

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2021 OPEN BUDGET SURVEY

The Open Budget Survey (OBS) examines the countries' level of accountability in national budget processes based on transparency, budget oversight, and public participation. The Open Budget Index (OBI) measures transparency in terms of public access to budgetary information. The Philippines obtained an OBI score of 68 and ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of 120 countries in the OBS conducted by the International Budget Partnership in 2021.

Table 1 shows that the Philippines topped other Asian countries in 2017 and 2019, but ranked second next to Indonesia in 2021. The country's score of 68 is eight points lower compared to its previous score of 76 in 2019. An OBI score of 61 and above indicates that a country is likely publishing enough material to support informed public debate on the budget. The Philippines has remained above the global average score for the last three surveys. Timor-Leste and Vietnam showed remarkable improvements in their OBI scores in 2021.

**TABLE 1  
OBI SCORES IN SELECT ASEAN-MEMBER STATES**

Country	2017	2019	2021	Change 2019-2021
<i>Global Average</i>	42	45	45	+0
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>-8</b>
Cambodia	20	32	33	+1
Indonesia	64	70	70	+0
Malaysia	46	47	47	+0
Myanmar	7	28	30	+2
Thailand	56	61	58	-3
Timor-Leste	40	40	52	+12
Vietnam	15	38	44	+6

Source: *Open Budget Surveys for 2017, 2019, and 2021*  
Available at [www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey](http://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey)

Table 2 presents the eight (8) budget documents and their availability in the Philippines. In 2019, all budget documents were produced and published as follows: (1) pre-budget statement; (2) executive's budget proposal; (3) enacted budget; (4) citizens' budget; (5) in-year review; (6) mid-year review, (7) year-end report, and (8) audit report. However, in 2017 and 2021, all the budget documents were produced but the publication of the mid-year review was not within the prescribed period.

# Facts in Figures

Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department  
House of Representatives  
December 2022 (No. 70)

**TABLE 2  
AVAILABILITY OF BUDGET DOCUMENTS, PHILIPPINES**

Type of Document	2017	2019	2021
Pre-Budget Statement	√	√	√
Executive's Budget Proposal	√	√	√
Enacted Budget	√	√	√
Citizens Budget	√	√	√
In-Year Report	√	√	√
Mid-Year Review	x	√	x
Year-End Report	√	√	√
Audit Report	√	√	√

Source: *Open Budget Surveys for 2017, 2019, and 2021*

The Mid-Year Review is an overview of the budget's effects at midpoint of the budget year, and it discusses changes in economic assumptions that affect approved budget policies. It must be published online no later than three (3) months after the end of the reporting period.

**TABLE 3  
BUDGET OVERSIGHT SCORE, PHILIPPINES**

Institution	2017	2019	2021
Legislature	56	67	67
Audit	83	89	89
<b>Overall</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>

Source: *Open Budget Surveys for 2017, 2019, and 2021*

The OBS measures budget oversight based on how legislatures and supreme audit institutions perform their oversight roles in the budget process. Overall score of 74 (in 2019 and 2021) as shown in Table 3 indicates that Congress and the Commission on Audit (COA) provide adequate budget oversight.

Table 4 shows that legislative oversight scores of the Philippines in 2021 (at 67) is the same as in 2019. This indicates adequate oversight by Congress during the planning and implementation stages of the budget cycle. For the past three surveys, only Vietnam shows a consistently high OBI score of 72 (for 2017 and 2019) and 75 in the most recent 2021 survey.

To further improve oversight in the Philippines, the 2021 OBS recommended the following: (1) Congress should debate on the budget policy before the Executive Budget Proposal is tabled, and the recommendations are approved for the upcoming budget; (2) Legislative committees examining the budget proposal and in-year implementation should publish either the Minutes of the Meeting or a Summary Report with findings and recommendations online; and (3) Legislative committees should examine the Audit Reports and publish a report with their findings online.

**TABLE 4  
LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT SCORES  
SELECT ASEAN MEMBER STATES**

Country	2017	2019	2021	Change (2019-2021)
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>+0</b>
Cambodia	44	39	25	-14
Indonesia	86	83	53	-30
Malaysia	25	19	28	+9
Myanmar	56	70	53	-17
Thailand	44	69	69	+0
Timor Leste	50	39	47	+8
Vietnam	72	72	75	+3

Note: A score of 0-40 (few), 41-60 (limited), 61-100 (adequate)  
Source: Open Budget Surveys for 2017, 2019, and 2021

Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) conduct audits to gauge whether public accounts are accurate and reliable, whether funds were used in accordance with the law, and whether public spending was efficient and effective. In the Philippines, the COA has the constitutional mandate to examine, audit, and settle all accounts pertaining to the revenue and expenditures of the government.

Table 5 shows that budget oversight by the COA has been considered adequate with a score of 83 in 2017 and an even higher score of 89 in 2019 and 2021. To strengthen independence and improve audit oversight by the COA, the OBS recommended that audit processes are reviewed by an independent fiscal institution.

**TABLE 5  
SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTION OVERSIGHT**

Country	2017	2019	2021	Change (2019-2021)
Global Average	63	63	63	+0
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>+0</b>
Cambodia	78	72	72	+0
Indonesia	84	78	78	+0
Malaysia	56	56	61	+5
Myanmar	33	56	45	-11
Thailand	67	50	39	-11
Timor Leste	67	67	72	+5
Vietnam	72	78	89	+11

Source: Open Budget Surveys for 2017, 2019, and 2021

Public participation in the budget process is essential to make sure that the allocation and use of government funds are responsive to the needs of the people. To realize the full benefits of public engagement, governments should establish meaningful participation opportunities throughout the four stages of the budget cycle—formulation, approval, execution, and oversight with the three government bodies engaged in budgeting—executive, legislative and COA.

Table 6 shows that the global average score for public participation is unchanged (at 14) in 2019 and 2021. The limited impact of the pandemic is a result of the online platforms that many governments created to continue participation practices. The Philippines' public participation score of 35 (in 2021) indicates that the public has limited opportunities to be involved in the budget process. The country's public participation score may be better than other Asian countries (particularly Cambodia, Myanmar, Timor-Leste, and Thailand with scores below the global average), but it is still way below the score of 61 to be considered adequate.

**TABLE 6  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCORES  
SELECT ASEAN MEMBER STATES**

Country	2017	2019	2021	Change (2019-2021)
Global Average	12	14	14	+0
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>+4</b>
Cambodia	4	6	0	-6
Indonesia	22	20	24	+4
Malaysia	22	17	26	+9
Myanmar	0	0	0	+0
Thailand	7	13	11	-2
Timor-Leste	9	6	7	+1
Vietnam	7	11	17	+6

Source: Open Budget Surveys for 2017, 2019, and 2021