



# **NIGER DELTA EAST - Advocacy Visit Report**



**March 2022**

**Report by Ebenezar Wikina**

## Background

Building on the successes of the advocacy visits to the Niger Delta West wing (Delta, Edo, and the Ondo States) the goal of visits to the eastern region of the Niger Delta (Cross River, Akwa Ibom, and the Abia States) was to track the progress of the Cross River State Growth and Development Strategy, the Abia State Long-Term plan and to discuss Akwa Ibom State Government's interest to develop a 30-year plan of its own. The Advocacy team also utilized the opportunity to meet with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and advocacy groups (including Partners for Peace) concerned with issues around access to land, state government budgeting and open governance, multiple taxations, and the proposed Niger Delta Peace and Security Framework which will be implemented in collaboration with Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs and BRACED Commission.

## Visiting Team

The Advocacy team which conducted the week-long exercise in the three States comprised of:

- Chuks Ofulue, Advocacy Manager
- Ebenezar Wikina, Advocacy Coordinator



*Cross-section of Cross River State Planning Commission Directors and Officers engaged in Calabar to track implementation of the Cross River State Growth and Development Strategy (2018-2048)*

## Cross River State

The working visit in Calabar was held on Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, and Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. Engagements were held with the Cross River State Planning Commission (CSPC) led by Mr. Joseph Agim (Director of Administration, CSPC) at the state secretariat complex and with civil society partners at the Budget Transparency and Accountability Network (BTAN) led by Kingsley Eworo (Cross River State Coordinator, BTAN). Both sessions provided PIND an opportunity to learn more about the progress made on the implementation of the Cross River State Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) and its inclusion in the State annual budgets from 2019 to date.

### Key Issues and Outputs from Meetings

- The budget office has been separated from the Planning Commission thus making it harder for the GDS to be harmonized with the annual State budgets
- There is a need to build the capacity of State planning commission staff to effectively rally MDAs to align with the GDS and track budget spending
- Cross River State has signed up to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) platform in Nigeria and held one engagement with the OGP secretariat housed in the Federal Ministry of Planning.
  - See report of Cross River State OGP engagement here - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kjslgad4GI8OARqBk7a60doEOh66jsQR/edit?usp=sharing&oid=114027926456686365644&rtpof=true&sd=true>
- State Planning Commission to develop a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) drawn from the GDS
- Planning Commission requested the support of PIND in reviewing the GDS as it is prescribed that the plan should be reviewed every 5 years as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework



*PIND Advocacy team at BTAN Office with Kingsley Etoro*

### **Takeaways for PIND**

- The Planning Commission provided PIND with soft copies of State annual budgets from 2019 to 2022 to help in tracking budgetary provisions linked to the GDS in the past 5 years. The Commission also highlighted budget lines in the 2022 State budget that connect to the GDS including 100 million nairas for feasibility study, design, and construction of cocoa processing plant in Ikom, 300 million naira for design and construction of rice mill processing plant in Ogoja, 200 thousand naira for the promotion of value-added services in the State, to mention a few.
  - See budget documents here:  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16lh9O8\\_1MbOYyY2PPD9fu3iA0BDYBxf?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16lh9O8_1MbOYyY2PPD9fu3iA0BDYBxf?usp=sharing)
- PIND has been made a member of the Cross River State Growth and Development plan review committee established by the government to provide oversight on the 5-year review process of the GDS. UNESCO has promised to fund this review activity, and the Advocacy Manager has been added to the Committee's WhatsApp group where engagements are being held on a day-to-day basis.
- BTAN has expressed interest to partner with PIND in coordinating civil society efforts especially as it relates to tracking the budget lines that relate to the GDS and supporting activities around other PIND advocacy issues, including access to land, multiple taxation, and peace and security framework
  - See screenshot of an email from BTAN corroborating the above -  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O8S\\_q7bGFEWxCkikLjE1Kwaz1xu5F50Q/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O8S_q7bGFEWxCkikLjE1Kwaz1xu5F50Q/view?usp=sharing)



Knowledge resources received from Policy Alert in Uyo

## Akwa Ibom State

The Advocacy team worked in Uyo on Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 engaging with former two-time Akwa Ibom State Commissioner and former Lead Consultant, Abia State Long-Term Development Plan, Dr. Ebebe Ukpogon to better understand the State's plan to design a Long-Term Development plan in the forthcoming administration. The team also engaged with Policy Alert, an activist organization led by Tijah Bolton Akpan to secure partnership towards the community engagement phase of the Niger Delta Peace and Security Framework project. Tijah is also a committed member of the Partners for Peace (P4P) Network via the Akwa Ibom State chapter.

### Key Issues and Outputs from Meetings

- Development in the State has been haphazard due to the lack of a sustainable Long-Term Development plan
- State Government frequently cites the Akwa Ibom State masterplan which was developed by former Governor Attah, but this is an urban development plan which is only one component of a holistic Long-Term Development plan
- Akwa Ibom State Government is yet to sign to the Open Government Partnership platform in Nigeria, thus state budgets and contractual processes are not open for public consumption and scrutiny

- Policy Alert has been advocating for Akwa Ibom to open up its public budgetary and procurement processes
- During the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) hearing, Policy Alert was active in ensuring grassroots participation at all National Assembly hearings is currently working to educate host communities in preparation for the establishment of the respective Host Communities Development Trust (HCDT).

#### **Takeaways for PIND**

- Policy Alert to partner with PIND during community engagement phase of the Niger Delta Peace and Security Framework design in the 9 states.
- Advocacy Manager is currently on an ad-hoc committee established by prominent Akwa Ibomites who are setting the agenda for the next government administration. Top on the agenda of projects is the proposed Akwa Ibom State Long-Term Development
- Policy Alert expressed their interest to work with PIND in the Economic Development program, especially in the GMoU communities. The Advocacy team promised to put them in touch with members of the Market Systems Development team



*The Advocacy team met with the Secretary to the State Government and representative of the House of Assembly*

## **Abia State**

The final lap of the State Advocacy visit was in Umuahia on Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup> and Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022. On the first day, the Advocacy team held a high-level meeting with the Secretary to the State Government (SSG) Abia State, Barr. Chris Ezem and the State legislator representing Umuahia South, Hon. Jeremiah Uzosike; who is also the Chairman of the House Committee on Donor Engagement. The purpose of the meeting was to follow up with the Executive and Legislature in Abia State as it relates to institutionalizing the Abia State Long-Term Development Plan (ABSLTDP), to ensure that successive governments can also plug into the roadmap for sustainable development in the State. Hon Uzosike promised that House would legislate on the plan document in current session. and he assured PIND of his unwavering support in this regard. The SSG placed on record the State government's appreciation to PIND and the Executive Secretary of the Planning Commission, Dr. Nnenna Chikezie, for ensuring that the Long-Term planning project was brought to a befitting end.

On the second day, the Advocacy team held a work session with key MDAs including the Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture, Transport, and Special projects to review items of their respective budgets that connect to the ABSLTDP. Following the formal launch of the plan in April 2021, this is was the first time the State is attempting to draw its annual budget from the plan, thus the session also provided PIND an opportunity to guide the MDAs on the process, plus discuss the rationale for key budget lines. Mr. Eric

Adile, Convener of the Abia State Sustainability Roundtable Series, who joined in from Abuja, was also invited to the work session by PIND to ensure private sector involvement even as the State commences implementation of the plan.



*During the three-hour work session, Directors and Planning officers from key MDAs presented on their projects for 2022 and how they connect with the ABSLTDP with particular reference to the page number*

### **Key Issues and Outputs from Meetings**

- MDAs highlighted the lack of release of funds as a hindrance to project implementation in the State
- MDAs requested the support of the Niger Delta Donors & Partners Coordination Forum in achieving soft components of State budgets
- State Planning Commission to share comprehensive document featuring where MDA budget lines connect with the ABSLTDP
- Mr. Eric Adile noted that the MDAs need to prepare concept papers on the respective projects to highlight particular areas the private sector can support. He gave an example of the conversation on the education component of the plan during the last Sustainability Roundtable series and the donation of two containers-worth of books coming to Abia State public primary schools in the coming week.

### **Takeaways for PIND**

- Abia State Government produced a simple template that is being used track how the budget lines connect the long-term development plan, and this can be adopted for other States to facilitate seamless reporting.



- In readiness for harnessing opportunities of interventions from the private sector projects, the Ministry of Agriculture has promised to profile Cassava farmers in the State in preparation for any investment opportunities that may arise.
- On Access to Land in Abia State for agricultural purposes, the Ministry of Agriculture would share a layout of the farm settlement earmarked for cultivation which is currently fallow.
- Abia State Government to legislate on the ABSLTDP, thereby giving it legal backing, in the coming quarter.
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*Cross-section of participants who took part in the ABSLTDP Implementation tracking session at the office of the State Planning Commission*

## **Closing**

Similar to the success experienced during the Advocacy visit to the Niger Delta West wing, the Advocacy team had a fruitful outing in Abia, Akwa Ibom, and the Cross River States harvesting several data points which will make up the report of how PIND is facilitating investment at the State government level.