

THE STATE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BUDGET PROCESSES

Multi-Country Assessment Trends & Findings

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NOTE

This report draws on and reflects trends and findings from assessments of public participation in budget processes conducted by teams of dedicated researchers and colleagues in ten countries. The author would thus like to place on record his sincere thanks to Camila Arenas Retamal and Svenja Bonnecke (Chile Transparente), Lamin Dibba and Marr Nyang (Gambia Participates), Alejandra Fuentes, Anajansi Alvarado, Carmen Bueso, Juan Aguilar, and Mario Romero (Asociación para una Sociedad Más Justa, ASJ in Honduras), Iskandar Boustany and Pamela Chemali Raffoul (TI Lebanon), Domoina Andriamialison, Hasiniaina Randrianja-Arivony, and Toky Rafenomanjato (TI Madagascar), Ali Sadki, Sanaa Zouanat (Transparency Maroc) and the researchers at Association Tamdoult (Morocco), Lamees Farraj, Hama Zeidan, Lina Haddad, Somod Barghouthi, and Isam Hussein (The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity, AMAN in Palestine), Carlos Arroyo and Mayra Pérez (Proética, Peru), Alain Sano Mugenzi and Tona Munyaneza (TI Rwanda), and Piumi Madushani and Sulakshi Madawala (TI Sri Lanka). The author apologizes for any inadvertent failure to mention other colleagues who have also contributed to the insightful and comprehensive assessments that inform this report. In most contexts, this report would also not have been possible without the support or cooperation of the assessed public institutions.

Individual assessments or country-level reports of findings may be obtained from the author, Anoukh de Soysa, at adesoysa@transparency.org, with the express consent of the research teams in the respective countries of assessment. As described in the assessment's research methodology (see [here](#)), the researchers have taken significant effort to ensure and verify the accuracy of information contained in the assessments. All information is thus believed to be correct as of November 2023. Nevertheless, Transparency International or the author cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use and interpretation in contexts beyond the immediate purposes of this report.

SANCUS REPORT

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN

BUDGET PROCESSES

TRENDS & FINDINGS FROM MULTI-COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS

Open budget processes at public institutions help ensure that public stakeholders can exercise influence over decisions that affect their lives in a meaningful and inclusive manner. It also allows such stakeholders to hold public officials accountable for those decisions. This report provides an overview of key trends and findings from 14 independent, civil society-led, multi-country assessments of public participation in budget processes at national and local-level institutions.

BACKGROUND

The Assessment Tool

In 2022, under the multi-country, EU-funded Strengthening Accountability Networks Among Civil Society (SANCUS) Project, Transparency International (TI) developed an [Assessment Tool](#) to measure the extent to which public institutions provide opportunities for meaningful and inclusive public participation in budget processes.

In addition to assessing key features of a meaningful participatory process, the tool also aims to determine the extent to which a public institution is ready to facilitate such participation. This unique two-pronged approach recognises that participation in budget processes at public institutions is uncommon, weak, or "[anaemic](#)". This approach thus means that where an institution does not have

an established mechanism for the public to participate in budget-related decisions, the first part of the assessment tool can nonetheless be used distinctly to determine whether the institution has, or operates within, suitable conditions to facilitate public engagement.

The Assessment Tool comprises 46 multi-dimensional indicators grouped across eight key pillars. The first four pillars assess the enabling conditions ('Participation Readiness') at a public institution and include indicators around:

1. Budget Transparency
2. Political Will
3. Legal & Operational Frameworks
4. Civic Space

The next set of pillars assess the nature, depth, and quality of 'Participation in Practice' and include indicators around:

5. Participatory Processes
6. Outreach & Awareness
7. Inclusion & Access
8. Accountability

The first set of pillars can be applied at any public institution, regardless of whether it has established a process through which the public can participate in its budget process. The second set does, however, require that the institution has some kind of participatory mechanism in place.

While scores for 'participation readiness' and 'participation in practice' can be determined independently, it is only when considered together that an assessment can provide the full picture of the state of public participation in budget processes at a public institution.

The Assessment Process

In 2023, national TI chapters and civil society organisations in 10 countries opted to pilot implementation of the SANCUS Assessment Tool. Through 14 detailed assessments, researchers in Chile, The Gambia, Honduras, Lebanon, Madagascar, Morocco¹, Palestine, Peru, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka examined and

evaluated public participation in budget processes across 14 public institutions.²

As the assessment can be applied at any public institution that deals with public finances at any level of government, the assessments cover an eclectic range of public institutions, operating in different sectors, at both national and local level:

- Peñalolén Municipality (Chile)
- Kanifing Municipal Council (The Gambia)
- Estado de Israel Educational Centre (Honduras)
- Ministry of Energy and Water, MoEW (Lebanon)
- Ministry of Social Affairs, MoSA (Lebanon)
- 10 x Municipalities (Madagascar)
- Ait Melloul Commune (Morocco)
- Kliaa Commune (Morocco)
- Ministry of Finance (Palestine)
- Cajamarca Regional Government (Peru)
- La Libertad Regional Government (Peru)
- Nyanza District (Rwanda)
- Akuressa Local Government Authority (Sri Lanka)
- Dickwella Local Government Authority (Sri Lanka)

Researchers used a combination of research methods and techniques to collect evidence in support of the 14 assessments. This included desk-based

¹ In Morocco, the assessments of participation at the communes of Ait Melloul and Kliaa were led by researchers at [Association Tamdoult](#), an independent youth association working in collaboration with Transparency Maroc.

² In Madagascar, the national TI chapter conducted assessments at 10 local municipalities to produce a consolidated report on the overall state of public participation. The assessed municipalities are: Andrafiabe Municipality, Anketrakabe Municipality, Sadjoavato Municipality, Antsakoabe Municipality, Antsalaka Municipality, Anivorano Nord Municipality, Tanambao Marivorahona Municipality, Ambakirano Municipality, Mantaly Municipality, and Ampondralava Municipality. These are collectively considered one institution for this report.

research, key-informant interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. In **Madagascar**, for example, the national chapter's assessment of participation at the 10 rural municipalities comprised surveys and focus group discussions with 1,188 respondents.

All 14 assessments are thus a result of extensive, empirical, multi-method research, with the researchers being required to triangulate, justify, and provide reliable and balanced evidence in support of assessment findings.

Assessment findings have also been subject to internal and external quality control measures to help ensure their veracity and credibility. All assessments have been reviewed by national and/or international experts on the topic, and their findings have been shared with the assessed institutions for their review, comment, and validation.

While this assessment process and the quality control measures contribute to standardising and delivering consistent, robust assessments, it is important to qualify that the researchers conducting the assessments were free to adopt and pursue distinct approaches within this wider, general framework.

Please see [here](#) for more information on the SANCUS Assessment Toolkit on Public Participation in Budget Processes,

including step-by-step guidance offered to researchers on the assessment process and methodology.

The SANCUS Report

This report provides an overview of key trends and findings from the 14 pilot assessments of participation in budget processes, implemented at national local-level public institutions across 10 countries. Throughout this report, the 14 distinct assessments, each of which represents a different institution,³ will be used as the primary units of analysis.

The first section of the report illustrates the broad 'state of public participation' across the 14 assessed institutions. It identifies overarching trends and some common challenges faced by these institutions, both in terms of fostering enabling conditions for participation as well as in facilitating participation in practice.

The report then examines specific findings across the eight assessment areas, providing a detailed overview of how the assessed institutions perform against select indicators. In doing so, the report also highlights replicable, best practices and key challenges identified through the assessments.

³ As indicated above, TI Madagascar's consolidated assessment of 10 rural municipalities is considered a single institution for the purposes of this report. The assessment reflects the average performance of the assessed municipalities and does not necessarily reflect the performance of individual municipalities on specific indicators.

Defining Public Participation in Budget Processes

Transparency International's [Primer](#) on the topic broadly defines public participation in budget processes as the direct interaction and engagement between members of the public and public officials in decision-making around the allocation and utilisation of public resources. For the purposes of this report, the 'public' can include individual citizen taxpayers, civil society organisations, and other non-state actors or their associations.

The public can participate or engage in budget-related decision-making in many ways. This can range from informal, ad-hoc consultations to more formal, institutional mechanisms. Common participatory processes, tools, and mechanisms in budget processes include Public Hearings, Citizens Budgets, Participatory Budgeting, Public Expenditure Tracking (PET), and Social Audits. These processes and mechanisms often vary in nature or depth and can be introduced at different stages of a public institution's budget cycle.

Please see [here](#) for more information on the topic of public participation in budget processes.

Box 1: Defining Public Participation in Budget Processes

THE STATE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Findings from the 14 SANCUS assessments of public participation in budget processes reveal that despite evidence of promising practices and conducive pre-conditions at several assessed institutions, more can be done to strengthen the state of public participation in practice.

Public Institution	Participation Readiness (%)	Participation in Practice (%)	State of Participation (%) ^a
Peñalolén Municipality	64	74	70
Kanifing Municipal Council	84	70	76
Estado de Israel Ed. Centre	47	-	20
Min. of Energy & Water, Lebanon	37	-	17
Min. of Social Affairs, Lebanon	50	-	23
Madagascar Municipalities	37	-	17
Ait Melloul Commune	92	70 ^b	75
Kliaa Commune	68	52	60
Ministry of Finance, Palestine	45	-	20
Cajamarca Regional Govt.	76	54	64
La Libertad Regional Govt.	68	66	65
Nyanza District	68	41	54
Akuressa LGA	42	-	18
Dickwella LGA	34	-	16

^a The 'state of participation' represents the total sum of scores achieved for participation readiness and participation in practice, divided by the total maximum score possible (see page 12 [here](#)).

^b There is currently **no** evidence of public participation in budget processes at Ait Melloul Commune. The researchers have instead scored the institution on an anticipated approach to a participatory practice.

Table 1: The State of Public Participation in Budget Processes, Source: SANCUS Assessments, 2023

High	A State of Participation Score between 80% – 100%
Medium	A State of Participation Score between 50% – 79%
Low	A State of Participation Score between 0 – 49%

The 'state of participation', as assessed under the SANCUS assessment of public participation in budget processes, is a collective measure of an institution's readiness to facilitate a participatory process and the extent to which it does so in practice.

Overall, the pilot assessments find that the assessed institutions generally

provide few or limited opportunities for meaningful and inclusive public participation in their budget processes.

Out of the 14 assessed institutions, the 'state of participation' is rated **low** at seven institutions, while the other seven institutions receive a **medium** rating. Although none of the institutions are rated as having a **high** state of public

participation, several institutions are found to employ good practices, either in terms of fostering enabling conditions for participation or in implementing participation in practice.

In **The Gambia**, for example, Kanifing Municipal Council scores 76% across all indicators on the assessment. While this still represents a moderate state of participation, the assessment finds that the council operates within conducive conditions for participation and takes important steps to implement a well-structured participatory process. This, and other examples, are detailed later in this report.

However, beyond promising highlights, the bleak overall ‘state of participation’ at the assessed institutions is consistent with global trends and findings around public participation in budget processes. The [Open Budget Survey \(OBS\) 2021](#), for example, found that public participation remains “rare and poorly structured” across national budget processes.

In this context, it is also worth noting that the assessments reveal minimal distinction in the overall performance of institutions at national and local level. The three national-level institutions in **Lebanon** and **Palestine** are rated as having low states of participation, while rural, local governments in **Sri Lanka** and **Madagascar** are rated similarly. There is also limited distinction in the rating of institutions across geographic regions, with both moderate and low states of participation being found at the different institutions in Asia, Latin

America, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Participation Readiness

The SANCUS assessment’s measure of ‘participation readiness’—the first of the two components of the overall ‘state of participation’—assesses the extent to which public institutions meet, or operate within, the main pre-conditions and enabling factors of meaningful participation. As detailed later in this report, the readiness of an institution to implement and facilitate a participatory process is measured via 21 unique and proxy indicators, including those that evaluate broader contextual factors.

As this measure is not contingent on a public institution actively employing a participatory process in practice, the SANCUS assessments determine scores for participation readiness at all 14 assessed institutions. Promisingly, the assessments find that eight of these institutions enjoy either **medium** or **high** levels of readiness to facilitate a participatory process.

In **Morocco**, the Ait Melloul Commune scores 92% on indicators of readiness, suggesting that the institution not only provides transparent, accessible budget information, but also that the institution operates within favourable legal and operational frameworks, and benefits from strong political will. Even in the comparatively more middling examples of Cajamarca Regional Government in **Peru** or Nyanza District in **Rwanda**, the researchers’ assessments find strong

evidence of enabling conditions that could facilitate a meaningful and inclusive participatory process.

Despite these predominantly positive results, the assessments also find that six institutions in **Honduras, Lebanon, Madagascar, Palestine, and Sri Lanka** do not offer conducive conditions for meaningful participation. While these six institutions operate in conditions of narrowed, obstructed, or restricted [civic space](#), the assessments confirm that this is compounded by challenges unique to each institution.

In **Honduras**, for example, the Estado de Israel Education Centre is found to have a strong legal framework for public participation and clear institutional commitment to the principles of open governance, but its performance on indicators of budget transparency significantly weakens its readiness to facilitate a participatory process. In **Palestine**, the Ministry of Finance performs well on indicators of budget transparency, but results are hampered by, *inter alia*, a lack of political will, constrained civic space, and limited experience implementing participatory processes.

Participation in Practice

The SANCUS assessment's measure of 'participation in practice'—the second component of an institution's 'state of participation'—assesses and reflects the nature, depth, and quality of public

participation in an institutional budget process in practice. This is measured through 25 indicators that identify the extent to which an institution supports and empowers public stakeholders to participate in and influence budget-related decisions, notifies and raises public awareness about opportunities for participation, ensures open and inclusive access to a process, and how duty-bearers are held to account in its implementation.

Unlike the assessment's measure of an institution's 'participation readiness', the measure of 'participation in practice' is contingent on the assessed institution employing a participatory mechanism in their budget process. As a result, only six of the 14 institutions are found to actively employ a participatory process in either the formulation, execution, or oversight of their budget process—and thus can be scored in terms of participation in practice.

This finding suggests that less than half of the assessed institutions translate largely positive results on participation readiness into practice. Encouragingly however, of the six institutions that do employ a participatory process, all but one (i.e., Nyanza District in **Rwanda**, which receives a low rating) receive a **medium** rating overall under the measure of participation in practice.⁴

In **Chile**, for example, the Peñalolén Municipality, scores 74% on indicators of participation in practice—the highest

⁴ It is also worth noting that all assessed institutions that received a medium rating on the overall 'state of participation' employed a participatory process in practice.

among all assessed institutions. Though, as with most assessed institutions, the municipality falls short on accountability indicators, it performs especially well on indicators around the depth of participation, outreach, and inclusion.

In general, the findings of the SANCUS assessments confirm that despite clear evidence of promising yet isolated good practices and conducive pre-conditions for participation, public institutions and officials can do more to strengthen the state of public participation in budget processes.

Crucially, the assessments find that even when institutions demonstrate a readiness to facilitate a participatory process, and operate such processes in practice, public stakeholders are often only able, at best, to moderately influence budget outcomes. This points to critical accountability deficits that prevent institutions from ensuring that the public can participate in budget processes in a meaningful way.

The performance of the 14 public institutions against the eight pillars of assessment, including inspiring and replicable practices, are presented in the following sections.

PARTICIPATION READINESS

The 14 assessments generally find positive enabling conditions for meaningful and inclusive public participation in budget processes at the assessed institutions.

Several institutions are found to perform especially well on measures of transparency, enjoy moderate levels of political will, and operate within largely conducive legal and operational frameworks. However, civic space remains a major challenge, with citizens and civil society stakeholders having limited opportunities or capacity to engage in or contribute to political processes.

As described in the overview of the 'state of participation', the SANCUS assessment scores for 'participation readiness' confirm that a majority of the 14 institutions have the necessary prerequisites for, or operate in conditions that are moderately conducive to, meaningful public participation.

These pre-conditions or enabling factors are categorised under the four pillars of budget transparency, political will, legal and operational frameworks, and civic space (see Annex 1). While the assessment findings reveal many common trends, individual institutions present unique experiences, good practices, and challenges against specific indicators.

Budget Transparency

The SANCUS assessment determines the transparency, or openness, of a public institution's budget and budget process through seven indicators. These include the production of key budget documents and fiscal information, the use of an online platform to publish such information, the timeliness and public availability of budget information

in a machine-readable format, and the timely production of a Citizens' Budget.

Generally, most assessed institutions are found to perform moderately well on indicators of budget transparency. All 14 assessed institutions are found to produce key budget documents and fiscal information; 10 of which publish this information via an online platform. In **Palestine**, for example, the Ministry of Finance publishes budget information on the institution's [website](#) as well as on [social media](#). In **Chile**, in addition to the availability of budget information, the Peñalolén Municipality maintains a page on its [website](#) dedicated to information transparency.

Similarly, 12 of the 14 institutions make budget and fiscal information publicly available, ensuring that the information is available online and/or free of any additional cost. Nine institutions meet both these criteria. In **Lebanon**, the Ministry of Finance publishes detailed versions of the Enacted Budgets of the [Ministry of Energy and Water](#) and the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#). However, the assessments also find that many of the other key budget documents—including proposed budgets, year-end reports,

and audit reports—are not produced or published by either of the institutions at the time of assessment.

While most of the assessed institutions successfully produce and publish key budget and fiscal information, their performance on the timely publication of these details is less encouraging. As illustrated in Figure 1, six institutions make only some budget documents publicly available in a timely manner (i.e., scoring a medium rating on the assessment), while five of the assessed institutions—including the ten rural municipalities in **Madagascar**—do not produce and/or publish any budget document within [reasonable timeframes](#).⁵

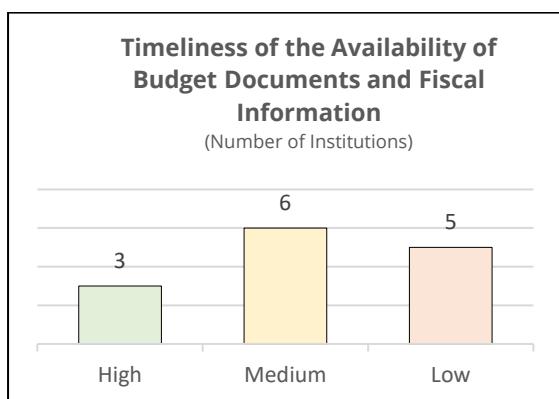


Figure 1: Timely Availability of Budget Documents

Thus, only three assessed institutions make all the budget documents they produce available to the public within a reasonable timeframe (i.e., scoring a high rating on the assessment). These are Cajamarca Regional Government in

Peru, Ait Melloul Commune in **Morocco**, and Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile**.

In fact, Cajamarca Regional Government and Ait Melloul Commune are the only institutions that publish all numerical budget data in machine-readable formats. The assessments confirm that both [Cajamarca](#) and [Ait Melloul](#) make budget data available online in Excel (XLSX) format and thus readable by a machine. Apart from the La Libertad Regional Government in **Peru**, which publishes *some* information in machine-readable formats, no other institution meets the criteria of this indicator at the time of assessment.

Central to open and transparent budget processes, simplified Citizens' Budgets are key enablers of public participation in budget-related decisions. Despite this importance, the assessments find that only five⁶ of the 14 institutions produce simplified, citizen-friendly versions of key budget documents.

In four out of the five cases, the Citizens' Budget is solely linked to the Enacted Budget; suggesting that stakeholders are less likely to receive simplified budget information at the pre-budget stage during the institutions' budget formulation processes. The only exception to this is found in **Madagascar**, where simplified information is prepared to correspond to both the budget proposal and the

⁵ According to the International Budget Partnership (IBP), an acceptable timeframe for the publication of a Pre-Budget Statement, for instance, is at least one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is submitted to the legislature. While a maximum of three months following approval by the legislature is considered acceptable for the publication of an Enacted Budget. See [here](#) for information.

⁶ Kanifing Municipal Council in The Gambia, Municipalities in Madagascar, the communes of Ait Melloul and Kliaa in Morocco, and the Ministry of Finance in Palestine produce simplified versions of technical budget documents.

enacted budget. However, none of the ten municipalities in Madagascar make this information publicly available.

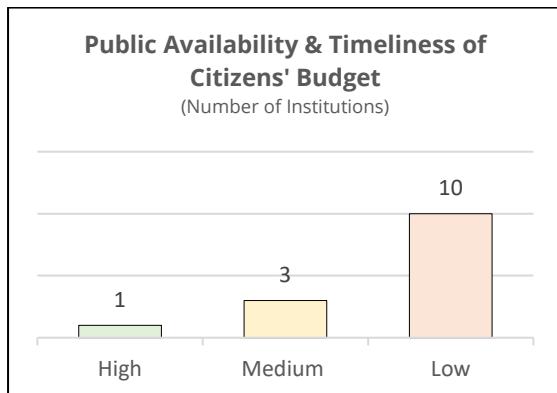


Figure 2: Timely Availability of Citizens' Budgets

In fact, as illustrated in Figure 2, only one institution—i.e., Kanifing Municipal Council in **The Gambia**—makes their [Citizens' Budget](#) publicly available within a reasonable timeframe. While most, i.e., ten, of the public institutions do not produce or publish Citizens' Budgets, and thus score a low (or none) rating on the assessment, the three institutions assessed in **Morocco** and **Palestine** do produce Citizens' Budgets but do not make them available to the public within a reasonable timeframe.

Political Will

The SANCUS assessment determines the political will at an institution to introduce or facilitate a participatory process through four indicators. Two indicators explore the extent to which the head of the institution and public officials demonstrate support for participation, while two determine institutional understanding and

commitment to open and good governance more broadly.

In this context, the heads or leadership of the 14 assessed public institutions demonstrate different levels of support for public participation in decision-making processes. Promisingly, the heads of six⁷ institutions are found to proactively support or advocate for participation. In **Rwanda**, for example, the Mayor of Nyanza District openly supports participatory efforts, with particular interest in advancing the inclusive [participation of farmers](#) in the country's popular *Imihigo* process. This strong support for participation by the six heads of institutions is mirrored by staff and public officials at three of these institutions—Kanifing Municipal Council in **The Gambia**, Ait Melloul Commune in **Morocco**, and Cajamarca Regional Government in **Peru**. It is also worth noting that these institutions also score the highest on the assessment's measure of 'participation readiness' (see 'PR' in table 2 below).

Public Institution	Political Will		PR%	PP%
	Head	Staff		
Kanifing MC	H	H	84	70
Ait Melloul C.	H	H	92	70
Kliaa C	H	L	68	52
Cajamarca	H	H	76	54
Est. de Israel	H	/	47	-
Nyanza Dis.	H	M	68	41

Table 2: Political Will, Participation Readiness (PR) and Participation in Practice (PP); where H - High, M - Medium, L - Low, / - Not-Applicable. Source: SANCUS Assessments 2023 (Selected)

⁷ Kanifing Municipal Council in The Gambia, Estado de Israel Education Centre in Honduras, Ait Melloul and Kliaa Communes in Morocco, Cajamarca Regional Government in Peru, and the Nyanza District in Rwanda all scored a high rating on the political will of the head of the institution to support a participatory process.

Willingness to support and/or lead a participatory initiative is equally varied at the level of the institutions' staff. In addition to the three institutions noted above, whose staff proactively support participation — and thus score a high rating on the assessment — the staff at eight other institutions are found to be neutral to the idea of public participation in decision-making, thus scoring a medium rating on the assessment.

Overall, only five of the assessed public institutions have leadership or staff actively opposed to, or with limited interest in, initiatives to strengthen public participation in decision-making processes. None of the institutions have both leadership and staff opposing the idea — suggesting that at every institution at least one of these two stakeholder groups could serve as potential [entry-points](#) and receptive targets for advocacy in support of public participation. Specifically, this finding demonstrates that public institutions are rarely monolithic, reinforcing that it is often possible to identify and leverage the interest of 'champions' to push for reform within institutions that are ostensibly reluctant to change.

It is also encouraging that 13 of the 14 assessed institutions possess a high or moderate level of understanding of the concepts, principles, and features of open and good governance. In **The Gambia**, for example, the researchers find that department heads and staff at Kanifing Municipal Council regularly participate in civil society-led trainings and workshops, and implement related

[activities](#), in the areas of transparency, participation, and accountability.

As illustrated in Figure 3, ten of the 14 assessed institutions are part of formal or informal arrangements, groups, and partnerships to promote and support the principles of open and good governance. This is considered a proxy indicator of an institution's commitment to good governance under the SANCUS assessment.

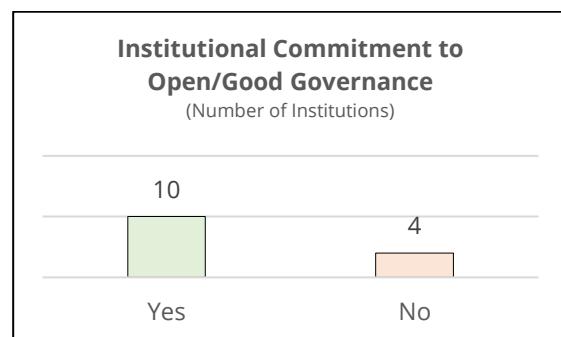


Figure 3: Commitment to Good Governance

In **Honduras**, the assessed educational centre is part of the national '[Redes Educativas](#)' initiative, which aims to model and improve public education through decentralisation and the inclusive participation of community actors.

Similarly, in **Lebanon**, the Ministry of Energy and Water leads and implements the country's commitments under the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#) (EITI), while the gender focal point at the Ministry of Social Affairs is part of a multi-stakeholder network led by the [National Commission for Lebanese Women](#), whose mission is to promote inclusive governance.

Frameworks

Recognising that sustained, meaningful public participation requires strong legal mandates and operational frameworks, the SANCUS assessment determines the extent to which these are found at an institution through five indicators. These include references to participation in the country's Constitution or supreme law, references to participation in the laws, regulations, or policies governing the institution, legal frameworks around accessing information, and the track record of the institution in facilitating participatory processes.

In general, the assessments find that public participation in decision-making is supported by strong legal frameworks across most of the assessed institutions. As illustrated in Figure 4, 11 of the 14 public institutions operate in countries with constitutions or equivalent supreme laws that enshrine a right for citizens to participate in policy or decision-making processes. In **Sri Lanka**, for example, Art. 27(4) of the country's Constitution places a duty on the State to afford "all possible opportunities to the People to participate at every level in national life and in government". The Constitutions of **Chile** and **Lebanon**, in contrast, do not explicitly guarantee citizens the right to participate in decision-making.

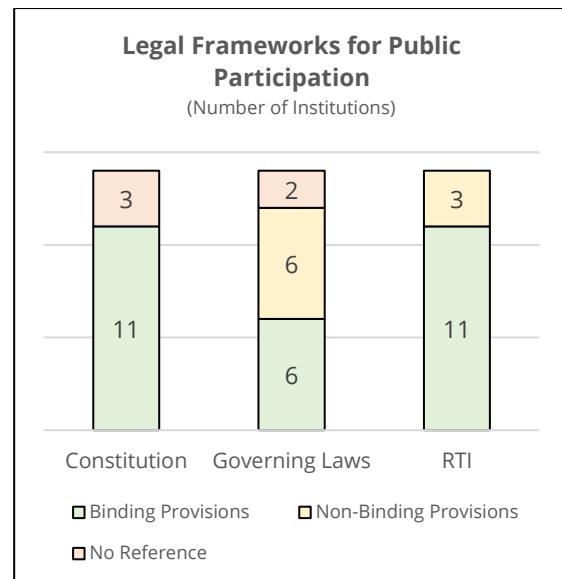


Figure 4: Legal Frameworks for Participation

In addition to references to participation in a country's supreme law, the SANCUS assessment also explores the presence of binding or non-binding provisions around public participation in policies, regulations, and/or laws governing the function of the assessed institution. As presented in Figure 4, a significant majority of 12 of the 14 institutions operate in contexts with governing laws regulations, and/or policies containing provisions around public participation in decision-making processes.

Out of these 12 institutions, six operate in contexts that formally mandate a binding obligation on the use of participatory processes, while the other six institutions operate in contexts that recommend, but fall short of explicitly mandating, participation. In **Peru**, for example, La Libertad and Cajamarca Regional Governments both operate in conditions characterised by a strong, legally binding regulatory and policy framework for public participation. These range from explicit provisions around participation in the Law on the

Rights of Citizen Participation and Control to the National Policy on Gender Equality, which guarantees women's access to and participation in decision-making spaces.

Peru is also one of seven countries — which together host 11 of the 14 assessed institutions — that enforce a public right to information (RTI) through dedicated legislation. Public access to information is currently not mandated, or actively enforced by law, in **The Gambia, Madagascar, or Palestine**.

In terms of operational frameworks, seven of the 14 assessed institutions have significant, recent experience implementing participatory processes and mechanisms. In **Chile**, Peñalolén Municipality regularly implements the mechanism of Participatory Budgeting, alongside other commitments by the Municipality to strengthen participatory governance under its open government action plan.⁸ In comparison to these seven institutions, the Nyanza District in **Rwanda**, municipalities in **Madagascar**, and the Ministry of Social Affairs in **Lebanon** report similar experience in facilitating participatory processes, though with less frequency and mixed results.

The quality of an institution's budget framework and process is also assessed as a crucial operational pre-condition for meaningful and inclusive public participation. According to the SANCUS

assessment, features or practices that comprise a 'high-quality' budget process include aligning the budget process with strategic priorities, ensuring open and transparent access, adhering to budget timelines, presenting complete and accurate financial records, facilitating inclusive participation, ensuring effective budget execution, and providing for independent audits. These features form the basis of criteria to be met by the assessed institutions.

Promisingly, as illustrated in Figure 5, six of the 14 assessed institutions are found to consistently implement a high-quality budget process (i.e., meeting a minimum of five criteria), while four others implement a moderately effective process (i.e., meeting a minimum of three criteria). While many institutions did not meet the criterion of effective budget execution, the criteria they meet vary across the institutions.

In **The Gambia**, Kanifing Municipal Council's budget process is found to meet several criteria of a high-quality budget process. Specifically, in addition to facilitating inclusive participation, the assessment finds that the Municipal Council aligns the budget with the institution's strategic priorities and publishes comprehensive, accurate budget and fiscal information on its official website and social media.

⁸ Multi-country arrangements and platforms, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), provide useful channels for reformers, both within and outside public institutions, to leverage global platforms to initiate, design, and deliver on national or local commitments to strengthen public participation in budget-related processes. See [here](#) for more information on this and other strategies for engaging duty-bearers.

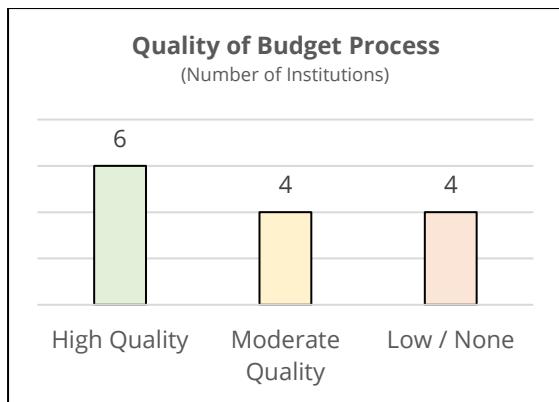


Figure 5: Quality of Institutional Budget Process

Civic Space

Civic space is broadly characterised by conditions that support citizens and civil society to exercise participatory rights and freedoms of association, peaceful assembly, and expression. While the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, and specific national institutions play a key role in this regard, many other service-oriented public institutions have limited influence in safeguarding civic space conditions.

Despite this, the SANCUS assessment recognises that civic space is a critical enabler of public participation in budget and other decision-making processes at any public institution. Thus, in addition to identifying the state of, and potential variances in, civic space conditions at national, regional, or local level, the SANCUS assessment also examines the level of participation of citizens in the work of civil society, the extent to which civil society organisations are consulted

in decisions at the assessed institution, evidence of the protection or violation of peaceful assembly, and more generally, the extent to which citizens are ready to contribute to decision-making processes.

Overall, the assessed institutions are found to operate in challenging civic space conditions. As illustrated in Figure 6, eleven of the 14 institutions operate in national civic space conditions rated by the [CIVICUS Monitor](#)⁹ as narrowed, obstructed, repressed, or closed. In **Honduras**, for example, the assessed education centre operates in a national context of reportedly '[repressed](#)' civic space, characterised by [reported](#) attacks and threats against activists, journalists, and the media.

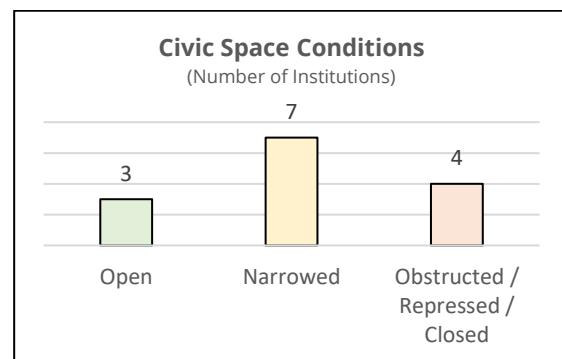


Figure 6: Civic Space Conditions

These challenging circumstances extend to the assessments' findings around the extent to which state authorities respect citizens' right to peaceful assembly. In fact, only three institutions¹⁰ are found to operate in contexts where authorities consistently allow and protect peaceful

⁹ The [CIVICUS Monitor](#) tracks and rates global civic space conditions, aiming to share reliable, up-to-date data on the state of civil society freedoms in all countries. Based on analysis of different streams of data, each country is assigned a rating of open, narrowed, obstructed, repressed, or closed. Please see [here](#) for more information on how civic space conditions are understood under each category.

¹⁰ The Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon, La Libertad Regional Government in Peru, and Nyanza District in Rwanda were all rated 'high' on the extent to which authorities respected citizens' right to peaceful assembly.

assemblies. While the safeguarding of this right does not fall in the purview of any of the assessed institutions, these findings provide a useful indication of the constrained civic space that these institutions operate within.

In **Morocco** and **Rwanda**, however, the researchers' positive assessments of civic space conditions (i.e., equivalent to 'open' in the CIVICUS rating) differ from the official, country CIVICUS ratings of 'obstructed' and 'repressed' respectively. In **Rwanda**, researchers attribute the high rating around civic space to a series of measures taken by the Nyanza District to offer unrestricted access to platforms for open dialogue.

In determining civic space, the SANCUS assessment also draws on the Varieties of Democracy ([V-Dem](#)) project¹¹ to identify the civil society participatory environment (V-Dem Indicator 3.10.0.5) and to determine the extent to which CSOs are consulted on policies and decisions relevant to their work (V-Dem Indicator 3.10.0.3). As presented in Figure 7, four of the assessed institutions score a high rating on both these indicators—i.e., Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile**, Kanifing Municipal Council in **The Gambia**, Ait Melloul Commune in **Morocco**, and Nyanza District in **Rwanda**.

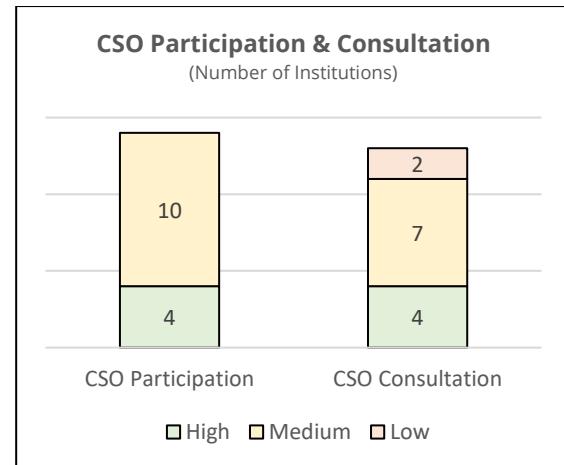


Figure 7: CSO Participation & Consultation¹²

In most assessed contexts, however, the public is minimally involved in the work of civil society organisations, reflected by predominantly moderate scores on levels of CSO participation. Similarly, the assessment also finds that most of the assessed institutions only occasionally, and selectively, consult groups of CSOs on relevant policy issues and decisions. In **Lebanon**, interviews with key stakeholders linked to the Ministry of Energy and Water found that CSOs are rarely consulted in the formulation of its policies or included in decision-making working groups.

The final aspect of civic space examined under the SANCUS assessment is the extent to which the public and/or the constituency of the assessed institution are 'ready' to engage and contribute meaningfully to participatory decision-making processes. According to the assessment, citizen readiness to engage can be demonstrated through criteria

¹¹ [Varieties of Democracy](#) (V-Dem) disaggregates the concept of democracy by distinguishing between and measuring the principles of electoral, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian, and liberal democracy. The full list of V-Dem indicators can be found [here](#).

¹² The indicator for 'CSO Consultation' is not assessed at the Estado de Israel Educational Centre in Honduras as the consultation of civil society is considered outside the mandate, purview, and function of an educational centre. As a result, the associated column in Figure 7 only represents findings from 13 institutions.

typically associated with an ability to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes. These criteria include prior experience in, or public awareness of, participatory processes, knowledge of budget processes and public financial management, the operation of, and citizen engagement in, organised civil society groups, and evidence of public trust in institutions.

Overall, the assessments find that the citizens and constituents linked to all 14 institutions demonstrate, at minimum, a moderate level of readiness to engage and participate in decision-making processes. This finding implies that at least one criterion of citizen readiness is met across the board. Most commonly, citizens possess either awareness of or prior experience in formal or informal participatory processes and are often involved in organised civil society and citizen groups.

In **Palestine**, the SANCUS assessment confirms that citizens' readiness to engage with the Ministry of Finance is reflected only by the proactive presence and representation of organised civil society and citizen groups. These include, for example, the Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency,¹³ a CSO coalition which *inter alia*, works to raise awareness, monitor implementation, strengthen inclusive participation, and improve accountability in national budget processes.

Distinctively, however, citizens in **The Gambia** and **Morocco**, i.e., in the constituencies of Kanifing Municipal Council and Ait Melloul Commune, citizens are found to possess an especially high level of readiness to engage in participatory processes and decision-making. In these contexts, the assessments confirm the presence of three or more of the listed criteria associated with citizens' readiness.

In **The Gambia**, for example, the assessment finds that constituents of the Kanifing Municipal Council are effectively represented by elected Ward Development Committees (WDC) and ward councillors. Through these committees, local ward councillors receive training and capacity building on participatory initiatives, and citizens are regularly informed about participatory processes. In turn, the researchers find, this strengthens citizen engagement and public trust in the work of Council.

Overall, despite highlighted exceptions, the SANCUS assessments find that the assessed institutions generally operate in contexts and present conditions that are moderately conducive to meaningful and inclusive public participation in budget processes. The next section explores the extent to which the institutions leverage these enabling conditions and translate them into participation in practice.

¹³ Established in 2011, the [Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency](#) comprises 38 CSOs and recognized economists in Palestine. As part of a broad mandate, the Team adopts an inclusive and participatory approach to campaigning and raising awareness around public financial management.

PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE

The SANCUS assessments find that only six of the 14 public institutions translate conducive pre-conditions for meaningful and inclusive public participation into practice through dedicated mechanisms to facilitate participation in budget processes. The institutions that employ such a process reveal varied challenges, including a lack of depth in the extent to which the public can influence a budget process, limited success in facilitating remote participation, and key accountability deficits within budget systems. Institutions generally perform better, however, on outreach and communicating opportunities for engagement, ensuring open and non-discretionary participation, and in delivering select accountability process such as internal and external oversight and grievance redress mechanisms.

As outlined in the 'state of participation above', the SANCUS assessment scores for 'participation in practice' confirm that half the assessed institutions fail to translate enabling conditions for public participation in budget processes into meaningful and inclusive participation in practice.

The extent to which a public institution facilitates participation in practice is determined through 25 indicators (see Annex 2), categorised around four core assessment pillars: the operation of the participatory process or mechanism at the assessed institution, outreach and communication about the process, the extent to which the process is inclusive and accessible to different stakeholders, and how accountable the institution is to those participating in the process.

The sections that follow discuss the performance of the six institutions¹⁴ that currently employ a participatory process in relation to each of these pillars.

Processes

The nature, depth, and quality of public participation in the budget process of an institution is determined through nine distinct indicators. The first of these indicators is a key qualifying indicator that establishes whether the institution employs a participatory process or mechanism through which public stakeholders can participate at any stage of the budget process. If an assessment finds that an institution does not employ such a process, the remaining indicators measuring

¹⁴ The six institutions that employ a participatory process or mechanism in the formulation, execution, or oversight of the budget are Peñalolén Municipality in Chile, Kanifing Municipal Council in The Gambia, Kliaa Commune in Morocco, Cajamarca Regional Government and La Libertad Regional Government in Peru, and Nyanza District in Rwanda. Ait Melloul Commune in Morocco does not currently employ an active participatory process, but researchers have assessed the institution for indicators of participation in practice based on imminent plans to introduce a participatory process.

participation in practice cannot be applied.

In these pilot assessments, six of the 14 assessed public institutions are found to actively employ participatory processes or mechanisms, and thereby qualify to be assessed for participation in practice. Linked to this critical filter, the SANCUS assessment also contains two unscored indicators which help deepen contextual understanding of the type and nature of participation at the institution. These indicators explore a) the phase of the budget cycle at which the institution employs the participatory process, and b) the type or form of engagement employed.

The SANCUS assessments find that the assessed institutions most commonly employ participatory processes at the pre-budget, formulation phase of the budget cycle. In fact, as illustrated in Figure 8, five of the six institutions that facilitate public participation, do so during budget formulation. In fact, at Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile** and Nyanza District in **Rwanda**, the public participate only during the formulation of the budget. The exception to this is Kliaa Commune in **Morocco** where mechanisms for participation are found solely during budget execution.

This finding partially mirrors [global assessments](#) of public participation in national budget processes, which observe that countries are most likely to employ participatory mechanisms either

during budget formulation or via the legislature's budget approval.

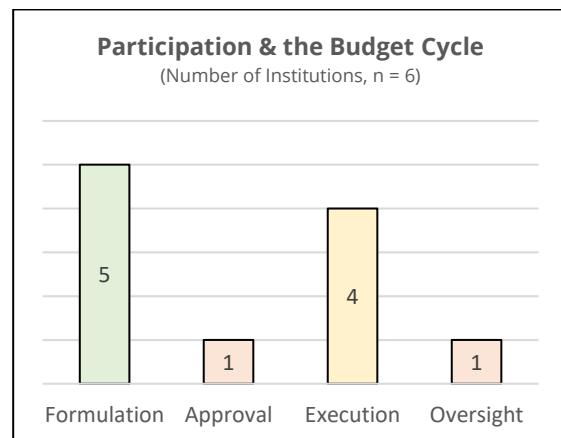


Figure 8: Participation across the Budget Cycle¹⁵

Unlike the global assessment of national budget processes, however, the SANCUS assessments do not report significant opportunities for public participation during the approval phase of the budget cycle. In fact, public participation during budget approval is recorded only at Kanifing Municipal Council in **The Gambia**, where citizens, WDC members, and local councillors are consulted on an advanced draft of the budget right before it is tabled at the representative general council for approval.

Instead, the SANCUS assessments find that four institutions—i.e., Kanifing Municipal Council in **The Gambia**, Kliaa Commune in **Morocco**, and Cajamarca and La Libertad Regional Governments in **Peru**—provide opportunities for public participation during post-budget execution of the budget. In **Peru**, [regulations](#) require the Cajamarca Regional Government to host public hearings during budget execution and

¹⁵ As most of the six institutions facilitate some form or mechanism of public participation during more than one phase of the budget cycle, Figure 8 presents an accumulation of 11 data points or occurrences of participation across the six institutions.

budget oversight, where the head of the institution presents progress, achievements, and perspectives on the execution of the budget.

Although the types, forms, and tools of public engagement can [vary greatly](#) (see also Box 1), the assessment finds that all six institutions use some form of public hearing and leverage websites and/or social media to facilitate public participation in their budget processes. In **Chile**, for example, Peñalolén Municipality convenes public hearings on its budget either through the mayor, the municipal council, or a collection of 100 citizens. These public hearings are published on the [website](#) of the municipality and announced via public meetings.

While the unscored indicators (see indicators 1.2 and 1.3 in Annex 2) offer background information about the nature of public participation at the institutions, the scored indicators under this pillar aim to assess the depth and quality of the participatory process. The first of these determines whether the process is informed by clearly outlined scope and objectives—and promisingly, most institutions do so. This ranges from references to the scope of the process through [ordinances](#) in **Peru** to setting out objectives in the [guidelines](#) governing participatory budgeting in **Chile**.

In terms of depth of participation, the assessment adopts the '[IAP2 spectrum](#)' to determine the level of participation at the institution at the pre-budget and post-budget phases of the budget cycle.

This can include the public merely being *informed* about decisions at one end of the spectrum, to being *empowered* to make decisions at the other. This can serve as a key distinguishing feature between a tokenistic and meaningful participatory process.

Participation Level / Depth	Indicative Description
Inform	Provide the public with objective information.
Consult	Obtain public feedback on decisions or solutions.
Involve	Work with the public to consider aspirations.
Collaborate	Partner with the public to develop solutions.
Empower	Place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Table 3: Participation Spectrum (Source: IAP2)

The findings in this context are mixed. In general, the assessed institutions are found to employ deeper and thus more meaningful participatory processes during the pre-budget phases of the budget cycle. The three institutions in **Peru** and **Rwanda** involve or consult the public in decisions around their budgets (i.e., scoring a medium rating on the assessment), while the two institutions in **Chile** and **The Gambia** are found to empower or collaborate with the public to make such decisions (i.e., scoring a high rating on the assessment).

In **The Gambia**, Kanifing Municipal Council empowers the public to make decisions on the budget by, *inter alia*, gathering information on needs and priorities through [Community Action Plans](#), partnering with citizens to co-create solutions to respond to needs and priorities, and sharing these with relevant departments for inclusion in the budget for the next three fiscal

years. The final decision on the budget is also made by the general council, which comprises chairpersons of WDCs representing, and iteratively consulting, different groups and stakeholders in the community.

In contrast, the depth of participation in post-budget phases is found to be low or non-existent in all but one of the six assessed institutions. This suggests that despite four institutions employing participatory mechanisms and tools during budget execution (see above), the assessments find that none of them meaningfully empower or collaborate with citizens to make decisions in this regard.

The only exception to this is La Libertad Regional Government in **Peru**, where the regional government is found to *involve* citizens in monitoring budget implementation through a dedicated monitoring committee and public hearings alongside the participatory budgeting process.

In addition to the nature and depth of participation, the SANCUS assessment determines the quality of the process through indicators measuring financial and human resources allocated to the process, and the extent to which the institution receives and leverages the support of different stakeholders. As illustrated in Figure 9, the six assessed institutions perform differently in each of these areas.

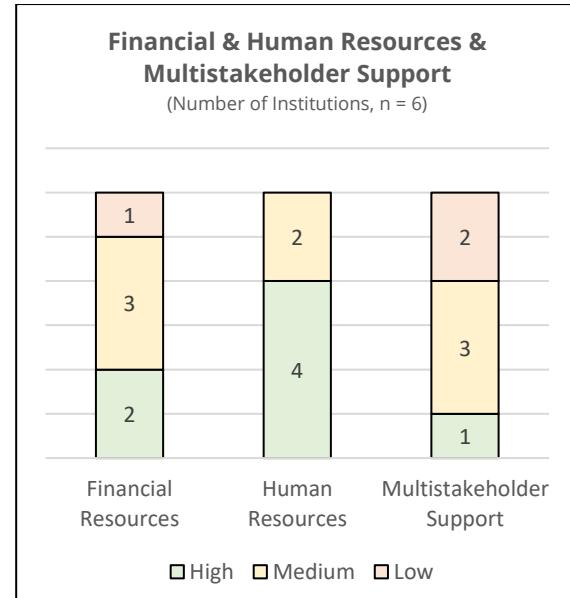


Figure 9: Financial, Human, & Multistakeholder Support

In terms of financial resources, the assessments find that five of the six institutions¹⁶ allocate sufficient funding to either plan, organise, and implement a participatory, and/or earmark sufficient funding for public allocation through such a process. Two of these—i.e., Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile** and Cajamarca Regional Government in **Peru** allocate sufficient funding to run the process and earmark funding for public allocation.

The institutions perform even better in terms of human resources. Four of the institutions provide training to staff on how to facilitate a participatory process and go on to assign these trained staff to run the participatory process at the institution (i.e., scoring a high rating on the assessment). At Kliaa Commune in **Morocco** and Nyanza District in **Rwanda**, however, the assessments find that staff trained on the participatory

¹⁶ The five institutions that either allocate funding to run a participatory process and/or earmark sufficient funding for public allocation are Peñalolén Municipality in Chile, Kanifing Municipal Council in The Gambia, Kliaa Commune in Morocco, and Cajamarca and La Libertad Regional Governments in Peru.

processes are either not retained or assigned to run the process, and the two institutions thus score a medium rating on the assessment.

Recognising that other state, non-state, and private stakeholders can support the institution to facilitate a meaningful and inclusive participatory process, the assessment aims to identify the extent to which assessed institutions engage different stakeholder groups. In doing so, the assessment finds that — apart from Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile** and Kliaa Commune in **Morocco** — the four other institutions receive support from at least one other stakeholder group.

In fact, in **The Gambia**, the assessment finds that Kanifing Municipal Council receives substantial support from, *inter alia*, [civil society](#), central government, media, and [international organisations](#), and thus implements a highly diverse and multistakeholder participatory process.

Outreach & Communication

Effective outreach and communication are central to an effective and inclusive participatory process. To determine this, the SANCUS assessment evaluates the extent to which a public institution uses multiple outreach tools and strategies, provides comprehensive yet simplified information, and equips the public with advance notice about opportunities for participation.

Overall, the assessments find that all six institutions employing a participatory mechanism pursue moderate levels of public outreach and communication through one or more features of effective outreach. These include citizen outreach initiatives through cell assemblies at Nyanza District in **Rwanda**, dedicated [websites](#) at La Libertad Regional Government in **Peru**, collaboration with news and [media outlets](#) at Kanifing Municipal Council in **The Gambia**, and [information meetings](#) at Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile**.

The three assessed institutions in **Chile**, **The Gambia**, and **Morocco** also ensure that public stakeholders receive full and comprehensive information prior to the participatory process, i.e., covering the 'rules of engagement' along with several other key elements, such as the purpose and scope of the process, constraints, intended outcomes, and anticipated timelines.

In the **Gambia**, for example, Kanifing Municipal Council proactively provides the public with information on, *inter alia*, why the engagement is being carried out, what rests within the scope of the engagement, the methods by which the engagement will take place and so on. This is verified by the council's Community Service Unit, elected councillors, sub-ward members, and residents. In contrast, the assessment in **Rwanda** finds that Nyanza District does not provide information on any the key elements prior to the process.

The three institutions that provide full and comprehensive information prior to

the assessed participatory process in **Chile, The Gambia, and Morocco** — along with La Libertad Regional Government in **Peru** — also ensure that this information is available to the public in a simplified manner.

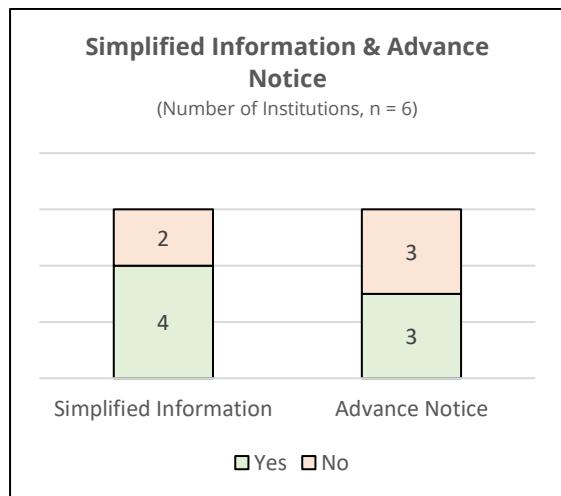


Figure 10: Simplified Information & Advance Notice

In **Peru**, for instance, La Libertad Regional Government publishes easy to access and simplified information on the public institution's Participatory Budgeting process via its [website](#). However, interviewed officials and civil society representatives both confirm that more could be done to strengthen communication and appeal to a wider audience.

The assessed institutions also perform differently in the provision of advance notice about opportunities for public participation. As illustrated in Figure 10, a binary indicator reveals that out of the six institutions that actively employ a participatory process, three institutions provide advance notice. These are Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile**, Kliaa Commune in **Morocco**, and La Libertad Regional Government in **Peru**.

In **Chile**, the Peñalolén Municipality provides information in advance on the budget proposal application process and the stages that follow on the institution's [website](#). The municipality also announces the budget proposals up for selection through [social media](#) and at other public spaces, more than two weeks before the final selection deadline.

Inclusion & Access

The extent to which a participatory process is inclusive and accessible to different members of the public is a critical area of inquiry under the SANCUS assessment. This inquiry is framed around six indicators that explore, *inter alia*, how an assessed institution addresses common barriers to participation, ensures representation of vulnerable and under-represented groups, publishes information in accessible languages, and provides opportunities for remote participation.

Inhibitive barriers to public participation in budget processes can take many forms; limited physical accessibility to the participatory venue, complicated registration protocol, the disallowing of anonymity, imposition of participation fees, a failure to consider commitment schedules and public availability, or even geographic hurdles.

Promisingly, four of the six institutions that employ a participatory process recognise and take clear measures to address barriers to participation. While Cajamarca Regional Government in

Peru and Nyanza District in **Rwanda** take measures to mitigate a few select barriers, Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile** and Kliaa Commune in **Morocco** take measures to address multiple barriers, and thus score a high rating on the assessment.

At Kliaa Commune, for example, interviews with officials confirm that the participatory process is not subject to complex protocols that impede inclusive public participation or impose a cost on attendance. In contrast, in **The Gambia**, the researchers find limited evidence of Kanifing Municipal Council addressing key barriers to meaningful participation. This includes a lack of advance notice (see Figure 10), issues surrounding transportation to the ward venues, and poorly considered timing and scheduling of community consultations.

Despite varied results in mitigating or addressing barriers to participation, all six institutions are found to provide at least moderate support towards the participation of representatives from vulnerable, marginalised, or under-recognised communities. In fact, the three institutions in **Chile**, **The Gambia**, and **Morocco** are found to actively seek out, support, and/or facilitate inclusive participation.

In **Chile**, Peñalolén Municipality actively looks for ways to better represent and include specific groups in society in the participatory budgeting process. This includes providing digital literacy classes and special assistance to senior citizens to help them access the institutions' web platforms, conducting surveys to meet

the needs of people with disabilities, and hosting workshops in marginalised areas to ensure the involvement of people living in poverty.

Similarly, the SANCUS assessment also finds that none of the six assessed institutions exercise discretion in the selection of individuals or collective civic stakeholders to participate in the participatory process. This confirms that the participatory mechanisms at the assessed institutions are effectively open to everyone. The Cajamarca Regional Government in **Peru**, for example, is required by ordinance to promote the open and inclusive participation of citizens and civil society organisations representing different groups in society.

It is further encouraging that all six institutions ensure that budget and fiscal information, or information on the participatory process itself, is at least partially accessible in the countries' official or national languages. In fact, in **Chile**, **The Gambia**, and **Peru**, the three institutions (i.e., Peñalolén Municipality, Kanifing Municipal Council, and La Libertad Regional Government) ensure that all relevant budget and fiscal information, and information on the participatory process are accessible in the citizens' official or national language of choice.

At La Libertad Regional Government in **Peru**, all information is made available in Spanish, the country's official language according to Article 48 of the Political Constitution of Peru. Although the area is also home to citizens that

speak the Quechua language, officials noted that these are small communities where Spanish is widely spoken. In **Morocco**, on the other hand, some information related to the budget of Kliaa Commune is published in Arabic, which technical information remains only in French.

Collectively, these findings confirm that the six assessed institutions generally perform well on indicators of inclusion and access to the participatory process. The institutions address key barriers to participation, include vulnerable and under-recognised groups, ensure open and non-discretionary access, and typically publish important budget and fiscal information in official languages.

However, most of these institutions do not perform as well in publishing core information through high quality Citizens' Budgets, or in providing opportunities for remote participation in their budget processes. As described in the section on 'Budget Transparency', only five of the 14 institutions assessed overall produce simplified, citizen-friendly versions of key budget documents. Among the five institutions that do produce a Citizens' Budget, only two — Kanifing Municipal Council in **The Gambia** and Kliaa Commune in **Morocco** — also employ an active participatory process.

Encouragingly, though, both these institutions publish comprehensive Citizens' Budgets, including different categories of core information. In **The Gambia**, the [Citizens' Budget](#) of Kanifing Municipal Council contains information

on total revenue and expenditure, policy initiatives, and data on macroeconomic forecasts. This is also published on the official website with the possibility for the public to [contact](#) the Council.

As illustrated in Figure 11, the SANCUS assessment also finds that most of the assessed institutions do not provide meaningful opportunities for remote participation in the budget process. In **The Gambia**, **Morocco**, and **Rwanda**, for instance, Kanifing Municipal, Kliaa Commune, and Nyanza District, all do not provide opportunities for the public to participate remotely in budget related activities, or only use digital and online spaces to [inform](#) the public about budget decisions.

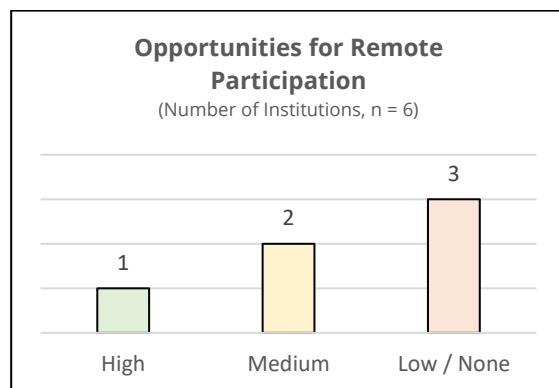


Figure 11: Opportunities for Remote Participation

In **Peru**, the regional governments of [Cajamarca](#) and [La Libertad](#) are found to provide the public with opportunities for remote participation in their budget processes. In fact, during the COVID19 pandemic, the assessment finds that the participatory budgeting process at La Libertad Regional Government was conducted entirely virtually. Civil society and other stakeholders caution that such processes do not, however, foster meaningful participation or allow the

public to significantly influence budget decisions. This is attributed to, *inter alia*, inadequate technical and other support to participate online, inconsistent access to information, limited digital literacy, and unreliable access to internet.

In **Chile**, however, the assessment finds that Peñalolén Municipality informs *and* empowers the public to participate remotely in the budget process, via a dedicated participation [portal](#). This space, operational during the pandemic and continued thereafter, allows citizens to submit project applications, review pre-selected projects, and vote on future projects.

Accountability

Accountability, or efforts to ensure that institutions deliver on the promise of meaningful and inclusive participation, is a critical, yet often overlooked, feature of a successful participatory process. The SANCUS assessment determines the extent to which an institution holds itself, or is held, accountable through six indicators. These include inter-related assessments of the extent to which an institution provides feedback on the inclusion and consideration of public input into the budget process, the extent to which this input influences (and is reflected in) budget-related decisions, and the extent to which the institution justifies and allows for public deliberation around the inclusion or non-inclusion of public input.

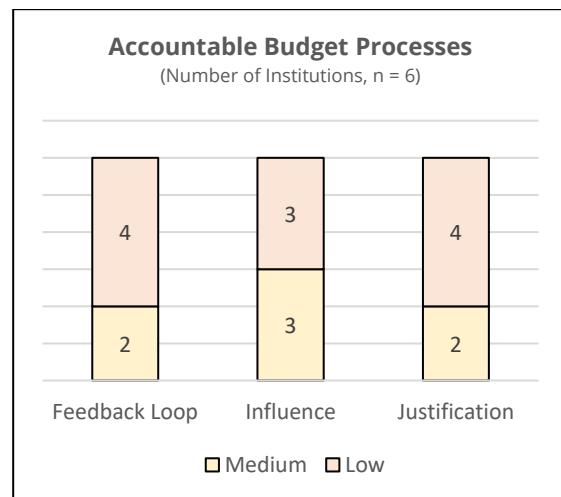


Figure 12: Feedback, Influence, & Justification on Public Input in the Budget Process

As illustrated in Figure 12, the six assessed institutions that employ a participatory process generally do not deliver highly accountable budget processes. Four of the six institutions, for example, do not close the feedback loop, as they fail to provide a written record of public inputs into the budget process and, if at all, limited information on how such input was used.

In **The Gambia** and **Rwanda**, however, Kanifing Municipal Council and Nyanza District both provide written records of the list of public inputs received from the participatory process, but neither institution publishes this list online, nor do they provide information on how these inputs have been used and/or incorporated in the budget and budget process. Similarly, the assessments also find that citizens and civil society are only able, at best, to influence budget processes moderately or partially at three of the six institutions.¹⁷ Among

¹⁷ The three institutions where public stakeholders can moderately influence budget processes, with some inputs being reflected in key decisions, are Peñalolén Municipality in Chile, La Libertad Regional Government in Peru, and

these, La Libertad Regional Government in **Peru** accommodates public input at different stages of the participatory budgeting mechanism. While measures include receiving recommendations from citizens, documenting public input via meeting minutes, and facilitating citizen oversight committees, citizen input does not significantly influence budget-related decisions.

Further exemplifying accountability deficits in budget processes, four of the six assessed institutions also do not provide justification or reasons for the inclusion or non-inclusion of public input in budget-related decisions, nor do they provide opportunities for the public to question or deliberate such decisions. The two institutions in **Peru**, however, do meet at least one of these criteria — both institutions typically provide opportunities for the public to raise questions and/or deliberate the institution's budget-related decisions.

Despite these deficits within budget process itself, the six institutions perform significantly better on other accountability processes. In five of the six institutions, for example, the head of the institution actively leads, supports, or advocates for public participation in budget processes, evidently translating into practice political will to support a participatory process as described in the findings on participation readiness. The only exception to this is at La Libertad Regional Government in **Peru**, where despite the mandated involvement of

the Governor in participatory processes, civil society representatives claim that such participation is merely to comply with requirements. This institution is thus the only one that scores a medium rating on this indicator.

Promisingly, five of the six institutions also subject their participatory process to some form of internal or external oversight, monitoring, and evaluation. In **The Gambia**, for instance, the Kanifing Municipal Council's Department of Internal Audit, finance committee, and councillors are responsible for key [internal oversight](#) processes, while the National Audit Office ([NAO](#)) and Local [Government Commission of Inquiry](#) exercise external oversight. In **Morocco**, however, researchers find that the limited nature and depth (see above) of the process at Kliaa Commune renders it outside the scope of an oversight mechanism.

In addition to oversight, the assessment also determines whether an institution provides opportunities and spaces for citizens and users of the participatory process to register complaints and/or receive redress in relation to the mechanism. Promisingly, here too, five of the six assessed institutions are found to provide such opportunities, with Nyanza District in **Rwanda** being the only outlier. Although the Rwanda Integrated Electronic Case Management System ([IECMS](#)) provides this in justice related matters, the assessment did not find a similar reporting channel for

Nyanza District in Rwanda. The public is found to have no or limited influence on budget decisions at Kanifing Municipal Council in The Gambia, Kliaa Commune in Morocco, and Cajamarca Regional Government in Peru.

public participating in the budget process.

In contrast, Peñalolén Municipality in **Chile** provides multiple channels and means for citizens to register complaints and receive redress in relation to the institution's participatory budgeting mechanism. This includes a department dedicated to addressing queries around citizen participation and the operation of [Office\(s\) of Information, Complaints, and Suggestions \(OIRS\)](#). This mechanism allows for two-way communication and is found at [all public agencies](#) in Chile.

ANNEX 1: SANCUS ASSESSMENT 'PARTICIPATION READINESS' RATINGS

PUBLIC INSTITUTION	TRANSPARENCY							POLITICAL WILL				FRAMEWORKS					CIVIC SPACE				
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
Peñalolén Municipality, Chile																				/	
Kanifing MC, The Gambia																					
Estado de Israel, Honduras											/									/	
Min. of Energy & Water, Lebanon																					
Min. of Social Affairs, Lebanon																					
10 Municipalities, Madagascar																					
Ait Melloul Commune, Morocco																					
Kliaa Commune, Morocco																					
Ministry of Finance, Palestine																					
Cajamarca Regional Gov., Peru																					
La Libertad Regional Gov. Peru																					
Nyanza District, Rwanda																					
Akuressa LGA, Sri Lanka																					
Dickwella LGA, Sri Lanka																					

- 1.1 Production of Key Budget Documents & Fiscal Information (Unscored)
- 1.2 Online Platform for Budget Documents & Fiscal Information
- 1.3 Public Availability of Key Budget Documents & Fiscal Information
- 1.4 Public Availability of Budget Data in a Machine-Readable Format
- 1.5 Timeliness of the Availability of Budget Documents & Fiscal Information
- 1.6 Production of a Citizens' Budget (Unscored)
- 1.7 Public Availability & Timeliness of a Citizens' Budget

- 2.1 Political Will of the Head of the Institution
- 2.2 Political Will of the Institutional Staff / Public Officials
- 2.3 Institutional Understanding of Open / Good Governance
- 2.4 Institutional Commitment to Open / Good Governance

- 3.1 Constitutional Provisions on Public Participation
- 3.2 Local Laws & Governing Legislation on Public Participation
- 3.3 Regulatory Framework on Access to Information
- 3.4 Institutional Experience with Participatory Processes & Mechanisms
- 3.5 Quality of Budget Process & System

- 4.1 Civic Space Conditions
- 4.2 Civil Society Participatory Environment
- 4.3 CSO Consultation
- 4.4 The Right to Peaceful Assembly
- 4.5 Citizen Readiness to Participate

/ - Indicator Not Applicable at the Institution

High
Medium
Low / None

ANNEX 2: SANCUS ASSESSMENT 'PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE' RATINGS

PUBLIC INSTITUTION	PARTICIPATORY PROCESS									OUTREACH				INCLUSION & ACCESS						ACCOUNTABILITY						
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	
Peñalolén Municipality, Chile																										
Kanifing MC, The Gambia																										
Ait Melloul Commune, Morocco	*																									
Kliaa Commune, Morocco																										
Cajamarca Regional Gov., Peru																										
La Libertad Regional Gov. Peru																										
Nyanza District, Rwanda																										

1.1 Existence of a Participatory Process or Mechanism

1.2 Participation across the Budget Cycle (Unscored)

1.3 Type of Participatory Process or Mechanism (Unscored)

1.4 Scope & Objective of Participation

1.5 Depth of Participation (Pre-Budget Phase)

1.6 Depth of Participation (Post-Budget Phase)

1.7 Financial Resources

1.8 Human Resources

1.9 Institutional / Multistakeholder Support

2.1 Public Outreach & Communication

2.2 Information on the Participatory Process

2.3 Simplified Public Outreach & Communication

2.4 Advance Notice

3.1 Barriers to Participation

3.2 Inclusion of Vulnerable / Marginalised / Underrepresented Groups

3.3 Open & Non-Discretionary Participation

3.4 Accessibility of Information (Language)

3.5 Quality & Accessibility of Citizen Budget

3.6 Opportunities for Remote Participation

4.1 Feedback Loop

4.2 Influence on Budget Decisions

4.3 Justification & Deliberation

4.4 Involvement of Senior Leadership

4.5 Oversight Mechanisms

4.6 Complaints & Redress Mechanisms

* There is currently **no** evidence supporting public participation in budget processes at Ait Melloul Commune in Morocco. The researchers have instead scored the institution on a planned and anticipated approach to a participatory practice and mechanism.

High
Medium
Low / None