



## Article

# Assessment of the Impact of Economic and Demographic Factors on the Financial Independence of Local Budgets

Khayot Ilyasovich Inogamov<sup>1</sup>

1. Independent researcher at the Banking and Finance Academy of the Republic of Uzbekistan

\* Correspondence: [Xisobot@bk.ru](mailto:Xisobot@bk.ru)

**Abstract:** The article examines the specific aspects and theoretical foundations of the financial independence of local budgets. It systematizes the impact of the formation of financial policy and the scientific approaches of local and foreign scholars. A survey was conducted among the population, and based on this survey, attention was paid to assessing the financial independence of local budgets. Based on the research, scientific conclusions and proposals have been developed. In this case, scientific conclusions are based on the point of view of the unitary or federal form of the state.

**Keywords:** local budget, financial independence, budget policy, financial powers, initiative budget, budget for citizens, budget transparency

## 1. Introduction

In Uzbekistan, a number of changes aimed at ensuring the financial stability of local budgets and strengthening the participation of the population in them are being implemented. The goal is to take into account the opinions of citizens in the development of budget policy and to increase the role of democratic elements in financial policy. In our view, the reforms being carried out by our state can be described as fundamental reforms reflecting the openness, equality, and elements of freedom in the economy.

In budget policy, especially from a regional perspective, it is important to ensure the participation of citizens in making financial decisions and to develop scientifically based approaches to regulate this participation. Overall, ensuring the participation of the population in decision-making regarding financial policy is crucial, including their involvement in voting processes, their awareness of the transparency of the budget, and the precise analysis of regional needs, which are essential for shaping collective potential.

In this regard, it is advisable to pay attention to the scientific conclusions of some researchers and scholars. In particular, Y. Akhunov provides scientific conclusions regarding the initiative budget category [1]. He notes that the participation of citizens in the development of projects funded by the state budget constitutes the formation of the initiative budget category. Furthermore, he shares his thoughts on the essence of the existing initiative budget and its implementation stages.

### Literature review

N. Yuldasheva analyzes the features of financial policy in the fight against the crisis in some federal states [2] (see Table 1).

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According to the data in Table 1, financial policy plays a special role in the experience of many federal states. This emphasizes that federal states are widely using financial policy in the fight against the crisis, and the degree of freedom in it is of significant importance.

It should be noted that the regional financial independence in federal states takes on a broader character than the experience in unitary states. This expresses the need to take into account the state structure in the approach to the category of financial independence. Therefore, the balanced distribution of financial powers between the central and regional authorities is of great importance in the development of financial independence.

Table 1. Crisis Management Measures in Foreign Countries

Implemented measures	Countries					
	US A	Great Britain	Germany	Norway	Japan	South Korea
Stabilizing financial sector	+	+	+	+	+	+
Monetary policy	+	-	-	+	+	+
Social protection of population	+	+	+	+	+	+
Tax policy	+	+	+	+	+	+
Budget policy	+	+	+	-	+	+
Supporting real sector	+	+	+	+	+	+

In his scientific article, Assoc. Prof. M. Khaydarov expresses his views on the priority directions of fiscal policy [3]. According to him, the factor of financial independence of local budgets is their stable ownership of their own revenues. In this regard, he has conducted scientific research on the sales tax and substantiated his scientific conclusions on it.

Assoc. Prof. U. Uroqov conducts research aimed at ensuring the financial independence of local budgets [4]. He emphasizes the importance of interbudgetary relations and ensuring the stability of budgets. He also provides his scientific approaches to the regulation of budget revenues and expenditures.

P. Usmonov attempts to form scientific conclusions on the financial independence of local budgets [5]. In his opinion, conducting scientific research on financial independence, implementing wide-ranging promotional activities among the population, and resolving the main directions with the financial independence of local government bodies are important. He also emphasizes the importance of accelerating and systematizing decentralization work in the budget system.

N. Ernazarov conducts scientific research on the effective use of local budget funds [6]. In his opinion, it is appropriate to focus on the redistribution of surplus revenues within the regional section, further optimize and increase the regulatory revenues, and further improve the financial powers of local government authorities in managing the additionally generated revenues.

The research carried out by Uzbek scientists shows that the financial independence of local budgets is becoming one of the important areas. It is substantiated that both tax policy and expenditure distribution policies are a priority in this regard.

In our opinion, the following aspects can be highlighted in ensuring the financial independence of local budgets.

Firstly, it is important to have a revenue base. This involves identifying and assessing the potential sources of revenue formation in the region.

Secondly, financial independence regarding budget expenditures is emphasized as a priority direction, such as ensuring transparency in inter-budgetary relations and managing budget expenditures.

Thirdly, improving citizen participation in ensuring the financial independence of regional budget policy is necessary. It is suggested that measures be taken to widely explain the role of the population in the distribution of budget expenditures and its unique characteristics.

Assoc. Prof. U. Pardaev focuses on the factors of budget transparency and openness in the use of state budget funds in his research [7]. He attempts to analyze the indicators established in international rankings for ensuring budget openness and the system of questionnaires related to them. In his opinion, enhancing budget openness involves improving the forms and methods of publishing information about budget data, ensuring that these reports are understandable to the population, and strengthening the integrity of information regarding budget data.

Assoc. Prof. N. Primova also develops approaches concerning the budget in her scientific article [8]. The participation of citizens in budget policy is viewed from the perspective of taxpayers. It is analyzed that ensuring the participation of citizens as taxpayers in the decision-making process regarding the budget is of significant importance.

M. Neshkova attempts to answer the question of whether the independence of entities in the allocation of state budget funds serves to increase the participation of the population or not [9]. She notes that civil servants have become accustomed to relying more on established rules. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the participation of citizens in the development of budget policy necessitates a solid legal basis for the decisions of civil servants.

In our opinion, the participation of citizens in making financial decisions concerning the budget has a significant impact, as reflected in numerous studies. This raises the need to identify and assess the current participation of citizens in processes related to the local budget. From this perspective, we have attempted to analyze the opinions of the population concerning the initiative budget, which could reflect the regional independence of budget policy, based on a survey.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The methodological approach to the article aims at carrying out a systematic analysis of financial independence of the local budgets by means of theoretical, empirical and analytical methods. The research is based on the survey completed among the inhabitants of the Yangiayot district of Tashkent city in Uzbekistan which was conducted in October – November 2024. The survey aimed at collecting demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and assessing the level of initiative budgeting concept understanding, as well as the level of the population's involvement in such processes. Questionnaire data was analyzed using multinomial logistic regression; the budget preference, transparency and challenges were the independent and dependent variables. This covering quantitative study revealed associations and correlations of age, gender, and knowledge with budget preference and perception of participatory budget. In the same way, the study compares the results from an extensive literature review together with the researches of local and foreign scholars on fiscal policy, budget transparency and decentralization. Thus, the components of the methodology guarantee a sound methodological approach to identify the interdependence of economic and, demographic indicators, along with budget autonomy at the local level. It focuses on the explorations of practicable finding of ideas that will foster improved engagement and citizen participation, break down barriers

exposed by the study, and assist make better financial choices for the region. Both technical professionalism and setting relevance are retained at all times, which gives a worthy contribution to policy and academic debate.

### 3. Results

In October-November 2024, we conducted the following survey among the residents of the Yangihayot district in Tashkent city, using the electronic link: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SHPVD8u\_MnHLDYqUgTassHMg0Z5FomJ2xIZJnE\_6w0E/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SHPVD8u\_MnHLDYqUgTassHMg0Z5FomJ2xIZJnE\_6w0E/edit). A total of 396 participants took part in the survey.

#### Survey

##### 1. Your age

(Response entered by participants)

##### 2. Gender

Male

Female

##### 3. What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?

I have full knowledge

I have partial knowledge

I have never heard of it

##### 4. How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budget process?

Very good, active participation is possible

Good, but there are some obstacles

There are shortcomings, participation needs improvement

I don't know

##### 5. Which areas do you consider important for the allocation of financial resources?

Education and healthcare

Infrastructure and transportation

Ecology and environmental protection

Citizens' safety and cultural events

Other

##### 6. How important are reports on the outcomes of the initiative budget?

Very important, regular reporting is needed

Important, but annual reporting is sufficient

Reporting is not necessary

##### 7. What do you think are the challenges in the initiative budgeting process?

Barriers during voting and decision-making processes

Insufficient activity from the population

Lack of financial resources in the budget

Existing restrictions related to SIM cards

##### 8. How do you think the initiative budget impacts economic development?

It has a positive impact, more citizens are engaged

It has a negative impact

Not clear

We conducted our analyses using the multinomial logistic regression method through the Stata computer software for questions related to this questionnaire.

A total of 396 citizens participated in the survey, with an average age of 39.8 years, involving population groups ranging from 17 to 68 years old. Moreover, since many of the average responses were between 1 and 2, we believe it is necessary to take into account that the majority of responses are also around this range.

Additionally, looking at the proportions of responses, it is notable that 52 percent of participants are males and 48 percent are females. Furthermore, we can observe that the first response in the questions is gaining a significant proportion.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the survey among the population regarding initiative budgeting processes

Indicators' name	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	396	39.86364	10.40285	17	68
Gender	396	1.479798	.5002237	1	2
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	396	1.373737	.5245537	1	3
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budget process?	396	1.616162	.9408541	1	4
Which areas do you consider important for the allocation of financial resources?	396	1.853535	1.162173	1	5
How important are reports on the outcomes of the initiative budget?	396	1.262626	.5341191	1	3
What do you think are the challenges in the initiative budgeting process?	396	1.994949	.8328537	1	4
How do you think the initiative budget impacts economic development?	396	1.30303	.6668201	1	3

In conducting our research, we focus on evaluating the first four questions as independent variables and each of the last four questions as dependent variables in our models.

Initially, we will conduct an analysis of the interrelationships of responses to the question "Which areas do you consider important for the allocation of financial resources?".

From the data in Table 3, it is evident that economic and demographic factors have a significant impact on the areas where budget funds are spent.

Table 3. Analysis of answers to the question "Which areas do you consider important for the allocation of financial resources?"

$F(16, 380) = 5.70$ , Prob > F = 0.0000

Which areas do you consider important for the allocation of financial resources?	Coef. Std..	Err	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Education and healthcare	(base outcome)					
Infrastructure and transportation						
Age	.02969	.01321	2.25	<b>0.025</b>	.0037154	.055667
Gender	-.73151	.28898	-2.5	<b>0.012</b>	-1.29961	-.16336
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	.89397	.25736	3.47	<b>0.001</b>	.38799	1.3999
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budget process?	.08916	.16217	0.55	0.583	-.22966	.40799
_cons	-2.5346	.71808	-3.5	0.000	-3.9463	-1.1228
Ecology and environmental protection						
Age	.0390141	.01458	2.67	<b>0.008</b>	.0103379	.0676904
Gender	.4548294	.30144	1.51	0.132	-.13780	1.04746
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	-.269537	.28944	-0.9	0.352	-.83858	.2995155
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budget process?	.2051886	.15326	1.34	0.181	-.09612	.5064984
_cons	-3.501993	.81269	-4.3	0.000	-5.0997	-1.90425
Citizens' safety and cultural events						
Age	.020787	.0406986	0.51	0.610	-.0592256	.1008002
Gender	-.26237	.4858072	-0.5	0.589	-1.217467	.6927152
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	-.12047	.7067787	-0.2	0.865	-1.509996	1.269041
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budget process?	1.10373	.2071749	5.33	<b>0.000</b>	.6964339	1.511041
_cons	-5.38578	2.580605	-2.09	0.038	-10.45922	-.3123436
Other						
Age	.0111773	.0184932	0.60	0.546	-.02518	.0475347
Gender	1.06126	.5383199	1.97	<b>0.049</b>	.0029354	2.119596
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	.6013376	.4432375	1.36	0.176	-.27006	1.472737
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budget process?	.423568	.2402839	1.76	<b>0.079</b>	-.04882	.8959639
_cons	-5.9468	1.165039	-5.1	0.000	-8.2372	-3.65638

Using the models formed in Table 3, we succeeded in drawing the following scientific conclusions:

Firstly, it should be noted that the allocation of budget funds with priority given to the categories of education and healthcare is determined by the population. This reflects the fact that citizens consider it essential to focus on education and healthcare sectors.

Secondly, when directing budget funds toward infrastructure and transportation, it can be observed that increasing age and having complete information positively influence these preferences. Conversely, it should be noted that female respondents showed less pronounced inclination toward these budget expenditures. In other words, male respondents paid more attention to designating infrastructure as a key area.

Thirdly, it should be emphasized that allocating funds from the budget for ecology and environmental protection is important primarily for older respondents. In other cases, climate-related areas do not appear to develop in a statistically significant way for citizens.

Fourthly, directing budget funds toward public safety and cultural events is important for those who evaluate the opportunities for participating in the participatory budget process as "very good" and believe that active participation is possible.

Fifthly, allocating budget funds to areas outside those listed in the survey is developing with statistical significance among male respondents and those who rate the opportunities for participation in the participatory budget process as "very good" and believe in the possibility of active involvement.

In our view, social sectors and infrastructure are considered important among citizens when it comes to allocating budget funds. However, it can be observed that there is a perception among the population that budget allocations for improving climate and ecological issues are not highly necessary. This, we believe, underscores the need to promote and raise awareness of efforts in this area.

#### 4. Discussion

We will continue our research by analyzing trends related to the question, "How important are reports on the outcomes of the initiative budget?"

Table 4. Analysis of answers to the question "How important are reports on the outcomes of the initiative budget?"

$F(8, 388) = 5.26$ , Prob > F = 0.0000

How important are reports on the outcomes of the initiative budget	Coef. Std..	Err	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Very important, regular reporting is needed	(base outcome)					
Important, but annual reporting is sufficient						
Age	-.04037	.01491	-2.71	<b>0.007</b>	-.06969	-.01106
Gender	-.62299	.30293	-2.06	<b>0.040</b>	-1.2185	-.02743
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	.115465	.28852	0.40	0.689	-.45177	.68271
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the Participatory Budget process?	.675389	.14858	4.55	<b>0.000</b>	.38326	.96750

_cons	-.41413	.76242	-0.54	0.587	-1.913	1.0847
<b>Reporting is not necessary</b>						
Age	-.02041	.01885	-1.08	0.280	-.05749	.01665
Gender	1.16165	.6264	1.85	<b>0.064</b>	-.06988	2.3931
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	.592877	.43649	1.36	0.175	-.26526	1.4510
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budgeting process?	.620139	.20818	2.98	<b>0.003</b>	.21084	1.0294
_cons	-5.9489	1.0883	-5.47	0.000	-8.0886	-3.8092

According to the Table 4, some factors are influencing the presentation of reports on the implementation of initiative budgeting based on the opinions expressed by citizens. Based on these analyses, we have succeeded in formulating the following scientific conclusions:

Firstly, a significant portion of the respondents notes that it is important to provide reports regularly. This indicates the necessity of reports on regional financial policy.

Secondly, the responses of survey participants who stated that annual reports are sufficient were statistically significant in relation to age, gender, and their evaluation of the participatory budgeting process. Specifically, as age decreases and the respondent is female, there is a declining trend in considering annual reports as sufficient. For those who rated the opportunities to participate in the initiative budgeting process as excellent and believed in the possibility of active involvement, annual reports on the initiative budget hold significant importance.

Thirdly, those who indicated that reporting is not mandatory are male citizens and evaluators who assess the opportunities to participate in the initiative budgeting process very positively, and it should be noted that for those who believe in the possibility of active participation, the annual report on initiative budgeting is not mandatory. It should also be noted that there is no unified view on the issue of the annual report on initiative budgeting for evaluators who assess the opportunities to participate in the initiative budgeting process very positively and for those who believe in the possibility of active participation.

In our view, while reports may be important for older individuals, the idea that reports are not mandatory for male citizens is gaining significant statistical importance. This reflects the factors that demographic elements should be considered in financial decisions regarding local budgets.

We will examine the analysis of responses to the question, "What do you think are the challenges in the initiative budgeting process?" in Table 5.

Table 5. Analysis of answers to the question "What do you think are the challenges in the initiative budgeting process?"

$F(12, 384) = 6.45$ , Prob > F = 0.0000

What do you think are the challenges in the initiative budgeting process?	Coef. Std..	Err	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
<b>Barriers during voting and decision-making processes</b>						
Age	-.00791	.01245	-0.64	0.525	-.03239	.01656
Gender	-1.1015	.25660	-4.29	<b>0.000</b>	-1.6060	-.59709



What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	.274920	.27534	1.00	0.319	-.26640	.81624
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budgeting process	-.35149	.18868	-1.86	<b>0.063</b>	-.7224	.01946
_cons	1.40822	.59798	2.35	0.019	.23259	2.5838
<b>Insufficient activity from the population</b>	(base outcome)					
<b>Lack of financial resources in the budget</b>						
Age	-.05706	.01652	-3.45	<b>0.001</b>	-.08956	-.02456
Gender	-1.5326	.4641	-3.30	<b>0.001</b>	-2.4451	-.62020
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	1.1373	.34933	3.26	<b>0.001</b>	.45052	1.8241
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budgeting process	.62071	.19876	3.12	<b>0.002</b>	.22994	1.0114
_cons	-.02377	.88924	-0.03	0.979	-1.7720	1.7244
<b>Existing restrictions related to SIM cards</b>						
Age	-.00612	.01704	-0.36	0.720	-.03964	.02739
Gender	-1.2654	.40926	-3.09	<b>0.002</b>	-2.0700	-.46088
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	.22201	.39093	0.57	0.570	-.54656	.990595
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budgeting process	.3696	.15967	2.32	<b>0.021</b>	.05577	.68361
_cons	-.7828	.9907046	-0.79	0.430	-2.730578	1.164848

Based on the assessments conducted in Table 5, we have successfully formulated the following scientific conclusions:

Firstly, the participants who have identified the existence of barriers in the voting and decision-making process are developing inversely proportional when the participants are female. Also, those who rate the opportunities to participate in the initiative budget process as very good and believe that they can actively participate in it, know with a 10% probability that there are difficulties in voting and decision-making.

Secondly, the insufficient activity of the population is observed to be a key factor as determined by the participants. This is manifested in the high impact of the population's activity.

Thirdly, it is necessary to emphasize that the difficulties associated with the lack of financial resources in the budget have a statistically significant impact in all cases. In particular, those over 40 years of age, males, those who have complete information about the initiative budget and those who rate the opportunities to participate in the initiative budget process as very good and believe that they can actively participate in it, have proportionally noted the lack of sufficient funds with a high probability.

Fourthly, the difficulties associated with the existence of restrictions on SIM cards are noted by men and those who rate the opportunities to participate in the initiative budget process as very good and believe that they can actively participate in it, with a 5% probability.

In our opinion, it can be seen that the lack of budget funds and the inactivity of the population are the main factors in the implementation of the initiative budget and the creation of conditions for the financial independence of local budgets. This indicates the need to implement systemic changes to further optimize these factors.

Table 6. Analysis of answers to the question "How do you think the initiative budget impacts economic development?"

$F(8, 388)=4.13$ , Prob > F=0.0000

How do you think the initiative budget impacts economic development?	Coef. Std..	Err	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
It has a positive impact, more citizens are engaged	(base outcome)					
It has a negative impact						
Age	.010332	.01764	0.59	0.558	-.02434	.04501
Gender	-2.1888	.58514	-3.74	0.000	-.3.3391	-1.0384
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	.50341	.29990	1.68	0.094	-.08619	1.0930
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budget process?	.55186	.16354	3.37	0.001	.23034	.87338
_cons	-1.6812	1.1622	-1.45	0.149	-.3.9662	.60363
Not clear						
Age	-.00845	.01474	-0.57	0.567	-.03743	.02053
Gender	-.73537	.37427	-1.96	0.050	-.1.4711	.00043
What is your knowledge about the initiative budget?	-.08045	.33423	-0.24	0.810	-.73754	.57664
How would you assess the opportunities for participating in the initiative budget process?	.64853	.16458	3.94	0.000	.32496	.97210
_cons	-1.5875	.66957	-2.37	0.018	-.2.9039	-.27117

The models reflected in the responses to the question "How does the initiative budget affect economic development?" in the Table 6 indicate the following scientific conclusions:

Firstly, those who believe that proactive budget processes positively influence the region's economic development constitute the majority.

Secondly, on the contrary, it can be shown that those who say that it has a negative impact on the economic development of the region or that it is unclear are mostly men, those who have full information about the initiative budget, who evaluate the

opportunities to participate in the initiative budget process as very good, and those who believe that it is possible to actively participate in it.

In our opinion, men have a view that proactive budgeting processes negatively affect the economic development of the region. Additionally, those who evaluate the opportunities to participate in proactive budgeting processes as very good, and those who believe that active participation is possible, also express their views with the perspective that it has a negative impact.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the following factors are of particular importance in participatory budgeting processes.

Strengthening budget financing for education and healthcare sectors, as well as developing infrastructure, is encouraging citizens to prioritize these aspects. However, issues related to ecology and citizen safety are not considered significant by the population.

If being under the age of 40 affects the submission of reports on participatory budgeting, this factor is not significant for men.

Issues such as the lack of funds in the budget and the inactivity of the population are highlighted as the main difficulties in participatory budgeting. In our opinion, considering the above situations, it is crucial to develop the financial independence of local budgets. We also believe that this will contribute to the sustainable development of participatory budgeting processes.

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