

**TRANSPARENCY**  
(OPEN BUDGET INDEX)

**54**

OUT OF 100

The Government of Costa Rica provides the public with **limited** budget information.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**27**

OUT OF 100

The Government of Costa Rica is **weak** in providing the public with opportunities to engage in the budget process.

**BUDGET OVERSIGHT**

**73**

OUT OF 100

**BY LEGISLATURE**  
Budget oversight by the legislature in Costa Rica is **adequate**.

**92**

OUT OF 100

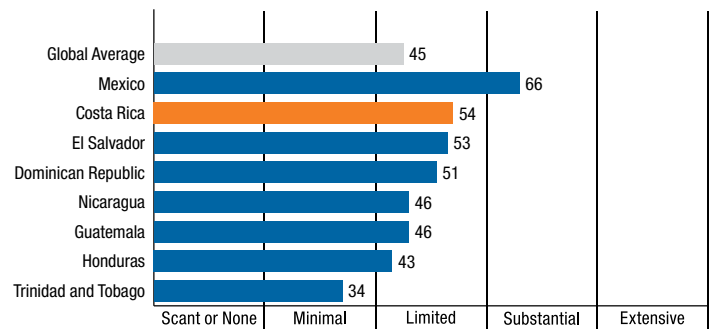
**BY AUDIT**  
Budget oversight by the supreme audit institution in Costa Rica is **adequate**.

**TRANSPARENCY (OPEN BUDGET INDEX)**

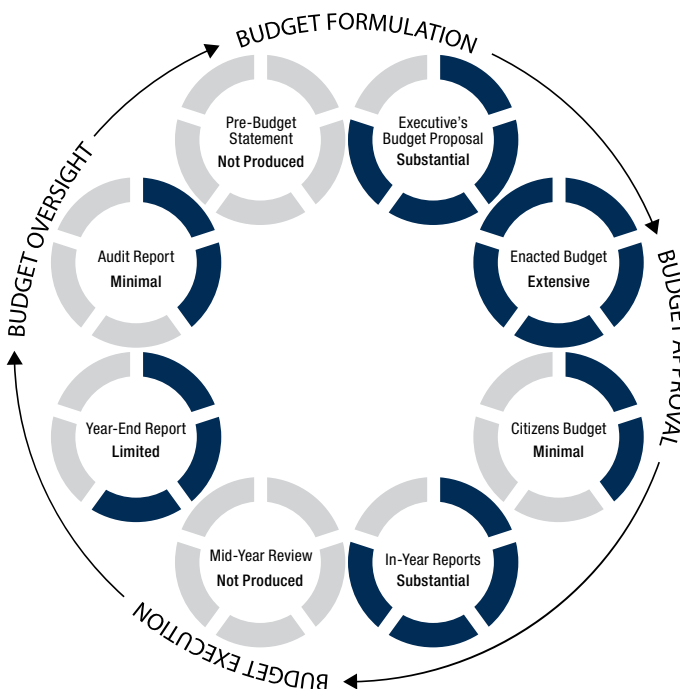
Drawing on internationally accepted criteria developed by multilateral organizations, the Open Budget Survey uses 109 indicators to measure budget transparency. These indicators are used to assess whether the central government makes eight key budget documents available to the public in a timely manner and whether the data contained in these documents are comprehensive and useful.

Each country is given a score out of 100 which determines its ranking on the Open Budget Index – the world’s only independent and comparative measure of budget transparency.

**Regional Comparison**

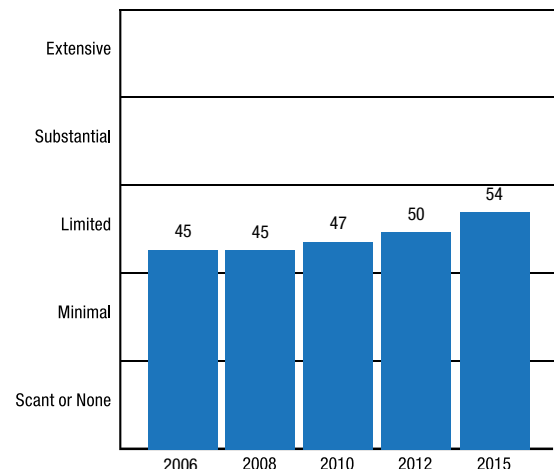


**Usefulness of Budget Information Throughout the Budget Cycle**



Costa Rica's score of 54 out of 100 is moderately higher than the global average score of 45.

**Change in Transparency Over Time**



Note: The following categories are used to report the usefulness of each document:

Not produced, Published Late, Internal Use, Scant, Minimal, Limited, Substantial, or Extensive.

# TRANSPARENCY (OPEN BUDGET INDEX)

## The Availability of Budget Documents Over Time

Document	2006	2008	2010	2012	2015
Pre-Budget Statement	●	●	●	●	●
Executive's Budget Proposal	●	●	●	●	●
Enacted Budget	●	●	●	●	●
Citizens Budget	●	●	●	●	●
In-Year Reports	●	●	●	●	●
Mid-Year Review	●	●	●	●	●
Year-End Report	●	●	●	●	●
Audit Report	●	●	●	●	●

● Not produced/published late   ● Produced for internal use   ● Published

Costa Rica's 4 point increase in its Open Budget Index score since 2012 appears to be somewhat understated due to the refinements made to the

2015 questionnaire. It now includes new and improved questions that aim to better measure budget transparency (see the Technical Note in the global report for details). Without these refinements, Costa Rica's 2015 score for budget transparency would have been slightly higher.

Since 2012, the Government of Costa Rica has increased the availability of budget information by:

- Publishing the Citizens Budget and In-Year Reports.
- Improving the comprehensiveness of the Year-End Report.

However, the Government of Costa Rica has decreased the availability of budget information by:

- Reducing the comprehensiveness of the Audit Report.

Moreover, the Government of Costa Rica has failed to make progress in the following ways:

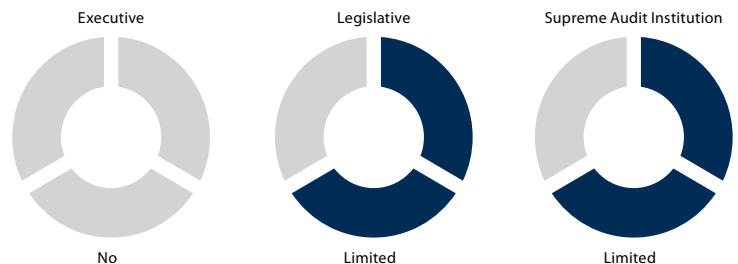
- Not producing a Pre-Budget Statement or a Mid-Year Review.

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Evidence suggests that transparency alone is insufficient for improving governance, and that public participation in budgeting can maximize the positive outcomes associated with greater budget transparency.

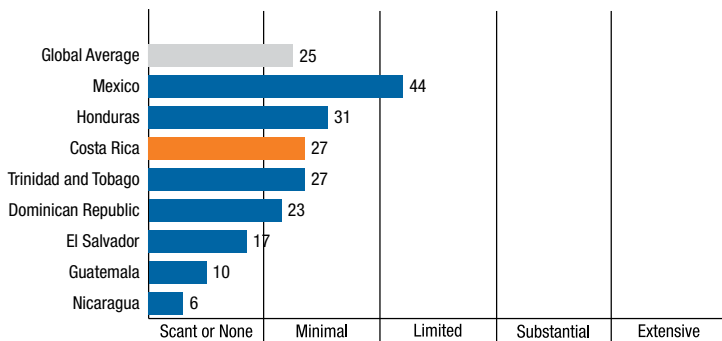
To measure public participation, the Open Budget Survey assesses the degree to which the government provides opportunities for the public to engage in budget processes. Such opportunities should be provided throughout the budget cycle by the executive, the legislature, and the supreme audit institution.

## Elements of Public Participation



Costa Rica's score of 27 out of 100 indicates that the provision of opportunities for the public to engage in the budget process is **weak**. This is higher than the global average score of 25.

## Regional Comparison



# BUDGET OVERSIGHT

The Open Budget Survey examines the extent to which legislatures and supreme audit institutions are able to provide effective oversight of the budget. These institutions play a critical role – often enshrined in national constitutions – in planning budgets and overseeing their implementation.

## Oversight by the Legislature



The legislature provides **limited** oversight during the planning stage of the budget cycle and **adequate** oversight during the implementation stage of the budget cycle. A pre-budget debate by the legislature does not take place. Regular consultations on budget matters between the executive and the legislature do not take place.

## Oversight by the Supreme Audit Institution



The supreme audit institution provides **adequate** budget oversight. Under the law, it has full discretion to undertake audits as it sees fit. Moreover, the head of the supreme audit institution cannot be removed without legislative or judicial approval, which bolsters its independence. Finally, the supreme audit institution is provided with sufficient resources to fulfill its mandate but has a limited quality assurance system in place.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Improving Transparency

Costa Rica should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

- Produce and publish a Pre-Budget Statement and a Mid-Year Review.
- Increase the comprehensiveness of the Executive's Budget Proposal by presenting more information on the administrative classification of expenditures for future years and on macroeconomic forecasts to include interest rates and unemployment rates with a better explanation on its effect on the budget.
- Increase the comprehensiveness of the Year-End Report by presenting more information on planned versus actual debt and interest and on planned versus actual macroeconomic forecasts.

## Improving Participation

Costa Rica should prioritize the following actions to improve budget participation:

- Establish credible and effective mechanisms (i.e., public hearings, surveys, focus groups) for capturing a range of public perspectives on budget matters.
- Hold legislative hearings on the budgets of specific ministries, departments, and agencies as well as on audit reports at which testimony from the public is heard.
- Establish formal mechanisms for the public to participate in audit investigations.

## Improving Oversight

Costa Rica should prioritize the following actions to strengthen budget oversight:

- Ensure the legislature holds a pre-budget debate and the outcome is reflected in the Enacted Budget.

# METHODOLOGY

The Open Budget Survey uses internationally accepted criteria developed by multilateral organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). It is a fact-based research instrument that assesses what occurs in practice through readily observable phenomena. The entire research process took approximately 18 months between March 2014 and September 2015 and involved about 300 experts in 102 countries. The Survey was revised somewhat from the 2012 version to reflect emerging developments in accepted good practice and to strengthen individual questions. A full discussion of these changes can be found in a technical note on the comparability of the Open Budget Index over time (see below).

Survey responses are typically supported by citations and comments. This may include a reference to a public document, an official statement by the government, or comments from a face-to-face interview with a government official or other knowledgeable party.

The Survey is compiled from a questionnaire completed for each country by independent budget experts who are not associated with the national government. Each country's questionnaire is then independently reviewed by an anonymous expert who also has no association to government. In addition, IBP invites national governments to comment on the draft results from the Survey and considers these comments before finalizing the Survey results.

The Government of Costa Rica provided comments on the draft Open Budget Questionnaire results.

Research to complete this country's Open Budget Survey was undertaken by:

Juan Guillermo Murillo

Programa Estado de la Nación (PEN)

CONARE

Edificio Dr. Franklin Chang Díaz, 300 metros al norte del Parque de La Amistad, Pavas

San José

Costa Rica, Apdo. 1174-1200

[programa@estadonacion.or.cr](mailto:programa@estadonacion.or.cr)

## Further Information

Visit [www.openbudgetsurvey.org](http://www.openbudgetsurvey.org) for more information, including:

- The Open Budget Survey 2015: Global Report
- Individual datasets for each of the 102 countries surveyed.
- A technical note on the comparability of the Open Budget Index over time.