



Strengthening Budget Credibility for Service Delivery

Project Overview

The International Budget Partnership (IBP) collaborates with civil society around the world to use budget analysis and advocacy as a tool to improve effective governance and reduce poverty. One of IBP's emerging focus areas is **budget credibility**, or whether governments collect and spend funds according to their approved budget. At its core, budget credibility is about governments upholding their commitments and explaining when they deviate from these commitments. When budgets are not implemented as planned, spending priorities can shift, deficits may exceed projections, and critical services may be compromised. Moreover, governments consistently deviating from their budgets risk an erosion of public trust.

Why budget credibility?

IBP's research on [budget credibility across countries](#) has shown that, despite the existence of global measures and standards on budget credibility, the problem of high budget deviations persists in many countries. Credibility is especially a challenge in low-income countries, which in turn can impede or even prevent the achievement of development goals. Credibility is also [linked to](#) the overall quality of public financial management systems and level of fiscal transparency.

To tackle this challenge, IBP is undertaking a three-year initiative called the *Strengthening Budget Credibility for Service Delivery* project, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). Together we are expanding our understanding of the causes and impacts of budget deviations on service delivery, raise awareness of these challenges, and promote reforms to address the underlying issues.

IBP and our partners are conducting in-depth country research and advocacy in four countries with IBP country offices: Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Senegal. In these four countries, IBP is leading research and analysis into the causes and impact of budget credibility issues in selected government service delivery programs, especially essential services that are relied upon by poor and vulnerable populations. These include fertilizer subsidies in Ghana, fuel subsidies for fisherfolk in Indonesia, primary healthcare and agricultural inputs for women farmers in Nigeria, and sanitation services in Senegal.

Credibility in vaccination budgets

[Immunization budgets](#) often suffer from both underspending and supply stock-outs, as well as the impact of budget deviations on gender equity outcomes. From 2021 to 2023, we are investigating potential budget credibility challenges in routine immunization funding in Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, and Senegal. We complement our research by engaging with national level partners to create incentives and generate pressure urging government actors, oversight bodies, and other development practitioners to address the challenges identified and improve spending on service delivery.

Credible budgets for sustainable development

At the global level, we are raising awareness of the importance of budget credibility to the achievement of national and international development goals, and sharing practical approaches to tackling these challenges, among international development agencies and international standard-setting bodies. A key focus of the global engagement is to promote more systematic audits of budget credibility challenges by national audit offices. In collaboration with UNDESA, we are convening national audit institutions and other public finance experts to systematize existing audit practices related to the analysis of budget credibility and develop practical guidance for SAIs to assess and address budget credibility in their countries.

We are also sharing budget credibility findings in the context of the SDG targets on budget credibility (16.6.1) and systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (5.c.1), as well as Financing for Development. IBP and partners are analyzing budget credibility trends in seven key sectors, that relate to 10 SDG goals, in 14 countries, to explore the potential impact of budget credibility challenges for efforts to achieve the SDGs. We aim to inform country Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to encourage greater attention and emphasis on budget implementation issues.

Capturing the human impact of budget deviations, learning and tools for practitioners

Throughout implementation of the project, IBP will document the human impact of budget deviations on the delivery of services in these countries. Together with the key research findings, these stories will inform the development of on-the-ground narratives about service delivery problems caused by budget deviations and will be used to catalyse awareness and action at the country and global level. By the end of this three-year project, lessons from IBP's research and engagement will be captured in country case studies and a methodological toolkit that can be used by practitioners in other settings to assess and address the lack of budget credibility.

For more information visit IBP's website at

<https://www.internationalbudget.org/issues-lab/budget-credibility/>