

SOKOTO STATE



Geopolitical Profile: Sokoto State is located in the North-Western Nigeria. It is bordered by Niger Republic and Republic of Benin. The projected state population in 2014 is 4.7 million. The state is located to the extreme North-western part of Nigeria between 4.8 degrees East and 6.54 degrees East Longitudes and 12 degrees North and 13.58 degrees North Latitudes. The state covers a total land area of 32,000 Square Kilometres. It has 23 local government areas. APC is currently the ruling party in the state. The Deputy Governor remains in PDP While majority of the Politicians in all the Houses and the Senate have decamped to APC, a handful of them in the State Assembly, Federal House of Representatives and the Senate still remains in PDP.

Economic Potentials: There is only Cement Company in the state. It has large deposits of limestone which the cement company exploits for its production. A new MOU was signed between Sokoto state and a company from overseas to establish cement company in the state. This was aimed at generating more employment for the people of the state.

Situation Analysis: There is little or no insecurity in the state. Politically, there are little upheavals as at now. Sokoto State is relatively calm. There is a great deal of red-tapeism and bureaucratic bottle-neck in terms of releasing official and public documents regarding budgets and financial documents. Most time, nothing is released.

FINDINGS

Public Access to budget documents

Sokoto state scores 27 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. The State Budget Appropriation Law is 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 Sokoto state have a limited space to be involved in the budget process with a score of 22 out of 100. During the **budget formulation** process, the state government holds limited consultations to solicit inputs for the State Draft Estimates. The Sokoto State House of Assembly opens most committee hearings to the public during the **budget approval** process. Both the **budget execution** and **auditing** process are closed off to public scrutiny.

Public access to procurement information

With a score of 53 out of 100, citizens have moderate access to procurement information in Sokoto. The Law on Bureau for Public Procurement and Price Intelligence of 2013 established the Due Process Office to regulate the procurement process. Tenders are opened immediately after the bidding process is closed.

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

- Call Circular for Recurrent and Capital Estimates
- Sokoto State Proposed Recurrent and Capital Estimates
- Sokoto State of Ngeria Approved Budget
- Sokoto State Budget Review
- Sokoto State Mid Year Review for Fiscal Appropriation Law
- Accountant-General's Report
- Auditor-General's Report

The Sokoto 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 of Sokoto 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 Sokoto 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 government should give the Due Process Office 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 Due Process Office should publish all procurement decisions along with their justifications and for all community projects.
- Empower the Public Procurement Commission of the state

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