

SUGGESTED APPROACH TO BUDGET LITERACY SURVEY FOR BCOP WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Rationale and Approach

The objective of the survey is to ascertain the reform progress in budget literacy¹ in BCOP member countries participating in the Budget Literacy Working Group. Given the objective of this working group is to also study practices in budget literacy, and exchange experiences, the following approach to the online survey is proposed.

The survey could contain a mix of tailor made questions that aim to capture countries' approaches to the education and promotion of government budgets to citizens (including schools) and the role of MoF (if any) in that process. The results of the survey will then be presented back to participants at the proposed budget literacy workshop.

Results from the recent 2014 Open Budget Survey could also be presented (subject to their availability) to measure the accessibility of budget documents to citizens, the use of citizens budgets, and opportunities for citizen engagement in the budget process in more depth. However, Armenia², Belarus, Uzbekistan and Moldova did not participate in the 2012 OBI, and unless they have participated in the 2014 OBI, more detailed information in these areas will not be available for these countries.³ Therefore, some fundamental questions on accessibility of budget documents to citizens have been included in the proposed survey (in Part 2) to ensure basic information is collected for all budget literacy working group countries.

Thus, in summary the survey will consist of two key parts comprising 20 questions in total:

1. Education and Promotion in Budget Literacy (tailor made) – 15 questions
2. Accessibility of Budget Documents to Citizens (IBP) – 5 questions

Questions in **Part 1** have been designed to capture what countries are doing in terms of formal and informal training in government budgets; and budget-related information campaigns and promotional activities. There are some innovative approaches being used, and from the survey results we could document what PEMPAL countries are doing as well as documenting international educational practices (referring to preliminary work undertaken already by the bank). This will meet one of the main objectives of the working group. It also asks participants for their perception of the current level of budget literacy of the different groups in their country and what may be some of the key impediments and challenges to raising this literacy.

¹ Budget literacy is defined as “the ability to read, decipher, and understand public budgets to enable and enhance meaningful citizen participation in the budget process”.

² Information on public availability of budget documentation in real time is however available for Armenia in the IPB's OBS tracker. See www.obstracker.org

³ Other countries in the Budget Literacy working group have been involved in OBI assessments and include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine, Tajikistan, and Romania.

Part 2 is drawn from the 2012 IBP survey but also from IBP's Open Budget Survey Tracker (www.obstracker.org, OBS Tracker). This tracker allows citizens, civil society, media, and others to monitor in real time whether central governments are releasing the requisite information on how the government is managing public finances. For budget literacy to be achieved, accessibility of budget documents, in different formats and for different audiences, is a pre-requisite. Four BCOP member countries are already on this tracker (Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, Macedonia and Georgia)⁴ of which two are participating in the working group and several other countries participate in the Open Budget surveys so results in these areas are available for most of the participants of the budget literacy working group. Part 2 asks questions on whether key budget documents are prepared, and if so, if they are available publically and free of charge. It should be noted that Kyrgyz Republic performs very well in this area with all key documents available publically so they could present at one of the workshop meetings on how they achieved this (refer www.obstracker.org for their results).

Next Steps

Once the proposed approach and draft survey questions are agreed, they could be circulated to key working group members for review.

Attachment: Survey Questions

The 20 questions within the two proposed sections are outlined below:

What is the name of your country: insert name (**please note only one response per country is required**)

Part 1: EDUCATION AND PROMOTION IN BUDGET LITERACY

1. **Are there national curricula and frameworks which encourage instruction in budget literacy as part of subjects/learning areas (e.g. Civics, Economics, Social Studies and Mathematics)**
 Yes/No
2. **If you answered "Yes" to Question 1, what levels are these provided at** (choose one or more)
 primary,
 secondary
 tertiary levels.
 Do not know
 other
 Please provide an explanation of any initiatives in these areas and the role of MoF, or government (if any):
3. **Does any other informal or formal training exist on how to analyze or understand governments budgets** Yes/No
4. **If you answered "Yes" to Question 3, please provide an overview of these initiatives and also indicate who is the target group for this training** (choose one or more?)
 Government

⁴ Only Armenia and Kyrgyz Republic are members on the budget literacy working group however.

Media (ie journalists, tv reporters)
Non-Government Organizations (eg lobby groups)
Parliamentarians
Parliament research or support offices
Auditors
Other, please specify
Provision of overview of these initiatives.....

5. **How would you rate the level of budget literacy of the following groups of people** (choose one for each category):

Government (line ministries, Cabinet)	low, medium, high, don't know
Media (ie journalists, tv reporters)	low, medium, high, don't know
Non-Government Organizations (eg CSOs, lobby groups)	low, medium, high, don't know
Parliamentarians	low, medium, high, don't know
Parliament research or support offices	low, medium, high, don't know
Auditors	low, medium, high, don't know

Provide additional explanation (optional).....

6. **Who develops the formal training materials on budget literacy in your country? (choose one or more)**

Educational sector (eg schools, universities)
Ministry of Finance or their equivalent
Ministry of Education
Civil Service Agency
Public Financial Management training institutes
Independent consultants
Not applicable (no such training materials are developed)
Other (please specify)

7. **Are information campaigns and knowledge promotion of governments budgets undertaken in your country**

Yes/No/don't know

8. **If you answered "Yes" to Question 7, please choose one or more of the following approaches that are adopted**

Print and audio media (ie newspaper, brochures, television and radio campaigns)
Interactive media (facebook, internet, interactive website tools)
Special events (e.g. national budget day or conferences)
Other
Please provide explanation of initiatives including who develops the materials and manages the campaigns

9. **Do the journalists in your country report on the government's budget?** Yes/No

10. **If yes, are these reports well presented, and an accurate summary?** Yes/No please provide more information (optional).....

11. **Do Civil Society Organizations (or coalition of CSOs) or other non-government organizations assess or scrutinize the government's budget?** CSOs are defined as a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations Yes/No/Don't Know

12. **If yes what is the role of CSOs in relation to the budget discussion in your country?** Please explain and also indicate what is the key challenges/impediments to effectively undertaking this role.

13. **Has your country introduced any other policies except training or communication campaigns to improve budget literacy?**
 Yes (please indicate what kind of policies)
 No, but there are plans to introduce policies to improve budget literacy
 No and there are no plans to introduce policies to improve budget literacy

14. **What do you see are the key challenges for improving budget literacy** (choose one or more)
 Lack of access to reliable media and/or communication technologies (eg remote areas)
 Apathy and/or lack of interest of citizens
 Confusion from too much information currently being presented
 Misunderstanding of economic and technical concepts and terminology
 Lack of understanding of role of government
 Lack of budget to fund government initiatives
 Unclear budget processes and practices and/or budget continually changing from reform processes
 Weak civil society sector
 Weak or biased media
 Weak budget literacy within government etc so difficult to focus on improving literacy outside of government
 Otherplease specify or provide further explanation of any key challenges chosen from above

15. Optional question: **What are your thoughts on how to best improve budget literacy in your country.** (Please provide your ideas and/or strategies you may have heard about from other countries that you would like more information about).....

Part 2: ACCESSIBILITY OF KEY BUDGET DOCUMENTS TO CITIZENS



16. **Which of the following key budget documents are prepared by your government** (choose one or more)
- Pre-Budget Statement
 - Executive's Budget Proposal
 - Enacted Budget
 - Citizens Budget
 - In-Year Report
 - Mid-Year Review
 - End-Year Report
17. **Which of the following key budget documents are available publically and free of charge (ie on the internet)** (choose one or more)
- Pre-Budget Statement
 - Executive's Budget Proposal
 - Enacted Budget
 - Citizens Budget
 - In-Year Report
 - Mid-Year Review
 - End-Year Report
 - Audit Report
18. **Do you have e-version of the Citizen's Budget (e.g. Budget Portal) for the national or sub-national budgets?**
- a. Yes, both for national and subnational budgets
 - b. Yes, but only for national budget
 - c. No
19. **Please indicate the key challenges preventing budget documents to be available to the public** (you can indicate several answers) :
- a. Lack of support from the political level (Parliament, President, Government Office)
 - b. Lack of leadership
 - c. Lack of relevant expertise and experience
 - d. Low public interest in the budget
 - e. Lack of public understanding of the budget concepts
 - f. Lack of budget to support initiatives
 - g. Other (please specify)
20. **Are citizens engaged in government budget formulation? Eg through the Parliament holding budget hearings with the public, or the Government consulting citizens on proposed priorities or macro-fiscal framework** Yes/No please provide explanation (optional)