



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
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Proposal for Ward-Level Budget Hearings Kenya County Budget Process 2014/15 Jason Lakin, Ph.D.

As counties prepare to engage with the public ahead of the tabling of budget estimates in the assembly by 30 April, the question of how to organize public consultations is being posed around the country. IBP - Kenya offers the following proposal for the content and structure of these meetings, assuming that the county is planning to hold them at the ward level. The general content and structure could be used at a lower or higher level as well.

1. Each ward hearing should discuss:
 - overall direction of the budget 2014/15 (and medium term); and
 - priorities within each sector for 2014/15
2. Prior to the hearings, citizens should be availed with draft summary estimates (or a kind of simplified, non-technical Citizens Budget) at least a week in advance (ideally two weeks).
3. The hearings should therefore consist of two parts. First, the government representatives should provide an overview of the Fiscal Strategy Paper, limited to the issues of:
 - overall revenue and expenditure figures, plus discussion of county debts and how these are managed (this should be compared to last year and explanations provided for differences from previous year); and
 - sector ceilings for 2014/15 and shifts in priority from prior year (e.g., increase in funding for agriculture, decrease in funding for infrastructure) and reasons for this shift

This presentation to be limited to 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of clarifying questions. Since the Paper has already been approved (or should have been approved), this is more by way of background than for discussion.

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4. Part II of the Forum will focus on within sector allocations. Each meeting should divide into the key sectors. At national level, the sector working groups are supposed to be the place where within sector bargaining happens. In other words, a ceiling is set for the “Agriculture” sector and then Livestock, Agriculture, and Fisheries compete for the available resources in that sector.

If this is not the actual procedure for allocation of resources, then it is not necessarily relevant to think in terms of sectors as opposed to looking at ministries and departments and their priorities. However, as a matter of convenience, it may be sensible to pool ministries/departments in order to keep the number of discussions manageable.

5. Within each sector meeting, the government representative should explain:

- Sector programmes (No more than 2-5 per sector)
- Sector priorities within each programme (no more than 1-2 per programme)

Both programmes and priorities should be explained in terms of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), meaning that they should be identified as having emerged from the CIDP, or, if they did not, an explanation for this should be provided.

- The share of sector spending that will go to the priorities and the share remaining after these have been catered for
- Key projects within priority areas (no more than 2-3)

This presentation should take no more than 20 minutes.

6. The floor should be opened to the public to comment first on

- a. Programmes, then
- b. Priorities, then
- c. Projects

Each of these should be separated so they do not run together and lead to confusion. Allow for 30 minutes to discuss Programmes, 30 minutes for Priorities, and an hour to discuss projects.

For Programmes: Ask public to consider programmes and programme objectives and comment on whether there is anything missing or they have concerns about the organization of programmes.

For Priorities: Ask public whether they agree with top priorities or would prioritize other elements of the sector. Force them to prioritize (meaning rank by importance using numbers) activities.

For Projects: Ask public whether they agree that these are projects that advance the priorities and programmes discussed. If there is disagreement about projects, there should be some discussion of whether these projects were proposed at the CIDP phase, why or why not, and why they should be included now if they are not in the CIDP.

7. Government should make a list of suggestions on a flipchart or in a way that the public can see that their comments are being noted.

8. After the completion of sector discussions, the government representatives should call people back to plenary to discuss the outcomes of the discussion. Each group should mention 1-2 (but not more) good suggestions that came out of the discussion.
9. The meeting should close by recognizing that the inputs will be collated across all wards and considered by the County Budget and Economic Forum for inclusion in the budget estimates before April 30. The budget estimates tabled in April will contain an Annex with feedback on how suggestions from the public were used, and an explanation of why some suggestions were not incorporated. The public should look out for this.
10. Total time for meeting: 3.5 hours