

The People-Centred Approach for Budgeting

What is a budget?

Budget is a plan to manage your income and expenditures. Budget forces you to consider what is important for you and your family. All family members should be involved in the budgeting process in order to follow the goal plan. Budgeting is useful for individuals and families, and also for businesses and governments.

The government budget sets out the level and type of expenditure the government plans to make and the ways that are planned to finance this expenditure. Generally budgeting process in the government consist of these four stages:

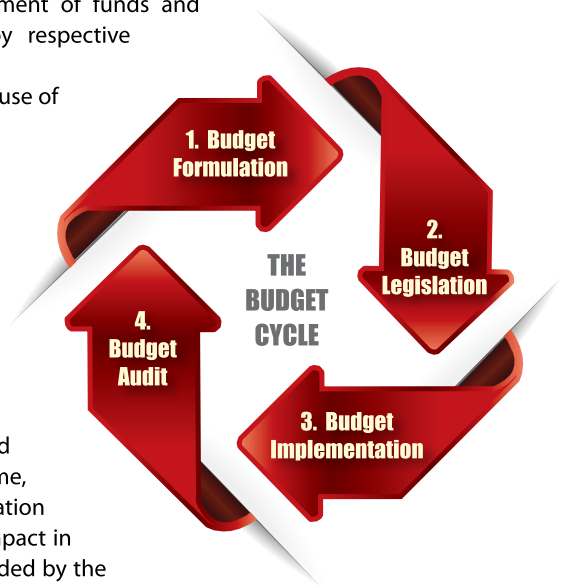
- ▶ Formulation of budget – proposals for financial allocations for the programmes / projects.
- ▶ Approval of budget – presentation to certain committee to approve the proposed budget.
- ▶ Implementation of budget – disbursement of funds and delivery of programmes / projects by respective departments.
- ▶ Audit / Evaluation of budget – audit the use of funds and evaluation of performance.

Why government budget need to be gender responsive and participatory?

Budget impacts women and girls, men and boys differently. This is because the needs of each category of people in community are different. It depends on their background such as sex, age, place of living, income, occupations, status of marriage, education including capabilities. These factors have impact in the kind of services and infrastructure provided by the governments to citizens.

For example, women or men who decide to work from home so that at the same time she can take care of her family need different services and basic infrastructure compared to working women/men. Therefore, gender responsive budgeting is a budget that is gender sensitive addressing the needs and interests of different groups of people in community.

So how could the governments be responsive to the needs, views and values of citizens? It is through participatory process whereby citizens – women and men – are the partners in deciding on the expenditure of the public fund. It is through community engagement that the government get valuable input from citizens to plan for an effective budget that represents the interest of the different groups in community.



GRP in Penang

Gender Responsive and Participatory Budgeting (GRP) was initiated in 2012 by the Penang Women's Development Corporation (PWDC), a state funded organisation, through smart-partnerships with the Penang local councils – City Council of Penang Island (MBPP) and Seberang Perai Municipal Council (MPSP).

GRP – The Penang Model initiative is a people-centred approach to bring the governments and citizens together for an effective and holistic outcomes. The process makes sure that there are representation of different groups in community that include sex, age, ethnicity, disabled and others. The engagements are done through various methods like survey/household survey, focus group, voting and dialogues.

GRP initiatives in Penang are focusing on the housing and public facilities projects under the MBPP and MPSP. The projects include those in PPR Jalan Sungai, PPR Ampangan, Kampung Sungai Chenaam, Machang Bubuk, Campbell Street Market, Sungai Pinang Turnkey Project, MBPP River Projects, Taman Tunku Seberang Jaya and Kenari Neighbourhood Park in Sungai Ara.

How do you participate in budgeting in the local government and community?

People's access to services and resources are determined by how budgets are formulated. Therefore, it is important for the community to take part in the consultations organise by the governments and local councils.

You can take part in all four phases of the budget process:

Phase 1 Budget Formulation: You can participate in the budget survey and budget dialogue. Timeframe: first half year, January – June every year.

Phase 2 Budget Adoption: Before the budget is approved, you and your people can advocate for programmes/projects that benefit your community, through your Members of Parliament (MP), State Assemblymen (ADUN), councillors and community leaders. Timeframe: July – November every year.

Phase 3 Implementations: You can participate in the community engagements on the implementations of programmes/projects by giving your ideas and feedbacks. Timeframe: depend on the execution of the programmes/projects

Phase 4 Evaluation: You can send feedback letter to your MPs, ADUNs, councillors, and community leaders or write to the respective departments on the programmes/projects. Timeframe: anytime you feel the needs to do it.

You can also request your ADUNs, councillors or community leaders to apply the Penang Model GRP at your place so that the allocations of the public funds in your constituency can be used effectively according to the needs of the community. Your leaders can present it at the budget dialogue of the governments and local governments.



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