OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP NEW ZEALAND

Commitment 1: Open Budget

Date: September to November 2017

Lead agency: The Treasury

To promote public discussion/debate and participation through accessibility of the Budget and include relevant groups outside of government in the formative phase of the Budget, ensuring they are informed about the process and issues.

	Milestones	Stage
1	Ask key stakeholder groups how the Budget could be made more accessible	🔵
2	Invite feedback on the previous Budget – this means making it available in forms people can engage with, which could include machine readable data, plain English published material and visual presentations *End date: May 2018*	🟢
3	Provide Budget data in machine readable form – this could include open source formats *End date: May 2018*	🟢
4	Work with agencies that have expertise in presenting Budget data in ways that make it easy to understand *End date: May 2018*	🟢

🟢 underway

🔵 completed

🟤 some delays.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

- A new contents page for "figures and tables" was added to the Pre-election Update as a result of stakeholder feedback.

- The Treasury has discussed establishing an open data programme with Statistics New Zealand, and how best to present financial data. The outcome of the meeting was to take a simple approach, based on examples of good practice (e.g. Singapore).

- Established that the appropriate license for Budget data has already been determined – Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Data

- Plan how to make the license terms known on the landing pages where data is available for download (Treasury website, data.govt.nz).

- Determine whether or not license info needs to be in the data file itself e.g. CSV or JSON.

- Develop the presentation page.

- Establish what data will be released initially.

Budget 2018 Design

- Publish a diagram outlining the budget process and broad timeline.

- Publish a roadmap on how to use the Budget publications and what each provides.

- Increase use of table of contents, figures, page references, tabs, and hyperlinks within and across documents.

- Provide targeted, bite size pieces of information (e.g. social media snippets), with links to more detailed information.

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP NEW ZEALAND

Commitment 1: Open Budget

Date: December to February 2018

Lead agency: The Treasury

To promote public discussion/debate and participation through accessibility of the Budget and include relevant groups outside of government in the formative phase of the Budget, ensuring they are informed about the process and issues.

	Milestones	Stage
1	Ask key stakeholder groups how the Budget could be made more accessible	🔵
2	Invite feedback on the previous Budget – this means making it available in forms people can engage with, which could include machine readable data, plain English published material and visual presentations *End date: May 2018*	🟢
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🟢 underway

🔵 completed

🟤 some delays

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

Data

- The Treasury is working on releasing Core Crown expenditure information for Budget 2018 in an open data format.

- The Treasury has agreed on a process for determining where licensing information needs to be in the data file.

Budget 2018 Design

- Increased use of table of contents, figures, page references, tabs, and hyperlinks within and across key Budget documents published on Treasury's website.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Data

- Core Crown expenditure information will be released in an open data format to a limited set of stakeholders for feedback, with a full release before Budget 2018.

- It is intended that, over time, further fiscal data (e.g. tax revenue, balance sheet) will be released in open data format.

- Consideration is being given to how promote the Treasury's open Budget data on the data.govt.nz platform.

Budget 2018 Design

- Provide targeted, bite size pieces of information (e.g. social media snippets), with links to more detailed information.

- Greater use of booklets and foldouts on particular Budget packages will be developed to better communicate Budget decisions.

- Publish a diagram on the Treasury's website outlining the budget process and broad timeline.

- Publish a roadmap on the Treasury's website on how to use the Budget publications and what each publication provides.

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP NEW ZEALAND

Commitment 1: Open Budget

Date: June to August 2017

Lead agency: The Treasury

To promote public discussion/debate and participation through accessibility of the budget and include relevant groups outside of government in the formative phase of the Budget, ensuring they are informed about the process and issues.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

- Milestone 1 of the Open Budget was passed with the completion of Stakeholder research by 31 May. The Research was published online on 26 July (see link below). As noted in the research New Zealand's fiscal reporting is considered one of the most transparent in the world, however potential improvements can still be explored. The research includes a number of recommendations (e.g. providing more historical data) which will be an important component of Budget design in the future.

- Work on providing open source budget data has continued. The Treasury met with Statistics New Zealand to ensure the work we are doing is in line with open data standards.

- We received some helpful feedback from the PSA, CTU and Transparency International on mid-term assessment. Common areas of interest were making budget information more accessible (e.g. publishing a Citizen's Budget that is understandable) and increasing the transparency and participation in the decision making process.

LINKS

http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/informationreleases/ogp

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Design for Budget 2018 continues, with the OGP stakeholder research and mid-term assessment feedback informing that process. Any resulting changes will be discussed and agreed with the post-election government.

- Work on open source data is also progressing with IT working on productionising the source information to ensure we develop a repository of data. Beyond that, we are looking create a roadmap to enable us to release the data in an open source format (the "how"), defining an operational Data Management workflow, which is going to be key to "when' the data is released, and creating a Treasury wide model specifying "what" data is released.

YEAR END: Commitment 1 - Open Budget

Date: March - June 2018

Lead agency: The Treasury

To promote public discussion/debate and participation through accessibility of the Budget and include relevant groups outside of government in the formative phase of the Budget, ensuring they are informed about the process and issues.

	Milestones	Stage
1	Ask key stakeholder groups how the Budget could be made more accessible	🔵
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WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

Data

- The Treasury has released Core Crown expenditure information for Budget 2018 in an open data format

- Treasury has agreed on a process for determining where licensing information needs to be in the data file

Budget 2018 Design

- Treasury has increased the use of table of contents, figures, page references, tabs, and hyperlinks within and across documents

- Treasury has released plain English material on the Economic and Fiscal Forecasts. We have incorporated a feedback section on the Budget website. Through this section, users of the data can complete an online survey which enables them to provide feedback, which will then be taken into consideration for future budgets

- Guides on the Treasury and Budget website have been published in an accessible, plain English format, including:

  o Guide to Budget documents - a list of all the documents published on Budget day and a short explanation of their purpose
  o Guide to New Zealand Budgeting Practices - a short guide on the how the budget is put together in New Zealand
  o Budget process - A short overview of the key phases in the New Zealand Budget process (this includes broad timeframes for the Budget process)

- Targeted information with links to more detailed information has been provided on the budget.govt.nz and treasury.govt.nz websites

- Booklets and foldouts on particular Budget packages have been developed to better communicate Budget decisions

- Agencies led on how initiatives were described qualitatively in the Budget, the presentation of quantitative data was standardised to ensure consistency.

- Change in budget documents from 2017 – Of the three new reports produced for Budget 2017, in the mid-term report only one currently remains. The reasoning for this is as follows:

  i. As the decision around additional documents to support the Budget are made by the Minister of Finance, in certain years it may be necessary to produce an additional document to explain significant Budget decisions (for example the Families Income Package at a Glance in Budget 2017).

  ii. For Budget 2018 it was deemed no additional document was needed, however as part of the mini-Budget released in December 2017 a document was produced to communicate the Government's Families Package.

INCOMPLETE MILESTONES

- *Work with agencies that have expertise in presenting Budget data in ways that make it easy to understand*

  o While some work towards presenting Budget data in accessible ways has been completed, this milestone has not been fully completed due to competing priorities in delivering Budget 2018. This included completing an audit review of the full budget process.
  o Work is in progress to complete this commitment and it will be included as part of the commitments for the next National Action Plan.

REFLECTION: HOW DID THIS COMMITMENT CONTRIBUTE TO OPEN GOVERNMENT?

- The Open Budget commitment relates strongly to the principles of Open Government. The Budget process can be considered as a closed process between agencies and the Government, with information being regarded as inaccessible. The Open Budget commitment towards sharing Budget information in plain English language and in an easily accessible format fosters greater public participation in the budget process.

- Making available information with the use of graphs and hyperlinks, including historical information and explanations of concepts provides an opportunity for stakeholders and citizens to better understand, analyse and interpret the data.

- The Budget feedback survey enables members of the public to provide input into the Budget process, making it more accessible and inviting discussion and debate, leading to more inclusive decision making and enhancing civic engagement.

- Releasing the Core Crown expenditure information for Budget 2018 in an open data format makes available information for stakeholders and members of the public. This release opens up the way for further releases on Core Crown debt, Core Crown Revenue and Core Crown Expenses, increasing transparency and accountability on the Government's accounting and fiscal practices.

LINKS

- Budget 2018 Foundations for the Future
  https://www.budget.govt.nz/index.htm

- Budget 2018 overview
  https://www.budget.govt.nz/budget/2018/at-a-glance/index.htm

- Guide to the Budget process – issue date 17 May 2018
  https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/guide/guide-budget-process

- Budget 2018
  https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/budgets/budget-2018

- Budget 2018 feedback on open data - survey form
  https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z6DVVZT

- Functional Classification of Core Crown Expenses – issue date 17 May 2018
  https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/model/functional-classification-core-crown-expenses