



Overall score: **0%**

Provides no information to the public in its budget documents during the year.

Highlights

Information in Public Documents

São Tomé e Príncipe's score on the Open Budget Index shows that the government provides the public with no information on the central government's budget and financial activities during the course of the budget year. This makes it very difficult for citizens to hold government accountable for its management of the public's money.

The Open Budget Index 2008 evaluates the quantity and type of information that governments make available to their publics in the seven key budget documents that should be issued during the budget year. One of the most important documents is the executive's budget proposal. It should contain the executive's plans for the upcoming year along with the cost of the proposed activities. The proposal should be available to the public and to the legislature prior to being finalized, at least three months before the start of the budget year to allow for sufficient review and public debate.

In São Tomé e Príncipe, the proposal is not released to the public prior to legislative approval, meaning citizens do not have a comprehensive picture of the government's plans for taxing and spending for the upcoming year.

Moreover, it is very difficult to track spending, revenue collection and borrowing during the year. São Tomé e Príncipe produces monthly reports on budget execution but does not release them to the public. Additionally, a mid-year review is prepared for the IMF and World Bank but is not made public. Publishing these documents would greatly strengthen public accountability, since they provide updates on how the budget is being implemented during the year.

It is also very difficult to assess budget performance in São Tomé e Príncipe once the budget year is over. A year-end report is not published, preventing comparisons between what was budgeted and what was actually spent and collected. Also, São Tomé e Príncipe does not make its audit report public and does not provide any information on whether the audit report's recommendations are successfully implemented.

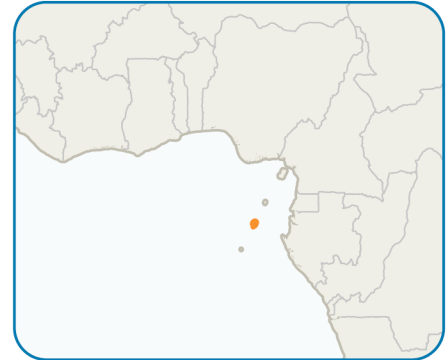
Access to the highly detailed budget information needed to understand the government's progress in undertaking a specific project or activity remains limited, despite the fact that São Tomé e Príncipe has codified the right to access government information into law.

Public Participation and Institutions of Accountability

Beyond improving access to key budget documents, there are other ways in which São Tomé e Príncipe's budget process could be made more open.

Opportunities for citizen participation in budget debates could be increased. For example, the legislature does not hold hearings on the budget in which the public can participate.

The independence of São Tomé e Príncipe's Supreme Audit Institution is somewhat limited. Although the SAI has the discretion to decide which audits to undertake, it does not have a budget sufficient to fulfill its mandate.



Availability of Key Budget Documents and Citizens Budget (in order of expected release)

Pre-Budget Statement	<input type="radio"/> No
Executive's Budget Proposal	<input type="radio"/> No
Citizen's Budget	<input type="radio"/> No
Enacted Budget	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
In-year Reports	<input type="radio"/> No
Mid-Year Review	<input type="radio"/> No
Year-End Report	<input type="radio"/> No
Audit Report	<input type="radio"/> No

Open Budget Index 2008



São Tomé e Príncipe

The Open Budget Index evaluates the quantity and type of information available to the public in a country's budget documents. A country's placement within a performance category was determined by averaging the response to 91 questions on the Open Budget Questionnaire related to information contained in the eight key budget documents that all countries should make available to the public.

Research to complete the Open Budget Questionnaire was undertaken by:

Carla Sardinha Vieira & Kiluange
Ntoku Noronha Tiny
WEBETO.ORG
Cidade de São Tomé C.P. nº 930
S. Tomé and Príncipe

Lisbon Office:
Edf Castelo Norte,
Porta B – Portas de Benfica
Freguesia de S. Domingos de Benfica
1500 – 469 Lisboa
Tel:
Carla Sardinha Vieira:
+351 965 055 006
Kiluange:
+351 964 407 448
Email:
Carla Sardinha Vieira:
csardinhavieira@sapo.pt
Kiluange: tiny@juristep.com

The International Budget Project was established as part of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington, DC-based non-partisan non-profit research organization, in 1997 to support civil society organizations around the world interested in strengthening public budget processes, instituting and outcomes. For more information on the IBP and the Open Budget Initiative 2008, please visit www.openbudgetindex.org

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