

BAYELSA STATE:

Findings

Public Access to budget documents

Bayelsa state scores 45 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. The State Budget Call Circular, State Draft Budget Estimates, and State Budget Appropriation Law are publicly available on request. Citizens have access to all documents in both the budget formulation and approval stage that can serve as a basis to monitor how the government is executing the budget; however, none of the budget execution documents (Citizens budget, Quarterly budget implementation reports, Mid-Year Reviews, accountant-general's report and Auditor-General's report) are publicly available to the public. The Accountant-General's and Auditor-General's Report are only produced for internal use while the Citizen's Budget, Quarterly Reports, and a Mid-Year Review are not produced at all.

Public participation in the budget

Citizens and CSOs in Bayelsa state have absolutely no spaces to be involved in the budget process with a score of 0 out of 100.

Public access to procurement information

With a score of 23 out of 100, citizens have limited access to procurement information in Bayelsa. The Bayelsa State Procurement Law 2009 regulates the entire procurement process and established the Bayelsa State Due Process Bureau. The Bayelsa State Due Process Bureau publishes all awarded contracts online.

Recommendations

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

Budget Transparency

The government can increase budget transparency in Bayelsa state by publishing the following documents that are already produced:

- Accountant-General's Report
- Auditor-General's Report

The Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning of Bayelsa state should do the following:

- partner with CSOs in the state, to develop a Citizen's Budget.
- produce and publish the Quarterly Reports and a Mid-Year Review on time.

Public Participation

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the government of 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 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 all committee hearings on the budget to public where citizens and CSOs can testify and publish reports on these hearings.
- 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.

Procurement Process

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

- the Bayelsa State Due Process Bureau should establish a procurement complaint board that manages an alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- the Bayelsa State Due Process Bureau should publish award justifications when awards are published online as well as community projects.

Access to Information

To improve access to information in the state, the government should do the following:

1. Domesticate the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2011.
2. Establish Freedom of Information (FOI) Agency in the state