

Fourth Annual Report Web Update

GTF334 International Budget Project

In its fourth year of implementing the Governance Transparency Fund program, the International Budget Partnership's Open Budget Initiative (OBI) continues to use research to establish benchmarks for transparent, responsive, and accountable budgeting; measure government performance against those standards; and support advocacy to promote open budgets. The program promotes *open budgets* based on its belief that more transparent and responsive government budgets can improve the lives of every member of society, especially those who are poor and marginalized.

The OBI implements its flagship Open Budget Survey in approximately 100 countries, primarily in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It also produces literature and guidebooks on public finance management practices and Citizens Budgets. It supports budget transparency assessments at the subnational and sector levels of government, as well as research on the causes and consequences of a lack of transparency in select countries. The OBI also promotes the development of international platforms, including best practice norms for public finance management, to enhance advocacy in support of greater transparency within countries.

The OBI hosts the world's largest databank on budget transparency, generated from three rounds of its Open Budget Survey. In national and international discussions on public finance management, the Open Budget Index is now widely accepted as the touchstone for transparent, participatory, and accountable budgeting. Donors are an increasingly significant user of OBS data as a source of benchmarking and recommendations for improving budget transparency in countries receiving foreign assistance. And, OBI personnel have provided, and are a source of, advice upon request and high-level presentations to a wide range of institutions and stakeholders.

In 2011 the IBP launched an exciting Budget Transparency, Accountability, and Participation (BTAP) Movement in Tanzania. During the launch, civil society from 56 countries passed a declaration of their vision of open budgeting (see www.makebudgetspublic.org). This global body is expected to undertake coordinated action to promote transparent and accountable budget systems. Also in 2011, the IBP helped establish the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT), a multi-stakeholder process involving government, civil society, and international organizations to advance and institutionalize significant and continuous improvements in fiscal transparency around the world (see www.fiscaltransparency.net). As a first step, GIFT members, including cabinet ministers from Brazil and the Philippines, the deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the managing director of the World Bank, and IBP's director approved the initiative's mandate, which includes formulating global norms on budget transparency.

The OBI's Annual Report to the Global Transparency Fund is available at <http://internationalbudget.org/who-we-are/?fa=major-donors>. More information on the OBI and the IBP can be found at www.internationalbudget.org.



Photograph 1: Records verification & consolidation during social audit in Andhra Pradesh
Photo courtesy of Neila Momade, Center for Public Integrity – Mozambique