



MEDIA RELEASE:

Namibia Can Improve On Open Budget Rankings

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Namibia has dropped in the global rankings on budget transparency and accountability published by the International Budget Partnership.

The Open Budget Survey is the world's only comparative, independent and regular assessment of transparency, oversight, and public participation in public budgets in 120 countries.

Namibia's transparency score decreased from 51 in 2019 to 42 in 2021. A score of 61 is considered the minimum threshold to foster an informed public debate on budgets. The global average transparency score in the OBS 2021 was 45.

Namibia published 6 of the 8 required public documents within the timeframe set by the survey. The dip in Namibia's transparency score comes mainly because government did not publish its Accountability Report on time in 2020 while the Auditor General's report on government finances was published so late it could not be considered. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 was a mitigating factor in the late publication of the Accountability Report.

The drop in score in Namibia comes against a backdrop of progress in other parts of the world. Most countries were able to maintain, and in some cases build on earlier gains in accountable spending practices despite the pandemic - thanks to increased digitalisation of information and the institutionalisation of accountability practices.

Namibia's score on the budget oversight element of the Survey increased from 46 in 2019 to 48 in 2021. Namibia's parliament and the Office of the Auditor General are considered to provide limited oversight during the budget process.

Namibia continued to perform poorly on the public participation part of the survey – registering a 0 score – as there were no formal opportunities for meaningful public participation afforded by the government, parliament or the Auditor-General's office.

The Ministry of Finance did hold budget consultations with civil society and other sectors in 2021 but unfortunately this was outside the time period for the Open Budget Survey, which had a cut-off date of December 2020. As a result, the public participation score should increase in future surveys.

“Namibia could make strides in budget transparency by improving the timing of audit reporting and making sure the Accountability Report is published within 12 months of the year under consideration,” said Graham Hopwood, Executive Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), which conducted the research for Namibia.

“Setting up formal opportunities for different sectors of society to give their input and comments during the budget cycle would also ensure Namibia's public participation score is boosted,” Hopwood said.

Namibia could also improve its ranking by submitting its budget proposal to parliament at least two months before the start of the budget year and allowing a Standing Committee to scrutinise the proposal, Hopwood added.

Further details are available in the country report on Namibia to be found here:
<https://internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2021/namibia>

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