The Philippines scores 51 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. The Philippines’ 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.

The executive’s budget proposal is one of the most important documents released during the budget year. The Philippines’ proposal provides some information to the public, scoring 57 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 room for improvement.

Governments should report to citizens regularly during the budget year on their spending, revenue collection and borrowing with in-year reports. The Philippines provides good information in its in-year reports, but it would greatly strengthen public accountability by publishing a more comprehensive mid-year review. This document provides the public with updates on what can be expected for the second half of the budget year. Year-end reports by the executive are released in a timely manner, but lack the details needed to facilitate comparisons between enacted levels and actual outcomes. While The Philippines does make its audit report public, it provides very little 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. The Philippines’ score on the Open Budget Index suggests that the public’s access to information could be improved. Researchers also found that opportunities for citizen participation could be improved. For example, the legislature does hold public hearings on the budget — but there are only a few hearings in which the public can participate.