

Glossary

Terms

Used in Government at a Glance

Budget

A comprehensive statement of Government financial plans which include expenditures, revenues, deficit or surplus and debt. The budget is the Government's main economic policy document, demonstrating how the Government plans to use public resources to meet policy goals and to some extent indicating where its policy priorities

Cash transfers

Benefits provided to eligible individuals by governments that are not required to be spent on a specific good or service. Examples of cash transfers include pensions, unemployment benefits and development aid.

Central Budget Authority (CBA)

The Central Budget Authority (CBA) is a public entity, or several co-ordinated entities, located at the central/national/federal level of government, which is responsible for the custody and management of the national/federal budget. In many countries, the CBA is often part of the Ministry of Finance. Specific responsibilities vary by country, but generally, the CBA is responsible for formulating budget proposals, conducting budget negotiations, allocating or reallocating funds, ensuring compliance with the budget laws and conducting performance evaluations and/or efficiency reviews. This Authority regulates budget execution but does not necessarily undertake the treasury function of disbursing public funds. Lastly, a very important role of the Central Budget Authority is monitoring and maintaining aggregate/national fiscal discipline and enforcing the effective control of budgetary expenditure.

Centre of Government (CoG)

The Centre of Government refers to the administrative structure that serves the Executive (President or Prime Minister, and the Cabinet collectively). The Centre of Government has a great variety of names across countries, such as General Secretariat, Cabinet Office, Chancellery, Office/Ministry of the Presidency, Council of Ministers Office, etc. In many countries the CoG is made up of more than one unit, fulfilling different functions. The role of the Centre of Government is closely linked to the role of the executive branch itself, i.e. to direct the resources of the State (financial, legal, regulatory, even military) to achieve a mission that reflects a political vision and responds to a mandate from citizens.

Citizen's budget	A citizens' guide to the budget is defined here as an easy-to-understand summary of the main features of the annual budget as presented to the legislature. It should be a self-contained document that explains what is in the annual budget proposals and what their effects are expected to be. While containing links or references to more detailed documents, the guide should not require readers to refer to them, or to know their contents, in order to understand the guide.
Civil servant	An employee of the state, either permanent or on a long-term contract, who would remain a state employee if the government changes. In addition, civil servants are employees covered under a specific public legal framework or other specific provisions.
Collective goods and services	Goods and services that benefit the community at large. Examples include government expenditures on defence, and public safety and order.
Composite index	An indicator formed by compiling individual indicators into a single index on the basis of an underlying model (Nardo et al., 2005).
Dataset	A set of indicators or variables concerning a single topic (e.g. regulatory quality).
Efficiency	Achieving maximum output from a given level of resources used to carry out an activity (<i>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</i>).
Effectiveness	The extent to which the activities stated objectives have been met (<i>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</i>).
European System of National Accounts	An internationally compatible accounting framework used by members of the European Union for a systematic and detailed description of a total economy (that is a region, country or group of countries), its components and its relations with other total economies (<i>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</i>). It is fully consistent with System of National Accounts (SNA).
Federal state	A country that has a constitutionally delineated division of political authority between one central and several regional or state autonomous governments.
Fiscal Rule	For purposes of this book, the OECD utilises a similar definition as the European Commission. A numerical fiscal rule refers to a permanent constraint on fiscal policy aggregates (e.g. in-year rules are excluded).
Full-time equivalent (FTE)	The number of full-time equivalent jobs, defined as total hours worked divided by average annual hours worked in full-time jobs (<i>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</i>).
Gender	Socially constructed and socially learned behaviours and expectations associated with females and males. All cultures interpret and elaborate the biological differences between women and men into a set of social expectations about what behaviours and activities are appropriate and what rights, resources, and power women and men possess. Like race, ethnicity, and class, gender is a social category that largely establishes one's life chances. It shapes one's participation in society and in the economy.

**General
Employment
Framework in the
public service**

It usually concerns the employment conditions of most government employees, and certainly concerns most statutory employees. Casual employees, by this definition, are not employed under the General Employment Framework for government employees. Please note that in a number of countries, all employees, including those employed on a short term basis, are employed under the General Employment framework, with a few exceptions (few casual employees in those cases, if any).

**General
government**

The general government sector consists of the following groups of resident institutional units: a) All units of central, state or local government; b) All non-market NPIs that are controlled by government units. c) The sector also includes social security funds, either as separate institutional units or as part of any or all of central, state or local government.

The sector does not include public corporations, even when all the equity of such corporations is owned by government units. Nor does it include quasi-corporations that are owned and controlled by government units. However, unincorporated enterprises owned by government units that are not quasi-corporations remain integral parts of those units and, therefore, must be included in the general government sector (*2008 System of National Accounts*).

Governance

The exercise of political, economic and administrative authority.

**Gross domestic
product (GDP)**

The standard measure of the value of the goods and services produced by a country during a period. Specifically, it is equal to the sum of the gross values added of all resident institutional units engaged in production (plus any taxes, and minus any subsidies, on products not included in the value of their outputs). The sum of the final uses of goods and services (all uses except intermediate consumption) measured in purchasers' prices, less the value of imports of goods and services, or the sum of primary incomes distributed by resident producer units (*OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms*).

**Independent
Fiscal Institution
(IFI)**

A publicly funded, independent body under the statutory authority of the executive or the legislature which provides non-partisan oversight and analysis of, and in some cases advice on, fiscal policy and performance. IFIs have a forward-looking *ex ante* diagnostic task (in contrast to public audit institutions which perform an equally indispensable *ex post* task).

Indicator

"... quantitative or qualitative measure derived from a series of observed facts that can reveal relative positions (e.g. of a country) in a given area. When evaluated at regular intervals, an indicator can point out the direction of change across different units and through time." (Nardo et al., 2005).

**Individual goods
and services**

Goods and services that mainly benefit individuals. Examples include education, health and social insurance programmes.

Input	Units of labour, capital, goods and services used in the production of goods and services. “Taking the health service as an example, input is defined as the time of medical and non-medical staff, the drugs, the electricity and other inputs purchased, and the capital services from the equipment and buildings used.” (Lequiller, 2005).
Labour force	The labour force, or currently active population, comprises all persons who fulfil the requirements for inclusion among the employed or the unemployed during a specified brief reference period (<i>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</i>).
Open Government Data centralized portal	The Central/federal Open Government Data central portal (or “one stop shop” portal) corresponds to a single entry point to access government’s data. Access to the data can be provided either directly on the portal or indirectly (redirected to the place where the data is located e.g.: to a ministry’s website).
Outcome	Refers to what is ultimately achieved by an activity. Outcomes reflect the intended or unintended results of government actions, but other factors outside of government actions are also implicated (<i>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</i>).
Output	In performance assessment in government, outputs are defined as the goods or services produced by government agencies (e.g. teaching hours delivered, welfare benefits assessed and paid) (<i>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</i>).
Performance Information	Performance information can be generated by both government and nongovernmental organizations, and can be both qualitative and quantitative. Performance information refers to metrics/indicators/general information on the inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes of government policies/programmes/organizations, and can be ultimately used to assess the effectiveness, cost effectiveness and efficiency of the same. Performance information can be found in statistics; the financial and/or operational accounts of government organisations; performance reports generated by government organizations; evaluations of policies, programmes or organizations; or Spending Reviews, for instance.
Productivity	Productivity is commonly defined as a ratio of a volume measure of output to a volume measure of input use (<i>OECD Statistical Glossary</i>). Economists distinguish between total productivity, namely total output divided by change in (weighted) input(s) and marginal productivity, namely change in output divided by change in (weighted) input(s) (Coelli et al., 1999).
Public sector	The public sector includes general government and public corporations. Quasi-corporations owned by government units are grouped with corporations in the nonfinancial or financial corporate sectors, thus part of public corporations (<i>2008 System of National Accounts</i>).
Public sector process	Structures, procedures and management arrangements with a broad application within the public sector.

Public services	Services that are performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions. Public services are provided by government to its citizens, either directly (through the public sector) or by financing private provision of services. The term is associated with a social consensus that certain services should be available to all, regardless of income. Even where public services are neither publicly provided nor publicly financed, for social and political reasons they are usually subject to regulation going beyond that applying to most economic sectors.
System of National Accounts	<p>The <i>System of National Accounts</i> (SNA) consists of a coherent, consistent and integrated set of macroeconomic accounts; balance sheets and tables based on a set of internationally agreed concepts, definitions, classifications and accounting rules. In 2009, the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed a revised set of international standards for the compilation of national accounts: the 2008 <i>System of National Accounts</i>, replacing the 1993 version of the SNA.</p> <p>The 2008 SNA retains the basic theoretical framework of its predecessor. However, in line with the mandate of the United Nations Statistical Commission, the 2008 SNA introduces treatments for new aspects of economies that have come into prominence, elaborates on aspects that have increasingly become the focus of analytical attention and clarifies guidance on a wide range of issues. The changes in the 2008 SNA bring the accounts into line with developments in the economic environment, advances in methodological research and needs of users.</p> <p>At the European Union level, the European System of Accounts (ESA), 1995 was made consistent with the 1993 SNA. Its update called European System of Accounts, 2010 covers the recommendations and clarifications agreed at the international level for the 2008 SNA.</p>
Total employment	Total employment covers all persons engaged in productive activity that falls within the production boundary of the national accounts. The employed comprise all individuals who, during a specified brief period, were in the following categories: paid employment or self-employment.
Trust	Trust is broadly understood as holding a positive perception about the actions of an individual or an organization. Trust gives us confidence that others will act as we might expect in a particular circumstances. While trust may be based on actual experience, in most cases trust is a subjective phenomenon, reflected in the eyes of the beholder.
Unitary states	Countries that do not have a constitutionally delineated division of political authority between one central and several regional or state autonomous governments. However, unitary states may have administrative divisions that include local and provincial or regional levels of government.
Variable	A characteristic of a unit being observed that may assume more than one of a set of values to which a numerical measure or a category from a classification can be assigned (e.g. income, age, weight, etc., and “occupation”, “industry”, “disease”, etc.) (<i>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</i>).



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