





## 1

OUT OF 100

### TRANSPARENCY OPEN BUDGET INDEX

Saudi Arabia provides the public with **scant** budget information.



## 0

OUT OF 100

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Saudi Arabia provides the public with **no** opportunities to engage in the budget process.



## 11

OUT OF 100

### BUDGET OVERSIGHT

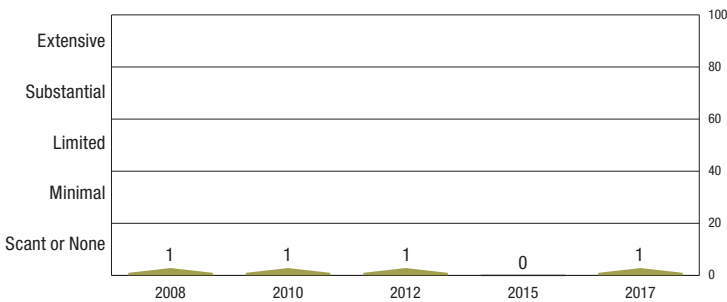
**BY LEGISLATURE & AUDIT**  
The legislature and supreme audit institution in Saudi Arabia provide **weak** oversight of the budget.

## TRANSPARENCY (OPEN BUDGET INDEX)

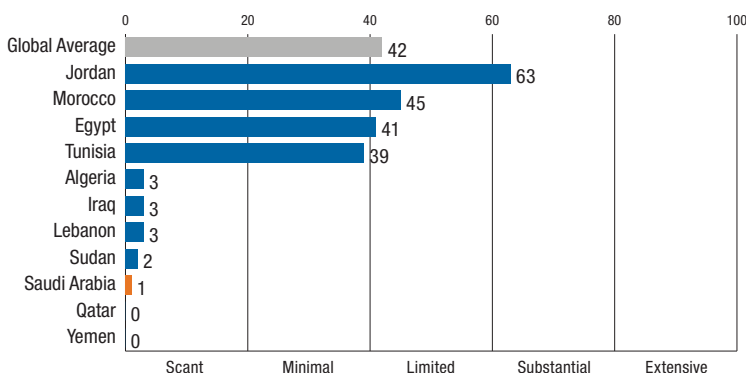
Drawing on internationally accepted criteria developed by multilateral organizations, the Open Budget Survey uses 109 equally weighted indicators to measure budget transparency. These indicators assess whether the central government makes eight key budget documents available to the public online in a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

Each country receives a composite score (out of 100) that determines its ranking on the Open Budget Index – the world’s only independent and comparative measure of budget transparency.

### How has the OBI score for Saudi Arabia changed over time?



### How does budget transparency in Saudi Arabia compare to others?

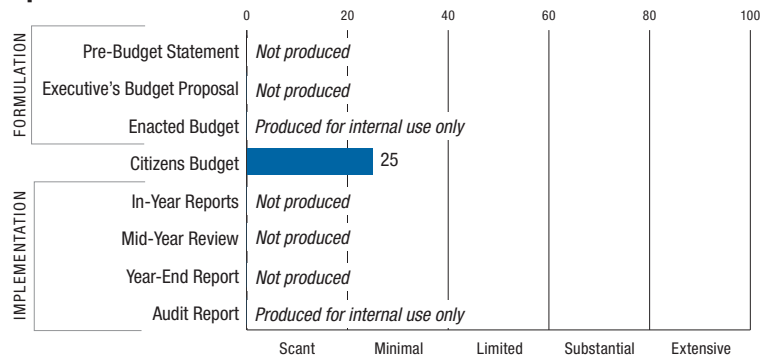


### Public availability of budget documents from 2008 to 2017

Document	2008	2010	2012	2015	2017
Pre-Budget Statement	●	●	●	●	●
Executive's Budget Proposal	●	●	●	●	●
Enacted Budget	●	●	●	●	●
Citizens Budget	●	●	●	●	●
In-Year Reports	●	●	●	●	●
Mid-Year Review	●	●	●	●	●
Year-End Report	●	●	●	●	●
Audit Report	●	●	●	●	●

● Available to the Public ● Not Produced  
● Published Late, or Not Published Online, or Produced for Internal Use Only

### How comprehensive and useful is the information provided in the key budget documents that Saudi Arabia publishes?



Saudi Arabia's score of 1 out of 100 is substantially lower than the global average score of 42.

Saudi Arabia's score of 1 on the 2017 Open Budget Index is largely the same as its score in 2015.

Since 2015, Saudi Arabia has increased the availability of budget information by:

- Publishing a Citizens Budget online.

However, Saudi Arabia has failed to make progress in the following ways:

- Not making the Enacted Budget and the Audit Report available to the public.
- Not producing an Executive's Budget Proposal, a Year-End Report, In-Year Reports, a Pre-Budget Statement, and a Mid-Year Review. (Subsequently, in 2017, which is not captured in this survey, the government has made In-Year Reports available to the public online.)

### Key Budget Documents

**Pre-Budget Statement:** discloses the broad parameters of fiscal policies in advance of the Executive's Budget Proposal; outlines the government's economic forecast, anticipated revenue, expenditures, and debt.

**Executive's Budget Proposal:** submitted by the executive to the legislature for approval; details the sources of revenue, the allocations to ministries, proposed policy changes, and other information important for understanding the country's fiscal situation.

**Enacted Budget:** the budget that has been approved by the legislature.

**Citizens Budget:** a simpler and less technical version of the government's Executive's Budget Proposal or Enacted Budget, designed to convey key information to the public.

**In-Year Reports:** include information on actual revenues collected, actual expenditures made, and debt incurred at different intervals; issued quarterly or monthly.

**Mid-Year Review:** contains a comprehensive update on the implementation of the budget as of the middle of the fiscal year; includes a review of economic assumptions and an updated forecast of budget outcomes.

**Year-End Report:** describes the situation of the government's accounts at the end of the fiscal year and, ideally, an evaluation of the progress made toward achieving the budget's policy goals.

**Audit Report:** issued by the supreme audit institution, this document examines the soundness and completeness of the government's year-end accounts.

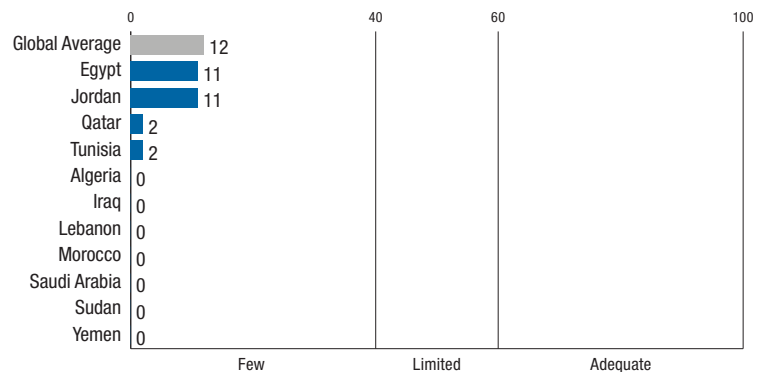
## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Transparency alone is insufficient for improving governance. Public participation in budgeting is vital to realize 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.

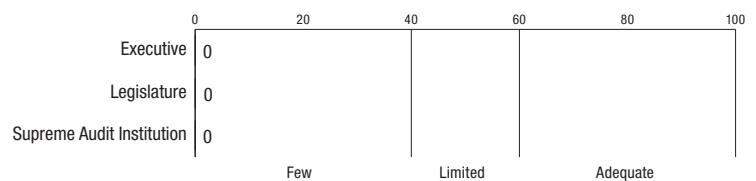
The questions assessing participation in the Open Budget Survey 2017 were revised to align them with the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency's new principles on public participation, which now serve as the basis for widely accepted norms on public participation in national budget processes. Therefore, data on the extent of public participation in budgeting in the Open Budget Survey 2017 cannot be compared directly to data from earlier editions.

### How does public participation in Saudi Arabia compare to other countries in the region?



Saudi Arabia's score of 0 out of 100 indicates that it provides the public with **no** opportunities to engage in budget processes. This is lower than the global average score of 12.

### To what extent do different institutions in Saudi Arabia provide opportunities for public participation?



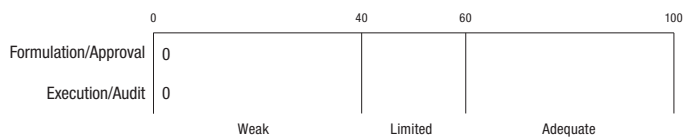


# BUDGET OVERSIGHT

The Open Budget Survey examines the role that legislatures, supreme audit institutions, and independent fiscal institutions play in the budget process and the extent to which they are able to provide effective oversight of the budget. These institutions play a critical role — often enshrined in national constitutions or laws — in planning budgets and overseeing their implementation.

These indicators were revised to better assess the role of formal oversight institutions in ensuring integrity and accountability in the use of public resources. Therefore, data on the role and effectiveness of oversight institutions in the Open Budget Survey 2017 should not be compared directly to data from earlier editions.

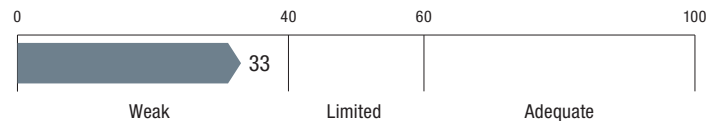
## To what extent does the legislature in Saudi Arabia provide budget oversight?



The legislature provides **no** oversight during the budget cycle. This score reflects that the legislature provides no oversight during the planning stage of the budget cycle and no oversight during the implementation stage of the budget cycle. The main barriers to effective legislative oversight are:

- A debate on budget policy by the legislature does not take place prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal.
- The Executive's Budget Proposal is not provided to legislators at least two months before the start of the budget year.
- Legislative committees do not examine and publish reports on their analyses of the Executive's Budget Proposal online.

## To what extent does the Supreme Audit Institution in Saudi Arabia provide budget oversight?



The supreme audit institution provides **weak** budget oversight.

- Under the law, it has significant discretion to undertake audits as it sees fit.
- Moreover, the supreme audit institution is provided with sufficient resources to fulfill its mandate, but its audit processes are not reviewed by an independent agency.
- Finally, the head of the institution is not appointed by the legislature or judiciary and can be removed without legislative or judicial approval, which undermines its independence.

### Oversight by an Independent Fiscal Institution

Saudi Arabia does not have an independent fiscal institution (IFI). While IFIs are not yet widespread globally, they are increasingly recognized as an important source of independent, nonpartisan information. IFIs take a variety of different institutional forms. Common examples include parliamentary budget offices and fiscal councils.

For more information, see Lisa von Trapp, Ian Lienert, and Joachim Wehner, "Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions and Case Studies," *OECD Journal on Budgeting*, March 2016 (special issue), pp. 9-24.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

For more detailed information on the survey findings for Saudi Arabia, please see the [Open Budget Survey Data Explorer at survey.internationalbudget.org](http://survey.internationalbudget.org).



### How can Saudi Arabia improve transparency?

Saudi Arabia should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

- Publish an Enacted Budget and an Audit Report online.
- Produce and publish an Executive's Budget Proposal, a Year-End Report, a Pre-Budget Statement, and a Mid-Year Review.

- Continue to publish In-Year Reports online. During the research period for OBS 2017, In-Year Reports were not made publicly available, but this practice has since been adopted and, accordingly, the first quarterly In-Year Report was published in May 2017.



### How can Saudi Arabia improve participation?

Saudi Arabia should prioritize the following actions to improve public participation in its budget process:

- Pilot mechanisms for members of the public and government officials to exchange views on national budget matters during both the formulation of the national budget and the monitoring of its implementation. These mechanisms could build on innovations, such as participatory budgeting and social audits. For examples of such mechanisms, see [www.fiscaltransparency.net/mechanisms/](http://www.fiscaltransparency.net/mechanisms/).
- Hold legislative hearings on the formulation of the annual budget, during which members of the public or civil society organizations can testify.
- Establish formal mechanisms for the public to assist the supreme audit institution in formulating its audit program and to participate in relevant audit investigations.



### How can Saudi Arabia improve oversight?

Saudi Arabia should prioritize the following actions to make budget oversight more effective:

- Ensure the legislature holds a debate on budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive’s Budget Proposal and approves recommendations for the upcoming budget.
- Ensure a legislative committee examines and publishes reports on in-year budget implementation online.
- Require legislative or judicial approval to appoint and remove the head of the supreme audit institution.
- Consider setting up an independent fiscal institution to further strengthen budget oversight.

## METHODOLOGY

The Open Budget Survey uses internationally accepted criteria developed by multilateral organizations from sources such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT).

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 August 2016 and January 2018 and involved about 300 experts in 115 countries. The Open Budget Survey 2017 assesses only events, activities, or developments that occurred up to 31 December 2016. The survey was revised somewhat from the 2015 version to reflect evolving methods for disseminating budget information and to strengthen individual questions on public participation and budget oversight. A discussion of these changes can be found in the Open Budget Survey Global Report (see link 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 parties.



The survey is based on a questionnaire that is completed for each country by **independent budget experts** who are not associated with the national government.



The draft responses to each country’s questionnaire are then independently reviewed by an **anonymous expert** who also has no association with the national government.



In addition, IBP invites nearly all **national governments** to comment on the draft responses and considers these comments before finalizing the survey results.



**Researchers** respond to comments from peer reviewers and their government, if applicable, **and IBP** referees any conflicting answers in order to ensure consistency across countries in selecting answers.

The government of Saudi Arabia provided comments on the draft Open Budget Questionnaire results.

Research to complete this country’s Open Budget Survey was undertaken by:  
 Open Budget Initiative  
 International Budget Partnership  
 820 First Street NE, Suite 510  
 Washington, D.C. 20002 USA  
 Email: [info@internationalbudget.org](mailto:info@internationalbudget.org)

#### Further Information

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

- The Open Budget Survey 2017: Global report
- Data explorer
- Methodology report
- Full questionnaire