

EBONYI STATE:

Findings

Public Access to budget documents

Ebonyi state scores 19 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. The State Budget Call Circular, Accountant-General's Report and Auditor-General's Report are publicly available on request. Citizens have access to all documents in the budget formulation, execution and auditing stage. The State Draft Estimates, State Budget Appropriation Law, Quarterly Reports, and Mid-Year Review are only produced for internal use.

Public participation in the budget

Citizens and CSOs in Ebonyi state have a limited space to be involved in the budget process with a score of 28 out of 100. During the **budget formulation** stage, citizens are essentially shut out from providing inputs for the State Draft Estimates. The Ebonyi House of Assembly opens some committee hearings on **budget approval** process. Both the **budget execution** and **auditing** process have no open spaces for public scrutiny.

Public access to procurement information

With a score of 13 out of 100, citizens have limited access to procurement information in Ebonyi state. The State Tenders Board is in charge of the procurement process.

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 Ebonyi state by publishing the following documents that are already produced:

- Approved Estimates of Ebonyi State Government of Nigeria
- Ebonyi State Budget Appropriation Law
- Ebonyi State Government Budget Performance Review
- Ebonyi State Government Mid-Year Budget Performance Review

In addition to publishing the documents that Ebonyi state already produces for internal use, the Ebonyi State Budget Office should partner with CSOs in the state to develop a Citizen's Budget.

Public Participation

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the government of Ebonyi 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 Ebonyi 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.

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 government should introduce a law in the SHoA establishing a tenders board that oversees the whole procurement process; procurement complaint board that manages an alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- the government should publish all procurement decisions along with their justifications and all 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