

Zero-Based Budgeting Versus Management Strategy And Applicability *An Applied Study In Municipalities Of Anbar Governorate*

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Abstract. *This study investigates the feasibility of applying zero-based budgeting in the municipalities of Anbar Governorate in Iraq, verifies the existence of a written strategy for its adoption, analyzes available resources and capabilities, and proposes a practical model for its implementation. This study uses a descriptive and analytical approach through data collection and analysis. A survey research tool "questionnaire" was used, designed to achieve the study objectives, and distributed to 280 municipal employees, including managers, accountants, and local council members, to assess their perceptions of applying zero-based budgeting. In addition, interviews were conducted with senior officials to obtain their vision towards implementing zero-based budgeting in their departments and whether it is in their minds and strategies. The results of our study indicate major gaps in current practices, including the absence of a clear strategy for adopting zero-based budgeting, insufficient financial resources, lack of skilled employees, insufficient technological infrastructure, weak administrative support, and the absence of legislative frameworks supporting the implementation of this type of budgeting. The study also identified critical areas for improvement, including developing a clear strategy, enhancing staff capacity through training, enhancing administrative support, upgrading technological resources, and reviewing legal frameworks to support the foundations of zero-based budgeting. The findings underscore the need for a comprehensive and well-supported transition plan to successfully implement zero-based budgeting in Anbar municipalities. By addressing these challenges, municipalities can improve resource allocation, prioritize projects more effectively, and ultimately enhance financial management practices. The paper concludes with a proposed model that represents the basic steps that should be adopted initially when embarking on the zero-based budgeting process, to ensure the successful implementation of zero-based budgeting.*

Keywords: *Zero-Based Budgeting, Management Strategies, Implementation Factors, Municipalities, Al-Anbar Governorate.*

Introduction

The state's general budget is the main controller of expenditures and revenues regardless of the method of its preparation and organization. It is known that all Iraqi government units rely on the traditional method in preparing their budgets, which is (items), which is called the appropriations budget. This method appeared since the beginning of the eighteenth century, and this method faced a lot of criticism, most of which revolved around the fact that this method focuses on control purposes in terms of the place and manner of public spending more than focusing on what this spending achieves, meaning that it focuses on the accounting and control function only, and that this method is old and does not meet the requirements of effective control

and accurate evaluation, in addition to not limiting extravagance and corruption, and also does not achieve the goals that government service units seek to achieve. On this basis, it helped create chaos, so it placed government units with all their departments in front of important defects that hinder efforts to build an effective and efficient performance management system. On this basis, many budget preparation methods have emerged that operate on different accounting bases, and among these budgets is the zero-based budget method, which is based on setting the budget according to precise justifications for each amount required by the decision-making units that were previously identified, and these decision-making units must be compatible with the organizational structure of the main administrative unit, and the organizational structure must be arranged in an ascending order to be compatible with the method of preparing the budget according to this method, because preparing the budget according to this method is from the lowest administrative level in the government unit to the highest administrative level in a cumulative manner. (Al-Jumaily, 2022:110-111). When considering ZBB, a distinction must be made between ZBB, which was first introduced when it was applied in the Ministry of Agriculture in 1962, and ZBB, which began in 1977. In the early 1970s, experiments were conducted on ZBB in the private sector. When this experiment was extended to the government, it was recognized that the weaknesses of PPBS were that it did not provide an operational tool for managers, did not consider the impact of different levels of funding, and was not well equipped to enforce continuous evaluation of ongoing programs (current work evaluation). These aspects were compensated for in ZBB when it was implemented at the federal level in 1977. By then, the system had gained additional experience in some states as well. (Premchand, 1983: 334-335). Zero-based budgeting plays a crucial role in rationalizing public spending by enhancing the examination of expenditures with a careful analysis of each expenditure, helps in detecting unnecessary spending and identifying areas for improvement, and increases efficiency by highlighting priorities and verifying the effectiveness of spending. (Hamidi, Al-Sharifi and Ali, 2023:61) It is thus a financial approach that requires the budgeting body to re-evaluate all costs and allocate resources to programs and activities anew for each financial period, without relying on planning but on the previous budget. In the context of municipalities, zero-based budgeting can be adopted to improve effectiveness and update financial guidelines to ensure the evaluation of programs and services by re-evaluating all programs and services provided by the municipality and determining their effectiveness and importance. In addition to setting priorities and allocating resources according to importance and current needs.

Adopting zero-based budgeting in municipalities leads to activating the participation of teams and employees in decision-making processes to enhance transparency and better understanding of challenges and needs. All these features will lead to continuous improvement by using the experiences of previous periods to improve planning and implementation processes for future financial periods.

With the implementation of zero-based budgeting in municipalities, a major shift can occur in how resources are managed and allocated, which helps maximize efficiency and better achieve strategic goals. However, this approach must be implemented carefully to ensure sustainability and achieve the desired benefits.

Research Problem:

The existence of a developed system and method in managing the revenues and expenditures (budget) of government service units results in achieving the set goals, and since the adopted method is a traditional method that is marred by many defects and shortcomings, which is reflected in the quality of services provided by the departments, in addition to the fact that this method is not compatible with crises, financial and economic conditions and all the events that change the course of the country's economy, and that these variables require that there be optimal exploitation of the available economic resources within the framework of the actual need for expenditures and the exclusion of unnecessary expenditures, and that the zero-based budget method achieves these points in addition to other points that support the departments in improving their performance on an ongoing basis to address weaknesses and enhance the positives achieved by reviewing the beginning of each fiscal year from scratch, and on this basis, the problem of our research revolves around the availability of the components for applying the zero-based budget in the municipalities of Anbar Governorate, this problem can be crystallized in several questions as follows:

- Is there a strategy followed in the municipalities of Anbar Governorate to shift to the zero-based budget method?
- The extent of the availability of the components for implementing zero-based budgeting in the municipalities of Anbar Governorate?

Study objectives:

In this study, we seek to achieve the following:

- Study one of the latest methods of preparing budgets, which is the zero-based budget, where its theoretical foundation will be presented, and a clear and comprehensive theoretical introduction will be prepared.
- Verify the existence of a written strategy in Anbar municipalities to move to the application of the zero-based budget.
- Study the reality of the capabilities and components in Anbar municipalities that enable and enhance the chances of success in applying the zero-based budget.
- Provide a model for applying the zero-based budget in Anbar municipalities, through which the chances of success in applying the zero-based budget can be enhanced and through which the difficulties and obstacles that prevent the adoption of the zero-based budget can be reduced.

Importance of the study:

The importance of the research comes from several aspects, the most important of which is improving financial performance, as zero-based budgeting can contribute to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of government spending and allocating expenditures towards the real priorities of society. In addition, enhancing transparency and accountability, as the application of this type of budget increases financial transparency, which enhances trust between the government and citizens. As well as meeting the needs of society in terms of understanding the challenges facing municipalities, thus helping to develop strategies that suit the needs of citizens. Finally, supporting the strategic decision, as the research provides valuable information to officials and decision-makers on how to improve the management of financial resources in Anbar municipalities.

Previous Studies:

Zero-based budgeting represents a process of translating society's requirements into numbers and arranging them according to importance and priority, and then a comprehensive re-evaluation of expenditures starting from scratch, instead of adjusting previous budgets. Previous studies have addressed its applications in various fields such as the public and private sectors, explaining its benefits in improving efficiency and allocating resources. However, some studies have shown challenges related to cost and time in its implementation.

The study by [Rajab \(1986\)](#) confirmed that ensuring the success of the implementation of the zero-based budget must begin with a partial application, which differs from the comprehensive approach adopted in the United States of America. This comprehensive approach led to many shortcomings in the application, which led to the complete cessation of the budget's implementation. In this context, the importance of partial application can be emphasized, as recommended by the study by [Hamidi, Al-Sharifi and Ali \(2023\)](#), which found a direct relationship between the implementation of the zero-based budget and rationalizing expenditures in line with the important requirements and needs of society. The study recommended the necessity of providing the necessary components to implement this budget, with its partial application in some sectors or ministries.

On the other hand, [Hamdi's study \(2012\)](#) addressed the elements of adopting zero-based budgeting in the municipalities of the Gaza Strip, showing that relying on this type of budgeting helps municipalities restructure their organizational structure and improve the control and planning process. It also helps evaluate the performance of employees and links decision-making groups to the accounting manual, which facilitates the budget preparation process.

In the same context, [Fouad and Bisar's study \(2021\)](#) showed the importance of zero-based budgeting in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of spending in the municipalities of Al-Masila Governorate. It concluded that applying zero-based budgeting contributes to allocating resources more efficiently and enhances the ability of the supervisory and administrative apparatus in the municipalities to achieve their goals.

[Hadi's study \(2014\)](#) supported these results by emphasizing the possibility of facing budget challenges in Iraq by adopting a modern method represented by zero-based budgeting. The study concluded that this type of budgeting enhances the process of reviewing and evaluating all government activities and projects, with the need to re-evaluate projects that have proven to have failed and make a decision regarding them. In [Kavanagh \(2023\)](#), zero-based budgeting was found to focus on examining expenditures in detail or choosing between priorities that have been arranged for the required services. The study also found that zero-based budgeting is not suitable for everyone and may be successful and beneficial in some cases. Ultimately, officials should study and decide whether the benefits of adopting zero-based budgeting are greater than its drawbacks and then decide whether to implement it or not. Finally, [Gombe & Alkali \(2024\)](#) studied the challenges of implementing budgeting in Nigeria, where they found that bureaucratic

administrative procedures hinder the implementation of zero-based budgeting. They recommended that budgets should be prepared before the budget call notice arrives to avoid unnecessary delays in preparing, submitting and approving the draft budget. They also recommended increasing the training dose for employees on budgeting methods and techniques.

Research Hypotheses:

Based on the research objectives and problems, the hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

H1: There is a strategy adopted by the municipalities of Anbar for transitioning to Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB).

H2: The necessary components for implementing Zero-Based Budgeting are available in the municipalities of Anbar.

Theoretical Framework of ZBB Budget:

Definition of ZBB Budget:

The word budget was used to describe the leather briefcase carried by the People's Assembly Advisor, which includes a statement of the government's needs and resources and submits it to the People's Assembly for discussion and voting (Omolehinwa, 2005, p. 538). The document contained in the briefcase became the government's plans expressed in financial figures and submitted to the People's Assembly for approval. Thus, the conceptual rooting of the word budget came from this basis. The methods of preparing budgets have gone through many stages, and recently, multiple types have appeared that are compatible with the developments in work methods and the aspirations of society. In our study, we will discuss one of the most important modern methods, which is the zero-based budget, which is a justification for all expenditures for each new period. Zero-based budgeting begins by analyzing each function within the organization in terms of its needs and costs. Then, financial estimates are built around what is required for the next period, regardless of whether the budget is more or less than the previous budget. (bhai, 2020, p.164) Another definition was given as a significant financial plan that includes interpretation and analysis of financial estimates in terms of products, markets, and resource application. Or it is an accounting tool related to planning and controlling resources and operating expenses (Reeve and Warren, 2008). It is also defined as a financial and/or quantitative statement, prepared, analyzed, discussed and approved before a specific period, of the policy to be followed during that period for the purpose of achieving a specific objective (Omolehinwa, 2015). It is also defined as a translation of a detailed, authorized and systematic operating plan expressed in monetary terms for

a specific period, usually one financial year. As time passes, managers treat it as regular practice, and they may fall into the habit of repeating similar budget allocations and adjusting the numbers slightly just to consider inflation (Fong and Kumar, 2002). Therefore, the implementation of zero-based budgeting (ZBB) is since activities, services and programs must be justified annually during the budget development process. The budget is prepared by dividing all departmental operations into decision units at relatively low levels of the government unit. The unit decisions are then grouped into decision packages based on program activities, program objectives and organizational unit (Okoh, and, Mad mere, 2023)

Zero-based budgeting objectives:

ZBB preparation is to evaluate specific activities and programs towards their legal responsibilities and to estimate the necessary expenditures, provided that these estimates are linked to justifications for these estimates. Therefore, the first step in the structure of preparing the zero-based budgeting system is to determine the objectives, which usually requires a consultative meeting by officials when making decisions controlled by the budget officer. There are some requirements through which the objectives can be determined, which are as follows: (Haxholli, 2015: 23):

1. Preparing the operational plan (operations) for next year.
2. Making efforts to reduce unnecessary costs in general employee expenses.
3. Studying the organization's conditions to improve policy or develop a broad policy or determine long-term goals.
4. Measuring the feasibility of the new long-term financial plan.
5. Implementing efficient and effective monitoring of activity programs.
6. Providing a database to restructure the institution or government unit entirely.

Characteristics of Zero-Based Budgeting:

The basis of zero-based budgeting is based on not paying attention to the numbers mentioned in previous budgets when preparing the new budget project, but rather depends on starting over, i.e. from scratch. Since zero-based budgeting does not give priority to programs and projects under implementation and previously approved over new projects when allocating appropriations, but rather depends on reducing appropriations or canceling projects under implementation, as it was found upon evaluation that their efficiency is low and their return is not commensurate with their

cost (Karaz, 2015:28). Therefore, the advantages of zero-based budgeting can be identified from the following points: (bhai, 2020:167)

- Determining the balance between and within programs.
- The zero-based budgeting process forces management to look to the future and become more effective and efficient in managing operational processes.
- It provides managers at all levels with better information about the relative priority associated with the budget request and helps them make decisions about budget estimates.
- It ignores duplicate and overlapping programs.
- Budgets do not need to be recycled when spending levels change instead of decision packages that must be added or deleted to implement the budget change.
- Zero-based budgeting leads to the implementation of programs prepared according to priorities and their importance related to the unit's needs.
- It requires identifying alternative ways to achieve goals.

What are the components of ZBB?

Zero-based budgeting deals with the total budget request and not just the increase or decrease from the previous year. The zero-based budgeting method requires each administrative unit to evaluate and review all its current programs and activities in a systematic and documented manner, including proposed new activities. It is necessary to implement the following steps before using the budget Zero: First, the statement of the general purpose of the organization, second, the definition of long-term goals, strategic plans, and departmental objectives and development. The following elements are most important for any zero-based budget program: (bhai, 2020:166)

- Support of senior management.
- Identifying “decision units”.
- Formulating decision packages through cost-benefit analysis.
- Arranging decision packages.
- Presenting objectives clearly and realistically.
- Allocating funds.
- Analyzing each decision unit as a “decision package”.
- Assigning authority and responsibility.
- Establishing responsible centers.

- Flexibility.

Methodology and data:

Study population and sample:

- **Study population:** The study population is represented by all municipalities in Anbar Governorate, which includes a variety of large and small municipalities, with Various resources.
- **Study sample:** All departments affiliated with the municipalities of Anbar Governorate will be selected, where the stratified random sample method will be used to ensure adequate representation of all categories. The sample includes officials and employees from different levels within these municipalities to collect diverse data that reflects their experiences and knowledge about zero-based budgeting.

The descriptions of the study sample, in addition to the number of questionnaire forms distributed to the administrative units in relation to the population, can be seen in Table (1):

Table 1 :Description of the Study Population and Sample

<u>Name</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Distribution ratio</u>	<u>Number of forms</u>
		Estimate 2009-10-17	Estimate 2018-07-01		
<u>Al-Anbār</u>	Governorate	1,463,623	1,747,697	%100	280
<u>Al-'Āmiriyah</u>	Central Subdistrict	89,704	105,336	0.060	17
<u>Al-Baghādī</u>	Subdistrict	31,177	36,529	0.021	6
<u>Al-Fallūjah</u> [Fallujah]	Central Subdistrict	275,128	333,880	0.191	53
<u>Al-Furāt</u>	Subdistrict	26,036	30,347	0.017	5
<u>Al-Habbāniyah</u>	Subdistrict	118,131	138,754	0.079	22
<u>Al-Haqlāniyah</u>	Subdistrict	23,314	27,857	0.016	4
<u>Al-Karmah</u>	Subdistrict	116,197	135,262	0.077	22
<u>Al-Qā'im</u>	Central Subdistrict	90,400	109,192	0.062	17
<u>Al-'Ubaydī</u>	Subdistrict	25,718	29,915	0.017	5
<u>Al-'Ubūr / Ar-Rumānah</u>	Subdistrict	34,028	40,085	0.023	6
<u>Al-Wafā'</u>	Subdistrict	8,728	10,429	0.006	2
<u>Al-Walīd</u>	Subdistrict	5,130	5,958	0.003	1
<u>'Anah</u>	Central Subdistrict	26,162	31,575	0.018	5
<u>An-Nukhayb</u>	Subdistrict	2,972	3,571	0.002	1

<u>Name</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Distribution ratio</u>	<u>Number of forms</u>
		Estimate 2009-10-17	Estimate 2018-07-01		
Ar-Ramādī [Ramadi]	Central Subdistrict	364,841	436,090	0.250	70
Ar-Rutbah	Central Subdistrict	30,898	37,511	0.021	6
As-Saqlāwiyah	Subdistrict	45,832	53,653	0.031	9
Barwānah	Subdistrict	21,674	26,117	0.015	4
Hadītha	Central Subdistrict	42,231	51,736	0.030	8
Hīt	Central Subdistrict	70,125	85,265	0.049	14
Kubaīсах	Subdistrict	15,197	18,635	0.011	3

Source: Prepared by the researchers, based on data from the Iraqi Ministry of Planning

The questionnaire forms were distributed based on the population proportion of each administrative unit relative to the total population of Anbar Governorate, according to the following equation:

$$x = \frac{E}{T} * y$$

Where:

X: The number of questionnaires distributed to each unit

E: The population of the administrative unit

T: The total population of Anbar Governorate

Y: The total number of questionnaires distributed (280)

Study Method:

In this study, the descriptive and analytical approach was used. This method includes collecting data from the selected sample by presenting the questionnaire paragraphs to the individuals and groups concerned. A comprehensive questionnaire was designed that is consistent with the objectives of the study, as this questionnaire will be presented to a sample consisting of managers, accountants and workers in the budget units affiliated with the organizational structure of Anbar municipalities.

Study Tools:

The questionnaire tool will be used to collect and analyze data in this study. This questionnaire includes a set of phrases that are consistent with the research objective and hypotheses, allowing participants to express their opinions about the existence of a written strategy for the transition

towards implementing zero-based budgeting. In addition to presenting their opinions about the available components for the success of implementing zero-based budgeting, the questionnaires will be distributed electronically and on paper to municipal employees. After collecting the data, it will be analyzed using the SPSS program. After that, a practical application model will be presented that facilitates the process of implementing zero-based budgeting in the study area.

The questionnaire can be described as consisting of two axes. The first axis is related to verifying the existence of a written strategy to shift to zero-based budgeting in Anbar municipalities. This axis consists of 4 essential paragraphs, while the second axis is related to verifying the availability of the components for implementing zero-based budgeting in Anbar municipalities. It consists of 5 paragraphs. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses of the study sample.

Results and Discussion:

Descriptive Analysis:

Table (2) presents the results of the descriptive analysis of the research sample of 280 individuals, and includes information about gender, age, educational attainment, and experience. In terms of gender, males represent 57.1% and females 42.9%, reflecting a relative balance between the sexes. As for age, the age group 25-35 years represents the largest percentage (35.7%), followed by the 36-45 years category (28.6%). The younger and older age groups constitute smaller percentages (less than 25 years: 17.9%, more than 55 years: 3.6%).

As for educational attainment, the category of diploma or bachelor's degree holders represents the largest percentage (42.9%), followed by the master's degree category with 21.4%. The percentage of PhD holders reaches 7.1%. As for experience, it appears that the largest percentage (32.1%) has experience between 5 and 10 years, followed by the experience category between 11 and 15 years at a rate of 21.4%. 10.7% of individuals have more than 15 years of experience, while 35.7% have experience with less than 5 years. Based on these distributions, the sample shows good diversity in terms of gender, age, educational attainment and experience, making it represent a diverse group of individuals with different professional and educational backgrounds. This diversity contributes to providing comprehensive and influential data to study the topic under research.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of the Research Sample			
Category	Subcategory	Number of Individuals	Percentage
Gender	Males	160	57.10%
	Females	120	42.90%
Age	Under 25 years	50	17.90%
	25 to 35 years	100	35.70%
	36 to 45 years	80	28.60%
	46 to 55 years	40	14.30%
	Over 55 years	10	3.60%
Educational Attainment	No high school diploma	30	10.70%
	High school diploma	50	17.90%
	Bachelor's degree	120	42.90%
	Master's degree	60	21.40%
	Doctorate	20	7.10%
Experience	Less than 5 years	100	35.70%
	5 to 10 years	90	32.10%
	11 to 15 years	60	21.40%
	More than 15 years	30	10.70%

Source: Prepared by the researchers

Testing the Hypothesis:

The First Hypothesis:

The first hypothesis indicates that "there is a strategy followed in Anbar municipalities to shift to zero-based budgeting". The results of testing this hypothesis, as shown in Tables (3,4) conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies followed in Anbar municipalities to shift to zero-based budgeting, indicate a noticeable weakness in all areas that were evaluated. Four main statements related to strategy implementation, communication and training were analyzed, and all

of them showed averages less than the neutral value (3), indicating that the participants did not agree with these statements.

The results related to the paragraph "We have a clear written strategy to shift to zero-based budgeting" indicate that the arithmetic mean of this paragraph was 2.6286 with a t value of -7.141 and a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000. We conclude from this that the participants did not prove the existence of a written strategy related to the transition to zero-based budgeting, which may reflect the lack of effective implementation or the lack of knowledge of this strategy. As for the second statement, "The approved strategy is effectively communicated to all concerned employees", the results indicated an arithmetic mean of 2.6679 and a t-value of -6.435, indicating that communication about the strategy is not sufficient. The basic element in any administrative change process must be effective communication, and if employees are not aware of the details of any strategy, the implementation process will be fraught with many problems. As for reviewing and updating the strategy periodically based on changes and needs, the results showed that the average sample responses supporting this procedure amounted to 2.2536 and the t-value equaled -12.964, which is less than the hypothetical mean of 3 degrees, which indicates that reviewing strategies are not present in the municipalities of Anbar and there is no updating. The failure of municipalities to do so may often lead to the strategy not being compatible with the current needs of the community. As for the aspect of training and preparing employees, the paragraph obtained an arithmetic mean of 2.0821 with t equal to -24.560, which is less than the hypothetical mean, indicating that the existing training programs are ineffective or insufficient to develop the capabilities of employees within the framework of building budget estimates and in a manner consistent with the principles of zero-based budgeting.

Table3 : One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<input type="checkbox"/> We have a clear written strategy for transitioning to zero-based budgeting.	280	2.6286	.87040	.05202
<input type="checkbox"/> The adopted strategy is effectively communicated to all concerned employees.	280	2.6679	.86366	.05161
<input type="checkbox"/> The strategy is periodically reviewed and updated based on changes and needs.	280	2.2536	.96348	.05758

<input type="checkbox"/> All involved parties in the municipality are trained on the principles of zero-based budgeting	280	2.0821	.62536	.03737
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Source: Prepared by the researchers

Table 4: One-Sample Test					
	Test Value = 3				
	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
<input type="checkbox"/> We have a clear written strategy for transitioning to zero-based budgeting.	-7.141-	.000	-.37143-	-.4738-	-.2690-
<input type="checkbox"/> The strategy adopted is effectively communicated to all concerned employees.	-6.435-	.000	-.33214-	-.4337-	-.2305-
<input type="checkbox"/> The strategy is periodically reviewed and updated based on changes and needs.	-12.964-	.000	-.74643-	-.8598-	-.6331-
<input type="checkbox"/> All stakeholders in the municipality are trained in the principles of zero-based budgeting.	-24.560-	.000	-.91786-	-.9914-	-.8443-

Source: Prepared by the researchers

Testing the Second Hypothesis:

The second hypothesis states that "the components of implementing the zero-based budget are available in the municipalities of Anbar." The results of testing this hypothesis through Tables (5,6) that were prepared to evaluate the components of implementing the zero-based budget in the municipalities of Anbar indicate a noticeable deficiency in all the factors that were evaluated. Five main statements were analyzed related to the availability of financial resources, qualified personnel, information technology, administrative support, and necessary legislation.

The first statement, "We have the financial resources necessary to implement the zero-based budget," showed an average of 2.5214, with a t value of -10.203 and a significance level (Sig.) 0.000, indicating that the participants feel that the financial resources necessary to implement the budget are insufficient. This reflects a major obstacle in implementing the strategy, as financial resources are one of the essential elements for the success of any administrative plan.

As for the second statement, “There are qualified cadres with the necessary skills to implement this budget,” it achieved a mean of 2.5321 with a t equal to -6.338 and Sig. 0.000, indicating that participants see a lack of required skills among the relevant cadres, which hinders the ability of municipalities to implement zero-based budgeting effectively.

As for the third statement, “The available information technology supports the implementation of zero-based budgeting effectively,” it achieved a mean of 2.4750, with a t equal to -9.139 and Sig. 0.000. This indicates that the available information technology is not sufficient to support the implementation of the budget, which is crucial in the current digital age, where technology contributes to facilitating the collection and analysis of data.

As for the fourth statement, “There is strong administrative support for the implementation of zero-based budgeting,” the result was more evident, as it achieved a mean of 1.7429 with a t equal to -21.484 and Sig. 0.000. This low value indicates a significant lack of administrative support, which is an essential element for the success of any administrative initiative, as leadership support is crucial in motivating staff and providing the necessary resources.

Finally, for the statement "The availability of appropriate legislation and regulations facilitates the implementation of zero-based budgeting", it obtained an average of 2.4929 with t equal to -5.501 and Sig. 0.000, which means that the current legislation does not adequately support the implementation of the budget, which adds another obstacle to the success of this initiative.

Based on these results, it can be said that the components of implementing zero-based budgeting in Anbar municipalities are not available in the required form. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis that the components of implementing zero-based budgeting are available, which reflects the urgent need to improve financial resources, enhance competencies, develop information technology, provide administrative support, and amend the necessary legislation to achieve the desired transformation.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<input type="checkbox"/> We have the necessary financial resources to implement zero-based budgeting.	280	2.5214	.78487	.04691
<input type="checkbox"/> There are qualified staff with the necessary skills to implement this budgeting approach.	280	2.5321	1.23525	.07382

<input type="checkbox"/> The available information technology effectively supports the implementation of zero-based budgeting.	280	2.4750	.96130	.05745
<input type="checkbox"/> There is strong administrative support for the implementation of zero-based budgeting.	280	1.7429	.97915	.05852
<input type="checkbox"/> The availability of appropriate legislation and regulations facilitates the implementation of zero-based budgeting.	280	2.4929	1.54269	.09219

Source: Prepared by the researchers

Table 6: One-Sample Test					
	Test Value = 3				
	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
<input type="checkbox"/> We have the necessary financial resources to implement zero-based budgeting.	-10.203-	.000	-.47857-	-.5709-	-.3862-
<input type="checkbox"/> There are qualified staff with the necessary skills to implement this budgeting approach.	-6.338-	.000	-.46786-	-.6132-	-.3225-
<input type="checkbox"/> The available information technology effectively supports the implementation of zero-based budgeting.	-9.139-	.000	-.52500-	-.6381-	-.4119-
<input type="checkbox"/> There is strong administrative support for the implementation of zero-based budgeting.	-21.484-	.000	-1.25714-	-1.3723-	-1.1420-
<input type="checkbox"/> The availability of appropriate legislation and regulations facilitates the implementation of zero-based budgeting	-5.501-	.000	-.50714-	-.6886-	-.3257-

Source: Prepared by the researchers

The Proposed Model for Implementing Zero-Based Budgeting:

After conducting the analytical study and describing the problem hindering the implementation of zero-based budgeting in the study area (Anbar municipalities), we will present a proposed model to facilitate and make the implementation of zero-based budgeting successful in Anbar municipalities, as this model represents an integrated framework that works to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of using financial and material resources, as this model depends on evaluating all programs and projects periodically and continuously in a manner consistent with preparing the budget from scratch, and the success of this evaluation depends on the accurate and

efficient analysis of citizen needs and arranging them in the form of alternatives and studying them in a justified manner. This model includes several stages and systematic steps that aim to achieve integration between the planning element, the implementation element, and the evaluation element. (See Figure 1)

The first stage includes focusing on administrative planning, as a committee is formed consisting of members from various relevant departments, for example, finance, planning, and other executive departments. This committee plays a prominent role in determining the strategic objectives to be achieved, for example, improving services, meeting the diverse requirements of society, etc. Thus, the prepared budget will be consistent with actual demands.

The second stage is related to training employees, as holding training courses and workshops enhances employees' understanding of the principles of zero-based budgeting and trains them on the best practices for successfully implementing zero-based budgeting.

Then we move to the third stage, which is data collection. In this stage, data related to the performance of current programs are collected and the factors affecting the results achieved are evaluated and analyzed. This enables municipal departments to make sound decisions. In this stage, the costs of all projects and programs are also studied and analyzed to accurately and appropriately determine the required budget.

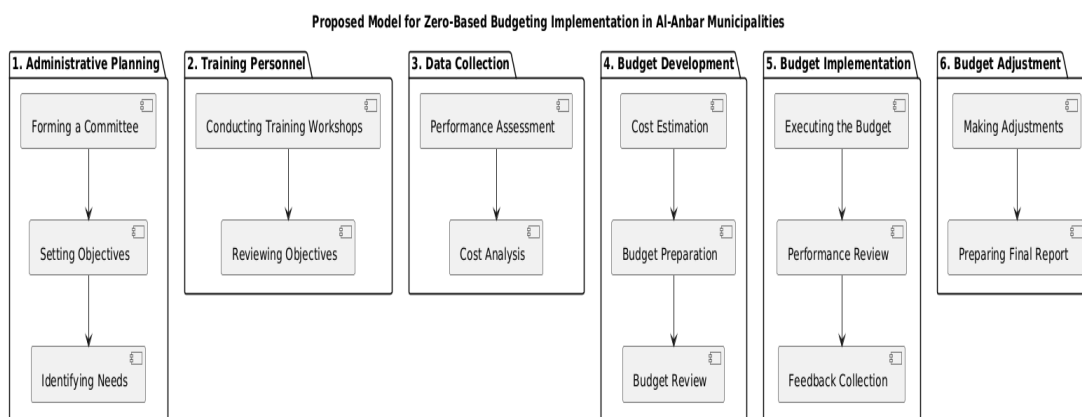
Upon completion of the data collection and analysis stage, the budget preparation stage begins. This stage includes an accurate estimation of costs for all planned activities, after which a draft budget based on zero-based budget is prepared that relates to all programs and projects. This draft is then reviewed by the committee formed for this purpose to ensure its compatibility with the specified objectives, which enhances the effectiveness of the budget.

Upon completion of the budget preparation stage, the process moves to the budget implementation stage, where programs and projects are implemented according to the established budget. After that, the financial and administrative performance of each program and project is monitored and evaluated from scratch on a regular basis, with feedback collected from the relevant subcommittees, which helps in identifying gaps, areas of weakness and defects that may appear during implementation to make the necessary corrections.

In the final stage, adjustments are made to the budget, as the adjustments are made according to the feedback data, meaning that the adjustments must address the shortcomings and weaknesses that were diagnosed in the implementation stage, and this is done by preparing a financial report

that includes an evaluation of the performance and results achieved, as it will contribute to improving operations in the future and directing the budget towards better meeting the requirements and needs of society. This proposed model is an administrative approach that seeks to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of financial and material resources, and improve the quality of services provided by presenting a modern model for preparing budgets that meets the ambitions and aspirations of society at all levels, and thus Anbar municipalities will be able to achieve tangible improvements in the allocation of resources and the development of public services, which contributes to the sustainable development of Anbar Governorate.

Figure (1)



Conclusion:

This study is concerned with exploring the practices of Anbar municipalities regarding the existence of a strategic plan that requires the adoption of zero-based budgeting, in addition to knowing the level of components for the success of implementing and adopting zero-based budgeting. The study dealt with a local study community related to the municipalities of Anbar Governorate, consisting of (21) administrative units. The study relied on the questionnaire tool to obtain data, as a questionnaire was formulated that included two axes: the first, the extent of the existence of a written strategy that requires the transition to the implementation of zero-based budgeting; the second, is related to searching for the level of available components. Within this context, two main hypotheses were developed: the first hypothesis is related to the existence of a strategy followed in Anbar municipalities to transition to the zero-based budgeting method, and the second hypothesis is related to the availability of components for implementing zero-based budgeting in the municipalities under study.

The questionnaire forms were distributed to the municipality employees, with 280 questionnaires returned in full, and the results were analyzed according to the SPSS statistical analysis program, and the main results were reached, namely that the Anbar municipalities do not include a clear, written and specific strategy that requires the application of the zero-based budgeting method, as well as with regard to the availability of the components for the application of the zero-based budget, results were reached that there is a shortage of financial resources, a lack of cadres with experience in the field of zero-based budgeting, and the lack of infrastructure related to information technology, in addition to the lack of administrative support and the lack of legislation that allows the transition to this method, all of these results indicate the lack of sufficient components to support the application of the zero-based budget.

Through the results reached by the research, an application model was formulated to help the municipalities of Anbar Governorate in the transition and success of the application of the zero-based budget.

The study presents a set of recommendations:

First, the municipalities of Anbar Governorate should work on developing a comprehensive, comprehensive and clear strategic development plan for the zero-based budget.

Secondly, Anbar municipalities should strengthen their human cadres through training and rotation; and focus on financial management skills and zero-based budgeting principles. This is done through specialized training courses and workshops.

Thirdly, work on providing strong administrative support as this factor is effective and important. Leaders should make it a priority to shift towards zero-based budgeting.

Fourthly, provide the infrastructure for specialized information technology for data collection and analysis.

Finally, amend the legal legislation in a manner consistent with the possibility of implementing zero-based budgeting, which is known as providing an appropriate legal environment that supports the transformation process.

To facilitate the transition towards zero-based budgeting, reduce the failure gap, and expand the circles of success, it is possible to rely on the proposed model presented in this study.

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