

BUDGET CYCLE ADVOCACY IN ACTION

1
STAGE

BUDGET FORMULATION

The executive formulates the draft budget. This stage consists of two phases: (1) policy priority setting and (2) programmatic and budget planning.

- **HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?**
 - You have to be specifically invited to participate, i.e. the government wants to find out what services are available or there is a call for social contracting proposals.
- **WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED?**
 - Evidence-based data and information on international best practice and guidelines
 - Services funded by donors
 - Current funding gaps for harm reduction services
 - Population size estimates, the key health needs of people who use drugs in your country and the unit cost of services.
 - Technical knowledge on service delivery and cost-effectiveness arguments.
- **WHO SHOULD YOU TARGET WITH YOUR ADVOCACY DEPENDING ON YOUR COUNTRY CONTEXT?**
 - National government officials responsible for health (e.g. the Minister of Health) and/or
 - The Ministry of Finance and/or
 - Local government officials and/or
 - Health insurance fund and/or
 - International partners, including bilateral and multilateral donors
- **WHAT SHOULD YOUR OBJECTIVE BE AND WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE?**
 - Harm reduction services you advocate for are recognised as a priority for domestic funding and included in the budget.
- **WHAT ARE THE KEY BARRIERS TO YOUR INVOLVEMENT?**
 - Lack of fiscal transparency
 - Corruption
 - Lack of allies, strategic partners and influence
 - Lack of awareness among public agencies
 - Limited knowledge and capacity of advocates to influence and engage with budget processes
 - Lack of social contracting



2
STAGE

BUDGET ENACTMENT

The legislature reviews and amends the budget and then enacts it into law.

- **HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?**
 - Through participation in public hearings or through a 'friendly legislator' (e.g. a member of parliament who supports harm reduction).
- **WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED?**
 - Evidence-based data and information on international best practice and guidelines
 - Services funded by donors
 - Current funding gaps for harm reduction services
 - Population size estimates, the key health needs of people who use drugs in your country and the unit cost of services.
 - Technical knowledge on service delivery and cost-effectiveness arguments will also be needed.
- **WHO SHOULD YOU TARGET WITH YOUR ADVOCACY DEPENDING ON YOUR COUNTRY CONTEXT?**
 - National government officials responsible for health (e.g. the Minister of Health) and/or
 - The Ministry of Finance and/or
 - Local government officials and/or
 - Health insurance fund and/or
 - International partners, including bilateral and multilateral donors
- **WHAT SHOULD YOUR OBJECTIVE BE AND WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE?**
 - Funding for the harm reduction services you advocate for is approved and adopted
- **WHAT ARE THE KEY BARRIERS TO YOUR INVOLVEMENT?**
 - Lack of fiscal transparency
 - Lack of awareness among public agencies
 - Limited knowledge and capacity of advocates to influence and engage with budget processes
 - Lack of allies, strategic partners and influence



4
STAGE

BUDGET OVERSIGHT

An independent audit checks if the budget was implemented efficiently and in line with plans. Parliament's budget office will also look at budget execution.

- **HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?**
 - Budget oversight is an ongoing process covering all the stages of budget cycle, but the largest portion of budget oversight work is done at the end of the budget cycle as a part of a retrospective audit.
- **WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED?**
 - Budget analysis conducted during the previous stage plus key recommendations on how to improve identified inefficiencies, close gaps in allocations and expenditures, and address human rights violations and quality issues.
- **WHO SHOULD YOU TARGET WITH YOUR ADVOCACY DEPENDING ON YOUR COUNTRY CONTEXT?**
 - National government officials responsible for health (e.g. the Minister of Health) and/or
 - The Ministry of Finance and/or
 - Parliament and the legislature (e.g. members of parliament) and/or
 - The auditor general
 - Local (sub-national) government officials and/or
 - Health managers or governing structures (e.g. hospital or health facility managers or management committees) and/or
 - International partners, including bilateral and multilateral donors
- **WHAT SHOULD YOUR OBJECTIVE BE AND WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE?**
 - Improve the availability, cost-effectiveness, quality and allocations for harm reduction programming in coming years.
- **WHAT ARE THE KEY BARRIERS TO YOUR INVOLVEMENT?**
 - Lack of fiscal transparency
 - Lack of disaggregated data
 - Lack of capacity to undertake budget analysis and budget advocacy
 - Lack of allies, strategic partnerships and influence



3
STAGE

BUDGET EXECUTION/ IMPLEMENTATION

The government implements the budget by providing funds and monitoring spending to ensure it is in line with the planned budget.

- **HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?**
 - Budget implementation is a difficult process to engage with. This is because it is short-term. However, many advocates find ways to engage.
- **WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED?**
 - Access to public budget documents
 - Analysis of the budget plan to identify underspend, bottlenecks and leakages, and to assess whether the budget is being implemented efficiently.
 - To advocate for underspend health funds to be allocated to harm reduction services for, you will need the same information as in stages 1 and 2.
- **WHO SHOULD YOU TARGET WITH YOUR ADVOCACY DEPENDING ON YOUR COUNTRY CONTEXT?**
 - Local (sub-national) government officials and/or
 - State or district officials (e.g. district health officials)
 - Health managers or governing structures (e.g. hospital or health facility managers or management committees) and/or
 - International partners, including bilateral and multilateral donors
- **WHAT SHOULD YOUR OBJECTIVE BE AND WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE?**
 - Identify key challenges and gaps that prevent harm reduction services from being efficiently implemented and improve the outcomes of budget expenditures. If underspending is predicted then your goal is to work out how these funds can be reprogrammed for alternative/additional activities.
- **WHAT ARE THE KEY BARRIERS TO YOUR INVOLVEMENT?**
 - Lack of capacity to analyse budgets and public procurements
 - Lack of fiscal transparency
 - Lack of disaggregated data or access to data

