Twaweza
Uganda Budget Explorer

Request for Proposals
Due Date: 2 January 2013

Title: Uganda Budget Explorer – an online platform to make budget information accessible / easy to use.

Objectives:
- To make budget data accessible and engaging to all interested (and potentially interested) audiences (see below for a detailed breakdown of these)
- To attract new audiences to budget data
- To emphasise the importance of budget data for all relevant stakeholders / key actors
- To allow users to do some of their own manipulation and analysis according to their interest
- To support sharing of interesting stories from budget data, as created by users
- To allow users to make correlations between their own work / research / interests and budget data
- To support analysis by non-experts
- To conform to technical standards to gain credibility and a 'stamp of approval' from technically-minded budget analysts
- To track interest in and use of budget data
- To drive year round interest in budget (changing default views to correlate with external events and pegs would be essential in this regard).

Delivery mechanism and specifications: online only, to use HTML5 not Flash. In the future some of the top level visualisations may also be used for hard copy distribution. To be embedded in the current Twaweza website.

Budget and schedule: budget range is US $ 10 000 – US $ 24 000 and schedule ideally not to exceed 2 months from start date but this can be discussed if not feasible

What we will provide: budget data sets over time in excel format. We will also provide a listing of the major ways in which budget data can be cut with some guidance on audiences for these different modes of analysis. However we would be open to feedback to improve this list.
We will also provide colour guidelines to ensue complementarity with current Twaweza logo / style.

Audiences: audiences are varied and detailed below with some guidance on what they might like to access in terms of budget data.

Media - key audience themselves as well as for onward dissemination. Media may have sectoral and geographical interests as well as requiring support in reporting the key headlines of the budget. Changes in spending in sectors over time would be of interest. Ideally when following up on stories related to the budget they will return to the UBE as part of an assessment of whether commitments have been honoured and whether allocations are reaching destination. So some scope for making the tool look fresh and relevant over the long-term is important.

Policy-makers - at national and local level, the UBE is expected to provide insight into specific sectoral and geographical data, and what areas have increased versus decreased over time.

NGOs / development practitioners - most likely sectoral and geographic interest related to their specific focus areas. Time series data might be of interest. The data can be used as the basis for advocacy (spend more on health instead of defense etc), promotion of accountability (ensuring funds reach destinations etc) as well as planning interventions (where the budget falls short)

Donors - although donors generally will have access to this data from government directly visualisations can be a more engaging way for them to ensure that commitments are met and, conversely, that their priorities align with the government's.

Budget Analysts – although they are likely to go straight to raw datasets in excel (therefore being able to download them is essential), they need to see that the tool is credible and contains all the categorisations of the budget as it is constructed. However in order not to overwhelm other users this should be an optional view.

Other issues
Sharing and printing: the ability to share, download, print each individual visualisation as selected by the user is vital. Visualisations will need to be download-able as JPEGs and PDFs to help drive media use.
User information: We would like to ensure that the tool can provide in-depth user statistics including monthly reports that cover most popular graphics / information, track sharing and usage.
Contextualisation and help: The option for explanatory and contextual text should also be available. One to describe what users are seeing and, moving forward, the option to add in contextualization, relationship to events etc.
Balancing user needs: Another key issue is in navigating the complexity and balancing the needs of non-technical users with those who have in-depth and sophisticated knowledge of how budgets work. Their approval of the visualisation is key to its credibility and integrity.
Telling stories: While Twaweza as an organization cannot pick and choose specific aspects of the data to highlight in this visualisation – users should be able to do so, so they can tell their own stories with the data.
Pop up survey: We would like to discuss the option of a pop-up questionnaire (short) appearing when users visit the site. Most likely this should appear every *Nth* user rather than every time people visit the site. This would contain a few questions on use of and interest in the budget tool.

Standards: the UBE and data contained will be required to conform to open data standards. In the future Twaweza would like to consider asking coders / developers to consider alternative presentations of the data and this should be possible directly from the tool.

Messages:
- Importance of budget data
- Wealth of information contained in the budget
- Uses of budget data
- Identifying government priorities
- Stories for each budget - that may be developed from the data in the future
- Comparisons across years, sectors, ministries and districts

Ways to breakdown the data:

In previous explorers data was broken down in numerous ways and this contributed to an over-complex visualisation. www.twaweza.org/tz-budget

Key modes of analysis are: Sector (agriculture, social welfare etc); Level of government (Overall, central government (ministries etc) and local government (regional)); increases/decreases over time (particularly since last budget); whether spending is recurrent or for new projects (less important); changes in per capita/per person allocations over time and across geographical areas.

We would also like to include some further analytical aspects: which cluster of the national poverty reduction strategy the spending relates to; some information on developmental priorities (health, education, water) and time-series and geographical variation. Note: more analysis options could be developed in collaboration.

Example of a budget visualisation that we like:

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/02/13/us/politics/2013-budget-proposal-graphic.html
(layperson's perspective)

Deliverables for Proposal

Please submit a full proposal including costs and timelines alongside any examples of previous similar work to uwazi@twaweza.org not later than Wednesday 2 January 2013.

If you have any specific questions about the project please contact rchande@twaweza.org. Please do not send proposals to this address.

Your proposal should include a detailed cost breakdown and timeline for delivery as well as samples of any previous similar work.