

## CROSS RIVER STATE



**Geopolitical Profile:** The name Cross River State was given in 1976 to the former South Eastern State which was created on May 27, 1967 from the former Eastern Region of Nigeria. The current Cross River State is what remains of it when Akwa Ibom State was carved out on 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 1987. As presently constituted, Cross River State has 18 Local Government Areas namely; Abi, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Bekwarra, Biase, Boki, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, Etung, Ikom, Obanliku, Obubra, Obudu, Odukpani, Ogoja, Yakurr, and Yala; with the city of Calabar as the State capital. The State has land area of 23,000 square kilometres and a population of 2,888,966 in 2006. With a growth rate of 2.9 per cent per annum, the estimated population for 2014 stands at 3,631,328, and a population density of 1,579 persons per square kilometre.

Located within the tropical rainforest belt of Nigeria, Cross River State lies between longitudes 7° 50' and 9° 28' East and latitudes 4° 28' and 6° 55' North. It shares a common boundary with The Republic of Cameroun in the East, Benue State in the North, Ebonyi and Abia States in the West, Akwa Ibom State in the South West and The Atlantic Ocean in the South. Its international boundaries make it a security hotspot and an axis of international trade.

Cross River State, like other States in the country, returned to democratic governance in 1999 after the interventions of the military. It has since been governed by the People's Democratic Party (PDP). All except one member of the State's House of Assembly belong to the PDP. The only exception is a member of the All Progressive Congress (APC). Representatives from the State at the House of Representatives and the Senate are all of the PDP.

The State is made up of three major ethnic groups; the Efiks, the Ejaghams, and the Bekwarras. The Efik language is widely spoken in Cross River State, and as far as Arochukwu in the neighbouring Abia State. Efik-speaking people live mainly in the Southern senatorial districts of Cross River State, or as is commonly referred to, the Greater Calabar district, which includes Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, Bakassi, Biase, Akpabuyo, Odukpani, and Akamkpa LGAs. There is also the Qua communities in Calabar who speak Ejagham. The main Ejagham

group occupies mostly the Greater Calabar areas of Calabar Municipality, Odukpani, Biase and Akamkpa sections of the State.

There are also Yakurr/Agoi/Bahumono ethnic groups in Yakurr and Abi LGAs, while the Mbene are predominantly found in Obubra LGA. Further up the core Northern part of the State are several sub-dialectical groups, amongst which are the Etung, Olulomo, Ekajuka, Mbube, Bette, Bekwarra, the Utugwanga people are found in Ogoja, Yala, Obudu, and Obanliku LGAs. The Yalas are a sub-group of the Idoma nation.

**Economic Potentials and Investment Policies:** The State is strategically located in the South-eastern part of Nigeria, offering daily road trips to Cameroun and sea routes to Equatorial Guinea, Gabon etc. There is a seaport and an international airport in Calabar as an alternative to congestion or other logistics and security concerns in the Lagos and Port Harcourt ports.

Calabar, the capital city of Cross River State, was the first capital of Nigeria (1882-1906) and is also home to Nigeria's pioneer Free Trade Zone (FTZ) and Tinapa, Africa's premier leisure and commercial resort. One-third of the State is covered by a body of waters from the tributaries of the Cross River and the Atlantic Ocean; this renders the land very fertile and provides abundant aquatic resources for fisheries. Successive governments since 1999 have developed strategies aimed at encouraging indigenous small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs), making the State investor and tourist friendly.

Agriculture and tourism are the flagships of the economic growth and development in Cross River State. The rich stock of arable land, forest, and mineral resources that abound in the State offer opportunities for growth in agriculture and eco-tourism. However, agriculture is her dominant economic sector. The varied ecological zones of the State make it rich in agricultural products. A variety of crops such as rubber, cocoa, cashew, castor seeds, yam, cocoyam, cassava, maize, melon, pineapple, oil palm, plantain, banana, groundnut, and assorted vegetables are produced in the State. The State has modern agricultural estates and several smallholder farms located in various local government areas. The sector currently employs about 80% of the State's labour force, and contributes about 40% to the Gross State Products (GSP).

Some major tourist attractions include the Obudu Ranch Resort, Marina Resort, the TINAPA Business Resort, the Cable Car, and the Bebi Airstrip. The State also organizes annual Christmas Festivals and Carnivals in Calabar, which also attract many tourists and visitors. So far, tourism has proven to be an effective sector that can complement the agricultural sector of the economy. It is the cleanest, most peaceful and secured State in Nigeria with the least threat to life and property.

The state is also endowed with mineral resources such as limestone, quartz, natural gas, clay, salt, tin, granite, basalt, lead/zinc, manganese, gypsum, barites, uranium and mica. These are yet to be exploited.

**Situational Analysis of the State:** Since 1999, there has been stability in the political climate of the State. The State has been enjoying relative peace in spite of occasional pockets of land-related conflicts either with border communities or with neighbouring States. The present

administration has also recorded great strides in ensuring probity and accountability among government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The government has established a budget Department with the vision to “Develop and manage the most reliable and realistic budgeting system in Nigeria”. The Department has organized several stakeholders’ consultative forum on budgets and ensured timely preparation of the annual State budget. The government as well as the Budget Department has websites where relevant government documents are made available to the public. The budget office also prepares the citizen’s budget which is posted on the website and hard copies shared in public fora organized by the Department. The Department also opens her doors to citizens who need financial documents about the state.

## **FINDINGS**

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

Cross River state scores 77 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index, ranked number 1 overall. The State Budget Call Circular, State Draft Budget Estimates, Citizen’s Budget, Quarterly Reports and Auditor General’s Report are all publicly available online. Citizens have access to all documents in all phases of the budget cycle that can serve as a basis to monitor how the government spends public funds throughout the budget process. The State Budget Appropriation Law, Mid-Year Review, and Accountant General’s Report are only produced for internal use.

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

Citizens and CSOs in Cross River state have significant spaces to be involved in the budget process with a score of 78 out of 100. During the **budget formulation** stage, the Ministry of Local Government Affairs in Cross River state maintain budget consultation forums where a wide variety of organizations are invited. The Cross River House of Assembly opens all committee hearings on the **budget approval** process to citizens with committees publishing reports on these hearings. The Department of Projects Monitoring and Evaluation establishes mechanism to solicit inputs during the **budget execution** process. In the **auditing** process, citizens have no open space for public scrutiny.

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

With a score of 63 out of 100, citizens have moderate access to procurement information in Cross River state. The Cross River State of Nigeria Public Procurement Act of 2011 regulates the entire procurement process and establishes the Due Process Bureau. Tenders in Cross River state are publicly opened after the bidding process is closed. Procurement awards are published online. The Due Process Bureau has a procurement complaint board with alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

## **Recommendations**

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

### **Budget Transparency**

The governor can increase budget transparency in Cross River state by publishing the following documents that are already produced:

- Cross River State Appropriation Law within three months of enactment by the state house of assembly(SHoA).
- the State Mid-Year Review annually by 30 September.
- Accountant-General's Report on time

### **Public Participation**

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the Cross River state government should do the following:

- publish a list of beneficiaries of projects, subsidies, social plans and other targeted spending from MDAs.
- ensure that the mechanisms for the public to provide inputs on how the budget is being implemented are more accessible along with reports on how these inputs are used.

Similarly, the Cross River State House of Assembly should do the following:

- improve the committee hearing reports by including written and spoken testimony presented not just contentious issues.

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 Due Process Bureau should be granted more powers to be single procurement authority and publish all contract guidance documents per award.
- the Due Process Bureau should publish justification of each award online.
- the Due Process Bureau should publish procurement complaints review body decisions within 30 days of reaching such decision.

### **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