

Budget Transparency Index for Local Councils: Methodology

The questionnaires for the Local Council Budget Transparency Index were distributed to the Local Councils via the Office of the Governor of Adamawa, and filled out by Local Council officials. Thus, **answers are self-reported**.

Local Councils were ranked by the sum of points they received for the answers to the 15 questions of the questionnaire, where the number of points obtainable reflects weights attached to the different questions to capture their relative importance. Questions are either binary (i.e. can elicit a yes/no answer), or they enquire about the grade of transparency/quality of an aspect of the budget. In the latter case, the awarded points can range from 0-4 per question. Questions 1 and 2 are effectively groups of 5 and 7 separate questions and yield a total of 3 and 5 points respectively.

In cases where questions were not answered, zero points were awarded. For the details regarding the points awarded per answer, please refer to the table below.

In interpreting the ranking of Local Councils, the two most important caveats to bear in mind are the fact that scores of the Local Councils reflect self-assessments, and that some foregone points might result from a lack of diligence of the official who filled out the questionnaire, and who preferred to leave questions blank instead of looking for the answers in documents, rather than from true opacity.

However, given the range of the scores (from 5 – 43) meaningful statements about the relative transparency of councils can be made nonetheless, and a good basis for an initial benchmarking of the different councils exists.

For Questions 1 and 2, respondents receive the points shown in each box if it is checked. Note that in Question 1, only one box per row can be checked, while in Question 2, each box per row can potentially be checked. The total points received for Questions 1 and 2 is then the sum of the earned points multiplied by the weight indicated.

1. Budget Documents Available (For each document type (1-5), select the appropriate answer (I, II, III or IV). Select only one answer per document by checking the appropriate box in the table).					
Document Type	I.	II.	III.	IV.	
	Not Produced	Produced but Not Available to the Public	Produced and available to the public, but only on request	Produced and distributed to the public	
Enacted Budget	0	1	2	3	
Budget Summary	0	1	2	3	
Mid-Year Report	0	1	2	3	
Year-End Report	0	1	2	3	
Audit Report	0	1	2	3	
Weight applied to points received in Q1	1/5	Maximum possible Points for Q1		3	
2. For budget reports that are produced and distributed to the public, what steps are taken to distribute these reports and to promote interest in them? (If report is produced, for each question 1-7, mark "Yes" or "No" in the boxes in columns I-V).	I. Enacted budget	II. Budget Summary	III. Mid-year report	IV. Year-end report	V. Audit report
1. Is the release date known at least one month in advance?	1	1	1	1	1
2. Is an advance notification of release sent to users/media?	1	1	1	1	1
3. Is document released to the public on the same day as the official release to media?	1	1	1	1	1
4. Is document available on the Internet free of charge?	1	1	1	1	1
5. Are free print copies available?	1	1	1	1	1
6. Is a news conference held to discuss release of document?	1	1	1	1	1
7. Is document disseminated by local councilors?	1	1	1	1	1
Weight applied to points received in Q2	1/7	Maximum possible Points for Q2		5	