



STATE ACTION PLAN (SAP) 2021 - 2023

Final Learning Exercise Summary Report

Jointly Prepared and Submitted By

**Government and Civil Societies
Coalition**

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Foreword

This Final Learning Exercise Summary Report is aimed at extracting lessons for reflection on the open government efforts at the end of the implementation of the Plateau State Action Plan 2021 - 2023 and providing recommendations for the co-creation and implementation of the jurisdiction's next action plan. It seeks to capture the successes and areas of improvement of the action plan as a whole – from co-creation to final implementation of commitments.

Due to the high turn-over in the make-up of the Independent Monitoring Board, and the consequent loss of institutional memory therein, the report was jointly prepared by the government and civil society coalition Points of Contact persons. The lessons and recommendations were drawn from the inception assessment and end of commitment assessments, with additional inputs from the last Steering Committee meeting held on 24th May, 2023 to review the Draft End of Commitments Assessment.

In summary, the implementation of the last Plateau State Action Plan was a case of mixed fortunes birthed from a sincerity of purpose and efforts moderated by extremely limited resources. It is our belief that, with the lessons from this first cycle, the next action plan will record even greater success.

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Section 1. Local Context

Plateau State is a sub-national government in North Central Nigeria with an estimated population of over four million people based on an annual growth estimation rate of 2.74% from the last conducted National Population Census in 2006. It is home to over fifty ethnic nationalities, nearly half of them having historic or autochthonic ties to virtually all the 36 states in Nigeria. This makes Plateau the most hospitable and cosmopolitan state in the country. The state experienced lots of ethno-religious conflicts between 2001 – 2015. Although the conflicts were largely contained between 2015 – 2023, the simmers from the protracted violence in the preceding years meant a slow return to the hitherto vibrant economy that the state used to be known for. This impacted negatively on the internal revenue generation performance of the state during the action plan implementation period, coupled with a drastic drop in the state's allocation from the federation account.

The global impact of COVID-19, which manifested more severely between 2020 – 2022 saw most donor organisations rechanneling their resources towards palliatives that responded to the food and non-food needs of impacted populations across the world. Plateau State was not insulated from the consequences of this development. Since virtually all its action plan commitments were not causally related to COVID-19, the alternative sources of funding them outside the state budget were highly limited.

Thirdly, the national elections that spanned from the party congresses and primaries in early 2022 up to the general elections that lasted up to April 2023 meant that the action plan did not receive priority attention for about three-quarters of its implementation period of September 2021 – March 2023. The state had to appeal to OGP Local for an extension of the action plan period by 30 days, to April 2023, to allow for some actions to be completed.



Section 2. Action Plan Co-creation Process

2.1 Co-creation process review

The Plateau State OGP Action Plan, which was a product of months of continuous engagement and planning discussions between government and civil society, culminating in an intensive 3-day co-creation process, contained six Commitments from the following five Thematic Areas:

- i) **Fiscal Transparency (2nos.):** - Improving Transparency in Procurement Processes; and Improving Participatory Budgeting;
- ii) **Citizens Engagement:** - Establishing Citizens Dialogue Mechanisms for improved Accountability and Transparency;
- iii) **Extractive Transparency:** - Increasing Transparency and Accountability in the Extractive Sector;
- iv) **Gender:** - Improving Gender Equality Through the establishment of a Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission;
- v) **Peace & Security:** - Establishing an Independent Peace and Security Fund.

The main strengths of the co-creation process in Plateau State include:

- The outstanding harmony between the government and civil society stakeholders that began with the membership application process through the action plan co-creation up to its implementation
- The level of diversity in the make-up of the stakeholders' forum with significant participation from women, youths and people living with disabilities
- The retreat settings during the final phase of the co-creation process engendered good fraternity across all the participating demographics.

The main weakness of the co-creation process for the Plateau State OGP was the naivety involved in the attempt to accommodate all shades of opinions and thereby ending up with such an ambitious plan that turned out in part to be rather too extortionate to completely implement within the desired period.



One of the outstanding outcomes of the co-creation process was the ability of the stakeholders' forum to be unanimously realistic about what constituted the peculiarities of the state, such that it was able to amend the thematic areas to reflect these peculiarities. For instance, the extractive transparency theme and commitments were introduced into the action plan to reflect the reality of the state in extractives sector, just in the same manner that the peace and security theme was earlier advocated when the state's membership application was submitted to OGP global forum despite the fact that peace and security was not one of the traditional thematic areas of the forum at that time.

The co-creation approach ensured that the Plateau State Action Plan met the spread requirement of five thematic areas and five commitments plus an adjunct one, and these adequately represented the diverse issues the state was dealing with in its development aspirations.

2.2 Co-creation process recommendations

Some recommendations for the next action plan co-creation exercise include:

- Start early and devote more time, between 6 – 8 weeks to allow for more robust multi-level deliberations;
- Use virtual meetings technology to extend participation opportunities to stakeholders outside the state, such as the Plateau State Diaspora Communities in the UK, USA, Canada, China, South Africa, and their in-country versions in Abuja, Lagos, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, and Bauchi;
- Actively encourage the participation of members of the state legislature (parliament) and participants from the third tier of government, that is, the local government areas level;
- Deliberately involve stakeholders from regional and zonal offices of federal ministries, departments and agencies domiciled in the state;



Section 3. Action Plan Commitments

3.1 Commitments implementation review

Overall, the commitments of Plateau State in its OGP Action Plan 2021 - 2023 were substantially implemented with significant impact on open governance in the state, especially with regards to participatory budgeting which extended citizens participation from zonal levels down to local government and ward levels of the state; open contracting, which introduced the state to the use of technology for public procurement. Citizens engagement commitment promoted the use of Monitoring & Evaluation concept to the state, leading to the development and adoption of a state M&E policy, the first by a subnational government in Nigeria.

The detailed milestones and their achievements are already reflected on the state's portal on the OGP website www.opengovpartnership.org. Below is a synopsis of the level of achievements of the strategic medium-term goals of state action plan:

S/N	Goal	Achievement Level
1	Setting up the Gender Commission before the end of 2022 to serve as the engine room for the pursuit of the gender equity objectives	The Gender and Equal Opportunity Commission Law was revised, awaiting passage by the legislature. An Implementing Committee was set up to operationalise the structure pending the passage of the revised law
2	Upgrading the Open Contracting Platform to enhance more robust access and interaction to citizens	The Open Contracting platform was enhanced to manage procurement in 4 ministries that account for over 70% of the state capital budget, viz: Works, Education, Health and Agriculture



3	Making the state's budgeting process more participatory	The citizens participation in budgeting was extended from the 3 zones of the state to the 17 local government areas and the 324 state wards
4	Organizing quarterly media appearances by the Governor and top government officials	The platform was created via 2 weekly radio programs on which commissioners and heads of agencies take turns to appear and engage with the citizens on trending policy issues
5	Promulgating the Plateau State Monitoring and Evaluation Policy by end of 2021	The Plateau State M&E Policy was developed and adopted, the first by any subnational in Nigeria
6	Promulgating the Plateau State Community Development Policy by mid-2022	The Draft Plateau State Community Driven Development Policy is already in place awaiting stakeholder validation and subsequent adoption by the State Executive Council
7	Deploying the Citizens Engagement Platform called " Click'n'Tell " by Q1-2022	The first version of " Click'n'Tell " was launched but later stepped down for upgrade
8	Holding the first "Plateau State Results Fair" by 4 th Quarter 2021	Yet to be achieved
9	Setting up the Plateau State Extractive Industries Transparency Forum by mid-2022	The Plateau State Extractive Transparency Forum has been constituted awaiting formal inauguration by the state Governor
10	Setting up the Plateau State Peace and Security Fund by Q3-2022	The Executive Bill for setting up the Security Fund is already presented to the legislature for passage into law



It is worthy of note to state that there were challenges associated with the levels of achievement of the goals above and those still outstanding. The main challenges were as follows:

- Paucity of funds had a significant impact on the implementation of the Plateau State OGP Action Plan 2021 – 2023. This was due mainly to the drastic fall in the revenues of the state from both the internal sources and from the federation account. Furthermore, the impact of COVID-19 on the direction of flow of development support funds from donors had its own adverse effect on the commitments since they do not directly address COVID-19-related issues.
- Due to the increased level of political activities which accompanied the elections period that spanned over three-quarters of the action plan period, the state government did not prioritize the implementation of the activities in the action plan.
- The civil society members of Plateau State OGP were very active during the action plan co-creation process but became rather aloof during implementation, believing that the implementation of the plan and its funding thereof were the exclusive responsibility of the state government.

In summary, the implementation of the six Commitments (two in Fiscal Transparency and one each for the other thematic areas) of the Plateau State OGP Action Plan 2021 – 2023 contributed substantially towards the achievement of the state's strategic vision of participatory, transparent, innovative, inclusive and accountable governance that would lead to an enabling environment for the socio-economic development of the state.

3.2 Commitments recommendations

Some of the recommendations for making the next commitments include:

- In making commitments, stakeholders should moderate ambition with realizability in order to avoid having very big commitments like the Citizens Engagement commitment in the last action plan;



- The Citizens Engagement and Peace & Security commitments should be carried over to the next action plan. However, the citizens engagement commitment needs to be fragmented for effectiveness;
- The outstanding activities, which are primarily the passage of proposed legislative bills, with respect to the Gender, Open Contracting, Participatory Budgeting and Extractive transparency commitments can be followed and completed within the ordinary business of governance;
- Stakeholders should peer-learn from the experiences of other jurisdictions similar to the Plateau State that may be addressing the same OGP themes as those of the state;
- Civil society members of the Plateau State OGP should endeavour to be more involved in the implementation of the action plan in terms of ownership and sourcing for alternative funds outside the state budget to carry out some of the activities required to meet the commitments;
- There is a need to consider making commitments in the areas of Climate Change Actions and Service Delivery Reforms in the next action plan in order to build upon the achievements in the last plan.
