



**national treasury**

Department:  
National Treasury  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## MEDIA STATEMENT

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### SOUTH AFRICA COMES FIRST IN THE 2017 OPEN BUDGET INDEX SURVEY

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South Africa's efforts to deepen transparency in budget processes have been recognised internationally. In the 2017 Open Budget Index (OBI) survey, out of 115 countries, South Africa has been ranked first – a position shared with New Zealand.

The OBI survey assesses the availability of eight key budget documents in each of the 115 countries evaluated, and considers the comprehensiveness of data in these documents. It also examines the extent of effective oversight provided by legislatures, the independent fiscal institutions and the supreme audit institutions, and the opportunities available to the public to participate in national budget processes.

In the 2017 OBI, South Africa achieved a score of 89 out of 100 in terms of transparency, an improvement from a score of 86 achieved in 2015. Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba has applauded this achievement. Minister Gigaba says South Africans should be proud of this achievement which entrenches its reputation as a global leader. "This is evidenced by the expansive budget information that is published for public analysis and scrutiny", he said.

South Africa has consistently been rated amongst the top three since it held the first position in the 2010 Open Budget Index. The rating of second in 2012 and third in 2015 coincided with a change in the OBI survey scoring which placed increased emphasis on budget participation.

Being mindful that South Africa does produce detailed and quality budget information, but cognisant that this information is not used as extensively by the public as we would like, the emphasis of National Treasury's budget reform agenda since 2014 has been on seeking to elicit public participation regarding the national budget. The challenge now is for South Africans – parliamentarians, the media, civil society and the general public – to use the information published in the budget documents more effectively.

It is for this reason that the National Treasury has been working very closely with civil society organisations. A flagship project of this partnership with IMALI YETHU is to develop an online budget portal named *vulekamali*. This portal will provide easily accessible budget data that will empower all South Africans with necessary information on how taxes are being generated, and how budgets are allocated and spent. Minister Gigaba is expected to launch the portal on 20 February 2018 in Cape Town.

In view of South Africa's commitment to improving budget transparency, participation and oversight, the National Treasury is pursuing the following measures:

- Expansion of participation and empowerment of civil society in the budget process, in partnership with IMALI YETHU and other civil society organisations, and
- Including more data on the financial information of the government.





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Further suggestions from the OBI report are that South African needs to improve on:

- Mechanisms to exchange views during the monitoring of budget implementation, and
- Providing more information on revenues and macroeconomic forecasts.
- Holding legislative hearings on the formulation of the annual budget where the public can testify
- Establishing formal mechanisms for the public to assist the supreme audit institution in formulating its audit program and in participation in relevant audit investigations.

The National Treasury remains committed to improving its budget processes as the leaders and stewards of public resources, and to working together with all South Africans in doing so.

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