

NIGER STATE:

Findings

Public Access to budget documents

Niger state scores 25 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. The State Budget Appropriation Law and Accountant General's and Auditor General's Reports are available on request. The majority of the remaining documents are produced, but are not publicly available. The Citizen's Budget and Quarterly Reports are not produced.

Public participation in the budget

Citizens and CSOs in Niger state have limited spaces to be involved in the budget process with a score of 39 out of 100. Citizens and CSOs are essentially shut out from the **budget formulation** process. The Niger State House of Assembly public committee hearings during the **budget approval** process. The government publishes a very limited list of beneficiaries of projects, subsidies, social plans and targeted spending from MDAs during the **budget execution** process. Meanwhile, the **auditing** process is closed off to the public.

Public access to procurement information

With a score of 23 out of 100, citizens have limited access to procurement information in Niger. While there is no formal law regulating the procurement process, the Niger State Guideline for Economic and Due Process Document of 2007 established the Niger State Budget Implementation, Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit to oversee the process. This Unit publishes guidance documents for potential bidders.

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 easily increase budget transparency in Niger state by timely publishing online the following documents that are already produced:

- Niger State Call Circular for Budget Estimates
- Niger State Draft Budget Estimates along with Niger State Draft Budget Votes and State Vision: 2020
- Niger State Quarterly Performance Report
- Niger State Mid-Year Budget Performance Review
- Niger State Accountant-General's Report
- Niger State Annual Report of the State Auditor-General

The Niger State Ministry of Finance & Economic Development 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 in Niger 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.
- improve the comprehensiveness of the 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 along with reports on how these inputs are used.

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

- open all committee hearings on the budget to the 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 bill regulating the procurement process; give the Niger State Budget Implementation, Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit the authority to regulate the procurement process in the state and the necessary resources to fulfill its duty and establish a procurement complaint board that manages an alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- the Niger State Budget Implementation, Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit should open bidding documents in public immediately after the bidding process is closed.
- the Niger State Budget Implementation, Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit should publish all procurement decisions along with their justifications and for 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.

Establish Freedom of Information (FOI) Agency in the state