:

Nominal GDP level

Inflation rate

Real GDP growth

Interest rates

Information beyond the core elements (please specify)

Source:

See the sources cited under the previous question.

Comment:

In addition to the core elements, information is provided on such matters as unemployment, income, and Federal employee pay raises.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

16. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation show the impact of different macroeconomic assumptions (i.e., sensitivity analysis) on the budget?"

(The core information must include estimates of the impact on expenditures, revenue, and debt of different assumptions for the inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 16 focuses on the issue of whether the Executive's Budget Proposal shows how different macroeconomic assumptions affect the budget estimates (known as a "sensitivity analysis"). It asks whether "core" information related to a sensitivity analysis is presented, estimating the impact on expenditures,

revenue, and debt of different assumptions for:

- inflation rate;
- real GDP growth; and
- interest rates.

A sensitivity analysis shows the effect on the budget of possible changes in some macroeconomic assumptions, and is important for understanding the impact of the economy on the budget; for instance, what would happen to revenue collections if GDP growth were slower than what is assumed in the budget proposal? Or what would happen to expenditure if inflation were higher than estimated? Or how will revenue be affected by a decrease in the price of oil?

As noted for Question 15, changes in certain macroeconomic assumptions, such as the price of oil and other commodities, can have a significant impact on the budget estimates. As a result, some sensitivity analyses may also examine the impact on the budget estimates of changes in assumptions such as the price of oil that are beyond the core elements of the inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to a "sensitivity analysis" as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to a "sensitivity analysis" is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on "sensitivity analysis" is presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented to show the impact of different macroeconomic assumptions on the budget.

Source:

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 2, Economic Assumptions and Interactions with the Budget, pages 9-20).

Comment:

In the cited document, see especially Table 2-4, Sensitivity of the Budget to Economic Assumptions, page 15, and the accompanying discussion.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

17. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information for at least the budget year that shows how new policy proposals, as distinct from existing policies, affect expenditures?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 17 and 18 ask about new policy proposals in the budget. In any given year, most of the expenditures and revenues in the budget reflect the continuation of existing policies. However, much of the attention during the budget debate is focused on new proposals – whether they call for eliminating an existing program, introducing a new one, or changing an existing program at the margins. Typically, these new proposals are accompanied by an increase, a decrease, or a shift in expenditures or revenues. Because these changes may have different impacts on people's lives, the budget proposal should present sufficient detail about new policies and their budgetary impact.

Question 17 asks about new expenditure policies, and Question 18 asks about new revenue policies. To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present both estimates of how all new policy proposals affect expenditures (for Question 17) or revenues (for Question 18) and a narrative discussion of the impact of these new policies. To answer "b" for either question, the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present estimates that show the impact of all new policy proposals, but no narrative discussion is included. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes only a narrative discussion, or if it includes estimates that show the impact of only some, but not all, policy proposals (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on the impact of new policy proposals.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates that show how all new policy proposals affect expenditures are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019 (Table S-2, Effect of Budget Proposals on Projected Deficits, page 118; Table S-6, Mandatory and Receipt Proposals, pages 125-141; Table S-7, Proposed Discretionary Spending Caps for 2019 Budget, pages 142-143; and Table S-8, 2019 Discretionary Overview by Major Agency, pages 144-146); and "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 23, Current Services Estimates, pages 293-303).

Comment:

The President is required by law (Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1109) to include in his budget submission "current services estimates," which show spending and revenue levels in future years excluding policy changes. These estimates are referred to as the budget "baseline." In the belief that the statutory requirements produce a baseline that may be distorted in some ways, the President uses an "adjusted baseline" that corrects some of the perceived distortions. Several summary tables in the budget present information on the President's spending and revenue proposals (and the resulting deficit) compared to the adjusted baseline.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

18. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information for at least the budget year that shows how new policy proposals, as distinct from existing policies, affect revenues?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 17 and 18 ask about new policy proposals in the budget. In any given year, most of the expenditures and revenues in the budget reflect the continuation of existing policies. However, much of the attention during the budget debate is focused on new proposals – whether they call for eliminating an existing program, introducing a new one, or changing an existing program at the margins. Typically, these new proposals are accompanied by an increase, a decrease, or a shift in expenditures or revenues. Because these changes may have different impacts on people's lives, the budget proposal should present sufficient detail about new policies and their budgetary impact.

Question 17 asks about new expenditure policies, and Question 18 asks about new revenue policies. To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present both estimates of how all new policy proposals affect expenditures (for Question 17) or revenues (for Question 18) and a narrative discussion of the impact of these new policies. To answer "b" for either question, the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present estimates that show the impact of all new policy proposals, but no narrative discussion is included. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes only a narrative discussion, or if it includes estimates that show the impact of only some, but not all, policy proposals (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on the impact of new policy proposals.

Prior-year information constitutes an important benchmark for assessing the proposals for the upcoming budget year. Estimates of prior years should be presented in the same formats (in terms of classification) as the budget year to ensure that year-to-year comparisons are meaningful. For example, if the budget proposes shifting responsibility for a particular program from one administrative unit to another – such as shifting responsibility for the training of nurses from the health department to the education department – the prior-year figures must be adjusted before year-to-year comparisons of administrative budgets can be made.

Typically, when the budget proposal is submitted, the year prior to the budget year (BY-1), also known as the current year, has not ended, so the executive will provide estimates of the anticipated outcome for BY-1. The soundness of these estimates is directly related to the degree to which they have been updated to reflect actual expenditures to date, legislative changes that have occurred, and anticipated changes in macroeconomic, caseload, and other relevant factors for the remainder of the year.

The first year that can reflect actual outcomes, therefore, is generally two years before the budget year (BY-2). Thus the OECD recommends that data covering at least two years before the budget year (along with two years of projections beyond the budget year) are provided in order to assess fully the trends in the budget.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates that show how all new policy proposals affect revenues are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

See the sources cited under Question 17, as well as the "Analytical Perspectives" volume, Chapter 11 (Governmental Receipts), pages 127-139.

Comment:

The response to the previous question regarding spending proposals applies equally to revenue proposals.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

19. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1) by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 19 asks if expenditure estimates for the year prior to the budget year (BY-1) are presented by one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. (See Questions 1-5 above.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditure estimates for BY-1 by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," expenditure estimates for BY-1 must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if expenditure estimates for BY-1 are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if expenditure estimates for BY-1 are not presented by any of the three classifications.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditure estimates for BY-1 are presented by all three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, and functional classification).

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Questions 1 and 3, particularly the "Historical Tables" volume and the "Object Class Analysis."

Comment:

See the comments for Questions 1-4.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

20. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for individual programs for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 20 asks if expenditure estimates for the year before the budget year (BY-1) are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department. For example, the Ministry of Health's budget could be broken down into several subgroups, such as "primary health care," "hospitals," or "administration." These subgroups should be considered programs even if they could be, but are not, broken down into smaller, more detailed units.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaille. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures, for BY-1. To answer "b," the programs shown individually in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures for BY-1. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents programs that account for only less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program.

Answer:

a. Yes, programs accounting for all expenditures are presented for BY-1.

Source:

See the sources cited under Question 1.

Comment:

See the comments for Question 6.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

21. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, have expenditure estimates of the year prior to the budget year (BY-1) been updated from the original enacted levels to reflect actual expenditures?

GUIDELINES:

Question 21 asks whether the expenditure estimates for the year before the budget year (BY-1) have been updated from the original enacted levels. Updates can reflect actual experience to date; revised estimates due to shifting of funds by the executive, as permitted under the law; enactment of supplemental budgets; and revised assumptions regarding macroeconomic conditions, caseload, and other relevant factors for the remainder of the year.

Answer "a" applies if the estimates have been updated; answer "b" applies if the original estimates are still being used.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditure estimates for BY-1 have been updated from the original enacted levels.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, particularly the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 25, Comparison of Actual to Estimated Totals, pages 319-323).

Comment:

The President's budget for a fiscal year (the "budget year") typically is submitted almost half-way through the BY-1 (the "current year"). Enacted levels for the current year may not be fully realized until after the President's budget for the budget year has been submitted. The current year levels in the President's budget for the next year therefore may reflect both revisions in enacted levels and revisions in proposals that still are pending. The basis for the data for the past year, the current year, and the budget year in the FY 2019 budget submission is discussed in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume, Chapter 8, Budget Concepts, on pages 94-95. Chapter 25 in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume illustrates how spending (and revenue) estimates are continually revised from year to year for several factors, including administrative and legislative actions, changing economic circumstances, and technical matters.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

22. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of expenditure for more than one year prior to the budget year (that is, BY-2 and prior years) by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 22 asks if expenditure estimates for more than one year prior to the budget year (BY-2 and prior years) are presented by any of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. (See Questions 1-5 above.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years are not presented by any of the three classifications

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years are presented by all three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, and functional classification).

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, including the "Appendix" volume, the "Historical Tables" volume, and the "Object Class Analysis" volume.

Comment:

Amounts for BY-2 often are designated "actual" in these documents; amounts for BY-1 (the current year) and BY (the budget year) are designated "estimates."

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

22b. Based on the response to Question 22, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications have estimates for more than one year prior to the budget year in the Executive Budget Proposal:

Answer:
Administrative classification
Economic classification
Functional classification

Source:
For administrative classification, see especially the "Appendix" volume; for economic classification, see especially the "Object Class Analysis" volume; and for functional classification, see especially the "Historical Tables" volume (tables on spending by superfunction, function, and subfunction).

Comment:
n/a

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

23. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for individual programs for more than one year preceding the budget year (that is, BY-2 and prior years)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 23 asks if expenditure estimates for more than one year before the budget year (BY-2 and prior years) are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department. For example, the Ministry of Health's budget could be broken down into several subgroups, such as "primary health care," "hospitals," or "administration." These subgroups should be considered programs even if they could be, but are not, broken down into smaller, more detailed units.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaille. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures, for BY-2 and prior years. To answer "b," the programs shown individually in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures for BY-2 and prior years. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents programs that account for only less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program.

Answer:
a. Yes, programs accounting for all expenditures are presented for BY-2 and prior years.

Source:
See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Questions 1 and 6, especially the "Appendix" volume.

Comment:
n/a

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

24. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, what is the most recent year presented for which all expenditures reflect actual outcomes?

GUIDELINES:

Question 24 asks for which year the actual outcomes for expenditures are shown. In most cases, the most recent year for which budget data on actual outcomes are available will be BY-2, as BY-1 is generally not yet finished when the budget proposal is drafted. So a government that has updated all its expenditure data for BY-2 to reflect what actually occurred, as opposed to estimating the outcome for that year, shows good public financial management practice.

For an "a" answer, a country must meet the good practice of having the figures for BY-2 reflect actual outcomes.

Answer:

a. Two years prior to the budget year (BY-2).

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, particularly the "Appendix" and "Historical Tables" volumes.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

25. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present revenue by category (such as tax and non-tax) for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, revenue estimates for BY-1 are presented by category.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in response to Questions 1, 9, and 10, especially the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 11, Governmental Receipts, pages 127-139, and Chapter 12, Offsetting Collections and Receipts, pages 141-152) and the "Historical Tables" volume (Section 2, Composition of Federal Government Receipts, pages 32-49).

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

26. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present individual sources of revenue for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue are presented for BY-1.

Source:

See the sources cited for Question 25.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

27. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, have the original estimates of revenue for the year prior to the budget year (BY-1) been updated to reflect actual revenue collections?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, revenue estimates for BY-1 have been updated from the original enacted levels.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, particularly the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 25, Comparison of Actual to Estimated Totals, pages 319-323).

Comment:

See the comment for Question 21.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

28. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present revenue estimates by category (such as tax and non-tax) for more

than one year prior to the budget year (that is, BY-2 and prior years)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, revenue estimates for BY-2 and prior years are presented by category.

Source:

See the sources cited for Question 25.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

29. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present individual sources of revenue for more than one year prior to the budget year (that is, BY-2 and prior years)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue are presented for BY-2 and prior years.

Source:

See the sources cited for Question 25.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

30. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, what is the most recent year presented for which all revenues reflect actual outcomes?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Two years prior to the budget year (BY-2).

Source:

See the sources cited for Question 25.

Comment:
n/a

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

31. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1)?

(The core information must include the total debt outstanding at the end of BY-1; the amount of net new borrowing required during BY-1; interest payments on the debt; interest rates on the debt instruments; maturity profile of the debt; and whether it is domestic or external debt.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 31 focuses on prior-year debt information, rather than on prior-year expenditures or revenues, asking whether "core" information is provided on government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1).

The "core" information includes:

- *total debt outstanding at the end of BY-1;*
- *amount of net new borrowing required during BY-1;*
- *interest payments on the debt;*
- *interest rates on the debt instruments;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether it is domestic or external debt.*

This core information for BY-1 is consistent with the budget year information for borrowing and debt, which is examined in Questions 13 and 14.

In addition, some governments provide information beyond the core elements, such as gross new borrowing required during BY-1; currency of the debt; whether the debt carries a fixed or variable interest rate; whether it is callable; a profile of the creditors (bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions, commercial banks, Central Bank, etc.); where appropriate, what the debt is being used to finance.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for BY-1 as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to government borrowing and debt, including its composition, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on government borrowing and debt for BY-1.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for government debt.

Source:

See the sources cited for Question 13 and the Economic Report of the President (Together with the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers), February 2018, available on the GPO Website at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/ERP-2018/pdf/ERP-2018.pdf>.

Comment:

The core elements identified in this question are addressed principally in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume, including a discussion of the maturity profiles of different types of debt and the division of debt held publicly and by government agencies, and by foreign and domestic entities. More detailed information on the debt of the United States Government is provided, outside of the President's budget submission, by the Treasury Department's Bureau of the Fiscal Service (<https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov>). Two of the publications distributed by the Bureau, the Daily Treasury Statement and the Monthly Treasury Statement, as well as various "Public Debt Reports," provide extensive information on the debt. Finally, the annual Economic Report of the President prepared by the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) provides information on Federal debt, including Table B-25, Bond yields and interest rates, 1947-2017, page 560-561; it provides information on a calendar-year basis and therefore includes the first quarter of the BY-1 (October-December 2017 for FY 2018).

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

32. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, what is the most recent year presented for which the debt figures reflect actual outcomes?

GUIDELINES:

Question 32 asks for which year the actual outcome for debt is shown. In most cases, the most recent year for which budget data on actual outcomes are available will be BY-2, as BY-1 is generally not yet finished when the budget proposal is drafted. So a government that has updated its debt data for BY-2 to reflect what actually occurred, as opposed to estimating the outcome for that year, shows good public financial management practice.

For an "a" answer, a country must meet the good practice of having the figures for BY-2 reflect actual outcomes.

It is essential that all government activities that may have an impact on the budget – in the current budget year or in future budget years – be fully disclosed to the legislature and the public in budget documents. In some countries, for instance, entities outside central government (such as public corporations) undertake fiscal activities that could affect current and future budgets. Similarly, activities that can have a significant impact on the budget, such as payment arrears and contingent liabilities, sometimes are not properly captured by the regular presentations of expenditure, revenue, and debt.

Answer:

a. Two years prior to the budget year (BY-2).

Source:

See the sources cited for Question 13.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

33. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on extra-budgetary funds for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a statement of purpose or policy rationale for the extra-budgetary fund; and complete income, expenditure, and financing data on a gross basis.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 33 focuses on extra-budgetary funds, asking whether "core" information related to these funds, which exist outside the budget, are presented. These core components include:

- a statement of purpose or policy rationale for the extra-budgetary fund (i.e., why was a particular fund set up? what is it used for?); and*
- estimates of its income, expenditure, and financing. (These estimates should be presented on a gross basis so that it is possible to tell how much money flows through each extra-budgetary fund.)*

In most countries, governments engage in certain budgetary activities that are not included in the central government's budget. Known as extra-budgetary funds, they can range in size and scope. For example, countries frequently set up pension and social security programs as extra-budgetary funds, where the revenues collected and the benefits paid are recorded in a separate fund outside the budget. Another example of an extra-budgetary fund can be found in countries dependent on hydrocarbon/mineral resources, where revenues from producing and selling those resources are channeled through systems outside the annual budget.

In some cases, the separation engendered by an extra-budgetary fund serves a legitimate political purpose, and the finances and activities of these funds are well documented. In other cases, however, this structure is used for obfuscation, and little or nothing is known about a fund's finances and activities.

The availability of information related to extra-budgetary funds is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the government's true fiscal position. In addition to the core information, other information about extra-budgetary funds is also desirable. Such information includes a discussion of the risks associated with the extra-budgetary fund; expenditures classified by economic, functional, or administrative unit; and the rules and procedures that govern the

operations and management of the extra-budgetary fund.

For more information about extra-budgetary funds, see the *Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget* (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>) and Principle 2.1.1 of the IMF's *Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018)* (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to extra-budgetary funds as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. A "b" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation presents all of the core information. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to extra-budgetary funds is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on extra-budgetary funds.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for all extra-budgetary funds.

Source:

"Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 9, Coverage of the Budget, pages 101-105; see especially page 103 regarding "Off-budget Federal activities") and "Appendix" volume (Social Security Trust Funds, pages 1123-1127, and Postal Service Fund, pages 1216-1218).

Comment:

Transactions of the two Social Security Trust Funds and the Postal Service Fund are "off budget" by law (42 U.S.C. 911a and 39 U.S.C. 2009a, respectively), but they are treated as part of the budget for most purposes.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree with the spirit of the response that all funds are reflected in the budget, but I do not agree that the "off budget" and extrabudgetary are synonymous. I think the question is trying to get at public enterprises of which I think the Postal Service might fit but not Social Security.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP notes that there are many different types of funds in the US budget, and that the US budget is presented on a unitary basis. IBP accepts the legal designation of "off-budget" as synonymous with "extra-budgetary" for purposes of the OBS.

34. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present central government finances (both budgetary and extra-budgetary) on a consolidated basis for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 34 asks whether the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documents present the finances of the central government on a consolidated basis, showing both its budgetary and extra-budgetary activities. Virtually all of the questions in the OBS questionnaire focus on budgetary central government – the activities of the ministries, departments, or agencies of central government. In addition, Question 33 asks about extra-budgetary funds, such as social security funds that are not included in the budget.

Coverage is an important aspect of fiscal reporting. Budget documents should cover the full scope of government's financial activity. In many countries, extra-budgetary activities are substantial, and can represent a sizable share of the central government's activities. To get a full picture of the central government's finances, therefore, it is necessary to examine both activities that are included in the budget and those that are extra-budgetary. This question asks whether such a consolidated presentation of central government finances is provided.

The central government is only one component of the overall public sector. The public sector also includes other levels of government, such as state and local government, and public corporations. (See Box 2.1 under Principle 1.1.1 of the IMF's *Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018)*:

<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>. For the purpose of answering this question, please consider only the central government level.

In order to answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present central government finances (both budgetary and extra-budgetary) on a consolidated basis for at least the budget year.

Answer:

a. Yes, central government finances are presented on a consolidated basis.

Source:

See the sources cited in response to Question 1.

Comment:

The President's budget follows the "unified budget" concept, recommended by the 1967 President's Commission on Budget Concepts, which merges together the two major types of funds (federal funds and trust funds) and encompasses all government activities. Information is provided in the President's budget for the two Social Security Trust Funds and the Postal Service Fund, notwithstanding that they legally are "off-budget" (i.e., extra-budgetary) activities.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

35. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of intergovernmental transfers for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 35 asks about intergovernmental transfers. In many cases, the central government supports the provision of a good or service by a lower level of government through an intergovernmental transfer of funds. This is necessary because, independent from the level of administrative decentralization that exists in a given country, the capacity for revenue collection of a local government is unlikely to be sufficient to pay for all its expenses. However, because the activity is not being undertaken by an administrative unit of the central government, it is unlikely to receive the same level of review in the budget. Thus it is important to include in the budget proposal a statement that explicitly indicates the amount and purposes of these transfers.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all intergovernmental transfers and a narrative discussing these transfers. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all intergovernmental transfers are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, intergovernmental transfers (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no estimates of intergovernmental transfers are presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of all intergovernmental transfers are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

"Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 14, Aid to State and Local Governments, pages 197-214) and "Historical Tables" volume (Section 12, Federal Grants to State and Local Governments, pages 241-306).

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

36. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present alternative displays of expenditures (such as by gender, by age, by income, or by region) to illustrate the financial impact of policies on different groups of citizens, for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 36 asks about "alternative displays" of expenditures that highlight the financial impact of policies on different groups of citizens. As discussed above, expenditures are typically presented by at least one of three classifications – administrative, functional, and economic classifications (see Questions 1-5) – and by individual program (Question 6). In addition, governments can provide alternative displays to emphasize different aspects of expenditure policies and to show who benefits from these expenditures.

For the purpose of answering this question, the alternative presentation must differ from the presentations (such as administrative, functional, or economic classifications or presentation by program) used to answer other questions. The alternative display can cover all expenditures or only a portion of expenditures. For instance, it can show how all expenditures are distributed according to geographic region or it can show how selected expenditures (such as the health budget or the agriculture budget) are distributed to different regions. But such a geographic display must be something different than the presentation of intergovernmental transfers used to answer question 35. One exception is when a country includes a special presentation of all policies

intended to benefit the most impoverished populations (and is used to answer Question 52) then that can be considered an alternative display for purposes of answering this question as well. Finally, brief fact sheets showing how proposals in the budget benefit particular groups would be insufficient; only more detailed presentations would be considered.

The IBP Budget Brief, "How Transparent are Governments When it Comes to Their Budget's Impact on Poverty and Inequality?" (<https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/government-transparency-of-budgets-impact-on-poverty-inequality-ibp-2019.pdf>) includes a discussion of the importance of alternative displays of budget information and provides a number of examples. For instance,

- Bangladesh in its 2017-18 Budget included a detailed supplementary Gender Budgeting Report, which presents the spending dedicated to advancing women across various departments. (<https://mof.portal.gov.bd/site/page/3bb14732-b5b1-44df-9921-efedf1496295>).
- The UK's 2017 budget included a supplementary analysis that provided a distributional analysis of the budget by households in different income groups (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661465/distributional_analysis_autumn_budget_2017.pdf)
- South Africa's 2017 Budget Review goes beyond the standard presentation of intergovernmental transfers, discussing the redistribution that results from national revenue flowing to the provinces and municipalities and presenting the allocations on a per capita basis (see chapter 6, <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2017/review/FullBR.pdf>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must include at least three different presentations that illustrate the financial impact of policies on different groups of citizens for at least the budget year. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must include at least two different alternative displays of expenditures. A "c" applies if only one type of alternative display of expenditure is presented. Answer "d" applies if no alternative display of expenditure is presented.

Answer:

d. No, alternative displays of expenditures are not presented to illustrate the financial impact of policies on different groups of citizens.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The President's budget includes as supplementary material "Fact Sheets" on nine selected issues, available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fact-sheets>. The fact sheets for FY 2019 address such matters as (1) School Safety; (2) Supporting Working Families; and (3) Combatting the Opioid Epidemic, but are two to four pages in length and do not present sufficient information to be counted for this survey.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

36b. Based on the response to Question 36, select the box(es) below to identify which types of alternative displays are included in the Executive's Budget Proposal:

Answer:

None of the above

Source:

n/a

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

37. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of transfers to public corporations for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 37 asks about transfers to public corporations. It is often the case that governments have a stake in enterprises that manage resources that are particularly relevant for the public good (such as electricity, water, and oil). While these public corporations can operate independently, in some cases the government will provide direct support by making transfers to these corporations, including to subsidize capital investment and operating expenses.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all transfers to public corporations and a narrative discussing the purposes of these transfers. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all transfers to public corporations are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, transfers to public corporations (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "c" also applies if estimates of transfers to public corporations are presented as a single line item. Answer "d" applies if no estimates of transfers to public corporations are presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of all transfers to public corporations are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

"Appendix" volume and the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 19, Credit and Insurance, pages 243-261).

Comment:

In the case of residential mortgages, for example, three Government-Sponsored Enterprises – the Federal National Mortgage Association ("Fannie Mae"), the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation ("Freddie Mac"), and the Federal Home Loan Bank System - "currently are involved, in one form or another, with approximately half of residential mortgages outstanding in the U.S. today (Analytical Perspectives, Chapter 19, page 249).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

38. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on quasi-fiscal activities for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a statement of purpose or policy rationale for the quasi-fiscal activity and the intended beneficiaries.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 38 focuses on quasi-fiscal activities, asking whether "core" information related to such activities is presented. These core components include:

- *A statement of purpose or policy rationale for the quasi-fiscal activity (i.e., what is the reason for engaging in this activity?);*
- *The identification of intended beneficiaries of the quasi-fiscal activity.*

The term "quasi-fiscal activities" refers to a broad range of activities that are fiscal in character and could be carried out through the regular budget process but are not. For example, a quasi-fiscal activity could take place if, instead of providing a direct subsidy through the budget for a particular activity, a public financial institution provides an indirect subsidy by offering loans at below-market rates for that activity. Similarly, it is a quasi-fiscal activity when an enterprise provides goods or services at prices below commercial rates to certain individuals or groups to support the government's policy goals.

The above examples are policy choices that may be approved by the government and legislature. However, quasi-fiscal activities can also involve activities that violate or circumvent a country's budget process laws or are not subject to the regular legislative approval process for expenditures. For example, the executive may issue an informal order to a government entity, such as a public commercial enterprise, to provide the executive with goods and services that normally would have to be purchased with funding authorized by the legislature. All quasi-fiscal activities should be disclosed to the public and subject to public scrutiny.

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about quasi-fiscal activities, including for example: the anticipated duration of the quasi-fiscal activity; a quantification of the activity and the assumptions that support these estimates; and a discussion of the fiscal significance and potential risks associated with the activity, including the impact on the entity carrying out the activity. Principle 3.3.2 of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>) provides examples of quasi-fiscal activities that can be consulted as needed. And more details on quasi-fiscal activities can be found in the Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to all quasi-fiscal activities for at least the budget year as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to quasi-fiscal activities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on quasi-fiscal activities.

If quasi-fiscal activities do not represent a significant problem in your country, please mark "e." However, please exercise caution in answering this question.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for all quasi-fiscal activities.

Source:

"Appendix" volume (Government-Sponsored Enterprises, pages 1261-1265) and "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 19, Credit and Insurance, pages 243-261).

Comment:

In Chapter 19 of the "Analytical Perspectives" volume, see especially "I. Credit in Various Sectors," pages 243-251.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

39. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on financial assets held by the government for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a listing of the assets, and an estimate of their value.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 39 focuses on financial assets held by the government, asking whether "core" information related to these assets is presented. These core components include:

- A listing of the financial assets; and
- An estimate of their value.

Governments own financial assets such as cash, bonds, or equities. Unlike private sector businesses, however, few governments maintain balance sheets that show the value of their assets and liabilities.

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about financial assets, including for example: a discussion of their purpose; historical information on defaults; differences between reported values and market values; and a summary of financial assets as part of the government's balance sheet.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year all of the core information related to all financial assets held by the government as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to financial assets is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on financial assets held by the government.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for all financial assets.

Source:

"Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 4, Federal Borrowing and Debt, pages 29-44, and Chapter 19, Credit and Insurance, pages 243-261).

Comment:

In addition to information on financial assets provided in the President's budget, further information is provided in various reports of the Treasury Department, as mentioned previously (Daily Treasury Statement and Monthly Treasury Statement). Information on financial assets also is provided in the Financial Report of the United States Government (see discussion of the End-of-Year Report).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

40. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on nonfinancial assets held by the government for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a listing of the assets by category.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 40 focuses on nonfinancial assets held by the government, asking whether "core" information related to these assets is presented. The core information is a listing of nonfinancial assets, grouped by the type (or category) of asset.

Nonfinancial assets are things of value that the government owns or controls (excluding financial assets) such as land, buildings, and machinery. The valuation of public nonfinancial assets can be problematic, particularly in cases where the asset is not typically available on the open market (such as a government monument). In these cases, it is considered acceptable to provide summary information in budget documents from a country's register of assets. But, in some cases, governments are able to value their nonfinancial assets; some present a summary of nonfinancial assets as part of their balance sheets. For an example of how nonfinancial assets are presented in one of the many supporting documents to the New Zealand Executive's Budget Proposal, see the Forecast Financial Statement 2011, Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued), Note 14, accessible here: <https://treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2011-05/befu11-pt6of8.pdf>.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year a listing by category of all nonfinancial assets held by the government as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to nonfinancial assets is presented, but some nonfinancial assets are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on nonfinancial assets held by the government.

Answer:

c. Yes, information is presented, but it excludes some nonfinancial assets.

Source:

"Analytical Perspectives" volume, Chapter 4, Federal Borrowing and Debt, pages 29-44, and Chapter 17, Federal Investment, pages 227-232.

Comment:

The President's budget includes limited information on nonfinancial assets.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

41. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of expenditure arrears for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 41 asks about estimates of expenditure arrears, which arise when government has entered into a commitment to spend funds but has not made the payment when it is due. (For more information see sections 3.49-3.50 of the IMF's GFS Manual 2001, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/all.pdf> (page 29)). Though equivalent to borrowing, this liability is often not recorded in the budget, making it difficult to assess fully a government's financial position. Moreover, the obligation to repay this debt affects the government's ability to pay for other activities.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all expenditure arrears and a narrative discussing the arrears. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all expenditure arrears are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, expenditure arrears (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no estimates of expenditure arrears are presented.

If expenditure arrears do not represent a significant problem in your country, please mark "e." However, please exercise caution in answering this question. Public expenditure management laws and regulations often will allow for reasonable delays, perhaps 30 or 60 days, in the routine payment of invoices due. Expenditure arrears impacting a small percentage of expenditure that are due to contractual disputes should not be considered a significant problem for the purpose of answering this question.

Answer:

e. Not applicable/other (please comment).

Source:

n/a

Comment:

Expenditure arrears are not a significant issue for the United States Government

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

42. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on contingent liabilities, such as government loan guarantees or insurance programs, for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a statement of purpose or policy rationale for each contingent liability; the new guarantees or insurance commitments proposed for the budget year; and the total amount of outstanding guarantees or insurance commitments (the gross exposure) at the end of the budget year.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 42 focuses on contingent liabilities, asking whether "core" information related to these liabilities is presented. These core components include:

- *a statement of purpose or policy rationale for each contingent liability;*
- *the new contingent liabilities for the budget year, such as new guarantees or insurance commitments proposed for the budget year; and*
- *the total amount of outstanding guarantees or insurance commitments at the end of the budget year. This reflects the gross exposure of the government in the case that all guarantees or commitments come due (even though that may be unlikely to occur).*

Contingent liabilities are recognized under a cash accounting method only when the contingent event occurs and the payment is made. An example of such liabilities is the case of loans guaranteed by the central government, which can include loans to state-owned banks and other state-owned commercial enterprises, subnational governments, or private enterprises. Under such guarantees, government will only make a payment if the borrower defaults. Thus a key issue for making quantitative estimates of these liabilities is assessing the likelihood of the contingency occurring.

In the budget, according to the OECD, "[w]here feasible, the total amount of contingent liabilities should be disclosed and classified by major category reflecting their nature; historical information on defaults for each category should be disclosed where available. In cases where contingent liabilities cannot be quantified, they should be listed and described."

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about contingent liabilities, including for example: historical default rates for each program, and likely default rates in the future; the maximum guarantee that is authorized by law; any special financing associated with the guarantee (e.g., whether fees are charged, whether a reserve fund exists for the purpose of paying off guarantees, etc.); the duration of each guarantee; and an estimate of the fiscal significance and potential risks associated with the guarantees.

For more details on contingent liabilities, see Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>) and page 59 (Box 11) and Principle 3.2.3 of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year all of the core information related to contingent liabilities as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to contingent liabilities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on contingent liabilities.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for all contingent liabilities.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, particularly the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (Chapter 3, Long-Term Budget Outlook, pages 21-27, and Chapter 19, Credit and Insurance, pages 243-261).

Comment:

Contingent liabilities, as defined in the question, are captured in the estimates for federal credit programs, as required by the Federal Credit Reform

Act and subsequent modifications. In contrast to practices elsewhere, the estimates include projections of default. Detailed information for credit programs in applicable accounts is provided in credit schedules included in the "Appendix" volume and in the accompanying "budget justification" materials submitted by each agency. Long-term projections are made for major entitlement programs involving Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. A full range of the long-term contingent liabilities is provided in the annual Financial Report of the United States Government.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

43. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present projections that assess the government's future liabilities and the sustainability of its finances over the longer term?

(The core information must cover a period of at least 10 years and include the macroeconomic and demographic assumptions used and a discussion of the fiscal implications and risks highlighted by the projections.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 43 focuses on government's future liabilities and the sustainability of its finances over the longer-term, asking whether "core" information related to these issues is presented. These core components must include:

- *Projections that cover a period of at least 10 years.*
- *The macroeconomic and demographic assumptions used in making the projections.*
- *A discussion of the fiscal implications and risks highlighted by the projections. Good public financial management calls for budgets to include fiscal sustainability analyses.*

The IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>) recommends that governments regularly publish the projected evolution of the public finances over the longer term (see Principle 3.1.3.). Future liabilities are a particularly important element when assessing the sustainability of public finances over the long term. Future liabilities are the result of government commitments that, unlike contingent liabilities, are virtually certain to occur at some future point and result in an expenditure. A typical example consists of government obligations to pay pension benefits or cover health care costs of future retirees. Under a cash accounting system, only current payments associated with such obligations are recognized in the budget. To capture the future impact on the budget of these liabilities, a separate statement is required.

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about the sustainability of their finances, including for example: projections that cover 20 or 30 years; multiple scenarios with different sets of assumptions; assumptions about other factors (such as the depletion of natural resources) that go beyond just the core macroeconomic and demographic data; and a detailed presentation of particular programs that have long time horizons, such as civil service pensions.

For more details on future liabilities, see Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to future liabilities and the sustainability of government finances over the longer term as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to future liabilities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on future liabilities and the sustainability of government's finances

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented to assess the government's future liabilities and the sustainability of its finances over the longer term.

Source:

See the sources cited for the previous question as well as Chapter 23, Current Services Estimates, pages 293-303, in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume.

Comment:

The federal budget process has focused much more intensely in recent years on long-term budget trends as they have worsened and their implications have become more ominous, especially regarding the Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid programs. Chapter 3 in the "Analytical Perspectives" provides data over a 25-year horizon in addition to the conventional 10-year budget forecast; sources of data and methods of estimating are discussed in a technical note on page 27. In addition, Chapter 23 provides various economic assumptions and baseline beneficiary projections for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other major benefit programs covering the 10-year period.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

44. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of the sources of donor assistance, both financial and in-kind, for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 44 asks about estimates of donor assistance, both financial and in-kind assistance. Such assistance is considered non-tax revenue, and the sources of this assistance should be explicitly identified. In terms of in-kind assistance, the concern is primarily with the provision of goods (particularly those for which there is a market that would allow goods received as in-kind aid to be sold, thereby converting them into cash) rather than with in-kind aid like advisors from a donor country providing technical assistance.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all donor assistance and a narrative discussing the assistance. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all donor assistance are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, donor assistance (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "c" also applies if the sources of donor assistance are not presented, but the total amount of donor assistance is presented as a single line item. Answer "d" applies if no estimates of donor assistance are presented. Select answer "e" if your country does not receive donor assistance.

Answer:

e. Not applicable/other (please comment).

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not receive donor assistance.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

45. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on tax expenditures for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a statement of purpose or policy rationale for each tax expenditure, the intended beneficiaries, and an estimate of the revenue foregone.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 45 focuses on tax expenditures, asking whether "core" information related to these tax preferences is presented. These core components must include for both new and existing tax expenditures:

- *a statement of purpose or policy rationale;*
- *a listing of the intended beneficiaries; and*
- *an estimate of the revenue foregone.*

Tax expenditures arise as a result of exceptions or other preferences in the tax code provided for specified entities, individuals, or activities. Tax expenditures often have the same impact on public policy and budgets as providing direct subsidies, benefits, or goods and services. For example, encouraging a company to engage in more research through a special tax break can have the same effect as subsidizing it directly through the expenditure side of the budget, as it still constitutes a cost in terms of foregone revenues. However, expenditure items that require annual authorization are likely to receive more scrutiny than tax breaks that are a permanent feature of the tax code.

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about tax expenditures, including for example: the intended beneficiaries by sector and income class (distributional impact); a statement of the estimating assumptions, including the definition of the benchmark against which the foregone revenue is measured; and a discussion of tax expenditures as part of a general discussion of expenditures for those program areas that receive both

types of government support (in order to better inform policy choices). For more details on tax expenditures, see *Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget* (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>) and Principle 1.1.4 of the IMF's *Fiscal Transparency Handbook* (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present, for at least the budget year, all of the core information related to tax expenditures as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to tax expenditures is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on tax expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for all tax expenditures.

Source:

"Analytical Perspectives" volume, Chapter 13, Tax Expenditures, pages 153-194.

Comment:

Chapter 13 presents data divided by corporate and individual income tax expenditures, a narrative discussion of about 170 separate tax expenditures, and issues in estimating tax expenditures.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

46. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of earmarked revenues for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 46 asks about estimates of earmarked revenues, which are revenues that may only be used for a specific purpose (for example, revenues from a tax on fuel that can only be used for building roads). This information is important in determining which revenues are available to fund the government's general expenses, and which revenues are reserved for particular purposes.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all earmarked revenues and a narrative discussing the earmarks. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all earmarked revenues are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, earmarked revenues (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no estimates of earmarked revenues are presented. An "e" response applies if revenue is not earmarked or the practice is disallowed by law or regulation.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of all earmarked revenues are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

"Analytical Perspectives" volume, Chapter 11, Governmental Receipts, pages 127-139, Chapter 12, Offsetting Collections and Offsetting Receipts, pages 141-152, and Chapter 24, Trust Funds and Federal Funds, pages 305-318.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

47. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on how the proposed budget (both new proposals and existing policies) is linked to government's policy goals for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 47 and 48 ask about information that shows how the budget (both new proposals and existing policies) is linked to the government's policy goals. The budget is the executive's main policy document, the culmination of the executive's planning and budgeting processes. Therefore, it should include a clear description of the link between policy goals and the budget – that is, an explicit explanation of how the government's policy goals are reflected in its budget choices. For an example of a discussion of a government's policy goals in the budget, see pages 13-18 of New Zealand's 2011 Statement of Intent (<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/abouttreasury/soi/2011-16>), one of the many documents supporting its budget.

In some countries the government prepares strategic/development plans. These plans include all the policies the government is planning to implement for the budget year and very often cover a multi-year perspective. In some cases, these plans do not match the budget documentation, and it is possible that they are completely disconnected from the Executive's Budget Proposal. So the question is examining whether government policy plans are "translated" into revenue and expenditure figures in the actual budget documents.

Question 47 asks about the information covering the budget year, and Question 48 asks about the period at least two years beyond the budget year. To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present both estimates of how the budget is linked to government's policy goals for the budget year (for Question 47) or for a multi-year period beyond the budget year (for Question 48) and a narrative discussion of how these policy goals are reflected in the budget. To answer "b" for either question, the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present estimates that show how the budget is linked to government's policy goals, but no narrative discussion is included. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes only a narrative discussion, or if it includes estimates that show how the budget is linked to some, but not all, of the government's policy goals (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on how the budget is linked to government's policy goals.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates that show how the proposed budget is linked to all the government's policy goals for the budget year are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

In the "Budget" volume, "The Budget Message of the President," pages 1-3, and individual chapters on such topics as "Modernizing Government for the 21st Century" and "A New Federal Budget That Works for the American People" address the relationship between policies and the budget in broad terms. More detail on savings and reform initiatives is provided in "The Major Savings and Reforms" volume (see, for example, "Repeal and Replace Obamacare" on pages 117-118). The relationship also is addressed, by major areas and by individual agencies and programs, throughout the "Analytical Perspectives" and "Appendix" volumes.

Comment:

The Administration also maintains a comprehensive Website on performance goals, including their linkage to the budget, at: <https://www.performance.gov/>. Information is provided on general management priorities and agency initiatives, including agency's multiyear strategic plans and performance plans and reports. Each agency also provides information on its performance goals on its Website.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

48. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on how the proposed budget (both new proposals and existing policies) is linked to government's policy goals for a multi-year period (for at least two years beyond the budget year)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 47 and 48 ask about information that shows how the budget (both new proposals and existing policies) is linked to the government's policy goals. The budget is the executive's main policy document, the culmination of the executive's planning and budgeting processes. Therefore, it should include a clear description of the link between policy goals and the budget – that is, an explicit explanation of how the government's policy goals are reflected in its budget choices. For an example of a discussion of a government's policy goals in the budget, see pages 13-18 of New Zealand's 2011 Statement of Intent (<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/abouttreasury/soi/2011-16>), one of the many documents supporting its budget.

In some countries the government prepares strategic/development plans. These plans include all the policies the government is planning to implement for the budget year and very often cover a multi-year perspective. In some cases, these plans do not match the budget documentation, and it is possible that they are completely disconnected from the Executive's Budget Proposal. So the question is examining whether government policy plans are "translated" into revenue and expenditure figures in the actual budget documents.

Question 47 asks about the information covering the budget year, and Question 48 asks about the period at least two years beyond the budget year. To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present both estimates of how the budget is linked to government's policy goals for the budget year (for Question 47) or for a multi-year period beyond the budget year (for Question 48) and a narrative discussion of how these policy goals are reflected in the budget. To answer "b" for either question, the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present estimates that show how the budget is linked to government's policy goals, but no narrative discussion is included. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes only a narrative discussion, or if it includes estimates that show how the budget is linked to some, but not all, of the government's policy goals (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on how the budget is linked to government's policy goals.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates that show how the proposed budget is linked to all the government's policy goals for a multi-year period are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

See the sources cited in the response to the previous question.

Comment:

While there is considerable discussion of multiyear policy goals throughout the budget documents, their main focus is on those goals pertinent to the budget year. For further discussion, see "About" at <https://www.performance.gov>.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

49. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present nonfinancial data on inputs to be acquired for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 49 asks about the availability of nonfinancial data on inputs for the budget year. (Nonfinancial data on outputs and outcomes are addressed in Question 50.)

The budget should disclose not only the amount of money that is being allocated on a program but also any information needed to analyze that expenditure. Nonfinancial data and performance targets associated with budget proposals are used to assess the success of a given policy. For example, even when allocated funds are spent according to plan, there remains the question of whether the policy delivered the results that it aimed to achieve.

Nonfinancial data can include information on:

Inputs - These are the resources assigned to achieve results. For example, in regards to education, nonfinancial data on inputs could include the number of books to be provided to each school or the materials to be used to build or refurbish a school.

Outputs - These are products and services delivered as a result of inputs. For example, the number of pupils taught every year; the number of children that received vaccines; or the number of beneficiaries of a social security program.

Outcomes - These are the intended impact or policy goals achieved. For example, an increase in literacy rates among children under 10, or a reduction in rates of maternal mortality.

In addition, governments that set performance targets must use nonfinancial data for outputs and outcomes to determine if these targets have been met.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present, for at least the budget year, nonfinancial data on inputs for each individual program within all administrative units (ministries, departments, and agencies). It is also acceptable if nonfinancial data on inputs for each individual program is organized by functions. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present nonfinancial data on inputs for all administrative units or all functions, but not for each individual program (or even for any programs) within those administrative units or functions. A "c" response applies if nonfinancial data on inputs are presented only for some programs and/or some administrative units or some functions. Answer "d" applies if no nonfinancial data on inputs is presented.

Answer:

b. Yes, nonfinancial data on inputs are presented for all administrative units (or functions) but not for all (or any) programs.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, especially the "Appendix" Volume and, in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume, Chapter 5, Social Indicators, pages 47-57; Chapter 6, Building and Using Evidence to Improve Government Effectiveness, pages 59-64; and Chapter 7, Strengthening the Federal Workforce, pages 65-74.

Comment:

Nonfinancial data on inputs are discussed in several chapters in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (cited above). Such inputs are referenced only for selected accounts in the "Appendix" volume and the "budget justification" documents submitted by each agency. For example, staffing resources by office and type of staff are listed in "Federal Aviation Administration, FY 2019 President's Budget Submission," table on "Staffing Summary," Operations page 8, available at: <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/budget/faa-fy-2019-budget-estimates>.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

50. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present nonfinancial data on results (in terms of outputs or outcomes) for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 50 asks about the availability of nonfinancial data on results for the budget year. Nonfinancial data on results can include data on both outputs and outcomes, but not on inputs (which are addressed in Question 49).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present, for at least the budget year, nonfinancial data on results for each individual program within all administrative units (ministries, departments, and agencies). It is also acceptable if nonfinancial data on results for each individual program is organized by functional classification. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present nonfinancial data on results for all administrative units or all functional classifications, but not for each individual program (or even for any programs) within those administrative units or functions. A "c" response applies if nonfinancial data on results are presented only for some programs and/or some administrative units or some functions. Answer "d" applies if no nonfinancial data on results is presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, nonfinancial data on results are provided for each program within all administrative units (or functions).

Source:

See the sources cited in the response to the previous question.

Comment:

Nonfinancial data on results and outcomes are discussed in several chapters in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (cited above). Some outputs are referenced, mainly for agency-wide performance goals, in the "budget justification" documents submitted by each agency and in individual agency reports at www.performance.gov. See, for example, the "Department of Homeland Security, Congressional Budget Justification FY 2019, U.S. Secret Service, Budget Overview"; tables on pages USSS-4 through USSS-8 provide data on such items as the number of law enforcement individuals trained in cybercrime, the percent of currency identified as counterfeit, and the number of information sharing events with the law enforcement and intelligence community (<https://www.dhs.gov/publication/congressional-budget-justification-fy-2019>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

b. Yes, nonfinancial data on results are presented for all administrative units (or functions) but not for all (or any) programs.

Comments: I think the appropriate answer is b. I do not believe that all programs have outcome data presented. All of them MAY have at least output data but that is not what the question is asking.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher and an "a" response. Under OBS methodology, any detail below the administrative unit level is treated as a program. So in the example provided, the US Secret Service would be accepted as a program within the Department of Homeland Security under OBS methodology.

51. Are performance targets assigned to nonfinancial data on results in the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation?

GUIDELINES:

Question 51 asks about performance targets assigned to nonfinancial data on results for the budget year. The question applies to those nonfinancial results shown in the budget, and that were identified for purposes of Question 50.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must assign performance targets to all nonfinancial data on results shown in the budget for at least the budget year. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must assign performance targets to a majority (but not all) of the nonfinancial data on results shown in the budget. A "c" response applies if performance targets are assigned only to less than half of the nonfinancial data on results. Answer "d" applies if no performance targets are assigned to nonfinancial data on results shown in the budget, or the budget does not present nonfinancial results.

Answer:

b. Yes, performance targets are assigned to most nonfinancial data on results.

Source:

See the sources cited in the response to Question 49.

Comment:

Performance targets tied to nonfinancial data on results are discussed in several chapters in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume (cited previously). In addition, such targets are referenced for some accounts in the "budget justification" documents submitted by each agency and in the reports of individual agencies at www.performance.gov. For example, performance targets for immunization programs of the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, are provided in the "FY 2019 Congressional Justification" for that agency, beginning on page 283; one target involved "Achieve and sustain immunization coverage of at least 80% in children 19- to 35-months of age for 2-3 doses of rotavirus" (<https://www.cdc.gov/budget/documents/fy2019/fy-2019-cdc-congressional-justification.pdf>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

52. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of policies (both new proposals and existing policies) that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations in at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 52 asks whether the budget highlight policies, both new and existing, that benefit the poorest segments of society. This question is intended to assess only those programs that directly address the immediate needs of the poor, such as through cash assistance programs or the provision of housing, rather than indirectly, such as through a stronger national defense. This information is of particular interest to those seeking to bolster government's commitment to anti-poverty efforts. For purposes of answering this question, a departmental budget (such as the Department of Social Welfare) would not be considered acceptable. In general, this question is asking whether the EBP includes a special presentation that pulls together estimates of all the relevant policies in one place. However, if the country uses "program budgeting," where programs are presented as expenditure categories with specific and identified objectives, and it identifies anti-poverty programs within each administrative unit, then that is also acceptable for this question.

The IBP Budget Brief, "How Transparent are Governments When it Comes to Their Budget's Impact on Poverty and Inequality?"

(<https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/government-transparency-of-budgets-impact-on-poverty-inequality-ibp-2019.pdf>) includes a discussion of countries that have provided information on how its policies affect the poor.

For instance, Pakistan provides a detailed breakdown of pro-poor expenditure as part of its 2017-18 budget proposal. In one document, the government sets out policy priorities, expected outputs, and estimates of past and future spending for several programs aimed at poverty alleviation. Another supporting document provides a comprehensive overview of ongoing policies, including a chapter on social safety nets, covering both financial and performance information of poverty alleviation schemes over a period of eight years. (http://www.finance.gov.pk/budget/mtbf_2018_21.pdf and http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey_1718.html).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must for at least the budget year both present estimates covering all policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations and include a narrative discussion that specifically addresses these policies. (For countries using program budgeting that breaks out individual anti-poverty programs, there should be a separate narrative associated with each such program.) Answer "b" if a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations are presented. Answer "c" if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" if no estimates of policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations are presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of all policies that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

See the volumes of the President's budget listed in the response to Question 1, especially Table S-6, Mandatory and Receipt Totals, pages 125-141 in the "Budget" volume and Chapter 14, Aid to State and Local Governments, pages 197-214 in the "Analytical Perspectives" volume.

Comment:

The budget documents do not discuss spending and tax benefits for the impoverished in a single, unified presentation, but by the pertinent functional classifications (e.g., health, income security) and administrative units (e.g., the Department of Health and Human Services). Such programs are dispersed among several functional classifications and administrative units. Narrative discussions for these programs appear mainly in the "Appendix" volume and the "budget justification" documents submitted by each agency to Congress separately.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: The most accurate option is not presented, which is that estimates of MOST policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations are presented, along with a narrative description.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP notes that under the OBS methodology the detailed program level information provided in the EBP, particularly in the supporting budget justification and performance documents, is consistent with an "a" response.

53. Does the executive release to the public its timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal (that is, a document setting deadlines for submissions from other government entities, such as line ministries or subnational government, to the Ministry of Finance or whatever central government agency is in charge of coordinating the budget's formulation)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 53 asks about the budget timetable. An internal timetable is particularly important for the executive's management of the budget preparation process, in order to ensure that the executive accounts for the views of the different departments and agencies in the proposed budget. The timetable would, for instance, set deadlines for submissions from other government entities, such as line ministries or subnational government, to the Ministry of Finance or whatever central government agency is in charge of coordinating the budget's formulation. So that civil society is aware of the various steps in the budget formulation process, and when opportunities may exist to engage the executive, it is essential that this timetable be made available to the public.

To answer "a," the executive must prepare a detailed budget timetable and release it to the public. A "b" answer applies if the timetable is made public, but some details are not included. A "c" response applies if the timetable is made public, but many important details are excluded, reducing its value for those outside government. Answer "d" applies if no timetable is made available to the public. As long as a timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal is released, answer "a," "b," or "c" may be selected, even if the Executive's Budget Proposal is not made publicly available.

Answer:

a. Yes, a detailed timetable is released to the public.

Source:

Office of Management and Budget, Circular A-11 (Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget), updated annually

Comment:

Deadlines for executive branch agencies regarding the preparation and revision of the budget submission are set forth in OMB's Circular A-11 (see especially Section 10.5). OMB also provides additional deadlines for agencies in Memorandums and Bulletins, such as the annual "budget guidance" memorandum for formulation; see, for example, OMB Memorandum M-17-28, Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Budget Guidance, July 7, 2017, 3 pages. OMB Bulletins, Circulars, and Memoranda are maintained under the heading "Information and Guidance" on the OMB Website (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

54. Does the Pre-Budget Statement present information on the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget projections are based?

(The core information must include a discussion of the economic outlook with estimates of nominal GDP level, inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 54 focuses on the macroeconomic forecast that underlies the Pre-Budget Statement, asking whether "core" information related to the economic assumptions is presented. These core components include a discussion of the economic outlook as well as estimates of the following:

- nominal GDP level;
- inflation rate;
- real GDP growth; and
- interest rates.

Beyond these core elements, some governments also provide additional information related to the economic outlook, including for instance: short- and long-term interest rates; the rate of employment and unemployment; GDP deflator; price of oil and other commodities; current account; exchange rate; and composition of GDP growth.

To answer "a," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all of the core information related to the macroeconomic forecast as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the macroeconomic forecast is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on the macroeconomic forecast is presented.

Answer:

d. No, information related to the macroeconomic forecast is not presented.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not prepare a Pre-Budget Statement (PBS).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

55. Does the Pre-Budget Statement present information on the government's expenditure policies and priorities that will guide the development of detailed estimates for the upcoming budget?

(The core information must include a discussion of expenditure policies and priorities and an estimate of total expenditures.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 55 focuses on the government's expenditure policies and priorities in the Pre-Budget Statement, asking whether "core" information related to these policies is presented. These core components include:

- *a discussion of expenditure policies and priorities; and*
- *an estimate of total expenditures.*

Although a Pre-Budget Statement is unlikely to include detailed programmatic proposals (such detailed information is typically only presented in the budget itself), it should include a discussion of broad policy priorities and a projection of at least total expenditures associated with these policies for the budget year. The Pre-Budget Statement can include some detail, for instance, estimates provided by any of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications.

To answer "a," the Pre-Budget Statement must present for the upcoming budget year all of the core information related to the government's expenditure policies and priorities as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all of the core components noted above for the upcoming budget year. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the government's expenditure policies and priorities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on the government's expenditure policies and priorities is presented.

Answer:

d. No, information related to the government's expenditure policies and priorities is not presented.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not prepare a PBS.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

56. Does the Pre-Budget Statement present information on the government's revenue policies and priorities that will guide the development of detailed estimates for the upcoming budget?

(The core information must include a discussion of revenue policies and priorities and an estimate of total revenues.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 56 focuses on the government's revenue policies and priorities in the Pre-Budget Statement, asking whether "core" information related to these policies is presented. These core components include:

- *a discussion of revenue policies and priorities; and*
- *an estimate of total revenue.*

Although a Pre-Budget Statement is unlikely to include detailed revenue proposals, it should include a discussion of broad policy priorities and a projection of at least the total revenue associated with these policies for the budget year. The Pre-Budget Statement can also include more detail, for instance, with estimates provided by revenue category – tax and non-tax – or some of the major individual sources of revenue, such as the Value Added Tax or the income tax.

To answer "a," the Pre-Budget Statement must present for the upcoming budget year all of the core information related to the government's revenue policies and priorities as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all of the core components noted above for the upcoming budget year. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the government's revenue policies and priorities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on the government's revenue policies and priorities is presented.

Answer:

d. No, information related to the government's revenue policies and priorities is not presented.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not prepare a PBS.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

57. Does Pre-Budget Statement present three estimates related to government borrowing and debt: the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year; the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year; and interest payments on the debt for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 57 asks whether the Pre-Budget Statement includes three key estimates related to borrowing and debt:

- *the amount of net new borrowing needed in the upcoming budget year;*
- *the central government's total debt burden at the end of the upcoming budget year; and*
- *the interest payments on the outstanding debt for the upcoming budget year.*

Debt is the accumulated amount of money that the government borrows. The government can borrow from its citizens, banks, and businesses within the country (domestic debt) or from creditors outside the country (external debt). External debt is typically owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Net new borrowing is the additional amount of new borrowing that is required for the budget year to finance expenditures in the budget that exceed available revenues. Net new borrowing adds to the accumulated debt. It is distinct from gross borrowing, which also includes borrowing needed to repay existing debt that matured during the budget year; debt that is replaced (or rolled over) does not add to the total of accumulated debt.

Interest payments on the debt (or debt service costs) are typically made at regular intervals, and these payments must be made on a timely basis in order to avoid defaulting on the debt obligation. Interest payments are separate from the repayment of principal, which occurs only when the loan has matured and must be paid back in full.

To answer "a," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all three estimates of borrowing and debt for at least the upcoming budget year. For a "b" answer, the Pre-Budget Statement must present two of those three estimates. For a "c" answer, the PBS must present one of the three estimates. Answer "d" applies if no information on borrowing and debt is presented in the PBS.

Answer:

d. No, none of the three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are not presented.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not prepare a PBS.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

58. Does the Pre-Budget Statement present estimates of total expenditures for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 58 asks about multi-year expenditure estimates in the Pre-Budget Statement.

To answer "a," expenditure estimates for at least two years beyond the upcoming budget year must be presented. The estimates must be for at least total expenditures, but could include more detail than just the aggregate total.

Answer:

b. No, multi-year expenditure estimates are not presented.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not prepare a PBS.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

59. Does the Enacted Budget present expenditure estimates by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 59 asks if expenditure estimates in the Enacted Budget are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above. Each of the classifications answers a different question:

administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. Unlike classification by administrative unit, which tends to be unique to each country, functional and economic classifications for government budgeting have been developed and standardized by international institutions. Cross-country comparisons are facilitated by adherence to these international classification standards.

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present expenditure estimates by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," expenditure estimates must be presented by two of the three classifications. A "c" answer applies if expenditure estimates are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if expenditure estimates are not presented by any of the three classifications.

Answer:

c. Yes, the Enacted Budget presents expenditure estimates by only one of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

Public Law 115-141, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (March 23, 2018) and explanatory materials inserted by the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee (Mr. Frelinghuysen of New Jersey) into the Congressional Record of March 22, 2018 (115th Congress, 2nd Session, Volume 164, Number 50, Book II (pages H2045-H2695) and Book III (pages H2697-2902) (<https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2018/03/22>).

Comment:

As indicated previously, the budget of the United States Government is not enacted in a single document or action, but instead involves the separate enactment of dozens of laws each year (and in prior years) and reflects the primacy of the Congress in making budgetary decisions. The most significant documents regarding the enacted budget are the public law and the congressional committee reports (House of Representatives, Senate, and conference) that accompany the budgetary legislation when it is considered. For most federal agencies, the omnibus (or consolidated) appropriations act has been the principal funding law in recent years rather than free-standing regular appropriations acts; the omnibus act effectively is a "vehicle" that merges regular appropriations act together, each as a separate "division" of the law. The initial reports of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees on the regular appropriations acts (that may or may not be considered by the chambers) have some relevance to the omnibus legislation because agreements for some portions of the legislation occur early in the process. With respect to omnibus legislation, in most cases, the House and Senate have not used the traditional conference committee to resolve their differences but have instead used other means. Accordingly, no conference report is prepared under these circumstances. As an alternative to a conference report (and the accompanying joint explanatory statement, which explains the conferees decisions), the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee usually has been authorized to insert explanatory materials into the Congressional Record (the verbatim record of the daily floor proceedings of the House and Senate).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: If one defines appropriation bills as the "enacted budget" this is accurate. But the appropriation bills, even in total, are 30% of the total budget, so how one could count that as an enacted budget is beyond me. However, I have had this argument with the OBS in the past and lost.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP accepts annual appropriation bills as the Enacted Budget for purposes of the OBS.

59b. Based on the response to Question 59, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications are included in the Enacted Budget:

Answer:

Administrative classification

Source:

See the reference to the explanatory materials in the previous response.

Comment:

Appropriations are classified by administrative units. The House and Senate Appropriations Committee reports, and the explanatory materials inserted into the Congressional Record at the final stage of consideration, present funding information by appropriations accounts, and in many instances, by activities, programs, or projects under accounts. Accounts are organized by the corresponding departments and agencies.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

60. Does the Enacted Budget present expenditure estimates for individual programs?

GUIDELINES:

Question 60 asks if expenditure estimates in the Enacted Budget are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present all programs, which account for all expenditures, in the budget year. To answer "b," the Enacted Budget must present expenditures for individual programs that when combined account for at least two-thirds of expenditures, but not all expenditures. A "c" answer applies if the Enacted Budget presents programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program in the Enacted Budget.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Enacted Budget presents estimates for programs accounting for all expenditures.

Source:

The explanatory materials for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (cited previously), show that \$887,171,00 was appropriated for the "Research and Education Activities" account of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture under the Department of Agriculture. Further, a table breaks the total amount down by about two dozen separate activities, such as \$33,961 for the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act (p. H2047). Similarly, \$3,697,831,000 appropriated to the "Operations, Research and Atmospheric Administration" account of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the Department of Commerce is broken down in the narrative by activities (e.g., \$561,187,000 for the National Oceans Service) and, under activities, in tabular form (e.g., \$26,604,000 for the Coral Reef Program under Ocean and Coastal Management and Services of the National Oceans Service) (pp. H2085-H2086).

Comment:

Funding in the public law, and the explanations of funding decisions in committee reports and explanatory materials, are provided on the basis of accounts. The methodology for this survey equates accounts to programs. Actual funding amounts (not estimates) are specified in the text of the public law and enumerated in tabular form throughout the explanatory material cited above. In many instances, funding levels are presented by activities, programs, or projects under an account.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

c. Yes, the Enacted Budget presents estimates for programs accounting for less than two-thirds of expenditures.

Comments: Total appropriations are less than one-third of expenditures, and one-third is less than two-thirds, thus C is the appropriate answer. Accepting A as a response flies in the face of the comprehensive view of the budget that the question suggests, and that the OBS criteria seem to value. I would note that, even for appropriations, there are several bills (up to 12) NONE of which account for even the 30% of expenditures alone.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher. While not all federal government expenditures are included in the EB, program-level detail is provided for all of the expenditures covered by the EB. Further, while the programs categorized as "discretionary" comprise roughly 30% of spending the US, the appropriations bills also include funding for appropriated entitlements such as Medicaid and SNAP. When these programs are included, these bills cover about half of all funding.

61. Does the Enacted Budget present revenue estimates by category (such as tax and non-tax)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 61 asks whether revenue estimates in the Enacted Budget are presented by "category"—that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present revenue estimates classified by category.

Answer:

b. No, the Enacted Budget does not present revenue estimates by category.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

As discussed previously, the omnibus appropriations act is treated in this survey as the "enacted budget." Some collections made by federal agencies pursuant to appropriations acts are treated as offsets to spending (offsetting collections) rather than being deposited into the Treasury as revenue. For the most part, however, revenues derive from separate legislation under the jurisdiction of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee and are not considered to be part of the enacted budget for purposes of this survey.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

62. Does the Enacted Budget present individual sources of revenue?

GUIDELINES:

Question 62 asks whether revenue estimates for individual sources of revenue are presented in the Enacted Budget. The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present all individual sources of revenue, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. To answer "b," the Enacted Budget must present individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Enacted Budget presents individual sources of revenue that account for less than two-thirds of revenues. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of revenue are not presented.

Answer:

d. No, the Enacted Budget does not present individual sources of revenue.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

See the response to the previous question.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

63. Does the Enacted Budget present three estimates related to government borrowing and debt: the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year; the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year; and interest payments on the debt for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 63 asks about three key estimates related to borrowing and debt:

- the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year;*
- the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year;*
- the interest payments on the outstanding debt for the budget year.*

Debt is the accumulated amount of money that the government borrows. The government can borrow from its citizens, banks, and businesses within the country (domestic debt) or from creditors outside the country (external debt). External debt is typically owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Net new borrowing is the additional amount of new borrowing that is required for the budget year to finance expenditures in the budget that exceed available revenues. Net new borrowing adds to the accumulated debt. It is distinct from gross borrowing, which also includes borrowing needed to repay existing debt that matured during the budget year; debt that is replaced (or rolled over) does not add to the total of accumulated debt.

Interest payments on the debt (or debt service costs) are typically made at regular intervals, and these payments must be made on a timely basis in order to avoid defaulting on the debt obligation. Interest payments are separate from the repayment of principal, which occurs only when the loan has matured and must be paid back in full.

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present all three estimates of borrowing and debt. For a "b" answer, the Enacted Budget must present two of those three estimates. For a "c" answer, the Enacted Budget must present one of the three estimates. Answer "d" applies if no information on borrowing and debt is presented in the Enacted Budget.

Answer:

d. No, none of the three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are not presented.

Source:

[Is response (d) a double negative?]

Comment:

Historically, legislation affecting borrowing and the debt is under the jurisdiction of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee and is not included in annual appropriations acts.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

64. What information is provided in the Citizens Budget?

(The core information must include expenditure and revenue totals, the main policy initiatives in the budget, the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget is based, and contact information for follow-up by citizens.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 64 focuses on the content of the Citizens Budget, asking whether "core" information is presented. These core components include:

- *expenditure and revenue totals;*
- *the main policy initiatives in the budget;*
- *the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget is based; and*
- *contact information for follow-up by citizens.*

To answer "a," the Citizens Budget or supporting documentation must present all of the above core information as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Citizens Budget must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if the Citizens Budget includes some of the core components above, but other core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if a Citizens Budget is not published.

Answer:

d. The Citizens Budget is not published.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not prepare a Citizens Budget (CB).

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

65. How is the Citizens Budget disseminated to the public?

GUIDELINES:

Question 65 asks how the Citizens Budget is disseminated to the public. Citizens Budgets should be made available to a variety of audiences. Therefore paper versions and an Internet posting of a document might not be sufficient.

To answer "a," the executive must use three or more different types of creative media tools to reach the largest possible share of the population, including those who otherwise would not normally have access to budget documents or information. Dissemination would also be pursued at the very local level, so that the coverage is targeted both by geographic area and population group (e.g., women, elderly, low income, urban, rural, etc.). Option "b" applies if significant dissemination efforts are made through a combination of two means of communications, for instance, both posting the Citizens Budget on the executive's official website and distributing printed copies of it. Option "c" applies if the Citizens Budget is disseminated through only posting on the executive's official website. Option "d" applies when the executive does not publish a Citizens Budget.

Answer:

d. A Citizens Budget is not published.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not prepare a CB.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

66. Has the executive established mechanisms to identify the public's requirements for budget information prior to publishing the Citizens Budget?

GUIDELINES:

Question 66 asks whether the executive has established mechanisms to identify the public's requirements for budget information before publishing a Citizens Budget. What the public wants to know about the budget might differ from the information the executive includes in technical documents that comprise the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget; similarly, different perspectives might exist on how the budget should be presented, and this may vary depending on the context. For this reason the executive should consult with the public on the content and presentation of the Citizens Budget.

To answer "a," the executive must have established mechanisms to consult with the public, and these mechanisms for consultation are both accessible and widely used by the public. Such mechanisms can include focus groups, social networks, surveys, hotlines, and meetings/events in universities or other locations where people gather to discuss public issues. In countries where Citizens Budgets are consistently produced and released, it may be sufficient for the government to provide the public with contact information and feedback opportunities, and subsequently use the feedback to improve its management of public resources.

Option "b" applies if the executive has established mechanisms for consultation that are accessible to the public, but that the public nonetheless does not use frequently. That is, the public does not typically engage with the executive on the content of the Citizens Budget, even though the executive has created opportunities for such consultation. Option "c" applies if the executive has established mechanism for consultation with the public, but they are poorly designed and thus not accessible to the public. Option "d" applies if the executive has not created any mechanisms to seek feedback from the public on the content of the Citizens Budget.

Answer:

d. No, the executive has not established any mechanisms to identify the public's requirements for budget information in the Citizen's Budget.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

The United States Government does not prepare a CB.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

67. Are "citizens" versions of budget documents published throughout the budget process?

GUIDELINES:

Question 67 asks if "citizens" versions of budget documents are published throughout the budget process. While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle.

To answer "a," a citizens version of at least one budget document is published for each of the four stages of the budget process (budget formulation, enactment, execution, and audit) – for a total of at least four citizens budget documents throughout the process. Option "b" applies if a citizens version of a budget document is published for at least two of the four stages of the budget process. Option "c" applies if a citizens version of a budget document is published for at least one of the four stages of the budget process. Select option "d" if no "citizens" version of budget documents is published.

Answer:

c. A citizens version of budget documents is published for at least one stage of the budget process.

Source:

Financial Report of the United States Government.

Comment:

See the response to YER-08 toward the beginning of the survey.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

68. Do the In-Year Reports present actual expenditures by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 68 asks if expenditure estimates in In-Year Reports are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above.

Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. Unlike classification by administrative unit, which tends to be unique to each country, functional and economic classifications for government budgeting have been developed and standardized by international institutions. Cross-country comparisons are facilitated by adherence to these international classification standards.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present actual expenditures by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," actual expenditures must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if actual expenditures are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if actual expenditures are not presented by any of the three classifications in In-Year Reports.

Answer:

b. Yes, the In-Year Reports present actual expenditures by two of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

Final Monthly Treasury Statement, September 2018, available at: <https://fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/mts/mts0918.pdf>. (The MTS for September, the last month of the fiscal year, is the "Final MTS"; the remaining reports are just "MTS".)

Comment:

The Final Monthly Treasury Statement presents data on actual expenditures by agency and function. Data by department and agency, for example, is presented in Table 5, Outlays of the U.S. Government, September 2018 and Other Periods, pages 7-20; data by function is presented in Table 9, Summary of Receipts by Source, and Outlays by Function of the U.S. Government, September 2018 and Other Periods, page 34.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

68b. Based on the response to Question 68, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications are included in the In-Year Reports:

Answer:

Administrative classification

Functional classification

Source:

See the sources cited in the response to the previous question.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

69. Do the In-Year Reports present actual expenditures for individual programs?

GUIDELINES:

Question 69 asks if expenditure estimates in In-Year Reports are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present actual expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures. To answer "b," In-Year Reports must present actual expenditures for individual programs that when combined account for at least two-thirds of expenditures, but not all expenditures. A "c" answer applies if In-Year Reports present actual expenditures for programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if actual expenditures are not presented by program in In-Year Reports.

Answer:

a. Yes, the In-Year Reports present actual expenditures for programs accounting for all expenditures.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to question 68.

Comment:

See the citation to Table 5 in the response to question 68. It presents data by agency and account. In this survey, accounts equate to programs.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

70. Do the In-Year Reports compare actual year-to-date expenditures with either the original estimate for that period (based on the enacted budget) or the same period in the previous year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 70 asks whether In-Year Reports compare actual expenditures to-date with either the enacted levels or actual expenditures for the same period in the previous year.

The OECD recommends that the reports contain the total year-to-date expenditures in a format that allows for a comparison with the budget's forecast expenditures (based on enacted levels) for the same period.

To answer "a," comparisons must be made for expenditures presented in the In-Year Reports

Answer:

a. Yes, comparisons are made for expenditures presented in the In-Year Reports.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to question 68.

Comment:

Table 5, cited previously, provides expenditure data for the current month compared to current year-to-date and prior year-to-date levels.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

71. Do In-Year Reports present actual revenue by category (such as tax and non-tax)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 71 asks whether In-Year Reports present actual revenues by "category"— that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present revenue estimates classified by category.

Answer:

a. Yes, In-Year Reports present actual revenue by category.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to question 68.

Comment:

Data on revenues are provided in Table 4, Receipts of the U.S. Government, September 2018 and Other Periods, page 6. Data on undistributed offsetting receipts is provided in Table 5, cited previously.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

72. Do In-Year Reports present the individual sources of revenue for actual revenues collected?

GUIDELINES:

Question 72 asks whether In-Year Reports present actual collections of individual sources of revenue (such as income taxes, VAT, etc.). The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present actual collections for all individual sources of revenue, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. To answer "b," In-Year Reports must present actual collections for individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue collected, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if In-Year Reports present individual sources of actual revenue that account for less than two-thirds of all revenue collected. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of actual revenue are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, In-Year Reports present individual sources of actual revenue accounting for all revenue.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to question 68.

Comment:

Data on revenues by source is presented in Table 4, cited previously. According to aggregate revenue data presented in Table 3, Summary of Receipts and Outlays of the U.S. Government, September 2018, page 5, "Miscellaneous Receipts" (\$111 billion) for the Current Fiscal Year to Date amount to about 3.3% of total receipts (\$3,328.7 billion) for the same period.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

73. Do the In-Year Reports compare actual year-to-date revenues with either the original estimate for that period (based on the enacted budget) or the same period in the previous year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 73 asks whether In-Year Reports compare actual revenues to-date with either the enacted levels or actual revenues for the same period in the previous year.

The OECD recommends that the reports contain the total year-to-date revenues in a format that allows for a comparison with the budget's forecast revenues (based on enacted levels) for the same period.

To answer "a," comparisons must be made for revenues presented in the In-Year Reports.

Answer:

a. Yes, comparisons are made for revenues presented in the In-Year Reports.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to question 68.

Comment:

Table 4, cited previously, provides revenue data for the current month compared to current year-to-date and prior year-to-date levels.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

74. Do In-Year Reports present three estimates related to actual government borrowing and debt: the amount of net new borrowing; the total debt outstanding; and interest payments?

GUIDELINES:

Question 74 asks about three key estimates related to borrowing and debt:

- *the amount of net new borrowing so far during the year;*
- *the central government's total debt burden at that point in the year; and*
- *the interest payments to-date on the outstanding debt.*

Debt is the accumulated amount of money that the government borrows. The government can borrow from its citizens and banks and businesses within the country (domestic debt) or from creditors outside the country (external debt). External debt is typically owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Net new borrowing is the additional amount of new borrowing that is required for the budget year to finance expenditures in the budget that exceed available revenues. Net new borrowing adds to the accumulated debt. It is distinct from gross borrowing, which also includes borrowing needed to repay existing debt that matured during the budget year; debt that is replaced (or rolled over) does not add to the total of accumulated debt.

Interest payments on the debt (or debt service costs) are typically made at regular intervals, and these payments must be made on a timely basis in order to avoid defaulting on the debt obligation. Interest payments are separate from the repayment of principal, which occurs only when the loan has matured and must be paid back in full.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present all three estimates of borrowing and debt. For a "b" answer, In-Year Reports must present two of those three estimates. For a "c" answer, IYRs must present one of the three estimates. Answer "d" applies if no information on borrowing and debt is presented in In-Year Reports.

Answer:

a. Yes, all three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are presented.

Source:

Final Monthly Treasury Statement, September 2018, available at: <https://fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/mts/mts0918.pdf>.

The quarterly Treasury Bulletin, September 2018, available at: <https://fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/treasury-bulletin/b2018-3.pdf>.

Comment:

In the Monthly Treasury Statement, Table 6, Means of Financing the Deficit or Disposition of the Surplus by the U.S. Government, September 2018, page 21, shows net borrowing for the month compared to year-to-date amounts for the current and prior years; Table 9, Summary of Receipts by Source, and Outlays by Function of the U.S. Government, September 2018, page 34, provides data on outlays for the "Net Interest" function (but not by the interest costs subfunction (901)). In the Treasury Bulletin, Table FD-1, Summary of the Federal Debt, on page 22, shows the monthly amounts of debt outstanding.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

75. Do In-Year Reports present information related to the composition of the total actual debt outstanding?

(The core information must include interest rates on the debt instruments; maturity profile of the debt; and whether it is domestic or external debt.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 75 focuses on the composition of government debt, asking whether "core" information related to its composition is presented. These core

components include:

- interest rates on the debt;
- maturity profile of the debt; and
- whether the debt is domestic or external.

The interest rates affect the amount of interest that must be paid to creditors. The maturity profile indicates the final payment date of the loan, at which point the principal (and all remaining interest) is due to be paid; government borrowing typically includes a mix of short-term and long-term debt. As discussed in Question 74, domestic debt is held by a country's citizens and banks and businesses, while external debt is held by foreigners. These factors related to the composition of the debt give an indication of the potential vulnerability of the country's debt position, and ultimately whether the cost of servicing the accumulated debt is affordable.

Beyond these core elements, a government may also provide additional information related to the composition of its debt, including for instance: whether interest rates are fixed or variable; whether debt is callable; the currency of the debt; a profile of the creditors (bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions, commercial banks, Central Bank, etc.); an analysis of the risk associated with the debt; and where appropriate, what the debt is being used to finance.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present all of the core information related to the composition of government debt to-date as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," In-Year Reports must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the composition of government debt is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on the composition of the debt outstanding in In-Year Reports.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the composition of the total actual debt outstanding.

Source:

See the sources cited in the response to Question 74, as well as the Monthly Statement of the Public Debt of the United States, September 30, 2018, available at: <https://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/pd/mspd/2018/opds092018.pdf>.

Comment:

The Treasury Department reports cited above collectively provide comprehensive information on borrowing and debt. The Treasury Bulletin, in particular, provides information on debt held by the public and government accounts (Table FD-1, page 22) and maturity distribution by classes (i.e., number of years) (Table FD-5, page 26). Information on average interest rates for marketable and non-marketable bills, notes, bonds, and other securities is provided under "Interest Rates & Prices" at TreasuryDirect, available at: https://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/rates/pd/avg/2018/2018_09.htm.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

76. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget include an updated macroeconomic forecast for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 76 asks whether the Mid-Year Review includes an updated macroeconomic forecast for the budget year, and provides an explanation of the update.

Refer to Question 15 for the components of the macroeconomic forecast presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must include an updated macroeconomic forecast and explain all of the differences between the initial forecast presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal and the updated forecast. The explanation must include at least estimates of all differences; a narrative discussion is desirable but not required if estimates of all the differences are provided. To answer "b," the macroeconomic forecast must be updated, but only some of the differences between the initial and updated forecasts are explained. The explanation would be more limited, such as only a narrative discussion of the differences or estimates covering only some of the differences. A "c" response applies if the Mid-Year Review includes an updated macroeconomic forecast, but does not provide an explanation for the revisions. A "d" response applies if the macroeconomic forecast has not been updated.

Answer:

a. Yes, the estimates for the macroeconomic forecast have been updated, and an explanation of all of the differences between the original and updated forecasts is presented.

Source:

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2019, Mid-Session Review, July 13, 2018, available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2019-MSR/pdf/BUDGET-2019-MR.pdf>.

Comment:

In the Mid-Session Review, see the section "Economic Assumptions" on pages 5-10. In addition to explaining the updated assumptions for variables that comprise the forecast, it is compared to competing forecasts (e.g., the Congressional Budget Office, the Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee, and a Blue Chip panel of private economists).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

77. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget include updated expenditure estimates for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 77 asks whether the Mid-Year Review includes updated estimates of expenditure for the budget year, and provides an explanation of the update.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must include updated expenditure estimates and explain all of the differences between the initial levels presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal (or the Enacted Budget) and the updated estimates. The explanation must include at least estimates of all differences; a narrative discussion is desirable but not required if estimates of all the differences are provided. The expenditure estimates must be updated, but only some of the differences between the initial and updated estimates are explained. The explanation would be more limited, such as only a narrative discussion of the differences or estimates covering only some of the differences. A "c" response applies if the Mid-Year Review includes updated expenditure estimates, but does not provide an explanation for the revisions. A "d" response applies if the expenditure estimates have not been updated.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditure estimates have been updated, and an explanation of all of the differences between the original and updated expenditure estimates is presented.

Source:

See the citation for the response to the previous question.

Comment:

In the Mid-Session Review, see the section "Expenditures" on pages 15-18. Changes in estimates due to the enactment of legislation, policy changes, changes in debt service levels, and re-estimates for technical and other factors are identified.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

78. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget present expenditure estimates for the budget year underway by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 78 asks if expenditure estimates in the Mid-Year Review are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. Unlike classification by administrative unit, which tends to be unique to each country, functional and economic classifications for government budgeting have been developed and standardized by international institutions. Cross-country comparisons are facilitated by adherence to these international classification standards.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must present expenditure estimates by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," expenditure estimates must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if expenditure estimates are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if expenditure estimates are not presented by any of the three classifications in the Mid-Year Review.

Answer:

c. Yes, the Mid-Year Review presents expenditure estimates by only one of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

See the source cited for the response to Question 76.

Comment:

The Mid-Session Review presents expenditure data by administrative units (see, for example, Table S-8, 2019 Discretionary Overview by Major Agency, pages 49-51).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

78b. Based on the response to Question 78, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications are included in the Mid-Year Review:

Answer:

Administrative classification

Source:

See the source cited in response to Question 76.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

79. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget present expenditure estimates for the budget year underway for individual programs?

GUIDELINES:

Question 79 asks if expenditure estimates in the Mid-Year Review are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures. To answer "b," the Mid-Year Review must present expenditures for individual programs that when combined account for at least two-thirds of expenditures, but not all expenditures. A "c" answer applies if the Mid-Year Review presents programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program in the Mid-Year Review.

Answer:

b. Yes, the Mid-Year Review presents estimates for programs accounting for at least two-thirds of, but not all, expenditures.

Source:

See the source cited for the response to Question 76.

Comment:

Revised estimates of some expenditures for individual programs, mainly involving mandatory spending accounts, are addressed in narrative and tabular form (see especially Table S-6, Mandatory and Receipt Proposals, pages 29-46).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

80. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget include updated revenue estimates for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 80 asks whether the Mid-Year Review includes updated estimates of revenue for the budget year, and provides an explanation of the update.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must include updated revenue estimates and explain all of the differences between the initial levels presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal (or the Enacted Budget) and the updated estimates. The explanation must include at least estimates of all differences; a narrative discussion is desirable but not required if estimates of all the differences are provided. To answer "b," the revenue estimates must be updated, but only some of the differences between the initial and updated estimates are explained. The explanation would be more limited, such as only a narrative discussion of the differences or estimates covering only some of the differences. A "c" response applies if the Mid-Year Review includes updated revenue estimates, but no explanation for the revisions is provided. A "d" response applies if the revenue estimates have not been updated.

Answer:

a. Yes, revenue estimates have been updated, and an explanation of all of the differences between the original and updated revenue estimates is presented.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to Question 76.

Comment:

In the Mid-Session Review, see the section entitled "Receipts," pages 11-13. Also, see Table S-4, Adjusted Baseline by Category, pages 25-26.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

81. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget present revenue estimates for the budget year underway by category (such as tax and non-tax)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 81 asks whether revenue estimates in the Mid-Year Review are presented by "category"— that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must present revenue estimates classified by category.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Mid-Year Review presents revenue estimates by category.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to Question 76.

Comment:

See the comment for the previous questions.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

82. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget present individual sources of revenue for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 82 asks whether revenue estimates for individual sources of revenue are presented in the Mid-Year Review. The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must present all sources of revenue individually, accounting for all revenues, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. To answer "b," the Mid-Year Review must present individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Mid-Year Review presents estimates of individual revenue sources that account for less than two-thirds of revenue. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of revenue are not presented in the Mid-Year Review.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Mid-Year Review presents individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to Question 76.

Comment:

See the comment for Question 80.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

83. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget include updated estimates of government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 83 asks whether the Mid-Year Review includes updated estimates of borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the budget year, and provides an explanation of the update.

Refer to Question 13 for details on estimates in the Executive's Budget Proposal of borrowing and debt. Key estimates related to borrowing and debt include:

- *The amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year;*
- *The central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year; and*
- *The interest payments on the outstanding debt for the budget year.*

Refer to Question 14 for details on estimates in the Executive's Budget Proposal related to the composition of the debt. Core information related to the composition of government debt include:

- *interest rates on the debt;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether the debt is domestic or external.*

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must include an updated estimates of borrowing and debt, including its composition, and explain all of the differences between the initial estimates presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal (or Enacted Budget) and the updated estimates. The explanation must include at least estimates of all differences; a narrative discussion is desirable but not required if estimates of all the differences are provided. To answer "b," the

estimates of borrowing and debt must be updated, but only some of the differences between the initial and updated estimates are explained. The explanation would be more limited, such as only a narrative discussion of the differences or estimates covering only some of the differences. A "c" response applies if the Mid-Year Review includes updated estimates, but no explanation for the revisions is provided. A "d" response applies if the estimates of borrowing and debt have not been updated.

Answer:

b. Yes, estimates of government borrowing and debt have been updated, and information on some of the differences between the original and updated estimates is presented.

Source:

See the source cited in the response to Question 76.

Comment:

In the Mid-Session Review, see Table S-11, Federal Government Financing and Debt, pages 54-55. In addition, information on changes in the deficit, economic assumptions, and spending for interest costs - pertinent to estimates of borrowing and debt - is presented in Table 1, Changes in Deficits From the February Budget, page 4; Table 3, Comparison of Economic Assumptions, page 9; and Table 5, Changes in Outlays, page 18.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

84. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the enacted levels (including in-year changes approved by the legislature) and the actual outcome for expenditures?

GUIDELINES:

Question 84 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and actual expenditures for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcome for all expenditures, along with a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if estimates of the differences for all expenditures are presented, but a narrative discussion is not included. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences are presented for some, but not all expenditures, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. Answer "d" if no estimates of the differences are presented in the Year-End Report

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcome for expenditures are not presented.

Source:

Financial Report of the United States Government, 2017, available at: <https://fiscal.treasury.gov/reports-statements/financial-report/2017-report.html>.

Combined Statement of Receipts, Outlays, and Balances of the United States Government, 2017, available at: <https://fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/combined-statement/cs2017/index.html>.

Comment:

Due to the manner in which federal spending is accounted for, there is no difference between these two sets of numbers. The enacted/final outcome levels are compared with the levels for the previous year, given that the concept of an "enacted level" has little relevance in the U.S. system, where most revenues and spending stem from permanent law. In addition to the Financial Report, the Treasury Department issues the Combined Statement of Receipts, Outlays, and Balances of the United States Government, which also serves as a "year-end" report.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree with the conclusion, but not with the explanation. The "enacted level" cannot be compared because the US has decided not to provide information on the enacted level, not because the enacted level has little meaning. It would be very useful to know what was assumed about spending after the Congress had completed action, and how that compared to what actually happened. Explaining that away as not relevant is a cop-out, in my view.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP would accept the "estimates" in the budget for mandatory programs as the equivalent of the enacted level for purposes of this question, but such

a comparison is not provided.

85. Does the Year-End Report present expenditure estimates by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 85 asks if expenditure estimates in the Year-End Report are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. Unlike classification by administrative unit, which tends to be unique to each country, functional and economic classifications for government budgeting have been developed and standardized by international institutions. Cross-country comparisons are facilitated by adherence to these international classification standards.

To answer “a,” the Year-End Report must present expenditure estimates by all three of the expenditure classifications. Answer “b” if expenditure estimates are presented by two of these three classifications. Answer “c” if expenditure estimates are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer “d” if expenditure estimates are not presented by any of the three classifications in the Year-End Report.

Answer:

b. Yes, the Year-End Report presents expenditure estimates by two of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to the previous question.

Comment:

The Financial Report and the Combined Statement present expenditure data by agency and function. The Financial Report generally reports information on the basis of “net costs,” which uses accrual accounting, while the Combined Statement uses cash-based accounting. In the Financial Report, the Statement of Net Cost for FY 2017 (page 49), for example, presents costs by administrative unit. In the Combined Statement, data is presented in Part One on Outlays by Function

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

85b. Based on the response to Question 85, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications are included in the Year-End Report:

Answer:

Administrative classification

Functional classification

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

86. Does the Year-End Report present expenditure estimates for individual programs?

GUIDELINES:

Question 86 asks if expenditure estimates in the Year-End Report are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present expenditure estimates for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents expenditures for individual programs that when combined account for at least two-thirds of expenditures, but not all expenditures. Answer "c" if the Year-End Report presents programs that account for only less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" if expenditures are not presented by program in the Year-End Report.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Year-End Report presents estimates for programs accounting for all expenditures.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

As indicated previously, the Financial Report and the Combined Statement provide expenditure data by agency and account.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

87. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the enacted levels (including in-year changes approved by the legislature) and the actual outcome for revenues?

GUIDELINES:

Question 87 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and actual revenues for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcome for all revenues, along with a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if estimates of the differences for all revenues are presented, but a narrative discussion is not included. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences are presented for some, but not all revenues, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. Answer "d" if no estimates of the differences are presented in the Year-End Report.

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcome for revenues are not presented.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

Due to the manner in which federal revenues are accounted for, there is no difference between these two sets of numbers. The enacted/final outcome levels are compared with the levels for the previous year, given that the concept of an "enacted level" has little relevance in the U.S. system, where most revenues and spending stem from permanent law.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree with the conclusion, but not with the explanation. The "enacted level" cannot be compared because the US has decided not to provide information on the enacted level, not because the enacted level has little meaning. It would be very useful to know what was assumed about

revenues after the Congress had completed action, and how that compared to what actually happened. Explaining that away as not relevant is a cop-out, in my view.

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

88. Does the Year-End Report present revenue estimates by category (such as tax and non-tax)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 88 asks whether revenue estimates in the Year-End Report are presented by "category" – that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present revenue estimates classified by category.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Year-End Report presents revenue estimates by category.

Source:

See the sources cited in the response to Question 84.

Comment:

See Combined Statement, Part One (Receipts by Source) and Part Two (Table A, "Receipts by Source Categories").

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

89. Does the Year-End Report present individual sources of revenue?

GUIDELINES:

Question 89 asks whether revenue estimates for individual sources of revenue are presented in the Year-End Report. The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present all sources of revenue individually, accounting for all revenue, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue, but not all revenue. Answer "c" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of individual revenue sources that account for less than two-thirds of revenue. Answer "d" if individual sources of revenue are not presented in the Year-End Report.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Year-End Report presents individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

See the Combined Statement, Part 2, Detail of Receipts.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

90. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original estimates of government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 90 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the original estimates and the actual outcome for the fiscal year for borrowing and debt, including its composition, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 13 for details on estimates in the Executive's Budget Proposal of borrowing and debt. Key estimates related to borrowing and debt include:

- *the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year;*
- *the central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year; and*
- *the interest payments on the outstanding debt for the budget year.*

Refer to Question 14 for details on estimates in the Executive's Budget Proposal related to the composition of the debt. Core information related to the composition of government debt include:

- *interest rates on the debt;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether the debt is domestic or external.*

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of borrowing and debt for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of borrowing and debt for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the original estimates of government borrowing and debt for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year is not presented.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

90b. Based on the response to Question 90, check the box(es) to identify which estimates of government borrowing and debt, including its composition, have the differences between the original forecast and the actual outcome for the year presented in the Year-End Report:

Answer:

Information beyond the core elements:

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: n/a, I assume, means that since the information referenced in Q90 is not provided, this question is not applicable.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the peer reviewer that "none of the above" is the correct response, but that answer choice is not available.

91. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original macroeconomic forecast for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 91 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the original macroeconomic forecast for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 15 for the components of the macroeconomic forecast in the Executive's Budget Proposal. Core components include estimates of the nominal GDP level, inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates, although the importance of other macroeconomic assumptions, such as the price of oil, can vary from country to country.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original macroeconomic assumptions for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original macroeconomic assumptions for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original macroeconomic assumptions for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the original macroeconomic forecast for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year is not presented.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

91b. Based on the response to Question 91, check the box(es) to identify which elements of the macroeconomic forecast have the differences between the original forecast and the outcome for the year presented in the Year-End Report:

Answer:

None of the above

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

92. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome?

GUIDELINES:

Question 92 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 49 for the nonfinancial data on inputs included in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome are not presented.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

This information is provided mainly in year-end reports of individual agencies, especially "annual performance reports" by fiscal year. The reports generally are available on the Websites of each agency and are consolidated at www.performance.gov. These reports, however, focus principally on outputs and outcomes, not inputs.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

93. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome?

GUIDELINES:

Question 93 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion. Nonfinancial data on results can include data on both outputs and outcomes, but not on inputs (which are addressed in Question 92).

Refer to Question 50 for the nonfinancial data on results included in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84. Also, see the FY 2019 Performance Plan and Report of the Department of Health and Human Services, available at: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/budget/fy2019/performance/index.html>.

Comment:

See the comment on the previous question. The Department of Health and Human Services, for example, issued a performance plan and report for FY 2019 in April 2018 that covered various goals and objectives. Goal 2, Objective 4 was "Prepare for and respond to public health emergencies." One of the related performance measures was to "[I]ncrease the percentage of CDC-funded Public Health Emergency Preparedness state and local public health agencies that can convene, within 60 minutes of notification, a team of trained staff that can make decisions about appropriate response and interaction with partners." In a tabular presentation, HHS showed that in FY 2012 the Department fell 2% points below its goal for that year of 91%, but exceeded higher goals in each of the next three years. The measurements for FY 2016-FY 2019 against the higher goal of 96% were all marked as "pending."

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

c. Yes, estimate of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome are presented.

Comments: I think that the answer is c, but I am not sure. My problem is that I do not think the researcher is sure that the answer is a. I am skeptical that for ALL of the original results data, differences are presented along with a narrative discussion. It would be amazing if that was true, but knowing that requires a lot more than just looking at HHS.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IBP Comment

IBP acknowledges the peer reviewer's point that is difficult to determine with certainty that the differences between all of the original estimates and actual outcomes of nonfinancial data on results are shown. But based on a review of several agency annual performance reports, IBP finds that the "a" response is appropriate.

94. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the enacted level of funds for policies (both new proposals and existing policies) that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome?

GUIDELINES:

Question 94 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the enacted level of funds for policies that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 52 for assistance to the most impoverished populations in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present estimates of the differences between the enacted level for all policies that are intended to benefit the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between the enacted level for all policies that are intended to benefit the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between the enacted level for some but not all of the policies that are intended to benefit the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the enacted level for policies that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome are not presented.

Source:

See the sources cited in the response to Question 84.

Comment:

Information is provided at the program level for all programs, including programs to benefit the impoverished, but such programs are not addressed in a separate narrative or presentation. Given the manner in which spending is accounted for in the federal budget process, there is no difference in these amounts. Enacted/final outcome levels are compared to levels for the prior year.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

95. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome?

GUIDELINES:

Question 95 asks whether the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 33 for estimates of extra-budgetary funds in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome is not presented.

Source:

See the sources cited in response to Question 84.

Comment:

n/a

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

96. Is a financial statement included as part of the Year-End Report or released as a separate report?

GUIDELINES:

Question 96 asks whether a financial statement is included as part of the Year-End Report, or whether it is released as a separate report. The financial statement can include some or all of the following elements: a cash flow statement, an operating statement, a balance sheet, and notes on accounting. For purposes of responding to this question, the financial statement in question does not need to be audited. For an example of a financial statement, see the document "Financial Statements of the Government of New Zealand 2013" (<https://treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2013-10/fsgnz-year-jun13.pdf>)

To answer "a," a financial statement must either be included in the Year-End Report or must be released as a separate report. Answer "a" applies if a financial statement is released as a separate report, even if the Year-End Report is not publicly available. Answer "b" applies if no financial statement is released either as part of the Year-End Report or as a separate report.

Answer:

a. Yes, a financial statement is part of the Year-End Report or is released as a separate report.

Source:

See the sources cited for the response to Question 84.

Comment:

The Financial Report includes various financial statements (in a separate section so named) as well as an Independent Auditor's Report prepared by the Government Accountability Office.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

97. What type of audits (compliance, financial, or performance) has the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) conducted and made available to the public?

GUIDELINES:

Question 97 asks about the types of audits conducted by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). There are three basic types of audits:

- Financial audits are intended to determine if an entity's financial information is accurate (free from errors or fraud) and presented in accordance with the applicable financial reporting and regulatory framework. See ISSAI 200 (<http://www.issai.org/issai-framework/3-fundamental-auditing-principles.htm>) for more detail.
- Compliance audits look at the extent to which the relevant regulations and procedures have been followed. See ISSAI 400 (<http://www.issai.org/issai-framework/3-fundamental-auditing-principles.htm>) for more details.
- Performance audits assess whether activities are adhering to the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. See ISSAI 300 (<http://www.issai.org/issai-framework/3-fundamental-auditing-principles.htm>) for more details. ≈

Financial and compliance audits are more common than performance audits, which usually occur only once a performance framework has been agreed upon. In some countries, the SAI's mandate limits the type of audit it can conduct.

To answer "a," the SAI must have conducted all three types of audit – financial, compliance, and performance – and made all of them available to the public. A "b" response applies if the SAI has conducted two of the three audit types, and a "c" applies if it has conducted only one type of audit. Answers "b" and "c" may be selected even if the Audit Report is not publicly available, as long as the SAI has conducted compliance or performance audits and made them available to the public. A "d" response applies if the SAI has not conducted any of the three types of audits, or has not made them available to the public.

Answer:

a. The SAI has conducted all three types of audits (compliance, financial, or performance) and made them available to the public.

Source:

Government Accountability Office: (1) U.S. Government Accountability Office Independent Auditor's Report (included in the Financial Report of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2017, pages 218-247); (2) Government Auditing Standards: 2018 Revision, GAO-18-568G, July 2018 (referred to as the Yellow Book and available at: <http://www.gao.gov/yellowbook>); and (3) Performance and Accountability Report, Fiscal Year 2018, GAO-19-1SP, November 15, 2018 (<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-1SP>).

Comment:

In the Yellow Book (cited above), see Chapter 6, Standards for Financial Audits, and Chapter 8, Fieldwork Standards for Performance Audits, and Chapter 9, Reporting Standards for Performance Audits. Chapter 7, Standards for Attestation Engagements and Reviews of Financial Statements, deals in part with compliance determinations.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

98. What percentage of expenditures within the mandate of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) has been audited?

GUIDELINES:

Question 98 focuses on the coverage of audits by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI), asking what percentage of expenditures within the SAI's mandate has been audited.

The SAI's mandate is typically defined in statute. Only expenditures related to budgetary central government (ministries, departments, and agencies) that are within the SAI's mandate should be considered for this question. (Question 99 addresses audits of extra-budgetary funds.) Further, the question does not apply to "secret programs" (for example, security-related expenditures that are confidential). Further, if the mandate gives the SAI the authority to outsource some audits, then those audits count for purposes of this question.

Only the Audit Report identified in Section 1 should be used to answer this question. Financial audits and compliance audits, or a hybrid of the two, can be taken into account to answer this question. Performance audits should not be considered for this question.

To answer "a," all expenditures within the SAI's mandate must be audited. A "b" response applies if at least two-thirds, but not all, expenditures within the SAI's mandate have been audited. A "c" response is appropriate when less than two-thirds of expenditures within the SAI's mandate have been audited. A "d" response applies when no expenditures have been audited.

Answer:

a. All expenditures within the SAI's mandate have been audited.

Source:
GAO Independent Auditor's Report (cited in the response to Question 97).

Comment:
The GAO audits all federal government activities, but because of the large scale of such activities, not every activity is audited annually or within a set multiyear period.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

99. What percentage of extra-budgetary funds within the mandate of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) has been audited?

GUIDELINES:

Question 99 focuses on audits of extra-budgetary funds, asking what percentage of extra-budgetary funds within the mandate of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) has been audited. These funds, although technically outside the budget, are governmental in nature and thus should be subject to the same audit requirement as other government programs.

The SAI's mandate is typically defined in statute. Only expenditures related to extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate should be considered for this question. (Question 98 addresses audits of budgetary central government.) Further, if the mandate gives the SAI the authority to outsource some audits, then those audits count for purposes of this question.

To answer "a," all extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate must be audited. A "b" response applies if extra-budgetary funds accounting for at least two-thirds of, but not all, expenditures associated with extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate have been audited. A "c" response applies if extra-budgetary funds accounting for less than two-thirds of expenditures associated with extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate have been audited. A "d" response applies if extra-budgetary funds have not been audited.

Answer:
a. All extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate have been audited.

Source:
GAO Independent Auditor's Report (cited in the response to Question 97).

Comment:
The GAO audits all federal government activities, but because of the large scale of such activities, not every activity is audited annually or within a set multiyear period.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

100. Does the annual Audit Report(s) prepared by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) include an executive summary?

GUIDELINES:

Question 100 asks whether the annual Audit Report includes an executive summary. Only the Audit Report identified in Section 1 should be used to answer this question. The Audit Report can be a fairly technical document, and an executive summary of the report's findings can help make it more accessible to the media and the public.

To answer "a," the Audit Report must include at least one executive summary summarizing the report's content. Answer "b" applies if the Audit Report does not include an executive summary, or the Audit Report is not made publicly available.

Answer:

a. Yes, the annual Audit Report(s) includes one or more executive summaries summarizing the report's content.

Source:

GAO Independent Auditor's Report (cited in the response to Question 97).

Comment:

The executive summary is included on the first two pages of the 30-page document, although it is not so labelled (the GAO document appears on pages 218-247 of the Financial Report). Virtually all reports issued by GAO contain an executive summary.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

101. Does the executive make available to the public a report on what steps it has taken to address audit recommendations or findings that indicate a need for remedial action?

GUIDELINES:

Question 101 asks whether the executive reports to the public on the steps it has taken to address audit recommendations made by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). The ultimate purpose of audits is to verify that the budget was executed in a manner consistent with existing law, and to hold the government accountable for this execution and its future improvement. The extent to which audits achieve the latter depends on whether there is adequate and timely follow-up on the recommendations provided in the SAI's audit reports.

To answer "a," the executive must report publicly on the steps it has taken to address all audit findings. A "b" response applies if the executive reports publicly on the steps it has taken to address most, but not all, audit findings. A "c" response applies if the executive reports publicly on the steps it has taken to address only some audit findings. As long as the executive reports publicly on the steps it has taken to address audit finding, answer "a," "b," or "c" may be selected, even if the Audit Report is not made publicly available. A "d" response applies if the executive does not report at all on its steps to address audit findings.

Answer:

b. Yes, the executive reports publicly on most audit findings.

Source:

GAO Independent Auditor's Report (cited in the response to Question 97).

Comment:

The executive branch does not provide a single, comprehensive response to GAO audit findings. Instead, agencies often provide responses to individual GAO audits that are included in the individual audit reports themselves, typically as a separate appendix. See, for example, the GAO report: Colombia: U.S. Counternarcotics Assistance Achieved Some Positive Results, but State Needs to Review the Overall U.S. Approach, GAO-19-106, December 2018, available at: (<https://gao.gov/assets/700/695952.pdf>). GAO's "Recommendations for Executive Action" and "Agency Comments" from several Departments are addressed on pages 65-67 and written comments from two Departments are provided in Appendices III and IV.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

102. Does either the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) or legislature release to the public a report that tracks actions taken by the executive to address audit recommendations?

GUIDELINES:

Question 102 asks whether the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) or the legislature track actions by the executive to address audit recommendations. After audit results and recommendations are discussed and validated by the legislature, the executive is normally asked to take certain actions to address the audit findings. For accountability purposes, the public needs to be informed about the status of those actions, and steps the executive has taken to address audit recommendations. In addition to the executive reporting on its actions (see Question 101), the SAI and legislature – as the key oversight institutions – have a

responsibility to keep the public informed by tracking the executive's progress in addressing audit recommendations.

To answer "a," the SAI or legislature must report publicly on what steps the executive has taken to address all audit findings. A "b" response applies if the SAI or legislature reports publicly on what steps the executive has taken to address most, but not all, audit findings. A "c" response applies if the SAI or legislature reports publicly on what steps the executive has taken to address only some audit findings. As long as the SAI or legislature reports publicly on the steps the executive has taken, answer "a," "b," or "c" may be selected, even if the Audit Report is not made publicly available. A "d" response applies if neither the SAI nor the legislature reports on the executive's steps to address audit findings.

Answer:

b. Yes, the SAI or legislature reports publicly on most audit recommendations.

Source:

GAO Independent Auditor's Report (cited in the response to Question 97).

Comment:

The GAO, in its individual audit reports, usually will indicate the response of the pertinent agency to its recommendations. See the example provided for the previous question. GAO also maintains a list of "high risk" programs, issued at the beginning of each Congress, that have "vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, or that need transformation" (<https://gao.gov/highrisk/overview>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

103. Is there an Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) that conducts budget analyses for the budget formulation and/or approval process?

GUIDELINES:

Question 103 examines whether an Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) exists that contributes budget analyses to the budget formulation and/or approval process. According to the Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions, adopted by the OECD Council in 2014, "independent fiscal institutions are publicly funded, independent bodies under the statutory authority of the executive or the legislature which provide non-partisan oversight and analysis of, and in some cases advice on, fiscal policy and performance", and with "a forward-looking ex ante diagnostic task". In practice, they come in two main forms:

- Parliamentary budget offices (also known as PBOs) such as the Congressional Budget Office in the United States (<https://www.cbo.gov/>), the Parliamentary Budget Office in South Africa (<https://www.parliament.gov.za/parliamentary-budget-office>), and the Center for Public Finance Studies in Mexico (Centro de Estudios de las Finanzas Públicas, <http://www.cefp.gob.mx/>); or
- Fiscal councils such as the Office for Budget Responsibility in the United Kingdom (<https://obr.uk/>), the Fiscal Policy Council in Sweden (Finanspolitiska Rådet, <http://www.finanspolitiskaradet.com/>), and the High Council for Public Finances in France (Haut Conseil des finances publiques, <https://www.hcfp.fr/>).

For more information, see von Trapp et al. 'Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions and Case Studies', *OECD Journal on Budgeting* 15:2 (special issue, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1787/budget-15-5jm2795tv625>.

To answer "a," there must be an IFI, and its independence must be set in law. In addition, it must have sufficient staffing and resources, including funding, to carry out its tasks. Answer "b" applies if an IFI exists, but either its independence is not set in law or its staffing and resources are insufficient to carry out its tasks. Answer "c" applies if an IFI exists, but its independence is not set in law and it lacks sufficient staffing and resources. Answer "d" applies if no IFI exists.

If the answer is "a," "b," or "c," please specify in the comments the name and type of IFI that exists (e.g., parliamentary budget office or fiscal council). If the answer is "a" or "b," identify the law that guarantees its independence, and provide evidence in support of the assessment of the adequacy of its staffing and resources. This can include the IFI's total budget allocation over recent years, any press reports that discuss perceived funding shortfalls, assessments by international organizations, and/or information from interviews with staff of the IFI.

Answer:

a. Yes, there is an IFI, its independence is set in law, and it has sufficient staffing and resources, including funding, to carry out its tasks.

Source:

2 U.S.C. 601 establishes the Congressional Budget Office and provides that the Director of the Congressional Budget Office and its personnel shall be appointed "without regard to political affiliation" and "solely on the basis of ... fitness to perform ... duties." The text of the United States Code may be found on the Government Printing Office Website (<http://www.govinfo.gov>).

Comment:

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) was established by Title II of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-344, as amended). The parts of the law pertaining to Congress are codified in Title II (The Congress) of the United States Code; the provisions dealing with CBO are found in Chapter 17 (Congressional Budget Office), Sections 601-612, and Chapter 17A (Congressional Budget and Fiscal Operations), Sections 621-665e. On its Website, under the tab "About CBO," it states: "CBO is strictly nonpartisan; conducts objective, impartial analysis; and hires its employees solely on the basis of professional competence without regard to political affiliation. CBO does not make policy recommendations, and each report and cost estimate summarizes the methodology underlying the analysis" (<https://www.cbo.gov/about/overview>). Each year, CBO prepares an economic forecast and baseline budget projections for a multiyear period. The forecast and budget projections are incorporated into many analytical products, including the Budget and Economic Outlook (usually issued in January or February and updated in August) and an annual report on long-term projections, and underpin the development of the budget resolution. In addition to CBO, two other congressional support agencies – the Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the Library of Congress and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) – provide budgetary analyses to Congress in an independent and nonpartisan manner. Finally, the Joint Committee on Taxation prepares independent, nonpartisan estimates of revenues.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

104. Does the Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) publish macroeconomic and/or fiscal forecasts?

GUIDELINES:

Question 104 assesses whether an Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) has a role in producing the macroeconomic forecast (e.g., GDP growth, inflation, interest rates, etc.) and/or the fiscal forecast (revenues, expenditure, deficits, and debt), and if so, what kind of role it has. Macroeconomic and/or fiscal forecasting is a typical core function across IFIs, but their role in forecasting takes several forms (von Trapp et al. 2016, p. 17 and Table 2). Some IFIs produce just a macroeconomic forecast, while others produce a complete fiscal forecast (which also typically requires an underlying macroeconomic forecast). In some cases, the fiscal forecast reflects continuation of current budget policies; such forecasts can be used by the legislature, the media, or the public to assess the projections in the executive's budget reflecting the government's policy proposals.

Some IFIs produce the official macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts used in the executive's budget. In other cases, IFIs do not prepare their own independent forecasts, but rather produce an assessment of the official estimates, or provide an opinion on, or endorsement of, the government's forecasts. Some others have no role at all in forecasting.

To answer "a", there must be an IFI that publishes both its own macroeconomic AND fiscal forecasts. Answer "b" applies if an IFI publishes its own macroeconomic OR fiscal forecast (but not both). Answer "c" applies if the IFI does not publish a macroeconomic or fiscal forecast, but rather publishes an assessment of the official forecasts produced by the executive and used in the budget. Choose option "d" if there is no IFI; or if there is an IFI that neither publishes its own macroeconomic and/or fiscal forecasts, nor a commentary on the official forecasts for the budget.

Macroeconomic forecasts may include indicators relating to economic output and economic growth, inflation, and the labor market, amongst others. Fiscal forecasts may include estimates of revenues, expenditures, the budget balance, and debt. If the answer is "a" or "b," please specify which indicators and estimates are included in the forecasts and whether the forecast is used by government as the official forecast. If the answer is "c," please describe the nature and depth of the assessment (e.g., the length of the commentary, or whether it covers both economic and fiscal issues).

Answer:

a. Yes, the IFI publishes its own macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts.

Source:

2 U.S.C. 602 (Duties and Functions) and 639 (Reports, Summaries, and Projections of Congressional Budget Actions).

Comment:

CBO publishes its own economic and fiscal forecast each year. The economic forecast includes such standard economic indicators as nominal and real Gross Domestic Product and measures of inflation, interest rates, unemployment levels, and wage and salary levels over a 10-year period. The fiscal forecast, which also employs a 10-year window, provides information on spending (budget authority and outlays), revenues, tax expenditures, the deficit (or surplus), and debt. This information is used by Congress to prepare and enforce its annual multi-year budget resolution and Congress sometimes makes some changes in the forecasts that underpin the measure. The President uses an economic and fiscal forecast prepared by the Office of Management and Budget with regard to his budget submissions to Congress. The congressional and executive forecasts often differ substantially.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

105. Does the Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) publish its own costings of new policy proposals, to assess their impact on the budget?

GUIDELINES:

Question 105 assesses whether an Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) has a costing function that involves assessing the budgetary implications of new policy proposals for both revenues and expenditures, and if so, what kind of role it has. Many IFIs have a costing role, but with substantial diversity in the nature and extent of this work (von Trapp et al 2016, pp. 17-18 and Table 2). Some assess virtually all new policy proposals, while others cost only a selection of new policy proposals. Others only publish opinions on, or scrutinize the costings of, budget measures produced by the executive.

To answer "a," the IFI must publish its own costings of all (or virtually all) new policy proposals. Answer "b" applies if the IFI publishes its own costings, but only for major new policy proposals – for instance, only those proposals that cost or save above a certain amount. Answer "c" applies if the IFI publishes its own costings, but only on a limited number of proposals. This could occur, for instance, if the IFI lacked the capacity to assess proposals dealing with certain sectors. Instead of producing a cost estimate, it can also publish an assessment of the estimates produced by the executive. Answer "d" applies if there is no IFI; or if the IFI does not publish its own costings of new policy proposals or provide an assessment of the official costings of new policy proposals.

Answer:

a. Yes, the IFI publishes its own costings of all new policy proposals.

Source:

2 U.S.C. 653 (Analysis by Congressional Budget Office).

Comment:

CBO prepares "cost estimates" (also known as "scores") on individual legislative measures at different stages of the legislative process, and sometimes on significant amendments thereto (these scores number in the hundreds during a session of Congress). For the revenue consequences of legislation, CBO is required to use the estimates prepared by the Joint Committee on Taxation (which services both the House of Representatives and the Senate).

In addition, CBO prepares an annual analysis of the President's budget (using its own economic and fiscal forecast to facilitate comparisons of the President's and congressional proposals) and, periodically, a study examining various options for reducing the deficit (<https://www.cbo.gov/about/products#5>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

106. In the past 12 months, how frequently did the head or a senior staff member of the Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) take part and testify in hearings of a committee of the legislature?

GUIDELINES:

Question 106 concerns the interaction between two important oversight actors and assesses how frequently the Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) made high-level inputs to the work of legislative committees. Almost all IFIs interact with the legislature in some form (von Trapp et al 2016, p. 18), but the intensity of the interaction varies. This question assesses this aspect by asking, with reference to the past 12 months, how frequently the head or a senior staff member of the IFI took part and testified in hearings of a committee of the legislature. The intent is to assess the extent to which the IFI staff member in question was not only present at a meeting of a legislative committee, but was an active participant (as opposed to a passive observer, serving only as a resource when called upon). As evidence to support your answer, you can refer to official records of legislative committees, websites and annual reports of the IFI, press releases and media coverage, for example. Choose answer "a" if this occurred five times or more; "b" for three times or more, but less than five times; and "c" for once or twice. Answer "d" should be selected if the head or a senior staff member of the IFI never took part and testified in hearings of a committee of the legislature, or if there is no IFI.

Answer:

a. Frequently (i.e., five times or more).

Source:

N/a

Comment:

CBO officials regularly testify before House and Senate committees involved in federal budgeting, especially the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and Budget Committees, the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Senate Finance Committee. In most instances, testimony is provided by the CBO Director and Deputy Director, but other CBO officials testify from time to time as well. Written testimony may be found on the

CBO Website; written testimony, and often video of the testimony, usually is available on the Website of the committee holding the hearing as well. See, for example, the testimony of CBO Director Keith Hall during a hearing of the House Budget Committee on held on April 12, 2018, available at the House Budget Committee's Website (<https://budget.house.gov/legislation/hearings/congressional-budget-offices-budget-and-economic-outlook-4>).

The Director and other officials also interact with Senators and Representatives and their staffs through such formal means as "Director's Statements," "Answers to Questions for the Record Following a Hearing," policy conferences, and press conferences (all of which are provided in written form and are available on the CBO Website), and through informal means such as personal meetings.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

107. Does the full legislature and/or a legislative committee debate budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 107 asks whether the legislature debates budget policies prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal. In general, prior to discussing the Executive's Budget Proposal for the coming year, the legislature should have an opportunity to review the government's broad budget priorities and fiscal parameters. Often times this information is laid out in a Pre-Budget Statement, which the executive presents to the legislature for debate. (See Questions 54-58.)

A number of countries conduct a pre-budget debate in the legislature around six months before the start of the budget year. In some cases, they adopt laws that guide the upcoming budget, for example the Budget Guidelines Law in Brazil and the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill in Sweden. A pre-budget debate can serve two main purposes: 1) to allow the executive to inform the legislature of its fiscal policy intentions by presenting updated reports on its annual and medium-term budget strategy and policy priorities; and 2) to establish "hard" multi-year fiscal targets or spending ceilings, which the government must adhere to when preparing its detailed spending estimates for the upcoming budget year.

To answer "a," the full legislature must debate budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal and approve recommendations for the upcoming budget.

Answer "b" applies if a legislative committee (but not the full legislature) debates budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal, and approves recommendations for the budget. Option "b" also applies if, in addition to the action by the committee, the full legislature also debates budget policy in advance of the budget, but does not approve recommendations.

Answer "c" applies if the full legislature and/or a legislative committee debates budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal, but does not approve recommendations for the budget. Answer "d" applies if neither the full legislature nor any legislative committee debate budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal.

In your comment, please indicate the dates of the budget debate, and if both the full legislature and a legislative committee held a debate. Note that a debate does not need to be open to the public, but a public record of the meeting or a public notice that the meeting occurred is required. In addition, please indicate whether the budget debate was focused on a Pre-Budget Statement published by the Executive. If the Executive did not publish a Pre-Budget Statement, then please indicate what served as the focus of the legislature's debate (for instance, a report released by an IFI or some other institution).

Answer:

c. Yes, the full legislature and/or a legislative committee debates budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal, but it does not approve recommendations for the upcoming budget.

Source:

House Budget Committee, The President's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget, February 14, 2018, available at: <https://budget.house.gov/legislation/hearings/presidents-fiscal-year-2019-budget>.

Senate Budget Committee, The President's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget, February 13, 2018, available at: <https://www.budget.senate.gov/presidents-fy-2019-budget-proposal>.

Comment:

In the United States, the federal budget process generally requires the President to submit his budget to Congress (without benefit of a Pre-Budget Statement) days or weeks (usually in February) after the legislature convenes in January. The House and Senate Budget Committees usually each hold a hearing, prior to the President's budget submission, on the annual report by the Congressional Budget Office on the "Budget and Economic Outlook" for particular fiscal years. The House and Senate then typically begin their budget-related activities after this has occurred, although the press of time may lead House and Senate committees to begin some hearings beforehand. The first task is for Congress to consider (usually in March) a budget resolution, which serves as Congress' internal blueprint for the subsequent consideration of spending, revenue, and debt measures. The law requires that the budget resolution be adopted by April 15 (2 U.S.C. 632); although the House and Senate usually debate a budget resolution in March or April, it often misses the deadline for its adoption (or does not adopt one at all). The primacy of Congress over budgetary legislation ensures that the vast bulk of its work in this area, including appropriations, revenue, and other budgetary legislation, occurs long after the President's budget has been submitted.

With regard to the FY 2019 cycle, CBO was delayed in issuing its annual report on the budget and economic outlook by weeks, so the the Budget

Committees did not hold hearings on it prior to the submission of the President's budget. Each Budget Committee held hearings on the President's budget within two days of its release.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

108. How far in advance of the start of the budget year does the legislature receive the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 108 examines how far in advance of the start of the budget year the legislature receives the Executive's Budget Proposal. International good practice recommends that the Executive's Budget Proposal should be submitted to the legislature far enough in advance to allow the legislature time to review it properly, or at least three months prior to the start of the fiscal year. (See, for instance, Principle 2.2.2 of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>)).

For the purposes of responding to this question, if – and only if – the most recent budget submission occurred later than usual as a result of a particular event, such as an election, please use a more normal year as the basis for the response. If, however, delays have been observed for more than one budget year, and the legislature has not received the Executive's Budget Proposal in a timely manner on more than one occasion in the last three years, then "d" will be the appropriate answer.

To answer "a," the legislature must receive the Executive's Budget Proposal at least three months in advance of the start of the budget year. Answer "b" applies if the legislature receives the Executive's Budget Proposal at least two months, but less than three months, before the start of the budget year. Answer "c" applies if the legislature receives the Executive's Budget Proposal at least one month, but less than two months, before the start of the budget year. Answer "d" applies if the legislature does not receive the Executive's Budget Proposal at least one month prior to the start of the budget year, or does not receive it at all.

Answer:

a. The legislature receives the Executive's Budget Proposal at least three months before the start of the budget year.

Source:

31 U.S.C. 1105(a) requires the President to submit his budget to Congress no later than the first Monday in February each year for the fiscal year which begins on October 1.

Comment:

The President usually submits his budget to Congress in early February, about seven or eight months before the start of the fiscal year. President Donald Trump, for example, submitted his FY 2019 budget to Congress on February 12, 2018. Although the President sometimes submits his budget to Congress well after the February deadline (especially during the transition to a new Administration), it is submitted at least four or five months before the start of the fiscal year. Following the November 2016 general election, for example, President Trump submitted his first budget to Congress (for FY 2018) on May 23, 2017, about three and one-half months after the deadline but more than four months before the start of the fiscal year.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

109. When does the legislature approve the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 109 examines when the legislature approves the Executive's Budget Proposal. International good practice recommends that the Executive's Budget Proposal should be approved by the legislature before the start of the fiscal year the budget proposal refers to. This gives the executive time to implement the budget in its entirety, particularly new programs and policies.

In some countries, the expenditure and revenue estimates of the Executive's Budget Proposal are approved separately; for purposes of this question, at least the expenditure estimates must be approved. Further, approval of the budget implies approval of the full-year budget, not just a short-term continuation of

spending and revenue authority.

To answer "a," the legislature must approve the Executive's Budget Proposal at least one month before the start of the budget year. Answer "b" applies if the legislature approves the Executive's Budget Proposal less than one month in advance of the start of the budget year, but at least by the start of the budget year. Answer "c" applies if the legislature approves the Executive's Budget Proposal less than one month after the start of the budget year. Answer "d" applies if the legislature approves the Executive's Budget Proposal more than one month after the start of the budget year, or does not approve the budget.

Answer:

d. The legislature approves the budget more than one month after the start of the budget year, or does not approve the budget.

Source:

The U.S. Constitution, in several places in Article I, places "the power of the purse" in the hands of Congress, empowering it to raise revenue, provide for borrowing, and spend money from the Treasury as authorized in law. Thus, there are no funds for the President to act on until and unless Congress enacts them in law. The Congressional Budget Act of 1974 changed the start of the fiscal year from July 1 to October 1 following a three-month transition quarter. A fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends. Accordingly, FY 2018 started on October 1, 2017 and ended on September 30, 2018.

Comment:

The President's budget (the Executive Budget Proposal) is merely a set of recommendations to Congress. Congress may accept or reject them as it sees fit. Further, the budget of the U.S. Government is not enacted as a single measure; instead, it encompasses multiple legislative measures enacted into law during the current session of Congress as well as spending, revenues, and borrowing stemming from laws enacted in prior years. Jurisdiction over legislation affecting different aspects of the budget is widely distributed within each chamber. About one-third of new spending (discretionary spending, which mainly funds the routine operations of the United States Government) stems from the enactment of annual appropriations acts under the jurisdiction of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. The remainder (mandatory spending, which mainly funds entitlement spending for individuals and State and local governments) becomes available under current legislation emanating from other House and Senate Committees or from prior laws under their jurisdiction (such as the Social Security Act of 1935, as amended). Revenue and borrowing laws (and much of the entitlement spending) are under the jurisdiction of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. Consequently, specific budgetary policies recommended by the President may be considered within the context of congressional action on individual budgetary measures (ranging from narrow to comprehensive in its scope). Congress often (but not always) enacts major budgetary legislation weeks or months after the start of the fiscal year. This is particularly true in the case of annual appropriations acts. Due to the requirement that agencies generally suspend operations in the absence of an appropriation, Congress often resorts to stop-gap funding (continuing resolutions) until final funding decisions are reached. All of the regular appropriations acts for a fiscal year have been enacted before the start of the year only a handful of times in recent decades. In some instances, action on all of the regular appropriations acts was not finalized until months into the applicable fiscal year. For FY 2018, the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018" was enacted into law as Public Law 115-141 on March 23, 2018 - almost six months into the fiscal year.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

110. Does the legislature have the authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 110 examines the legislature's power to amend—as opposed to simply accept or reject—the budget proposal presented by the executive. This question is about legal authority rather than actions the legislature takes in practice. The legislature's powers to amend the budget can vary substantially across countries.

The "a" response is appropriate only if there are no restrictions on the right of the legislature to modify the Executive's Budget Proposal, including its right to change the size of the proposed deficit or surplus. The "b" response would be appropriate if, for instance, the legislature is restricted from changing the deficit or surplus, but it still has the power to increase or decrease funding and revenue levels. The more limited "c" response would apply if, for instance, the legislature can only re-allocate spending within the totals set in the Executive's Budget Proposal or can only decrease funding levels or increase revenues. Finally, response "d" would apply if the legislature may not make any changes (or only small technical changes), or if amendments must first be approved by the executive. In these cases, the legislature is essentially only able to approve or reject the budget as a whole. If the answer is "b" or "c", please indicate the nature of the amendment powers available to the Parliament and how they are limited.

Answer:

a. Yes, the legislature has unlimited authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal.

Source:

Comment:

See the previous discussion regarding the congressional "power of the purse." No new proposals in the President's budget can take effect unless they are approved in legislation which becomes law.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

111. During the most recent budget approval process, did the legislature use its authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 111 assesses whether any formal authority of the legislature to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal is used in practice. The responses to this question should be determined based on action by the legislature related to the Enacted Budget used in the OBS. Choose answer "a" if the legislature used its authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal during the most recent budget approval process, and amendments were adopted (all, or at least some of them). Answer "a" also applies if the legislature used its authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal, but the amendments were rejected by executive veto. Answer "b" applies if the legislature used its authority in law to propose amendments to the Executive's Budget Proposal, but none of these amendments were adopted. Answer "c" applies if the legislature has the authority in law to amend the budget, but no amendments were proposed during its consideration. Answer "d" applies when the legislature does not have any authority to amend the budget (that is, Question 110 is answered "d").

If the answer is "a" or "b", please specify in the comments the number of amendments introduced by the legislature (and in the case of an "a" response, the number adopted, or if applicable, information about an executive veto) and describe their nature. For example, did the amendments result in an increase or decrease of the deficit? What were the most significant amendments to revenues and to expenditures in terms of the sums involved? How did amendments affect the composition of expenditures? If the answer is "a," please specify which amendments were adopted, and provide evidence for it.

Answer:

a. Yes, the legislature used its authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal, and (at least some of) its amendments were adopted.

Source:

Comment:

In acting on budgetary legislation, Congress both adopts some of the President's recommendations (with or without amendment) and originates its own policies. With respect to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141), which is regarded in this survey as the enacted budget, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee inserted explanatory material regarding the measure into the Congressional Record (daily ed.) of March 22, 2018 (Volume 164, #50, Books II and III (pages H2045-H3044) (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CREC-2018-03-22/pdf/CREC-2018-03-22.pdf>). The material contains many tables comparing amounts for agencies and accounts in the bill with the enacted amounts for FY 2017 and amounts requested by the President for FY 2018. In the case of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), for example, the measure provides FY 2018 appropriations for the agency totaling \$20.7 billion, an increase of \$1.1 billion over the enacted level for FY 2017 and \$1.6 billion over the President's requested level for FY 2018 (the President had proposed a reduction of over \$0.5 billion from the prior year) (see page H2108 in Book II).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

112. During the last budget approval process, did a specialized budget or finance committee in the legislature examine the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 112 assesses the role of a specialized budget or finance committee during the budget approval stage. Effective committee involvement is an essential condition for legislative influence in the budget process. Specialized committees provide opportunities for individual legislators to gain relevant expertise, and to examine budgets and policy in depth. Yet, the involvement of committees differs across legislatures. Some legislatures have separate committees to examine spending and tax proposals, while others have a single finance committee. Not all legislatures have a specialized budget or finance committee to examine the budget. In addition, there can be differences in the time available for the committee's analysis of the budget.

A report with the committee's findings and recommendations is intended to inform the debate in the full legislature, therefore it must be published before the

legislature has adopted the budget.

Response "a" requires that, in the last budget approval process, a specialized budget or finance committee had one month or more to examine the Executive's Budget Proposal, and it published a report with findings and recommendations prior to the budget being adopted. Response "b" applies where such a committee examined the draft budget and published a report, but within a shorter timeframe of less than one month. Response "c" applies if a committee examined the budget (without regard to the time period), but did not publish a report prior to the adoption of the budget. Response "d" applies where a specialized budget or finance committee did not examine the Executive's Budget Proposal.

Please specify in your comment the name of the committee and the number of days it had available to examine the budget and to publish a report. For bicameral legislatures where one house or chamber has greater constitutional authority in budgetary matters, the question applies to the house or chamber (usually the upper or second one) that is decisive. For bicameral legislatures with co-equal houses or chambers, the question should be answered with reference to the one that achieves the higher score for this question. In the case of bicameral legislatures, please note the relevant arrangements in each house or chamber. If applicable, provide a copy of the report. Please note also if a report is published, but only after the budget has been adopted.

Answer:

a. Yes, a specialized budget or finance committee had at least one month to examine the Executive's Budget Proposal, and it published a report with findings and recommendations prior to the budget being adopted.

Source:

For FY 2018, the House and Senate acted on a budget resolution during the latter half of the year, well behind schedule. The House Budget Committee reported a budget resolution, H.Con.Res. 71 (H.Rept. 115-240); the Senate Budget Committee reported one, S.Con.Res 25, but without a written report (the Committee typically issues a committee print in lieu of a Senate report). With regard to the regular appropriations acts for FY 2018, most of them were reported by both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, but floor action was very limited. As indicated previously, final action on appropriations occurred with respect to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018. Information on legislative actions on budget resolutions and annual appropriations acts may be found on "congress.gov" under the link at the top to "Appropriations" (<https://www.congress.gov>).

Comment:

The President's budget is reviewed by the House and Senate Budget Committees in the course of their development of the annual budget resolution (including hearings with witnesses from the Administration, including the OMB Director and the Treasury Secretary, among others) and references to the President's proposals are included in the committee reports accompanying the budget resolution. In terms of the consideration of the President's department, agency, and program-specific proposals for enactment into law, they are reviewed by various House and Senate Committees according to their jurisdiction. For example, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees develop annual appropriations acts that provide discretionary spending, while the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee may develop legislation affecting revenues, borrowing, and mandatory spending for major entitlement programs within their jurisdiction; these committees typically engage in the full legislative process (e.g., hearings, markup, report, consideration on the chamber floor) when advancing the legislation. Most committee hearings are televised and videos of the hearings are available on committee Websites and in the Video Library of C-Span at <https://www.c-span.org/quickguide>. These videos are quickly accessible whereas related committee reports and printed hearing transcripts usually are not available until much later.,

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

113. During the last approval process, did legislative committees, responsible for particular sectors (e.g., health, education, defense, etc.), examine spending in the Executive's Budget Proposal related to the sector for which they are responsible?

GUIDELINES:

Question 113 assesses the role of committees of the legislature that are responsible for particular sectors (e.g., health, education, defense, etc.) during the budget approval stage. The role of sectoral committees differs across legislatures. Some legislatures do not involve them in the budget approval process, while others do. In addition, the time available for committee analysis differs.

A report with the committee's findings and recommendations is intended to inform the debate in the full legislature, so therefore must be published before the legislature has adopted the budget. Response "a" requires that sector committees had one month or more to examine the Executive's Budget Proposal, and published a report with findings and recommendations prior the budget being adopted. Response "b" applies where such committees examined the draft budget and published a report, but within a shorter timeframe of less than one month. Response "c" applies if sectoral committees examined the budget (without regard to the time period), but did not publish a report prior to the adoption of the budget. Response "d" applies where sectoral committees did not examine the Executive's Budget Proposal.

Please provide in the comments a brief overview of the committee structure and specify the number of days that sectoral committees had available to examine the budget and to publish their reports. For bicameral legislatures where one house or chamber has greater constitutional authority in budgetary matters, the question applies to the house or chamber (usually the upper or second one) that is decisive. For bicameral legislatures with co-equal houses or chambers, the question should be answered with reference to the one that achieves the higher score for this question. In the case of bicameral legislatures, please note the relevant arrangements in each house or chamber. If applicable, provide a sample copy of at least one of the reports. Please note if a report is published, but only after the budget has been adopted.

For purposes of responding to this question, use those sectoral committees that are best performing – that is, the ones that examine the budget the longest and that publish reports.

Answer:

a. Yes, sector committees had at least one month to examine the Executive's Budget Proposal, and they published reports with findings and recommendations prior to the budget being adopted.

Source:

The Ways and Means Committee is one of 20 standing committees in the House of Representatives. It has six subcommittees. Nearly all of the House committees have some jurisdiction over the funding of agencies and programs funded by the Federal Government. In addition, the Ways and Means Committee has jurisdiction over revenues and debt. The Committee, as an example, held hearings and markups throughout 2018 on various measures dealing with spending and revenue matters under its jurisdiction, focusing in part on proposals in the President's budget with testimony from Department and agency officials. These hearings included, among many others, such topics as: (1) Ensuring Social Security Serves America's Veterans (February 7, 2018); (2) Department of Health and Human Services' Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request (February 14, 2018); (3) The President's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Proposals with U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin (February 15, 2018); (4) Post Tax Reform Evaluation of Recently Expired Tax Provisions (March 14, 2018); and (5) Hearing on U.S. Trade Policy Agenda (March 21, 2018). The hearings may be accessed at the Committee's Website (<https://waysandmeans.house.gov/legislation/hearings?page=1>). A search for legislation resulting from these activities may be conducted at <https://www.congress.gov>, refining the search by committee and by congress (115th Congress for 2017-2018).

Comment:

See the previous discussion regarding committee specialization over budgetary matters.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

114. In the past 12 months, did a committee of the legislature examine in-year implementation of the Enacted Budget during the relevant budget execution period?

GUIDELINES:

Question 114 is about legislative oversight of budget execution. It assesses whether and how often a committee examined the implementation of the budget during the budget execution period (i.e., financial year) for which it was approved, and whether this resulted in an official report with findings and recommendations. This question does not apply to the ex post review of implementation following the end of the budget year as part of the audit stage, which is assessed separately. Nor does it apply to the legislature's review of the budget that it may undertake as part of the process of considering a supplemental budget during the year. In-year monitoring by the legislature will be affected by the frequency that the executive publishes In-Year Reports.

To answer "a," a committee must have examined in-year implementation of the Enacted Budget at least three times during the course of the relevant budget year and published reports with findings and recommendations. Answer "b" applies where this occurred only once or twice during the year.

Exception: If a legislature is in session only twice during the year, and it examines the implementation of the budget during both sessions, then it would be eligible for an "a" response.

Choose "c" if a committee examined in-year implementation (without regard to frequency), but did not publish any report with findings and recommendations. Answer "d" applies where no committee examined in-year implementation.

If the answer is "a" or "b," please specify the name of the committee and when it reviewed budget implementation, and provide a copy of its report(s). If the answer is "c," please specify the name of the committee and when it reviewed budget implementation.

For purposes of responding to this question, if more than one committee holds in-year reviews of the budget, use the committee that is best performing – that is, the one that examines in-year implementation the most times and that publishes a report.

Answer:

a. Yes, a committee examined in-year implementation on at least three occasions during a fiscal year, and it published reports with findings and recommendations.

Source:

The report of the House Ways and Means Committee on its legislative and oversight activities for the 115th Congress (H.Rept. 115-1115, January 2, 2019) summarizes its many activities during 2017-2018 by subcommittee jurisdiction, which coincides with policy areas such as trade, health, human resources, and Social Security, and by its oversight agenda (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-115hrpt1115/pdf/CRPT-115rpt1115.pdf>). Pages 31-55, for example, list legislation dealing with health issues that was acted on by the Committee, including many measures that became public law. Some of these measures dealt with the budgetary status of the Medicare program and efforts to constrain costs.

The Committee report also lists hearings and other activities that pertain to oversight of budget execution. For example, the Subcommittee on Oversight held a hearing on July 17, 2018 on "Stopping Disability Fraud: Risk, Prevention, and Detection." One of the witnesses, the Director of Forensic Audits and Investigative Service of the Government Accountability Office, addressed "Medicare: Actions Needed to Better Manage Fraud Risks," GAO-18-660T (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/693156.pdf>).

Comment:

Most congressional committees follow budget execution by agencies under their jurisdiction. In particular, the various subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees follow budget execution very closely. Any committee may issue a report (usually in conjunction with a hearing or series of hearings) if a matter of budget execution becomes a controversial issue. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees often become involved in implementation issues when they are raised by an investigation or audit conducted by the Government Accountability Office.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

115. Does the executive seek approval from the legislature prior to shifting funds between administrative units that receive explicit funding in the Enacted Budget, and is it legally required to do so?

GUIDELINES:

Question 115 examines whether the executive seeks approval from the legislature prior to shifting funds between administrative units, and whether it is legally required to do so.

In some countries, the executive has the power in law to adjust funding levels for specific appropriations during the execution of the budget. This question examines rules around shifting funds between administrative units (ministries, departments, or agencies) or whatever funding unit (or "vote") is specified in the Enacted Budget.

The conditions under which the executive may exercise its discretion to shift funds should be clearly defined in publicly available regulations or law. In addition, the amount of funds that the executive is allowed to transfer between administrative units should not be so excessive as to undermine the accountability of the executive to the legislature.

To answer "a," the executive is required by law or regulation to obtain prior legislative approval before shifting funds between administrative units, and it does so in practice. Answer "b" applies if the executive obtains legislative approval before shifting funds between administrative units, but is not legally required to do so. Answer "c" applies if the executive is legally required to receive legislative approval before shifting funds, but does not do so in practice. Answer "d" applies if legislative approval is not legally required for the executive to shift funds between administrative units and the executive does not obtain legislative approval in practice. Answer "d" also applies if the executive is authorized to shift an amount considered so excessive as to undermine accountability (roughly equal to 3 percent of total budgeted expenditures). A "d" response applies if the legislature only approves the shifting of funds after it has already occurred.

In the comments, please indicate any law or regulation that provides the executive with standing authority to shift funds between administrative units and, if so, describe that authority. Similarly, legislative approval for shifting funds between administrative units typically occurs with the adoption of legislation such as a supplemental budget. But if other formal procedures for gaining approval from the legislature exist, then please provide information about that approval process.

Answer:

a. The executive is required by law or regulation to obtain approval from the legislature prior to shifting funds between administrative units, and it does so in practice.

Source:

31 U.S.C. 1301(a) and 31 U.S.C. 1531(a).

Comment:

Major administrative units often are funded by multiple appropriations accounts. Generally, appropriations may be spent only on the purposes specified in the appropriations acts (31 U.S.C. 1301(a)) and may not be transferred to other accounts without statutory approval (31 U.S.C. 1532). Permanent law grants transfer authority in particular circumstances, such as during an agency reorganization (31 U.S.C. 1531(a)). In addition, annual appropriations acts usually grant department or agency heads limited authority to transfer appropriations made for a fiscal year. The limitations may be specified as dollar amounts or percentages of the total funds provided. When a shifting of funds occurs within an account instead of between accounts, it is referred to as a reprogramming instead of a transfer. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have imposed restrictions on reprogramming practices, oftentimes incorporating them into the appropriations act itself, but sometimes only specifying limitations in committee report language.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

116. Does the executive seek approval from the legislature prior to spending excess revenue (that is, amounts higher than originally anticipated) that may become available during the budget execution period, and is it legally required to do so?

GUIDELINES:

Question 116 examines whether the executive receives approval from the legislature prior to spending excess revenue, and whether it is legally required to do so. Good practice requires the legislature to approve changes in revenue or expenditure relative to the Enacted Budget. For example, if additional revenue is collected unexpectedly during the year, which often happens in oil/mineral-dependent countries, and it was not accounted for in the Enacted Budget, there should be a procedure in place to ensure that the legislature approves any proposed use of these "new" funds. If such requirements are not in place, the executive might deliberately underestimate revenue in the budget proposal it submits to the legislature, in order to have additional resources to spend at the executive's discretion, with no legislative control.

To answer "a," the executive is required by law or regulation to obtain prior legislative approval before spending any funds resulting from higher-than-expected revenues, and it does so in practice. Answer "b" applies if the executive obtains legislative approval before spending excess revenue, but is not legally required to do so. Answer "c" applies if the executive is legally required to receive legislative approval before spending excess revenue, but does not do so in practice. Answer "d" applies if prior legislative approval is not legally required for the executive to spend excess revenue and the executive does not obtain legislative approval in practice. A "d" response applies if the legislature only approves the additional spending after it has already occurred.

Typically, legislative approval of additional spending beyond what was reflected in the Enacted Budget would occur with the adoption of a supplemental budget. But other formal procedures for getting approval from the legislature in advance of it adopting the supplemental budget may exist. If that is the case, then please provide information about that approval process.

Answer:

a The executive is required by law or regulation to obtain approval from the legislature prior to spending excess revenues, and it does so in practice.

Source:

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, and Section 9, Clause 7.

Comment:

Congress is empowered with the "power of the purse" under the U.S. Constitution. No revenues can be raised (or funds borrowed), nor any funds in the Treasury spent, without the enactment of a law. These Constitutional authorities have been amplified by statutes generally codified in parts of Title 31 of the United States Code (Money and Finance).

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

117. Does the executive seek approval from the legislature prior to reducing spending below the levels in the Enacted Budget in response to revenue shortfalls (that is, revenues lower than originally anticipated) or other reasons during the budget execution period, and is it legally required to do so?

GUIDELINES:

Question 117 examines whether the executive receives approval from the legislature prior to cutting spending below the levels in the Enacted Budget in response to revenue shortfalls or for any other reason, and whether it is legally required to do so. Good practice requires the legislature to approve changes in revenue or expenditure relative to the Enacted Budget. For example, if less revenue is collected unexpectedly during the year, the legislature should approve or reject any proposed reductions in expenditures that are implemented as a result. If such requirements are not in place, the executive might substantially change the composition of the budget at the executive's discretion, with no legislative control.

Typically, legislative approval of proposals to reduce spending below the levels reflected in the Enacted Budget would occur as part of the supplemental budget. But other formal procedures for getting approval from the legislature in advance of it adopting the supplemental budget may exist. If that is the case, then please provide information about that approval process.

To answer "a," the executive is required by law or regulation to obtain prior legislative approval before implementing spending cuts in response to revenue shortfalls or for other reasons, and it does so in practice. Answer "b" applies if the executive received legislative approval before implementing such cuts, but is not legally required to do so. Answer "c" applies if the executive is legally required to obtain legislative approval before implementing such cuts, but does not do so in practice. Answer "d" applies if legislative approval is not legally required for the executive to implement such cuts and the executive does not obtain such approval in practice. A "d" response applies if the legislature only approves the spending cuts after they have already occurred.

Answer:

a. The executive is required by law or regulation to obtain approval from the legislature prior to reducing spending below the enacted levels in response to revenue shortfalls or other reasons, and it does so in practice.

Source:

2 U.S.C. 681-688

Comment:

Lump-sum amounts in annual appropriations acts are not regarded as ceilings but instead are regarded as the amounts that should be spent. When the President determines that an agency will not spend all or a portion of an appropriation, then under the Impoundment Control Act of 1974, as amended (2 U.S.C. 681-688), he must notify Congress that he proposes to rescind the funds. The funds may be withheld from spending for a limited period while Congress considers the request. Congress must approve a rescission through legislative action before it can take effect; if Congress does not approve the rescission, the funds must be spent. In recent years, Presidents have proposed "cancellations" rather than "rescissions"; while they avoid some of the strict reporting and other controls of the Impoundment Control Act in doing so, they lose the ability to withhold funds from spending for the limited period provided under the Act. The Government Accounting Office is charged under the Act with monitoring agency spending and notifying Congress regarding any unreported rescissions.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

118. Did a committee of the legislature examine the Audit Report on the annual budget produced by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 118 is about ex post oversight following the implementation of the budget. It probes whether a committee examined the Audit Report on the annual budget produced by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI), and whether this resulted in an official report with findings and recommendations. A key issue is how soon after the SAI releases the report does it legislature review it. This question does not apply to the legislative scrutiny of in-year implementation of the Enacted Budget during the relevant budget execution period, which is assessed separately. Also, the question is asking specifically about the SAI's annual report on the execution of the budget, not about other audit reports that the SAI may produce. (This is the Audit Report used for responding to Question 98.)

To answer "a," a legislative committee must have examined the annual Audit Report within three months of it being released by the SAI, and then published a report (or reports) with findings and recommendations. (Note that the three-month period should only take into account time when the legislature is in session.)

Answer "b" applies when the committee examines it within six months of it being released (but more than three months), and then published a report with its findings and recommendations. Choose "c" if a committee examined the annual Audit Report more than six months after it became available or it did not publish any report with findings and recommendations. Answer "d" applies where no committee examined the annual Audit Report.

If the answer is "a" or "b," please specify the name of the committee and when it reviewed the Audit Report, and provide a copy of its report(s). If the answer is "c," please specify the name of the committee and when it reviewed budget implementation. Answers "a," "b," or "c" may be selected if the Audit Report is produced by the SAI but not made publicly available.

Answer:

d. No, a committee did not examine the Audit Report on the annual budget.

Source:

Comment:

House and Senate committees routinely hold hearings that examine federal financial management as a general matter or as it applies to particular agencies. Review of the Financial Report of the United States Government, however, is not a regularly scheduled activity by any particular House or Senate committee. It occurs opportunistically, as when the Senate Budget Committee held a hearing on April 6, 2016 regarding the Government Accountability Office's review of the Financial Report for 2015 (<https://www.budget.senate.gov/hearings/how-fed-govts-financial-mismanagement-contributes-to-broken-budget-process>). Undoubtedly, Members and staff of the House and Senate reviewed the Financial Report for 2017, but a review of applicable government Websites (GPO, select House and Senate committees, GAO, and the Treasury Department) did not disclose any hearings or reports on the matter.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

119. Was the process of appointing (or re-appointing) the current head of the SAI carried out in a way that ensures his or her independence?

GUIDELINES:

Question 119 concerns the appointment process of the current head of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). Appointment procedures vary greatly across countries, as well as across different types of SAIs. Moreover, conventions and informal practices can greatly affect the de facto independence of the head of the SAI. While these factors make it difficult to devise a single metric against which all SAIs can be assessed with regard to this particular aspect, this question focuses on whether the legislature or judiciary must appoint or approve the appointment of the head of the SAI as a way to ensure the SAI's independence from the executive. However, if the appointment is carried out in another way that nonetheless ensures the independence of the SAI head, then that approach could be also considered.

To answer "a," the legislature or judiciary must appoint (or re-appoint) the head of the SAI, or approve the recommendation of the executive, as a way that ensure his or her independence from the executive. (As noted above, alternative approaches may also be acceptable.) Choose "b" if the appointment process does not ensure the independence of the head of the SAI, e.g. the executive may appoint the head of the SAI without the final consent of the legislature or judiciary.

Irrespective of which answer you selected, provide a description of how the head of the SAI is appointed.

Answer:

a. Yes, the head of the SAI may only be appointed by the legislature or judiciary, or the legislature or judiciary must give final consent before the appointment takes effect.

Source:

The General Accounting Office Act of 1980 (94 Stat. 314-315), codified at 31 U.S.C. 703.

Comment:

The GAO Act of 1980 (31 U.S.C. 703(a)) established a new process for the selection of a new Comptroller General (the head of the Government Accountability Office, formerly the General Accounting Office). Under this process, the Comptroller General (and the Deputy Comptroller General) is nominated by the President from a list of prospective nominees prepared by a special congressional commission appointed for this purpose. The nominee must be confirmed by the Senate. In order to promote the Comptroller General's independence, individuals are appointed for single, nonrenewable 15-year term.

According to GAO, the process has "been followed three times now, leading to the President's nomination, and the Senate's confirmation, of the sixth Comptroller General, Charles A. Bowsher, in 1981 and the seventh Comptroller General, David M. Walker, in 1998, and the eighth Comptroller General, Gene Dodaro, in 2010 (<https://www.gao.gov/about/comptroller-general/>).

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

120. Must a branch of government other than the executive (such as the legislature or the judiciary) give final consent before the head of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) can be removed from office?

GUIDELINES:

Question 120 covers the manner in which the head or senior members of the SAI may be removed from office. This question draws on best practices identified in the Lima Declaration of Guidelines on Auditing Precepts (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/LimaDeclaration.pdf>), including measures intended to guarantee the office's independence from the executive.

To answer "a," the head of the SAI may only be removed by the legislature or judiciary, or the legislature or judiciary must give final consent before the head of the SAI is removed. For example, the legislature or judiciary may give final consent following a certain external process, such as a criminal proceeding. So while the executive may initiate a criminal proceeding, the final consent of a member of the judiciary – or a judge – is necessary to render a verdict of wrongdoing that may lead to the removal from office of the head of the SAI. Answer "b" applies if the executive may remove the head of the SAI without the final consent of the judiciary or legislature.

Answer:

a. Yes, the head of the SAI may only be removed by the legislature or judiciary, or the legislature or judiciary must give final consent before he or she is removed.

Source:
31 U.S.C. 703(e)

Comment:
Pursuant to law, the Comptroller General (or the Deputy Comptroller General) may be removed by impeachment or by the adoption of a joint resolution of Congress directed toward this purpose. Removal by joint resolution requires notice and a hearing and may occur only for permanent disability, inefficiency, neglect of duty, malfeasance, or a felony conviction or conduct involving moral turpitude.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

121. Who determines the budget of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 121 asks who determines the budget of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). To ensure objective audits of government budgets, another important component of the SAI's independence from the executive is the extent to which the SAI's budget is determined by a body other than the executive, and whether the SAI has adequate resources to fulfill its mandate.

Answer "a" applies if the funding level is broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate, AND either the SAI determines its own budget and then submits it to the executive (which accepts it with little or no change) or directly to the legislature, or the budget of the SAI is determined directly by the legislature or judiciary (or some independent body). Answer "b" applies if the SAI's budget is determined by the executive (absent a recommendation from the SAI), and the funding level is broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate. Answer "c" applies if the legislature or judiciary (or some independent body) determines the SAI's budget, but the funding level is not consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate. Answer "d" applies if the executive determines the SAI's budget, and the funding level is not consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate. Please provide evidence in support of the assessment that the funding level is or is not broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate.

Answer:

a. The SAI determines its own budget (i.e., submits it to the executive, which accepts it with little or no change, or directly to the legislature), or the budget of the SAI is determined by the legislature or judiciary (or some independent body), and the funding level is broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate.

Source:

Comment:
Funding for the Government Accounting Office is provided largely in the annual Legislative Branch Appropriations Act under the jurisdiction of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. The GAO must justify its budget request and compete for funds like other Legislative Branch entities.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Comments: The agency is called the "Government Accountability Office". Fix this here and anywhere else where this error might have been made.

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

Researcher Response
Change "Government Accounting Office" to "Government Accountability Office"

122. Does the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) have the discretion in law to undertake those audits it may wish to?

GUIDELINES:

Question 122 explores the scope of the investigative powers of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) as prescribed in law.

Question 97 asks which of the three types of audits – financial, compliance, and performance – the SAI conducts. This question asks if the SAI is constrained by law (rather than by a lack of capacity or an inadequate budget) from undertaking any form of audit or investigating irregularities in any program or activity.

There are numerous examples of limitations. For instance, some SAIs are not permitted by their legal mandate to audit joint ventures or other public-private arrangements. Others are only allowed to undertake financial audits, precluded from conducting performance or value-for-money audits. The SAIs in some countries do not have the legal mandate to review arrangements involving oil or stabilization funds, or other types of special or extra-budgetary funds. The SAI may also not have the ability to audit commercial projects involving the public and private sector.

To answer "a," the SAI must have full discretion in law to decide which audits to undertake. Answer "b" applies if some limitations exist, but the SAI enjoys significant discretion to undertake those audits it wishes to. Answer "c" applies if the SAI has some discretion, but significant legal limitations exist. Answer "d" applies if the SAI has no power at all to choose which audits to undertake

Consulting the Lima Declaration of Guidelines on Auditing Precepts (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/LimaDeclaration.pdf>) may be useful in answering this question as its provisions serve to define the appropriate scope of a SAI's legal mandate and jurisdiction.

Answer:

a. The SAI has full discretion to decide which audits it wishes to undertake.

Source:

31 U.S.C. 711 and 712.

GAO's Congressional Protocols, GAO-17-767G, July 17, 2017.

Comment:

Among the various duties specified in law that the Comptroller General must perform, 31 U.S.C. 712 states that "[T]he Comptroller General shall: (1) investigate all matters related to the receipt, disbursement, and use of public money;" While GAO has considerable discretion under law, its reviews often are initiated at the request of a House or Senate committee or subcommittee or due to requirements in existing law. The 2017 report cited above explains GAO's protocols in working with Congress and how it establishes its work priorities.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

123. Are the audit processes of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) reviewed by an independent agency?

GUIDELINES:

Question 123 assesses whether and to what extent the audit processes of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) are subject to review by an independent agency. The latter could be a peer SAI, an international organization, an academic institution with relevant expertise, or an independent domestic agency with quality assurance functions in the area of financial reporting.

To answer "a," an independent agency must conduct and publish a review of the audit processes of the SAI on an annual basis. Answer "b" applies if a review was carried out within the past five years, and published, but it is not conducted annually, but. Choose answer "c" if the SAI has an internal unit that reviews the audit processes of the SAI on a regular basis, but an independent agency does not conduct such a review. Answer "d" applies if the audit processes of the SAI are reviewed neither by an independent agency nor by a unit within the SAI.

If the answer is either "a" or "b," please specify the name of the independent agency and when last it conducted such a review, and provide a copy of the published report. If the answer is "c," please specify the name of the unit within the SAI that is tasked with conducting such reviews.

Answer:

b. Yes, an independent agency conducts and publishes a review of the audit processes of the SAI at least once in the past five years, but not annually.

Source:

"International Peer Review of the Performance and Financial Audit Practices of the United States Government Accountability Office" (prepared by national audit offices of Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom), September 2017.

"Report of the International Peer Review Team on GAO's Performance and Financial Audit Practices" (prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Norway), September 2014.

Links to these and earlier reports are available under "Peer Review" (<https://www.gao.gov/about/what-gao-is/performance/peer-review>).

Comment:

The Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), known informally as the Yellow Book, has been published periodically by GAO since 1972 (<https://www.gao.gov/yellowbook/overview#t=0>). According to GAO, "Yellow Book revisions undergo an extensive, deliberative process, including public comments and input from the Comptroller General's Advisory Council on Government Auditing Standards. GAO considers all Yellow Book comments and input from the ... Advisory Council when finalizing revisions to the standards." The Advisory Council consists of experts, drawn from Federal, State, and local government, the private sector, and academia, who serve four-year terms (<https://gao.gov/yellowbook/overview#t=2>). Under GAGAS (paragraph 3.96), GAO is required to obtain an external peer review at least once every three years, as described more fully on the GAO Website (<https://www.gao.gov/about/what-gao-s/performance/>). The two most recent reviews are cited above.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

124. In the past 12 months, how frequently did the head or a senior staff member of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) take part and testify in hearings of a committee of the legislature?

GUIDELINES:

Question 124 concerns the interaction between two important oversight actors and assesses how frequently the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) made high-level inputs to the work of legislative committees. Many SAIs interact with the legislature in some form, but the nature and intensity of the interaction varies. This question probes this aspect by asking, with reference to the past 12 months, how frequently the head or a senior staff member of the SAI took part and testified in hearings of a committee of the legislature. The intent is to assess the extent to which the SAI representative in question was not only present at a meeting of a legislative committee, but was an active participant (as opposed to a passive observer, serving only as a resource when called upon). You can refer to official records of legislative committees, websites and annual reports of the SAI, press releases and media coverage, for example. Choose answer "a" if this occurred five times or more; "b" for three times or more, but less than five times; "c" for once or twice, and "d" for never.

Answer:

a. Frequently (i.e., five times or more).

Source:

Government Accountability Office, Performance and Accountability Report, Fiscal Year 2018, November 15, 2018, GAO-19-1SP.

Comment:

According to the report cited above, "Senior GAO officials were asked to testify 98 times [before House and Senate committees] on a wide range of issues that touched virtually all major federal agencies." Much of the testimony was provided by Directors or Acting Directors of GAO Divisions. The report provides detailed examples of testimony, arranged by Strategic Goals (beginning on page 65 for Goal 1, page 71 for Goal 2, and page 78 for Goal 3).

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

125. Does the executive use participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input during the formulation of the annual budget (prior to the budget being tabled in parliament)?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles on "Inclusiveness" and "Timeliness" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the executive are truly interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the executive.

The drafting of this question and its answers are partially drawn from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, in particular with regards to the concepts of "involvement" (option "a" in the responses) and "consultation" (option "b"). See:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf.

Please consider only participation mechanisms that the Ministry of Finance, lead budget agency, or central coordinating agency designated by the government to implement participation mechanisms ("the executive") is currently using to allow the public to participate in the formulation of the annual budget, including annual pre-budget discussions. Participation mechanisms used only by line ministries should not be used to answer this question. If there is more than one

mechanism used by the executive, please select the deepest or most interactive mechanism that reflects the government's efforts to incorporate citizens' input into the formulation of the annual budget. The participation mechanisms can involve a range of different issues, such as spending and tax policy, funding and revenue levels, and macro-fiscal planning .

To answer "a," the executive must use open participation mechanisms that involve the public in the formulation of the annual budget. This means that a public process is in place whereby CSOs and/or individual members of the public and government officials interact, and have the opportunity to express their opinions to each other in what can be considered a public dialogue between them (i.e., in-person and online discussion forums). Additionally, the mechanism should be open to any CSO and/or individual members of the public who wish to participate. By selecting this answer, the researcher must present evidence to support the presence of a public dialogue among citizens and government officials. Examples include public meetings and online deliberative exchanges.

Answer "b" applies if an open consultation mechanism is in place whereby members of the public (i.e., individuals and/or CSOs as well as academics, independent experts, policy think tanks, and business organizations) can provide their input in the formulation of the annual budget. This answer applies if the government is using a mechanism that is structured and well established, and not ad-hoc. The researcher must present evidence to support the presence of consultative processes through which the executive seeks out inputs from citizens. Examples include surveys, focus groups, report cards, published policy consultation exercises, and online platforms that government officials actively manage to solicit inputs.

Answer "c" applies if the executive has established a mechanism or mechanisms to allow citizens to participate in the budget formulation phase, but:

1) The mechanisms are not structured and happen only on ad-hoc basis, or not regularly.

and/or

2) The executive consults with and/or interacts with, citizens, but there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, and the executive determines fully or partially such selection process by inviting specific groups (for example by making an open call but just to experts from a particular sector, or naming specific organizations). While it is not possible for all citizens and/or CSOs to participate in this or other phases of the budget process, options "a" and "b" apply if the government does not exercise any discretion in determining who is allowed to participate. While there is likely going to be self-selection, it is important that the selection is not made by the executive.

In cases where there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, to select answer choice "c", there should be some sort of public record (held in public, minutes of meetings released to public) so that the all CSOs and individual members of the public can have knowledge of the meeting, who participated, and what was discussed.

Examples of mechanisms that might qualify as a "c" response include hotlines, Facebook announcements, and one-off meetings with NGOs in which there is a public record.

The researcher must present evidence to support selection of a "c" response.

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation stage.

Answer:

d. The requirements for a "c" response or above are not met.

Source:

Circular A-11, Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget, June 2018 (published annually) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/a11.pdf>). See especially Part I, Section 22.

Comment:

In the U.S. federal budget process, Congress exercises the "power of the purse" pursuant to the Constitution and is the principal point at which citizens have access to influence the enacted budget. In the Executive, the White House, the Treasury Department, and the Office of Management and Budget solicit input from CSOs and various stakeholder organizations during formulation, but not in a regular, open, or comprehensive manner. Deliberations regarding the formulation of the President's budget largely are confidential, as required by Section 22 of Circular A-11. Section 22.1 states, in part: "The nature and amounts of the President's decisions and the underlying materials are confidential" (Page 1 of Section 22). Section 22.5 (Pages 3 and 4 of Section 22) identifies statutes that authorize the exemption of certain materials and open-meeting requirements for budgetary matters from the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and the Government in the Sunshine Act (see 5 U.S.C. 552b). Meetings between White House, Treasury Department, and OMB officials with the public on budgetary matters certainly occur but are difficult to document. Presidential administrations have maintained visitor logs but differed in their practices regarding the information displayed about meetings and their public disclosure. The Obama Administration, for example, maintained logs with sufficient information that the general purposes of meetings could be inferred in some instances (as discussed by the Sunlight Foundation (<https://sunlightfoundation.com/2017/02/17/online-search-for-obama-era-white-house-visitor-logs-goes-offline/>)); the Trump Administration decided not to publicly disclose its logs. Because visitor logs, minutes, or other explanations of meetings (such as press conferences) are not made available regularly, OBS guidelines require a response of "d" on this question.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

126. With regard to the mechanism identified in question 125, does the executive take concrete steps to include vulnerable and under-represented parts of the population in the formulation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principle of "Inclusiveness", and examines the executive's effort to actively reach out to citizens who are from socially vulnerable groups and/or underrepresented in national processes. The emphasis here is on the executive's efforts to seek out the views of members of the public from socially vulnerable groups and/or who are underrepresented in the process.

To answer "a," the executive must actively seek out individuals from vulnerable and underrepresented communities and/or civil society organizations representing vulnerable and underrepresented individuals and communities. The researcher must provide evidence to show the government's efforts and actions. The researcher must speak with the relevant government official(s), and subsequently double check with an alternative source, such as representatives of vulnerable/underrepresented groups.

Answer "b" applies if the executive does not take concrete steps to incorporate vulnerable/underrepresented individuals, or organizations representing them, into participation mechanisms or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation stage.

Answer:

b. The requirements for an "a" response are not met.

Source:

As indicated in the response to the previous question, the formulation process for the President's budget is relatively closed and any citizen participation that may occur is very difficult to identify.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

127. During the budget formulation stage, which of the following key topics does the executive's engagement with citizens cover?

For the purpose of this question, key topics are considered to be:

1. Macroeconomic issues
2. Revenue forecasts, policies, and administration
3. Social spending policies
4. Deficit and debt levels
5. Public investment projects
6. Public services

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Timeliness". Please consider all of the mechanisms currently used by the executive to promote public participation during the formulation of the annual budget.

Please note that while the public engagement can/may cover other topics -- and for this reason the other questions assessing the executive's engagement with the public during budget formulation can be answered on the basis of engagement on topics other than the six listed above -- for the purpose of answering this question, "key topics" are considered to be only the ones listed above. If the executive's engagement with the public covers topics other than the six listed above, please specify these topics in the comments.

Note also that this question assesses only the coverage of public engagement (i.e., "what issues is the public invited to engage on?") and issues related to the depth of engagement or selectivity of engaged are not dealt with by this question.

Answer "d" applies if requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation stage.

Answer:

d. The requirements for a "c" response or above are not met.

Source:

Comment:

As indicated previously, the formulation process for the President's budget is relatively closed and any citizen participation that may occur is very difficult to identify.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

128. Does the executive use participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input in monitoring the implementation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles on "Inclusiveness" and "Timeliness" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the executive are truly interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the executive.

The drafting of this question and its answers are partially drawn from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, in particular with regards to the concepts of "involvement" (option "a" in the responses) and "consultation" (option "b"). See:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf

Please consider only participation mechanisms that the Ministry of Finance, lead budget agency, or central coordinating agency designated by the government to implement participation mechanisms ("the executive") is currently using to allow the public to participate in monitoring the implementation of the annual budget. If the executive has designated a central coordinating agency to implement participation mechanisms throughout the national budget process, researchers may consider these mechanisms. Participation mechanisms used only by line ministries should not be used to answer this question. If there is more than one mechanism used by the executive, please select the deepest or most interactive mechanism that reflects the government's efforts to incorporate citizens' input into the implementation of the annual budget. The participation mechanisms can involve a range of different issues, such as revenue administration, public service delivery, public investment project implementation, including procurement, and the administration of social transfer schemes.

To answer "a," the executive must use open participation mechanisms that involve the public in the implementation of the annual budget. This means that a public process is in place whereby CSOs and/or individual members of the public and government officials interact, and have the opportunity to express their opinions to each other in what can be considered a public dialogue between them (i.e., in-person and online discussion forums). Additionally, the mechanism should be open to any CSO and/or individual members of the public who wish to participate. By selecting this answer, the researcher must present evidence to support the presence of a public dialogue among citizens and government official. Examples include public meetings, online, deliberative exchanges, procurement complaint mechanisms, and social monitoring and dialogue.

Answer "b" applies if an open consultation mechanism is in place whereby members of the public (i.e., individuals and/or CSOs as well as academics, independent experts, policy think tanks, and business organizations) can provide their input on the implementation of the annual budget. This answer applies if the government is using a mechanism that is structured and well established, and not ad-hoc. The researcher must present evidence to support the presence of consultative processes through which the executive seeks out inputs from citizens. Examples include public hearings, surveys, focus groups, report cards, and online platforms that government officials actively manage to solicit inputs.

Answer "c" applies if the executive has established a mechanism or mechanisms to allow citizens to provide input on budget implementation, but:

1) The mechanisms are not structured, happen only on ad-hoc basis, or not regularly.

and/or

2) The executive consults with and/or interacts with, citizens, but there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, and the executive determines fully or partially such selection process by inviting specific groups (for example by making an open call but just to experts from a particular sector, or naming specific organizations). While it is not possible for all citizens and/or CSOs to participate in this or other phases of the budget process, options "a" and "b" apply if the government does not exercise any discretion in determining who is allowed to participate. While there is likely going to be self-selection, it is important that the selection is not made by the executive.

In cases where there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, to select answer choice "c", the researcher must have evidence that the government is holding participation mechanisms that have some sort of public record (held in public, minutes of meetings released to public) so that all CSOs and members of the public can have knowledge of the meeting, who participated, and what was discussed.

Examples include hotlines, Facebook announcements, one-off meetings with NGOs in which there is a public record.

The researcher must present evidence to support selection of a "c" response.

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation stage.

Answer:

d. The requirements for a "c" response or above are not met.

Source:

The Executive reports on the implementation on the budget but does not provide for citizen input into the process. In general, there are not mechanisms established for citizen input into budget execution.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

129. With regard to the mechanism identified in question 128, does the executive take concrete steps to receive input from vulnerable and underrepresented parts of the population on the implementation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principle of "Inclusiveness", and examines the executive's effort to actively reach out to citizens who are from socially vulnerable groups and/or underrepresented in national processes. The emphasis here is on national government's efforts to obtain input from members of the public who are from socially vulnerable groups and/or underrepresented in national processes during the implementation of the annual budget.

To answer "a," the executive must actively seek out individuals from vulnerable and underrepresented community and/or civil society organizations representing vulnerable and underrepresented individuals and communities. The researcher must provide evidence to show the government's efforts and actions. The researcher must speak with the relevant government official(s), and subsequently double check with an alternative source, such as representatives from vulnerable/underrepresented groups.

Answer "b" applies if the national executive does not take concrete steps to incorporate vulnerable/underrepresented individuals, or organizations representing them, into participation mechanisms or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation stage.

Answer:

b. The requirements for an "a" response are not met.

Source:

Comment:

In general, there are not mechanisms established for citizen input into budget execution.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

130. During the implementation of the annual budget, which of the following topics does the executive's engagement with citizens cover?

For the purpose of this question, key topics are considered to be:

1. Changes in macroeconomic circumstances
2. Delivery of public services
3. Collection of revenue
4. Implementation of social spending
5. Changes in deficit and debt levels
6. Implementation of public investment projects

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Timeliness". Please consider all of the mechanisms currently used by the executive to promote public participation during the implementation of the annual budget.

Please note that while the public engagement can/may cover other topics – and for this reason the other questions assessing the executive's engagement with the public during budget implementation can be answered on the basis of engagement on topics other than the six listed above – for the purpose of answering this question, "key topics" are considered to be ONLY the ones listed above. If the executive's engagement with the public covers topics other than the six listed above, please specify these topics in the comments.

Note also that this question assesses only the coverage of public engagement (i.e., "what issues is the public invited to engage on?") and issues related to the depth of engagement or selectivity of engaged are not dealt with by this question.

Answer "d" applies if requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation stage.

Answer:

d. The requirements for a "c" response or above are not met.

Source:

Comment:

As indicated previously, the Executive has not established any mechanisms for citizen input into budget execution.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

131. When the executive engages with the public, does it provide comprehensive prior information on the process of the engagement, so that the public can participate in an informed manner?

Comprehensive information must include at least three of the following elements:

1. Purpose
2. Scope
3. Constraints
4. Intended outcomes
5. Process and timeline

GUIDELINES:

This question relates to the GIFT principle of "Openness," and addresses whether the executive provides relevant information on the process of the engagement before public participation takes place, in order to help citizens engage effectively. The question addresses whether the "rules of the public engagement" are clearly spelled out, in advance and in detail, so that those members of the public who want to engage know how to do so, in terms of when they can do so, what they are expected to provide input on, by when, to whom, etc. This question does not cover the substance of the engagement, which is covered by questions 127 and 130.

Non-comprehensive information means that the government provides information that includes at least one but less than three of the elements listed above.

Purpose refers to a brief explanation of why the public engagement is being undertaken, including the executive's objectives for its engagement with the public.

Scope refers to what is within the subject matter of the engagement as well as what is outside the subject matter of the engagement. For example, the scope may include how a current policy is administered but exclude the specifics of the policies themselves.

Constraints refers to whether there are any explicit limitations on the engagement. An example of a constraint could be that any policy changes must not cost (or forgo revenue) more than a specific amount or have no net fiscal cost.

Intended outcomes refers to what the executive hopes to achieve as a result of the engagement. Examples of intended outcomes could be revising a policy to better reflect citizen or service-user views or to improve the way in which a particular program is administered.

Process refers to the methods by which the public engagement will take place and the discrete steps in the process. For example, the process may simply be a one-off Internet-based consultation, with a summary published of public inputs and the official response. The process may involve simultaneous or overlapping steps, and may be conducted in one round or in two or more rounds of engagement.

Timeline refers to the specific dates on which the discrete steps in the process will take place, or during which they will be completed, and clear start and end

dates for the overall engagement.

Answer "d" applies if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation or formulation stage.

Answer:

d. The requirements for a "c" response or above are not met.

Source:

As discussed previously, the Executive has not established formal, comprehensive mechanisms for citizen participation in the formulation or implementation of the budget. Because the "power of the purse" is exercised by Congress, it is the focus of citizen participation.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

132. With regard to the mechanism identified in question 125, does the executive provide the public with feedback on how citizens' inputs have been used in the formulation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Sustainability", and examines the extent to which the executive provides information to citizens on which public inputs were received, which ones are used in the formulation of the annual budget, and how/why.

By "written record", we mean a document that is produced and released by the lead budget agency (Ministry of Finance, Treasury) that has set up and holds the participation activity.

Answer "a" applies when the executive provides a written document with:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public and*
- *A detailed report on how the inputs were used or not used (such report should include information on which inputs were used or not used, why, and how)*

Answer "b" applies when the executive provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public and*
- *A not-so-detailed report, such as a document with a few paragraphs, on how public inputs were used or not used. This document only gives a general idea on how those inputs were used or not used.*

Answer "c" applies when the executive provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public or*
- *A report (being it detailed or not-so-detailed) on how public inputs have been used or not used.*

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation stage.

Answer:

d. The requirements for a "c" response or above are not met.

Source:

Comment:

No document or report of this nature is prepared or issued by the Executive. To the extent that citizen inputs were received on an "ad hoc" basis during formulation, they might (rarely) be identified in the President's budget submission.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

133. With regard to the mechanism identified in question 128, does the executive provide the public with information on how citizens' inputs have been used to assist in monitoring the implementation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Sustainability", and examines the extent to which the executive provides information to citizens on which public inputs were received during the implementation of the annual budget, which ones are taken into account to improve budget monitoring, and how/why.

By "written record", we mean a document that is produced and released by the lead budget agency (Ministry of Finance, Treasury) that has set up and holds the participation activity.

Answer "a" applies when the executive provides a written document with:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public and*
- *A detailed report on how the inputs were used or not used (such report should include information on which inputs were used or not used, why, and how)*

Answer "b" applies when the executive provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs received (e.g., a written transcript) from the public and*
- *A not-so-detailed report, such as a document with a few paragraphs, on how public inputs were used or not used. This document only gives a general idea on how those inputs were or were not taken into account by the executive during budget monitoring.*

Answer "c" applies when the executive provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public or*
- *A report (being it detailed or not-so-detailed) on how public inputs have been used or not used.*

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation stage.

Answer:

d. The requirements for a "c" response or above are not met.

Source:

Comment:

Again, no such mechanism has been established by the Executive.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

134. Are participation mechanisms incorporated into the timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles on "Sustainability," "Timeliness" and "Complementarity" and addresses whether the executive is able to link participation mechanisms to the administrative processes that are used to create the annual budget.

Please note that "timetable" refers to a document setting deadlines for submissions from other government entities, such as line ministries or subnational government, to the Ministry of Finance or whatever central government agency is in charge of coordinating the budget's formulation. This document is sometimes referred to as the budget calendar and is the same document referenced in Question 53.

Answer "a" applies if the national executive establishes a clear set of guidelines that enable citizens and civil servants to understand when participation mechanisms should be used to enable citizen inputs to be incorporated into the annual budget. For answer choice "a", the timetable must be available to the public prior to the budget preparation process beginning.

Answer "b" applies if the executive does not establish a clear set of guidelines that enable citizens and civil servants to understand when participation mechanisms should be used to enable citizen inputs to be incorporated into the annual budget or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation or implementation stage.

Answer:

b. The requirements for an "a" response are not met.

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

135. Do one or more line ministries use participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input during the formulation or implementation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES

While questions 125 – 135 focus only on participation mechanisms that the Ministry of Finance, lead budget agency, or central coordinating agency currently use to allow the public to participate in the national budget process, this question asks about participation mechanisms used by line ministries to allow the public to participate in national budget processes. Thus, participation mechanisms used by the Ministry of Finance, lead budget agency, or central coordinating agency should not be used to answer this question. If there is more than one mechanism used by a line ministry or if multiple line ministries use participation mechanisms, please select the deepest or most interactive mechanism that reflects the government's efforts to incorporate citizens' input into the formulation and/or implementation of the annual budget.

This question reflects the GIFT principles on "Inclusiveness" and "Timeliness" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the executive are truly interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the executive.

The drafting of this question and its answers are partially drawn from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, in particular with regards to the concepts of "involvement" (option "a" in the responses) and "consultation" (option "b"). See:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf

To answer "a," a line ministry must use open participation mechanisms that involve the public in the formulation or implementation of the annual budget. This means that a public process is in place whereby CSOs and/or individual members of the public and government officials interact, and have the opportunity to express their opinions to each other in what can be considered a public dialogue between them (i.e., in-person and online discussion forums). Additionally, the mechanism should be open to any CSO and/or individual members of the public who wish to participate. By selecting this answer, the researcher must present evidence to support the presence of a public dialogue among citizens and government official. Examples include public meetings and online deliberative exchanges.

Answer "b" applies if an open consultation mechanism is in place whereby members of the public (i.e., individuals and/or CSOs as well as academics, independent experts, policy think tanks, and business organizations) can provide their input in the formulation or implementation of the annual budget. This answer applies if the government is using a mechanism that is structured and well established, and not ad-hoc. The researcher must present evidence to support the presence of consultative processes through which a line ministry seeks out inputs from citizens. Examples include surveys, focus groups, report cards, published policy consultation exercises, and online platforms that government officials actively manage to solicit inputs.

Answer "c" applies if a line ministry has established a mechanism or mechanisms to allow citizens to participate in the budget formulation phase, but:

1) The mechanisms are not structured and happen only on ad-hoc basis, or not regularly.

and/or

2) A line ministry consults with and/or interacts with, citizens, but there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, and the line ministry determines fully or partially such selection process by inviting specific groups (for example by making an open call but just to experts from a particular sector, or naming specific organizations). While it is not possible for all citizens and/or CSOs to participate in this or other phases of the budget process, options "a" and "b" apply if the government does not exercise any discretion in determining who is allowed to participate. While there is likely going to be self-selection, it is important that the selection is not made by the executive.

In cases where there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, to select answer choice "c", there should be some sort of public record (held in public,

minutes of meetings released to public) so that the all CSOs and individual members of the public can have knowledge of the meeting, who participated, and what was discussed.

The researcher must present evidence to support selection of a "c" response.

Examples of mechanisms that might qualify as a "c" response include hotlines, Facebook announcements, and one-off meetings with NGOs in which there is a public record.

Answer:

c. Yes, at least one line ministry uses participation mechanisms during the budget formulation or implementation phase, but either these mechanisms capture only some ad-hoc views, or the executive invites specific individuals or groups for budget discussions (participation is not, in practice, open to everyone).

Source:

(1) OMB Circular A-11, Section 22 (cited previously).

(2) Department of Energy: <https://www.energy.gov/em/services/program-management/budget...> (<https://www.energy.gov/em/services/program-management/budget-performance>).

(3) IBM Center for the Business of Government, Assessing Public Participation in an Open Government Era; A Review of Federal Agency Plans, by Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, Joe Goldman, and David Stern, 2011 (<https://www.govexec.com/pdfs/082211jm1.pdf>).

(4) President Barack Obama, Transparency and Open Government; Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, January 21, 2009 (published in the Federal Register) (<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/transparency-and-open-government>).

Comment:

As stated previously, in the U.S. federal budget process, Congress exercises the "power of the purse" pursuant to the Constitution and is the principal point at which citizens have access to influence the enacted budget. In the Executive, federal departments and agencies solicit input from CSOs and various stakeholder organizations during formulation, but not in a regular or comprehensive manner.

Deliberations regarding the formulation of the President's budget largely are confidential, as required by Section 22 of Circular A-11. Section 22.1 states, in part: "The nature and amounts of the President's decisions and the underlying materials are confidential." Section 22.5 identifies statutes that authorize the exemption of certain materials and open-meeting requirements for budgetary matters from the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and the Government in the Sunshine Act (see 5 U.S.C. 552). The major departments of the Federal Government make scant reference to public participation in the budget formulation process. For example, a unit of the Department of Energy provides this information: "EM provides an opportunity for public participation in the federal budget process. The budget request is initially formulated in the program offices, where EM considers public comments in developing the program strategies, priorities and funding requests. Those priorities are reflected in the budget that is submitted to Congress." No further information is provided.

Federal agencies have been moving in recent years toward greater engagement with the public in policy making and implementation, especially as part of an international Open Government movement. In 2009, for example, President Obama committed to an Open Government Initiative and issued a memorandum to Department and agency heads to make the Federal Government more transparent, participatory, and collaborative. An article by the IBM Center for the Business of Government, "Assessing Public Participation in an Open Government Era," examined agency plans and actions under the initiative, finding that dozens of agencies have used crowdsourcing, online contests or competitions, Wikis, town halls or chats, and various other online tools, as well as such face-to-face mechanisms as public hearings, stakeholder forums, and resident and citizen forums to engage citizens on policy matters and to solicit their input. While the Federal Government has established such Websites as www.USAspending.gov and www.data.gov to promote the availability of certain budgetary and economic information to the public, the federal budget has not been a central focus of efforts to engage the public.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

136. Does the legislature or the relevant legislative committee(s) hold public hearings and/or use other participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input during its public deliberations on the formulation of the annual budget (pre-budget and/or approval stages)?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principle on "Sustainability," "Transparency," and "Complementarity" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the legislature are interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the legislature, rather than being limited to allowing the public to attend or hear public budget deliberations.

Please consider participation mechanisms that the legislature (both in its whole institution or its relevant budget/public accounts/finance committees) has put in place and is using to allow the public to participate in their deliberations on the annual budget. This includes deliberations during the pre-budget phase (i.e., when the executive is still in the process of formulating the draft budget) and the budget discussions after the budget has been tabled to parliament and before it is approved. In the comment box, please specify during which stage of the budget cycle the legislature has put in place a public participation mechanism.

Mechanisms through which members of the public reach out to individual Members of Parliament as opposed to the legislature (both in its whole institution or

its relevant budget/public accounts/finance committees) or unofficial hearings organized by a subset of committee members should not be considered in answering this question.

If there is more than one mechanism, please select a mechanism that best shows/reflects the legislature's efforts to incorporate citizens into the formulation of the annual budget. The participation mechanisms can involve a range of different issues, such as revenues, policy selection, and macro-fiscal planning (please note that the issue of coverage is covered in a subsequent question).

To answer "a," the legislature must hold public hearings where citizens are allowed to testify. This answer applies only if the legislature does not exercise discretion in determining which citizens and/or CSOs can testify (for example, participation takes place on a first-come-first-served basis).

Answer "b" should be selected if the following applies:

- The legislature holds public hearings on the budget;
- Testimony is not allowed from members of the public or CSOs; but
- There are other means used by the legislature to receive and collect views from citizens and CSOs on the budget, and the legislature does not exercise discretion in determining which citizens and/or CSOs can provide input. The researcher must provide evidence to support the presence of those alternative processes through which the legislature seeks inputs from citizens. For example, there should be a public record indicating that views from citizens and the public were sought.

Answer "c" should be selected if the following applies:

- The legislature holds public hearings on the budget;
- Testimony is not allowed from members of the public or CSOs;
- No other means are used by the legislature to receive and collect views/input from citizens and CSOs on the budget, but
- The legislature invites a few individuals/groups to provide input (through public hearings or elsewhere)

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the legislature does not use public participation mechanisms during its deliberations on the annual budget

Answer:

b. Yes, public hearings are held. No testimony from the public is provided during the public hearings, but contributions from the public are received through other means.

Source:

<https://waysandmeans.house.gov/committee-activity/committee-submissions>

Comment:

While testimony at public hearings is subject to limitations and constraints (e.g., there generally are not hearings open on a "first come, first served" basis), it should be noted that solicitation of input from the public, as represented by CSOs, non-profit organizations, unions, academia, and many other types of organizations, is pursued aggressively. The House and Senate, and their committees, increasingly use social media to inform and interact with citizens. For example, the House Committee on Ways and Means collects "Submissions for the Record" from organizations and individuals and posts them to its Website (<https://waysandmeans.house.gov/committee-activity/committee-submissions>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

137. During the legislative deliberations on the annual budget (pre-budget or approval stages), which of the following key topics does the legislature's (or relevant legislative budget committee) engagement with citizens cover?

For the purpose of this question, key topics are considered to be:

1. Macroeconomic issues
2. Revenue forecasts, policies, and administration
3. Social spending policies
4. Deficit and debt levels
5. Public investment projects
6. Public services

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Timeliness". Please consider the range of mechanisms currently used by the legislature to promote public participation during legislative deliberations on the annual budget.

Please note that while the public engagement can/may cover other topics, for the purpose of answering this question, "key topics" are considered to be only the ones listed above. If the legislature's engagement with the public covers topics other than the six listed above, please specify these topics in the comments.

Note also that this question assesses only the coverage of public engagement (i.e., "what issues is the public invited to engage on?") and issues related to the depth of engagement or selectivity of engaged are not dealt with by this question.

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the legislature does not use public participation mechanisms during its deliberations on the annual budget.

Answer:

a. The legislature seeks input on all six topics.

Source:

U.S. Government Printing Office, "About Congressional Hearings" (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/chrg/116>)

Comment:

The primary and most visible means by which the legislature engages with citizens on budgetary and economic policy matters is through the committee hearings process. Groups of citizens typically are represented in this process by the leaders of interest groups, businesses, and other organizations, and by experts from think tanks and universities. Jurisdiction over overall budgetary and economic policy, and policies with respect to particular areas, is widely dispersed within the House and Senate. Consequently, many different committees usually hold multiple hearings on a vast array of budgetary and economic topics. While the House and Senate Budget Committees, in particular, focus on overall budgetary and economic policy, most of the other House and Senate committees address specific policy areas, including such diverse matters as healthcare spending, business tax incentives, defense spending, or tax relief programs for low-income populations. (In 2017, the two Budget Committees did not hold their customary hearings with Administration officials.) The House and Senate Appropriations Committees invest considerable time and effort in hearings on a wide range of budgetary topics. All of the hearings conducted by House, Senate, and Joint committees are listed by Congress from the 87th Congress (1961-1962) through the present (116th Congress) are available at the GPO Website, cited above. For example, during the 115th Congress, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held dozens of hearings, including "The Fiscal Year 2019 Department of Energy Budget," April 12, 2018.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: To the extent that there is public involvement. See response to prior question suggesting that this input is not frequently solicited, or when it is, it is done indirectly.

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

138. Does the legislature provide feedback to the public on how citizens' inputs have been used during legislative deliberations on the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Sustainability", and examines the extent to which the legislature provides information to citizens on which public inputs were received and how inputs were used during legislative deliberations (please note that these deliberations can refer to the pre-budget and approval phases). By "written record" in this question, we mean a document that is produced and released by the legislature.

Answer "a" applies when the legislature provides a written document with:

- The inputs received from the public (e.g., a written transcript) and
- A detailed report on how the inputs were used or not used (such report should include information on which inputs were used or not used, why, and how).

Answer "b" applies when the legislature provides a written document that includes:

- The inputs received from the public (e.g., a written transcript) and
- A not-so-detailed report on how public inputs were used or not used. This document only gives a general idea on how those inputs were used or not used in legislative deliberations on the annual budget (please note that these deliberations refer to the pre-budget and approval phases).

Answer "c" applies when the legislature provides a written document that includes:

- The inputs received from the public (e.g., a written transcript) or
- A report (being it detailed or not-so-detailed) on how public inputs have been used or not used.

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the legislature does not use public participation mechanisms during its deliberations on the annual budget.

Answer:

c. Yes, the legislature provides a written record which includes either the list of the inputs received or a report or summary on how they were used.

Source:

For an example of a committee referring to suggestions received from citizen groups, see the following report: House Appropriations Committee, H.Rept. 115-238, Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2018 (June 21, 2017). All House and Senate committee reports are available in numerical order, and arranged by Congress, at the Government Printing Office Website under "About Congressional Reports" (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/CRPT>). See further comment below.

Comment:

Each committee is required by the rules of their House to prepare a written report to accompany legislation that is forwarded to the full chamber for consideration. These reports often address inputs or concepts (although not necessarily in an itemized listing), usually promoted by multiple groups, and how they are addressed in the legislation. In addition, the committees publish hearings that include both the transcript of the actual witness testimony and dialog between Members and witnesses, as well as material submitted for the record. Committee references to citizen inputs oftentimes are brief and generalized. With regard to the report cited above, for example, the Committee made the following comment on page 31 regarding the National Park Service and the Heritage Partnership Program: "These funds support grants to local nonprofit groups in support of historical and cultural recognition, preservation and tourism activities. The Committee commends the Alliance of National Heritage Areas for, in response to Congressional direction, recently developing an allocation model that maintains core services of more established areas while proposing more resources to newer areas to provide additional economic and cultural opportunities in the communities they serve. The Committee continues to encourage heritage areas to develop plans for long-term self-sufficiency as the Committee fully expects pressure on HPP funding to continue in future years."

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

139. Does the legislature hold public hearings and/or use other participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input during its public deliberations on the Audit Report?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principle on "Sustainability," "Transparency," and "Complementarity" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the legislative are interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the legislature, rather than being limited to allowing the public to attend or hear public budget deliberations.

A key constitutional role of the legislature in almost all countries is to oversee the government's management of public resources. While the Supreme Audit Institution is responsible for checking the government's accounts and publishing the outcome of their audits, for accountability purposes it is essential that the legislature reviews and scrutinizes those reports, and checks on whether the executive is taking the appropriate corrective actions based on the Supreme Audit Institution's recommendations.

Holding public hearings to review audit findings allows the public to learn more about how the government has managed its resources for the budget years that have ended, and demand accountability in case of mismanagement and irregularities. Reviewing and discussing those reports in public is therefore a key responsibility of a legislature.

Please note that by "Audit Report" we refer to the same audit report assessed in the transparency section of this Survey, i.e., one of the eight key budget documents that all governments (in this case, the Supreme Audit Institution) must produce, according to best practice.

Please consider participation mechanisms that the legislature (both in its whole institution or its relevant budget/public accounts/finance committees) have put in place and using to allow the public to participate in their deliberations on the Audit Report.

Mechanisms through which members of the public reach out to individual members of parliament as opposed to the legislature (both in its whole institution or its relevant budget/public accounts/finance committees) or unofficial hearings organized by a subset of committee members should not be considered in answering this question.

To answer "a," the national legislature must hold public hearings where citizens are allowed to testify. This answer applies only if the legislature does not exercise discretion in determining which citizens and/or CSOs can testify (for example, participation takes place on a first-come-first-served basis).

Answer "b" should be selected if the following applies:

- The legislature holds public hearings on the budget;*
- No testimony is allowed from the public; BUT*
- There are other means used by the legislature to receive and collect views from citizens and CSOs on the budget, and the legislature does not exercise discretion in determining which citizens and/or CSOs can provide input. The researcher must provide evidence to support the presence of those alternative processes through which the legislature seeks inputs from citizens. For example, there should be a public record indicating that views from citizens and the public were sought.*

Answer "c" should be selected if the following applies:

- The legislature holds public hearings on the budget;
- No testimony is allowed from the public;
- No other means are used by the legislature to receive and collect views/input from citizens and CSOs on the budget, BUT
- The legislature invites a few individuals/groups to provide input (through public hearings or elsewhere)

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the legislature does not use public participation mechanisms during its deliberations on the Audit Report.

Answer:

c. Yes, public hearings on the Audit Report are held. No testimony from the public is provided during the hearings and there are no other mechanisms through which public contributions are received, but the legislature invites specific individuals or groups to testify or provide input (participation is not, in practice, open to everyone).

Source:

Senate Budget Committee, hearing, "How Federal Government's Financial Mismanagement Contributes to Broken Budget Process," April 6, 2016 (<https://www.budget.senate.gov/hearings/how-fed-govts-financial-mismanagement-contributes-to-broken-budget-process>).
Government Accountability Office, "Fiscal Year 2015 U.S. Government Financial Statements: Need to Address the Government's Remaining Financial Management Challenges and Long-Term Fiscal Path," GAO-16-541T, April 6, 2016 (<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-541T>).

Comment:

House and Senate committees usually focus only relatively little attention on the Audit Report, with constraints on participation by the public in hearings, but the mechanisms to solicit public input that apply to hearings generally apply in this instance as well. Hearings on this topic may not be held for several years. In the hearing cited above, the Comptroller General presented testimony on the GAO review of the Audit Report (the Financial Report of the United States Government).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

140. Does the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) maintain formal mechanisms through which the public can suggest issues/topics to include in the SAI's audit program (for example, by bringing ideas on agencies, programs, or projects that could be audited)?

GUIDELINES:

This question assesses whether the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) has established mechanisms through which the public can provide suggestions on issues/topics to be included in its audit program. When deciding its audit agenda, the SAI may undertake audits for a sample of agencies, projects, and programs in the country; and such a selection could be based on complaints and suggestions made by members of the public. To receive such suggestions, the SAI may create formal mechanisms, like setting up a website, hotline, or office (or assigning staff to liaise with the public).

Answer:

a. Yes, the SAI maintains formal mechanisms through which the public can suggest issues/topics to include in its audit program.

Source:

Comment:

GAO provides a mechanism, referred to as "FraudNet," by which the public can influence the planning of audits and investigations when fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement of federal funds is suspected. According to GAO, FraudNet (1) refers allegations to federal, state, and local law enforcement, and Offices of Inspector General, as appropriate; (2) supports congressional investigation and audit requests; (3) provides audit and investigative leads to GAO staff; and (4) offers support to government at all levels for establishing and operating hotlines (<https://www.gao.gov/fraudnet>).

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

141. Does the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) provide the public with feedback on how citizens' inputs have been used to determine its audit program?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Sustainability", and examines the extent to which the Supreme Audit Institution provides information to citizens on which public inputs were received, which ones are used to determine the Supreme Audit Institution's audit program. By "written record" in this question, we mean a document that is produced and released by the Supreme Audit Institution.

Answer "a" applies when the Supreme Audit Institution provides a written document with:

- *The inputs received from the public and*
- *A detailed report on how the inputs were used or not used (such report should include information on which inputs were used or not used, why, and how).*

Answer "b" applies when the SAI provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs received from the public and*
- *A not-so-detailed report on how public inputs were used or not used. This document only gives a general idea on how those inputs were used or not used to determine the SAI's annual audit program.*

Answer "c" applies when the SAI provides a written document that includes:

- *The received from the public or*
- *A report (being it detailed or not-so-detailed) on how public inputs have been used or not used.*

Answer "d" applies if requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if maintain formal mechanisms through which the public can suggests issues/topics to include in the SAI's audit program.

Answer:

c. Yes, the SAI provides a written record which includes either the list of the inputs received or a report or summary on how they were used.

Source:

Government Accountability Office, "Opioid Addiction: Laws, Regulations, and Other Factors Can Affect Medication-Assisted Treatment Access, GAO-16-833, September 27, 2016 (<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-833>).

Comment:

While GAO does not provide feedback in a comprehensive or consistent manner on public inputs that have been received and how they have helped to determine GAO's audit program, the agency does solicit public comments on issues and discuss them on a case-by-case basis. In many instances, GAO merely notes the stakeholders with which it interacted. In a recent report on the regulation of medicines for opioid addiction, for example, GAO noted that it had interviewed, among others, "officials from relevant stakeholder organizations, including the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, Faces and Voices of Recovery, and Young People in Recovery." Comments from stakeholders were reflected throughout the report.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

142. Does the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) maintain formal mechanisms through which the public can contribute to audit investigations (as respondents, witnesses, etc.)?

GUIDELINES:

This question mirrors question 140, but instead of covering public assistance in formulating the SAI's audit program, it focuses on whether the Supreme Audit Institution has established mechanisms through which the public can participate in audit investigations. In addition to seeking public input to determine its audit agenda, the SAI may wish to provide formal opportunities for the public and civil society organizations to participate in the actual audit investigations, as witnesses or respondents.

Answer:

b. The requirements for an "a" response are not met.

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: