

Malawi

Open Budget Index 2006



Open Budget Index Highlights

Malawi scores 41 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. Malawi'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. Malawi's proposal provides substantial information to the public, scoring 64 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 some room for improvement.

Governments should report to citizens regularly during the budget year on their spending, revenue collection and borrowing with **in-year reports**. Malawi provides minimal information in its in-year reports and it would greatly strengthen public accountability by publishing a comprehensive **mid-year review**. This document should provide the public with updates on what can be expected for the second half of the budget year. A separate **year-end report** by the executive is not released to the public within six of the end of the financial year. This prevents timely comparisons between enacted levels and actual outcomes. Malawi does not make its **audit report** public and 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 consideration of the budget to use that information, to ensure their informed participation in budget debates. Malawi'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:
Blessings Botha
 Project for Economic Governance, Malawi

P/Bag A59
Lilongwe, Malawi
Tel: (+265) 8303093
E-mail: bbotha@cidamalawi.org