

TRANSPARENCY
(OPEN BUDGET INDEX)

81

OUT OF 100

The Government of the United States provides the public with **extensive** budget information.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

69

OUT OF 100

The Government of the United States provides the public with **adequate** opportunities to engage in the budget process.

BUDGET OVERSIGHT

85

OUT OF 100

BY LEGISLATURE
Budget oversight by the legislature in the United States is **adequate**.

100

OUT OF 100

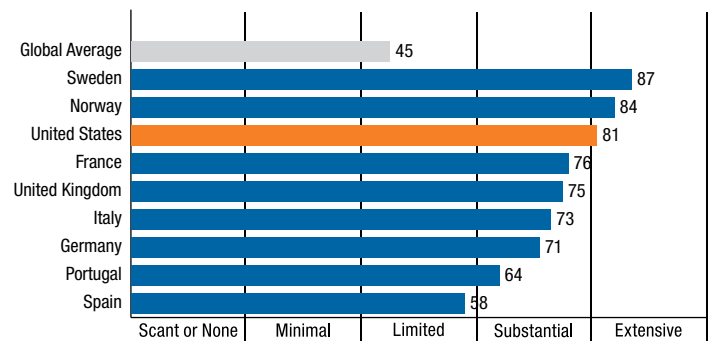
BY AUDIT
Budget oversight by the supreme audit institution in the United States is **adequate**.

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.

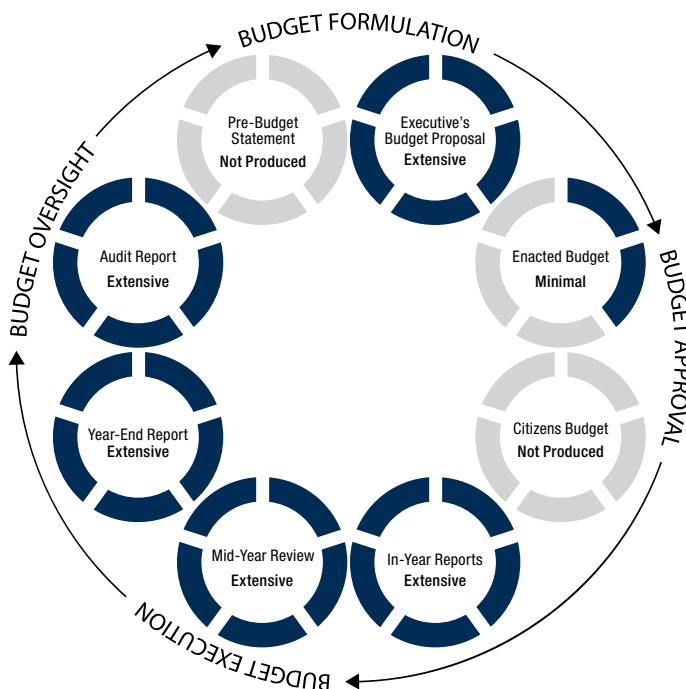
Each country is given a score out of 100 which determines its ranking on the Open Budget Index – the world’s only independent and comparative measure of budget transparency.

Country Comparisons

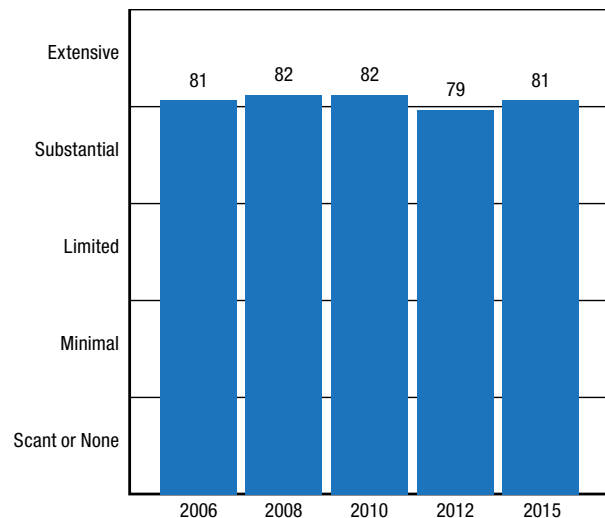


The United States’ score of 81 out of 100 is substantially higher than the global average score of 45.

Usefulness of Budget Information Throughout the Budget Cycle



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

*The United States does not publish a Pre-Budget Statement because it publishes its Executive's Budget Proposal more than eight months before the start of the fiscal year.

The United States' score of 81 on the 2015 Open Budget Index is largely the same as its score in 2012.

The United States failed to make progress in the following ways:

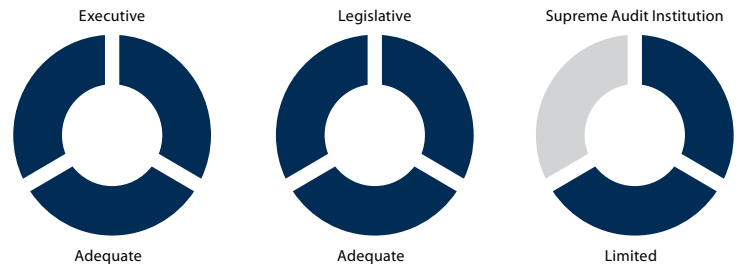
- Not producing a Citizens Budget for its Executive's Budget Proposal.
- Publishing an Enacted Budget that contains only minimal budget information.

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.

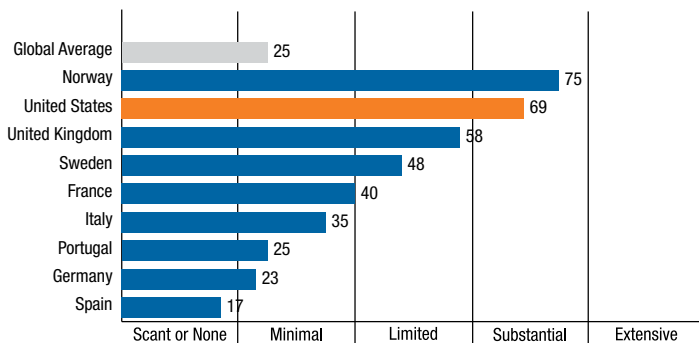
To measure public participation, the Open Budget Survey assesses the degree to which the government provides opportunities for the public to engage in budget processes. Such opportunities should be provided throughout the budget cycle by the executive, the legislature, and the supreme audit institution.

Elements of Public Participation



The United States scores 69 out of 100, indicating that the public is provided with **adequate** opportunities to engage in budget processes. This is higher than the global average score of 25.

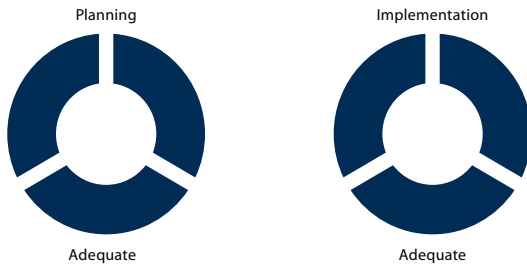
Country Comparisons



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 **adequate** oversight during the planning stage of the budget cycle and **adequate** oversight during the implementation stage of the budget cycle.

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

The United States should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

- Produce and publish a Citizens Budget for its Executive's Budget Proposal.
- Increase the comprehensiveness of the Enacted Budget by, for instance, presenting information on all expenditures, revenues, and debt.

Improving Participation

The United States 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.
- Establish formal mechanisms for the public to participate in audit investigations.

Improving Oversight

The United States should prioritize the following to strengthen budget oversight:

- Ensure legislators approve the annual budget before the start of the fiscal year.

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.

IBP did not receive comments on the draft Open Budget Questionnaire results from the Government of the United States.

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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.