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**Report on Sub-National Budget Transparency Survey  
for Bayelsa State, Nigeria.**



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## **Executive Summary**

Bayelsa State is part of the 36 states of Nigeria that took part in the Open Budget Survey being carried out in Nigeria. Bayelsa State participated in the 2015 Survey and scored 45 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. However, this rating was below average and several recommendations were suggested for the purpose of improvement in line with international best practices.

Appraised on the bases of the baseline rating, the State in the 2018 survey performed poorly. The overall budget transparency score for 2018 was 21 out of 100 showing that the state provides minimal information on budget to citizens. On availability of key budget documents to the public, the state scored 24 out of 100 meaning that budget documents are scantily available to the public. On public participation in budget processes, the score was 0 out of 100 which reveals that there is no participation of any sort by citizens in the budget processes in the State. However, on public Access to procurement information the state scored 36 out of 100 which shows that the public have some access to procurement information in the state, though still relatively below international best practices.

The current round of Sub-National Budget Transparency Survey commenced in February 2018 with detailed timelines. The process commenced with a training session for Researchers, State Supervisors and Zonal Consultants held in Enugu, Enugu State. The State research team for Bayelsa State is as follows: Professor Uchechi Rex Ogbuagu (Zonal Consultant), Dr. Tubo Pearce Okumoko (State Supervisor) and Bie Ebidouzee (State Researcher).

## **Geographical profile of Bayelsa State**

The state is geographically located within latitude  $4^{\circ}15'$  North and latitude  $5^{\circ}23'$  south. It is also within longitudes  $5^{\circ}22'$  West and  $6^{\circ}45'$  East. The state is bounded by Delta State on the north, Rivers State on the east and the Atlantic Ocean on the western and southern parts.

The population of the State as at 2016 is 2,277,961 with population density of  $251.46/\text{km}^2$

According to UNDP, 2017, the Multidimensional poverty index (MPI) for Bayelsa State is 0.12. UNDP Nigeria/NBS used the following indicators to compute this index; assets, cooking fuel, floor type, source of water, sanitation, source of lighting, child mortality, child school attendance, years of schooling and importantly, unemployment.

## **Methodology of the survey**

The research process adopted the use of questionnaires that was designed to measure some key parameters related to budget processes, availability and transparency processes. The questionnaire was divided into sections 1-4 with 70 questions in all. The sections measured availability of key budget documents, public participation in budget processes, transparency in the public procurement processes, as well as access to information and fiscal responsibility covering sections 1 to 4 respectively.

The survey was constituted with survey team comprising the State Researcher, State Supervisor and a Zonal Consultant who oversees the research process and reports back to CIRDDOC. The State Research Team received support from the CIRDDOC team at every stage of the process.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **Budget Transparency Index**

The 2018 survey result placed Bayelsa state on a score of 21 out of 100 in terms of the overall budget transparency index. There is a slight decrease of 8 points compared to 2015. This result indicates an abysmal performance, showing that the state provides minimal information on budget to citizens.

### **Public access to budget documents:**

Bayelsa state scored 24 out of 100 on the State Budget Document Availability Index. There is a significant decrease when compared to 2015. Bayelsa state no longer makes publicly available the State Budget Estimates and Votes and the State Appropriation Law. The State Quarterly Reports and State Mid-Year Review are now available on request when compared to 2015. The State Budget Call Circular and State Medium-Term Expenditure Framework/Fiscal Strategy Paper are available on request. The State Accountant General's Report and State Auditor-General's Report are produced for internal use only. The Citizen's Budget isn't produced at all.

### **Public participation in the budget process:**

Citizens and CSOs in Bayelsa state have no spaces for the public to be involved in the budget process with a score of 0 out of 100. The executive, SHoA, and Auditor-General provide, like in 2015, no spaces for public consultation.

### **Public access to procurement information:**

With a score of 36 out of 100, citizens have limited access to procurement information in Bayelsa state. There has been an increase of 13 points when compared to 2015. While there is no Public Procurement Bureau, there is a Due Process Office guiding the procurement process. In comparison to 2015, this Due Process Office now provides pre-bidding documents to potential contractors and tenders are opened publicly.

## Comparative Analysis: 2015 Vs 2018

Comparing the performance of Bayelsa State on the budget transparency survey between 2015 and 2018 reveals a further decline of performance as Bayelsa State came 11<sup>th</sup> in 2015 but 24<sup>th</sup> position in 2018 which indicates a worsening scenario. Several factors maybe adduced for this further drop in performance by the state which we will address in recommendations for improvement. See chart below:

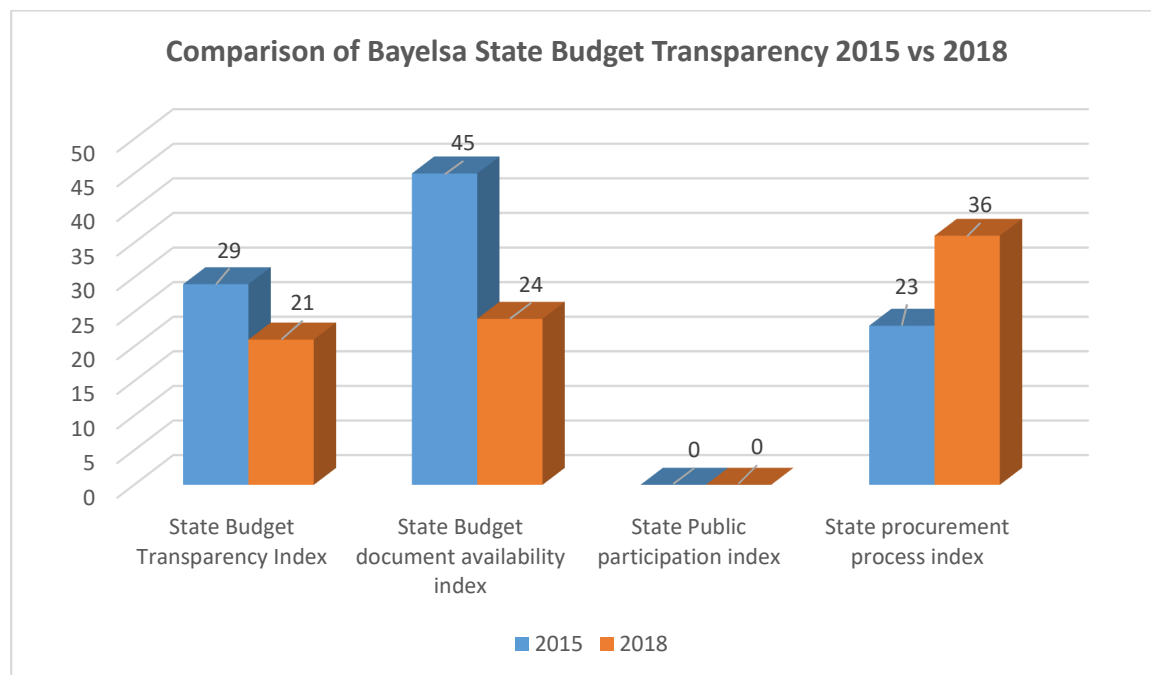


Fig. 1: Performance of Bayelsa State in 2015 vis-à-vis 2018 on budget transparency

### Recommendations

CIRDDOC recommends the following to improve budget transparency, public participation in the budget process, and transparency in the procurement process:

#### Budget Transparency

The Bayelsa state government should implement the recommendations of the Fiscal Sustainability Plan and go one step further by publishing online and in a timely manner the following documents that are available on request:

- State Budget Call Circular,
- State Medium-Term Expenditure Framework/Fiscal Strategy Paper,
- State Quarterly Reports, and
- State Mid-Year Review.

The state should also publish these budget documents it currently produces for internal use only:

- State Draft Budget Estimates and Votes,
- State Appropriation Law,
- State Accountant General's Report, and

- State Auditor-General's Report.

In addition to publishing these documents, the Bayelsa State Ministry of Finance and Budget should make budget information accessible by producing and publishing a Citizen's Budget.

### **Public Participation**

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the government in Bayelsa state should do the following:

- Open the budget formulation process to all constituencies; establish effective mechanisms to solicit the public's inputs on what should be included in the State Draft Estimates and Votes; and clearly articulate what the government expects to do with these inputs.
- Publish a list of beneficiaries of projects, subsidies, social plans, and other targeted spending from MDAs.
- Establish practical mechanisms for the public to provide inputs on how the budget is being implemented and publish reports on how these inputs are used.

Similarly, the Bayelsa State House of Assembly should do the following:

- Open committee hearings on the budget to public where citizens and CSOs can testify.
- Open the hearings on the Auditor-General's Report to the public.

Lastly, the Auditor-General should do the following:

- Establish practical mechanisms for the public to submit inputs on what should be audited.
- Auditor-General should publish his reports in print form to be access by the public.

### **Procurement Process**

To improve the entire procurement process, the following should be done:

- The Bayelsa State House of Assembly should enact a procurement law to establish a Public Procurement Bureau.
- The Public Procurement Bureau should publish procurement awards and justification of awards for all community projects, and have a complaints review mechanism. This body should manage the procurement process for all MDAs and include representatives from the private sector and civil society.