

# Costa Rica

## Open Budget Index 2006



## Open Budget Index Highlights

Costa Rica scores 44 percent out of a possible 100 percent on the *Open Budget Index 2006*. The *Index* evaluates the quantity of information provided to citizens in the seven key budget documents that all governments should make public during the course of the budget year. Costa Rica's performance indicates that the government provides citizens with **some information** on the central government's budget and financial activities, but that there is much room for improvement.

Public Availability of Key Budget Documents	
Budget Document	Availability
Pre-Budget Statement	
Executive's Budget Proposal	
Citizens' Budget	
In-Year Reports	
Mid-Year Review	
Year-End Report	
Auditor's Report	
Available to the Public	Produced but for internal Use Only
	
	Not Produced
	

The **executive's budget proposal** is one of the most important documents released during the budget year. Costa Rica's proposal provides some information to the public, scoring 54 percent out of a possible 100 percent of the information needed to present the public with a comprehensive picture of the government's financial activity. This suggests that there is substantial room for improvement.

Governments should report to citizens regularly during the budget year on their spending, revenue collection and borrowing with **in-year reports**. Costa Rica does not produce in-year reports or a **mid-year review**; publishing these two documents would greatly strengthen public accountability. These documents should provide the public with updates of the execution of the budget to date, and at the six month mark, an update on what can be expected for the rest of the budget year. **Year-end reports** by the executive are released in a timely manner and present some of the details needed to facilitate comparisons between enacted levels and actual outcomes. While Costa Rica does make its **audit report** public, it does not provide any information on whether the audit report's recommendations are successfully implemented.

Citizens require both access to information, and opportunities during the budget's consideration to use that information, to ensure their informed participation in budget debates. Costa Rica's score on the *Open Budget Index* suggests that the public's

access to information could be improved. The researcher also found that opportunities for citizen participation could be increased. For example, the legislature does hold public hearings on the budget – but there are only a very limited number of hearings in which the public can participate.

Research to complete the Open Budget Questionnaire was undertaken by:

**Ronald Alfaro-Redondo**  
**Programa Estado de la Nación**

**San José, Costa Rica**  
**Tel: (+506) 290 7222, 232 4750**  
**E-mail: [ralfaro@estadonacion.or.cr](mailto:ralfaro@estadonacion.or.cr)**  
**Website: [www.estadonacion.or.cr](http://www.estadonacion.or.cr)**