**BCOP Working Group (WG) on Budget Literacy and Transparency**

**Meeting of the WG to Finalize PEMPAL Recommendations on Overcoming Challenges in Designing and Implementing Citizens’ Budgets in PEMPAL Countries**

**September 22, 15.00-17.00**

**World Bank Resident Mission, room 108**

**Moscow, Bol’shaya Molchanovka st., 36/1**

**Background and context**

**This workshop is a part of the Working Group on Budget Literacy and Transparency, established by PEMPAL[[1]](#footnote-1)** Budget Community of Practice (BCOP) under its Action Plan for FY17. The Working Group is led by BCOP Executive Committee members from the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation. Its activities are supported by the World Bank resource team. The objective of the Working Group is to learn from international experience on approaches to raise budget literacy among citizens and to enhance budget openness and accessibility.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**During the first half of 2016 the WG has been developing recommendations on overcoming challenges in designing and implementing Citizens’ Budgets in PEMPAL countries.** The topic and the format have been selected because Citizens’ Budgets remain a key challenge in providing a broad-based access to budget information in PEMPAL countries. In the 2015 PEMPAL survey, only 5 countries participating in the WG reported having Citizens’ Budgets[[3]](#footnote-3), and only 4 countries reported having e-portals on Citizens’ Budget at national and sub-national levels.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Results from the 2015 Open Budget Index (OBI) also show less than half the countries from the PEMPAL region have a citizens’ budget**.[[5]](#footnote-5) Only the following countries reported having one: Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Russian Federation, and Czech Republic (IACOP). Examining budget transparency more broadly, the following countries from the PEMPAL region were categorized as providing ‘substantial budget information’ scoring between 61-80/100: Romania (75), Russia (74), Czech Republic (69), Georgia (66), and Bulgaria (65). These are significant achievements particularly in the context that the average score of the 102 countries surveyed was 45/100. Kyrgyz Republic also showed notable improvement since the last OBI 2012 score of 20/100 to achieve 54/100 for their 2015 score, including having all key budget documents accessible to its citizens.

**Although significant progress is evident in parts of the PEMPAL region, OBI scores also indicate opportunities for reform and improvement**. In February 2016 the WG started to discuss key challenges identified by the participating countries with respect to the designing and implementing Citizens’ Budgets. Some of the challenges were selected for discussions in the course of producing recommendations, which later served as the basis for the recommendations

**Based on the discussions and a review of international practice that followed, the WG leaders in cooperation with the Resource team have developed draft recommendations** that are presented for a discussion by all the WG participants at a VC on September 22, 2016, in order to finalize the recommendations.

**Participants**

**The 15 member countries of the working group will be invited to the workshop**: Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova Romania Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The meeting will be attended by the WB Resource Team. The moderator, Lead for Working Group from the Ministry of Finance, Russian Federation, Anna Belenchuk, will participate from the WB RM in Moscow.

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**AGENDA**

Moderator: Lead for Working Group from the Ministry of Finance, Russian Federation, Anna Belenchuk, BCOP Executive Committee Chair

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| 15.00-15.15 | ***Welcoming of the participants***  Maya Gusarova, Coordinator of BCOP Resource Team, Public Sector Specialist, World Bank  ***Introduction of the agenda***  Anna Belenchuk, Chair of BCOP Executive Committee, Ministry of Finance of Russian Federation  ***Participants introductions*** |
| 15.15 -15.45 | ***Presentation of PEMPAL recommendations to overcome challenges in designing and implementing Citizens’ Budgets in PEMPAL countries***  Deanna Aubrey, Public Finance Management Consultant, PEMPAL Strategic Advisor/BCOP Resource Team, World Bank |
| 15.45-16.30 | ***Discussion: the WG participants are invited to provide comments and suggestions regarding finalization of the recommendations***  Мoderators:  Anna Belenchuk, Chair of BCOP Executive Committee, Ministry of Finance of Russian Federation  Maya Gusarova, Coordinator of BCOP Resource Team, Public Sector Specialist, World Bank |
| 16.30 -17.00 | ***The Working Group’s future plans***  Anna Belenchuk, Chair of BCOP Executive Committee, Ministry of Finance of Russian Federation |

Background documents to be circulated:

* Draft PEMPAL recommendations to overcome challenges in designing and implementing Citizens’ Budgets in PEMPAL countries.

1. Public Expenditure Management Peer Assisted Learning network established 2006 by the World Bank and other donors. Currently has 21 countries participating with members from budget areas of Ministries of Finance. Supported by World Bank, Ministry of Finance of Russian Federation, and SECO. See [www.pempal.org](http://www.pempal.org) for more information. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Source: Budget Literacy Work Group Concept Note <http://www.pempal.org/event/eventitem/read/140/389> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Russian Federation, Croatia, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Undertaken by 14 of the 15 countries participating in the Working Group. Results available at <http://www.pempal.org/event/eventitem/read/140/386> (presentation by Deanna Aubrey) and Report <http://www.pempal.org/event/eventitem/read/140/388> (compiled by Nina Duduchava). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Some PEMPAL countries did not participate in the survey e.g. Armenia, Belarus, and Uzbekistan [↑](#footnote-ref-5)