



# SOUTH AFRICA

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### Mechanisms in Fiscal Matters

Despite legal reforms for more public participation in the budget, South Africans are still struggling to find ways to have more influence over how public money is spent.



South Africa scored 86 out of a 100 on the Open Budget Index, a comparative measure of central government budget transparency



### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

#### CIVIL SOCIETY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE CONSULTATIONS



Annual budget cycle:  
Executive budget review.

##### OBJECTIVE



- Promote CSOs' engagement with Treasury officials through the Budget and Expenditure Monitoring Forum (BEMF), a group of civil society organizations that monitors the National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS 2007-2011 ([www.tac.org.za/community/BEMF](http://www.tac.org.za/community/BEMF)).
- Create a **Citizen's Guide to the Budget**, to supplement Treasury's People's Guide.

##### MECHANISM

- BEMF emerged from the fight for comprehensive treatment for people with HIV/AIDS.

- While there is no formal relationship between the Treasury and CSOs, a **Treasury Unit worked with BEMF to create a Citizen's Guide to the Budget**.

##### RESULTS

A **Citizen's Guide to the Budget in lay terms was created by CSOs**.

An expected MOU between Treasury and BEMF to structure the relationship did not come to fruition. BEMF was disbanded.

More **emphasis has been placed on dissemination** than on encouraging public participation in the budget process, and line department policy making that informs the process. Direct participation by the citizenry in formal budget formulation is still an issue receiving attention. Treasury hosts university and civil society outreach events.

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC, FINANCE AND MONETARY AFFAIRS



Annual budget cycle:  
Executive budget preparation.

##### OBJECTIVE



- Created the **National Economic Development and Labor Council (NEDLAC)** as a formal vehicle for government, organized labor, business and community organizations to cooperate on economic, labor and development issues (<http://new.nedlac.org.za>).

- Take into **account community organizations' opinion** on public finance and monetary policy.

##### MECHANISM

- The Council convenes an **annual national multi-stakeholder summit** chaired by the President. Further summits are convened at the discretion of NEDLAC.

- groups and forums as possible to give **feedback on Council activities in a transparent manner, to obtain inputs from organizations or persons not normally involved**, and to establish broader ownership of the Council.

##### RESULTS

NEDLAC's 'community constituency' - **citizens' organisations speaking for key constituencies** participated for many years in the public finance chamber of where the budget was discussed.

It includes the **Development Chamber** (focused on social and economic policy), in which organisations which are assumed to represent key social sectors such as women, youth, disabled people, rural residents and 'communities' are represented.

These formal channels of participation have had some success in influencing budgetary policy. Examples where **citizens managed to influence the budget**, such as in the case of providing antiretroviral medication for people living with HIV and AIDS, were predominantly the results of efficient civil society campaigns and direct engagement at the political level.

#### CITIZEN SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF PUBLIC SERVICES



Annual budget cycle:  
Executive's budget execution: monitoring, supervision, and review.

##### OBJECTIVE



- Appoint community-level development workers to create a **link between citizens and the provision of services**

- Create a Presidential **hotline to receive citizens' complaints** regarding public services.

##### MECHANISM

- Public servants are deployed in communities** to improve communication about service delivery and help local people gain access to services.
- The Department of Public Service and Administration and the line Ministries are both involved in the process.

interact with citizens, councilors, and municipalities include meetings, awareness campaigns, izimbizo (a forum for discussion of policy, and **door-to-door visits** among others. They are urged to 'live with the people, walk with them and talk their language'.

- Citizens' opinion on delivery of public services is gathered** through the Government Communication and Information System (a range of technological tools).

- As for the Presidential hotline, **calls that cannot be resolved at the first line are transferred to another one and so on until they reach the relevant ministries**. There's a tracking system to monitor progress.

- Communication channels** for community workers to

##### RESULTS

Hotline results have not been assessed yet. On average, **70% of the calls are complaints, 27% are enquiries, 1.8% are suggestions and compliments**.

#### CITIZEN MONITORING OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES



Annual budget cycle: Executive budget execution: monitoring, supervision, and review.

##### OBJECTIVE



- Create a **citizen based monitoring pilot process (CBM)** to give citizens direct access to information regarding how public services are being delivered.

- Larger objectives: **strengthening government effectiveness** by making it more responsive to citizen concerns and deepening democracy.

##### MECHANISM

- CBM participants don't examine budgets, but **monitor whether public services are satisfactorily provided**.

(600-800 households). A component of the program uses free cell phone messaging to enable people to complete surveys about services they receive.

- Citizens are placed as active participants** in shaping what is monitored, how the monitoring is done, and what actions are derived from the data.

- The **survey results are discussed by citizens and officials** at a community meeting.

- Characterized by a **client-oriented approach** (citizens as customers) and **radical participation approach** (people insert themselves into discussions from which they had been previously excluded).

- Citizens develop community scorecards** through facilitated focus groups. The information is used by citizens to engage with government service providers.

- Community perception surveys** are conducted by community members

- This is a non-adversarial, cooperative process, aiming to **build local-level accountability**.

##### RESULTS

**CBM monitors** the police, the South Africa Social Security Agency, and the national departments of health and social development at selected "difficult" sites.

As a result, the South Africa Social Security Agency now sees **60-70 clients a day** (it used to be 40) and processing applications went from two to one day.

CBM pilot phase ends in 2015 and aims to operate at least **50 facilities by 2018**, potentially moving beyond government structured forums with the help of NGOs.

The initiative addresses the defensiveness of officials or the lack of support from local politicians which can hinder the process.

#### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES



Annual budget cycle:  
Pre-budget consultations and spending review.

##### OBJECTIVE



Take into consideration the public's opinion on the **Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS)** and on budget modifications and government service delivery.

##### MECHANISM

- Parliamentary committees must consider spending issues, changes to the budget, and examine how budgets are spent. Hearings **allow citizens to raise service delivery concerns, which can result in amendments**.

- This includes **discussion of the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement** (proposing a fiscal framework for the next three years) that the Minister of Finance must submit to Parliament before tabling the budget.

##### RESULTS

**Advocacy organizations have submitted proposals** but Parliament has not formally amended the national budget law. However, some changes have been made to the government's budget tabled by Treasury for Parliament's consideration, following parliamentary hearings and reports and other processes.

### LEGISLATURE

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING IMPROPER USE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS



Annual budget cycle:  
Auditing and review.

##### OBJECTIVE



- Enable citizens to report to the **Office of the Public Protector (OPP)** cases of alleged improper use of government funds, and to submit requests for investigation.

##### MECHANISM

- Citizens file reports** to the OPP about alleged improper use of government funds and request investigations. OPP undertakes extensive investigations and proposes government's course of action.
- OPP vigorously publicizes its findings** in

media conferences and by requesting public engagement reports.

- OPP launches a national stakeholder consultative dialogue** for special interest groups to interact. This constituency serves as support for the Office.

##### RESULTS

Most significant success has been the dismissal of **Cabinet ministers** after the national police chief for OPP's investigations found that they were responsible for financial irregularities. In one case, NGOs had filed a complaint.



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