



Overall score: 64% Provides significant information to the public in its budget documents during the year.

Highlights Information in Public Documents

Germany's score on the Open Budget Index shows that the government provides the public with substantial information on the central government's budget and financial activities during the course of the budget year. This gives citizens tools to hold government accountable for its management of the public's money.

The Open Budget Index 2008 evaluates the quantity and type of information that governments make available to their publics in the seven key budget documents that should be issued during the budget year. One of the most important documents is the executive's budget proposal. It should contain the executive's plans for the upcoming year along with the cost of the proposed activities. The proposal should be available to the public and to the legislature prior to being finalized, at least three months before the start of the budget year to allow for sufficient review and public debate.

In Germany, the proposal provides substantial information to the public, meaning citizens have a fairly comprehensive picture of the government's plans for taxing and spending for the upcoming year.

Moreover, it is fairly easy to track spending, revenue collection and borrowing during the year. Germany publishes detailed in-year reports and a mid-year review, though the latter document lacks some important details and does not include updated expenditure estimates for the budget year.

It is also somewhat difficult to assess budget performance in Germany once the budget year is over. A year-end report is produced, allowing comparisons between what was budgeted and what was actually spent and collected, though it lacks some important details. Also, though Germany makes its audit report public, the government does not report on steps it has taken to address the audit report's recommendations. However, Germany's Supreme Audit Institution publishes reports that track actions in response to its recommendations in prior years.

Access to the highly detailed budget information needed to understand the government's progress in undertaking a specific project or activity remains limited. This is despite the fact that Germany has codified the right to access government information into law, through a Freedom of Information Act.

Public Participation and Institutions of Accountability

Beyond improving access to key budget documents, there are other ways in which Germany's budget process could be made more open.

For instance, while the procurement of goods and services frequently follows an open and competitive process, there have been some reported instances of irregularities.

Notably, Germany's Supreme Audit Institution enjoys a fair degree of independence. The SAI has the discretion to decide which audits to undertake and receives complaints and suggestions from the public to assist it in determining its audit program.



Availability of Key Budget Documents and Citizens Budget (in order of expected release)

Pre-Budget Statement	<input type="radio"/> No
Executive's Budget Proposal	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
Citizens Budget	<input type="radio"/> No
Enacted Budget	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
In-year Reports	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
Mid-Year Review	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
Year-End Report	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
Audit Report	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes

Open Budget Index 2008



Germany

The Open Budget Index evaluates the quantity and type of information available to the public in a country's budget documents. A country's placement within a performance category was determined by averaging the response to 91 questions on the Open Budget Questionnaire related to information contained in the eight key budget documents that all countries should make available to the public.

Research to complete the Open Budget Questionnaire was undertaken by:

Dr. Michael Thöne
 FiFo Köln – Finanzwissenschaftliches
 Forschungsinstitut an der Universität
 zu Köln (Cologne Center for Public
 Economics)
 Postfach 420 520 D-50899 KOELN.
 Germany
 Tel: +49 221 426 979
 Email:
 Michael: thoene@fiffo-koeln.de
 Website: www.fiffo-koeln.de

The International Budget Project was established as part of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington, DC-based non-partisan non-profit research organization, in 1997 to support civil society organizations around the world interested in strengthening public budget processes, institutions and outcomes. For more information on the IBP and the Open Budget Initiative 2008, please visit www.openbudgetindex.org

