



CHAPTER 7

Strategies for the Incidence of Civil Society on the Defense Budget

7.1 Influence and Participation. Concept and Scope

Incidence is the result of a process based on power and participation. Participation may be understood as the ability and possibility for individuals and groups to influence the conditions that affect their lives. It is an attribute, a skill, a basic need; the satisfaction of that need for participation is connected to the requirement for identity that every human being has. It is also understood as the possibility to influence, through the existence of concrete conditions and mechanisms that allow the intervention of individuals, groups and institutions.¹

Mario Róvere² claims that it is possible to understand participation as one of the mechanisms

¹ Mercedes Jones, *Sociedad Civil y Procesos de Incidencia*, Foro del Sector Social, April 2003.

² *Ibid.*

for the distribution of power and, therefore, as one of the cornerstones of participatory democracy, a more mature form of democracy. Participation as a mechanism for collective influence and citizen control is an orderly intervention of individuals and organizations, which creates guarantees for the possibility of improving the democratic model.

Participation is conceived as an element that transforms the democratic system, grants it a different dynamism and, at the same time, requires permanent communication channels between the political leaders and the citizens. Participation is the initial step towards the establishment of the social control over public expenditure. The term "social control" refers to a particular approach to the control function, according to which society plays the role of major supervisor of public actions. For that purpose, it is necessary to define control levels, which will allow the gradual development of social interest and of the abilities necessary for the exercise of such supervision. From these premises, the levels of participation may be classified as follows:

The first level is *information*, which is the elementary level to start from if we are to achieve influence. It implies counting with the necessary information, in terms of quality and quantity, to be able to analyze and generate proposals supported by objective data or elements of reality.

A second level is *opinion*: based on information, it is possible to adopt positions. Positions, ideally, are the basis for decision-making following their expression, from the point of view of society. Election times are the most visible moments for positions, but studies confirm that, when there is no permanent expression of opinion, there is usually a trend towards the appearance of new opinions, contrary to the defined interest.

A third level is *decision-making*. In decision-making, again, we observe the fact that the absence of active participation in all times of public activities leads to new and illegitimate claims reaching the political center and imposing their strength.

We have chosen to use the concept of incidence, with a more limited meaning than *advocacy*,

³ The word advocacy comes from the Latin *Advocare* and means support to somebody who needs something. (Inés González Bombal, specialist in Advocacy issues and researcher of the CEDES in Argentina).

since it reinforces the idea of the object we wish to incidence, and does not make reference to the origin of the action, that is, the cause or the rights we are defending.³ We should also make a distinction between incidence and the concept of civic lobby. In its wider sense, the term lobby is used to refer to the efforts to influence the ideas and actions of people who have decision-making power, by talking directly to them, at their offices or in corridors. It implies exerting pressure so that they adopt or refrain from adopting certain decisions.

Incidence is a wider concept; it covers a range of activities that is large enough to include any individual, group or organization in different contexts. Whereas lobbying always implies influencing, incidence does not always refer to a lobbying action.⁴

7.2 Steps towards the Incidence of Civil Society

Why get involved in the applied work of defense budgeting?

As was analyzed in the previous chapters, defense, just like other fields of reality, has particular features that must be taken into account when thinking and deciding on the actions to be carried out. Transparency will be achieved when the policy of the area finds its expression in the budget. With that main objective it is possible to undertake actions to influence the dynamics and results of the decision-making process, which is expressed in the budget cycle but does not end there.

If we consider that incidence is the result of a process in which the analyst or organization participate and try to promote the achievement of values to build a democratic environment, the defense sector is not absent from that general pattern. Defense is one of the State policies and that alone should be a reason for society to become interested in its design and resources allocated to it. But it is also the policy through which the State expresses its monopoly over the use of force, which involves a potential risk to life for those who should serve in the area (whether a professional or a citizen in the case of an armed conflict), and which accompanies the design of foreign policy in an international environment with increasingly higher demands.

⁴ Mercedes Jones, *op. cit.*

This leads us to another characteristic of the defense good: defense as a good is provided in order to face external threats that may haunt the Nation. In this sense, the perception of threats that has guided the relations between many countries in the region for decades corresponded to objective elements of international relations, and also to subjective elements resulting from information that was not always complete and reliable. The development of new relations among countries in Latin America has found a key instrument in confidence building measures for the change from a logic of conflict to a logic of cooperation.

Transparency as a confidence-building measure reduces the uncertainty about changes in the countries' capabilities and intentions. And the defense budget is the area that clearly reflects the volume and destination of resources that feed country policies. Therefore, budget transparency in defense has been stipulated as a confidence-building measure in the Second Regional Conference on Confidence-Building Measures in San Salvador (1998). And although the highest transparency will come from the action of governments, the work made by individuals and organizations in civil society for a sustained and coherent consideration of this issue will allow to strengthen and accelerate that process in each country.

Actions for an Incidence Strategy

The characteristics mentioned above imply that any incidence strategy in the area of defense will make sense if designed in accordance with:

- A general objective that connects - in accordance with national reality - both policy and budget, in order to support the development of the democratic process and the effective design of the defense policy.
- The interconnection of particular objectives that will be designed in accordance with the overall objective.
- The combination of short-term strategies, mainly thinking of the medium and long term.

Thus, it will be possible to assume the complexities and sensitivities of the area and avoid the short-term temptations in terms of personal or organizational public image, instead of the needs of the policy itself.

For that, it will be necessary to:

- A. Define a strategy
- B. Project times
- C. Count with human resources
- D. Count with financial resources
- E. Plan the expected results to evaluate the process

Let us explore a hypothetical case and the possibilities that could emerge. Let us consider the case of an organization that begins to explore the budget preparation subject (following international requirements for transparency, the particular interest of any of its members, etc.). This insight reveals that, in the country, the defense budget is a black box, not only because of its complex technical approach, but also because an analysis of this kind implies beginning to make questions about how that budget expresses the design of the defense policy and its feasibility in the current international environment. Then, it decides that -given its objectives and missions- it will devote part of its actions to try to incide that aspect of national reality, and it begins a process characterized by the following steps:

A) Define a strategy

In the definition of the strategy it is important to:

i) Identify the problem we would like to approach

Different problems imply different objectives and activities. Working on defense budgets is a useful definition, but too wide when it comes to designing the consistency of actions. Are we going to work on the promotion of the need to analyze budgets? On concrete figures? On the confidence and

transparency of budgets among different countries? It may be based on all, one, or none at a given time. It is important to clearly define what problem/s we would like to approach, and for each of them undertake a separate road. Latin American countries, in general, have a historical problem with the definition of defense. There is usually a confusion between internal security and defense subjects, as a result of which budgets can not reflect real needs.

According to the case we are presenting, the problem we define is the need to identify the policy the current budget is expressing, its feasibility, and adjustments that should be made in order for the budget to reflect the policy. Some of the questions we could consider are:

- What is the existing pattern of national interests and objectives, defense objectives and public defense policy?
- According to what principles and reasons are bases established to design the defense budget?
- What is the relationship between this budget and the macroeconomic policy of the country in general, and the design of the defense policy in particular?

The sensitivity of the defense area, the general rigidity of its budget, the amounts of its items, are some of the characteristics to be taken into account. Likewise, it will be necessary to consider leading actors in the area, such as the military forces (led by the governments in a dynamic political relationship that sustains and supports democratic construction).

ii) Identify the legal and political situation to analyze the feasibility of a strategy of this kind

Once the problem has been defined, it will be necessary to evaluate the real possibilities for action, offered both by the legal framework and the political environment. This will reveal whether it is possible to approach the problem directly, or whether it will be necessary to look for indirect approaches, which after some time will allow a direct approach. It is essential for a direct approach to be possible that there be a rapprochement between society and its political representatives. Most of the legal obstacles for monitoring the public budget by the population may be corrected by the legislative branch.

In our imaginary case, the legal framework may determine concrete difficulties to have access to disaggregated information of the defense budget. That constitutes an intermediate problem, which is access to the information. In that case, it will be necessary to count with a strategy aimed at solving this problem, before approaching the major problem. This is an illustration of one of the basic principles to be assumed for the incidence approach: be willing to redefine problems and objectives, if that helps to introduce the issue, even if that implies taking a longer road to approach the main objective. If there were political impediments that determine the inconvenience of a direct treatment of the issue, it will also be necessary to define ways for working on them.

iii) Identify the needs of the population targeted by the project

Although the whole population will benefit from a better quality and efficiency in the defense budget, there is a specific group that will be the target of actions to be undertaken and, in this case, that group will be made up of decision-makers, members of the armed forces, academicians, and opinion makers, that work in the area of defense at a national level. Their needs must be contemplated, since their actions will have a positive result and better chances of openness and reception.

For instance: Is there a need for more technical knowledge, for information from compared experiences; for the generation of channels of dialogue through which the civilian and military actors may put forward their various concerns about the reality of defense?

iv) Define objectives and activities

At this point in the example, our project tends to collaborate so that the various actors involved in political decisions may trigger a debate about policy and budget. To that end, we may establish objectives and the activities that will help us attain them.

Objectives:

- Promote awareness in the actors involved in decision-making in defense about the importance of relating the budget to the debates on policy concepts.

- Make citizens sensitive to the importance of defense, and its budgetary expression.
- Learn about the reality of each stage in the defense budget cycle.
- Support the development of programs that research the budgetary reflection of the defense policy in the country during the past decades.

Activities:

In order to meet the objectives, we will have to define activities. As an example, let us think of activities along several years. Real times will bear a relationship with the possibilities for action, to the political situation and even, in some cases and due to the sensitivity of the issue, to the internal agreements within the organization itself.

During the first year, the activities would contemplate internal and external aspects. Internally, it is worth considering the following:

- a) Selection of the work team: do we have our own capabilities or do we need to introduce a specific type of professionals?
- b) Training and appropriation of the subject by the team (training could be provided by organizations with experience in the area).
- c) Define what we are going to do: budget analysis, citizen awareness, influence on the defense policy.
- d) Define the coalition work,⁵ whether alliances will be formed, and with whom.
- e) Define the relation with the actors: this should be, according to the situation presented, a relationship of cooperation rather than confrontation.
- f) Drafting of a specific project to investigate the operation of each stage in the defense budget cycle of the country, and another project to analyze how the budget behaved during the past years in those cases in which information is available. This will also

⁵ The characteristics of the coalition are: 1- short term; 2- for a single public issue; 3- for a single public policy; 4- for a wide range of public issues or policies.

include an analysis of the relation between expenditure and the national defense policy in the same period.

Externally, elements such as the following should be considered:

- a) Awareness of the beneficiary population (seminars, workshops, drafting working documents).
- b) Meetings with government officials to present the issue, send letters, contribute material from other experiences, express the will to work in cooperation rather than in competition, make the knowledge of the organization available, receive suggestions, confront their own opinion with the official experience, etc.
- c) Initiate meetings to begin to make the mass media aware of the issue.
- d) Awareness of other organizations of civil society, so that they get involved in the budgetary issue of defense (for instance, organizations of the country that work on budgets in general).
- e) Generate alliances with Universities, Centers of Strategic Studies, and/or Professional Associations for the analysis of the public budget.
- f) Produce hard information, didactic and of easy access, about the composition of the budget.

During the second year, the activities could be oriented to:

- a) Strengthening the alliances: Is it possible to look for cooperation with institutions from other countries?
- b) Making a pilot exercise, after defining the methodology agreed with the various actors, for the implementation of a mechanism of participation in budget preparation and control.
- c) Produce hard information, didactic and of easy access, about the composition of the defense budget.

v) Define alliances, actors and discourses

To be introduced in the issue and approach the problem -in this case, analyze the relationship between policy and budget and begin an awareness process about the need for this relation- we may think of the strategic design of alliances that allow a higher strength and ability to deal with the issue in all its complexity. To promote and consolidate the action and experience of a work of this kind, new in the region, it may be key to work in a network and in cooperation. That will imply defining:

- the actors involved in the problem.
- the discourse or message to be worked on with each of them.

Let us see some of the most relevant actors for this case:

I. Executive branch: it is the main actor in our problem, and therefore a contact must be found to allow the organization to present its proposal and concerns. This may be with the Ministry of Defense, or with the Ministry of Economy and Finance (decision-makers and personnel directly involved in every day tasks), as well as with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the design of the foreign policy that supports the defense policy. This may generate a connection that allows a better understanding of the information, disseminate the idea of a consistent relation between policy and budget, and promote a dialogue that helps strengthen the abilities for the conduction of the area.

II. Legislative branch: relation with the defense and budget committees, offering training in budgetary issues, and results of the investigations that may be conducted. Given the problem we are approaching, and being the Legislative the main actor in the approval of the budget, a goal of this relationship could be to generate in the representatives the need to analyze the way the budget expresses the policy the country is willing to implement, and establish a fluent relationship with the Executive in order to present ideas and modifications.

III. Armed forces: the channels of communication are essential, since these are the main actors for their participation in planning and their experience in the execution of the defense budget. These channels of dialogue will help the organization better know the reality of the problem,

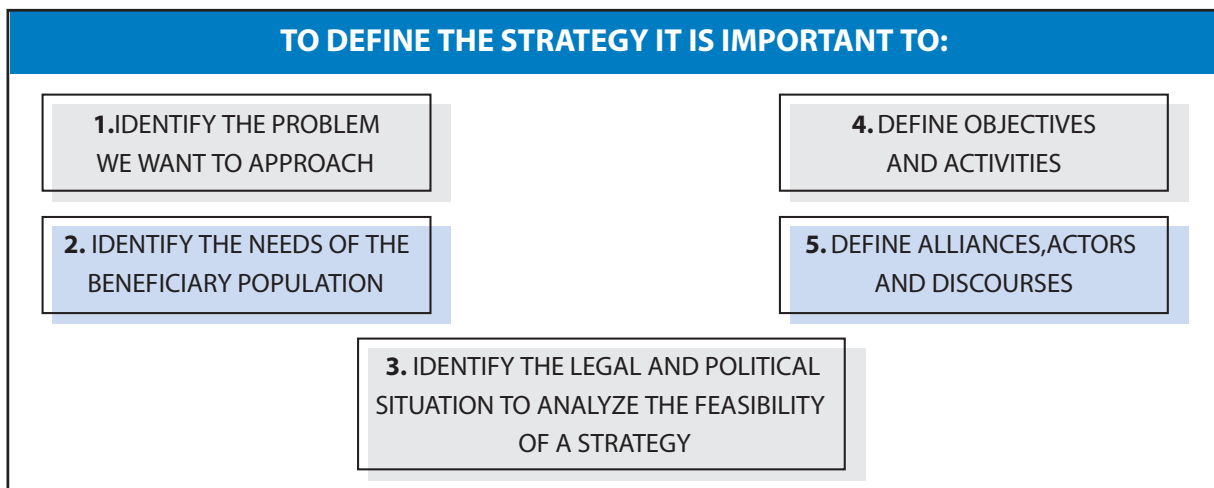
think of new work alternatives, and incorporate a technical knowledge to the debates it proposes.

IV. Political parties: if we speak of policy design, the political parties should be included in the strategy of the organization, basically to generate a greater awareness about the main problem defined.

V. Universities, research centers: we may generate academic cooperation alliances, in order to carry out the research programs and involve them in the independent analysis of the defense budget in a didactic manner and of easy access.

VI. Mass media: the action with the mass media in a problem of this kind could be defined according to the opportunity criterion, to disseminate activities and propositions once they are made and the connection with the various actors has been initiated. Thus, and according to the political sensitivity existing in each country, the organization may determine the timely moment so that this kind of alliances contributes to the discussion of the problem.

VII. Experts and organizations from other countries in the region: maximizing efforts and seeing compared experiences may be another key element for the development of the action that the organization wants to undertake. For instance, organizing a workshop with the attendance of experts in defense budgeting and political design for defense, to discuss the importance of the relation between both, as well as the international and regional trends in the issue.



B) Times, Human and Financial Resources

Each of them should be a particular item of consideration and discussion within the organization. If we wish to deal with a problem such as the connection between policy and budget, we must think of an action sustained in time and for the medium and long term. It is important to remember the particularities of the defense budget, especially its rigidity and the dimension of the items that compose it.

The human resources should include specialists both in budgeting and in defense, with at least part-time availability. The projection should also include the financial resources necessary to count with the working team, for the development of the workshops, the follow-up of the activities, publications, etc.

C) Plan expected results to evaluate the process

If the objective was an introduction to the budget expression of the defense policy, a consistent strategy should include the provision for the expected results, and how to evaluate the difficulties and opportunities that may appear in the process in order to correct or improve the influence strategy. For instance:

- What are the main difficulties that affect the decision-maker in the budgetary design of the policy? Which of them are related to the general political environment of the country, and which are specific to the defense area?
- What are the difficulties directly related to the stages of the budgeting cycle?
- Are there -according to what can be measured in the connection generated with the various actors- opportunities to promote an informal debate among them, about the behavior of the budget variable in defense?

Actions of influence in each stage of the defense budget cycle

Part of the general strategy that each organization will define to approach the defense budget issue will be the specific action it will carry out in the budget cycle. That is, its influence will develop in practice not only in the connection it generates with the various actors and in the investigations it may conduct, but it will have an opportunity with every commencement and development of the cycle where political decisions are expressed. Let us see in the example we have described so far, how it is possible to define actions to influence the various stages of the budget cycle.

- Formulation stage, when the Executive Branch prepares the budget bill.
- Approval stage, when Parliament debates, modifies and approves the bill.
- Execution stage, when the government applies the budgeted resources.
- Oversight stage, when the specific agencies account and evaluate the execution.⁶

A) Budget formulation stage

Budget formulation is usually the "closest" stage throughout the budget cycle; in practice, the opportunities for the participation of civil society have been mostly informal and based on initiatives and connections of the organizations themselves.

One of the strategies of CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) to influence the formulation stage, is through the discussion of the set of priorities underlying the policy options. In Canada, for instance, this discussion has adopted the form of alternative budgets, that detail political options and priorities different from those sustained by the government. Another example of influence in the formulation is the well known case of participatory budgets, where the governments consult assemblies of citizens so that they debate and set up their own set of priorities. This method has evidenced, so far,

⁶ Isaac Shapiro (Ed.), *Guía Ciudadana para el Trabajo Presupuestario*, International Budget Project, Washington D.C., Parte II, p 28.

a practical applicability limited to local environments (cities).

For the case of the defense budget, our incidence strategy should revolve around the analysis and discussion of the priorities defined by the Executive for the sector. The mandatory starting point would be a careful sequential follow-up of the activities that make up the formulation stage, which would represent some progress since the budget is a mystery for the academic community of defense and even for the congress defense committees themselves. However, the expectation is not exhausted in the mere collection of descriptive data about the process, but the idea is that the CSOs promote the debate specifying the trade offs existing in the official proposals and make specific recommendations.

Probably, the first action of incidence should be related to urging the government to provide budgetary specifications of the productive universe of the sector. At an operative level, this implies the development of an exhaustive and consistent program structure. Some examples may be:

- 1) The most important programs of the armed forces are in general those of "operational capability". These mega-programs reflect the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the resources globally assigned to operations, but they don't make a distinction among specific (of each service), joint (inter-service) and combined (with forces from other countries) operations. The difference may seem quite unimportant for a budget analyst, but not for a defense specialist. A wide academic and political consensus has been sustaining for some time the need to reinforce operative integrity, to the detriment of the training of each service (trade-off between specific operations vs. joint operations). On the other hand, combined operations with armed forces from neighboring countries are a recognized confidence-building mechanism that leads to the consolidation of the regional concept of cooperative security (trade-off between combined operations vs. national operations [specific and joint]).

- 2) Although the education and training programs of the armed forces reflect the number of graduated and trained officers and NCOs, it is necessary to observe the breakdown of the affected resources to educate and train both. Another desirable aspiration would be, for instance, to obtain the budgetary breakdown of resources affected to the education and training of the various services and branches of the army (infantry, cavalry, artillery, engineers, communications, etc.).

Some operative strategies, as an example, could be:

- Request, collection and critical and systematic analysis of the information contained in the forms defined every year by the national budgeting offices for the budget formulation in defense. These may refer with different names to:

- a) Budget policy.
- b) Resource projection.
- c) Program structure.
- d) Chart of human resources per jurisdiction.
- e) Multi-annual budget.
- f) Summary of the expenditure budget per section.
- g) Description of the program, subprogram and other categories.
- h) Chart of goals and gross production.
- i) Chart of human resources per program category.
- j) Budget of expenditures of the jurisdiction.
- k) Programming of the investment projects, their works and activities, etc.

- Request, collection and systematic analysis of the preliminary budgets of the Defense jurisdiction and their sub-jurisdictions.

- Analysis of the official formulation report to National Congress. Use of this instance to present specific observations with the guidelines determined for the budget bill.

B) Budget approval stage

This stage develops within the Legislative branch; in general, this is the biggest opportunity for dissemination. The biggest debate and public attention occurs at this stage, so it is a good opportunity to influence the decisions to be made by the representatives of the people and of the federal states.

The focus of action at this stage may be located on two centers:

- 1) The *forms*: The parliamentary debate *process*, as regards observing compliance with the legal powers and obligations of the Legislative branch at this stage.
- 2) The *substance*: Make contributions about the issue itself: *defense*.

Given the role of Congress as a body that represents the citizenship, the budget approval stage that occurs within it is usually judged as the most appropriate for the incidence of civil society. However, the effectiveness of that incidence is conditioned by the power of Parliament itself in the budgeting process.

Among the strategies of CSOs to incide on the budget approval stage, we find the preparation of accessible budget summaries and guides, as well as the organization of round tables and debates. The target audience would ideally be made up of the legislators themselves, who are responsible for the approval, their staffers and the mass media.

For the case of the problem that we have proposed here as an example, our incidence strategy may be focused on the construction of a coordinated work with the defense advisory committees. A recent meeting of legislators members of these committees in Latin America has revealed very clearly that the treatment of the defense budgets is not a part of their regular work schedule.⁷ Whether due to a lack of analytical capabilities or to institutional arrangements that kept them apart from that decisive job, it is clear that the defense committees must strengthen their role in this discussion.

The strategies at this stage must be centered around the generation of awareness in the parliamentary defense committees that the substantive and critical analysis of the defense budget is probably the best and most effective opportunity to influence on the "defense policy". It must be repeatedly emphasized that, leaving institutional arrangements aside (that the budget bill should have no treatment in the defense committee), the discussion of the budget is for them an indeclinable political responsibility.

It is also very important to increase the degree of budget management of the defense

⁷ RESDAL organized the Workshop-Seminar "Parliamentary Action in National Defense", Buenos Aires, 4-6 November 2003. See <http://www.resdal.org.ar/main-sem-parlamento.html>

committee for another essential reason. It is established by law that every legislative bill, whose eventual implementation implies expenditures, must specify in detail the origin of the resources. The initial temptation to sustain that the resources will come from an increase in tax collection is generally sterile, because it leads to the almost automatic (and justified) veto of the Executive branch. Congress must assume the scarcity of resources and understand that an increase in a sector usually requires an adjustment in another. If Congress has managed to build consensus internally as regards a need that must be funded, it must discuss internally where the transfer will come from.

Some activities could include:

- Preparation and selective dissemination of an analytical report about the budget bill for the sector.
- Organization of informative meetings at the defense committee.
- Participation of the competent committees in the debates, such as the defense committee and the budget and finance committee. This could include the whole cycle of regular sessions as well as the debate on the budget bill, both in the committees and in the plenary session.
- At the end of the budget enactment stage it is possible to make a general report based on a scheme to classify the strengths and weaknesses detected during the debate and in the contents, together with a set of recommendations to improve the debate process and the subject content.
- At the proper political moments, it may be suitable to deploy a communicational strategy in the mass media to raise interest.

C) Budget execution stage

Budget execution is a function of the Executive branch. The CSOs may monitor the application made by the Executive of the funds budgeted by law.

The analysis may consist of *observing*:

- The degree of compliance with the scheduled programs.
- Whether the amounts are used for the planned destination.
- Whether the periods in which the funds are applied are in accordance with the schedule.
- Whether there is a fund reallocation and whether it is in accordance with the law.
- Whether the expenditures are in excess of the budget (on execution).
- Whether the expenditures are below the budget (sub-execution).
- Whether additional budget items have been incorporated, and for what purpose (for instance, peace missions).
- In the hypothetical case that the Defense policy was a part of the President's campaign platform, it may be possible to analyze the scheduled amount in comparison to other issues and determine whether it agrees with the promises in the election campaign (this is useful to analyze the relation between the promises and the achievements during office).

The activities could therefore include:

- The publication of *execution monitoring reports* and their dissemination through the mass media.

That report may be submitted to the Executive branch with recommendations to improve their management and the defense policies, as well as to the Legislative branch, so that they may count with more information to perform their controller function. The report may also be used to raise awareness in other SCOs and individual citizens. The results of the report and the recommendations formulated to the Executive may be presented through workshops and talks. The objective of those workshops would be to involve other people in the issue, in order to generate a critical mass to have more influence.

D) Oversight stage

The main actor in the oversight or control phase is the Legislative branch, through a control body or external auditor. Additionally, there are the internal supervision bodies, that report to the Executive and perform a centralized control, requiring regular reports of the expenditures of each jurisdiction.

The SCOs may request the reports from the auditors and/or the government offices in charge of the control and evaluation of the expenditure execution. That information may be analyzed, translated into an understandable language, and disseminated in the media to propose changes. In those cases where the auditors are competent, these reports frequently document improper and misapplied expenditures and irregularities in the acquisition system.

For the hypothetical case proposed here, our incidence strategy consists of the systematic collection and analysis of the reports from the auditing bodies (internal and external) and the follow-up of the implementation of the proposed corrective measures, urging the defense committee to call on those responsible in those cases where they perceive an excessive delay or lack of will.

The activities could include:

- Systematic collection of the audit reports.
- Request, if the legal framework allows it, the reports from the internal audit units.
- Follow-up of the corrective activities (for this task, alliances may be formed with the supervisory bodies themselves).
- Proposition to the Defense Committee to issue requests for explanation to those responsible that may have ignored the recommendations in the audit reports.

Strategies to strengthen the budget analysis

An initial step after having identified the type of work that may and will be carried out around a

specific issue, is to identify the information available in the budget process, the opportunities to influence and the alliances that may be generated.

Diagnosis

Most of the successful experiences of budget analysis have implied the development of analytical capabilities, based on an initial evaluation of the conditions of access to the information and participation that are presented in the specific context we want to influence. Generating a diagnosis of the legal framework that supports the budget process and its characteristics, as well as of the information generated in the process, is important to found the analysis and make the best use of all the opportunities.

Besides the diagnosis of the budget environment, it is important to start from a diagnosis of the specific issues that may be approached. The best budget technician or economist will have limited capabilities to understand the implications of particular aspects of the defense or industrial development spending. The specific knowledge of the sector, and the underlying circumstances, are therefore essential.

Budget analysis involves an unavoidable learning process, and a long-term effort by the organizations that carry it out. Just as with experience, the capability of the organization to be involved in new projects may increase.

Connection

The connection of the organizations that perform applied budget analysis with other organizations and decision-makers is essential. It must be carried out in three levels:

- within the organization, to improve the work developed in various areas of activity.
- with other groups, to supplement the influence tasks and expand the area of influence of the work achieved.

- with political actors, government officials and legislators, that is, those that make the decisions.

The connection promotes a fundamental exchange of information and allows optimizing scarce resources. In order to form networks and alliances, the proposals made acquire more credibility and the organizations get more opportunities to incide.

Training

Training is another essential activity of the groups that work with budgets. One of the main objectives of the budgeting work is to promote transparency, accountability and the participation of the groups and individuals affected by the government's fiscal and expenditure policy, and there is no better way to improve these components than through training. Training programs may be intended for the legislatures, the media, SCOs, as well for government officials, legislative support staff and legislators.