

ONDO STATE



Geopolitical Profile: Ondo State of Nigeria was one of the seven states created on 3rd February, 1976. It was carved out of the former Western State. The state covered the total area of the former Ondo Province created in 1915 with Akure as the provincial headquarters. Ondo State took off formally on 1st April 1976, consisting of the nine administrative divisions of the former Western State. These nine divisions then were Akoko, Akure, Ekiti Central, Ekiti North, Ekiti South, Ekiti West, Okitipupa, Ondo and Owo.

Akure town was retained as the state headquarters. However, on 1st October, 1996, Ekiti State comprising Ekiti Central, Ekiti North, Ekiti South and Ekiti West Divisions was carved out of Ondo State. Hence, the present Ondo State is made up of Akoko, Akure, Okitipupa, Ondo and Owo Divisions. Akure remains the State capital.

The state lies between latitudes $5^{\circ}45'$ and $7^{\circ}52'N$ and longitudes $4^{\circ}20'$ and $6^{\circ}05'E$. Its land area is about 15,500 square kilometres. Ondo State is bounded on the east by Edo and Delta states, on the west by Ogun and Osun States, on the north by Ekiti and Kogi States and to the south by the Bight of Benin and the Atlantic Ocean.

The climate of Ondo State is of the Lowland Tropical Rain Forest type with distinct wet and dry seasons. In the south, the mean monthly temperature is $27^{\circ}C$, with a mean monthly range of $2^{\circ}C$, while in the northern part of the state, the mean monthly temperature and its range are about $30^{\circ}C$ and $6^{\circ}C$ respectively.

The natural vegetation is the high forest, composed of many varieties of hardwood timber such as *Melicia excelsa*, *Antaris africana*, *Terminalia superba*, *Lophira procera* and *Symphonia globulifera*. In the northern districts, the vegetation consists of woody savanna featuring such tree species as *Blighia sapida* and *Parkia biglobosa*. An important aspect of the vegetation of the state is the prevalence of tree crops. The major tree crops include cocoa, kola, coffee, rubber, oil palms and citrus; cocoa being the most prevalent. It is also important to note that rubber and oil palms have been cultivated in large plantations in Odigbo, Okitipupa and Irele Local Government Areas. Trees that are not native have also been introduced as forest plantations. These exotics have been used to revegetate large portions of harvested old forest reserves in Omo and Owo. They include mainly *Tectona grandis* (teak) and *Gmelina arborea* (pulp wood).

The people of Ondo state are mostly of the Yoruba race, although other Nigerians and foreign nationals coexist peacefully in the state. The most known ethnic subgroups are the Akoko, the Akure, the Ijo (made up of Apoi and Arogbo), the Ikalẹ, the Ilaje, the Ondo and the Owo. Although the detailed analyses of the 1991 census are yet to be done, information already provided indicates that Ondo State has a total of 2,255,728 persons made up of 1,134,703 males and 1,121,025 females.

Agriculture is the dominant occupation of the people of Ondo State providing income and employment opportunities for over seventy percent of the population. It also contributes well over seventy-five per cent to the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Ondo State is one of the most important timber producing states in Nigeria. Some of the hardwood species are Iroko, mahogany, Obeche and sapele wood. Timber has encouraged the establishment of sawmilling industries which litter every nook and corner of the state. Nigeria Romania Wood Industry (NIROWI) located in Ondo is the largest wood industry.

Ondo State has become a member of the Nigerian oil producing states as petroleum is now extracted offshore. Other minerals available include tar sand (bitumen), especially in Okitipupa and Irele LGAs; kaolin clay in Ile-oluji/Okelgbo, Ondo and Odigbo LGAs; iron ore in Ifedore, Akure, Idanre, Odigbo and Akoko North East, Akoko North West, Akoko South East and Akoko South West LGAs; granite in Idanre and Ile Oluji/Okelgbo LGAs; and quartz sands at Ilaje, Okitipupa and Ese Odo LGAs. Furthermore, there are other minerals, such as coal, columbite, tin

and marble, many of which are at different stages of prospecting, extracting and development. Ondo state has a coast with great potentials for fishing industry.

At present, the major industrial ventures include the Okitipupa Oil Palm Mill Pie at Okitipupa, NIROWI at Ondo, Cocoa Products Company Ltd. at Ile-Oluji and Oluwa Glass Company Pie at Igbokoda. Others include the Nigerian Italian Ceramics Factory at Ifon, Alpha Paper Industries at Arigidi-Akoko, Ondo State Asphalt Company at Aponmu, Araromi Ayesan Oil Palm Pie at Araromi Obu and Foam Industry at Akure, to mention but a few.

Areas of great potentialities in Ondo State include agriculture, forestry and tourism. Indeed, forestry offers a lot of investment opportunities in the state. Exotic species such as teak (*Tectona grandis*) and pulp wood (*Gmelina arborea*) are now cultivated in many places. Other forestry products like twines, canes are common along rivers and are used for weaving hats, bags and rope making.

FINDINGS

Public Access to budget documents

Ondo state scores 41 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. The State Budget Appropriation Law is available online and Accountant-General's and Auditor-General's Reports are available on request. The majorities of the remaining documents are produced, but are not publicly available. Citizen's Budget and Quarterly Reports are not produced.

Public participation in the budget

Citizens and CSOs in Ondo state have minimal space to be involved in the budget process with a score of 44 out of 100. Few citizens and CSOs from disadvantaged groups are invited to solicit inputs during the **budget formulation** process. The Ondo State House of Assembly opens most committee hearings to the public 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 33 out of 100, citizens have minimal access to procurement information in Ondo state. While there is no formal law regulating the procurement process, the Ondo State Project and Price Monitoring Unit 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 Ondo state by timely publishing online the following documents that are already produced:

- Advance Proposal & Draft Estimates
- Ondo State Budget Proposal
- Ondo State Mid Year Appraisal

The Ondo State Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget should do the following:

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

Public Participation

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the government of Ondo 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 Ondo State House of Assembly should do the following:

- publish reports on budget committee 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 Ondo State Project and Price Monitoring Unit the authority to regulate all 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 Ondo State Project and Price Monitoring Unit should open bidding documents in public immediately after the bidding process is closed.
- the Ondo State Project and Price Monitoring Unit should publish all procurement decisions along with their justifications and 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.