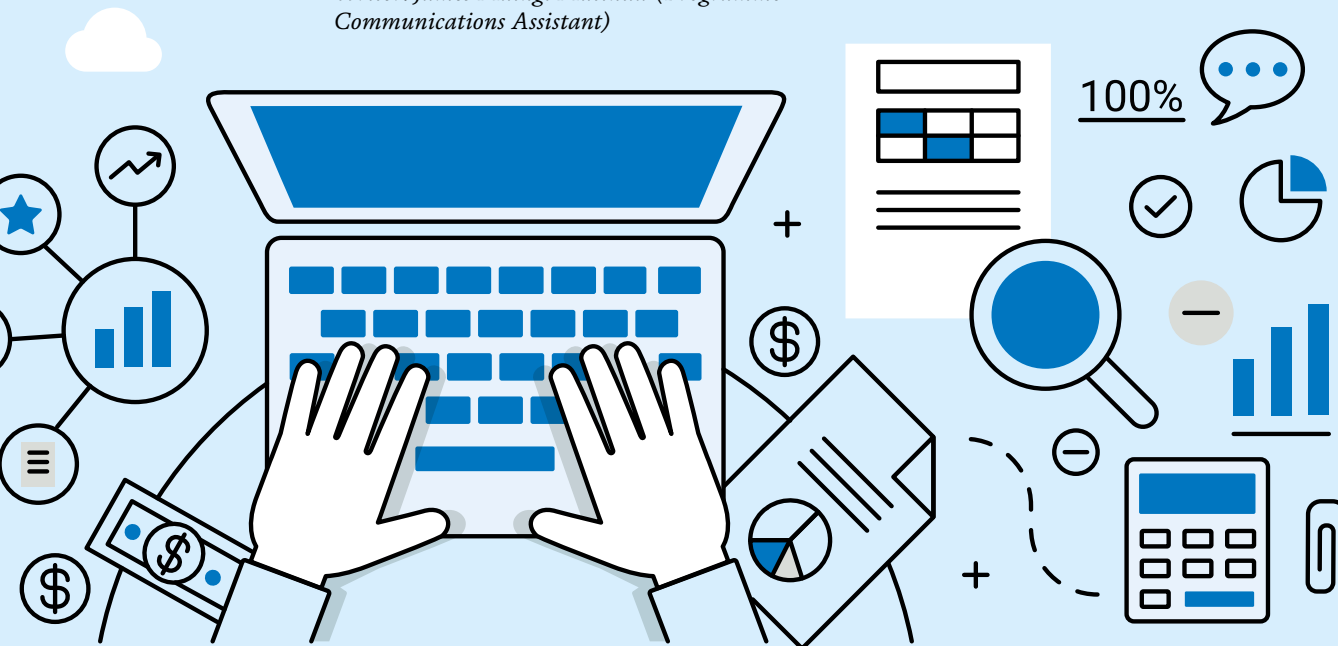


Improving Budget Transparency through the Budget Portal

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As we continue to journey through the public finance landscape, we shift our focus to how technology has improved budget transparency and facilitated convenient access to budgetary information. Legal mandates demand that any financial decisions involving the public be open to public participation. Technology has strategically seized this opportunity to achieve comprehensive disclosure of pertinent fiscal information in a systematic and timely manner. This strategic initiative takes shape through the phased development of the “Bajeti Yetu” Portal designed to present information in a manner that allows easy interaction for any member of the public or stakeholder.

Enhancing Accessibility and Organization of Budget Documents

The National Treasury has historically aimed to meet this transparency requirement by making a number of documents, including those pertaining to budget, available on its website. Accessing and searching for this information has not been easy due to the large number of documents published by the National Treasury.

This challenge is especially pronounced for new users navigating the website because they have to deal with not only budget-related materials but a myriad of other documents. Compounding this challenge, the National Treasury has numerous reports from different departments featured on the website which further complicates the search for budget information. Additionally, lack of proper organization makes it challenging for users to access information easily.

With the creation of Bajeti Yetu portal, technology has proven to be a reliable partner in addressing

these challenges. The portal systematically organizes all budget documents extracted from the National Treasury website resulting in the creation of a comprehensive document library within the portal.

Users can now easily access various National Treasury budget publications, including circulars, Budget Policy Statements, Budget Reviews Outlook Paper (BROP), and other essential budget documentation. The document library provides a user friendly experience by making the information searchable by financial year or document category. The Bajeti Yetu Portal represents a significant leap forward in overcoming the challenges of accessibility and organization, ensuring that relevant budget information is readily available and effortlessly navigable for all users.

User-Friendly Data Manipulation and Analysis:

Historically, the National Treasury has shared budget information through its website often presented in PDF format hindering user-friendly interaction. This experience has been simplified by the portal by ensuring data within the portal is easy to manipulate. The ability to create charts and visualizations on specific requirements has been made possible.

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Whether one wants to analyze the expenditure trends in a particular sector or develop tables and charts, the portal facilitates this operations. Users can now delve deeper and gain insights into specific program initiatives implemented within a sector. This extended functionality contributes significantly to improving transparency regarding budget allocations. For instance, within the Energy, Infrastructure and ICT Sector, users can drill down further to visually assess the prioritized areas and associated budgetary allocations, offering a clearer understanding of the specific focus and priorities within that sector.

Mapping Feature for Geographical Transparency:

Due to the previous practice of publishing budget documents solely on the website, there was a limitation in visually representing the allocation and distribution of resources across the country. In the spirit of enhancing transparency, the portal introduced a mapping feature allowing users to visually grasp how specific allocations are distributed across the country. Initial attention has been given to the education and health sectors. Users now can accurately pinpoint schools on the map, allowing them to observe the distribution of allocations to sub-counties and villages.

With detailed information about school allocations, the portal makes it easier to search schools by county and sub-county. This strategic addition contributes to a more transparent understanding of how resources are allocated geographically, fostering informed insights into budget priorities.

Public Participation Model:

Also included in the portal is an additional feature on public participation where members of the public can easily comment on particular documents. For instance, users can navigate to a particular report, share their insights, and the National Treasury can respond directly to the raised comments. This marks a significant departure from conventional approaches, where the public had no avenue to express their opinions on specific budget documents, as there was previously no provision for such interactions.

Challenges and lessons learnt.

While the portal improves transparency in highlighting budget allocations, it lacks the capability to offer insights into whether the planned development initiatives outlined in the budget were successfully achieved. This crucial information would bridge the gap between the intended outcomes in the budget and the actual execution. Recognizing this as one of the challenges, the solution lies in addressing it during the phase 2 development of the portal, which includes the automation of additional budget documents, specifically program performance review reports.

Life is indeed a journey filled with challenges, lessons, and experiences to savor. The journey with GIMIS and Budget Portal reflects a commitment to overcome challenges, embrace lessons, and continually enhance systems for more efficient and transparent public finance management.

As the path unfolds, the resolve remains strong to meet challenges with innovation and apply lessons learned for the betterment of public service delivery.