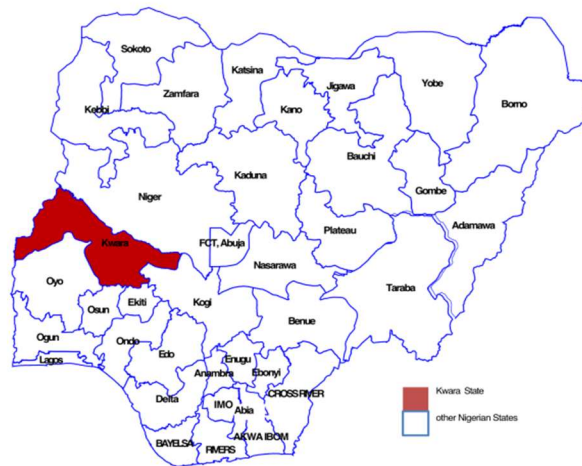


KWARA STATE



Map of Nigeria showing the Location of Kwara State

Geopolitical Profile: Kwara state was created on 27th May 1967 by the Federal Military Government led by General Yakubu Gowon. The state was one of the first 12 states created to replace the regional structure that made up Nigeria at independence. However, subsequent state creations on 13th February, 1976 and 27th August, 1991 respectively by the Federal Government (FG) led to a considerable reduction in its original size to about 35,705 square kilometers (NBS, 2011). Kwara state is located in the North Central Geopolitical zone. It shares inter-state boundaries with Niger state in the north, Kogi in the east, Oyo, Ekiti and Osun states in the south, and an international boundary with the Republic of Benin in the west.

The 2006 national population census figures revealed that the population of Kwara state was about 2.4 million people. Based on an estimated annual growth rate of 3.2 percent, the state's population is projected to be about 3.04 million people in 2014. This figure consists of five major heterogeneous tribes (i.e. Yoruba, Fulani, Nupe, Baruba and Hausa). The state is made up of sixteen Local Government Areas namely Asa, Baruten, Edu, Offa, Ekiti, Oyun, Ilorin West, Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Moro, Kaiama, Patigi, Ifelodun, Irepodun, Oke-Ero and Isin. The traditional administration in the state is characterised by the emirate system in Kwara central and north, and Obas in the south.

Geopolitically, the state is divided into twenty four (24) state constituencies, six (6) federal constituencies, and three senatorial districts (i.e Kwara Central, Kwara North and Kwara South. Thus, there are twenty four (24) legislators in State House of Assembly, six (6) House of Representative members and 3 senators from the state at the Federal House of Representatives and Senate respectively. The State Governor, 22 members of the state House of Assembly, all the senators and House of Representatives members from the state were elected under the platform of People's Democratic Party (PDP) in 2011. But the crisis in the PDP has led to the defection of the State Governor, two (2) out of the three (3) senators, twenty two (22) members of State House of Assembly, and all members of House of Representatives originally elected under the platform of the PDP to All Progressive Congress (APC).

Economic Potentials and Investment Policies: Agriculture remains the greatest economic potential of Kwara state. The state is blessed with a favorable climate and large expanse of fertile land. These endowments were combined to support various farming activities both in commercial and subsistence scales. Some of the major crops grown in the state include maize, sorghum, rice, sugar cane, yam, cassava, soya beans, and fruits. In addition to crop production, livestock rearing is another major occupation in the state. Cattle, poultry, goats and sheep are reared in commercial and subsistence scales. In addition to agriculture, the state is also endowed with a number of vital mineral resources. These include marble, granite, clay, kaolin and gold.

Agriculture provides employment to at least 70 percent of the state's labour force in the rural area, while government is largest employer of labour in the formal sector. The recent upsurge of industrial establishments has also provided employment opportunities for several others in the organised private sector. People who could not gain employment in the agricultural sector, government and organised private sectors are engaged in the informal sector as business men, petty traders, artisans and commercial transporters etc.

The relative peace enjoyed in the state, favorable investments policies and her strategic location made her a destination for small, medium and large scale investors. The state government has also provided some incentives for investors. These ranges from provision of industrial layout/estate with basic infrastructural facilities, easy acquisition of land, rebate on land, joint financing facility to provision of raw material data among others. Some of the major investments include

Harmony Holdings, Dangote Flour Mill, Jebba Paper Mill, Tuyil Pharmaceutical Company and Shonga Farms.

Situational Analysis of the State: Kwara state like many other states in Nigeria depends heavily on federal transfers (statutory allocation, value added tax (VAT) and excess crude oil proceeds). Federal transfers account for at least 80 percent of its revenue. Several steps have been taken by the state government to improve the Internally Generated Revenue capacity of the state. These steps are already yielding positive results but the federal transfers still dominate the revenue profile of the state.

The scope of Kwara state government budget like all other states is guided mainly by the provisions of the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria. But the level of transparency in its budget process may differ from other states as this survey may reveal. The budgeting process in the state is largely similar with what obtains in the federal government.

FINDINGS

Public Access to budget documents

Kwara state scores 8 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. While the majority of documents are produced, not a single document is publicly available. Only the Citizen's Budget is not produced.

Public participation in the budget

Citizens and CSOs in Kwara state have little or no space to be involved in the budget process with a score of 8 out of 100. Only the Kwara State House of Assembly opens few committee hearings to the public during the **budget approval** stage.

Public access to procurement information

With a score of 10 out of 100, citizens have limited access to procurement information in Kwara. The Tenders Board Office in the Ministry of Works and Transport regulates 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 easily increase budget transparency in Kwara state by timely publishing online the following documents that are already produced:

- Kwara State Government Budget Call Circular
- Recurrent and Capital Estimates of the Government of Kwara State
- Kwara State Budget Appropriation Law
- Kwara State Estimates Quarter Budget Performance for MDAs
- Kwara State Estimates Mid- Year Budget Performance for MDAs
- Report of the Accountant-General, Kwara State with the Financial Statements. Audited Reports of Kwara State for the period ending December

The Kwara State Ministry of Budget & Planning of should partner with CSOs in the state to develop a Citizen's Budget. The Auditor-General should also publish it's annual report on the budget..

Public Participation

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the government in Kwara 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 Kwara 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.
- Hold public hearings on the Auditor-General's Report.

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 ensure that the procurement law is published; give the State Tenders Board 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 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