The Government of New Zealand provides the public with extensive budget information. New Zealand’s score of 88 out of 100 is substantially higher than the global average score of 45.

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.

New Zealand’s score of 88 out of 100 is substantially higher than the global average score of 45.

Regional Comparison

Usefulness of Budget Information Throughout the Budget Cycle

Change in Transparency Over Time
The Availability of Budget Documents Over Time

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

New Zealand’s score of 88 on the 2015 Open Budget Index is largely the same as its score in 2012.

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.

New Zealand’s score of 65 out of 100 indicates that the public is provided with adequate opportunities to engage in budget processes. This is higher than the global average score of 25.

Regional Comparison

- Global Average: 25
- South Korea: 67
- Philippines: 42
- New Zealand: 65
- Thailand: 42
- Vietnam: 35
- Indonesia: 23
- Papua New Guinea: 12
- Timor-Leste: 10
- Fiji: 10
- Cambodia: 8
- China: 6
- Myanmar: 6

- Scant or None
- Minimal
- Limited
- Substantial
- Extensive
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 **weak** oversight during the implementation stage of the budget cycle. The legislature does not have a specialized budget research office.

**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 and has an adequate quality assurance system in place.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Improving Transparency**

New Zealand should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

- Increase the comprehensiveness of the Executive’s Budget Proposal by improving the scope and depth of reporting on tax expenditures.

**Improving Participation**

New Zealand should prioritize the following actions to improve budget participation:

- Establish formal regulations that oblige the executive to engage with the public during each stage of the budget cycle.
- Hold legislative hearings on the budgets of specific ministries, departments, and agencies at which testimony from the public is heard.
- Provide detailed feedback on how public assistance and participation have been used by the supreme audit institution.

**Improving Oversight**

New Zealand should prioritize the following actions to strengthen budget oversight:

- Establish a specialized budget research office for the legislature.
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 New Zealand provided comments on the draft Open Budget Questionnaire results.

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

Jonathan Dunn
Consultant
smitana@ihug.co.nz

Further Information
Visit 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.