

## Overview



Transparency:

**41** /100

(Open Budget Index score)



Public  
Participation:

**7** /100



Budget Oversight:

**59** /100

## About the survey

Government budget decisions – what taxes to levy, what services to provide, and how much debt to take on – affect how equal a society is and the well-being of its people, including whether the most disadvantaged will have real opportunities for a better life. It is critical that governments inform and engage the public on these vital decisions that impact their lives.

**The Open Budget Survey (OBS)** is the world's only independent, comparative and fact-based research instrument that uses internationally accepted criteria to assess public access to central government budget information; formal opportunities for the public to participate in the national budget process; and the role of budget oversight institutions such as the legislature and auditor in the budget process.

The survey helps local civil society assess and confer with their government on the reporting and use of public funds. This 7th edition of the OBS covers 117 countries.

Visit [www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey](http://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey) for more information, including the full OBS methodology, the 2019 Global Report, findings for all surveyed countries, and the Data Explorer.

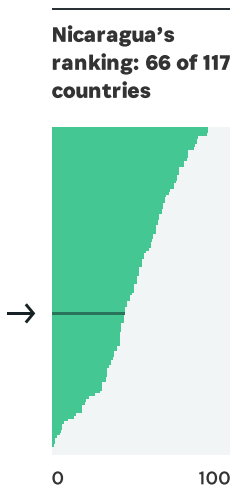


# Transparency

This part of the OBS measures public access to information on how the central government raises and spends public resources. It assesses the online availability, timeliness, and comprehensiveness of eight key budget documents using 109 equally weighted indicators and scores each country on a scale of 0 to 100. A transparency score of 61 or above indicates a country is likely publishing enough material to support informed public debate on the budget.

Nicaragua has a transparency score of **41** (out of 100).

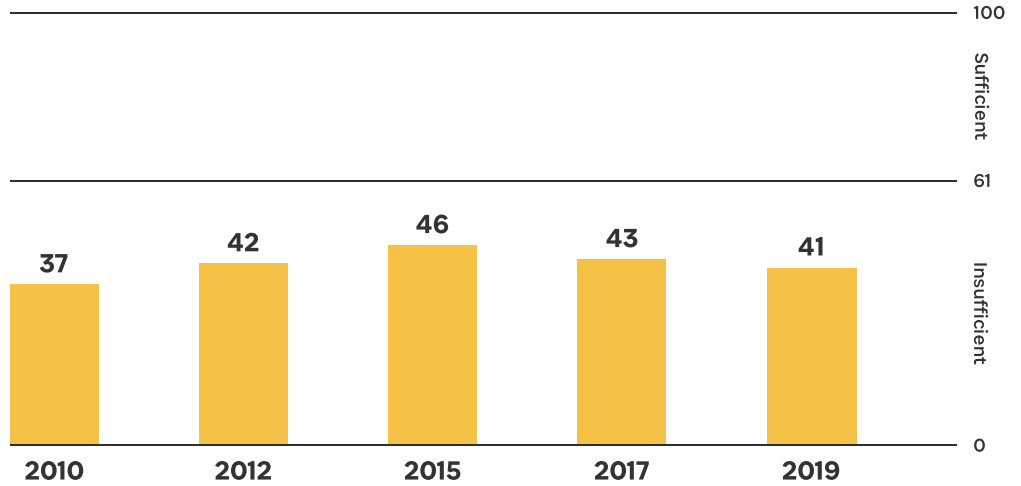
## Transparency in Nicaragua compared to others



Global Average	45
Mexico	82
Dominican Republic	75
Guatemala	65
Honduras	59
Costa Rica	57
El Salvador	46
Jamaica	42
Nicaragua	41
Trinidad and Tobago	30

0    Insufficient    61    Sufficient    100

## How has the transparency score for Nicaragua changed over time?



## Public availability of budget documents in Nicaragua

- Available to the Public
- Published Late, or Not Published Online, or Produced for Internal Use Only
- ⊘ Not Produced

Document	2010	2012	2015	2017	2019
Pre-Budget Statement	⊘	●	●	●	●
Executive's Budget Proposal	●	●	●	●	●
Enacted Budget	●	●	●	●	●
Citizens Budget	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
In-Year Reports	●	●	●	●	●
Mid-Year Review	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Year-End Report	●	●	●	●	●
Audit Report	●	●	●	●	●

## How comprehensive is the content of the key budget documents that Nicaragua makes available to the public?

- 61-100 / 100
- 41-60 / 100
- 1-40 / 100

Key budget document	Document purpose and contents	Fiscal year assessed	Document content score
Pre-Budget Statement	Discloses the broad parameters of fiscal policies in advance of the Executive's Budget Proposal; outlines the government's economic forecast, anticipated revenue, expenditures, and debt.	2019	Internal Use
Executive's Budget Proposal	Submitted by the executive to the legislature for approval; details the sources of revenue, the allocations to ministries, proposed policy changes, and other information important for understanding the country's fiscal situation.	2019	53
Enacted Budget	The budget that has been approved by the legislature.	2019	22
Citizens Budget	A simpler and less technical version of the government's Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, designed to convey key information to the public.	2018	Not Produced
In-Year Reports	Include information on actual revenues collected, actual expenditures made, and debt incurred at different intervals; issued quarterly or monthly.	2018	70
Mid-Year Review	A comprehensive update on the implementation of the budget as of the middle of the fiscal year; includes a review of economic assumptions and an updated forecast of budget outcomes.	2018	Not Produced
Year-End Report	Describes the situation of the government's accounts at the end of the fiscal year and, ideally, an evaluation of the progress made toward achieving the budget's policy goals.	2017	52
Audit Report	Issued by the supreme audit institution, this document examines the soundness and completeness of the government's year-end accounts.	2016	19

Nicaragua's transparency score of 41 in the OBS 2019 is near its score in 2017.

### What changed in OBS 2019?

Nicaragua has decreased the availability of budget information by:

- Reducing the information provided in the Executive's Budget Proposal regarding revenues.
- The content score for the Enacted Budget is lower than in the previous survey because, to ensure research consistency between countries, OBS 2019 does not take into account the Enacted Budget annexes that include only the legislative changes to the proposed budget, rather than the approved budget in its entirety.

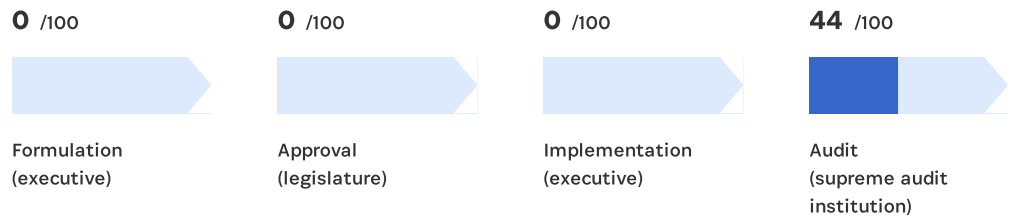
## **Recommendations**

Nicaragua should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

- Publish the Pre-Budget Statement online in a timely manner.
- Produce and publish the Citizens Budget, Mid-Year Review online in a timely manner.
- Including in the Executive's Budget Proposal fiscal risk information.
- Include in the Year-End Report performance and macroeconomic information.
- Improve the comprehensiveness of the Audit Report and Enacted Budget.



## Extent of opportunities for public participation in the budget process



few: 0 - 40; limited: 41 - 60; adequate: 61 - 100

## Recommendations

To further strengthen public participation in the budget process, Nicaragua's Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público should prioritize the following actions:

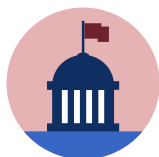
- Pilot mechanisms to engage the public during budget formulation and to monitor budget implementation.
- Actively engage with vulnerable and underrepresented communities, directly or through civil society organizations representing them.

Nicaragua's Asamblea Nacional should prioritize the following actions:

- Allow members of the public or civil society organizations to testify during its hearings on the budget proposal prior to its approval.
- Allow members of the public or civil society organizations to testify during its hearings on the Audit Report.

Nicaragua's Contraloría General de la República has established mechanisms for the public to assist in developing its audit program. It should prioritize the following actions to further improve public participation in the budget process:

- Establish formal mechanisms for the public to contribute to relevant audit investigations.

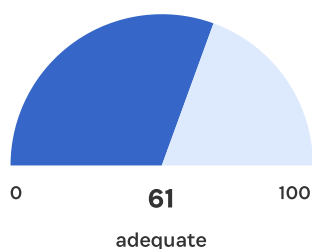


# Budget Oversight

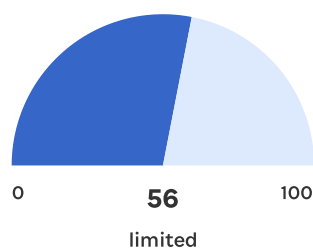
The OBS also examines the role that legislatures and supreme audit institutions (SAIs) play in the budget process and the extent to which they provide oversight; each country is scored on a scale from 0 to 100 based on 18 equally weighted indicators. In addition, the survey collects supplementary information on independent fiscal institutions (see Box).

The legislature and supreme audit institution in Nicaragua, together, provide limited oversight during the budget process, with a composite oversight score of **59** (out of 100). Taken individually, the extent of each institution's oversight is shown below:

## Legislative oversight



## Audit oversight



weak: 0 - 40; limited: 41 - 60; adequate: 61 - 100

## Recommendations

Nicaragua's Asamblea Nacional provides limited oversight during the planning stage of the budget cycle and adequate oversight during the implementation stage. To further improve oversight, the following actions should be prioritized:

- The legislature should debate budget policy before the Executive's Budget Proposal is tabled and approve recommendations for the upcoming budget.
- A legislative committee should examine in-year budget implementation and publish reports with their findings online.
- A legislative committee should examine the Audit Report and publish a report with their findings online.



To strengthen independence and improve audit oversight by the Nicaragua Contraloría General de la República, the following actions are recommended:

- Ensure the supreme audit institution has adequate funding to perform its duties, as determined by an independent body (e.g., the legislature or judiciary).
- Ensure audit processes are reviewed by an independent agency.

### **The emerging practice of establishing independent fiscal institutions**

Nicaragua does not have an independent fiscal institution (IFI). IFIs are increasingly recognized as valuable independent and nonpartisan information providers to the Executive and/or Parliament during the budget process.

*\*These indicators are \*not\* scored in the Open Budget Survey.*

# Methodology

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- Only documents published and events, activities, or developments that took place through 31 December 2018 were assessed in the OBS 2019.
- The survey is based on a questionnaire completed in each country by an independent budget expert:  
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- To further strengthen the research, each country's draft questionnaire is also reviewed by an anonymous independent expert.