FROM BUDGETS TO ACTION:

A COMMUNITY-LED TOOL FOR MONITORING PPPR BUDGETS AND TRACKING PPPR EXPENDITURE



This community guide accompanies a longer toolkit that provides a detailed, step-by-step approach for using community-led monitoring (CLM) approaches to track Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPPR) financing and carry out PPPR budget advocacy. The toolkit can be used by anyone who wants to ensure that money budgeted for PPPR reaches the clinics, health workers, and families who need it most.

This community guide and the tool are structured as follows:

UNDERSTAND THE NATIONAL BUDGET PROCESS

There are typically four stages in the budget cycle:

- Formulation
- Enactment
- Execution
- Oversight

Can you identify entry points?

FIND OUT WHAT THE PPPR BUDGET IS

PPPR funds are rarely allocated in a single pocket

Search across all relevant Ministries to consolidate the total financial picture

ANALYZE THE PPPR BUDGET

Is the budget:

- Adequate?
- A priority?
- Fair?
- Efficienct?

TRACK EXPENDITURE

Verify spending

- Were funds spent on time?
- Did funds reach the frontline?
- Were funds spent on their intended purpose?

INTRODUCTION: MONITORING PPPR FINANCING FOR A SAFER WORLD



At its heart, a government budget is a political document. It translates a government's policies, political commitments, and goals into decisions about how to raise money (revenue) and how to spend it (expenditure). It is the most powerful expression of a government's true priorities and most powerful tool for turning policy commitments into tangible action. For these reasons, understanding how much funding is allocated to a particular commitment, such as PPPR, and monitoring where it goes, and whether it is spent effectively is not merely a technical exercise, it is a fundamental component of ensuring global health security.

THE CHALLENGE OF TRACKING FUNDS

Systems for monitoring pandemic readiness and the financial flows that support it are often fragmented and difficult to monitor. PPPR funding tends to be embedded within broad health programs, spread across multiple government ministries, and allocated at both national and local, decentralized or devolved levels. This can make it extremely difficult for citizens and civil society to track budget allocations and expenditures.

Community-led monitoring is a powerful approach that can fill the accountability gap left by fragmented official systems. By empowering local organizations to track financial flows and the delivery of services on the ground, CLM strengthens community surveillance and cultivates the trust that is vital during a health crisis. The ultimate purpose of this work is to shift power to communities, ensuring that resources for pandemic preparedness reach the clinics, health workers, and families that need them most. It is about connecting national PPPR plans and budgets to the local clinic and answering questions that matter to families, such as:

- **"Will there be enough masks and soap at the local clinic when the next disease arrives?"**
- **"Will my child be able to get a timely vaccine in an emergency?"**

This tool is not intended to be a definitive audit report. Its main goal is to provide organizations with a foundation for budget advocacy. The analysis is meant to help you uncover evidence-based insights that can be used to support your advocacy efforts. Don't worry about getting every single number right. The real power lies in identifying trends and patterns that reveal a powerful story.



PART 1: BUDGET MONITORING

THE FOUR-STAGE BUDGET CYCLE

The public budget process is often thought of as being highly technical, accessible only to economists and government insiders. This, however, is not the case and there is growing recognition that CSOs and citizens have an important role to play in ensuring that public resources reach their intended beneficiaries. To empower communities to monitor and analyze PPPR budgets, a critical first step is to demystify the budget process itself. Understanding the process will also reveal opportunities and entry points for CSOs to engage in and influence budget decisions.

While the specifics may vary, most countries follow a four-stage budget cycle that involved:

- **Stage 1:** Formulation. The executive branch of government (led by the Ministry of Finance) develops the budget proposal. This is often where the most important decisions are made.
- **Stage 2:** Enactment or approval. The executive submits its budget proposal to the legislature (Parliament or Congress) for debate, amendment, and approval. CSOs can influence this stage by providing independent analysis of the budget proposal.
- **Stage 3:** Execution. The government implements the approved budget. Ministries and agencies begin to spend the allocated funds. This is where expenditure tracking becomes critical.
- **Stage 4:** Oversight and audits. After the fiscal year ends, the government accounts for its spending. This accounting is done by developing audit reports, which CSOs can use to hold the government accountable for past performance.

There are entry points for CSOs to engage with the budget-making process in each of these stages. The case study below gives an example of what engagement can look like at the budget formulation level. For other examples, see the full resource.

TIPS FOR TREVOR

The Tips for Trevor campaign was a pioneering public participation initiative in South Africa that invited citizens to submit budget suggestions directly to the Minister of Finance ahead of the annual Budget Speech. The campaign was first launched in 2002, when Finance Minister Trevor Manuel invited citizens to submit their budget suggestions directly to him on a radio show. Sustained by his successors, the campaign became a credible, community-led mechanism to surface key budgeting priorities from the public. It gained widespread attention through media outreach and official acknowledgements, with some suggestions influencing real policy decisions and some groups recognizing that while the intervention was interesting it could risk being treated as PR campaign for engagement and not replace a platform for communities to assert their rights and demand accountability. This model demonstrated how structured public engagement can potentially strengthen transparency, responsiveness, and inclusiveness in national budget processes.

One notable example of the campaign influencing policy was the incorporation of public suggestions related to youth employment and skills development. Several submissions called for targeted government investment in youth training programmes and job creation initiatives. In response, subsequent budget speeches included increased allocations to initiatives like the Expanded Public Works Programme and support for learnerships through SETAs (Sector Education and Training Authorities). These changes reflected a direct link between citizen input and budgetary decisions, reinforcing the campaign's role as an effective tool for participatory governance and policy responsiveness.



Annexure A contains a list of terms and concepts that are used in relation to government budgets and spending.

FINDING OUT WHAT A COUNTRY'S PPPR BUDGET IS

Before you can analyze your country's PPPR budget, you need to determine what it is i.e. determine the total financial commitment your country has made to PPPR during a specific budget cycle. This is not always a straightforward exercise, and you will need to consider all the pockets of funds across government that get put towards PPPR and add them together. Only by consolidating these amounts will you get a clear, accurate sense of the total amount of money set aside for PPPR.

If your country has one, their National Action Plan for Health Security (a planning process for improving a country's core capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats) or NAPHS will likely contain specific, costed strategies for PPPR. As a result, NAPHS can serve as an excellent roadmap for finding PPPR funds. NAPHS are generally publicly available on government websites or via the World Health Organization's website.

However, because PPPR is a crosscutting, multi-sectoral agenda, funds towards PPPR could also appear under various other Ministries or in other pockets, such as:

- **Ministry of Health:** Programs related to Public Health, Epidemiology and Surveillance, Laboratory Services, Health Systems Strengthening, Community Health Services, and Emergency Response.
- **Ministry of Finance:** Look for Contingency Funds or Emergency Reserves.
- **Ministry of Security/Home Affairs:** Funds for border control, quarantine enforcement, or security personnel.
- **Ministry of Defense:** Allocations for medical personnel, logistics, or infrastructure.
- **Other ministries**: Funds could also be found under Agriculture (zoonotic surveillance) or Education (risk communication).

Added to this, you will generally also need to look beyond national level budgets, to consider what is budgeted for at the local level (districts, provinces, municipalities or counties. This is because key decisions about health, surveillance, emergency response, and social protections are often made and funded at the provincial, sub-national, or district level.

Once you have successfully identified all the pockets of PPPR funds, the next step is to add them all together to determine a global sum. This comprehensive total represents the government's true, overall financial commitment to PPPR for the budget cycle, providing the single, most powerful number for your subsequent analysis and advocacy.

WHAT TO DO WHEN INFORMATION IS NOT AVAILABLE?

In some cases, budget documents may not be accessible. In these circumstances, CSOs have several options:

- **Form a coalition:** Partner with other CSOs, journalists, and academics to make a collective demand for information. A joint request carries more weight than an individual one.
- **File formal information requests:** Many countries have Access to Information laws or parliamentary petitioning processes that give citizens the right to request government information. CSOs should learn how to use these laws to formally request specific budget data.
- **Document everything:** Keep a written record of every request for information made and every response (or lack thereof) from the government. This documentation can be a powerful piece of evidence that can be used in advocacy campaigns to push for greater transparency.

HOW TO ANALYZE THE BUDGET

Once you know how much money has been budgeted for PPPR, you can begin your analysis. The goal is to answer critical questions about the government's PPPR budget. The accompanying tool offers a simple but powerful framework for this analysis, focused on four key dimensions:

- **Adequacy:** Is the total amount budgeted for PPPR enough?
    - **Questions to ask:** What is the PPPR budget as a percentage of the total government budget? How does this year's allocation compare to previous years?
- **Priority:** How important is PPPR relative to other government priorities?
    - **Questions to ask:** How does the PPPR budget compare to spending on other sectors, such as infrastructure, or debt servicing?
- **Equity:** Is the budget fair? Does it ensure that resources will reach the most vulnerable and marginalized populations?
    - **Questions to ask:** Are there specific allocations for hard-to-reach populations or high-risk areas? Does the budget plan address the specific needs of women, children, people with disabilities, or other vulnerable groups?
- **Efficiency:** Are resources allocated in a way that is likely to achieve the best results?
    - **Questions to ask:** What is the balance between spending on prevention and preparedness versus more expensive curative care and response? Does the budget prioritize low-cost, high-impact interventions like community health worker training and surveillance systems?

By systematically working through these four dimensions, you can begin to build a compelling, evidence-based narrative about the strengths and weaknesses of the government's financial commitment to pandemic preparedness.



PART 2: EXPENDITURE TRACKING



If a budget is a promise, expenditure is the proof. With expenditure tracking, the goal is to see if there is a difference or gap between what is allocated towards PPPR in the budget and what is actually spent. While national governments may track expenditure at the high level, community-led monitoring is uniquely positioned to track expenditure in the "last mile" by verifying whether budgeted funds actually materialize as goods and services in the local clinics.

WHY TRACK EXPENDITURE?

Tracking expenditure is about answering a simple set of questions:

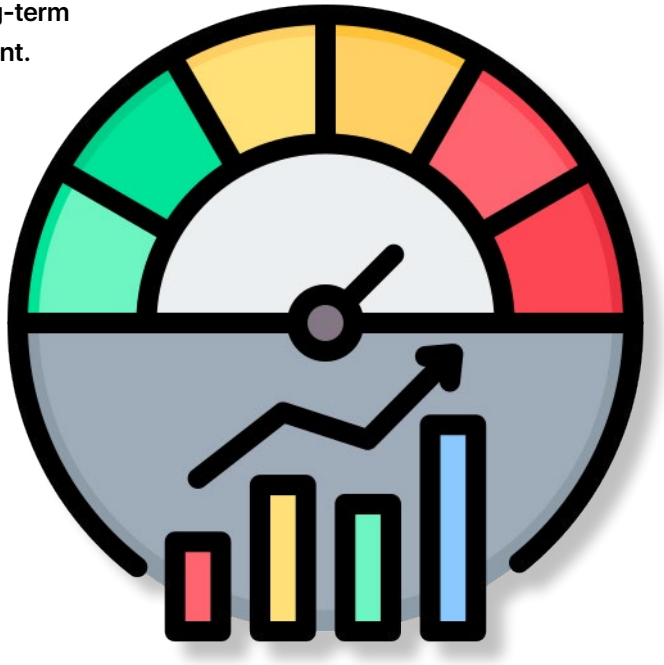
- **Are funds being spent on time?**
- **Are funds reaching the frontline where they are needed most?**
- **Are funds being used for the intended purpose?**

By collecting data that addresses these questions, CSOs can move beyond analyzing the budget to evaluate its implementation, generating powerful evidence for accountability.

Expenditure tracking can also help you analyze the different types of spending in a budget. It can be helpful to distinguish between:

- **Recurrent expenditure:** These are the ongoing operational costs, such as salaries for staff, rent, and office supplies.
- **Capital expenditure:** This is spending on long-term assets such as infrastructure, buildings, or equipment.

Understanding this split can be important in pandemic budget oversight because strong public health system requires consistent recurrent spending on staff training, drug procurement, and surveillance operations, as example. Conversely, large, sudden spikes in capital expenditure for infrastructure (like new ambulances or quarantine facilities) may need to be closely scrutinized to ensure they are necessary, cost-effective, and lead to lasting capacity improvements.



HOW TO TRACK EXPENDITURE: COMMUNITY-BASED EXPENDITURE TRACKING METHODS

There are several ways to track expenditure and resource delivery at the community level. The methods proposed in the tool are methods that are deliberately participatory and grounded in the lived experiences of citizens and frontline service providers.

- **The social audit.** This method is a collective process where community members come together to review and verify official information about public spending and projects. A social audit could involve, for example, comparing a list of medical supplies that were supposed to be delivered to a local clinic with the actual supplies received.
- **The community scorecard.** The community scorecard is a highly recommended tool for gathering citizen feedback on the quality and availability of public services. The community collectively decides on key indicators to measure service delivery and then individually scores the performance of the local clinic. The scores are then consolidated and presented in a dialogue with health officials to identify problems and collaboratively develop solutions.
- **Simplified Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS).** This is a method that can be used to trace the flow of a single, tangible resource. For example, a CSO could decide to track a specific consignment of PPE by visiting the district medical store to find the dispatch record and then visiting the rural clinic to verify the receipt record.

The key objective of many community-level expenditure tracking tools is to structure observations and facilitate a direct comparison between what was promised in the budget and what is happening on the ground.



PART 3: BUDGET ADVOCACY



The point of budget analysis and expenditure tracking is to use the evidence to inform advocacy: the evidence gathered is only as valuable as the action it inspires. Part 3 of the tool provides a set of practical resources, including strategies, templates, and frameworks, to help CSOs transform their findings into strategic, persuasive, and impactful advocacy campaigns.

BUILDING YOUR ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Before launching an advocacy campaign, it is essential to develop a clear strategy that defines what you want to change, who you need to influence, and how you will do it.

- **Defining your objective.** What is your advocacy objective? Your goal might be broad (for example, to improve PPPR financing in your country, but your objective should be specific and measurable e.g., "To persuade the Parliamentary Health Committee to recommend a 10% increase in the national surveillance budget during the next budget debates."
- **Stakeholder mapping.** Who are the key individuals and institutions that can help you achieve your objective? Identify all the individuals and institutions that have power over your objective.
    - **Primary targets:** The decision-makers who can give you what you want e.g., the Minister of Finance, the Chair of the Parliamentary Budget Committee.
    - **Secondary targets:** The influencers who have the ear of the primary targets e.g., influential journalists, donor agencies, traditional leaders.
- **Crafting key messages.** What message do you want to share? Your goal here is to translate the evidence and data you uncovered into clear and powerful messages. A good message has three parts:
    - **The problem:** A clear statement of the issue, backed by your strongest piece of evidence.
    - **The solution:** Your specific, actionable recommendation.
    - **The justification:** Why your solution is the right one.

MAKING THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

In contexts where health competes with other priorities like infrastructure and debt servicing, it might be important to frame PPPR as a smart economic investment, not just a social cost. Policymakers, especially in Ministries of Finance, are often persuaded by cost-benefit arguments. CSOs can strengthen their case by including talking points such as:

- **"The World Bank estimates that the cost of preparedness is cents per person per year, while the cost of a severe pandemic can run into the trillions of dollars. Investing now saves money later."**
- **"A healthy population is a productive workforce. Investing in disease surveillance protects our economy from the disruption and loss of productivity caused by major outbreaks."**

THE ADVOCACY ACTION TOOLKIT

The associated tool includes a library of adaptable templates that CSOs can use to package and deliver their advocacy messages. These tools are designed to translate technical data into professional and persuasive communication products. They include:

- **A policy brief:** A concise document for policymakers that includes an executive summary, key findings, and concrete policy recommendations.
- **A community budget report card:** A visually engaging, one-page summary using a simple scoring or traffic light system to rate the government's budget.
- **A press release:** A formal statement for the media announcing your key findings and advocacy demands.
- **A social media kit:** A ready-to-use package for digital advocacy, including infographics and relevant hashtags.
- **A template letter:** A formal letter that CSOs can use to present their evidence to their local elected representative and request specific action.

CLOSING THE LOOP: DEMANDING FEEDBACK AND ACTION

Publishing a press release, score card, or policy brief is not the end of an advocacy campaign; it is the beginning. The final step is to create platforms for dialogue and to consistently follow up to ensure that commitments lead to action. This involves:

- **Multi-stakeholder dialogues:** Organize public forums or closed-door meetings where you can present your findings directly to government officials, parliamentarians, donors, and the media. This creates a space for public accountability where officials are asked to respond to the evidence.
- **Systematic follow-up:** After a meeting where an official makes a commitment, send a formal letter summarizing the commitment and the agreed-upon next steps. Follow up regularly to track progress.

ANNEXURE:
USEFUL TERMS AND CONCEPTS



- **Absorption capacity:** The ability of an agency or government to effectively spend and manage the funds allocated to it.
- **Allocation or appropriation:** The amount of money authorized by the legislature for a specific purpose. This is the planned spending.
- **Audit:** An independent review and verification of government accounts and financial practices.
- **Budget:** A political document that translates a government's policies into decisions about how to raise and spend money.
- **Budget call circular (BCC):** A formal document from the Ministry of Finance instructing government ministries and departments on how to prepare and submit their budget requests.
- **Budget deficit:** Occurs when a government's expenditures exceed its revenues.
- **Budget transparency:** The degree to which budget information is open, accessible, and understandable to the public.
- **Capital expenditure:** Spending on long-term assets such as infrastructure, buildings, or equipment.
- **Disbursement:** The actual release of funds from the treasury to a government agency or program.
- **Expenditure:** The amount of money actually spent.
- **Fiscal year (FY):** The government's 12-month accounting period.
- **Line item (or vote):** A specific category of spending in a budget, such as "Personnel Salaries" or "Medical Supplies."
- **Medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF):** A multi-year planning process (usually 3-5 years) that sets spending ceilings and priorities.
- **Off-budget financing:** Funds that are not included in the formal national budget, often from donor grants or loans.
- **Participatory budgeting:** A process that allows citizens to directly participate in the allocation of a portion of a public budget.
- **Performance-based budgeting:** A budgeting system that links the allocation of funds to the achievement of specific performance targets and outcomes.
- **Public expenditure tracking survey (PETS):** A methodology used to trace the flow of public funds down to the point of service delivery.
- **Recurrent expenditure:** Ongoing operational costs such as salaries, rent, and office supplies.
- **Revenue:** The income that a government receives, primarily from taxes.
- **Supplementary budget:** A budget approved mid-year to add to or amend the original budget, often in response to unforeseen events.
- **Surplus:** Occurs when a government's revenues exceed its expenditures.
- **Virement:** The transfer of funds from one budget line to another, usually within a single ministry or department.



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