

## **RIVERS STATE:**

### **Findings**

#### **Public Access to budget documents**

Rivers state scores 14 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. While the majority of documents are produced, not a single document is publicly available. Citizen's Budget, Quarterly Reports and Mid-Year Review are not produced.

#### **Public participation in the budget**

Citizens and CSOs in Rivers state have little or no space to be involved in the budget process with a score of 8 out of 100. The Auditor-General has some limited mechanisms to solicit inputs on what should be audited.

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

With a score of 70 out of 100, citizens have significant access to procurement information in Rivers state. The Rivers State Procurement Law of 2008 established the Rivers State Bureau on Public Procurement. This Bureau is the source of all bidding guidance documents and opens bids with a slight delay after the bidding process is closed. All procurement awards are published online. The Bureau has a fully functioning procurement complaint board that publishes all disputes 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 easily increase budget transparency in Rivers state by timely publishing online the following documents that are already produced:

- Rivers State Budget Call Circular
- Rivers State Government Budget Draft Estimates
- Rivers State of Nigeria Appropriation Law
- Rivers State Government Report of the Accountant-General with Financial Statements.
- Report of the Auditor-General, Rivers State on the accounts of the government of Rivers State of Nigeria.

The Rivers State Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning should do the following:

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

#### **Public Participation**

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the government of Rivers 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 along with reports on how these inputs are used.

Similarly, the Rivers 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.
- open the hearings on the Auditor-General's Report to the public.

Lastly, the Auditor-General should do the following:

- expand the 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 State Tenders Board should open bidding documents in public immediately after the bidding process is closed.
- the State Tenders Board should publish justification for contracts awarded and for all community projects.