OpenBudgets.eu: Fighting Corruption with Fiscal Transparency

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Deliverable 6.1

MEP Questionnaire

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Abstract: Deliverable 6.1 of Work Package 6 is a short questionnaire, which will be circulated to the Members of the European Parliament's Budget and Budgetary Control committees. The aim of this questionnaire is to assess the data and data analysis need of MEPs.

History

Version	Date	Reason	Revised by
0.1	06.10.2015	Incorporated feedback from European Parliament meetings	Nick Aiossa
0.2	19.10.2015	Incorporated feedback from European Parliament meetings	Nick Aiossa
1.0	30.10.2015	External Review by project partner	Anna Alberts

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Executive Summary

Deliverable 6.1 of Work Package 6 is a short questionnaire, which will be circulated to the Members of the European Parliament's Committee on Budgets (BUDG) and Budgetary Control Committee (CONT). The aim of this questionnaire is to assess the data and data analysis needs of these Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The responses from MEPs will then be considered and incorporated into the design and development of the OpenBudgets.eu platform. These responses will also play a role in the drafting of Deliverable 6.2, the needs analysis report, which will look at analysing whether the data structures, tools and architecture foreseen or implemented in Openbudgets.eu correspond with the needs of MEPs in the CONT and BUDG committees.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CONT	European Parliament Budgetary Control Committee
BUDG	European Parliament Committee on Budgets
MEP	Member of the European Parliament

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1   Introduction

Initial advocacy and outreach activities served as a basis for gathering relevant and substantive material that policymakers' could find important and that could be incorporated in the questionnaire.   A series of meetings were held with relevant European Parliamentary stakeholders, which included BUDG and CONT political group policy advisors, MEP assistants, and committee secretariat and policy department D administrators. The aim of the meetings were to help build political support for the project but also open budget data generally. The meetings comprised of three main components: first, to introduce the OpenBudgets.eu project; second, to discuss open budgets and open data generally; and third, to solicit possible data and data analysis needs of the MEPs in both BUDG and CONT committees. The initial comments from these meetings fed into the drafting process and both the questionnaire's content and format reflect this.

The questionnaire's policy-related content highlights the relevant focus areas of policy-makers' work with budget allocation and expenditure data. The level of detail needed in budget and expenditure analysis and the thematic focuses varied in stakeholder feedback. This is not entirely unexpected given the two related but distinct mandates of the BUDG and CONT committees. Thus, the questions aim to incorporate the various areas mentioned with the goal to more accurately gauge MEPs' opinion on these matters. Doubts were also expressed that MEPs, given their respective workloads and the number of surveys they receive, would be able to devote time to completing a survey or questionnaire. Therefore, the format is also designed to allow busy policymakers the ability to quickly and simply complete this questionnaire without any undue administrative burden.

2 Questionnaire

OpenBudgets.eu MEP Questionnaire

Background

The OpenBudgets.eu project aims to provide a framework containing the relevant tools required for supporting financial transparency, thus enhancing accountability within public sectors, and as a result preventing corruption. In order for OpenBudgets.eu to provide a framework which is user friendly, feasible, and relevant to policy-makers' work we would like to assess the needs and opinions of the key MEPs working in the Budgets and Budgetary Control Committees.

In this questionnaire you are asked which budget and expenditure data is important to your work as a MEP and how you would like it presented, in order for your feedback to be incorporated into the design of the online OpenBudgets.eu platform.

Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of 12 questions and takes five minutes to complete.

1. Which committee(s) are you a member/substitute of:
   i.   Committee on Budgets _____
   ii.   Budgetary Control Committee_____

2. Would you find it useful for budget and expenditure figures to be analysed on the online platform?
   i.   Yes
   ii.   No

3. Which of the following levels of detail in **expenditure** data are important for your work:
   i.   Fund _____
   ii.   Operational programme _____
   iii.   Major projects _____
   iv.   Individual projects _____
   v.   Beneficiary information _____
   vi.   Other _____

4. Which of the following levels of detail in **budget** data are important for your work:

    i.   Fund _____

    ii.   Programme _____

    iii.   Budget Heading _____

    iv.   Budget line _____

    v.   Itemised items within budget lines _____

5. How important is budget and expenditure data in the following **headings**, with 0 being lowest and 5 being highest:

    i.   Smart and inclusive growth _____

    ii.   Sustainable Growth: natural resources _____

    iii.   Security and citizenship _____

    iv.   Global Europe _____

    v.   Administration _____

    vi.   Other special Instruments _____

6. How important is budget and expenditure data in the following **funds**, with 0 being lowest and 5 being highest:

    i.   Structural and Cohesion_____

    ii.   Horizon 2020 _____

    iii.   Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) _____

    iv.   Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME) _____

    v.   LIFE+ _____

    vi.   European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) _____

    vii.   External Action Instruments _____

7. Which **indicators** do you find most important in your work:

    i.   Funding period thematic objectives

    ii.   Investment priorities for these thematic objectives

    iii.   Error rates

    iv.   Performance rates

    v.   Absorption rates

    vi.   Other _____

8. What **sources** would be useful in order to analyse and process the raw budget and expenditure data:

      i.   Commission budget implementation summaries _____

      ii.   Commission annual activity reports _____

      iii.   Member State national audit reports _____

      iv.   Court of Auditors' reports _____

      v.   Member State annual shared management summaries _____

      vi.   Other _____

9. In addition to budget data would you like to have the legislative budget process outlined on the platform?

      i.   Yes

      ii.   No

10. How would you like the data presented on the platform:

      i.   Geographically _____

      ii.   By Fund _____

      iii.   By Sector _____

      iv.   Through Timelines _____

      v.   Other _____

11. Which **comparable timelines** would be most useful to you:

      i.   Multiannual Financial Framework periods _____

      ii.   Annual budget periods _____

      iii.   Funding period _____

      iv.   Programme life _____

      v.   Project _____

      vi.   Other _____

12. Additional Comments: _____

3 Conclusion

This questionnaire will be sent electronically to all Members in BUDG and CONT committees. Corresponding outreach and advocacy, including bi-lateral meetings with key MEPs, towards the relevant European Parliament stakeholders will continue in parallel. These activities will serve to highlight the questionnaire and its purpose in order to bolster response rates.