



**International
Budget
Partnership**

COVID Module and Open Budget Survey, Asia Region

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August 25th, 2021

Mobilizing Resources



As COVID-19 swept across the globe, governments acted swiftly to meet the needs of their people.

At the end of 2020, governments had mobilized a **staggering \$14 trillion** in fiscal policy responses of different types.

Methodology

Working with the same civil society researchers who conduct the Open Budget Survey research, IBP documented almost 400 emergency fiscal policy packages and assessed them on three pillars:

1. public access to relevant information
2. adequate oversight arrangements
3. opportunities for citizen engagement

Canada

Emergency Fiscal Policy Package (EFPP) assessed:
 COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: C-13 and C-14" (introduced March 2020)
 Executive Decree

Transparency	Some
Introduction of the package	Adequate
Macroeconomic and aggregate budget info	Adequate
Policy measures	Substantive
Recipients and performance	Some
Sources of financing	Some
Extrabudgetary funds	Minimal
Implementation of the package	Some
Reporting on execution	Some
Extrabudgetary funds	Minimal
Procurement	Adequate
Oversight	Some
Role of legislatures	Some
Role of national audit offices	Limited
Participation	Limited
Public participation	Limited

The call for transparent government responses

Governments were urged to “**keep the receipts**” to ensure these massive resources reached those who needed them most.

Implementing transparency and accountability mechanisms would also help governments build back better.



Key findings

Overall. Governments are falling short of managing their fiscal policy response to the crisis in a transparent and accountable manner. More than two thirds of the governments we looked at, across many regions and income levels, have only provided limited or minimal levels of accountability in the introduction and implementation of their early fiscal policy responses.

	No. of countries (out of 120)	Countries
Substantive	0	
Adequate	4	Australia, Norway, Peru, Philippines
Some	29	Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Fiji, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States
Limited	55	Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Moldova, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, São Tomé e Príncipe, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine, Vietnam, Zambia
Minimal	32	Albania, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Comoros, Dem. Rep. of Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Hungary, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Malawi, Morocco, Myanmar, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela, Yemen, Zimbabwe

1. Governments failed to adopt key measures to enhance accountability in their relief packages

	Execution	Audit	Procurement
Global	1/2 of governments published little information on implementation of policy initiatives	2/3 of the audit offices provided minimal oversight during the crisis	2/3 of countries failed to follow transparent procurement procedures

2. The role of legislatures has been limited during the pandemic

	Executive Decrees	Role of oversight
Global	$\frac{1}{2}$ introduced fiscal policy measures through executive decrees, side-stepping normal legislative and approval process and preventing public debate	Only a tenth of the 120 countries had legislatures that provided adequate or better oversight – in the approval and monitoring the implementation.

3. Citizen participation in the formulation and execution of COVID policy responses is virtually non-existent

The public was excluded from having a voice in policy decisions and implementation during the pandemic, depriving governments of contributions which could greatly improve the effectiveness of their actions. Same in the 14 countries where USAID-Asia.

4. Times of crisis can be moments of innovation

Many governments took action to make useful information available to their citizens, and to specific groups of beneficiaries

Some countries showed that a better way is possible:

Ecuador

launched an open data platform with all COVID-19-related procurement contracts

Jamaica

published three concurrent audit reviews of the government's cash transfer program

Chile and the Philippines

reoriented ongoing participation mechanisms to ensure citizen engagement during the pandemic

Canada, the Philippines and Sweden

published a Gender Impact Assessment of their COVID-19 response

Nepal

The Parliamentary Accounts Committee investigated irregularities in procuring medical equipment and supplies to hold to account those responsible

Indonesia

set up a website providing details of government policies for various actors, including links to relevant policies, infographics and government contacts

Resources:

<https://internationalbudget.org/covid/>

<https://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey>

<http://survey.internationalbudget.org/#calculator>