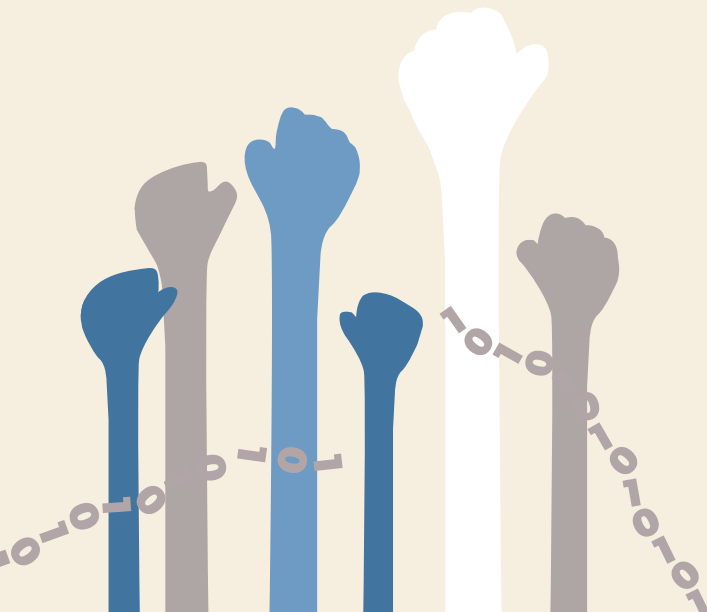


A Guide to Make

State Budgets Data

Open, Accessible
and Citizen Friendly



A Guide to Make State Budgets Data Open, Accessible & Citizen Friendly

by CivicDataLab



Credits

Published by: CivicDataLab

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Design by: The Graphic Studio

Published year: 2022



Introduction

CivicDataLab has been working closely with various state finance departments to strengthen their capacity to better manage, analyse and publish budget data. We have collated a list of best practices that will help state finance departments to make their budget data more open, accessible and citizen friendly.

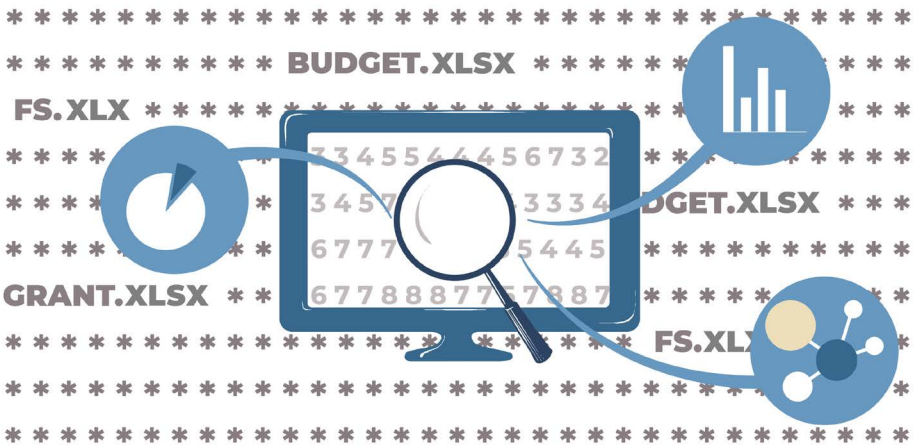
This also includes recommendations for the state finance departments to become compliant with National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) and recent implementation guidelines issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology(MeitY), as part of the Digital India initiative.

Here is the list:

1.

Publish Budget Data online in Machine Readable Format via Open APIs

Budget data (Budget Summary/Budget at a Glance, Annual Financial Statement, Expenditure Budget, Receipts Budget, Detailed Demands for Grants and Supplementary Demands for Grants) should be published in machine-readable formats like Open Document Formats for Spreadsheets (ODS), Comma Separated Values (CSV), or Excel (XLS, XLSX) through Open APIs (as per letter issued by MeitY on January 14, 2022).



Publishing budget data in machine-readable format will enable a wide range of actors to analyse budget data and facilitate deeper understanding of public expenditure management in the country. This will also conform to the standards set by the **National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP), 2012** of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India as well as the Policy on Open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for Government of India.



Odisha



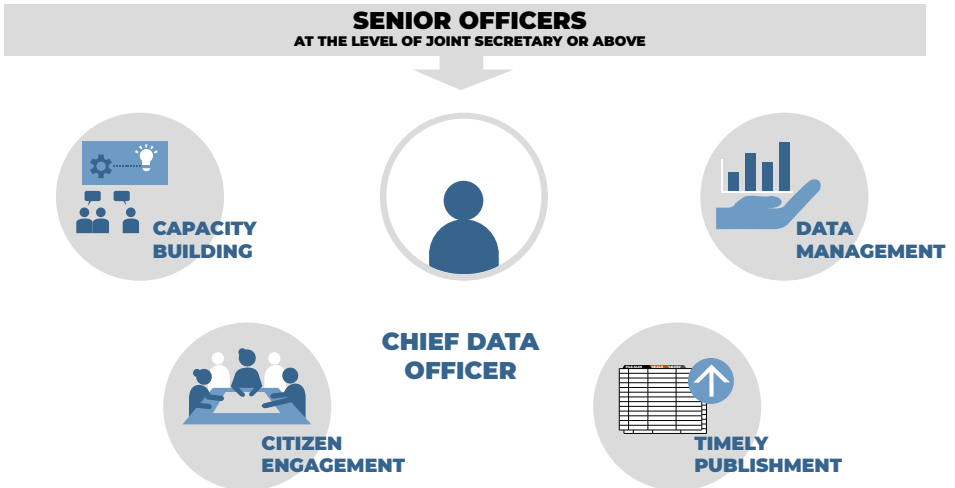
Assam

Currently, **Odisha** is the only state which is publishing the budget data online in Excel format (budget.odisha.gov.in) and the state of **Assam** publishes its budget data in machine-readable format through the Open Budgets India platform (openbudgetsindia.org).

2.

Appoint a Chief Data Officer in the State Finance Department and conduct regular trainings

In order to implement the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy, every state finance department needs to nominate a senior officer at the level of Joint Secretary or above as the Chief Data Officer(CDO).



The key responsibilities of CDO include—compile, collate and publish open budget data and other high value datasets in a timely manner.

CDOs need to conduct regular capacity building sessions to improve overall data management capacity of the state finance departments. They also need to regularly engage with the citizens to better understand their data needs and increase citizen participation in the budgetary processes. The contact details of CDO need to be made publicly available on the state finance department website and state-level open data portal.



Karnataka



Tamilnadu



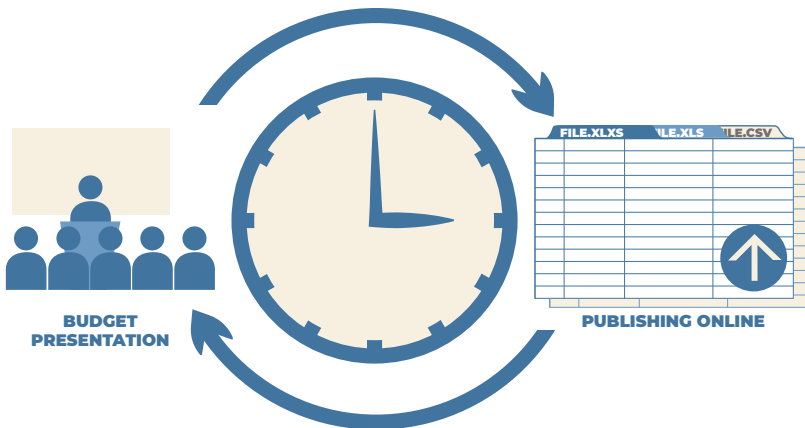
Assam

*Previously, **Assam** had appointed a Chief Data Officer in the finance department, which led to publishing of budget data in open and increased citizen participation in the budgetary processes. But unfortunately, that position remains currently vacant, thus it's essential to also find a timely replacement of CDOs. Currently, **Karnataka** and **Tamil Nadu** are the only states that have appointed a Chief Data Officer to publish open data related to audits and accounts.*

3.

Publish Budget Data online in a timely manner

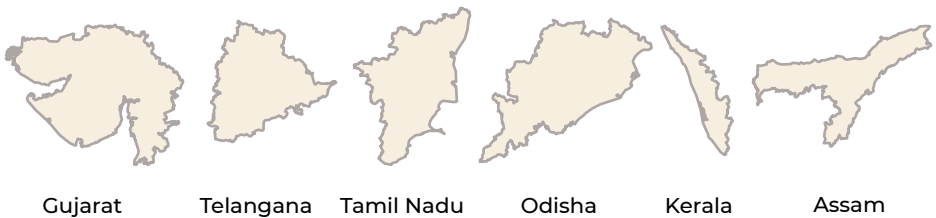
The complete State Budget, including the detailed budget books, should be made available online immediately after the presentation of the budget in the legislative assembly. Any delay will hinder the process of timely analysis and citizen uptake.



4.

Publish Budget Documents in English and the official language of the state

While all states publish budget documents in at least PDF format, a few states bring it out in only one language—either English or the state’s official language. The use of English alone makes the documents inaccessible to the residents of the state who are not proficient in the language, and the use of the state’s official language(s) alone restricts the ability of researchers from across the country to engage in timely and meaningful analysis of the budget.



*States may follow the best practice set by **Assam, Gujarat, Kerala, Odisha, Tamil Nadu** and **Telangana**, who publish their budget documents in both the vernacular language and English.*

5.

Publish Budgets online for at least the last ten years

The unavailability of budget documents for previous financial years restricts the opportunity for any long term analysis of state budget data. States may publish budget documents online for at least the last 10 years, a step that would help address the dual requirements of enhancing transparency and enabling long-term analysis.



Gujarat



Maharashtra



Madhya Pradesh



Chhattisgarh



Odisha



West Bengal

Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and West Bengal are among the few states who have published their State Budget documents for the last 10 years.

6.

Use Open Fonts and Unicode Characters

Some states employ non-'Open' fonts in their budget data, which cannot be picked up and used to create machine-readable files or for data parsing. Hence, for enhancing interoperability and scalability of such data, the states should prepare their budget data using 'Open' fonts and 'Unicode' characters. This would ensure consistent encoding, representation, and handling of text in data parsing processes.



Karnataka



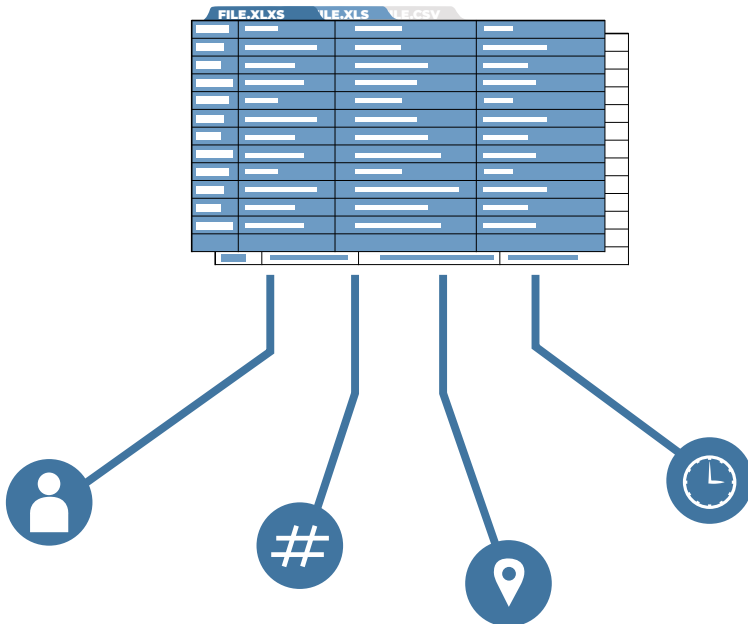
Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka are two states that use 'Open' fonts in their budget documents.

7.

Provide description (metadata) for the budget documents published online

A comprehensive data description or metadata helps citizens understand, better consume and analyse budget data. Most countries and regions across the globe have been publishing comprehensive metadata alongside their budget data.



We recommend state finance departments to adopt National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy guidelines and develop metadata that include data description, keywords, units, theme and more. This will enable published budget datasets to be easily searched, discovered and indexed on the state finance website.



Assam

*Currently, **Assam** is the only state to publish metadata along with their budget data on Open Budgets India platform.*

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Our work

We are a research lab working at the intersection of data, tech, design and social science to strengthen the course of civic engagements in India. We work to harness the potential of open knowledge movements and better enable citizens to engage in matters of public reform. We aim to grow data and tech literacy of governments, non-profits, think-tanks, media houses, universities, and more to enable data-driven decision-making at scale.


- Open Budgets India
(<https://openbudgetsindia.org/>)
 - Union Budget Explorer
(<https://union.openbudgetsindia.org/en/>)
 - Himachal Pradesh Fiscal Data Explorer
(<https://hp.openbudgetsindia.org/>)
 - Assam Budget Explorer
(<https://assam.openbudgetsindia.org/en/>)
- Open Contracting India
(<https://assam.open-contracting.in/>)
- Justice Hub
(<https://justicehub.in/>)



OpenBudgetsIndia





www.civicalab.in
info@civicalab.in
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