

YOBE STATE



Location of Yobe State in the Map of Nigeria

Geographical Profile: Yobe state is located within latitude 11 North and longitude 13.5 East with a total land area of 47,153 square kilometers. It shares common boundaries with Borno state to the east and southeast, Jigawa state to the northwest, Bauchi and Gombe states to the southwest. It also shares an international border with the Republic of Niger. This boundary stretches over 323km to the north of the State. The population of the State according to the National Head Count conducted in 2006 is about 2.6 million. The state was created on August 27, 1991 having been carved out of the old Borno State in the year 1991 with Damaturu as the state capital.

Yobe state is politically divided into three geopolitical zones namely; Zone A comprising Damaturu, Gujba, Gulani, Tarmuwa, Bursari, Gaidam, Yunusari; Zone B comprising Potiskum, Fika, Fune and Nangere while Zone C is made up of Bade, Jakusko, Karasuwa, Nguru, Yusufari and Machina LGAs. This makes the total of 17 LGAs in the state. The state is ruled by the opposition political party since 1999 from UNCP to ANPP merged with other political parties to become APC. With recent permutations in the political environment of most the state, two Senators, five House of Representative Members, twenty two House of Assembly Members and LGA chairmen belongs to the APC, while one Senator, one House of Representative Member and two House of Assembly Members belong to present opposition party PDP in the State.

The Economic Potentials and Investment Policies: Yobe state economy is a relatively small economy when compared to other states in Nigeria. The Gross State Product (GSP)

which measures the magnitude of output of annual economic activities in the state was estimated to be about N60.57 billion in 2005. The per capita GSP was equally estimated to be about US\$222.99 which the national average for the same year was US\$887.63. Its economy makes a modest contribution of about 0.42% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The economy of the state is largely driven by agriculture. Yobe State is generally agrarian with more than 80% of the citizens engaged in small scale subsistence farming. Food crops such as millet, sorghum, beans, and maize are grown by small-scale farmers to generate household income. Cash crops that are commonly grown by peasant farmers in the state include groundnut, sesame seed, and cotton and Benny seed. In the past, these crops were exported to earn foreign exchange and for local industrials as raw materials. Tree crops such as shear butter, Gum Arabic has also potentials for export. The state is also noted to be the largest producer of gum Arabic in Nigeria. A significant proportion of the population is pastoralists who pastor commercial livestock including cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and horses.

The State has the largest cattle markets in West Africa. It supplies meat, hides and skin to other parts of the country particularly to the south. Thus, the state has the potentials not only to become an agricultural base of the country but also net foreign exchange earner. Yet, a lot needs to be done in terms of agricultural investments to realize these potentials. The major business centers in the state include Potiskum, Nguru, Gashua, Geidam and Damaturu. However, informal trading flourishes among communities on the Nigeria-Niger borders. Yobe state has not only agricultural potentials; it is also blessed with a number of solid minerals. The solid minerals that have been proven to exist in commercial quantities in the state include limestone, Kaolin, diatomite, gypsum, clay shale, trona, sandstone, silica sand and granite. These solid minerals have remained largely unexplored and unexploited although illegal miners are making fortune out of them. Thus, investment in solid mineral exploration could transform the economic fortune of the state by providing job opportunities to the population and attract investors to the State.

Situational Analysis of the State: Yobe is controlled by one political party; APC which makes it difficult to criticize or challenge the incumbent leadership at all levels, the state is also one of the 3 states under state of emergency declared by the president in May 2013. Though the present and past leaderships in Yobe remained supportive to government reform issues, practical change in the way government does its business also remained a contentious

issue. There are only two state owned media station and the national network; NTA, the state owned media stations includes Yobe Television (YTV) and Yobe Broadcasting Corporation (YBC) which are solely financed and controlled by the state government. Most civil societies in the state are also government employees, though with average capacity to engage the government on pro poor issues, engaging critically with government institutions also remained a difficult area which makes it hard to establish level of access by government to public document.

FINDINGS

Public Access to budget documents

Yobe state scores 37 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. The State Budget Call Circular, State Budget Appropriation Law, and Auditor-General's Report are publicly available on request. The majorities of the remaining documents are produced, but are not publicly available. Only the Citizen's Budget is not produced.

Public participation in the budget

Citizens and CSOs in Yobe state have limited spaces to be involved in the budget process with a score of 20 out of 100. Citizens and CSOs are completely shot out from the **budget formulation** process. The Yobe State House of Assembly opens all committee hearings to the public during the **budget approval** stage. The public is also closed off from the **budget execution** process. Meanwhile, the State Auditor-General Office's has an email address to solicit request on what should be **audited**.

Public access to procurement information

With a score of 0 out of 100, citizens have no access to procurement information in Yobe state.

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 Yobe state by timely publishing online the following documents that are already produced:

- State Draft Budget Estimates along with the Yobe State Economic Reform Agenda
- Quarter Budget Performance Reports
- State Mid-Year Review

The Yobe State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning 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 Yobe 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 detail 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 Yobe State House of Assembly should do the following:

- publish reports on committee hearings.
- open the hearings on the Auditor-General's Report to the public.

Lastly, the Auditor-General should do the following:

- ensure the public utilizes 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 government should introduce a bill to regulate the procurement process; establish a State Tenders Board with 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 State Tenders Board should open bidding documents in public immediately after the bidding process is closed.
- the State Tenders Board 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.
2. Establish Freedom of Information (FOI) Agency in the state