

OPEN BUDGET DATA FOR WHAT?

Open Budget Data: World Landscape

We asked Open Knowledge and the Digital Methods Initiative to map the world of definitions, best practices and actors associated with open budget data and here is a snapshot of what we found!

CHECK THE FULL STUDY:
<http://bit.ly/2aYfChi>

MAKING BUDGETS VISUAL

At least 65% of the projects found and examined used some form of data visualization of interactive graphics to give a top level overview of expenditure and revenue. Tree maps, bubbles and others allow users to navigate through hierarchies of transactions, go from large to small spending categories, or follow spending trends over time.



Examples

Open Spending (international)
Where Does My Money Go? (international)
Los Angeles Mayor's budget website (U.S.)

CITIZEN WATCHDOGS

Several open budget data projects are designed explicitly to enable citizen and civil society monitoring of public finances. They present the information in ways that allow to easily identify anomalies, track flows of public money, and oversee individual expenses in public facilities in their cities.

Examples

Israeli Open Budget
Follow the Money (Nigeria)
Taking Care of My Neighborhood (Brazil)



JOURNALISTS FOLLOW THE MONEY

While only a handful of projects were found, some journalistic projects are also using open budget data as part of investigations or in depth reporting projects tracking the distribution and use of public funds, from European subsidies to the creation of databases for cross-border investigations.

Examples

"Farm Subsidy" project, by a network of European journalists, researchers and activists. "Database tracking the European Union's Structural Funds," by Bureau of Investigative Journalism and The Financial Times. "Deconstructing the 2014-15 Hong Kong Budget," by South China Morning Post.



ADVOCACY

Several projects use fiscal information – particularly in digital media – to support their advocacy efforts around a range of different causes, from tracking funds associated with the Millennium Development Goals (health, education, etc.) to promote allocations for specific causes such as human rights, the environment and many others.

Examples Government Spending Watch (international), Moldovan Budget Stories, Budget at Your Fingertips (Brazil).

Who Are the Key Players?

Government 51%, Civil Society (mostly international) 37%, Media 5%, Multilateral 1%, Private sector 2.5%, Others 3.5%

Main Findings

- **Consensus around definitions** There is relatively strong consensus that the "openness" of open budget data refers to the legal and technical character of the disclosure rather than openness of official processes or institutions.
- **Best practices** machine readable, legally open, bulk downloadable, timely, continually available, free of cost, comprehensive, protection of sensitive information, compliant with relevant data standards, accessible to citizens, and the following elements are publicly available: data format or specification, transaction level data, historical data, description of Financial Management Information System, associated documents, and off budget fiscal data.
- **Why does it work?** Despite the emerging number of open budget data projects, explicit "accountability paths" and theories of change appear to be relatively under developed and more research is required about this aspect.
- **In search of diversity** While civil society represent the second biggest actor in the field, most of the civil society groups are large international organizations. Local groups and those not mainly focused on transparency are not particularly active in open budget data.

CHECK THE FULL STUDY: <http://bit.ly/2aYfChi>

GIFT
GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR
FISCAL TRANSPARENCY