

BSDP



Benue State Development Plan

2025-2034

Foreword



The *Benue State Development Plan (BSDP) 2025–2034* represents a bold and visionary roadmap for the next decade, aimed at fostering sustainable growth, equitable development, and inclusive governance in Benue State. As we embark on this transformative journey, the Plan seeks to unlock the full potential of our human and natural resources, ensuring prosperity for all citizens of the State. Benue State, often referred to as the "Food Basket of the Nation," is endowed with rich agricultural resources, an industrious population, and abundant natural endowments. Despite its vast potential, the state faces significant developmental challenges, including infrastructure deficits, unemployment, fiscal constraints, and security concerns. Addressing these challenges requires a sound, evidence-based, and strategic plan that prioritizes key sectors

and aligns with global, national, and subnational development goals. The BSDP 2025–2034 serves as a comprehensive blueprint to guide policymakers, investors, development partners, and citizens in building a stronger and more resilient Benue State.

This plan is anchored on four strategic pillars: **Economic Growth and Development, Infrastructure, Social Development, and Governance and Public Administration.** These pillars are carefully designed to address critical development needs while harnessing the strengths, opportunities, and competitive advantages of the State. For each pillar, targeted interventions, flagship programmes, and priority projects have been outlined, with measurable outcomes to track progress over the Plan period. The preparation of the BSDP 2025–2034 is a result of an inclusive and consultative process. It reflects the aspirations of the people of Benue State, integrating inputs from government institutions, private sector actors, civil society organizations, and international development partners. Furthermore, it aligns with the **National Development Plan (NDP) 2021–2025** and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, ensuring that our progress contributes to broader national and global agendas.

A distinctive feature of the BSDP is its focus on agriculture, industry, infrastructure, and human capital development. Recognizing the state's comparative advantage in agriculture, the Plan prioritizes the modernization of agricultural practices, value chain development, and rural infrastructure. Simultaneously, it emphasizes industrialization, trade promotion, and investment facilitation to diversify the State's economy. Critical sectors such as education, healthcare, energy, transportation, water resources, digital economy, and security have

also been prioritized to improve the well-being and livelihoods of our people.

Benue State's development success over the next decade will require firm commitment, collaboration, and resource mobilization. As the state government, we reaffirm our dedication to implementing this Plan with transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. We recognize the critical role of development partners, the private sector, and the people of Benue State in achieving the goals set out in this plan. Together, we can transform challenges into opportunities and achieve a prosperous, secure, and sustainable future for our state.

On behalf of the Government of Benue State, I invite all stakeholders to embrace the BSDP 2025–2034 as a shared vision for the future. I am confident that with collective resolve, we will realize the aspirations of this Plan, paving the way for a Benue State that is economically vibrant, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable.



Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia
Executive Governor of Benue State

Date: *December 2024*

Preface



The *Benue State Development Plan 2025–2034* (BSDP) marks a key milestone in the journey to transform Benue State into a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient economy over the next decade. Rooted in a clear vision and strategic focus, this Plan offers a clear roadmap to unlock the full potential of our people, resources, and institutions. By addressing persistent challenges and

harnessing emerging opportunities, the BSDP aims to lay a foundation for sustainable growth, improved livelihoods, and equitable development for all citizens of Benue State.

Benue State, known as the *Food Basket of the Nation*, is endowed with vast agricultural resources, rich cultural heritage, and immense human capital. However, despite its significant potential, the State faces numerous challenges, including insecurity, limited infrastructure, environmental pressures, economic stagnation, and disparities in access to basic social services. Recognizing these hurdles, the BSDP is a strategic response to reposition Benue State as an economic hub, leveraging agriculture, industry, trade, innovation, and good governance.

Structure and Approach

The BSDP 2025–2034 was developed through an inclusive, participatory process involving stakeholders across government ministries, local government areas, development partners, private sector actors, and civil society organizations. The Plan builds on a sound assessment of the State's performance between

2020 and 2024, taking into account the local, national, and global economic outlooks. It aligns with Nigeria's national development priorities, international development goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and innovative financing models to support its execution.

The strategic framework for the BSDP is anchored on four thematic sections:

- **Economic Growth and Development:** Focuses on enhancing agriculture, industry, trade, and investments, as well as optimizing solid mineral resources and tourism.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Aims to improve critical infrastructure such as transportation, housing, power, digital connectivity, and environmental sustainability.
- **Social Development:** Emphasizes investments in education, health, gender equality, youth empowerment, and disaster management.
- **Governance and Public Administration:** Strengthens governance, security, law enforcement, and justice systems, promoting accountability, transparency, and institutional efficiency.

A Transformative Vision

At the core of the BSDP is a transformative vision: *To achieve a diversified and inclusive economy, driven by sustainable growth, innovation, and good governance.* This vision is supported by strategic pillars that set clear medium-term objectives, measurable targets, and implementable flagship programs across critical sectors. The Plan articulates bold strategies to attract investments, expand infrastructure, foster innovation, build human capital, and enhance governance frameworks. The BSDP also prioritizes inclusivity, ensuring that no one is left behind. Particular attention is given to women, youth,

persons with disabilities, and vulnerable groups to foster a more equitable and just society. This Plan's success rests on collaboration between the government, private sector, development partners, and the people of Benue State.

The Benue State Development Plan is anchored on a set of key commitments aimed at unlocking the state's potential, driving sustainable economic growth, and improving the quality of life for its people. At the forefront of these commitments is the unlocking of agricultural potential, which leverages Benue's vast agricultural endowments. By prioritizing value-chain development, food processing, and the establishment of agro-industrial hubs, the state aims to transform its agricultural sector into a powerful driver of economic growth and food security. This strategic focus will not only enhance productivity but also create employment opportunities, boost rural economies, and ensure that Benue maximizes its comparative advantage as the "Food Basket of the Nation." Infrastructure revitalization represents another critical pillar of the Plan, emphasizing the need to enhance essential infrastructure such as roads, housing, energy, water resources, and digital networks. The development and modernization of these infrastructure components are vital for creating a conducive environment for businesses, attracting investments, and improving livelihoods. By bridging infrastructure gaps, Benue State seeks to facilitate economic activities, improve connectivity within and outside the state, and lay the foundation for industrialization and urban development. Investing in human capital remains a top priority in the Plan, with a clear focus on improving access to quality education, healthcare, and social services. Empowering the people of Benue State through better learning opportunities and healthcare outcomes is fundamental to achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development. By prioritizing human capital development, the plan seeks to equip citizens with the skills, knowledge, and well-being required to contribute meaningfully to the state's transformation.

The Plan also emphasizes fostering innovation

and technology as a catalyst for productivity and competitiveness. By promoting science, technology, and innovation, Benue State aims to harness new ideas and solutions to address developmental challenges, boost economic diversification, and position itself as a hub for technological advancements. Encouraging innovation across sectors will ensure that the State remains adaptive, resilient, and capable of achieving long-term growth in an increasingly competitive global environment. Lastly, the Plan explains the importance of strengthening governance, which is essential for building strong institutions, improving security, and ensuring accountability in the delivery of public services. Effective governance is critical to achieving the goals of the development plan, as it provides the framework for implementing policies, managing resources efficiently, and delivering results that meet the aspirations of the people. Through transparent leadership, institutional reforms, and enhanced security measures, Benue State is committed to fostering a stable and enabling environment where development can thrive sustainably.

Call to Action

The *Benue State Development Plan 2025–2034* reflects a shared vision and collective aspirations of the people of Benue State. Achieving the ambitious goals outlined in this Plan requires unwavering commitment, strategic partnerships, and active participation from all stakeholders. Government agencies, private investors, development partners, and citizens must align efforts, contribute resources, and work together to implement the strategies outlined in the BSDP.

We must embrace this Plan as a tool for change, innovation, and resilience, building a future where Benue State emerges as a beacon of economic prosperity and social progress. The time for action is now—let us collectively transform this vision into reality.



Barr. Dr Sam Ode, Mni
Deputy Governor of Benue State

Date: December 2024

Acknowledgements



Since the creation of Benue State in 1976, various planning frameworks have been adopted, starting with the National Rolling Plan, a medium-term plan (1990–1998). Since Nigeria returned to civilian democratic rule in 1999, every successive administration in Benue State has introduced one form of development strategy or economic blueprint or another, including the Benue

Advance Plan (1999–2003), Benue State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (BenSEEDS), Our Benue, Our Future (2008–2011), Our Collective Vision for a New Benue (2015–2019), and Benue State Development Plan (2016–2025). To ensure an inclusive successor development plan to the earlier economic blueprints, it became imperative for the planning process to follow a consultative and participatory approach, with key stakeholders actively involved.

The current Benue State Development Plan (2025–2034) benefitted from the contributions of individual experts, corporate bodies, associations, organisations, and non-governmental actors too numerous to mention. Our first appreciation goes to UNICEF for offering technical support to the state government in developing a comprehensive development plan with costed programmes and projects over the medium term. This was made possible through the provision of a consultant (Strategic Development Results Consult Ltd.) to lead the process. With the approval of the Governor, Reverend Father Dr Hyacinth I. Alia, and his directive to the State Planning Commission to produce a development plan, the process commenced in earnest.

Benue State is deeply indebted to the Executive Governor, Reverend Father Dr Hyacinth I. Alia, for providing quality leadership throughout the planning process. We are also grateful to the Deputy Governor, the Secretary to the Benue State Government, all State Commissioners, Special Advisers, Senior Special Assistants to the Governor, and the Benue State body of Permanent Secretaries for their invaluable contributions. Our appreciation also extends to the Benue State Council of Traditional Rulers, under the able leadership of the Tor Tiv and its members. We acknowledge the support of all non-governmental actors (NGOs, CBOs) and organised private sector operators in Benue State, such as MAN and NACCIMA. We must also recognise the invaluable contributions of representatives of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the state, the National Council of Women's Societies, and umbrella youth organisations in Benue State, among others.

Members of the Technical Working Groups (TWGs), the Central Working Group (CWG), and the Steering Committee (SC), who provided the technical inputs essential to the production of a comprehensive, holistic, robust, and implementable Benue State Development Plan 2025–2034, are deeply appreciated for their commitment and dedication to the successful completion of the project. A list of TWG, CWG, and SC members is provided as an appendix at the end of this development plan document.

Finally, to all officials of the various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in Benue State who provided the background information and data for this project, we express our profound gratitude.

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'Jerome Andohol'.

Prof. Jerome Andohol
Director General, Benue State Budget and
Economic Planning Commission

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BIPC	Benue Investment Property Commission
BIPC	Benue Investment Property Commission
BIRS	Board of Internal Revenue
BIRS	Board of Internal Revenue Service
BSB&EPC	Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission
BSBEPC	Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission
BSDP	Benue State Development Plan
BSPC	Benue State Planning Commission
BSU	Benue State University
BSU	Benue State University
BudgIT	Non-governmental civic organisation that promotes budget reforms and transparency and accountability in the annual budget process
COE	College of Education
COE	College of Education
DMO	Debt Management Office
DMO	Debt Management Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IGR	Internally Generated Revenue
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MDAs	Ministries, Department and Agencies
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NDP	National Development Plan
OAGS	Office of the Auditor General of the State
OAGS	Office of the Auditor General of the State
PEBEC	Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB-IVA	World Bank Independent Verification Assessment
WB-IVA	World Bank Independent Verification Assessment.

Executive Summary

Benue State is the Food Basket of Nigeria. Created in 1976, the State is richly endowed with human and natural resources. The development trajectory in the State over the last 48 years has been mixed, but generally, there have been continuous improvements across sectors of the economy and facets of the citizens' lives. The State has an estimated population of over 7 million, based on the 2016 census figure of 4,253,641 and a population growth rate of 3.23%. It is endowed with solid mineral resources and hydrocarbons, which are found in commercial quantities across the State due to the sedimentary formation comprising sandstones, mudstone, and limestone. The prospects for gas and oil exploration and exploitation are high, owing to the State's location in the Benue Trough. It also boasts a relatively extensive river system, with the River Benue being the longest tributary of the River Niger, spanning a length of 1,083 km.

The State serves as one of the gateways to the South-East and South-South regions of the country. It connects the northern part of Nigeria to other regions via a road and rail infrastructure network. The colonial rail infrastructure linked the State to other parts of the country, including Port Harcourt, Jos, and Kaduna. The State also has a navigable river network, although navigation by large vessels is restricted to certain periods due to insufficient water depth.

Macroeconomic Outlook

The global and national economic outlooks are generally relatively favourable for Nigeria and Benue State.

Despite the global macroeconomic challenges experienced in 2023, the prospects for growth appear promising for 2024 and beyond. Nigeria, and indeed Benue State, is expected to benefit from a stabilising global market. It is anticipated that the fiscal space for States and Local Government Areas (LGAs) will enable them to spend efficiently and invest wisely, thereby boosting growth, creating jobs, and improving living standards across the federation. Looking ahead, the revenue profile of Benue State remains generally unchanged in terms of structure and composition. This clearly shows the dominance of revenue allocations from the Federation Account and the relatively low share of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR).

Strategic Framework

The purpose of developing the Benue State Development Plan (BSDP) 2025–2034 is to address the gaps identified in the development and implementation of previous plans and to accelerate progress. The Plan draws inspiration from Nigeria Agenda 2050, which aligns with the regional (Africa Agenda 2063) and global development agenda (Sustainable Development Goals 2030). It provides an overarching long-term vision for a Greater Benue, aiming to build an agriculture-driven economy with a strong human capital base, high quality infrastructure, viable micro, small and medium enterprises and an improved governance capacity for job and wealth creation, inclusive growth and poverty reduction. It also outlines the strategic framework anchored on seven pillars designed to set the State on a trajectory of inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Pillar 1: **Security of Lives and Property**

Benue State faces challenges with insecurity, including increasing cases of communal conflicts, farmer-herder conflicts, kidnapping, and banditry. Reversing this trend is critical to realising the State's full economic potential and ensuring the overall well-being of its citizens. The State will therefore partner with security agencies and the public to gather, collate, and share information and intelligence to enhance safety and security. It will intensify efforts to address the root causes of crime and criminality, promote behaviour modification among inmates, and empower inmates through educational and vocational skills training programmes, as well as facilitating incentives and income generation. The State will also collaborate with relevant stakeholders to introduce community policing and neighbourhood watch in 70% of LGAs, enhance the implementation of the Anti-Open Grazing Law to improve security, deploy technology (particularly CCTV) for security surveillance, promote gender-sensitive policing, and administer non-custodial measures such as community service, probation, and parole.

Pillar 2: **Agriculture and Rural Development**

Agriculture is the key driver of growth and has the potential to make Benue State one of the five most economically viable states in Nigeria and an agro-industrial hub of the nation. Its high potential for employment, income, and livelihoods will be optimised during the Plan horizon of 2025–2034. The strategic objective for the agricultural sector is therefore to develop and modernise agriculture in Benue State, making it the driver of accelerated economic development, investment, food

and nutrition security, food sovereignty, and prosperity.

The specific objectives are to boost agricultural productivity by 50% through increased access to inputs, financing, extension services, and markets, diversify employment and income-generating opportunities using small-scale agro-processing, and expand rural infrastructure to facilitate the evacuation of farm produce from production to marketing and consumption points.

The priority projects and programmes to be executed to achieve the above strategic objectives and targets include the construction of 12 small earth dams in each senatorial district, the resuscitation of 100 irrigation facilities for the cultivation of 300,000 hectares, the provision of 600 tractors annually for mechanised production, the training and equipping of 10,000 youths for agro-related enterprises, and the establishment of 15 small- and medium-scale agro-allied manufacturing factories and 10 feed mills and fish hatcheries in each senatorial district. Additionally, nine agricultural training centres will be established to train 500 extension workers annually and improve the extension-farmer ratio to 1:800. Access to essential farm inputs will be increased with the supply of 200 trucks of fertilisers, 40,000 improved seeds, and 24,000 litres of agro-chemicals, while three cattle, sheep, and goat ranches will be established in each senatorial district, and 1.5 million trees will be planted annually as a climate change mitigation strategy.

Pillar 3: **Commerce and Industry**

The strategic objectives for this sector are to create an enabling environment for increased private investments in

commercial and industrial activities and to support the development of viable MSMEs to optimise their job and wealth generation potential. The Government will focus on creating the conditions for private sector investment of at least N60 billion while investing directly in infrastructural facilities to spur trade, commercial, and manufacturing activities.

The strategic priorities for execution include the development of Phase II of the Benue Industrial Estate in Makurdi, the establishment of a technology and innovation hub in Makurdi to support SMEs, the establishment of a textile and garment manufacturing cluster that will employ 2,000 persons, the establishment of a world-class fashion hub, the construction of hotels at the fashion hubs, the establishment of five vocational and technical training centres, and the establishment of three Export Processing Zones (EPZs). Additionally, three solar energy plants will be constructed to support 1,000 SMEs, a dam will be built at Taraku Mills Limited, and a standard abattoir will be constructed in each of the 23 LGAs.

Other initiatives include establishing agro-processing parks and industrial hubs through public-private partnerships, reviving State-owned industries such as Taraku Oil Limited and Yam Processing Plants, and partnering with major companies like Dangote and Lafarge to establish cement and brick manufacturing plants. Furthermore, 10,000 farmers will be trained annually on international standards for export, packaging, and quality control, and a certification scheme will be implemented in collaboration with international organisations. An online export promotion portal will be developed, and annual trade fairs and trade missions will be organised in

partnership with Federal Government export promotion agencies to promote Benue-based producers and exporters.

Pillar 4: **Human Capital Development**

The strategic objective is to develop human capacity to drive productivity, promote equitable opportunities, and protect the vulnerable (women, youths, and those with disabilities).

Education and Knowledge Management
Benue State remains committed to investing in education and knowledge management as a strategy for human capital development and the creation of a knowledge-based economy. The BSDP 2025-34 will focus on developing educational infrastructure at all levels, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, expanding lifelong learning opportunities for all, sustainably developing the capacity of teachers, promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), mainstreaming vocational education and skills acquisition, and improving the availability and quality of educational data for evidence-based decision-making. The State aims to improve the number of students per classroom to 40 students and the qualified teacher-pupil ratio to the globally acceptable ratio of 1:40, especially at the Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) and secondary school levels. It also seeks to improve the proportion of STEM students from 15% to 60% and increase literacy from 63% to 72%.

The flagship projects and programmes to be implemented include the construction of classrooms, recruitment of qualified teachers to reduce the student-to-teacher ratio, provision of special scholarships for science students, increased supply of

science equipment and learning aids, establishment of Special Needs Education Centres for children with disabilities, continuous curriculum review and improvement, training and professional development of teachers, with special attention to teachers for Mathematics and special education, establishment of vocational skills acquisition centres in all 23 LGAs, upgrading the Benue Education Management Information System (BEMIS) from a manual to an automated system, and the establishment of a base station at the Ministry's Headquarters, etc.

Health and Human Services

The health and human services sector is critical to human capital development and the realisation of Benue State's full development potential. It determines the extent to which the State harnesses its human resources and optimises demographic dividends. The broad objective of the Government for health and human services is to enhance the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of healthcare services in Benue State, ensuring equitable healthcare delivery and improved health outcomes across all demographics through preventive and curative interventions. This will require expanding access to healthcare in underserved areas through infrastructural development, enhancing the availability of essential drugs and equipment, expanding health training institutions to produce adequate qualified health workers, and strengthening mechanisms for regulation and standardisation of practice and services provided in public and private healthcare facilities. Key targets for measuring performance include increasing access to healthcare services within a 5km radius to 75%, ensuring 75% of PHCs have adequate staffing, increasing the total number of healthcare personnel (doctors, nurses, and midwives) from one medical professional

for every 7,464 people to one for every 4,556 people, increasing access to health insurance coverage to 60%, reducing maternal and infant mortality by 40%, reducing maternal mortality from 70/100,000 to 42/100,000 live births, and reducing the prevalence of all infectious diseases to less than 5%.

Priority programmes and projects to be executed to achieve these objectives include strengthening 276 Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) through renovation, remodelling, and equipping, with priority given to facilities providing essential ANC and PNC services, upgrading three specialist hospitals in Vandeikya, Okpokwu, and Buruku LGAs, completing renovation works for state medical stores, eliminating the scarcity of essential drugs through the drug revolving fund system, developing manpower by providing infrastructural facilities, equipment, and qualified academic and support staff for the introduction of new programmes at Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), and upgrading health-related institutions, etc.

Women Affairs and Social Development

Benue leads in women's empowerment and social inclusion. This Plan will enable the State to consolidate its gains and accelerate the development of women and other vulnerable groups. The broad objective of the Government in this area is, therefore, to promote gender equality, protect the rights of women, children, and the elderly, improve their health and wellbeing, and enhance the economic opportunities and participation of women. The specific objectives are to increase the participation of women and other vulnerable groups in development, develop their entrepreneurial abilities, increase access to social services and

financial capital among women and other vulnerable groups, and provide protection services to these groups.

To achieve these objectives, the following projects have been prioritised for implementation: establishment of the Benue Women's Economic Empowerment Fund (BWEFF) with initial seed funding of

1 billion, entrepreneurship training and mentorship programmes for 5,000 women, provision of microfinance loans to 10,000 women, support for 500 women-led SMEs with capacity building and access to markets, development of women-focused economic zones, expansion of social protection programmes such as cash transfers and food assistance, provision of counselling, shelter, and other support services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and other persons with special needs.

Youth, Sports and Creative Industry

Benue State has a youthful population. This Plan will harness the potential of the youth to optimise demographic dividends. It aims to enhance the physical, emotional, and cognitive growth of the youth, empower them through inclusive and accessible opportunities in sports, promote creativity among the youth, leverage their exuberance to preserve cultural heritage, and promote their active participation in the overall development of the State. The flagship projects to be delivered during the plan period include leadership training programmes, construction of mini stadia in the 23 LGAs, construction of multipurpose indoor sports halls, supply of sporting equipment and kits, harnessing the potential of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in sport, organising State Sport Festivals, inter-LGA competitions, the Governor's Football competition, and ensuring continuous participation and improved performance of the State in national and

international sport festivals.

Pillar 5: Infrastructure Development and Environment

Infrastructure development creates the foundation for inclusive growth and sustainable development. It has a catalytic effect on growth and inclusion. This Plan aims to bridge the infrastructure deficit in Benue State to unleash inclusive growth and sustainable development. It focuses on the development of core (transportation and energy) and non-core (housing and water) infrastructure assets and the associated improvements in service delivery.

Works, Housing and Urban Development

Access to quality road transport is key to unleashing the development potential of Benue State. It will boost the status as the “Food Basket of the Nation” and promote the agricultural value chain within the State. This Plan focuses on the development of critical road, housing, and urban infrastructure. Broadly, this Plan seeks to develop and maintain a safe, efficient, and sustainable road network that supports economic growth and social development and provides safe, affordable, and sustainable housing to improve the quality of life for all citizens. It sets the key targets that include constructing/rehabilitating 905km of roads, increasing funding for road maintenance (with a total length of 981.96km) to 20% of the total annual budget for road infrastructure, and providing 5,000 housing units to improve existing towns and rural settlements. The State will develop and implement a comprehensive Road Sector Development Plan by 2027 and establish a State Road Maintenance Agency to coordinate efforts and fast-track achieving objectives and targets.

Priority projects to be executed include completing all ongoing projects, including the construction of over 327km of intra-state roads and interchanges (underpasses) in Makurdi and Gboko, construction of 305km of urban roads across the State, construction of 600km of rural roads, provision of layouts in the three Senatorial zones, construction of 5,000 low-cost housing units, and construction of 30 pedestrian bridges to cater for the interests of people living with disabilities in Makurdi, Gboko, and Otukpo.

Transportation

Transportation has a catalytic effect on almost all sectors of the economy and human endeavour and serves as a major source of employment opportunities and means of livelihood. The broad objective of the Government in the medium-term plan from 2025-2029 is to develop a safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation system that will support economic growth, social development, and environmental protection in Benue State. More specifically, this Plan seeks to enhance transportation infrastructure and services by constructing and rehabilitating river ports and a cargo airport, increasing the fleet size and improving the quality of public transport vehicles, increasing road safety awareness among citizens to reduce road accidents, and enhancing accessibility to transportation services for persons with disabilities and special needs. The Government will also develop the capacity of relevant MDAs in PPP management to increase private investments in the sector, utilise smart transport technologies for traffic management, route optimisation, and real-time information systems, encourage the use of environmentally friendly transport options and practices, and support the CNG initiative of the Federal Government for more cost-effective and

environmentally friendly transport fuel.

Power and Renewable Energy

Benue State has huge potential for mini-grid and off-grid electricity from renewable and non-renewable sources. This Plan will enable the State to harness its potential to bridge existing gaps in electricity supply and to meet the requirements for accelerated economic growth and social development. It sets a broad objective of ensuring reliable, efficient, and sustainable electricity supply to power economic growth, social development, and improve the quality of life for all citizens in Benue State. The following performance targets will guide the achievement of this strategic objective: generating at least 40% of electricity from renewable sources and increasing access to electricity for 90% of the population by connecting a minimum of 150,000 new households. To achieve these strategic objectives and targets, the State will invest in the development of power infrastructure, especially power generation and distribution using mini-grid and off-grid options, strengthen the relevant legal framework at the State level to enable the creation of a feasible electricity market, and package power projects for private sector investment through PPP options.

Water Resources, Environment, and Climate Change

The proper management of the water and environmental endowments of Benue State is critical for the development and optimal realisation of its abundant agricultural and natural resources in a sustainable manner. This will require expanding and upgrading water infrastructure for affordable and efficient services, adopting environmentally friendly approaches to development, and enhancing the adaptation capacity of communities to mitigate the effects of

climate change. To this end, this Plan seeks to promote and ensure the rational and sustainable utilisation, development, and effective management of water and environmental resources for the socio-economic development of Benue State.

The key targets set for the State for the period 2025–2029 are to increase access to clean and affordable water supply to 72.7%, increase the proportion of the population with access to basic sanitation facilities to 80%, and plant 150,000 palm and other trees to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Pillar 6: **Information and Communication Technology**

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector has consistently recorded the highest growth rate of 8.5% and the largest contribution to Nigeria's real GDP growth of 57.7% in recent years.

Communication and Digital Economy
Benue State will optimise the growth and inclusion opportunities offered by the high-performing ICT sector in the Nigerian economy. It sets a broad objective of transforming the State into a digitally inclusive, innovative, and connected society where technology drives economic growth, improves quality of life, and enhances the efficient delivery of government services. The Plan sets performance targets for key areas, including supporting the growth of 1,000 digital start-ups, increasing basic digital literacy skills among citizens by 50%, providing 80% of government services via e-governance platforms by 2029, and increasing the ICT sector's contribution to Benue's economy to 20% of GDP by 2029.

The strategies for implementation include developing e-governance platforms for

all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to effectively interact with citizens and businesses, enhancing digital literacy among public servants and citizens, deploying automated payroll systems to enhance transparency and efficiency, expanding ICT infrastructure and services to address insecurity and crime, establishing innovation hubs to boost digital entrepreneurship, and strengthening the legal framework to unlock the full potential of the sector.

To achieve these objectives, priority projects include deploying ICT solutions, such as security networks, in nine local government areas (LGAs) facing serious security challenges. The government will also partner with relevant federal MDAs and the private sector to increase broadband and internet penetration while reducing cybersecurity risks.

Science, Technology and Innovation

The government will increase investments in building a robust foundation for science, technology, and innovation. It will establish Technology, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship Incubation Centres in each senatorial zone to support the development of new ideas, inventions, and solutions through technical guidance, mentoring, and networking.

Other initiatives include upgrading and equipping science research laboratories, renovating classrooms in 12 science and technical colleges and the BEST Centre, enhancing the capacity of 190 science and technology teachers and 80 managers of incubation centres and hubs, introducing a Young Science and Technology Cadets' initiative in primary and secondary schools to promote engagement in science and technology activities among students, and installing a 100 MW solar mini-grid in each of the three senatorial districts.

Pillar 7: **Political and Economic Governance**

The quality of governance in the State will determine the extent to which Benue State achieves its development aspirations outlined in this Plan. This quality is determined by the ability of the Government to define and communicate its strategic vision, its responsiveness, and its capacity to promote equity, inclusiveness, citizen participation, the rule of law, transparency, accountability, and efficient and effective service delivery. The institutional arrangements, legal and regulatory frameworks, policies, processes, and rules are crucial for improving the quality of governance.

Justice and Public Order

The justice system creates the foundation for economic development and the general well-being of citizens by defending the rule of law, ensuring access to justice, maintaining peace and order, and protecting human rights. This Plan, therefore, aims to build a strong and effective justice system, which is essential for creating a stable and prosperous society where individuals and corporate organisations can live and operate peacefully and orderly. The strategies to be adopted to achieve this objective include developing infrastructure, providing adequate modern equipment to enhance professionalism and the quality of legal services, building the capacity of legal officers and support staff, reviewing obsolete laws to align with current realities and international best practices, increasing access to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, strengthening collaboration with the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, and correctional institutions, and institutionalising effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Legislature

The legislature has a critical role to play in Benue State's development efforts, especially by providing legal frameworks, appropriation, and oversight at both state and local government levels. This Plan seeks to enhance the legislature's contribution to development by enacting high-impact legislation essential for individuals, businesses, and government agencies to operate within a secure and peaceful society, thereby attracting investment and increasing government revenues. The strategies to achieve this include providing infrastructure and equipment, amending obsolete laws to align with current realities and future needs of Benue State, strengthening the law-making process by promoting robust public hearings on all bills, ensuring effective and efficient oversight functions, enhancing the legislature's representative roles, and building the capacity of legislative and non-legislative staff.

Finance and Fiscal Sustainability

Financial capacity and fiscal sustainability are crucial for achieving the vision set out in this Plan by creating a stable economic climate that supports growth and development, boosting revenue generation, strengthening public financial management, ensuring debt sustainability, and promoting transparency and accountability. This Plan seeks to enhance internally generated revenue (IGR) to support sustainable development and ensure efficient, effective, and sustainable public expenditure management for optimal service delivery. It sets the following key targets to measure government performance: increase IGR by 20% annually, achieve an IGR-to-GDP ratio of 15% by 2026, increase tax registration by 30% by 2025, achieve a 90% budget

execution rate by 2025, and reduce expenditure arrears by 50% by 2026.

The strategies outlined in this Plan include revamping government-owned companies and assisting them in securing investments, growing IGR, fully automating financial operations of public financial management agencies, implementing cost optimisation, funding agriculture, establishing and building the Benue Sovereign Fund and Sinking Fund to stabilise government operations, continuously training and recruiting subject matter experts, establishing a Debt Management Office (BSDMO) for the State, and working with the Federal Government's DMO to access long-term funding for projects and strategic investments. Priority projects include automating the financial operations of the Accountant-General's Office, Ministry of Finance, and Benue State Internal Revenue Service, establishing a revenue transparency portal, creating a citizen engagement platform, and conducting regular citizen satisfaction surveys.

Financing the Plan

The total financing requirement for the Plan is N1.78 trillion. This amount will be financed by both the public and private sectors. The public sector is expected to provide up to 91% (N1.62 trillion) of the total investment requirement, while the private sector will contribute approximately 5% (N89.1 billion) through PPPs. Direct private investments are not included. About 4% of the total financing requirement (N70.03 billion) is expected as aid and grants for donor-assisted projects. The public sector component comprises N871.8 billion in state revenue (53.8%) and N750.25 billion for the 23 LGAs in the State (46.2%).

Financing the Plan's development

priorities requires adopting fiscal measures to complement federal fiscal and other reforms. During the Plan period, policy objectives include entrenching fiscal discipline to reduce costs, free up resources, and stabilise revenue streams for accelerated and inclusive growth; enhancing allocative efficiency to deliver development priorities; and optimising alternative financing options to bridge gaps and sustain a positive trajectory.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Institutionalising a monitoring, evaluation (M&E), and reporting system is key to the effective implementation of this Plan. This system will track the implementation of prioritised programmes and projects using key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets set across sectors. It will assess expected development outcomes, evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of implemented policies, programmes, and projects, and facilitate documentation, reporting, and dissemination of M&E outcomes to enable continuous improvement through experiential learning and periodic Plan reviews. The institutional framework for M&E identifies key stakeholders and outlines responsibilities.

Plan Implementation, Coordination and Communication

Implementing this Plan requires effective coordination and a robust communication strategy. The communication strategy serves as a call to action, raising awareness of BSDP (including the vision, strategic objectives, and sectoral priorities) by disseminating key information, obtaining stakeholder feedback on implementation modalities and status, and presenting results delivered through policies, programmes, and projects at output,

outcome, and impact levels. A platform will also be created for policy advocacy and dialogue to enhance evidence-based decision-making and establish official communication channels within BSB&EPC to harvest stakeholder feedback.

The governance framework for implementing the communication strategy will be under the leadership of the Director-General of the Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission (BSB&EPC). A Grassroots Sensitisation and Mobilisation Committee (GSMC), led by the Director-General, will manage and facilitate the implementation of the BSDP Communication Strategy. This includes communicating and harvesting feedback on policy, programme, and project outcomes and sharing results with stakeholders. The GSMC will include members from the Governor's Office, Secretary to the State Government's Office, Ministry of Information, LGAs, NGOs, and religious and traditional institutions. BSB&EPC will serve as the Secretariat for the GSMC.

Plan Structure

This Plan is structured into three major parts with 28 chapters, aligned with institutional arrangements in the State and the mandates of implementing MDAs. The first part covers Chapters 1–3, providing background information, a macroeconomic outlook with projections and assumptions for state and LGA revenue and expenditure, the strategic framework (including vision, mission, pillars, and strategic objectives), and the macroeconomic framework of this Plan. Chapters 4–25 present sectoral situation analysis, strategic objectives, implementation strategies, priority projects and programmes, financing requirements, expected outcomes, and costed projects and programmes. The Plan concludes with Chapters 26–28, which outline financing requirements and options, the monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework, and details on Plan implementation, coordination, and communication.

Section 1

PLAN RATIONALE

Introduction and Background

Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

The Nigerian economy remained resilient after the turbulence caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The economy continued to grow, albeit at a slower rate. Some sectors contributed significantly to growth, while the oil and gas sector, among others, stagnated or weakened growth. Recent economic reforms have opened new opportunities for inclusive growth and sustainable development, which will positively impact businesses and citizens. The political stability in the country has considerable implications for confidence building among key economic actors. Successful transitions after electoral cycles create the enabling environment for Nigeria to address persistent socioeconomic challenges and optimise growth potential in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

However, heightened economic risks at the global level have increased the vulnerability of national economies, reduced growth, and worsened the socioeconomic situation worldwide. At the national level, reform policies, coupled with inherent macroeconomic, socioeconomic, and security challenges, have exacerbated volatility and uncertainty. While gains have been recorded, particularly in the fiscal and monetary space, price hikes and inflation have increased the cost of living and the cost of doing business, weakening growth and hindering job and wealth creation.

These socioeconomic realities are evident in Benue State as well. Governments at the state and local levels, along with businesses and residents in the State, are grappling with these challenges. This situation has made it imperative for the Benue State Government to introduce reform measures that would drive transformational change by stimulating inclusive economic growth,

creating an enabling environment for increased job creation, and addressing poverty. Consequently, it became necessary to review the Benue State Development Plan 2016–2025 and formulate a successor plan for the next 10 years, spanning 2025–2034, to reposition the State and unlock its full development potential.

The Benue State 10-Year Development Plan (2025–2034) has been formulated to enable the State to leapfrog other states by optimising economic growth potential, addressing myriad socioeconomic challenges, and promoting peace, security, and prosperity. The Plan centres on seven pillars, strategically focusing on building a Greater Benue with a secure, peaceful, and business-friendly environment that fosters growth and delivers favourable outcomes, particularly through improved governance, massive job and wealth creation, and a prosperous future. It draws inspiration from Nigeria's Agenda 2050 and the National Development Plan 2021–2025, and aims to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It builds on gains recorded during the implementation of previous development plans and the existing Benue State Development Plan 2016–2025. The Plan also enables the State to align with national initiatives through the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Agenda and international development partners.

1.2 Profile of Benue State

Benue State is known as the Food Basket of Nigeria. Created in 1976, the State is richly endowed with human and natural resources. Over the last 48 years, the State's development landscape has been mixed, but there have been continuous improvements across various sectors of the economy and aspects of residents' lives.



1.3 Governance Structure

Makurdi, the capital of Benue State and the seat of government, is located along the southern bank of the River Benue. It is one of the State's 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Other LGAs include Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer, Gwer-West, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Obi, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo, and Vandeikya.

The State is administratively structured to promote even development and ensure adequate representation in the legislative arm of government at both national and state levels. Accordingly, Benue State has three Senatorial Districts (Benue South, Benue North-East, and Benue North-West), ten Federal Constituencies for the House of Representatives (Apa/Agatu; Kwande/Ushongo; Vandeikya/Konshisha; Buruku; Ado/Ogbadibo/Okpokwu;

Katsina-Ala/Ukum/Logo; Otukpo/Ohimini; Gboko/Tarka; Makurdi/Guma; and Gwer/Gwer-West), and 32 Constituencies for the Benue State House of Assembly.

The traditional institutions in the State serve as custodians of culture and values. They play critical roles in local governance, community development, and the promotion of peace, unity, and prosperity. Benue State has a three-tier traditional council system comprising local government area traditional councils, area traditional councils, and the State Council of Chiefs. The Tor Tiv is the Chairman of the State Traditional Council. The two Area Traditional Councils (Tiv and Idoma) are headed by the Tor Tiv and the Och'Idoma, respectively, while a second-class chief heads each Local Government (Area) Traditional Council, which includes several District Heads in each of the 23 LGAs.

1.4 People and Culture

Benue State is estimated to have a population exceeding 7 million, based on the 2016 census figure of 4,253,641 and a population growth rate of 3.23%. The age and gender distribution of the population generally mirrors national patterns. The State has a youthful demographic, with individuals under 19 years constituting more than half of the population. This demographic potential offers prospects for growth and inclusive development within the State.

Benue State is relatively culturally diverse. The main ethnocultural groups include the Tiv, Idoma, Iggede, Etulo, Abakpa, Jukun, Hausa, Akweya, and Nyifon peoples. The Tiv people dominate 14 of the State's 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs), while the Idoma and Iggede people are predominant in the remaining LGAs. This cultural diversity is reflected in the State's rich heritage, encompassing distinctive languages, traditional institutions, cuisine, costumes, rituals, and festivals. English serves as the official language, with Tiv and Idoma widely spoken across the State and beyond. The population is predominantly Christian, with minorities practising Islam and traditional

religions. The cultural diversity of Benue State characterises its people as amiable, cheerful, and hospitable.

1.5 Climate and Vegetation

Benue State lies in Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone. It spans a landmass of 33,955 km², located between latitudes 6.5° and 8.5° North and longitudes 7.47° and 10° East. It shares borders with Nasarawa State to the north, Taraba State to the northeast, Kogi State to the west, and Cross River, Ebonyi, and Enugu States to the south. The State also has an international border of approximately 40 km with the Republic of Cameroon to the southeast.

Due to its location, Benue State enjoys a favourable climate, with distinct rainy and dry seasons. The rainy season spans up to seven months, with annual rainfall ranging from 100–200 mm, while the dry season lasts for five months, beginning in November. Atmospheric temperatures range from 23°C to 37°C and vary across the State, with the southeastern region being generally cooler due to the influence of the Obudu-Cameroon mountain range.



The State's geology consists of a sandy-loam basement complex and alluvial plains. Its predominantly undulating plains occasionally rise to elevations between 1,500 m and 3,000 m above sea level. These geological and topographical features, combined with favourable rainfall, support the cultivation of various crops.

Benue State is situated in the wooded savannah region, featuring mixed vegetation. It serves as a transition zone between northern and southern ecologies. The northern part predominantly features the Guinea Savannah, with grasses and medium-height trees, while the western and southern parts are characterised by rainforests with tall trees, dense grasses, and oil palm trees.

1.6 Mineral Resources and Endowments

Benue State is rich in solid minerals and hydrocarbons, present in commercial quantities across the State due to its sedimentary formations of sandstone, mudstone, and limestone. Major mineral resources include limestone in Gboko LGA and kaolin in Otukpo LGA, both of which are commercially exploited. Coal is available in commercial quantities in Ogbadibo LGA, while limestone and barite are found in Gboko LGA, gypsum and kaolinite in Otukpo LGA, iron ore in Apa LGA, and salt/brine in Gwer East LGA. Other abundant resources include gold, lead, feldspar, wolframite, gemstones, river sand, and granite.

Additionally, the State's location on the Benue Trough presents significant prospects for oil and gas exploration. The defunct Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) had expressed interest in exploration, particularly following progress made on the Nasarawa end of the trough.

Benue State features an extensive river

system. The River Benue, the longest tributary of the River Niger, spans 1,083 km. Originating in the Adamawa Plateau of northern Cameroon at an altitude of 1,340 m, it flows westwards through Adamawa, Taraba, and Benue States before joining the Niger at the confluence in Kogi State. Its major tributaries include the Gongola, Taraba, and Katsina-Ala Rivers, alongside smaller ones such as Mkomon, Amile, and Duru. The Benue River and its floodplains offer substantial potential for irrigated agriculture, with numerous small-scale irrigation sites across Makurdi, Gwer West, Katsina-Ala, Jato Aka, Otukpo, and Agatu LGAs.

1.7 Transport Connectivity

Benue State serves as a gateway between the southeastern and southern regions of Nigeria, linking the north to other parts of the country via its road and rail networks. Makurdi is connected to Abuja through a dual carriageway via Lafia, and ongoing road expansion is set to connect the State to the southeast via Otukpo and Enugu. All LGA headquarters are linked by trunk A and B roads. The colonial-era rail network connects the State to Port Harcourt, Jos, and Kaduna. Although River Benue offers navigable waterways, large boats operate only during periods of sufficient water depth. Nevertheless, the river holds potential for substantial goods and passenger transportation.

1.8 Benue State Development Planning Experience

The Benue State development planning experience dates back to 1999 with the introduction of the "Benue Advance Plan". Since then, four plans have been produced and implemented. Beyond the statements of vision and mission, all the plans had overarching development goals and were aligned with national development plans, including the National Economic



Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Nigeria's Vision 20:2020, the Transformation Agenda, and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). The current strategic plan by Rev. Fr. Dr. H.I. Alia has benefited significantly from the past plans. The four plans were:

- * Benue Advance Plan (1999–2003)
- * Benue State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (BenSEEDS)
- * Our Benue, Our Future (2008–2011)
- * Our Collective Vision for a New Benue (2015–2019)

Arising from the previous experience and the

Key lessons learned from the development and implementation of previous development plans in Benue State are:

- * Some plans were largely political manifestos that emphasised expressions of intent and visions of State political leaders.
- * The plans did not contain facts and figures to enable evidence-based planning, including rigorous sectoral analysis, projections, and the setting of measurable targets.
- * A structured monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the plans was generally absent, thus performance measurement was not systematically done, and the impact of the plans was not established.
- * The lack of performance measurement metrics weakened transparency and accountability and affected the confidence and trust of stakeholders.

It seeks to create equal opportunities, improve labour conditions, and support entrepreneurship.

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure): The focus is on technological advancement, resource efficiency, and equitable access to infrastructure.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries (Reduced Inequalities): Reduce income inequality within and among countries by ensuring equal opportunity, reducing barriers to social and economic inclusion, and implementing equitable policies.

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (Sustainable Cities and Communities): It covers affordable housing, sustainable urban planning, and reducing urban environmental impacts.

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (Responsible Consumption and Production): Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns by reducing waste, promoting resource efficiency, and supporting sustainable business practices and consumer behaviour.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (Climate Action): Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by promoting climate resilience, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting global environmental policies.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development (Life Below Water):

It involves preventing marine pollution, protecting ecosystems, and ensuring sustainable fisheries.

Goal 15. Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss (Life on Land): It aims to protect, restore, and sustainably manage terrestrial ecosystems, forests, and land, combat desertification, halt land degradation and biodiversity loss, and promote sustainable forest management.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions): It emphasises reducing violence, corruption, and injustice while fostering transparency.

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (Partnerships for the Goals): This involves financial resources, technology sharing, and capacity building to support all goals.

1.9 Purpose, Scope and Planning Approach

The purpose of developing BSDP 2025–2034 is to bridge gaps identified in the development and implementation of previous plans. It is developed to install a sustainable strategy for promoting growth, social inclusion, and making Benue State an attractive place to live, work, and invest in. It also aims to address inequalities. The Plan embraces all the main drivers of development in the State – economic, infrastructural, civil society, security, and environmental. Governance and finance are treated as cross-cutting.

This Plan departs from the past by adopting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic,

and Time-bound (SMART) performance metrics, including goals, objectives, outcomes, and outputs. It, thus, sets out a solid foundation for monitoring and evaluating plan implementation and creates opportunities for continuous improvement through learning from experience. The Plan demonstrates the feasibility of the expected outcomes and compels a careful consideration of financial implications and the specification of the organisational ability of the government to achieve the set goals. Details on projects or programmes are to be included in sector plans and strategies, including Medium-Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs), and incorporated into annual budgets.

approval.

Previous development plans were generally short-to-medium term in nature.

1.10 Plan Development Process and Structure

The development of this Plan improved on the process adopted in developing previous plans to enhance the depth of analysis, standardise performance metrics, cost priorities, and institutionalise monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The process of developing these plans generally involved Technical Working Groups (TWGs) undertaking desk reviews and organising strategy sessions to agree on long-term development goals, and sector policy thrusts, objectives, strategies, and expected results. The TWGs engaged stakeholders at the Senatorial level using focus group discussion approaches and Town Hall meetings to gather inputs to improve the document. The work of the TWGs culminated in the preparation of a draft Plan, which is shared with the Technical Advisory Panel for review and improvement. The improved revised draft is presented to stakeholders at a validation workshop, and a draft is presented to a Steering Committee for inputs. A revised final draft was presented to the Benue State Executive Council for consideration and

Strategic Framework for BSDP 2025-2034

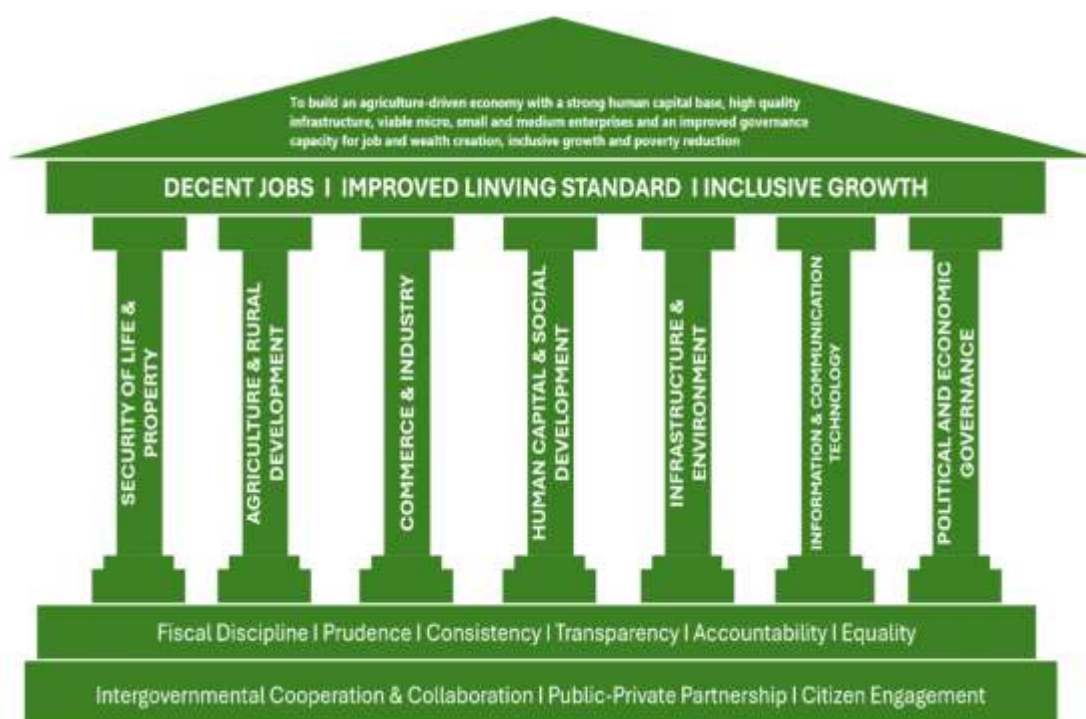
Chapter 2

2.0 Introduction

The Benue State 10-Year Development Plan draws inspiration from Nigeria Agenda 2050, which reflects regional (Africa Agenda 2063) and global development (Sustainable Development Goals 2030) agendas. It provides an overarching long-term vision for a Greater Benue and a strategic framework anchored on seven (7) pillars that will set the State on a trajectory of inclusive growth and sustainable development. These pillars frame strategic initiatives and priorities to be implemented over the next 10 years to bring about transformational changes and deliver development outcomes in the social, economic, environmental, and governance spheres.

Being a long-term plan, each of the 7 pillars provides broad objectives,

implementation strategies, and execution priorities for all sectors. To ensure logical consistency and accommodate adjustments, the pillars provide broad parameters for crafting other medium-term development planning instruments, including Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSS), Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and sector policies, as well as preparing annual budgets for Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in the State. The Plan's strategic framework is predicated on the understanding that the 23 LGAs in the State will ensure that their plans, policy actions, and annual budgets align with this framework. It is expected that Benue State will, by so doing, be on a development pathway that will guarantee the delivery of key development outcomes such as inclusive growth, job creation, and an improvement in the standard of living.



The philosophical underpinning of the Plan is people-centred, and it is based on functional federalism, active private sector participation, and citizen engagement. It also upholds the universal good governance principles of transparency, accountability, and equality. This will enable Benue State to derive maximum benefits from the Nigerian federation, provide strategic direction for the 23 LGAs in the State to deliver development outcomes, and create the enablement for the private sector and citizens to actively participate in the development effort. Coming at a critical time, the successful implementation of the Plan will rely heavily on fiscal discipline, prudence in the management of scarce public resources, and policy consistency over the next 10 years.

2.1 Strategic Pillars for the BSDP 2025-2034

The BSDP 2025-2034 is formulated to ensure the effective delivery of development outcomes across sectors and spheres. The broad vision provides the plank for the 7 pillars of this Plan, and these 7 pillars are broken down into 26 strategic objectives that outline the desired outcomes to be achieved during the 10-year period. Furthermore, the strategies to be implemented to achieve the strategic objectives outline how the objectives are to be achieved. The strategic policy actions to be taken to realise the broad objectives are also identified. Strategic initiatives are also highlighted under each pillar, and these initiatives serve as execution priorities that will help implementing MDAs and LGAs to prioritise their policies, programmes, and projects. The strategic framework of the Plan is outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: BSDP 2025-2029 Strategic Framework

Pillar	Strategic Objectives
Security of Lives and Property	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evolve a viable state security architecture in synergy with the relevant institutions to address the security challenges in Benue State. 2. Strengthen traditional institutions to effectively promote peace and security.
Agriculture and Rural Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Boost agricultural productivity by increasing access to inputs, financing, extension services, and markets. 4. Diversify employment and income-generating opportunities using small-sized agro-processing. 5. Expand rural infrastructure to facilitate the evacuation of farm produce from production to marketing and consumption points.
Commerce and Industry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Create an enabling environment for increased private investments in commercial and industrial activities. 7. Support the development of viable MSMEs to optimise their job and wealth generation potentials.
Human and Social Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Develop human capacity to drive productivity and promote equitable opportunities. 9. Protect the vulnerable (women, youths, and the differently challenged) through functional science and technical education.

	<p>10. Invest in human capital development by providing targeted knowledge, skills, and proper orientation to participate and promote the socio-economic growth of the State, while providing secure, conducive, and equitable opportunities for all citizens.</p> <p>11. Strengthen health institutions to deliver efficient pro-poor health services.</p> <p>12. Empower women to effectively engage in income-generating activities for their improved standard of living.</p> <p>13. Increase youth employment through skill development and leadership development in efficient commerce, industries, and agriculture.</p> <p>14. Develop capacity-building and participation strategies for the differently challenged groups in the State.</p>
Infrastructure and Environment	<p>15. Increase rural electrification using grid and off-grid renewable solutions.</p> <p>16. Expand transport infrastructure to catalyse growth and job creation.</p> <p>17. Increase access to potable water.</p> <p>18. Stimulate the delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>19. Promote the development and sustenance of a clean and eco-friendly environment for human and non-human habitation.</p>
Information and Communication Technology	<p>20. Empower youth with digital skills and support innovation-driven enterprises.</p> <p>21. Improve the quality of governance and make government more accountable, transparent, effective, and efficient using ICT.</p>
Political and Economic Governance	<p>22. Deepen reforms to reduce the cost of governance and raise the productivity of the Public Service.</p> <p>23. Strengthen mechanisms for enhanced sub-national coordination efficiency.</p> <p>24. Safeguard the independence of the Judiciary and Legislature to guarantee the rule of law and order.</p> <p>25. Diversify the revenue base and aggressively increase IGR to meet growing expenditure needs.</p> <p>26. Improve resource allocation efficiency to free up fiscal space for developmental purposes.</p>

Macroeconomic Framework

Chapter 3

3.0 Introduction

The global and national economic outlooks generally shape the direction of events at sub-national levels, and decisions made at these levels largely determine the macroeconomic environment that influences what happens in Benue State and other parts of the country. However, policies and programmes at sub-national levels have the potential to cause transformational changes in the economy and society.

3.1 Global and National Economic Outlook

The latest International Monetary Fund (IMF) projections for the global economy estimate sustained growth at a similar pace

to 2023, with a steady decline in headline and core inflation. Global growth is projected to be stable, though slow. For the medium-term horizon, the global economy is expected to remain on a growth trajectory, with an estimated growth rate of 3.1% in 2019. In particular, growth projections for sub-Saharan Africa show an increase from the 2023 estimate of 3.4% to 3.8% in 2024 and 4.0% in 2025. The earlier forecasted growth for the top crude oil exporters in the region was revised, with Angola's estimate being downgraded due to a contraction in the oil sector, and Nigeria's estimate being revised upwards.

The global economic outlook is based on projections for global commodity prices, interest rates, and fiscal policies. Fuel commodity prices are expected to fall by an average of 9.7% in 2024, while crude oil



prices are anticipated to drop by about 2.5%. The fall in prices is attributed to an increase in supply from strong non-OPEC+ (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and selected non-member countries such as Russia) producers. Natural gas prices are also expected to continue declining by 32.6% in 2024, due to new supply, reduced demand, and expanding storage capacity. The prospects for global growth remain positive, with the beneficial effect of declining inflation in advanced economies and marginal changes in emerging market and developing economies. Inflation is projected to decline further in major advanced economies. Policy rates of major central banks are expected to reduce.

Despite global economic resilience, surprises and adverse risks cannot be ruled out. The following are the major downward risks:

- Hikes in commodity price spikes due to regional conflicts;
- Risks related to inflationary pressures in many economies are generally believed to reduce and be broadly balanced;
- Delayed or stalled gains from tight monetary policies, resetting fixed-rate mortgages, and raising household debts, which could stunt growth in many sectors (especially in commercial real estate and firms) and increase risks to financial stability;
- Disrupted Chinese recovery could negatively impact global growth;
- Fiscal policy tightening with excessive tax hikes and spending cuts to reduce budget deficits and moderate debt-to-GDP ratios;

- Dissatisfaction with reform measures could worsen the trust deficit, intensify resistance to reforms, and even cause social unrest or worsen violent conflicts; and
- The outcome of major elections in major economies could lead to policy changes that may have ripple effects on the global economy.

The Nigerian economy performed impressively in 2023, posting positive growth, though it was below expectations. A growth of 2.51% in real GDP (year-on-year) was recorded, lower than the 3.1% rate for 2022. The lower-than-expected performance was linked to reform policies and associated shocks. As has been the case for years, the non-oil sector of the Nigerian economy primarily propelled growth, recording a growth rate of 3.0% and contributing 94.3% to real GDP in Q1-Q3 2023, while the oil sector contracted further by 6.2% due to several challenges, including insufficient investments, asset vandalism, oil theft, and ageing infrastructure. The ICT sector recorded the highest growth of 8.5% and had the largest contribution to real GDP, at 57.7%, followed by the financial sector, which grew by 25.3% and contributed 41.9% to real GDP growth. The agricultural sector, which has the largest share of real GDP (24.8%), had a subdued growth of 0.6%, while the transport sector contracted by 30.7%, devastatingly dragging overall growth. The oil sector also dragged the industrial sector, causing a contraction of 0.4%.

Inflation was generally high and exceeded projections for 2023. There was a spike in the inflation rate, with headline inflation reaching 28.9% by the end of Q3 2023 and averaging 24.5% for the entire year. These

factors raised the cost of doing business in the country, thus impeding productivity. The disruption of the global supply chain

resulting from the Russia-Ukraine conflict also raised energy prices and triggered food scarcity.

Table 3.1: Key Macroeconomic Indicators (2023-2026)

Indicator	2023	2024	2025	2026
Oil Price Benchmark (US\$/b)	75.00	77.96	73.76	69.9
Oil Production (mbpd)	1.76	1.78	1.8	1.81
Exchange Rate (N/\$)	435.57	750	665.61	669.79
Non-Oil GDP (N'bn)	214,049.50	223,989.20	249,188.00	278,251.70
Oil GDP (N'bn)	11,457.80	12,316.00	13,225.70	14,272.00
Nominal GDP (N'bn)	225,507	236,305.20	262,413.70	292,523.70
GDP Growth Rate (%)	3.75	3.76	4.22	4.78
Inflation	17.16	21.40	20.30	18.60

Source: Compiled by Budget Office of the Federation

Despite the macroeconomic challenges experienced in 2023, the global prospects for growth generally look promising for 2024 and beyond, and Nigeria is expected to benefit from a stabilising global market. The forecasted prices of crude oil and natural gas will be favourable. The decline in prices of these commodities may not have significant implications on the projected revenue streams, especially with proactive measures expected to be taken by OPEC+. A favourable scenario that could de-escalate regional tensions and abate trade confrontations may support a more stable energy market. Therefore, the underlying macroeconomic assumptions for the Nigerian economy will largely remain valid in the medium term.

Nigeria's nominal GDP is projected to continue on a growth trajectory in the medium term. It is expected to grow by 3.76% in 2024 and by up to 4.78% in 2026. The non-oil sector is expected to remain the backbone of the economy, driving and sustaining growth, while increased private sector investments in the oil sector

will unleash the sector's growth potential and mitigate the negative implications for industrial output. The commitment to diversification reforms is expected to yield positive results, with a gradual reduction in the share and contribution of traditional sectors and the emergence of new economic growth drivers that will enable massive job creation and ensure more equal opportunities for citizens. Initial market responses show a rejuvenation of confidence in Nigeria's financial market, with the Nigerian equities market recording a remarkable surge, breaking records to an unprecedented 70,000 index points, surpassing the previous level of 66,371.20.

Consistent with the growth trajectory, oil and non-oil revenues are expected to increase in the medium term. The oil price benchmark reflects a projected decline in global prices, though it is expected to increase in 2024 before declining from 2025. The price is expected to increase marginally by 3.94% in 2024 before declining by 6.8% in 2026. The benefits of

economic transformation and related growth are expected to be optimised for increased revenues, especially in the non-oil sector. The deliberate monetary policies of the government have curbed Naira depreciation, reducing from as high as ₦1,800/1US\$ to a relatively more stable rate of below ₦1,600/1US\$. However, this development needs to be consolidated to ensure a more favourable rate as projected for the medium-term horizon.

Equally, taming high inflation will boost

growth prospects. Doing this will require reducing the cost of business operations, moderating interest rates, addressing infrastructure bottlenecks in a market-friendly but socially sensitive manner, addressing regulatory hindrances to investment, and making deliberate decisions aimed at productivity enhancement in critical sectors. The reform policies introduced by the Federal Government appear to be heading in this direction.

Table 3.2: Projected Distributable Revenue for 3 Tiers of Government (2023-2026)

Indicator	2023	2024	2025	2026
Total FGN Share	5,164,404,348,785	12,573,714,603,094	11,980,732,375,465	12,331,316,185,513
Total States Share	3,837,253,766,566	8,004,269,925,386	7,966,569,859,716	8,424,876,306,736
Total LGC Share	2,856,440,360,555	6,034,811,761,533	5,983,729,558,430	6,313,589,884,455
Total Distributable Federation Account Pool	11,858,098,475,906.00	26,612,796,290,013.00	25,931,031,793,611.00	27,069,782,376,704.00

The consolidation of the gains from reforms is expected to increase non-oil revenues. The total gross non-oil revenue is expected to rise from N8.3 trillion in 2023 to N14.4 trillion in 2026, an increase of over 72.1%. This will provide the revenues required for growth-enhancing public investments. Reforms, such as the removal of energy subsidies, will free up more resources for capital investment in

infrastructure and human capital development. Furthermore, the total distributable revenue for the three tiers of government is expected to increase significantly, from N11.8 trillion in 2023 to over N27.06 trillion in 2025. This represents an increase of over 128% and indicates the gains from reforms introduced and sustained over the years.

Indicator	2023	2024	2025	2026
Total (Gross) Oil & Gas Rev	9,384,719,084,846	18,754,677,694,854	16,662,645,162,135	17,173,783,842,706
Total (Gross) Non-Oil Rev	8,370,661,405,194	12,101,069,619,388	13,048,725,953,015	14,413,945,228,101
Gross FA Inflow	17,755,380,490,040	30,855,747,314,242	29,711,371,115,150	31,587,729,070,807
Net FA - Main Pool	8,985,375,736,198	22,775,464,860,913	21,473,135,898,151	21,950,235,745,773
Net FA - VAT Pool	2,736,375,247,640	3,663,095,695,937	4,263,746,611,082	4,905,607,614,917
FA (EMTL)	136,347,492,067	174,235,733,163	194,149,284,379	213,939,016,013.10
Total FA	11,858,098,475,905.00	26,612,796,290,013.00	25,931,031,793,612.00	27,069,782,376,703.10

Source: Compiled by Budget Office of the Federation

The substantial increase in the Federation Account (FA) distributable revenues will filter down to the lower tiers of government. The States and LGAs are expected to witness record receipts from the FA. The volume of revenues the States and LGAs will receive from the FA is expected to increase by 120% between 2023 and 2026. The 36 States are projected to receive a total of N8.42 trillion, up from N3.83 trillion in 2023. This development should expand the fiscal space for States and LGAs and enable them to

spend efficiently and invest wisely to boost growth, create jobs, and improve living standards across the federation.

3.2 Benue State Economic Outlook

Benue State, like most of the States in the federation, depends heavily on allocations from the FA. The allocations comprise statutory allocations from the FA, VAT, the Ecological Fund, and others, including the Distribution of Exchange Gain and Electronic Money Transfer Levy (EMTL).

Table 3.4: FAAC Allocation to Benue State (January 2022 – May 2024)

	2021	2022	2023	Subtotal
Net Statutory	26,139.23	28,029.78	29,197.87	83,366.89
VAT	22,281.13	28,204.23	37,632.56	88,117.92
Others*	2,869.00	5,424.35	20,936.00	29,229.36
Total**	51,289.37	61,658.36	87,766.44	

Source: NBS

*** These include Equalization, Excess from non-oil charges and Exchange gain**

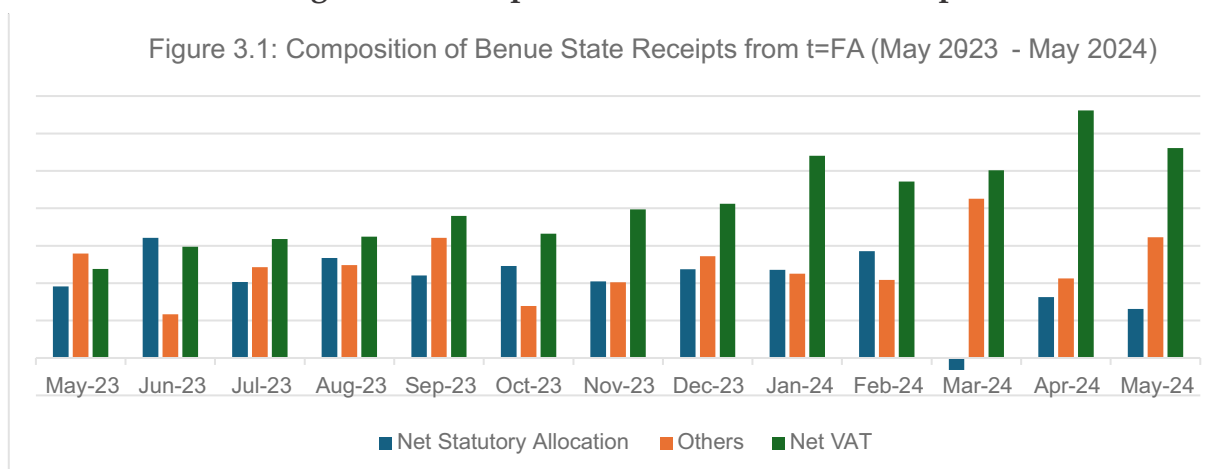
**** Total does not include Ecological Fund**

The allocation received by the State has generally increased over the years. It rose from N51.2 billion in 2021 to N61.6 billion in 2022, and N87.7 billion in 2024, representing an increase of 20.1% and 70.7%, respectively. The substantial increase is partly attributed to improvements in revenue generation and the removal of fuel subsidies in mid-2023. This is more evident in the wide difference

between receipts in the first five months of 2024 and receipts in the corresponding period in previous years. The receipt in the first five months of 2024 has more than doubled the receipts in the corresponding period of 2021. The State received N49.4 billion in 2024, compared with N 31.04 billion in 2023, N 21.63 billion in 2022, and N 19.76 billion in 2021.



Figure 3.1: Composition of Benue State Receipts



Source: NBS

An analysis of the FA allocations shows that Benue State received more funds from the VAT pool and other sources than from its statutory allocation from oil and gas revenues. The State received N93.14 billion between January 2022 and May 2024 from the distributable VAT pool, N65.04 billion as FA statutory allocation, and N40.31 billion from other sources. The higher share of VAT in the total receipts is

even more prominent after the removal of the subsidy. The total sum of N54.3 billion was received between May 2023 and May 2024 from the VAT distributable pool, compared with N26.7 billion received as FA statutory allocation and N32.1 billion from other sources. Less than N1 billion (N823.2 million) was received from the Ecological Fund.

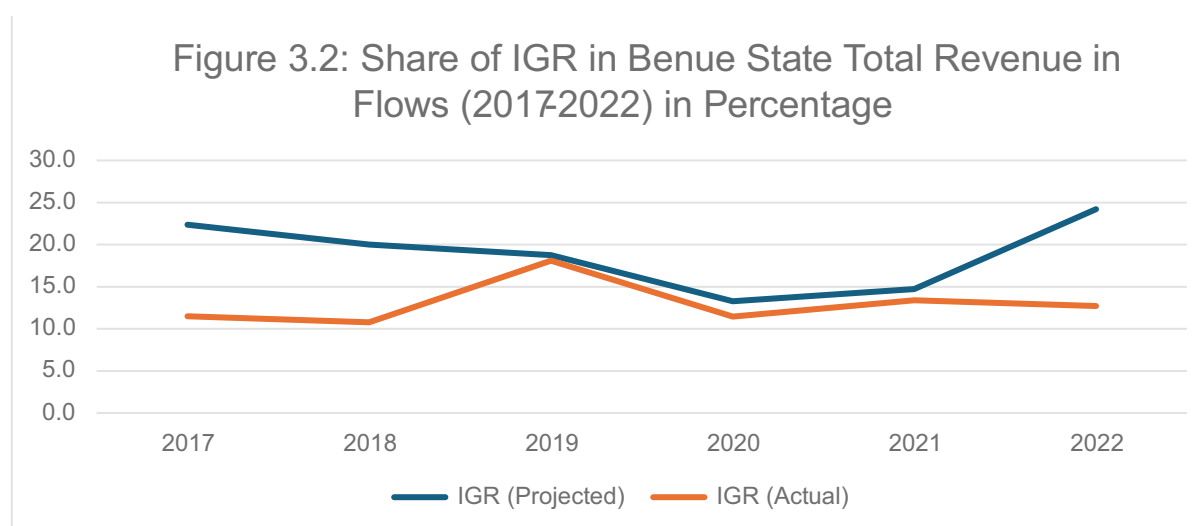
Table 3:5 Revenue Inflow of Benue State (2017-2023) in N' Million

Year	Indicator	Total FA Receipts	Grants & Loans	IGR	Total	Share of IGR
2017	Estimates	83,425.96	58,944.63	40,998.18	183,368.78	22.36
	Actual	59,073.39	7,008.84	8,569.93	74,652.15	11.48
2018	Estimates	98,129.28	53,869.78	38,031.02	190,030.08	20.01
	Actual	80,149.66	2,655.20	9,999.04	92,803.91	10.77
2019	Estimates	86,579.54	75,737.19	37,428.41	199,745.14	18.74
	Actual	69,218.40	8,556.39	17,179.64	94,954.43	18.09
2020	Estimates	44,888.34	49,489.61	14,444.73	108,822.68	13.27
	Actual	60,152.16	20,809.16	10,463.67	91,424.99	11.45
2021	Estimates	69,612.39	45,000.77	19,761.61	134,374.77	14.71
	Actual	69,888.69	11,647.48	12,601.16	94,137.33	13.39
2022	Estimates	72,189.75	45,716.48	37,660.17	155,566.39	24.21
	Actual	76,954.76	26,317.73	15,013.11	118,285.60	12.69

Source: BSB&EPC

The revenue profile of Benue State shows fluctuations in inflows in the last seven years (2017-2023). The projected revenue ranged between N108.8 billion in 2020 to N199.7 billion in 2019 before the removal of fuel subsidies, but increased to a record N225.7 billion in 2024. Revenue projections in the 2024 budget show an increase of 25.8% over projections for 2023. This increase is largely due to revenue boosts resulting from the removal of

energy subsidies. Further analysis shows that receipts from the FA account for the greatest share. These receipts account for between 41% and 51% of the total projected revenues and between 65% and 86% of the total actual revenues received. The share of IGR is relatively low, accounting for as little as 13.2% of projected inflows in 2020 and further lower at 10.7% of actual revenue generated by the State Government in 2018.



Source: Benue State Planning Commission

Generally, the volume of internally generated revenue (IGR) in Benue State is relatively low, raising concerns about fiscal sustainability. The Fiscal Performance Ranking conducted by BudgIT highlights the fiscal challenges faced by the state. Benue State was ranked 34th in 2023, an improvement from the 36th position in 2022. However, this remains lower than other states in the North-Central geopolitical zone: Kogi (24th), Kwara (10th), Nasarawa (22nd), Niger (25th), and Plateau (33rd). The ranking provides insights into the fiscal situation of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), reflecting the

ability of states to meet their operational needs through IGR, debt sustainability, and capacity to address developmental requirements using capital expenditure. The poor fiscal performance of Benue State suggests low business activity and limited private sector participation in the economy. This is evident in the state's low ranking on the Ease of Doing Business Index. Benue was ranked 23rd in the 2023 Ease of Doing Business Index compiled by the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC), a decline in its position. While the state performed better than four states (Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, and Niger) in the North-

Central zone and the FCT, its low national ranking suggests underperformance in infrastructure development (electricity, transportation, logistics, and internet), security and stability, economic

opportunities (access to finance, foreign exchange, and customers), transparency and access to information, regulatory environment, and the availability of skilled labour.

Table 3.6: Benue State Fiscal Sustainability and Ease of Doing Business Ranking

Ranking	Benue	Kogi	Kwara	Nasarawa	Niger	Plateau
Fiscal Sustainability (2023)	34 th	24 th	10 th	22 nd	25 th	33 rd
Ease of Doing Business (2023)	23 rd	34 th	27 th	26 th	25 th	10 th
Domestic Debt Stock* (2024)	30 th	11 th	15 th	5 th	21 st	27 th
Multidimensional Poverty Index (2020)	25 th	16 th	10 th	15 th	18 th	30 th

Source: NBS, BudgIT, PEDEC and DMO

* Ranking based on volume of debt

Projecting into the future, the revenue profile of Benue State is expected to remain unchanged in terms of structure and composition, demonstrating the dominance of revenue allocations from the Federation Account (FA) and a low share of IGR. The share of total receipts from the FA is projected to average 64.6%, decreasing from 68.4% in 2025 to 64.6% by

2029. The state is estimated to receive up to 165.3 billion in 2025, rising to 181.3 billion by 2029. IGR is anticipated to respond to reform measures, increasing from 34.2% in 2025 to 38.3% by 2029. Grants and loans are projected to account for an average of 21.3% of total revenue between 2025 and 2029, increasing from 17.4% in 2025 to 21.8% by 2029.

Table 3.7: Benue State Projected Revenues by Composition (' Billion)

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
FAAC	113.12	106.79	111.47	114.25	117.09
IGR	23.44	25.47	24.29	24.40	24.72
Others	28.75	35.10	46.78	36.69	39.53
Total	165.31	167.36	182.54	175.34	181.34

Source: Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission

* Projection in the MTEF 2024-2026

✓ TWGs projections

The assumptions for Benue State revenue projections generally reflect fiscal realities. Heavy dependence on FA receipts exposes the State to risks associated with volatility in oil prices and production and limits the fiscal space for investments required to boost economic growth. The removal of energy subsidies promises to make more distributable revenues

available at the national level, and Benue State's share is expected to increase. The surge in the distributable revenue pool from N3.83 trillion in 2023 to the projected N8.42 trillion is noteworthy.

The significant increase in FA distributable revenues will trickle down to the lower tiers of government. The states

and LGAs are expected to witness record receipts from the FA. The volume of revenues the states and LGAs will receive from the FA is expected to increase by 120% between 2023 and 2026. The 36 states are expected to receive a total sum of N8.42 trillion, up from N3.83 trillion in 2023. This development will expand the fiscal space for states and LGAs, enabling them to spend efficiently and invest wisely to boost growth, create jobs, and improve living standards across the federation.

3.3 Outlook for the Local Governments in Benue State

The LGAs have a key role to play in improving the socioeconomic situation in Benue State. They are fiscal entities with constitutionally assigned powers to receive and generate revenues and spend the same for the wellbeing of their residents and for economic progress. Their contributions aggregate to improve the socioeconomic situation at the state and national levels, making local governments very relevant in the implementation of national and state development plans.

Table 3.8: Revenue Distributed to 23 LGAs in Benue State from FA (N' Billion)

Month/ Year	2022	2023	2024
January	4.63	6.30	8.00
February	3.61	4.96	7.89
March	3.92	4.83	7.36
April	4.69	4.83	8.22
May	4.18	5.97	8.21
Total	21.03	26.89	39.68

Source: NBS

The situation at the local government level generally reflects the situation at the state level. There is heavy reliance on federally generated revenues and very low internally generated revenue (IGR). The share of the 774 LGAs in the total distributable pool (FA, VAT, and others) has increased in recent years. It rose from N753.53 billion in the first five months of 2022 to N963.89 billion during the same period in 2023, and further up to N1.41

trillion in 2024, an increase of over 87.9%. This is largely due to improvements in revenue and the impact of the removal of energy subsidies. The 23 LGAs in Benue State saw similar patterns, with their receipts from the FA increasing from N21.03 billion in the first five months of 2022 to N26.89 billion during the same period in 2023, and further to N39.68 billion in 2024.

Table 3.9: Projected Share of LGAs in the Total FA Distributable Pool (' Billion)

Share of FAAC/Year	2023	2024	2025	2026
Total FGN Share	5,164.4	12,573.7	11,980.7	12,331.3
Total States Share	3,837.3	8,004.3	7,966.6	8,424.9
Total LGAs Share	2,856.4	6,034.8	5,983.7	6,313.6
Grand Total	11,858.10	26,612.80	25,931.03	27,069.78

Source: NBS

The surge in the size of the share of the 774 LGAs in the distributable FA pool is expected to be sustained in the medium term. It is projected to increase in response to the subsidy removal, from 2.85 trillion in 2023 to 6.05% in 2024, an increase of over

111%. It is estimated to reach 6.31% in 2026. This suggests that the revenue accruals to the 23 LGAs in Benue State from the FA will increase in the medium term.

Table 3.10: Projected Revenue for 23 LGAs in Benue State (' Billion)

Revenue Items	2024	2025	2026
Statutory Allocation	86.81	108.47	133.46
VAT	34.07	43.79	54.98
Other FA Receipts	4.87	4.87	4.87
Share of IGR	1.82	2.00	2.20
Total	127.56	159.13	195.51

Source: Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission

The projected total revenue for the 23 LGAs in Benue State is expected to increase significantly in the medium term. It is projected to grow from 127.56 billion in 2024 to 159.13 billion and 195.51 billion in 2025 and 2026 respectively, representing an average increase of 23.8%. This growth is expected to be largely driven by an increase in statutory allocations, which are projected to rise by over 53.4% between 2023 and 2026. However, the share of internally generated revenue (IGR) in the projected revenue of the LGAs is extremely low, with very modest growth. IGR is estimated to account for only 2% of the total revenue at most and, rather than growing, it is projected to decline from 2.09% in 2024 to 1.65% in 2026, a decrease of over 21%. This situation does not position the

LGAs well to sustainably drive economic transformation at the local level or contribute optimally to growth at the state level.

3.4 Expenditure

Public expenditure in Benue State has undergone changes in pattern, with fluctuating trends over the last eight years. Initially, capital expenditure dominated recurrent expenditure, accounting for nearly 60% of the total budget estimate in 2017. However, the share of capital expenditure declined from 59.98% in 2017 to 56.88% in 2018, further reducing to 32.4% in 2021 before rising to 36.51% in 2022 and 51.05% in 2024.

In terms of size, the total budget of Benue State increased from 183.4 billion in 2017 to 225.7

billion in 2024. Total annual budget estimates grew by an average of 8.6% during the eight-year period. Recurrent and capital expenditure components of the budget

estimates grew by an average of 7.2% and 6.2% respectively during the same period. However, the trend in actual capital expenditure remains discouraging.

Table 3.11: Benue State Projected Expenditure (2017-2024)

Expenditure Items	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Rec. Exp	73.4	81.9	109.3	68.3	90.8	98.8	106.6	110.5
Total Cap Exp	110.0	108.1	90.4	40.5	43.5	56.8	73.6	115.2
Total Budget	183.4	190.0	199.7	108.8	134.4	155.6	180.2	225.7
% of Capex in Total	59.98	56.88	45.26	37.20	32.40	36.51	40.82	51.05

Source: BSB&EPC

The share of personnel expenditure in total recurrent expenditure dropped from 64.54% in 2017 to the lowest share of 36.16% in 2022, while the share of overheads increased significantly from 17.6% in 2017 to a high of 41.89% in 2020 before falling to 23.8% in 2023. Projected debt servicing decreased significantly from 8.31% in 2017 to 1.9% in 2020 but increased sharply to 19.82% in 2023.

Actual expenditure deviates significantly from projections in the annual budget. The share of capital expenditure in actual

expenditure is particularly low, accounting for only 14.78% in 2017 and dropping to 9.85% in 2020 before increasing to 11.97% in 2022. On average, only 16.9% of projected capital expenditure was spent between 2017 and 2022. The highest actual capital expenditure was 17.19 billion in 2018, while the lowest was 8.24 billion in 2019. Conversely, 96.2% of projected recurrent expenditure was spent on average during the same period. This disparity has serious implications for achieving development outcomes, with growth and expansion targets hindered by poor budget performance.

Table 3.12: Change (Year-on-Year) in Annual Expenditure Estimates (%)

Expenditure\Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Recurrent Expenditure		11.7	33.4	-37.5	32.9	8.7	7.9	3.6
Capital Expenditure		-1.7	-16.4	-55.2	7.5	30.5	29.5	56.7
Total Expenditure		3.6	5.1	-45.5	23.5	15.8	15.8	25.3

Source: BSB&EPC

The actual expenditure severely limits Benue State's ability to achieve development targets and deliver outcomes. While the state budget allocates between 30% and 60% to capital expenditure, low budget performance hinders its medium- to long-term aspirations. High inflation is expected to drive recurrent expenditure higher.

Increased revenue from the Federation Account will likely be offset by rising personnel costs due to upward revisions in the minimum wage, coupled with higher overheads and capital project delivery costs, leading to a tight fiscal situation that could impair public expenditure.

Section 2

Economic Growth & Development





4.0 Introduction

The agricultural sector is of immense importance to Benue State. The sector creates job opportunities in farming, food processing, transportation, agricultural trading, and agricultural value chain activities such as processing and distribution. The sector provides means of employment, sustenance, and livelihood to about 80% of the population (roughly 5,620,940), including young people, and over 95% of the women population in rural areas. Thus, the sector is the largest employer of labour in the State. However, the sector is characterised by subsistence farming and small farm holdings ranging from half a hectare to five hectares cultivated in one location. Only a few medium-scale farmers exist in the State.

The sector has the potential to make the State one of the five most economically viable states in Nigeria and an agro-industrial hub of the nation. The sector

contributes about 23% of the State's Gross Domestic Product. There is no gainsaying the fact that agriculture is key to the rapid and sustainable development of Benue State as it contributes towards achieving food security, the provision of employment opportunities, foreign exchange earnings, income generation, and industrial raw materials.

4.1 Institutional Setting

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is responsible for the formulation of agricultural policies in Benue State. Several departments, agencies, and units collaborate to ensure effective implementation of state and federal agricultural policies aimed at improving crop yields, livestock management, and fishing activities. Key agencies and parastatals of the Ministry include the Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority, Benue State Agricultural Development Programme,

Benue State Irrigation Board, and the Benue State Livestock Services Board. The State Government collaborates with federal agencies and international partners on improving rural infrastructure such as roads, irrigation systems, and storage facilities, which are crucial for the agricultural value chain.

Over time, the government has demonstrated commitment to the development of agriculture in the State by providing subsidised farm inputs such as fertilisers, agrochemicals, improved certified seeds, tractors, and vaccines. Other interventions in the sector include manpower training to enhance farmers' productivity and income, and extension service delivery to enhance the adoption of agricultural best practices. In addition, the Benue State Government has effectively partnered with the Federal Government, Development Partners, the private sector, and local cooperatives towards the effective implementation of projects and programmes to enhance sector output and food security.

Other efforts aimed at strengthening the agricultural sector include enhancing the capacity of the State's strategic grain reserves and establishing public modern warehousing facilities with cold storage

(for perishable farm products) where local farmers and cottage industries can store finished products and raw materials. Others include land development reforms, post-harvest handling of farm produce to reduce waste, the promotion of the use of organic fertiliser, and the reactivation of irrigation and storage facilities and agricultural service centres.

4.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

A large spectrum of crops, including yam, cassava, rice, soybeans, benniseed (sesame), maize, sorghum, millet, groundnut, cowpea, tomatoes, pepper, wheat, melon, citrus, mangoes, pawpaw, and sugarcane, are cultivated. The production capacity in the agricultural sector in Benue State has been grossly underutilised over the years, resulting in yearly food shortages and reliance on a large inflow of food from other states, mostly from the far North, to support food demand in the State. The review of available data over the period 2016 to 2021 reveals an average decline in output of about 5%. This has not changed in any significant way as most of the livestock and some food crops consumed in the State still come from other states.



TABLE 4.1: CROP PRODUCTION IN METRIC TONNES, 2016-2021 FOR SELECTED CROPS IN BENUE STATE

Year/ Crops	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL	5 Year Avg.
Maize	174,440	192,738	190,000	391,630	379,370	386,330	1,714,508	285,751
Sorghum	193,600	152,004	191,000	198,090	195,400	204,800	1,134,894	189,149
Rice	156,700	147,377	145,000	537,420	506,680	517,650	2,010,827	335,138
Cereal	524,740	492,119	526,000	1,127,140	1,081,450	1,108,780	4,860,229	810,038
Cassava	3,911,000	3,841,000	3,759,000	3,862,410	3,678,170	3,731,870	22,783,450	3,797,242
Yam	3,001,230	2,401,920	2,740,500	2,653,420	2,881,660	3,158,300	16,837,030	2,806,172
Tuber	6,912,230	6,242,920	6,499,500	6,515,830	6,559,830	6,890,170	39,620,480	6,603,413
Beniseed	70,370	59,155	68,000	83,890	93,240	96,580	471,235	78,539
Cowpea	20,700	22,030	23,000	130,540	132,790	138,510	467,570	77,928
G/Nut	369,140	298,612	352,000	311,630	307,800	277,600	1,916,782	319,464
Soyabean	224,000	241,000	200,000	239,320	240,260	247,870	1,392,450	232,075
Legumes	684,210	620,797	643,000	765,380	774,090	760,560	4,248,037	708,006
SUB TOTAL	16,242,360	14,711,672	15,337,000	16,816,700	16,830,740	17,519,020	97,457,492	
						G/Total	97,457,492	

SOURCE: Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2022.

TABLE 4. 2: POPULATION OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN BENUE STATE 2016 -2021

Year/ Animals	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total	5 Yr Avg.
Pigs	183,000	236,000	146,000	206,000	275,000	385,000	1,431,000	238500
Goats	727,000	765,000	272,000	455,000	579,000	686,000	3,484,000	580666.67
Cattle	1,047,000	1,322,000	180,000	446,000	903,000	958,000	4,856,000	809333.33
Chicken	2,350,000	3,450,000	2,050,000	3,220,000	4,600,000	5,003,000	20,673,000	3445500
	4,307,000	5,773,000	2,648,000	4,327,000	6,357,000	7,032,000	233,383,823	
						GRAND TOTAL	263,827,823	

SOURCE: Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2022.

4.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

4.3.1 Strength

Benue State is located in the Benue Trough with predominantly rich alluvial soils and favourable climatic conditions suitable for the cultivation of virtually all tropical crops. Additionally, 95% of its land is cultivable under rain-fed and irrigation agriculture. The State is adequately watered for agricultural production. The River Benue and its major tributary, River Katsina-Ala, await exploitation for large-scale irrigation purposes. Numerous streams and wetlands dot the landscape, and the abundant groundwater resources provide excellent opportunities for dry season farming and aquaculture.

In terms of labour supply, Benue has a high youth population, constituting an affordable labour force that can be

harnessed to accelerate food production, processing, and marketing. Furthermore, Benue State, with its diversity of agricultural produce, has the potential for a strong raw materials base for agro-industries, which is an attraction for investors in food processing.

4.3.2 Key Challenges

The key constraints impeding investment in and the growth of agricultural production include:

- * The inability of farmers in the State to properly organise themselves into cooperatives and clusters to benefit from interventions from government and non-governmental organisations. This has limited their capacity to produce and improve in the agricultural value chains.
- * The absence of feeder roads into deep farming communities in the State makes the evacuation of produce



from the hinterland difficult. The lack of linkages by rail, air, and water transportation also constitutes a drawback in market linkages. Inadequate power supply, processing, and storage facilities contribute to produce deterioration, poor pricing, and huge economic losses.

- * Interest rates charged by banks are too high for profitable agribusiness. Moreover, the conditions attached to accessing agricultural credit are beyond the reach of smallholder farmers. This has hampered the expansion of agro-based businesses and the overall development of the agricultural sector in the State.
- * Tractorisation of cultivable land is less than 1%, with harvest operations and post-harvest handling of produce remaining largely manual. Furthermore, the total dependence on rain-fed agriculture limits food production to the rainy season.
- * The knowledge base of Benue agriculture is weak. With only 28 Extension Agents (EAs), who are ill-equipped and poorly motivated, farmers are practically helpless in acquiring knowledge for improved practices (BNARDA, 2013).
- * There are virtually no processing facilities to take up produce from Benue farmers, add value to it, and encourage more production. Farmers are discouraged from expanding production due to the fear of losses resulting from produce gluts and deterioration.
- * The absence of production, processing, and marketing data is a serious drawback to effective agricultural planning. At present, it is difficult to quantify the number of farmers in Benue State, their categories, their hectareage and yield per hectare, their livestock holdings, market information, and other indicators for programme evaluation and planning.
- * Over the years, farmers in Benue State have used agrochemicals indiscriminately, largely due to ignorance and poor sensitisation on the proper use of agrochemicals. This includes harvesting fish with chemicals or misapplying pesticides on crops and livestock, resulting in poor quality produce and health hazards for consumers.
- * Farmers in the State have rarely benefitted from agricultural interventions, except for programmes and projects funded by International Development Partners (IDPs), which often come with stringent conditions attached to fund utilisation.

4.3.3 Threats

- * The disruption of agricultural activities due to incessant clashes between pastoralists and farmers is a serious threat to the agricultural revolution planned for Benue State. Establishing ranches to mitigate this risk is imperative.
- * In general, revenue allocations to Benue State are low. Considering the weak infrastructure base and underdeveloped agricultural sector, the sector must compete with

obligatory provisions for education, health, infrastructure, and other sectors of the State economy.

- * Evolving climate change conditions, occasioning drastic changes in the ecosystem that affect the food chain, have had adverse effects on food production. Floods have washed away crops in certain parts of the State, while inadequate rainfall has affected late-maturing varieties. To build agricultural resilience, Benue State should create early warning systems regarding rainfall, floods, and droughts using meteorological indices and tools for animal and plant



disease surveillance. The adoption of climate-smart agriculture has become an urgent necessity.

In spite of these challenges and risks, the agricultural sector is envisioned to play an even greater role in the growth and development of Benue State in the medium term.

4.3.4 Opportunities

Despite these challenges, the agricultural sector in Benue State exhibits numerous opportunities. The 25,500 sq. km of arable land in the State is suitable for growing a variety of crops for both domestic consumption and export.

With Nigeria's rapidly growing population, there is a widening gap between food supply and domestic demand. Federal Government measures to ban the importation of major staples, such as rice, aim to conserve foreign exchange and stimulate domestic production. Benue State can exploit these opportunities to accelerate production and dominate the targeted value chain.

Reactivation of Moribund Industries: Several agro-allied industries in Benue State are currently non-functional. The State could partner with investors who can inject capital to revive these industries, thereby kickstarting an agro-industrial revolution. There is also considerable potential for local manufacturers of agricultural equipment to meet domestic demand.

Opportunities abound for diversifying Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from East Asia, where rising labour costs have increased production expenses. Incentives such as tax holidays and ease of land acquisition could attract massive FDI to boost the planned agro-industrial

revolution in the State.

Benue State can also leverage agricultural financing initiatives by the Federal Government through the Bank of Agriculture (BOA) and the Bank of Industry (BOI) to attract significant agricultural credit for farmers, supporting the Benue Agricultural Revolution. The State Government could capitalise on the Federal Government's plan to establish agro-processing zones and infrastructure to support a network of such zones.

An agro-export processing zone could be designated to handle export-specific produce. Leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) can increase market uptake of Benue State products, enhancing opportunities for agricultural value chain development, especially given the State's extensive arable land suitable for growing various crops for domestic and export markets.

4.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

4.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the agriculture sector in the medium term is to develop and modernise agriculture in Benue State to become the driver of accelerated economic development, investment, food and nutrition security, food sovereignty, and prosperity.

The medium-term objectives include the following;

- * To promote access to safe, nutritious, sufficient, and affordable food all year round for all citizens.
- * To commercialise agriculture to become the main contributor to

economic growth in Benue State.

- * To promote agriculture-led sustainable industrialisation.
- * To strengthen domestic, national, and international resource mobilisation for agricultural development.
- * To enhance capacity to deliver effective and appropriate agricultural interventions.
- * To promote and strengthen research, innovation, monitoring, and evaluation.

4.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- * Increase crop yield by 50% within the next five years through improved farming methods and practices.
- * Ensure that 80% of genuine farmers in the State have access to adequate and timely farm inputs to increase crop yield by 50% by 2029.
- * Increase agro-processing output by 20% within the next five years by establishing new processing facilities, upgrading existing ones, and reducing agricultural produce waste by 50% within the same period.
- * Provide infrastructure such as rural roads, storage facilities, market structures, and irrigation schemes to support agricultural and rural development by 60% by 2029.
- * Facilitate the establishment of 15 new small- and medium-scale manufacturing units in the three senatorial zones of Benue State.

- * Increase market access for rural farmers by 50% by 2029 through improved logistics and marketing channels.
- * Improve the livelihood of rural households by increasing average household income by 30% within five years.
- * Use agricultural biomass and feedstock as raw materials for energy production in industrial activities by 15% by 2029.
- * Promote and facilitate the establishment of three cattle, sheep, and goat ranches in each senatorial zone in partnership with the private sector by 2029.
- * Actively promote pasture agronomy in partnership with the private sector and facilitate the business of fodder and silage production, targeting ranchers as off-takers by 2029.
- * Promote the establishment of at least 10 feed mills and fish hatcheries in each senatorial district in partnership with the private sector by 2029.
- * Increase the extension agent-to-farmer ratio to 1:800 by 2029 in partnership with the private sector.
- * Introduce monitoring and evaluation (M&E) desk officers in all agricultural programmes and projects by 2029.

4.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

4.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- * Empower ministries, departments, and agencies to propel independent development of the state as an agrarian society, with capacity for



food security and self-sufficiency.

- * Prioritise the timely supply of subsidised farm inputs, especially fertiliser and quality seeds, to farmers through the revamped Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (BNARDA) in the state.
- * Create partnerships with the federal government, private sector, and local cooperatives.
- * Increase the capacity of the state's strategic grain reserves and establish public modern warehousing facilities with cold storage (for perishable farm products) where local farmers and cottage industries can store finished products and raw materials.
- * Implement effective land development reforms in the state.
- * Collaborate with the Benue State University Centre for Food Technology and Research (CEFTR) on post-harvest handling of farm produce to reduce waste.
- * Promote the use of organic fertiliser.
- * Reactivate facilities such as irrigation, storage, and agricultural service centres.

4.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

4.6.1 Programmes and Projects

A range of government initiatives and programmes has been identified as triggers for improving the agricultural value chain and productivity in Benue

State. These programmes are classified into three broad groups: Agro-related infrastructure development, institutional capacity strengthening, and agricultural productivity and production.

Agro-related Infrastructural Development

The State intends to forge strategic partnerships with state and non-state actors in identified areas within the agricultural value chain to develop agro-related infrastructure to achieve its targets of food security and income generation. The provision of irrigation infrastructure will be prioritised to enhance dry-season farming through the establishment of 12 small earth dams and water reservoirs in each senatorial district.

A total of 100 natural water sources will be resuscitated for irrigation, and 300,000 hectares of land will be cultivated through irrigation. Large-capacity silos will also be established in each of the senatorial zones to enhance storage and connect farmers with off-takers to reduce post-harvest losses.

The Benue State Government will pursue aggressive agricultural mechanisation programmes by facilitating access to 600 tractors annually by farmers' cooperatives and individuals at subsidised rates. Harvesters, planters, power tillers, and other agricultural machines will be procured and provided at subsidised rates, targeting 2,000 farmers annually. A robust biometric database of all farmers across the state will be developed to enhance the provision of farm inputs. Relevant MDAs' staff will also be trained to regularly update the register.

In the livestock and fisheries sub-sectors,

the State targets the establishment of a feed mill factory, a feed control system, and hatcheries for the production of day-old chicks and fingerlings. To enhance product value, fish and livestock processing centres and livestock markets will be established across Benue State.

Institutional Capacity Strengthening

As part of the Agro-transformation initiative of the State, agricultural training centres will be rehabilitated and reconstructed to enhance agricultural skills acquisition, research, and development. Nine new agricultural training centres will be established across the State, promoting agricultural skills acquisition for over 10,000 youths annually to enhance self-employment in agro-related micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) within the agricultural value chain.

A key component of institutional capacity building is the employment and training of 500 extension agents annually to meet the extension farmer ratio of 1:800, with the inclusion of private sector and tertiary institutions in agricultural extension service delivery in the State. To boost extension personnel productivity, the State will develop a regulatory framework for agricultural extension services across public and private providers. To diversify the agricultural productive base, 500 fish farmers and 1,000 livestock farmers in each of the senatorial zones will be trained annually.

Agricultural Productivity and Production
To enhance agricultural productivity, the State will develop its vast arable land. To this end, the State will recover all lands at the agro-service centres and divisional agro-centres in the 23 local government

areas. Additionally, two existing government-reserved land sites in each of the senatorial zones will be developed annually to ensure easy access to farmland for cooperative and cluster farming. Furthermore, the State will procure and distribute 200 trucks of fertilisers, 40,000 improved seeds, and 24,000 litres of agro-chemicals at subsidised rates to profiled farmers to boost food production.

The State will adopt climate change mitigating strategies by embarking on a State-wide sensitisation exercise on commercial tree planting, targeting 1 million people in each senatorial zone. Over 1,500,000 trees will be distributed and planted annually, with 500,000 trees in each senatorial zone. These will be sourced from 500,000 tree nursery beds established annually at one agricultural institution in each senatorial zone. To improve productivity, the State will collaborate with the Benue State University Centre for Food Technology and Research on agricultural best practices to reduce post-harvest losses.

4.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the goals outlined for the agriculture sector, the estimated public investment is N382.94 billion for the period 2025–2029. As the government repositions the agricultural sector as a business and implements strategies to stimulate private domestic and foreign investment, it is expected that private sector investment will account for a substantial portion of the total sector investment.

4.7 Expected Outcomes

The broad outcomes expected from the various interventions and specific benefits derivable from capital investments,

spread across the 31 projects to be implemented under 12 broad programmes, are presented in Table 4.3. Each of these programmes and projects has the potential to meaningfully contribute to agricultural sector objectives in the areas of improved crop and

livestock production, enhanced agricultural operations, improved value chain integration, and accelerated achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

. Table 4.3: Agriculture and Food Security Sector-Level Result Framework

SDG	OUTCOME	KPI	BASELINE	TARGET				
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
GOAL 2: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access	Reduced post-harvest losses	Percentage of post-harvest losses of key value chains	60% for all agricultural output	55%	48%	40%	30%	20%
by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.	Increased arable land cultivation	Hectares of arable land under cultivation	1.5 million hectares	1,575,000 Ha	1,650,000 Ha	1,725,000 Ha	1,800,00 Ha	1,875,000 Ha
	Increased crop yield	Yield per hectare	8 tons/ha for rice	13 tons/ha	19 tons/ha	26 tons/ha	33 tons/ha	40 tons/ha
	Increased extension workers	Extension-farmer ratio	1: 10,000	1: 9,200	1: 8,200	1:6,800	1:5,300	1:4,000
	Increased irrigation coverage	Hectares of land covered	4,000 ha	24,000 ha	50,000 ha	95,000 ha	145,000 ha	200,000 ha
	Increased technological adoption	% of tech. adoption	15% of Tech. usage	20%	27%	35%	45%	60%
	Increased fish production	Fish tonnage	50 tons	80 tons	120 tons	180 tons	250 tons	350 tons
	Increased livestock production	No of animals produced	3,500,000	4 million	4.5 million	5 million	5.5 million	6 million
	Increased economic tree crops	No of economic trees produced	4,500,000	5 million	5.5 million	6 million	6.5 million	7 million
By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age.	Adoption of Best Agronomic Practices	% of skilled farmers	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%
	Increased availability & accessibility of farm inputs	% of farmers that access farm inputs	40%	45%	52%	60%	70%	80%

5.0 Introduction

The Industry, Trade, and Investment sub-sector is of tremendous importance to Benue State. It accelerates economic growth and diversification of the State's economy, mitigating risks associated with climate change, market fluctuations, and post-harvest losses. The sector plays a significant role in reducing poverty and unemployment among the populace, while adding value to industrial raw materials. Besides the agricultural sector, the Industry, Trade, and Investment sub-sector is a major revenue earner for the State through taxes, duties, and levies. This assists the government in providing social amenities and infrastructure within the State. Trade activities within the sub-sector contribute to market expansion for Benue State's products in both domestic and international trade. The sector also promotes technological advancement by adopting modern techniques of production.

The Industry, Trade, and Investment sub-sector has the potential to enhance the value of agricultural produce through investment in modern storage and processing, making Benue State the agro-processing hub of Nigeria. Expansion in trade activities also has the potential to position Benue State as the commercial nerve centre of the Middle Belt and a major player in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), while attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows. By promoting modern technologies across industries, the sector has the potential to make Benue State the technological and

industrial hub for skill development in Nigeria. Overall, the sub-sector has the potential to transform Benue State into a viable investment and business destination.

5.1 Institutional Setting

Certain government institutions have been established to enable the sub-sector to accomplish its strategic roles. These institutions include the Benue Investment and Property Company (BIPC), Benue State Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (BCCIMA), Benue State Industrial Development Centre (IDC), and Benue State Export Promotion Council (BSEPC). Others include the Benue State Bureau of Public Enterprise (BPE), Benue State Investment Promotion Agency (BNIPA), Benue State Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (BSMEDA), Benue State Agricultural Development Agency (BSADA), and the Bureau of Wealth Creation and Entrepreneurship.

The establishment of these institutions demonstrates the government's commitment to enabling the Industry, Trade, and Investment sub-sector to achieve its core mandates, such as:

- * Promotion of trade and export development
- * Industrial development and economic diversification
- * Business registration, renewal of business premises, and regulation
- * Market expansion and development
- * Value addition
- * Infrastructure development
- * Attracting local and foreign

investment to Benue State

- * Revenue generation
- * Promoting the adoption of modern technologies across industries
- * Skill development
- * Regional development and ensuring balanced economic growth across the state

Owing to the political will of the government and the establishment of an enabling institutional framework, the sub-sector has achieved significant progress over the past five years. It has played a pivotal role in reducing unemployment and poverty within the state. For instance, the sector has empowered over 24,656 micro-business enterprises through the Nano Programme, providing them with necessary resources to excel. Additionally, the BN-Cares Programme has supported 5,934 business enterprises. Furthermore, the sub-sector has promoted industrial activities by supporting small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), generating employment opportunities for a substantial proportion of the population. In terms of poverty

reduction, the sub-sector has made notable strides, reducing the incidence of poverty in the state from 75% in 2020 to 72.5% in 2022.

5.2 Sector Performance 2020-2024

The performance of the Industry, Trade, and Investment sub-sector in Benue State for the period 2020-2024 has been analysed by tracking trends in key performance indicators, including revenue generation, unemployment rates, and poverty incidence. This is summarised in Table 5.1. During the review period, the sub-sector experienced fluctuations in recurrent revenue, with a conspicuous decline in 2021 and a substantial surge in 2024. Capital expenditure followed a similar pattern. Data on unemployment were only available for 2020, with a reported rate of 12%. However, through data extrapolation using a three-point moving average, the unemployment rate increased to 14.4% in 2024. The poverty incidence showed a marginal reduction from 75% in 2020 to 70% in 2024.



Table 5.1: Key Variables of Sector Performance (2020-2024)

Year	Recurrent Revenue (₦)	Recurrent Expenditure (₦)	Capital Expenditure (₦)	Total Allocation (₦)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Poverty Incidence (%)
2020	4,391,218,800.00	125,381,972.00	533,720,000.00	659,101,972.00	12	75
2021	109,000,000.00	107,169,696.00	451,870,800.00	559,040,496.00	12.6*	73.8*
2022	165,4000,000.00	177,363,886.54	500,945,200.00	678,309,086.54	13.2*	72.5
2023	1,228,412,800.00	162,547,286.54	355,740,000.00	518,287,286.54	13.8*	71.3*
2024	5,215,428,834.91	356,511,143.88	3,797,700,000.00	4,154,211,143.88	14.4*	70*

Note * denotes extrapolated data using three-point moving average.

Source: Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission, 2024; NBS, 2024



The performance of the sector underscores the need for continued focus on infrastructural development, particularly the development of the international border with the Republic of Cameroon, financial inclusion, and industrial capacity building. Other focus areas include addressing persistent insecurity in the state, enhancing access to finance, and simplifying regulatory processes. Strengthening public-private partnerships, investing in human capital development, and promoting the exploitation of solid minerals are recommended strategies to further boost the sub-sector's contribution to Benue

State's economic development.

5.3 Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

5.3.1 Strengths

- Large and fertile landmass
- Natural resource endowment
- Village-level farmers' associations providing a platform for growth and innovation
- Farmers' extensive agricultural knowledge and experience

5.3.2 Challenges/Weaknesses

- Limited access to financial resources
- Unreliable electricity supply
- Insufficient water resources and poor road network
- Issues of mismanagement
- Lack of technical skills
- Weak linkages between research, extension services, and farmers
- Low levels of mechanisation and innovation

5.3.3 Opportunities

- The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): By leveraging this agreement, Benue State can access large regional markets and boost trade activities.
- Development of the Benue State - Republic of Cameroon border: The Jato Aka-Waya-Imande Dura-Anyamade-Imande Ukusu-Joint Water Road provides a strategic gateway for cross-border trade.
- Abundance of arable land suitable for growing a variety of crops presents significant opportunities.
- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) offer avenues for improving infrastructure and industrial capacity.

5.3.4 Major Threats

- Insecurity poses a significant threat to agricultural activities and investment.
- Climate change leading to unpredictable weather patterns, flooding, and environmental degradation.
- Environmental factors increasing the vulnerability of infrastructure, resulting in higher maintenance costs.

- Global economic challenges, including fluctuations in commodity prices and trade barriers.

5.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the Industry, Trade, and Investment subsector in Benue State in the medium term is to enhance economic growth and investment attractiveness within the state. The medium-term objectives to be achieved during the plan period of 2025 to 2029 include the following:

- * Reduce the state's overreliance on agriculture by promoting industrial development, trade, and agro-processing through targeted investments totalling 100 billion by 2029.
- * Generate 1,000,000 additional employment opportunities by 2029 through industrial parks, Export Processing Zones (EPZs), agro-processing hubs, and SMEs.
- Improve infrastructure by 60% to support industrial and commercial growth.
- * Create a conducive environment to attract local and foreign investment, contributing at least 15% to the state's GDP by 2029.
- * Enhance the value of agricultural products by reducing post-harvest losses from 60% to 35% through investments in modern storage, processing, and packaging facilities.
- Drive the state's economy through the commercialisation of its



- agricultural and industrial resources.
- * Increase value addition in agricultural products by 50% by 2029 through the establishment of modern processing facilities and adherence to global standards for certification and packaging.
- Encourage public-private participation in agro-processing parks, EPZs, and industrial hubs.
- * Streamline the registration and supervision of business activities, ensuring compliance and providing support for SMEs.
- * Provide world-class facilities and infrastructure for industrialisation, such as fashion hubs, cement and brick plants, and technology innovation centres.
- * Promote Benue State as a viable investment and business destination through international trade fairs and improved marketing strategies.
- * Attract at least 60 billion in domestic and foreign investments by 2029 in agro-processing, textile manufacturing, and technology hubs.
- * Improve the standard of living by supporting SMEs and large-scale industries with favourable financing and infrastructure.
- * Increase production efficiency by 40% by 2029 through the adoption of new technologies, improved division of labour, and enhanced worker training.
- * Enhance Benue State's competitiveness in global markets

by ensuring that at least 70% of agricultural exports meet international quality standards by 2029.

- * Establishment of Zonal Commodity Markets by 2029
- * Reactivation of Taraku Mills on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) by 2025
- * Reactivation of Tomatoes/Fruits Juice Wannune by 2025
- * Upgrade of facilities at Modern Market by 2025
- * Establishment of Modern Abattoirs across the local governments in the State by 2025
- * Increase funding by 40% by 2027 to support statewide investment and development initiatives, including

to BIPC's annual revenue.

- * Support 200 businesses within Benue State through advisory services by 2029 to stimulate local entrepreneurship by the BIPC.

5.4.2 Medium Term Targets

The medium-term targets for the five-year plan period are as follows:

- Establishment of three Export Processing Zones (EPZs) over the next five years: one by 2027 and two by 2029.
- Encouragement of 60 businesses to set up export-oriented plants in the EPZs within the next five years through tax incentives and subsidies: 10 businesses by 2027 and 50 businesses by 2029.
- Development of a training programme for 10,000 farmers annually by 2027, and 20,000 farmers annually by 2029, across the state, focusing on export requirements.



- to international standards to enhance domestic and international trade: one market by 2027 and two by 2029.
- Establishment of 23 world-class abattoirs, one in each local government area of Benue State, to improve hygiene and meat consumption standards: 10 abattoirs by 2027 and 13 by 2029.
 - Creation of a portal by 2027 to connect foreign buyers of agricultural products with local sellers for online transactions.
 - (x) Establishment of three direct export routes in Benue State: one by 2027 and two by 2029.
 - Organisation of four international trade fairs to promote Benue's exports: one trade fair by 2027 and three by 2029.
 - Establishment of four agro-processing parks and industrial hubs in the state within five years: one by 2027 and three by 2029.
 - Establishment of four fully equipped world-class fashion hubs and hotels in three major cities of the state over five years.
 - Training of 4,000 residents in textile production and garment design: 1,000 by 2027 and 3,000 by 2029.
 - Increase in oilseed milling and flour production by 20% by 2027 and 50% by 2029.
 - Revival of three moribund agricultural processing plants in Ukum and Otukpo LGAs: one plant by 2027 and two by 2029.
 - Construction of a dam at Taraku Mills Ltd. to address water supply challenges and linking five government-owned industries to the national grid.
 - Reduction of environmental challenges and mitigation of compensation issues by 30% by 2027 and 50% by 2029.
 - Development of three solar energy plants to support 1,000 small and medium-sized enterprises annually over the next five years.
 - Provision of single-digit interest loans to 10,000 SMEs each year, to support for 5,000 businesses by 2027 and 10,000 by 2029 through Benue Cares in collaboration with relevant agencies.
 - Development of ease-of-doing-business measures in Benue's industrial estates by 40% by 2027 and 100% by 2029.
 - Establishment of two Benue State Entrepreneurship Development Centres and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Agencies: one by 2027 and one by 2029.
 - Development of two technology and innovation hubs in Makurdi to support start-ups, industrial design, and SME establishments: one by 2027 and one by 2029.
 - Establishment of one brick manufacturing plant by 2027 and one by 2029 in Benue, in partnership with major companies, to support



residential and industrial estate development.

- Establishment of one equipment leasing company by 2027 and one by 2029 to ease access to affordable industrial equipment for local businesses.
- Establishment of 23 standard mechanic workshops, one in each local government area of the state.
- Begin construction on the first two zonal markets with foundational infrastructure in 2025.
- Complete construction of the first two markets and launch pilot operations by 2026 and begin construction for the remaining zones by 2027.
- Finalize partnership agreements with private investors and stakeholders,
- conduct a technical audit to assess rehabilitation needs, secure funding and initiate procurement of necessary equipment and commence physical rehabilitation of the mill by 2025.
- Recruit and train personnel for efficient operations, Relaunch production and distribution, focusing on key product lines at Taraku Mills by 2025.
- install modern processing equipment and establish supply chain networks for raw material sourcing at Tomatoes/Fruits Juice Factory by 2025.
- Identify priority areas for upgrades, such as water supply, sanitation, and security at the Modern Market, allocate budget and procure contractors, begin phased upgrades to minimize disruption to market activities, and complete the upgrade of facilities, including integration of modern

trading systems by 2025

- Begin construction in the first 10 locations by 2025.
- Complete and operationalize the first 10 abattoirs and start construction for the remaining 13 abattoirs, and train local staff in hygiene and operational best practices by 2026.

5.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

5.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

The following high-level strategies and policy measures will be implemented from 2025 to 2029. These strategies are designed to meet the medium-term objectives and targets for key sub sectors such as industry, trade, and investment.

Strategic partnership and collaboration

- Collaborate with federal ministries and agencies to leverage federal funding and initiatives

- Encourage public private partnership (PPPs) to finance key projects such as establishment of EPZs, agro-processing plants, and industrial hubs.
- Partner with development organizations like World Bank, UNIDO, and USAID to access grants, technical expertise, and policy advice for industrial infrastructure development.

Strengthening Value Chain Linkages

- Promote vertical integration by establishing processing facilities for yams, cassava, and sesame to reduce post-harvest losses and add value to agricultural outputs.
- Facilitate the creation of garment and textile clusters in Gboko and the solar energy hub in Makurdi.

Promotion of Agriculture as a Business

- Establish industrial parks focusing on agro-processing and provide targeted incentives such as tax breaks, duty-free machinery



imports and subsidized land leases.

- Encourage the development of export-oriented industries in garment manufacturing and agro-processing to facilitate regional and global trade.

Improving Mechanization and Technology Adoption

- Partner with international firms to implement eco-friendly technologies that reduce emissions and energy costs in key sectors.
- Provide affordable Access to industrial equipment through the establishment of a state-run equipment leasing company.

Automation of Work Processes and Payment Systems

- Implement digital payment systems for government services, subsidies, and loan disbursement, improving transparency and ease of doing business.
- Streamline business registration, licensing, and permit processes through digital platform to reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Human Resource Capacity Development

- To train 20,000 youth by 2029 through Benue Industrial Skills and Entrepreneurship Training Programme in partnership with local and international institutions.
- Entrepreneurship development for SMEs through collaboration with financial institutions to offer single-digit interest loans and start-up funding to industrial entrepreneurs

Strengthening State Institutions and Industrial Policy Frameworks

- To establish the Benue State Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Agency to streamline support for MSMEs.
- Revive and update investment policies to enhance investor confidence and reduce bureaucratic delays

Energy and Infrastructure Development

- Focus on energy projects in Makurdi, Otukpo and Katsina-Ala to drive industrial activity and reduce energy costs.
- Link government-owned industries to the national grid

Environmental Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Industrialization

- Promote eco-friendly technologies in cement and brick production to reduce environmental degradation.
- Conduct Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAs) for all new industrial projects to ensure compliance with state and federal environmental regulations.

5.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost 2025-2029

5.6.1 Programmes and Projects

The following programmes have been identified as enablers for improving the value chain in the Industry, Trade and Investment subsector in Benue State.

- The following programmes have been identified as enablers for improving the value chain in the Industry, Trade, and Investment subsector in Benue State:

- Expansion of commodity market, livestock, and trade fair programmes.
- Industrial parks and garment/textile manufacturing cluster programmes.
- Development of industrial infrastructure, rehabilitation of moribund industries, and expansion programmes.
- Youth industrial skills/entrepreneurship training and SMEs loan/support programmes.
- Technology and innovation hub initiatives, industrial equipment leasing schemes, agro-processing cluster development, and production programmes.
- The Establishment of a Regional Brewery under the Brewery Development Programme.
- The Expansion of the Ben Fruit Processing Facility under the Fruit Processing Programme.
- The Creation of an Agro Commodities Hub aims to centralize the trade of agricultural products, streamline supply chains, and enhance the competitiveness of agro-produce in the market, benefiting farmers and traders.
- The Development of a Centralized Packing System aims to improve product quality and market readiness, reduce wastage, and ensure efficient packaging for agricultural and industrial products.
- The Establishment of a Normal Saline Production Facility under the Saline Production Programme aims to meet local healthcare needs, reduce dependency on imported saline products, and improve the availability of essential medical supplies.
- The Expansion of Nail Manufacturing Plant under the Nail Production Programme will increase production capacity, reduce the importation of nails, and provide employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector.
- The Scale-Up of Bread Production under the Bread Production Expansion Programme.
- The Expansion of Clean Water Distribution under the Water Production Enhancement Programme.
- The Development of a Sustainable Eco-City under the Eco-City Development Programme aims to promote green infrastructure, sustainable living, and environmental conservation while fostering a modern urban lifestyle.
- The Establishment of a CNG Vehicle Conversion Center under the CNG Conversion Programme.
- The Estate Development for Low-Income Residents under the Low-Income Estate Development Programme.



The associated projects include the following:

- Establishment of EPZs in Makurdi, Katsina-Ala, and Otukpo.
- Provision of tax incentives and subsidies to EPZ plants.
- Training 10,000 farmers annually on international standards for export, packaging, and quality control.
- Establishment of modern storage and processing facilities through public-private partnerships.
- Implementation of a certification scheme in collaboration with international organisations.
- Annual trade missions in partnership with federal trade bodies, Benue-based producers, and exporters.
- Upgrading modern and international markets in Benue State.
- Establishment of standard abattoirs, one for each Local Government Area of Benue State.
- Setting up an online export promotion portal for Benue products.
- Upgrading Makurdi Airport with a dedicated export terminal.
- Hosting international trade fairs biannually in Makurdi.
- Establishment of agro-processing parks and industrial hubs through public-private partnerships.
- Establishment of world-class

fashion hubs and the construction of hotels at the fashion hubs in three major towns in Benue State.

- Building a textile and garment manufacturing cluster in Gboko and training 2,000 residents during the period.
- Revitalising Taraku Mills Ltd.
- Reviving yam processing plants in Katsina-Ala LGA and the cassava plant in Otukpo LGA.
- Construction of a dam at Taraku Mills Ltd. and linking government-owned industries to the national electricity grid.
- Completion of environmental impact assessments, mining leases, and compensation for the Star and Mbativ Cement factories.
- Establishment of five vocational and technical training centres in Makurdi, Gboko, Otukpo, Katsina-

Ala, and Adikpo.

- Development of three solar energy plants to support 1,000 small and medium industries annually.
- Provision of single-digit interest loans to 10,000 SMEs each year, with training and retraining programmes.
- Collaboration with the World Bank, the Federal Government, and other agencies to support businesses through Benue Cares, Result Area Three, and the BOI MSMEs Matching Fund.
- Development of Phase II of the Benue Industrial Estate in Makurdi, including access roads, a police post, and public water facilities.
- Establishment of the Benue State Entrepreneurship Development Centre and the MSME Agency.



- Development of a technology and innovation hub in Makurdi to support SMEs in Benue State.
- Establishment of cement and brick manufacturing plants in Benue through partnerships with major companies like Dangote and Lafarge.
- Establishment of a state-run equipment leasing company in Makurdi.
- Establishment of standard mechanic workshops in every Local Government Area of Benue State.
- Establishment of Zonal Commodity Markets
- Reactivation of Taraku Mills on Public-Private Partnership (PPP)
- Reactivation of Tomatoes/Fruits Juice Facility in Wannune
- Upgrade of Facilities at the Modern Market
- Establishment of Modern Abattoirs Across Local Governments in the State
- Establish Regional Brewery
- Ben Fruit Processing Facility Expansion
- Create Agro Commodities Hub
- Centralized Packing System
- Normal Saline Production Facility
- Expand Nail Manufacturing Plant
- Scale-up Bread Production
- Clean Water Distribution Expansion
- Develop Sustainable Eco-City
- Establish CNG Vehicle Conversion Centre
- Estate Development for Low-Income Residents

5.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the goals outlined for the Industry, Trade, and Investment subsector, the estimated public investment is ₦442,623 million for the period 2025–2029. With commitment and strong political will by the government, in collaboration with the private sector, it is feasible that the Industry, Trade, and Investment subsector will be reinvigorated to become the engine of growth for Benue State's economy within the plan period.

5.7 Expected Outcomes

The broad outcomes expected from the various interventions and specific benefits accruing from capital investments are distributed across the 28 projects to be implemented under the five broad programmes outlined above. Specifically, the expected outcomes from sector objectives are detailed in Table 5.2:

Table 5.2: Sector-level outcome, performance and targets for Industry, Trade and Investment

SDG	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
GOAL 17: Promote a universal, ruler-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its	Increased industrial output and job opportunities, thereby reducing unemployment and improving standard of living	Establishment of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in Makurdi, Katsina-Ala, and Otukpo with modern facilities.	0 EPZs output	1 EPZ established	2 EPZs established
	Enhanced growth of Benue economy through domestic and foreign investment	Tax incentives and subsidies to businesses that set up export-oriented plants in the EPZs	0 businesses	10 businesses	50 businesses
Doha Development Agenda.	Increased awareness on international standards, packaging and quality control to enhance agricultural exports.	Development of a training program for 10,000 farmers annually across Benue on the requirements for exports.	11 farmers	10,000 farmers annually	20,000 farmers annually
	Reduce post-harvest losses and increase exportation of agricultural exports.	The number of modern storage and processing facilities established in the state.	0 facilities	2 facilities	3 facilities
Goal 2: Zero Hunger aims at food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Increase the percentage of agricultural products in Benue State meeting global standards	Implementation of a certification scheme with international organizations in Benue State.	10%	30%	50%
	Increased competitiveness in the export of agricultural products in Benue State.	Number of trade missions organized in partnership with the federal trade bodies annually	0 trade missions	2 trade missions	5 trade missions
	Enhancement of domestic and international trade.	Number of markets upgraded to international standards in Benue State.	2 unstandardized markets	1 standard market	2 standard markets
Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages	Improvement in hygiene and standard of meat consumed in all LGAs in Benue State.	Number of world-class abattoirs established in each Local Government of Benue State	0 abattoirs	10 abattoirs	13 abattoirs
	Connecting foreign buyers of agricultural products with local producers for online business.	Number of online export promotion portals operational	0 portal	1 portal operational	
Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.	Establishment of direct export routes in Benue State.	Upgrading Makurdi Airport with a dedicated export terminal and collaborating with international cargo airlines.	0 export routes	1 export routes	2 export routes
	Promotion of Benue's exportable commodities	Number of international trade fairs organized annually	0 trade fairs	1 trade fair	3 trade fairs
	Increased processing of crops through Public-Private Partnerships	Number of agro-processing parks and industrial hubs established in Benue State.	0 parks/hub	1 park/hub	3 parks/hubs
Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.	Promotion of fashion and textiles industries in Benue State.	Establishment of world-class fashion hubs and 3 hotels & hostels in three major cities in Benue State.	0 hubs	1 hub fully equipped	3 hubs fully equipped
	Enhanced skills of residents in Gboko in textile production, tailoring and garment design.	Number of residents trained in textile production and garment design in Gboko town.	0 residents	1,000 residents	2,000 residents
	Milling of oilseed and flour production, expanding to value-added products like cooking oils and livestock feeds	Revitalization of Taraku Mills Ltd.	Existing capacity(m oribund)	20% increase	50% increase

SDG	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
	Increase in agricultural processed products to enhance preservation and exports.	Revival of moribund yam processing plant in Ukum LGA and the cassava plant in Otukpo LGA	0 plants revived	1 plant revived	2 plants revived
	Addressing water supply challenges and linking government-owned industries to the national electricity grid	Construction of a dam at Taraku Mills Ltd.	Existing capacity(moribund)		5 industries linked and dam constructed
	Ease of environmental challenges and mitigating compensation issues for mining and cement factories.	Completion of environmental impact assessments and community compensation for the Star and Mbativ Cement factories.	0% complete	30% complete	50% complete
GOAL 17: Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda.	Increased training in vocational and technical skills in Makurdi, Gboko, Katsina-Ala, Otukpo and Adikpo.	Establishment of 5 vocational and technical training centers in Makurdi, Gboko, Otukpo, Katsina-Ala, and Adikpo.	0 centres	2 centres established	5 centres established
	Increased supports for the energy need of small and medium scale establishments	Development of three solar energy plants to support 1,000 small and medium scale industries annually	0 plants	1 plant	2 plants
	Provision of single-digit interest loans to 10,000 SMEs each year.	Number of SMEs benefiting from single-digit interest loans annually	0 SMEs	30,000 SMEs annually	60,000 SMEs annually
	Supporting businesses through Benue Cares Result Area Three, BOI MSMEs Matching Fund, and CBN MSMEs Development Fund	Number of collaborations with relevant agencies and businesses supported	0 collaborations	5,000 businesses supported	10,000 businesses supported
	Ease of doing business at Benue Industrial Estate Phase II in Makurdi	Development of Benue Industrial Estate Phase II in Makurdi, including access roads, a police post, and public water facilities	0% complete	40% complete	100% complete
	Enhancement of entrepreneur skills to Benue Entrepreneurs	Establishment of Benue State Entrepreneurship Development Centre and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Agency	0 centre/agencies	1 centre/agencies	1 centre/agency
	Supporting tech start-ups, industrial design, and small-scale manufacturing establishment in Makurdi	Development of a technology and innovation hub in Makurdi	0 hubs	1 hub	1 hub
	Access to quality bricks for building of residential and industrial estates in Benue State.	Establishment of and brick manufacturing plants in Benue through partnerships with major companies	0 plants	1 plant	1 plant
Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.	Easy access to affordable industrial equipment to local businesses	Number of equipment leasing companies established	0 companies	1 company	1 company
	Access to quality mechanic services in Benue State.	Establishment of standard mechanic workshops in every Local Government Area of Benue State	0 workshops	9 workshops	14 workshops
	Sources: Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment for baseline data; targets are projections				

6.0 Introduction

Benue State is endowed with a very large landmass of about 33,955 square kilometres, making it the 11th largest state in Nigeria. Apart from the land being fertile for the production of many agricultural crops, it is also home to about 34 different solid minerals out of the 44 recorded for the whole country. This makes the state strategic for economic prosperity and development. These attributes require that the government takes the lead in the commercial exploitation and exploration of these vast land resources. The establishment of the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals ensures efficient management of the State's landmass and all the solid mineral deposits. The Ministry is, therefore, central to policymaking and ensuring the success of development initiatives. It has the mandate to deliver clear, secure, and negotiable rights to land and its resource utilisation in a manner that fosters economic prosperity for the citizenry.

To realise its core sectoral mandates, the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals and its agencies have set high-level objectives currently being pursued in alignment with the overarching objectives of the Benue State government. These include, among others, public acquisition of land for public purposes; land registration; survey and mapping of local and regional boundaries for development purposes; upgrading of maps for

historical purposes; land use planning; dispute resolution; data management; and the formulation of solid minerals policy for the State. The Ministry has enormous potential for the socio-economic development of the State in terms of increased revenue generation, job creation, improved land use planning, increased foreign direct investment, economic growth, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability, among others.

6.1 Institutional Setting

The Ministry of Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals has several departments, including the Departments of Lands, Town Planning, Planning, Research and Statistics, Survey, and Solid Minerals. Other ancillary agencies supporting the Ministry in delivering its core mandates include the Benue State Geo-Information System (BENGIS) and the Urban Development Board (UDB). These agencies fully complement the Ministry, ensuring that it meets the goals of its establishment.

The key mandates being pursued in the sector include: securing tenure of lands; promoting equitable access to land and supporting economic development; guaranteeing land ownership; providing security for credit systems; supporting land and property tax systems; facilitating land reforms; reducing land disputes; developing and monitoring land markets; protecting state lands from external

encroachment; improving urban planning and infrastructure development; and supporting sustainable management of the vast land resources.

The State has solid mineral potentials, which, when harnessed, will significantly improve unemployment levels and the

overall socio-economic wellbeing of the people, particularly when the government determines their commercial quantity to attract the requisite levels of investment. The categories of solid mineral endowments in 20 local government areas in the state are listed in Table 6.1:

Table 6.1: Solid Minerals Distribution in Benue State.

S/NO.	L.G.A.	SOLID MINERALS FOUND
1.	ADO	Limestone, Brine, Lead and Zinc, Barytes
2.	APA	Limestone, Gypsum, Kaolin, Anhychite Calcium Sulphate.
3.	BURUKU	Glass sand, Brick clay, Crushed and dimension stone.
4.	GBOKO	Limestone, Glass sand, Barytes, Gypsum, Brine, Lead and zinc, Granites.
5.	GUMA	Limestone, Glass sand, Barytes Brine, Rock salt, Lead and Zinc.
6.	GWER	Limestone, Barytes, Gypsum, Brine, Ilmenite/magnetite.
7.	GWER-WEST	Limestone, Gypsum, Brick clay.
8.	KATSINA-ALA	Glass Sand, Ball Clay, Brine, Crushed & Dimension stone, Gemstone.
9.	KONSHISHA	Limestone, Gypsum, Lead and Zinc.
10.	KWANDE	Ilmenite / magnetite, Gemstone, Gold, Lithium.
11.	LOGO	Fluorspar, Lead and Zinc, Limestone.
12.	MAKURDI	Limestone, Glass Sand, Barytes, Brick Clay.
13.	OGBADIBO	Kaolin, Brick Clay, Brine, Coal.
14.	OHIMINI	Granites.
15.	OJU	Limestone, Ilmenite / magnetite.
16.	OKPOKWU	Limestone, Kaolin, Coal.
17.	OTUKPO	Gypsum, Ball Clay, Brick Clay, Crushed & Dimension stone.
18.	UKUM	Brine
19.	USHONGO	Barytes, Gypsum, Brine, Granites, Lead and Zinc.
20.	VANDEIKYA	Glass Sand, Kaolin, Ilmenite / Magnetite.

SOURCE: MLSSM Report, January 2024.

The Ministry has effectively collaborated with government and non-government institutions/agencies such as the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, the Urban Development Board, the Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning. International collaborators include the World Bank and, more recently,

GISTransport. These partnerships and collaborations have advanced the sector's fortunes and its contributions to the state economy.

6.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

Some flagship programmes and projects have been implemented in the sector over the last five years. These include the establishment of BENGIS (Benue Geo-Information System), a centre/agency responsible for e-land administration and management. The Benue State government has, through the sector,



facilitated the establishment of military and paramilitary institutions, such as Naval and Air Force bases, provision of land for mass housing units by the Federal Ministry of Housing, and establishment of Entrepreneurship and Skills Centres. Over 300 layouts have been designed and executed for various land uses, including residential, utilities, mixed-use, and rural settlements. The State Action on Business Enabling Reform (SABER) and Mineral Support for Economic Diversification (MIDIVER) projects by the Nigerian Geological Survey in Benue State are notable deliverables of the sector in this period.

Performance data from 2019 to 2024 indicate that of 161 mineral titles obtained in Benue State by 119 mining companies, only 22 (13.7%) are active. This demonstrates weak government regulation in this sector, despite its enormous potential. Addressing this in the next planning cycle (2025–2029) is critical to ensuring optimal contributions to the state's economic development. Although baseline data for policies and projects were unavailable (the Ministry was excluded from the Benue State Development Plan 2016–2025), revenue

from land taxes increased under the previous administration. Land acquisition records showed parcels and layouts in 17 communities surrounding the state capital were acquired. However, this is insufficient given the fast urbanisation rate. Evidence suggests the government lost potential revenue due to over 130 inactive mining titles.

The sector contributed around 3% to the State GDP, created over 50,000 jobs, and reduced poverty by about 43% in the past five years. However, the next medium-term development plan must address key challenges such as land conflicts, environmental degradation, infrastructure deficits, limited technical capacity, and financial mismanagement.

6.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

6.3.1 Strength

Benue State boasts a vast landmass of about 33,955 square kilometres rich in a variety of solid minerals, making it one of the top ten states in Nigeria for mineral wealth. Twenty out of its 23 local

government areas are endowed with minerals in commercial quantities. Additionally, improved land use planning, accelerated issuance of certificates of occupancy, and enhanced land use efficiency make it an attractive investment destination.

Strategically located in the Middle Belt region, with River Benue providing water transportation for linkage with the Atlantic Ocean, the state is positioned for economic activity, including mineral export. Its youthful and energetic population is another strength for workforce mobilisation in mining and related activities. These attributes present opportunities for increased foreign direct investment, enhanced community engagement in land use management, and a greater contribution to state GDP through sustainable economic growth and development.

6.3.2 Key Challenges

Some of the key challenges hindering the investment growth of the solid minerals sector in Benue State include the following:

- · Insecurity, which has continuously created fear in the minds of local and international investors who cannot guarantee security for their human and material resources. A large number of skilled and unskilled labourers are engaged in mineral exploitation and exploration at mining sites deep within the forest.
- · Inadequate data and information on the volume of different categories of mineral deposits in commercial quantities in Benue State. Vital statistics required to make well-informed investment decisions in the sector are currently lacking in the State.
- · Poor network of rural roads, which creates a serious barrier for miners who

find it difficult to transport their products from the mining sites, particularly during the rainy season when most rural feeder roads become completely impassable for trucks.

- · Illegal activities of artisanal miners, which are not properly documented or regulated by the relevant government authorities, continue to pose serious constraints to economic activities in the sector.
- · Limited knowledge among small-scale miners about the benefits of forming cooperative societies, which poses a significant challenge to investment in the sector.
- · High cost of borrowing and limited interest by the banking industry in funding the long-term investments required in the mining industry.
- · Lack of local technical expertise in the solid minerals sector. Heavy-duty equipment required in the sector is not fabricated or produced locally, limiting access to these machines due to weak financial capacity to import them..

6.3.3 Threats

- i. Inflationary pressures on land use and certificate of occupancy costs.
- ii. Changes in government policies affecting land use and certificate of occupancy regulations.
- iii. Competition for resources from other stakeholders.

6.3.4 Opportunities

Despite the threats and challenges, opportunities abound in this sector to accelerate economic growth and development:

- · A very large landmass of about 33,955 square kilometres, rich in a variety of solid minerals, provides opportunities for different business ventures, whether small, medium, or large-scale.
- · Ongoing policy reforms in the sector

and increasing government focus on diversifying the State economy.

- The strategic location of Benue State in the Middle Belt, with an intersection of trunk A roads complemented by water transportation through River Benue, linked to the Atlantic Ocean, offers opportunities to boost economic activities.
- Benue State's youthful population provides opportunities for cheap labour, which attracts investors.
- The availability of abundant raw materials and a growing population creates opportunities for industrialisation in Benue State.

6.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

6.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029.

Over the medium-term development plan (2025–2029), the sector's broad objective is to effectively manage and utilise the State's land, survey, and solid mineral resources to promote sustainable economic growth, social development, and environmental conservation while ensuring transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the allocation and utilisation of these resources. The sector's key objectives are:

- To promote conservation, systematic and scientific development of mineral deposits, and protection of the environment, including restoration and rehabilitation of mined-out areas by 2029.
- To promote efficiency in surveying and mapping, geo-spatial data management, and boundary demarcation in the State.
- To enhance efficient mineral exploration, exploitation, and environmental management, ensuring that mining activities are carried out in an environmentally responsible

manner.

- To increase revenue generation to support overall development in the State.
- To strengthen institutional capacity and human resources through training and development programmes.

6.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- Significant improvement in land administration and management.
- Enhanced surveying and mapping, geospatial data management, and boundary demarcation.
- Reduced incidence of illegal mining.
- Reduction in pollution from mining activities.
- Improved monitoring of mining activities in the State.
- Development of a robust mining database for the State.
- Reduction in environmental degradation.

6.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

6.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the Objectives, 2025-2029

The following strategies and policy measures will be deployed over the period of the State Development Plan (2025–2029) to mitigate challenges confronting the lands, survey, and solid minerals sector, achieve the objectives, and deliver expected outcomes:

- Carry out land reforms to simplify land acquisition, registration, and titling processes.
- Digitalise land registry and mapping systems for efficient land administration.
- Institutionalise an efficient land

dispute resolution mechanism.

- Build the capacity of land administration officials through training.
- Modernise and upgrade survey equipment and technology to enhance accuracy and efficiency.
- Establish a national spatial data infrastructure to integrate spatial data.
- Undertake exploration and mapping to identify mineral resources in the State.
- Strengthen licensing and regulatory processes for mining operations in the State.
- Optimise and manage revenue from mining activities.

These high-level strategies provide a framework for developing more detailed policies, programmes, and initiatives to drive growth and development in the lands, survey, and solid minerals sector.

6.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

6.6.1 Programmes and Projects

Some flagship programmes and projects have been identified for effective implementation to propel and transform the Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals sector in Benue State. These programmes and initiatives can be classified into four distinct but related groups, namely: Solid Minerals Development Programme, State Surveying Programme, State Urban Planning Programme, and Planning, Research and Statistics Programmes.

Solid minerals development programme

The Benue State Government plans to hire high-performing officials to be trained both locally and internationally to enhance their capacity in the diverse skill sets required for the Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals sector. This initiative aims

to reposition the sector for the challenges of the 5th Industrial Revolution. To achieve its policy of diversifying the Benue State economy, the government will procure modern geological equipment that will facilitate the timely achievement of sectoral objectives. A world-class laboratory will be constructed and fully equipped to ensure quality assurance and grading of sector outputs, meeting international standards for market access. Minerals exploration and exploitation activities will be undertaken by State-registered and recognised mining companies. Furthermore, the government will invest in local and international solid minerals exhibitions to expose Benue State's products to global investors.

State surveying programme

The government will intensify investment in boundary and layout delineation, as well as demarcation, to comprehensively address incessant communal clashes among neighbouring communities disputing land ownership. Significant investment will also be directed towards modern surveying technologies, particularly Geographic Information Systems (GIS), to enhance efficiency and improve service delivery in the sector.

State Urban Planning Programme

In response to the increasing urbanisation of Makurdi, the State capital, and other zonal headquarters, the government intends to develop a long-term strategic urban master plan for the State. Regional and urban layouts complementing the master plan will be designed using GIS technology. This initiative aims to accelerate the development of an infrastructure backbone across the State, comparable to what obtains in developed countries. A key objective is to prevent the emergence of urban slums and associated social problems in the future. Emphasis

will also be placed on proper regulation and development control. To enhance land administration, the government will invest in establishing a Land Information System (LIS), complemented by e-Land registration and documentation. This will create an enabling environment for private sector businesses to thrive in the State.

Planning, Research and Statistics programmes

Under Planning, Research and Statistics Programmes, the government will conduct a needs assessment of the Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals sector to identify skill gaps and implement measures to address them. Specifically, investments will be made in capacity-building training programmes for staff across technical and service departments, with a focus on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Computer hardware and software will be procured, installed, and deployed to improve routine operations in the sector. This initiative is expected to enhance data collection, collation, analysis, and interpretation, preparing the sector for the challenges of the 4th Industrial Revolution and enabling the rollout of evidence-based policies and initiatives.

6.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the core objectives and accompanying goals of the Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals sector, the medium-term development plan (2025–2029) estimates a total investment size of ₦6.355 billion over the planning horizon. As the government repositions the sector to

accelerate its diversification efforts from dependency on oil revenue, it is expected that private sector operators will account for a substantial share of the total investment. The government will focus more on providing the hard and soft infrastructure necessary for private sector investment and foreign investment to flourish.

6.7 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes from the four broad programmes and fourteen projects to be implemented over the planning horizon are summarised in a matrix in Table 6.2. These programmes, projects, and other government interventions in the sector will not only significantly contribute to the achievement of sector objectives but also accelerate the State's concentric diversification efforts. Specifically, these outcomes will include improved land administration and management, enhanced efficiency in surveying and mapping, results-oriented geospatial data management, and effective boundary demarcation.

Additionally, the initiatives will lead to a reduction in incidences of illegal mining within the State, minimise pollution arising from mining activities, and improve the monitoring of mining operations. There will also be a substantial reduction in environmental degradation, an increase in employment opportunities, and the successful development of a robust mining database for the State. Overall, these interventions will significantly support the government in accelerating the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Table 6.2: Sector-Level Results Framework for Lands, Survey and Solid minerals

SDGs	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline 2024	Target	
				2027	2029
Goals 11 & 3	Improved land administration and management	Improved process of land acquisition	29.55%	50%	75%
		Enhanced land use planning	27.55%	50%	80%
		Strategic acquisition of land for infrastructural development	23.55%	50%	70%
		Improved community engagement in land acquisition	21.55%	50%	80%
		Improved Deeds registration efficiency	25.55%	60%	80%
Goal 11	Efficient surveying and mapping, geospatial data management and boundary demarcation	Improved survey and mapping accuracy	20.55%	50%	75%
		Enhanced planning and development control	19.55%	60%	80%
		Increase building permit issuance	18.55%	50%	70%
SDGs	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline 2024	Target	
				2027	2029
	Reduced incidence of illegal mining	Number of illegal mining sites in the state	N/A	30	0
		Number of legal mining sites in the state	14	50	80
		Number of registered artisanal miners in the state	N/A	50	100
		Number of titles issued out	161	300	350
		Number of active operational titles	22	50	100
Goal 2 & 13	Reduced incidence of pollution through mining activities	Number of incidences of pollution	N/A	50%	80%
		Number of professionals operating in the state	11	50	80
Goal 17	Improved monitoring of mining activities	Revenue generated by state from mining activities	N/A	70%	100%
		Contribution of mining activities to the state GDP	20%	22%	25%
Goal 2	Reduced degradation of the environment	Number of mining sites degraded by mining activities	N/A	50%	80%
		Area of land reclaimed by mining activities	N/A	20%	50%
Goal 1	Increased employment opportunities	Number of mining subsidiary firms/mining enterprises established in the State.	11	20	30
		Number of employment in the mining sector	N/A	100	200
	Mining database developed	Percentage of mining site with full data gathered	5%	70%	100%
Sources: Benue State Gazette, State Internal Revenue Administration (Amendment) Law, 2022. Targets are projections					

Information, Culture and Tourism

Chapter

7

7.0 Introduction

The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism has immense potential and is central to galvanising the populace to achieve the developmental and governance objectives of Benue State. In this regard, Radio Benue and Benue Television have the combined capacity to reach 4,253,641 citizens, based on the 2006 census figures, spanning across 23 Local Government Areas and extending to neighbouring States.

The sector's direct impact is significant, both in terms of the number of stations and tourism activities in Benue State, the employment it generates, and its overall economic contribution. Workers in the commercial and non-commercial local broadcast television and radio industry consume goods and services produced in other sectors of the Benue economy, creating ripple effects in employment, income generation, and economic output. Additionally, the output of these media industries stimulates economic activity by providing a platform for advertising, which connects producers with consumers.

Moreover, the culture and tourism subsector has growing socio-economic importance due to its potential to generate substantial revenue. Tourism entails the movement of people for pleasure, business, adventure, cultural, or political exchanges, thereby contributing to the State's revenue base. Accurately tracking such movements—where tourists go, eat, sleep, and how much they spend—is vital for effective planning. In 2022 alone, travel and tourism contributed 3.6% to Nigeria's GDP,



equivalent to approximately 12.9 trillion (using the average 2022 exchange rate). Despite challenges, Benue State has benefitted from tourism patronage, although insecurity has occasionally dampened its growth.

Benue State boasts numerous tourist sites, including Ikyogen Cattle Ranch, Aokpe Pilgrimage Site, Ikuve Holiday Resort, Ushongo Hills, and Mount Mtor. However, these sites remain underdeveloped and underutilised for revenue generation. Fully exploring and investing in these sites could yield significant economic benefits, attracting both local and international tourists, thereby boosting the State's economy and supporting the development of other sectors.

7.1 Institutional Setting

The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism is a vital agency of the Benue State Government, established in 1976 when the State was created. It plays a crucial role in information dissemination and the

promotion of Benue State's cultural and tourism potential. The Ministry propagates government policies, programmes, and projects while educating and promoting the State's rich cultural heritage.

Through its various organs—Radio Benue, Benue Television, The Voice Newspaper, the Government Printing Department, the Benue State Library Board, the Culture and Tourism Boards, the Arts Council, the Cultural Troupe, and others—the Ministry mobilises and sensitises the public, encouraging participation in government initiatives. The Ministry's emphasis on information dissemination fosters citizen engagement, transparency, and awareness of government activities.

7.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

The Benue State Government, through the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, collaborates with the Federal Government's National Orientation Agency (NOA) on various issues requiring public enlightenment campaigns to implement programmes periodically. This collaboration is also extended to International Development Partners and Donors, such as UNICEF, which is currently implementing a Social and Behaviour Change Communication Project in Otukpo Local Government Area across five selected communities.

Furthermore, the information sub-sector has received significant attention since 2020, with notable achievements such as the establishment of Benue Television and the procurement and installation of a 20KW Digital FM Transmitter for Radio Benue, Makurdi, in 2022. This transmitter has the capacity to broadcast across the length and breadth of Benue State.

Similarly, the Ministry has established a



Hospitality and Tourism Institute (NIHOTOUR) in collaboration with the Federal Government. Additionally, the administration of Governor Hyacinth Alia, during the current budget year 2024, has initiated a Public-Private Partnership agreement with Shimatex Nigeria Limited, supported by seed funding of 500,000,000.00, for the comprehensive revitalisation of the Benue Printing and Publishing Corporation, owners of The Voice Newspapers.

7.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

7.3.1 Strength

Benue State's traditional and religious systems, with their dedicated followership, make communication and information dissemination more efficient. Often, the Ministry relies on these structures to mobilise grassroots participation in government policies, programmes, and projects. The current government recognises the power of information and communication and has taken steps to strengthen existing structures by investing in the Radio and TV Corporation and initiating a PPP for the Benue Printing and

Publishing Corporation. With the procurement and installation of the 20KW FM transmitter, the Ministry and its agencies can now reach over four million citizens across the State and beyond.

The growing adoption of social media by the people of Benue and the Ministry enhances information dissemination by making it more inclusive and non-traditional, especially for engaging the youth. Moreover, the Ministry leverages the social capital and networks of other governmental agencies, traditional and religious institutions, NGOs, and the private sector to deliver its mandates.

7.3.2 Key Challenges

One of the greatest challenges facing the Ministry is inadequate funding, which has hindered it from realising its full potential. The Ministry is also constrained by staff shortages, outdated equipment, insufficient ICT tools, and limited collaboration with local government councils. Additionally, the Ministry lacks a comprehensive database of its activities, faces erratic and costly electricity supply, and struggles to maintain heritage sites. Other issues include inadequate funding for tourism and hospitality, partial implementation of enabling policies, weak linkages between tourism and the market economy, insufficient tourism data for planning, and inadequate public-private partnership initiatives. Compensation disputes between host communities, government, and investors also pose significant challenges.

7.3.3 Threats

Despite having a strong broadcasting network, insecurity in certain local government areas hampers face-to-face communication and affects the culture and tourism sub-sectors. Insecurity deters tourists who might otherwise visit Benue's destinations. Additionally, the

vandalisation of information and communication infrastructure, including facilities at tourist sites, is a significant drawback. Underdeveloped infrastructure, such as inadequate air transport and poor access roads to tourist sites, further exacerbates these issues.

7.3.4 Opportunities

Despite these challenges, the Ministry benefits from a high level of awareness and multiple communication channels to reach people. It effectively utilises traditional and religious institutions and social structures to engage grassroots communities. The Ministry also has opportunities for collaboration within Benue's socio-cultural and political ecosystem and can tap into the available low-cost manpower for mobilisation and information dissemination.

7.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

7.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the information, culture, and tourism sector in the medium term is to develop and modernise information and tourism infrastructure in Benue State to drive rapid economic growth and development. This includes fostering public participation in governance for shared prosperity and establishing Benue State as a leading cultural and tourist destination in Nigeria. The Medium-term objectives include:

- Developing a vibrant, inclusive, and digitally ready information ecosystem that fosters citizen engagement, promotes transparency, and supports sustainable peace and development in a secure Benue State.
- Driving inclusive economic empowerment and reducing unemployment through tourism.
- Promoting entrepreneurship development through cultural and

tourism initiatives.

7.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- Increase local media quality content production by 50% by 2029 to empower citizens and reduce NBC sanctions.
- Establish a N1 billion local content fund for the media industry to support quality content creation and procure digitalisation equipment by 2029.
- Upgrade two community radio stations to digital formats by 2029 to extend broadcast coverage to at least 50% of rural communities.
- Establish a state-of-the-art media hub by
- Identify, document, and develop 29 cultural heritage sites by 2029.
- Renovate or develop at least five new tourist attractions by 2029.
- Generate a minimum of N1 billion in tourism revenue by 2029 and N10 billion within the next decade, creating 6,000 jobs in the hospitality sector.
- Engage all 23 Local Government Areas in cultural heritage preservation for economic growth and development.
- Increase annual visitor numbers by 50% through improved tourist site infrastructure and services.



2029 to facilitate feedback mechanisms between citizens and government, reducing misinformation and misunderstandings.

- Increase citizen participation in governance by 70% through awareness creation and interactive feedback mechanisms for accountability and transparency.
- Secure Benue State with actionable intelligence and early warning systems, supported by a Unified Internal Security Command, improving tourism and increasing annual visitors to 50,000 by 2029.

7.5 Key Sector Policies and Strategies

7.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

To manage the image and reputation of the people and Government of Benue State through a professional and dynamic public information system that facilitates access to credible and timely information about Benue State and its people. This system will aim to stimulate national and international cultural exchanges, promote tourism for economic development by showcasing the State's rich heritage and natural beauty, and

facilitate economic growth, social development, and cultural preservation.

7.5.2 Key Sector Strategies

The strategies to achieve the sector objectives and deliver expected outcomes include:

- • Operate fully digitised broadcast platforms to increase patronage and align with the global digital revolution, enhancing productivity within the knowledge economy.
- • Provision of state-of-the-art equipment with real-time feedback systems and social media integration, recognising the dominance of social media in audience reach and competition.
- • Develop educative, informative, entertaining, and public enlightenment programmes to improve public understanding of government policies, programmes, and projects, thereby building trust, increasing participation, and mitigating social unrest.
- • Build robust feedback mechanisms for monitoring policy, programme, and project outcomes, enhancing governance and providing early warnings of misperceptions about government activities.
- • Regular training of Information and Culture staff to equip them with essential skills and align performance with expected indicators.
- • Promote mass communication and public relations instruments to boost mass awareness and participation.
- • Enact policies to harmonise operations of State-owned media outlets.
- • Increase focus on the tourism sector by maintaining local assets and launching global marketing campaigns.
- • Create an enabling environment for

tourism-business linkages, fostering growth and development.

- • Implement and update policies to harness the State's cultural and tourism potential.
- • Facilitate access to financing for creative arts.
- • Establish cultural and tourism hubs to serve as focal points for development.
- • Ensure the safety of lives and property at tourist sites to bolster tourism.
- • Drive inclusive economic empowerment and reduce unemployment through tourism initiatives.
- • Promote entrepreneurship development via culture and tourism clinics..

7.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

7.6.1 Programmes and Projects

Key government initiatives identified for advancing the Information, Culture, and Tourism sector can be grouped into three broad areas:

- • Enhanced cultural patronage, tourism, and hospitality for economic growth and development.
- • Improved peace, coexistence, and security among ethnic and social groups within the State.
- • Enhanced public awareness and trust building between the Government and the people of Benue State through improved communication and feedback mechanisms.

7.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the stated goals, the projected public investment for the period 2025–2029 is 16,181,101,016.66 (16.2 billion).

Investment in infrastructure and digitalisation of the information, culture, and tourism sector is expected to stimulate private, domestic, and foreign investments. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) will play a crucial role, driving substantial investments in the sector.

7.7 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes from the interventions and investments, across seven (7) programmes and twenty-nine (29) projects, include the following:

- Increased cultural patronage and enhanced tourism and hospitality for economic growth, improved quality of life, and alignment with the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs).

- Improved peace, coexistence, and security among ethnic and social groups, fostering general development and strengthening the tourism sector.
- Enhanced public awareness and trust between the Government and the people of Benue State, achieved through quality broadcast content, patronage, and a robust feedback mechanism.

Each programme and project is strategically designed to contribute to the overarching goals of economic growth, cultural preservation, and societal harmony in Benue State.

SDGs	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
Goals 4, 8, 11 & 12.	Increased Cultural patronage, wellbeing and quality of life.	Number of patronages of the State's troupe within and outside the State	150	300	400
		Number of Cultural Festivals organised within and outside the State	26	37	50
		Number of Cultural exchanges recorded	1	10	15
Goals 8 & 11 & 12	Increased Tourism and Hospitality for economic growth	Annual Tourist visits in the State	1,000	10,000	50,000
		Amount of revenue generated within the sector (N million)	30m	100m	1billion
		Number of Hotels and Allied Enterprises Established	500	750	1,000
10,16 & 17	Improved peaceful coexistence amongst various groups and reduction in insecurity.	Number of socio-political conflict recorded (Zaki-biam)	1	0	0
		Number of religious and ethnic conflict recorded	Nil	0	0
Goals 4, 5,10 & 12	Improved understanding between the government and the people of Benue State	Proportion of protests against Government Policies	65%	20%	5%
Goals 4, 10, 16 & 17.	Enhanced awareness Public	Percentage level of awareness	15%	50%	70%
	Ensured productivity quality and Level of efficiency programmes contents.	Level of digitization of broadcasting content	10%	40%	60%
		Number of advertisement patronage	1,000	5,000	10,000
		Number of NBC sanction received	1	0	0
Goal 4,10 & 17	Improved feedback mechanism	Proportion of responses received on programmes	1%	20%	50%
Sources: Consultant and Stakeholders Field Notes for baseline data; targets and projections					

Section 3

Infrastructure



Works, Housing and Urban Development

Chapter 8

8.0 Introduction

Infrastructure development is critical to the economic growth of Benue State. An efficient infrastructure system is key to the socio-economic development of the State. Currently, the State faces significant infrastructure deficits, particularly in roads and housing. This deficiency hampers movement across the State, especially the transportation of agricultural produce from rural areas to urban centres. Addressing this challenge would enhance Benue's status as the "Food Basket of the Nation" and promote agricultural value chains within the State. Focusing on critical infrastructure and housing development can significantly contribute to job creation and economic empowerment. The State Ministry of Works, Housing, and Urban

Development plays a pivotal role in this sector by planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining essential infrastructure such as roads and bridges. It also oversees initiatives to improve roads, markets, and storage facilities to support agricultural development, provide affordable housing, and enhance urban living conditions.

The existing network of State roads connecting rural settlements in Benue includes Adikpo-Jato Aka road, Ugbema-Manyam road, AbajiAmaafu-Ugba-Anyiin-Anyebe road, Tyowanye-Joo-Aketa road, AnyebeAyi1amo-Abeda-Afia-Chito-Jootar road, Ameladu-Buruku road, Sai-SankeraChito-Vaase road, Taraku-Aondoana-Naka-Agagbe-Abian-Gbaji road, and others.



Table 8.1: Roads in Benue State and their Distances in Kilometers

S/N	Roads	Distance
1	Makurdi – Gbajimba	37.566km
2	Makurdi – Naka	40.130km
3	Naka – Adoka	31.104km
4	Makurdi – Wannune	52.133km
5	Wannune – Yandev	38.020km
6	Yandev – Buruku	29.157km
7	Buruku – Ugba	17.004km
8	Ugba - Zaki-Biam	32,199km
9	Zaki-Biam – Sankera	5.673km
10	Zaki-Biam - Katsina-ala	52.916
11	Katsina-ala – Adikpo	34.357km
12	Makurdi – Igbor	31.555km
13	Igbor – Alaide	24.370km
14	Alaide – Otukpo	40.276km
15	Otukpo - Botu-iga	21.297km
16	Botu-Iga - Idekpa-okpiko	8.926km
17	Adoka – Ugbokpo	39.356km
18	Ugbokpo – Ogbagti	31.887km
19	Otukpo – Otukpa	60.794km
20	Yandev - Katsina-Ala	53.358km
21	Katsina-ala - Tor-Donga	45.655km
22	Tor-Donga – Takum	32.033km
23	Sankera – Wukari	40799km
24	Makurdi – Lafia	86.763km
25	Idekpa-Okpiko – Ankpa	41.870km
26	Botu Iga – Adoka	18.468km
27	Iga-Okpaye - Ankpa(Kogi)	34.294km
	Total	981.96km

8.1 Institutional Setting

The State Ministry of Works, Housing, and Urban Development is mandated to formulate infrastructure policies and programmes related to works, housing, and urban development. Its responsibilities include: construction and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and public buildings; development of low-cost housing projects and provision of necessary infrastructure in residential areas; urban renewal projects aimed at improving living conditions; and formulating policies that align with the broader developmental goals of the State Government.

The Ministry collaborates with various agencies, including the Bureau for Infrastructure and Special Projects, the Urban Development Board, and other State Ministries such as the Ministry of Power,

Renewable Energy and Transport, and the Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperatives. Federal collaborations include partnerships with the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing and the Federal Ministry of Transport.

8.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

Despite limited resources, the Ministry has made commendable efforts in providing infrastructure. Over the last five years: 53.69 km (63%) of urban roads have been completed, and rural roads saw limited development, with only 6.5 km completed in Gboko township, 1.79 km in Otukpo, and 3.50 km in Vandeikya. Renovation of public buildings, including the Benue House of Assembly Complex, Benue Secretariat Complex, and the Governor's Lodge in Makurdi, was successfully completed.

Table 8.2: Status of Road Projects, 2019-2024

Location	Completed Roads	Ongoing Roads	Ongoing Interchange /Underpass	Abandoned Roads	Yet to be Mobilized
Makurdi	53.69 km				28.95 km
Gboko	6.5 km		580m		35 km
Otukpo	1.79 km	3.15 km			
Vandeikya	3.50 km	32.0 km			
Ushongu		37.08 km			
Buruku		41.0 km			
Konshisha/Oju		52.0 km			
Gwer East/Obi		36.50 km			
Gwer East/Gwer West		47.0 km			
Makurdi/Guma		55.0 km			
Kwande		23.0 km		47 km	
Orakam				17.1 km	
Guma/Tarka					17 km
TOTAL	65.48 km	326.73 km	1.13 km	64.1 km	80.95 km

Table 8.3: Public Building Renovated, 2019-2024.

S/N	Building	Location	Status
1	Benue House of Assembly Complex	Makurdi	Completed
2	Benue House of Secretariat Complex	Makurdi	Completed
3	Governor's Lodge.	Makurdi	Completed





8.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

8.3.1 Strength

The State is located in the North Central region of Nigeria, serving as a gateway to many other regions of the country. From the State, commuters can access the North-East States, South-East States, North-West States, and the Federal Capital Territory. With adequate infrastructural provision within the State, productivity would improve as man-hours would be reduced. This would also assist those in the agricultural value chain by increasing production, creating jobs, and generating revenue. Such improvements would enhance the income and welfare of citizens, who are predominantly involved in agricultural activities.

8.3.2 Key Challenges

The key challenges militating against the provision of infrastructural amenities in the State include:

- Inadequate funding for critical infrastructures in the state has been a major challenge for the government over the years. The state has majorly relied on monthly Federal allocation to implement and execute major infrastructural projects. Due to external shocks on the price of crude oil, the foreign exchange earnings from crude oil have affected Nigerian revenue, which also has a negative effect on Benue state allocation and ability to fund critical projects.
- Lack of equipment to execute the critical infrastructures by the Ministry of Works and Housing is a major challenge for the sector. This can be attributed to inadequate funds to purchase heavy equipment that should be used to provide and implement the projects.
- Limited technical personnel also affects the execution of the critical infrastructures within the state. The qualified professionals that should be

working for the government most times do not stay as employees of the government due to poor welfare packages. These personnel prefer to move to Federal agencies or private sector where they can receive better welfare packages.

- Lack of political will by the government to implement the infrastructural projects that have already been budgeted for has been great challenge on the development of critical infrastructure within the state.
- The delay by the Government in the payment of approved measurement certificates for work executed is also a major limitation on the execution of infrastructure within the state. The government inability to provide these certificates to contractors have led to many of the contractors to abandon many projects within the state.

8.3.3 Threats

- The increase insecurity within the

state over the years is a major distraction for the successive government. Constant attack by the bandits on farmers and kidnapping of construction workers is a major threat to infrastructural development in the state.

- The frequent changes in climate have also served as threat to the infrastructural provisions in the State. In the recent years, the state has witnessed flooding, and this has damaged many infrastructures which include roads, housing and businesses.
- Inflationary pressure has led to contractors asking for contract cost variation. With the government decreasing revenue, the cost and price variations have not been possible leading to many projects abandoned.

8.3.4 Opportunities

In spite of the many challenges confronting the state, the state has a lot of opportunities that can be leveraged on in





order to achieve its development plan.

- • Possibility of increase in the internally generated revenue by the state and blocking of revenue leakages would help in funding infrastructural gaps. This could be done by expanding the tax base to cover many of the citizens that do not pay taxes or are under-paying their taxes.
- • Collaboration between the state government and the private investors to finance critical infrastructure. Public Private Partnerships (PPP) is one of the ways by which government can finance infrastructural development. The abundance of resources within the state can attract private investors to the different sectors which can help in partnering with the government in the provision of infrastructures like roads, housing among others.
- • Provision of adequate and improve infrastructures would

attract investors and businesses into the state, leading to job creation and economic diversification, promoting tourism and the hospitality industries which is capable of increasing the internally generated revenue of the state.

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8.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

8.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objectives of the infrastructural sector, with specific reference to works and housing, are to develop and maintain a safe, efficient, and sustainable road network that supports economic growth and social development in the State. In addition, the goal is to provide safe, affordable, and sustainable housing to improve the quality of life for all citizens of Benue State.

The medium-term objectives include the following:

- • To enhance the road network by

constructing or rehabilitating 905 km of roads by 2029.

- To reduce road accidents by 30% annually over the next three years.
- To achieve a road maintenance funding ratio of 20% of the total road budget by 2029.
- To develop a comprehensive road sector development plan by 2027.
- To provide 5,000 units of housing to improve existing towns and rural settlements by 2029.
- To improve transportation services for people living with disabilities by 2029.

8.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- Construction of 305 km of urban roads within the next five years across the State.
- Construction of 600 km of rural roads across the State by 2029.
- Provision of layouts in the three (3) Senatorial Zones and the construction of 5,000 units of low-cost housing.
- Establishment of a State Road

Maintenance Agency responsible for maintaining State roads.

- Construction of ten (10) pedestrian bridges in Makurdi, five (5) in Gboko, and five (5) in Otukpo, catering to the needs of people living with disabilities.

8.5. Key Sector Strategies and Policies

8.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- Formulating policies, designing, constructing or rehabilitating, supervising, maintaining, and coordinating urban development and urbanisation in Benue State.
- Enhancing connectivity, facilitating trade, and improving access to services through infrastructure development.
- Investing in the construction and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and public buildings to enhance infrastructure.
- Developing low-cost housing



projects and providing necessary infrastructure in residential areas.

- Undertaking urban renewal projects to improve sanitation, waste management, and public amenities in urban centres.

8.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

8.6.1 Programmes and Projects for Medium-Term Plan 2025-2029

These programmes and projects aim to build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation in alignment with SDG 9, as well as enhance the development of sustainable cities and communities in line with SDG 11. The government will ensure the provision of safe, effective, and efficient infrastructure and related services to drive the economic recovery agenda, responsive to the socio-economic needs of Benue State.

Construct/Rehabilitate 600 km of Urban and Rural Roads

The government plans to construct and rehabilitate 600 km of urban and rural roads to facilitate and drive economic growth and agro-industrial development at a rate of 200 km per year.

Construct a Functional Cargo Airport

The State will develop aviation infrastructure by constructing a functional cargo airport in Makurdi to facilitate the movement of agricultural products from the State to other parts of the country and for export to international markets.

Housing and Urban Renewal

The government intends to construct 5,000 housing units across the three (3) Senatorial Districts, including:

Construction of 2,000 units in Zone A.

Construction of 1,500 units in Zone B.

Construction of 1,500 units in Zone C.

This initiative will include the survey, design, and construction of model integrated rural community settlements in each Senatorial District.

8.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the objectives of the works and housing sub-sector, the estimated public investment required is 439.2 billion for the period 2025–2029. This investment will enable the government to reposition the State economy through infrastructural development. The implementation of these strategies is expected to attract additional private domestic and foreign investments in the infrastructure sector, promoting Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in the State.

8.7 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes from the listed high-level objectives are presented in Table 8.4. Specifically, with the provision of roads linking major rural areas in the State, farmers would be able to transport their produce to markets, thereby reducing post-harvest losses. The construction of urban roads in Makurdi and other major towns in the State would facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services, enhancing economic activities and improving man-hour efficiency. In addition, the provision of mass housing is expected to improve the standard of living for the workforce while reducing rural-urban migration. This initiative would contribute towards achieving a road maintenance funding ratio of 20% of the total road budget by 2029. Furthermore, it aims to provide modern and accessible road infrastructure for people living with disabilities, fostering inclusivity across the State.

Table 8.4: Works and Housing Sector-Level Result Framework

SDG	OUTCOME	KPI	BASELINE	TARGET				
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
GOAL 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.	Improved road networks for easy transportation of people and agricultural products to the markets to reduce post-harvesters losses.	*Construction 600 km of roads in urban and rural areas. *Economic viability of the State through easy movement of agricultural products.	30%	35%	45%	55%	60%	65%
GOAL 11: By 2030, make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.	Improve Habitable Settlement.	Building 5,000 low-cost housing at 1,000 units per year across the State.	5%	15%	25%	35%	45%	55%
	Inclusive and sustainable urbanization	Inclusive sustainable human settlement planning for PWD and Reduction of road Accidents	0%	30%	50%	70%	-	-



9.0 Introduction

The Power and Renewable Energy sub-sector is responsible for delivering and implementing the policies of the Government of Benue State in the areas of equitable and efficient service delivery in power installations, generation, and distribution to promote the economic development of the State. The sub-sector plays a pivotal role in power generation, distribution, and management to meet the energy needs of residents and support economic activities. Its responsibilities include enhancing connectivity, promoting accessibility, and contributing to the overall socio-economic development of Benue State. Also, it seeks to ensure the equitable and efficient delivery of services in power installations, generation, distribution, and the transmission of power to every community in the State.

9.1 Institutional Setting

The Ministry of Power, Renewable Energy, and Transport is tasked with formulating policies on power and renewable energy in Benue State. Other ministries and agencies collaborating with the Ministry include the Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperatives, the Bureau for Special Projects and Infrastructure, and the Benue Investment and Property Company (BIPC). The State Government also partners with the Federal Ministry of Power, other Federal agencies, and international organisations to improve power supply and renewable energy across the State.

The current Government of Benue State

has demonstrated a strong commitment to developing the power sub-sector by creating an enabling environment for private-sector investment. Recently, under the initiative of the BIPC, plans were announced to construct a power plant aimed at independently generating electricity. Remedy Earth, an energy company using 100% renewable technology, will spearhead this investment. The company does not require peaker plants, battery arrays, or extensive use of scarce metals, nor does it utilise polluting fuels that generate toxic waste. This proactive development aims to address the energy needs of communities across the State and is anticipated to drive significant socio-economic growth.

Other initiatives to improve electricity supply in the State include implementing power generation projects, upgrading and maintaining transmission and distribution networks, collaborating with private-sector entities, promoting the use of renewable energy sources, and developing policies and incentives to encourage renewable energy investments. The State Government has also prioritised identifying and developing renewable energy projects, conducting research and development in renewable energy technologies, and providing subsidies and incentives for the adoption of renewable energy.

Sector Performance, 2020-2024

The Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy has made substantial contributions to Benue State's GDP by

creating employment opportunities, reducing poverty, improving agricultural produce storage, and enhancing socio-economic activities. It also serves as a revenue-generating agency for the State Government. Over the past five years, notable achievements in the sector include the installation of: 2.5MVA power transformer at the Government House, Makurdi; 1000KVA/33/415KV power transformer at the State Secretariat

Complex, Makurdi; 500KVA transformer at Kuma Abanyam Street, New GRA, Makurdi; 300KVA transformer at the Commissioner Quarters, Makurdi; Solar streetlights on Ishaya Bakut Road, Jonah Jang Crescent, and Abu King Shuluwa Road, Makurdi; 33KV line extension and two 300KVA transformers in the Mbaikya Community, Makurdi LGA; and 300KVA dedicated transformer at the Benue Cabinet Office, Makurdi.

Table 9.1: Power Projects Completed in State from 2020-2024

S/N	Project	Location	Status
1	Installation of 2.5MVA power transformer	Government House, Makurdi	Completed
2	Installation of 1000KVA/33/415KV power transformer	State Secretariat, Makurdi.	Completed
3	Installation of 300KVA transformer	Commissioner Quarters, Makurdi	Completed
4	Installation of solar streetlights on Ishaya Bakut road.	Jonah Jang Crescent and Abu king Shuluwa road, Makurdi	Completed
5	Extension of 33Kv line and Installation of two 300KVA transformers	Mbaikya Community in Makurdi LGA	Completed
6	Installation of 300KVA dedicated transformer	Benue Cabinet Office, Makurdi	Completed

Table 9.2: Ongoing Power Projects to Be Retained in the Successor Development Plan (2025–2029)

S/N	Name of Project	Location of Project	Status
1.	Installation of 300KVA dedicated transformer	Benue Cabinet office, Makurdi	On-going
2.	Installation of traffic lights at 4 major junctions	Makurdi metropolis	On-going
3.	Installation of solar streetlights with CCTV cameras	Makurdi metropolis	On-going



9.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

9.3.1 Strength

Benue State benefits from high solar irradiance, making it an ideal location for solar power projects. Expanding solar farms and installing rooftop solar systems can significantly enhance energy availability. The River Benue also offers considerable potential for small-scale hydropower projects that could provide electricity to nearby communities. Furthermore, agricultural residues and waste can be converted into biomass energy, contributing an additional renewable energy source. Expanding the electricity grid and deploying off-grid solutions in rural areas could improve living standards, increase agricultural productivity, and reduce rural-urban migration. Community-based energy projects could empower local populations and provide a sustainable energy supply. Promoting the use of energy-efficient appliances and practices would lower energy consumption and reduce costs. Also, implementing demand-side management programmes could optimise energy use and reduce peak demand on the grid. Introducing smart grid technology and advanced metering infrastructure would enhance the efficiency, reliability, and resilience of electricity supply, while also improving billing accuracy and reducing energy theft.

9.3.2 Key Challenges

The key constraints impeding the growth of the power and renewable energy sub-sector in Benue State include:

- Lack of adequate power infrastructure and grid connectivity, which hinders effective energy distribution. Energy infrastructure

comprises various components, each serving a unique purpose. Power generation facilities, including fossil fuel plants, nuclear reactors, and renewable energy installations, form the starting point of energy production. These sources generate electricity, which is then transmitted across vast networks comprising transmission lines, transformers, and substations. The limited availability of this infrastructure in the State remains a major challenge for power and renewable energy investment.

- Limited funding and investment in power and renewable energy projects is another challenge. The lack of adequate funding hampers both the State government and private investors. For the government, the limited resources available are insufficient even to meet overhead costs, let alone invest substantial funds in power and renewable energy.
- Regulatory bottlenecks present another major challenge in the power and renewable energy sector. Over the years, only the Federal Government has held the exclusive power to provide electricity across Nigeria. This centralised control has significantly slowed the progress that the State could have made in connecting all parts of Benue State to power sources. Additionally, complex and often unclear regulatory frameworks delay project implementation in this sub-sector.
- Poor rural electrification is another significant issue in the State. This is largely attributable to the lack of political will by previous administrations to implement budgetary allocations for rural electrification projects across the State.

9.3.3 Threats

The power and renewable energy sub-sector in Benue State faces several threats, including:

- In recent years, the Nigerian economy has been affected by multiple external shocks, such as the crude oil price crash, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the global economic recession. These shocks have adversely impacted the economy, reducing Federal allocations to Benue State and limiting the State government's ability to invest in the power sub-sector.
- Inconsistent government policies in the State have posed a significant threat to the development of the power sub-sector. Successive administrations often abandon policies, programmes, and projects initiated by their predecessors, leading to a multitude of abandoned projects across the State. Changes in government priorities disrupt both ongoing and future projects.
- Climate change has negatively impacted power and renewable energy infrastructure. Erratic weather patterns, such as excessive rainfall, have caused severe flooding, leading to the destruction of transformers, power cables, power poles, and power stations.
- The lack of security for power infrastructure within the State is another critical issue. Theft of transformers, power cables, and poles poses a significant threat to achieving broader connectivity across the State, including connections to the national grid and renewable energy sources for rural communities.

In spite of these challenges, there is evidence that the current State government can overcome these threats due to the abundant opportunities and untapped potential within Benue State,

which could help achieve the medium-term development plan's specific objectives.

9.3.4 Opportunities

Despite these challenges, the Benue State power and renewable energy sub-sector offers significant opportunities.

- Benue State is endowed with abundant renewable resources scattered across the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the State. It is no wonder that Benue State is acclaimed as the "Food Basket of the Nation," due to its rich agricultural produce, which accounts for 75% of the population and includes rice, cassava, maize, soybean, sorghum, millet, sesame, and others. These agricultural resources can be harnessed in the form of biomass for power generation.
- The State also boasts one of the longest stretches of river systems in the country, with great potential for small-hydro-electricity generation stations. Tributaries such as the River Konshisha in Konshisha LGA, Katsina-Ala River in Katsina-Ala LGA, River Guma in Guma LGA, River Logo in Logo LGA, River Okpokwu in Okpokwu LGA, and River Obi in Obi LGA are notable examples. Other tributaries of the Benue River include Mkomon, Amile, Kpa, Duru, Ombimu, Be, Aya, and Oyongo, scattered throughout the State. These tributaries hold great potential if properly harnessed to provide small-hydro power to meet the ever-increasing demand for electricity in the State.
- Solar energy is another promising renewable energy resource in Benue State due to its apparent limitless potential. The State experiences a monthly average solar radiation ranging from 14MJ/m² per day. These radiation values are sufficient to

generate electricity through photovoltaic systems. The Estimation and Mapping of Solar Energy Potentials of Renewable Energy Resources in Benue State, Nigeria study examined the solar radiation levels across the 23 LGAs of the State, assessing their viability for renewable energy use. If optimally utilised by the State government, solar energy could contribute significantly to the State's development, sustainability, and reduction of dependence on fossil fuels, thereby protecting the environment.

- Wind energy presents another great opportunity in the State. Makurdi, the State capital, has a mean wind speed at a 25-metre level of 2.689m/s, with an annual wind energy potential of 4,183.51kWh from a wind turbine with a 10m blade diameter and 26,148.85kWh from a 25m blade diameter. These values are high, positioning Benue State favourably for both national and international collaborations to establish wind power stations that could provide electricity to its populace. Renewable energy resources in the State exhibit wind speeds of 2 to 4m/s at a height of 10m, a range suitable for wind energy construction. Benue is among the states with such potential, and the government should collaborate with relevant agencies to establish wind turbines in the State.
- Geothermal energy is another promising resource. It is produced and stored in the Earth's crust from radioactive decay and the continual heat loss from the Earth's formation. Geothermal power is a renewable, environmentally friendly energy source primarily reliant on the internal heat of the Earth. Geothermal sources are present in the Benue Trough, and

the State is fortunate to be blessed with these extensive geothermal assets, which the government could harness. The Benue Trough is large, and the government could collaborate with other states in the region to tap into these resources and generate electricity that could serve both the region and the national grid. The prevailing power crisis in the State could be addressed through geothermal power, which could also serve as a future source of energy if properly exploited..

9.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

9.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the power and renewable energy sub-sector is to ensure a reliable, efficient, and sustainable electricity supply to power economic growth, social development, and improve the quality of life for all citizens in Benue State.

The medium-term objectives include the following;

- To establish an electricity law and market for Benue State.
- To increase access to electricity to 90% of the population by connecting a minimum of 150,000 new households in the next five years.
- To generate at least 40% of electricity from renewable sources by 2029.
- To establish solar farms and rooftop solar installations to boost energy availability.
- To use the River Katsina-Ala and the Benue River as sources of hydropower to supply electricity to rural communities.
- To use agricultural residues and waste as a source of biomass energy.
- To extend the grid and deploy off-grid solutions to rural areas to improve

living standards, boost agricultural productivity, and reduce rural-urban migration.

- To implement community-based energy projects to empower local populations and ensure a sustainable energy supply.

9.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- Increase access to electricity among the population by connecting a minimum of 30,000 new households per year over the next five years.
- Establish solar farms and hydropower technologies to boost energy availability, achieving 90% access by 2029.
- Extend the grid and deploy off-grid solutions to rural areas to improve living standards by 90%, boost agricultural productivity, and reduce rural-urban migration.
- Organise stakeholders and town hall meetings on the establishment of the Benue State electricity market agency.

9.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

9.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- Power generation, distribution, and management to meet the energy needs of residents and support economic activities in the State.
- Enhance connectivity, promote accessibility, and contribute to overall socio-economic development in the State.
- Ensure equitable and efficient service delivery in power installations, generation, and distribution, and transmit power to every community in the State.

9.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

9.6.1 Programmes and Projects for Medium-Term Plan 2025-2029

The proposed programmes and projects are designed to achieve SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) in the State. Key initiatives include:

- Construction of a 60 MW hydroelectric power plant at River Katsina-Ala.
- Construction of solar power plants with capacities of 30 MW in Makurdi, 20 MW in Gboko, and 20 MW in Otukpo.
- Extension of the power distribution network covering 70 km in Zone A, 90 km in Zone B, and 70 km in Zone C.
- Extension and upgrading of the power distribution network spanning 25 km in Makurdi.
- Construction of briquetting plants for energy generation in Zone A, Zone B, Zone C, and Makurdi.
- Provision of solar home systems for 15,000 households in Zone A, 20,000 households in Zone B, and 15,000 households in Zone C.
- Installation of 6,000 integrated solar streetlights across the State.

9.6.2 Indicative Cost

To realise the objectives of the power and renewable energy sub-sector, the estimated public investment for the period 2025-2029 is N344.4 billion. This investment is anticipated to enhance the State's infrastructural development and stimulate increased private sector involvement, both domestic and foreign. By fostering a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework, this initiative will position the State as a hub for

infrastructural growth.

9.7 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the listed specific objectives are presented in the matrix on Table 9.3. Specifically, within the next five years, the State electricity law and market should be operational. At least 150,000 new households should gain access to electricity in the same period. By 2029, a minimum of 40% of electricity generation in the State should be derived from renewable energy sources. Solar farms should have been established across the three senatorial zones in the State. By 2029, functional hydropower plants utilising the River Katsina-Ala and the River Benue should be operational to

enhance the electricity supply. Biomass should also be utilised as an energy source, leveraging agricultural residues and waste to complement other energy sources. The adoption of grid and off-grid solutions is expected to improve living standards, boost agricultural productivity, and reduce rural-urban migration by 2029. The sub-sector should have ensured the implementation of community-based energy projects to power local populations and deliver a sustainable energy supply. Also, by 2029, it is projected that these initiatives will result in an increase in overall economic activity in the State, driving development and improving livelihoods.

Table 9.3: Power and Renewable Energy Sector-Level Result Framework

SDG	OUTCOME	KPI	BASELINE	TARGET				
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
GOAL 7: By 2030, there should be affordable and clean energy.	Affordable and clean energy by majority of citizens of the State	Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.	20%	25%	30%	35%	55%	60%
GOAL 9: By 2030, provision of Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure.	Build a resilient Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure in the State	Adequate availability of Innovation and Infrastructure development	30%	35%	45%	55%	60%	65%
GOAL 11: By 2030, there should be sustainable cities and communities in the State	Build a sustainable cities and communities	Ensuring Sustainable Cities and Communities	30%	33%	38%	43%	50%	60%
GOAL 12: By 2030, there should be a responsible consumption and production within the State	Responsible Consumption and Production by all citizens in the State	Ensuring a sustainable consumption and production patterns.	15%	20%	25%	30%	40%	55%



10.0 Introduction

The transportation sector is crucial to economic development and the general wellbeing of society. It serves as a growth enabler with a high catalytic effect on nearly all sectors of the economy and human endeavour, while also being a major source of employment. A safe, reliable, affordable, convenient, and efficient transport system is central to preventing exclusion and unlocking the full social and economic potential of citizens in the State. The sector encompasses transport infrastructure assets and services that facilitate the seamless movement of people and goods, covering road, rail, and water transport infrastructure assets and services.

10.1 Institutional Setting

The mandate of developing the transportation sector of Benue State is shared by multiple MDAs. The Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development has the core mandate of developing transportation infrastructure in Benue State. It is responsible for the construction and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and public buildings, while the Bureau for Infrastructure and Special Projects

provides specialised project management services. The Ministry of Power, Renewable Energy and Transport has the mandate of delivering convenient, safe, and affordable transportation of people and goods for the economic development of the State. The Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperatives also has the responsibility of developing rural transportation infrastructure and services, while Benue Links Nigeria Limited manages public transportation services. The Vehicle Inspection Officers (VIO) are responsible for conducting thorough inspections of vehicles to ensure safety and compliance with environmental standards.

The general and specific roles and responsibilities of the MDAs in the transportation sector are as follows:

- Formulation and implementation of transport policies that align with national standards and cater to the specific needs of Benue State;
- Construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of roads, bridges, and flyovers;
- Provision of transportation services using mass transit and other

- modes of transportation;
- Regulation and enforcement of transport laws to ensure safety, efficiency, and compliance with environmental standards; and
- Implementation of measures to improve traffic management and enhance road safety for all users.

10.2 Sector Performance

In the last five years, there have been significant developments in the transportation sector that have contributed to GDP growth, job creation, and poverty reduction in Benue State. Road transport infrastructure has generally improved, facilitating the free flow of vehicles. Contracts for the construction of 337.89 km of roads were awarded between 2019 and 2023, of which 85.79 km were designated as urban (township) roads, while 252.10 km were rural roads. Within this period, 53.69 km of urban roads (63%) were completed, but no rural roads were completed. The urban roads completed included 6.5 km within Gboko township, 1.79 km in Otukpo, and 3.5 km in Vandeikya. Additionally, the completion of the Keffi-Lafia-Makurdi dual carriageway by the Federal Government significantly enhanced transport connectivity, particularly by linking the State to the Federal Capital Territory. This improvement has facilitated more productive economic activities and enhanced access to essential services.

In the area of public transport services, 100 buses and other public transport vehicles were procured to expand the state-owned fleet. Efforts were also made to develop modern bus terminals and transit hubs to improve the efficiency and comfort of public transport services. A number of projects were implemented to enhance traffic management systems. These included the installation of traffic lights,

signage, and road markings to improve traffic flow and safety. For instance, 2.5 billion was allocated for the procurement of the new buses and traffic management projects, demonstrating the State's commitment to modernising its transport systems.

10.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

Transportation infrastructure and services are critical to harnessing the potential associated with Benue State's strategic location and its significance as the "food basket" of the country.

10.3.1 Strength

- Strategic Location: Benue State is strategically situated in central Nigeria, connecting the northern region and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) with the southeast and south-south regions. Enhancing transportation connectivity will stimulate economic activities, particularly by enabling the efficient movement of agricultural produce and other goods across the country.
- Trans-National Road Network: The State is linked to other regions via federal roads, including dual carriageway connections to the FCT (through Lafia and Akwanga) and further extending to the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano axis and beyond. The ongoing completion of the Makurdi-Enugu dual carriageway is expected to enhance connectivity and foster economic growth. The State can capitalise on this network to expand and integrate its intra-State road infrastructure and public transport systems.
- Strategic Alignment: The current political leadership places high importance on infrastructure development, with a particular focus on transportation. This creates a

favourable environment for the completion of priority projects and the effective implementation of supportive policies. The Bureau for Infrastructure and Special Projects is poised to play a pivotal role in achieving these objectives.

- **Skilled Workforce:** Benue State boasts a pool of skilled professionals and semi-skilled workers essential for the construction, maintenance, and operation of transportation assets and services.
- **Availability of Raw Materials:** The State has an abundance of raw materials necessary for road construction and maintenance, including laterite, gravel, and limestone. This reduces reliance on imported materials, potentially saving an estimated 1.2 billion annually on construction projects.
- **Regulations and Standards:** The implementation of stringent safety and efficiency standards ensures the development of reliable and sustainable transportation systems.

10.3.2 Weaknesses

- **Public financial management deficits:** Risks associated with public financial management range from inefficient allocation of resources to lapses in procurement.
- **Work attitude:** Bureaucratic bottlenecks and inefficiencies in the public service may affect the cost and delivery of priority projects.
- **Weak enforcement:** Inadequate enforcement of standards and regulations undermines safety and erodes public trust.

10.3.3 Threats

- **Tight fiscal space:** The fiscal space remains relatively constrained and may affect the State's ability to

sufficiently fund large-scale projects and their maintenance.

- **Maintenance culture:** The current maintenance culture and practices are inadequate to preserve the quality of existing road infrastructure assets and the longevity of new assets.
- **Insecurity:** Inaccessibility of some rural communities due to violent conflicts may hinder the delivery and utilisation of priority projects.

10.3.4 Opportunities

- **Inland waterway transportation:** The River Benue and its tributaries offer significant opportunities for expanding inland transportation.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):** The political leadership's demonstrable commitment to private sector-friendly policies can attract PPP investments in the transportation sector.
- **Urbanisation:** Expanding urban areas will drive increased demand for improved transport services.
- **Green initiatives:** Growing emphasis on sustainable and eco-friendly transport solutions offers opportunities for innovative projects.

10.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

10.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

Developing, expanding, and modernising transportation infrastructure and services are the top priorities of the Benue State Government. The broad objective of the transport sector during the medium-term plan from 2025-2029 is to develop a safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation system that will support economic growth, social development, and environmental protection in Benue State. The specific objectives of the sector are to:

- enhance transportation infrastructure by constructing and rehabilitating

- roads, river ports, and a cargo airport;
- increase the fleet size and improve the quality of public transport vehicles;
- increase road safety awareness among citizens to reduce road accidents;
- improve transportation efficiency and reduce travel time; and
- enhance accessibility to transportation services for persons with disabilities and special needs.

10.4.2 Medium Term Targets

The key implementation targets for the transportation sector are:

- Construction and rehabilitation of 905 km of roads within the three senatorial zones over the next five years;
- Construction of three ports along the River Benue;
- Construction of three pedestrian bridges designed to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- Construction of a multipurpose cargo airport to enhance agricultural exports;
- Increasing the fleet for mass transit with 100 new buses;
- Reducing road accidents by 30%; and
- Reducing travel time by 20%.

10.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

10.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

The State will adopt strategies to ensure the timely delivery of priority projects and improvement in service delivery in the sector. The strategies to be adopted include:

a) Road Network Expansion and Rehabilitation

- Constructing new roads and upgrading existing ones to improve connectivity within the State and to neighbouring States.

- Prioritising the maintenance of critical road infrastructure to ensure safety and reliability.
- Developing urban infrastructure with a focus on constructing flyovers, pedestrian bridges, roundabouts, and installing lighting and traffic control systems.
- Developing modern bus terminals/parks and transit hubs to improve the efficiency and comfort of public transport services.
- Implementing traffic control measures for effective traffic management and safety.
- Adopting long-term infrastructure planning.

b) Rail Transport Revitalisation

- Working with the National Railway Corporation to increase investment in the rehabilitation and expansion of the rail network to enhance freight and passenger transport.
- Promoting rail transport as a cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative to road transport.

c) Inland Water Transport Development

- Developing ports and jetties along the River Benue for commercial and passenger transport.
- Enforcing safety regulations and standards in the operation of inland water transportation.

d) Airport Transportation Development

- Constructing a cargo airport to enable more efficient transport of agricultural produce/products and other goods and passengers to and from the State.
- Facilitating the provision of aviation logistical services by the private sector.

e) Others

- Developing the capacity of relevant MDAs in PPP management to increase

- private investments in the sector.
- Utilising smart transport technologies for traffic management, route optimisation, and real-time information systems.
- Implementing electronic ticketing and payment systems to streamline public transport services and enhance revenue generation.
- Encouraging the use of environmentally friendly transport options and practices.
- Supporting the Federal Government's CNG initiative to provide a more cost-effective and environmentally friendly transport fuel.

10.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

10.6.1 Programmes and Projects for Medium-Term Plan 2025-2029

The State will focus on delivering the following priority project portfolios during the period 2025-2029, in alignment with SDG 11 (making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), and SDG 9 (building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and fostering innovation):

- Construction of 905 km of urban and rural roads across 23 LGAs;
- Construction of two interchanges (underpasses) in Makurdi and Gboko;
- Construction of pedestrian bridges with facilities for persons with disabilities and special needs;
- Construction of three river ports;
- Construction of a cargo airport;
- Construction of a modern bus terminal and transit hub in Makurdi;
- Construction of an ultra-modern park in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT);

- Construction of a computerised vehicle inspection centre in Makurdi;
- Installation of 20 traffic control systems in Makurdi, Otukpo, and Gboko; and
- Provision of 150 buses for mass transit.

10.6.2 Indicative Cost

The estimated investment required in the transportation sub-sector for the period 2025-2029 is 266,550,000,000.00. This substantial investment in the sub-sector cannot be achieved by the government alone without collaboration and partnership with the private sector. Therefore, to stimulate investment in the sub-sector, it is expected that there will be public-private partnerships to ensure effective investment in the sub-sector and successfully deliver the government's priority projects for the State.

10.7 Expected Outcomes

The broad expected results from the listed high-level objectives are shown in the matrix in Table 10.1. Specifically, the provision of roads linking major rural areas in the State will enable farmers to transport food products to the markets, thereby reducing post-harvest loss from approximately 50% to 15%. The provision of urban roads in Makurdi and other major towns in the State will facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services, enhancing economic activities and man-hour efficiency by over 70%. This will also reduce transportation costs within the inland waterways and improve commercial activities. Additionally, modern means of road accessibility will be provided for people with disabilities, while air transportation will be enhanced, supporting the exportation of agricultural produce.



Table 10.1: Transportation Sector-Level Result Framework

SDG	OUTCOME	KPI	BASELINE	TARGET				
				2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
GOAL 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Sustainable transport systems for all.	25%	30%	40%	48%	55%	60%
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.	Improving transport infrastructure and creating jobs.	20%	27%	37%	45%	50%	55%
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being.	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages.	Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages (especially people with disabilities by 3 pedestrian bridges).	30%	35%	45%	50%	55%	60%
GOAL 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.	Improved road networks for easy transportation of people and agricultural products to the markets to reduce post-harvest losses.	Construction 600 km of roads in urban and rural areas. Economic viability of the State through easy movement of agricultural products.	30%	35%	45%	55%	60%	65%

Communication and Digital Economy

Chapter 11

Governor Alia Benue Digital Revolution

His Excellency, Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormen Alia
Executive Governor of Benue State

HAS APPROVED SUPPORT FOR 5,000 BENUE YOUTH TO ADVANCE DIGITAL TECH STARTUPS IN BENUE.

Additionally, the Benue State Government will feature a pavilion at GITEX Global Dubai 2025, providing a platform to showcase their brands on the global stage.

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Enquiry: info@bdic.ng

11.0 Introduction

The increasing wave of digitisation in governance and its role in facilitating socioeconomic development has led to the creation of the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy, which was a Department in the Ministry of Science and Technology until 2023. The ministry's strategic importance in governance, the economy, and sundry services includes: deepening communication and digital activities, leading to transparency, accountability, and efficiency in government operations; driving economic development through digital entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation; promoting inclusivity and productivity of institutions, markets, and opportunities for digital literacy and skills

development through access to learning platforms, which contribute to effectiveness in governance at the local, State, and national levels; ensuring State security, surveillance, cybersecurity, and defence; facilitating communication, workflow, and service delivery among MDAs, as well as public-private initiatives; and formulating, regulating, and monitoring telecommunication and ICT services in the State, among others.

The State's emerging communication and digital economy has the capacity to boost economic growth and transform Benue State into a leading digital economy that will provide a high quality of life, digital innovation and entrepreneurship, and create wealth and prosperity for its

citizens. The digital sub-sector was worth about \$11.5 trillion (15.5 per cent of global GDP) and may exceed 25 per cent of GDP by 2026 (World Bank, 2023). The phenomenal growth at the national level of 12.9 per cent in 2020 has provided a good opportunity for the State's emerging communication and digital economy to key into the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (2020-2030), the Nigerian National Broadband Plan (2020-2025), and the E-Government Masterplan.

11.1 Institutional Setting

The Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy is tasked with the responsibility of formulating and implementing policies governing the operations of ICT use, communication, and digital economy in Benue State. However, several agencies collaborate for the effective implementation of ICT and digital economy policies within the State and at the federal level. These agencies include the Benue Digital Infrastructure Company (BDIC) and the Benue State Integrated Intelligence Security Management Information System (BIISMIS). Together with the State Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy, international partners, and the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy, they govern the digital space in Benue State.

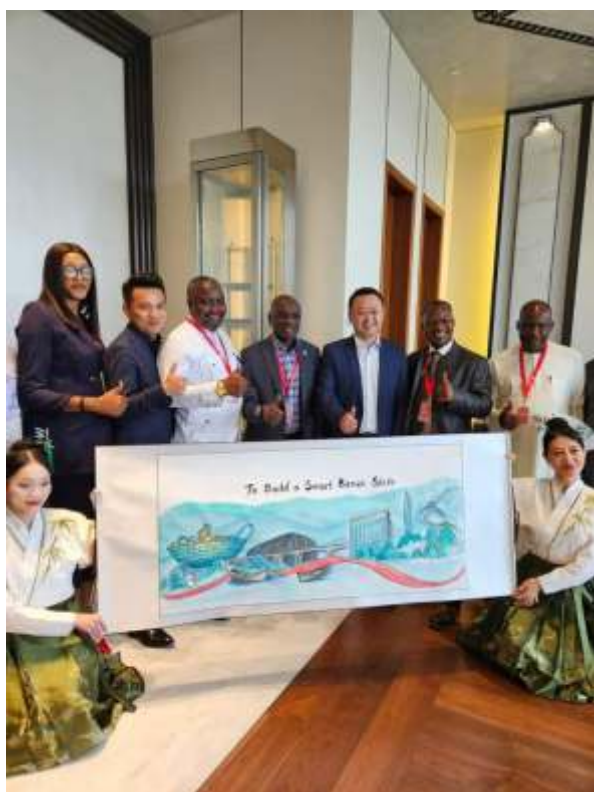
The Government has demonstrated its commitment to achieving digital transformation in the State through the domestication of the National Digital Economy Plan Strategy (NDEPS), signing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) in a bid to expand digital infrastructure, boost economic productivity, enhance competitiveness, and create sustainable economic growth. An enforcement agency called the Benue State Digital Infrastructure Services Management

Enforcement Agency (BENDISMEA) has also been established to regulate ICT use and aggregate BDIC services for implementation across all MDAs. Additionally, the State Digital Infrastructure Company Implementation Committee has been inaugurated for the establishment, funding, and management of the Benue State Infrastructure Company.

The State Government has also approved the recruitment of 253 digitally inclined staff to support the Benue State Digital Infrastructure Services Management Enforcement Agency. Other initiatives include the acquisition of a state-owned Payment Solution Service Provider (PSSP) licence with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to handle all State revenue and payment processing, including payroll, BIRS collections, and State POS, thereby eliminating the need for third-party services in revenue collection.

11.2 Sector Performance, 2020 - 2024

The contributions of the ministry to the ICT and digital sector are manifold. Among these contributions are: skills training for 10,000 youths in the State; training of civil servants for effective service delivery; establishment of ICT parastatals such as BDIC and BIISMIS to drive the provision of digital infrastructure and inclusion in the State; revenue generation through the deployment and operation of Computer-Based Centres (CBTs), digital hubs, and boot camps; and the deployment of e-government solutions in MDAs. The ICT council was also constituted and inaugurated as an advisory body for the development, deployment, and general use of ICT in the State, while providing e-learning to improve ICT adoption, foster a knowledge economy, and promote



human capital development and youth empowerment.

11.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

11.3.1 Strength

Benue State has several professionals in the ICT and digital space, equipped with contemporary digital skills and tools for training and manpower development in the civil service, private sector, digital education, and entrepreneurial development in the State. The yearly allocations to the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy provide the financial backing for personnel costs, overheads, as well as ICT and digital infrastructure in the State. With strategic partnerships with stakeholders and ICT giants such as Google and Galaxy Backbone Ltd, as well as the creation of BDIC and BIISMIS to fast-track the implementation of the National Digital Economy Plan Strategy, the State is well-positioned for digital advancement. The Digital Economy Plan

Strategy will ensure the deployment of fibre optics and radio internet connectivity in the State, as well as the introduction of robotics, artificial intelligence, and technology transfer hubs in Local Government Areas (LGAs), among other initiatives.

11.3.2 Key Challenges

Some of the key challenges of ICT and digital development in the State include:

- Inadequate electricity supply and computer systems, which have limited digital operations in the State and contribute to exclusion, especially in rural communities and schools. This has limited the adoption of requisite ICTs for teaching / learning and professional development.
- Inadequate office accommodation, which constitutes an infrastructural deficit affecting the deployment of ICT equipment and computers required for effective service delivery within the digital space.
- Inadequate provision of official vehicles to facilitate monitoring and supervisory roles of agencies. This has limited the regulation of private ICT/digital operators in the State.
- Poor ICT adaptation, coupled with inadequate staff training in MDAs, which affects the integration of relevant ICTs for work and service delivery. The civil service is replete with employees with obsolete and redundant skills, who may not align with the innovations in the digitaleconomy.
- Until recently, the need for the deployment of fibre optics for seamless e-digital operations did not receive the required attention. There has been inadequate

provision of facilities for internet services and a lack of connectivity among MDAs, which affects the e-governance agenda of the State.

- The e-governance platform remains underdeveloped and lacks the capacity to drive digitisation of MDAs in the State.

11.3.3 Threats

- The unprecedented rise in the prices of imported goods has dealt a blow to the digital transformation agenda of the State. ICT equipment and computers are imported into the country, and the cost of this equipment limits access to computers and digital operations by individuals, schools, private organisations, and MDAs.
- There is also a lack of political will to drive the full digitisation of the civil service, schools, and parastatals in the State. Through appropriate legislation, strategic partnerships, and the appropriation of funds, the State can fast-track its digital agenda of inclusion in the digital space.
- Theft and inadequate security of ICT equipment constitute a threat

to digital transformation in Benue State. The cost of replacing stolen equipment is high and leads to delays and inefficiency in digital service delivery.

- Environmental factors, such as windstorms, flooding, and heavy rainfall, have posed a threat to ICT infrastructure in the State. Masts are often destroyed by these environmental disasters. Additionally, there is disruption of quality internet services arising from KU-band networks, which are susceptible to rainfall and other environmental factors. Only fibre optics cables (which are yet to be deployed) are not susceptible to environmental/electromagnetic interferences.

11.3.4 Opportunities

Despite the numerous challenges, the State has many opportunities to fast-track its digital transformation agenda. With a teeming population of over 5.7 million people (NBS, 2016), the State has the capacity for sufficient manpower development in the ICT and digital sector. It is further reported that less than 10 per



cent of its youth population are certified IT professionals, while only about 8 per cent have knowledge of specialised software packages within the North-Central zone where it belongs (NBS, 2020). This implies the availability of an untapped market for the ICT and digital sector and the need for investment in the sector.

Opportunities also exist for the training of these masses of people lacking requisite ICT/digital skill sets through the integration of certified ICT professionals into the State's digital transformation plan and strategic partnerships with ICT giants, which the State is currently



pursuing. This has the potential to increase digital literacy among young people in the State and position the State strategically to optimise the abundant opportunities in the global digital market. This feat is achievable, especially with the recent establishment of the Benue Digital Infrastructure Company (BDIC), the Benue State Integrated Intelligence Security Management Information System (BIISMIS), and the Digital Infrastructure Services Management Enforcement Agency (BENDISMEA).

11.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

11.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the communication and digital sector is to transform Benue into a digitally inclusive, innovative, and connected society where technology drives economic growth, improves the quality of life, and enhances the efficient delivery of government services.

The medium-term objectives include the following:

- Build partnerships and investments that stimulate the ICT knowledge economy.
- Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth through job creation.
- Unify all ICT policy administrators under the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy.
- Facilitate the development of an appropriate legal framework for effectively implementing ICT policies.
- Promote universal access to high-quality and advanced information and communication technologies and services.
- Develop and enhance indigenous capacity in ICTs and software development.

11.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- Increase internet penetration to 80% of the population by 2029.
- Ensure 50% of citizens have basic digital literacy skills by 2029.
- Establish robust and secure ICT infrastructure covering 90% of the State by 2029.
- Increase broadband penetration to 50% of the population by 2029.
- Implement e-governance platforms for 80% of government

services by 2029.

- Ensure online availability of 90% of government services by 2029.
- Increase the contribution of the digital economy to 20% of GDP by 2029.
- Support the growth of 1,000 digital stars by 2029.
- Establish a cybersecurity framework to protect 90% of ICT infrastructure by 2029.
- Reduce cybercrime incidence by 50% by 2029.

11.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

11.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

Accelerate digital transformation in MDAs to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery in the State.

Collaborate with all MDAs and the private sector in digital infrastructure provision and services in the ICT

sector.

- Collaborate with the Benue State University Teaching Hospital on e-health services and general use of ICT tools in the medical profession.
- Partner with agencies (both international and local) in ICT to create an enabling environment for digital transformation.
- Harness technology for the benefit of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA).
- Partner financially with the Bank of Industry and non-governmental organisations to create digital hubs in LGAs to foster inclusion and socioeconomic development.
- Develop ICT education and training through the establishment of ICT laboratories in primary and secondary schools.



11.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

11.6.1 Programmes and Projects

Development of E-Governance Platform

The Ministry intends to develop the e-governance platform within the medium-term framework by deploying software in all MDAs, an office website for government interaction with the people in the three geopolitical zones, and to digitise the use of files in all MDAs. This will be done so that the Ministry can improve efficiency and productivity in staff. It is expected that 50% will be achieved between 2025 and 2029.

Digital Literacy Initiatives and Training Programs

The Ministry is aware of the ICT knowledge among civil servants and the high unemployment rate, especially among youths. It intends to initiate digital literacy initiatives and training programs for civil servants and private individuals, including the vulnerable members of society. The aim is to improve and increase ICT knowledge in the State by enhancing internet connectivity across all the LGAs. This will increase the efficiency of civil servants and the employability of citizens. The baseline set for this is 50%, but the Ministry intends to achieve a 25% improvement from 2025 to 2029. This is because the State currently lacks a well-developed digital network, and the Ministry needs to improve ICT infrastructure in the 23 local government areas of the State. The intention is to achieve widespread and high-speed internet and network connectivity. The medium-term target is 50% between 2025 and 2029.

Development of ICT Infrastructure

The level of insecurity from border areas or herders has been a source of concern for

the State and the Federal Government. The Ministry intends to improve the development of ICT infrastructure in the medium term, as the State currently lacks a developed internet security network in the local government areas. However, the Ministry plans to deploy security networks in 9 local government areas of the State by collaborating with the military to provide drones and other equipment. The target set for this is 40%.

Installation of Automated Payroll and Biometric System

To ensure transparency and efficiency of staff, the ministry will install automated payroll processing and biometrics in all MDAs.

Creation of Innovation Hubs

With the decline in the contribution of agriculture and the high level of unemployment in the State, the Ministry intends to increase job creation and income generation by establishing innovation hubs, start-ups, and entrepreneur support centres. This will help enhance the growth and development of the State, with an estimated 10% contribution to economic growth.

Expansion of Broadband and Collaboration

The State intends to collaborate with the Federal Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy to increase the broadband expansion rate in the senatorial zones. The baseline for broadband achievement is 50%. However, the target set by the Ministry is 20%, taking into account the current rate of broadband penetration in the State.

Provision of Legal Framework



ICT policy is necessary for the ministry to achieve its mandate and hence the need to provide a legal framework to unlock its potentials and ensure growth and development. The ministry intends to key into the national development plan of the federal government to have a solid framework. The ministry wishes to achieve 50% by the end of the medium-term framework.

11.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the goals outlined for the communication and digital economy sector, the estimated public investment is 54.896 billion for the period 2025-2029. As the sector undergoes reforms and restructuring, it is hoped that significant investment from the private sector will help drive the development of the sector.

11.7 Expected Outcomes

The broad outcomes expected from the various interventions and specific benefits derived from capital investments spread across the fifteen (15) projects to be implemented under seven (7) broad programmes are presented in the matrix in Table 11.1. Each of these programmes and projects has the potential to meaningfully contribute to ICT/digital sector objectives in the areas of improved e-governance, digitisation of MDAs for effective service delivery, affordable internet connectivity, and provision of internet infrastructure for 23 LGAs in the State, among others.

Table 11.1: Sector-Level Results Framework for Communication and Digital Economy

SDGs	Program	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
					2027	2029
GOAL 17: Enhance global macroeconomic stability Including through policy coordination and policy Coherence	Deployment of e-governance in all MDAs	1) improved efficiency and productivity in government services.	Numbers of government services available online.	0%	5%	10%
	Digital literacy initiatives and training program	Improved employability and digital literacy rate in the State.	Individuals trained and training coverage.	2%	10%	15%
Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. Build resilient infrastructure that promotes inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	ICT Infrastructure development Programs	Wide spread availability of high-speed internet and network connectivity across the State.	Internet subscribers and geographic areas covered	1%	5%	10%
	Digital security systems	Enhanced protection of property, lives, digital assets, data and infrastructure.	Response time to security incident and digital security incidents resolved.	0%	5%	10%
	Deployment of human managers technology for head count in all MDAs	Transparency in personal data and payroll management.	Accurate head count, payroll processing and biometrics	10%	20%	30%
	Innovation hubs, start-ups and entrepreneurs support programs	Increase economic growth, job creation and income generation.	Growth in GDP	0%	2%	5%
Goal: Decent work and Economic Growth that enhances policy coherence for sustainable development.	Broadband Expansion	Average internet speed and quality of service.	Increase in internet connectivity	0%	5%	10%
	ICT policy development	Govern the development, implementation and use of ICT	Alignment with nation development goals and global best practices.	0%	5%	10%

Cooperatives and Rural Development

Chapter 12

12.0 Introduction

Benue State, being an agrarian state, has pursued its rural development agenda using agriculture and community mobilisation to achieve the goals of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development. The ministry has the mandate to initiate, implement, manage, and sustain development programmes in rural communities, especially in the key areas of infrastructure, economic empowerment, and human capacity building. It works in collaboration with other relevant ministries to actualise this mandate. Apart from providing key infrastructure, the ministry also develops rural areas through community development projects to improve the lives of rural dwellers. The empowerment of the people of Benue State through the establishment of cooperative societies, enabling them to engage in life-changing activities to improve their living standards, is another key mandate of the ministry.

The ministry also ensures the provision and development of rural roads to rural communities, provision, supervision, and maintenance of electrification projects in rural areas, and the design, planning, and execution of water maintenance schemes in rural areas, with the aim of alleviating suffering and increasing access to basic needs to promote socioeconomic development in rural communities.

The ministry has the capacity to reduce poverty in the state and create access to basic necessities of life through the development of infrastructure and the provision of social amenities in the suburbs.

Furthermore, the development of rural communities will stem rural-urban migration, which will reinforce the development of the agricultural sector and ensure an adequate supply of raw materials to the urban areas of the state. This will lead to job creation, boost the State Gross Product (SGP) exponentially, and spark massive socioeconomic development.

12.1 Institutional Setting

The Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development is responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes on cooperatives, rural and community development, coordination and regulation of cooperative societies' activities, formation and supervision of community development-based organisations and associations. The ministry also collaborates with national and international organisations responsible for community development activities.

Other departments and units under the ministry include: Administration and Finance, Planning, Research and Statistics, Cooperatives, Rural Roads, Rural Electrification, and Community Development. These units, together with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and other development partners, work together to ensure rural development in the state. The Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development also partners with government agencies like the Community and Social Development Agency and Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (BNARDA) to coordinate and drive activities in the sector. Though past administrations have always

demonstrated the desire to pursue an aggressive rural transformation agenda, this has remained elusive, with much of the progress hardly achieved, leaving communities in their deprived state.

12.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

In Benue State, the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development has contributed significantly to the state's growth and development in the following ways:

- Food security: In Benue State, rural communities are the activity hubs in agriculture, producing crops like rice, yams, and cassava, etc., feeding not only the state but the entire nation. By providing rural infrastructures, the food security of the state is enhanced.
- Job creation: Rural development activities have created jobs, especially in agricultural processing establishments and other industries.
- Poverty reduction: Rural development activities have helped alleviate poverty in the state through various skills acquisition programmes, providing income-earning opportunities.
- Economic growth: The activities of the ministry in rural communities have contributed to Benue State's economy through agriculture, commerce, and natural resources.
- Environmental conservation: The

ministry's rural development efforts have promoted sustainable land use practices, conserving natural resources and mitigating climate change through community engagement with agricultural extension and community development officials.

- Infrastructure development: This has been achieved through the provision of rural roads, bridges/culverts, and communication networks.
- Reduced rural-urban migration: By providing opportunities and improving living standards, there has been a significant reduction in the migration of young people from rural areas to city centres.

12.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

12.3.1 Strength

Benue State has a projected population of about six million people, with over 60% falling within the working population, which constitutes a strong labour force to drive the productive sector, especially agriculture and primary production. The ministry can harness this resource to increase productivity and job creation, particularly in agro-allied industries. This will lead to food security, competitiveness, and facilitate economic growth and development in the state.



Due to the abundant labour force in rural communities, volunteers often make themselves available to help achieve community self-help projects such as community roads, bridges, or culverts. This labour, in some cases, serves as a counterpart contribution in carrying out projects financed by development partners. Benue State, with a land area of over 30,000 square kilometres, is well-suited for agricultural projects. It is largely a rural state with a relatively low cost of living, which encourages immigrants from other states, thereby increasing the size of local markets.

12.3.2 Key Challenges

Some of the major challenges to rural development in the state include:

- Low income of rural dwellers: This is a significant impediment, especially in carrying out capital-intensive agricultural projects with the potential to improve livelihoods. It denies people access to basic needs essential for their functioning.
- Lack of electricity: In many rural communities, inadequate or no access to electricity is a limitation to development. This discourages the proliferation of cottage industries or agro-allied industries in the state.
- Inadequate infrastructure: The lack of roads, bridges, etc., impedes access to farmland and the transportation of farm produce to commercial centres, where they have good market value.
- Low government funding: Government funding for rural projects has been insufficient, and in some cases non-existent, leaving inadequate funds for the implementation of cooperative activities.
- Inadequate health facilities: Rural communities suffer from a lack of health infrastructure. Most hospitals and health centres are dilapidated, reducing access to quality healthcare and impacting



workforce productivity. There is also a shortage of qualified medical personnel, further exacerbating the situation.

- Inadequate community mobilisation and agricultural extension workers: This limits access to extension services in rural areas, reducing productivity.
- Low literacy and cooperative education: This impedes the smooth functioning of cooperative societies and the effectiveness of government policies and programmes in the state.

12.3.3 Threats

- Insecurity: Insecurity constitutes a major threat to rural development in Benue State. The most prominent form of insecurity is the herders-farmers conflict, which has displaced over 20% of rural residents who now take refuge in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. This situation has had adverse effects on the social functioning of rural dwellers, who are now subjected to poor socioeconomic conditions in IDP camps. Other threats to rural development include banditry, communal wars, cultism, and kidnapping.
- Climate change: Climate change has also negatively impacted the development of rural communities. The consequences are devastating, including flooding, erosion, soil infertility, reduced agricultural yields,

soil biodiversity loss, and landslides.

- Political instability: Political instability and interference have heightened conflicts in the state, leading to violence, protests, marginalisation, the proliferation of light arms, and cultism.
- Lack of early warning systems: The absence of early warning systems for natural disasters poses a threat to lives and property, worsening socioeconomic conditions in rural areas. Additionally, the lack of emergency response centres for natural disasters is a serious threat to rural communities.
- Economic policy uncertainties: Economic policy uncertainties at the state and national levels threaten socioeconomic development in rural communities. Volatility in exchange rates, inflation, and interest rates reduces people's purchasing power and increases the cost of living, leading to deprivation and exclusion from social amenities.

12.3.4 Opportunities

Despite the challenges, the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development offers several opportunities for rural transformation and socioeconomic development. Continuous provision of rural infrastructure such as good roads and hospitals will promote public safety, environmental protection, and economic growth in Benue State. Partnerships with the private sector can also boost rural

infrastructure development, create market expansion, and create jobs in rural areas, thus accelerating domestic production and economic development.

Opportunities also exist for expanding markets for farm products both nationally and internationally, especially if the Benue State-Cameroon border from Jato-Aka through Wanyiasse to Imande Ukusu is developed. Rehabilitation of health centres and public offices will increase access to public services and improve the standard of living for rural dwellers in Benue State.

12.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

12.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the Benue State policy on Rural Development revolves around improving the quality of life for rural people, alleviating rural poverty, and using rural development to contribute to laying a strong foundation for the development of Benue State. The medium-term objectives include:

- Opening up rural roads
- Promoting the construction of bridges and culverts
- Provision of electricity in rural and urban areas
- Promoting the mobilisation and registration of community development associations and cooperative societies
- Liaising with other MDAs towards providing rural infrastructure for



socio-economic growth

- Reducing rural poverty for the enhanced well-being of rural dwellers
- Liaising with the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), NGOs, donor agencies, and international organisations to achieve the goals and objectives of the State in rural development
- Encouraging and providing rural areas with required infrastructure and modern facilities to discourage rural-urban migration
- Sensitising local communities to mobilise resources to carry out self-help projects in their areas, such as building culverts, bridges, and rural electrification
- Supporting entrepreneurship development

12.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- To construct 2,300 km of rural roads in rural communities in Benue State within the next five years
- Electrification of four rural communities in each of the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Benue State to enhance agro-processing and industrialisation between now and 2029
- To build the capacity of 1,000 cooperative groups in Benue State by 2029
- To empower 1,000 cooperative groups through the provision of loans and grants by 2029
- To build the capacity of 1,200 Community Development Associations (CDAs) in Benue State in the next five years
- To sensitise rural communities to form Community Development Associations to enable them to obtain loans and grants between now and 2029

12.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

12.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the

objectives, 2025-2029

- Provision of rural infrastructure, such as electrification, construction of access roads, hospitals, health centres, and schools, to facilitate access and improved socio-economic development in every part of the State
- Sensitisation of rural communities to form cooperatives and development associations, emphasising the benefits of self-help groups and support in rural development
- Building strong synergies between the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development and other relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies in developing rural communities in Benue State
- Exploring opportunities to collaborate with donor agencies, international organisations, the FGN, and MDAs to sponsor rural development programmes in the State
- Supporting entrepreneurial development and discouraging rural-urban migration in the State

12.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

12.6.1 Programmes and Projects 2025-2029 Provision of Infrastructure in Rural Communities

In a bid to facilitate rural development and access to basic infrastructure and social amenities, the State will embark on the construction of feeder roads, bridges, and culverts, as well as electrification of rural communities. These projects will bring about massive development in the rural areas by linking them to urban centres, which will open up markets for agricultural produce and speed up cottage industries in the State.

Empowerment of Cooperative Groups



One of the ways to boost self-help and support among rural communities is to ensure the creation and effective functioning of cooperative groups. The capacities of members of the cooperative groups can be built through the provision of loans and grants to members. This will foster participation and cooperation in undertaking individual and community development projects among rural communities.

Sensitization of Development Associations
Closely related to cooperative societies are development associations. These associations comprise Community-Based Associations (CBAs), community initiatives, social institutions, and groups within the community. These associations focus on social inclusion, self-help, and community development. The Ministry can support the formalisation of these groups by creating awareness for registration of development associations, building capacities of existing community development associations, and providing grants and loans to these associations in the State.

12.6.2 Indicative Cost

To fast-track the attainment of the goals outlined for the cooperatives and rural development sector, the estimated public investment is 127.852 billion for the period 2025-2029. As the government repositions the sector and implements strategies to create market expansion through rural-urban linkages and foster public-private sector partnerships for rural transformation, it is expected that rural development will receive a significant boost over the medium term.

12.7 Expected Outcomes

The broad outcomes expected from the various interventions and specific benefits derivable from capital investments spread across the six (6) projects to be implemented under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development are as follows. These broad programmes are presented in a matrix on Table 12.1. Each of these programmes and projects has the potential to meaningfully contribute to rural transformation, specifically in the areas of rural electrification, access roads, capacity-

building training, loans and grants to cooperative organisations and members, and the accelerated achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

12.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

In Benue State, the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development has contributed significantly to the state's growth and development in the following ways:

- Food security: In Benue State, rural communities are the activity hubs in agriculture, producing crops like rice, yams, and cassava, etc., feeding not only the state but the entire nation. By providing rural infrastructures, the food security of the state is enhanced.
- Job creation: Rural development activities have created jobs, especially in agricultural processing establishments and other industries.
- Poverty reduction: Rural development activities have helped alleviate poverty in the state through various skills acquisition programmes, providing income-earning opportunities.
- Economic growth: The activities of the ministry in rural communities have contributed to Benue State's economy through agriculture, commerce, and natural resources.
- Environmental conservation: The ministry's rural development efforts have promoted sustainable land use practices, conserving natural resources and mitigating climate change through community engagement with agricultural extension and community development officials.
- Infrastructure development: This has been achieved through the provision of rural roads, bridges/culverts, and communication networks.
- Reduced rural-urban migration: By

providing opportunities and improving living standards, there has been a significant reduction in the migration of young people from rural areas to city centres.

12.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

12.3.1 Strength

Benue State has a projected population of about six million people, with over 60% falling within the working population, which constitutes a strong labour force to drive the productive sector, especially agriculture and primary production. The ministry can harness this resource to increase productivity and job creation, particularly in agro-allied industries. This will lead to food security, competitiveness, and facilitate economic growth and development in the state.

Due to the abundant labour force in rural communities, volunteers often make themselves available to help achieve community self-help projects such as community roads, bridges, or culverts. This labour, in some cases, serves as a counterpart contribution in carrying out projects financed by development partners. Benue State, with a land area of over 30,000 square kilometres, is well-suited for agricultural projects. It is largely a rural state with a relatively low cost of living, which encourages immigrants from other states, thereby increasing the size of local markets.

12.3.2 Key Challenges

Some of the major challenges to rural development in the state include:

- Low income of rural dwellers: This is a significant impediment, especially in carrying out capital-intensive agricultural projects with the potential to improve livelihoods. It denies people access to basic needs essential for their functioning.

- Lack of electricity: In many rural communities, inadequate or no access to electricity is a limitation to development. This discourages the proliferation of cottage industries or agro-allied industries in the state.
- Inadequate infrastructure: The lack of roads, bridges, etc., impedes access to farmland and the transportation of farm produce to commercial centres, where they have good market value.
- Low government funding: Government funding for rural projects has been insufficient, and in some cases non-existent, leaving inadequate funds for the implementation of cooperative activities.
- Inadequate health facilities: Rural communities suffer from a lack of health infrastructure. Most hospitals and health centres are dilapidated, reducing access to quality healthcare and impacting workforce productivity. There is also a shortage of qualified medical personnel, further exacerbating the situation.
- Inadequate community mobilisation and agricultural extension workers: This limits access to extension services in rural areas, reducing productivity.
- Low literacy and cooperative education: This impedes the smooth functioning of cooperative societies and the effectiveness of government policies and programmes in the state.

12.3.3 Threats

- Insecurity: Insecurity constitutes a major threat to rural development in Benue State. The most prominent form of insecurity is the herders-farmers conflict, which has displaced over 20% of rural residents who now take refuge in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. This situation has had

adverse effects on the social functioning of rural dwellers, who are now subjected to poor socioeconomic conditions in IDP camps. Other threats to rural development include banditry, communal wars, cultism, and kidnapping.

- Climate change: Climate change has also negatively impacted the development of rural communities. The consequences are devastating, including flooding, erosion, soil infertility, reduced agricultural yields, soil biodiversity loss, and landslides.
- Political instability: Political instability and interference have heightened conflicts in the state, leading to violence, protests, marginalisation, the proliferation of light arms, and cultism.
- Lack of early warning systems: The absence of early warning systems for natural disasters poses a threat to lives and property, worsening socioeconomic conditions in rural areas. Additionally, the lack of emergency response centres for natural disasters is a serious threat to rural communities.
- Economic policy uncertainties: Economic policy uncertainties at the state and national levels threaten socioeconomic development in rural communities. Volatility in exchange rates, inflation, and interest rates reduces people's purchasing power and increases the cost of living, leading to deprivation and exclusion from social amenities.

12.3.4 Opportunities

Despite the challenges, the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development offers several opportunities for rural transformation and socioeconomic development. Continuous provision of

rural infrastructure such as good roads and hospitals will promote public safety, environmental protection, and economic growth in Benue State. Partnerships with the private sector can also boost rural infrastructure development, create market expansion, and create jobs in rural areas, thus accelerating domestic production and economic development.

Opportunities also exist for expanding markets for farm products both nationally and internationally, especially if the Benue State-Cameroon border from Jato-Aka through Wanyase to Imande Ukusu is developed. Rehabilitation of health centres and public offices will increase access to public services and improve the standard of living for rural dwellers in Benue State.

12.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

12.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the Benue State policy on Rural Development revolves around improving the quality of life for rural people, alleviating rural poverty, and using rural development to contribute to laying a strong foundation for the development of Benue State. The medium-term objectives include:

- Opening up rural roads
- Promoting the construction of bridges and culverts
- Provision of electricity in rural and urban areas
- Promoting the mobilisation and registration of community development associations and cooperative societies
- Liaising with other MDAs towards providing rural infrastructure for socio-economic growth
- Reducing rural poverty for the enhanced well-being of rural dwellers
- Liaising with the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), NGOs, donor agencies, and

international organisations to achieve the goals and objectives of the State in rural development

- Encouraging and providing rural areas with required infrastructure and modern facilities to discourage rural-urban migration
- Sensitising local communities to mobilise resources to carry out self-help projects in their areas, such as building culverts, bridges, and rural electrification
- Supporting entrepreneurship development

12.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- To construct 2,300 km of rural roads in rural communities in Benue State within the next five years
- Electrification of four rural communities in each of the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Benue State to enhance agro-processing and industrialisation between now and 2029
- To build the capacity of 1,000 cooperative groups in Benue State by 2029
- To empower 1,000 cooperative groups through the provision of loans and grants by 2029
- To build the capacity of 1,200 Community Development Associations (CDAs) in Benue State in the next five years
- To sensitise rural communities to form Community Development Associations to enable them to obtain loans and grants between now and 2029

12.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

12.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- Provision of rural infrastructure, such as electrification, construction of access roads, hospitals, health

centres, and schools, to facilitate access and improved socio-economic development in every part of the State

- Sensitisation of rural communities to form cooperatives and development associations, emphasising the benefits of self-help groups and support in rural development
- Building strong synergies between the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development and other relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies in developing rural communities in Benue State
- Exploring opportunities to collaborate with donor agencies, international organisations, the FGN, and MDAs to sponsor rural development programmes in the State
- Supporting entrepreneurial development and discouraging rural-urban migration in the State

12.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

12.6.1 Programmes and Projects 2025-2029 Provision of Infrastructure in Rural Communities

In a bid to facilitate rural development and access to basic infrastructure and social amenities, the State will embark on the construction of feeder roads, bridges, and culverts, as well as electrification of rural communities. These projects will bring about massive development in the rural areas by linking them to urban centres, which will open up markets for agricultural produce and speed up cottage industries in the State.

Empowerment of Cooperative Groups

One of the ways to boost self-help and support among rural communities is to ensure the creation and effective functioning of cooperative groups. The capacities of members of the cooperative groups can be built through the provision of loans and grants to members. This will foster participation and cooperation in undertaking individual and community development projects among rural communities.

Sensitization of Development Associations

Closely related to cooperative societies are development associations. These associations comprise Community-Based Associations (CBAs), community initiatives, social institutions, and groups within the community. These associations focus on social inclusion, self-help, and community development. The Ministry can support the formalisation of these groups by creating awareness for registration of development associations, building capacities of existing community development associations, and providing grants and loans to these associations in the State.

12.6.2 Indicative Cost

To fast-track the attainment of the goals outlined for the cooperatives and rural development sector, the estimated public investment is 127.852 billion for the period 2025-2029. As the government repositions the sector and implements strategies to create market expansion through rural-urban linkages and foster public-private sector partnerships for rural transformation, it is expected that rural development will receive a significant boost over the medium term.

12.7 Expected Outcomes

The broad outcomes expected from the various interventions and specific benefits derivable from capital investments spread across the six (6) projects to be implemented under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development are as follows. These broad programmes are presented in a matrix on Table 12.1. Each of these programmes and projects has the potential

to meaningfully contribute to rural transformation, specifically in the areas of rural electrification, access roads, capacity-building training, loans and grants to cooperative organisations and members, and the accelerated achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Table 12.1: Cooperatives and Rural Development Sector Level Results Framework

SDG	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
Goal 9: Industry & Infrastructure,	Increased access to farmlands, local markets and improved movements in rural communities.	Provision of rural roads, culverts and bridges in Benue State	20% of projected Rural Roads	25% of projected Rural Roads	25% of projected Rural Roads 35% of projected Rural Roads
Goal 9: Industry & Infrastructure	Enhanced establishment of agro- processing industries in rural communities	Electrification of rural communities in Benue State	15% of projected rural electrification projects across rural communities	20% of projected rural electrification projects across rural communities	30% of projected rural electrification projects across rural communities
Goals 1 & 4: End poverty & inclusive education/training	Increased member of Cooperative Societies in Benue State	Capacity building and training of members of Cooperative Societies	20% performance in financial record keeping, agricultural produce, mobilizing of savings and loan schemes	Projected increased performance of 25% in financial record keeping, agricultural produce, mobilizing of savings and loan schemes	35% performance projected in financial record keeping, agricultural produce, mobilizing of savings and loan schemes
Goals 1 & 4: End poverty & inclusive education/training	Improved standard of living of members of Cooperative Societies in Benue State	Empowerment of 1000 Cooperative Groups through provision of loans and grants	40 % performance in agricultural inputs and capital availability	Projected performance of 50% in agricultural inputs and capital availability	Projected performance of 60% in agricultural inputs and capital availability
Goals 1 & 4: End poverty & inclusive education/training	Increased number of Community Development Associations in Benue State.	Sensitization and awareness creation in Benue State	35% performance in community sensitization, enlightenment and awareness creation	40% performance in community sensitization, enlightenment and awareness creation	50% performance in community sensitization, enlightenment and awareness creation
Goals 1 & 4: End poverty & inclusive education/training	Self-reliance and improved standard of living for members of Community Development Associations	Empowerment of 1200 community development groups through provision of loans and grants	40% performance for self-reliance and improved standard of living	45% performance for self-reliance and improved standard of living	55% performance for self-reliance and improved standard of living

Source: Field Data, 2024 from Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, for baseline, targets are projections

Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change

Chapter 13



13.0 Introduction

The proper management of the water and environmental endowments of the State is critical for the development and optimal realisation of its abundant agricultural and natural resources. Benue State is endowed with two major water bodies, namely: River Benue and River Katsina-Ala, which are mainly used for industrial and commercial purposes. The Benue River has potential for inland water transportation and increased fish production. About 80-90% of the water bodies in the State are vital for agricultural production, with many farmers in the State relying on them for irrigation, livestock production, fishing, and other aquaculture activities. The State's industrial sector utilises about 5-10% of

the water bodies for industrial purposes such as food processing and manufacturing, brewing, and beverages.

The commercial usage of water in Benue State is relatively low compared to agricultural and industrial usage. Benue State has made efforts to provide a healthy and eco-friendly environment for human habitation. These efforts are occasioned by a myriad of environmental problems. These challenges affect sanitation, waste management, pollution control, flood management, deforestation, degradation of arable land, desertification, gully erosion, as well as unsustainable use of natural resources. Benue State has over 100,000 hectares of irrigable land, supporting crops like rice, wheat, and

sugarcane. Proper water management can increase irrigation-based agriculture coverage from 2.55% to 10% in 2025, 38.9% in 2029, and 77.8% in 2034. This will increase crop yields and food security in the State, creating about 10,000-20,000 new jobs with an estimated value of 17.35 billion (approximately \$12.5-25 million USD) per annum.

13.1 Institutional Setting

The State Ministry of Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change is the coordinating ministry for water policy, planning, and regulation. Other agencies within this sector include the Benue State Water Board, Benue State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (BERWASSA), and the Benue State Environmental Sanitation Authority. The State's management of the environment draws inspiration from extant national policies and guidelines, some of which are the National Erosion and Flood Control Policy (2004) and the National Environmental Sanitation Policy and Action Plan (2005). The Government has initiated a number of projects geared towards the development of the sector. Some of these projects include the Otukpo, Makurdi, and Katsina-Ala Water Supply Project, which was built in 2007 with the aim of providing safe water and expanding water infrastructure in the State; the Katsina-Ala Irrigation Project, inaugurated in 2018 to develop irrigation infrastructure for agricultural production in Sati Agirigi. Other projects are the Benue State Flood Control Project (2020), which implements flood control measures in flood-prone areas, and the Water Quality Monitoring Project, meant to monitor and improve water quality in rivers, streams, and groundwater sources.

13.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

The water supply sector situation analysis in the State reveals that the majority of the citizens lack access to clean water supply in the State, as over 45% depend on streams and rivers for their needs. This water source is unsafe for consumption, largely due to poor waste management practices, and it easily dries up during the dry season. Only about 25-30% of the population have access to pipe-borne water, 15% consume borehole water, while 10% make use of protected well water, and about 5% consume spring water (NBS, 2023).

Key policies were pursued between 2020 and 2024, geared towards enhancing the water supply situation in the State. For instance, the Benue State Water Policy of 2020, the Water and Sanitation Policy of 2019, and the Irrigation Development Programmes in 2019. The State Water Supply Policy is a comprehensive policy framework for water resources management, and the Water Supply and Sanitation Policy focuses on improving access to safe water and sanitation, with programmes such as the Benue State Water Supply and Sanitation Programme implemented between 2018 and 2022. The Irrigation Development and Flood Management Programmes focus on mitigating flood risks and impacts. Other targets of these policies include putting in place environmental and sanitation policies, promoting cooperation in environmental services and sanitary control with other similar bodies, ensuring the neatness/tidiness of the highways, and conducting regular inspection of facilities used for the production of consumables, such as food, water, and

drinks. These policy actions facilitated the promotion of sanitation services across the State. However, it is noted that most of the services are lopsided, having been skewed in favour of urban settlements and

schools. This affects the attainment of the objectives of the provision of sanitation services across the State.



Table 13.1: Access to Water Sources and Percentage in Benue State

Sources of Water	Providers	Cost to providers/	Percentage (%)	Remarks
Pipe-born (Taps)	Government utility	N 400.00 per month	25-30%	Where water treatment plants exist, few households are connected
Dug wells	Private household	Nil	10%	Shallow, not safe and mostly dry up during the dry season.
Boreholes	Private individuals	N 20.00 sold to hawkers and individuals	15%	The supply depends on the electricity source.
Rivers/Streams	Individuals	Nil	45%	Not safe due to poor waste management and the streams mostly dry up during dry season
Dams	Government Utility	Nil	3%	The projects are yet to be completed leading to flooding

13.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

13.3.1 Strengths

The following are the strengths of the water resources and environmental sub-sectors in Benue State for the period of 2020 to 2024:

- Irrigation potential: Water resources support agricultural production, a significant contributor to the State's economy.
- Fishing and Aquaculture: The water bodies in Benue State are a great potential for fishing and aquaculture activities, which are sources of revenue to the State.

13.3.2 Weaknesses

- Water pollution: The surplus in other tributaries like Makurdi, Guma, and Katsina-Ala are prone to seasonal flooding, caused by heavy rainfall and the overflow of the River Benue and River Katsina-Ala.
- Weak institutional framework: There is poor coordination and enforcement of water resources policies and regulations in Benue State.
- Inadequate funding: Limited financial resources hinder the development and maintenance of water infrastructure.
- Poor infrastructure condition: Existing infrastructure such as water treatment plants, storage, and distribution are often in disrepair, reducing its effectiveness.

- The need to provide sanitation services across the State poses a tough challenge and requires an effective coverage strategy.
- From the baseline information available, there is no clear delivery strategy for state coverage.
- Other challenges outlined are inadequate manpower, inadequate human capacity, especially health educators and sanitary inspectors, as well as inadequate sanitation equipment to provide the services.

13.3.3 Opportunities

- Private sector investment: There are opportunities for public-private partnerships to develop water infrastructure and water resources management.
- Sustainable agricultural expansion: There is a growing demand for irrigation water to support agricultural expansion.
- Climate change adaptation: There are opportunities to develop climate-resilient water infrastructure and management practices.
- Environmental and eco-friendly society is easily achievable.
- A healthy environment for achieving sanitation, food, and personal hygiene is a possibility.

13.3.4 Threats

- Climate change: Evolving climate change conditions, occasioned by drastic changes in the ecosystem



that affect the food chain, have had adverse effects on food production. Changes in precipitation patterns and increased flooding risk threaten water resources.

- Water pollution: Pollution from agricultural runoff, industrial activities, and domestic waste threatens water quality.
- Inter-state water conflicts: Potential conflicts with neighbouring States over shared water resources remain a challenge for proper exploitation of these water resources.

13.4 Medium Term Objective and Targets

13.4.1 Sector Objective(s), 2025-2029

The broad objective of this sector is to promote and ensure the rational and sustainable utilisation, development, and effective management of water and environmental resources for the socio-economic development of Benue State. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To promote increased access to safe

and affordable potable water supply and sanitation to 72% of the population, from the present 39.9%, by 2029.

- To increase access to safe water in Benue State from the current 24% in the rural areas to 50%, and 25-30% in major urban areas such as Makurdi, Katsina-Ala, Otukpo, and Gboko by 2029.
- To increase avenues for the full utilisation of both surface and underground water sources in Benue State.
- To secure a qualitative environment adequate for good health and well-being by ensuring environmental sustainability (protect and conserve water resources, watersheds, and aquatic ecosystems).
- To enhance the economic empowerment of the populace by

supporting livelihoods through fishing, livestock, and other water-dependent activities.

- To implement measures to adapt to climate change impacts on water resources.

13.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- Increased access to clean and affordable water supply to 72.7% by 2029.
- Decrease open defecation practices in all the 23 LGAs by 2029.
- Increase the population with basic sanitation facilities to 80% by 2029.
- Improve the application of technology in waste management.
- Implement measures to adapt to climate change impacts on water resources by increasing the number of palm and other tree seedlings planted to at least 150,000 by 2029.
- Reduce water pollutants in rivers to less than 10 by 2029.
- Increase forest cover to 80 hectares of land area by 2029.

13.5 Key Sector Policies and Strategies

13.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- Ensure the passage of the State water and sanitation policy into law by the State Assembly.
- Conduct a comprehensive feasibility study and develop a master plan for water supply and sanitation.
- Upgrade, rehabilitate, and maintain existing water facilities for enhanced water distribution networks and strengthen internally generated revenue units.
- Improve and sustain partnerships with development partners and the

private sector for water supply, liquid, and solid waste management systems in major towns in Benue State by 2029.

- Ensure and strengthen the participation of all genders, people living with disabilities, and local communities in improving water and sanitation management.

13.6 Flagship Sector Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

13.6.1 Programmes and Projects 2025-2029

Portable water supply

- Construction of 115 solar-powered water schemes in 23 LGAs.
- Repairs of facilities/reticulation of water in four major towns: Makurdi, Otukpo, Gboko, and Katsina-Ala.
- Rehabilitation of 115 rural dysfunctional water facilities.
- Supply of water treatment chemicals.
- Installation of 79,000 automated water billing devices (meters) to households in the State capital.

Village Level Operation and Maintenance (VLOM)

- Training of 1,370 Local Area Mechanics (LAMs).
- Training of 1,370 Water Consumers' Associations (WCAs) in partnership with UNICEF.
- Training of 1,370 Water Sanitation and Hygiene Committees (WASHComs) in partnership with UNICEF.
- Training of 1,370 stakeholders on climate change and resilience in partnership with ACREsAL.

Construction of medium gravity earth dams

- Construction of 3 mini earth dams in each of the three senatorial districts.
- Rehabilitation of 9 dysfunctional earth dams with aqua-filters in partnership with ACREsAL to boost irrigation-based agriculture and clean water supply.

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Sanitation and infrastructure

- Undertake Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) awareness on the dangers of open defecation in 10 non-WASH intervention LGAs.
- Construction of 9 inclusive sanitation facilities in public places.
- Provision of 10 mobile toilets in strategic points in the State capital.

Solid waste management

- Construction of 5 faecal sludge management and treatment plants in Makurdi, Otukpo, Gboko, and Katsina-Ala in the first phase.
- Procurement of 4 waste evacuation and recycling machines in major towns.

Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Awareness

- Sensitisation of 1,370 stakeholders on MHH in each LGA.
- Training of 1,370 women on the production of menstrual pad materials and soap making.

Hygiene Promotion and infrastructure

- Supply of 94 automated handwashing stations in public places.

- Development of radio, television, and social media jingles in three major languages in Benue State on hygiene promotion (twice a month) for one year.

Flood Control

- Construction of drainage systems in flood-prone LGAs such as Makurdi, Gwer-West, Guma, Buruku, Katsina-Ala, and Agatu.
- Planting of 10,000 palm and coconut trees by the riverbanks.
- Sensitisation on climate adaptability technology for water, sanitation, and hygiene in 23 LGAs.

13.6.2 Indicative Costs

To achieve the goals and objectives outlined for the Water Resources and Environment sector, the estimated public investment is 75.2 billion for the period 2025-2029. As the government repositions the environment and water resources sector through its reform efforts and implements strategies to improve the availability of a clean and conducive environment for healthy lives and a productive work environment, private, domestic, and foreign investment will be attracted as a result of the strategies put in place. This will also enhance the sector's performance and its contribution to growth and development.

13.7 Expected Outcome

The expected outcome is shown in Table 13.2.

Table 13.2: Result framework and Key Performance Indicators for Water Resources and Environment

SDGs	Outcome	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline 2025	Target 2026	2027	2028	2029
Goal 6	Increased access to clean and affordable water supply	%of the population using clean and affordable water	39.9%	48.1%	56.3%	64.5%	72.7%
Goal 6	Decrease open defecation practices	Number of LGAs declared ODF compliant	10	13	16	19	23
Goal 6	Increase % of the population with basic sanitation facilities	% of communities with basic sanitation facilities in use	27.60%	40%	65%	70%	80%
Goals 6, 11 & 13	Improve application of technology in waste management	Tons of recycled materials (metric tons)	n/a	25	35	45	55
		Number of applications of technology deployed in the sector	n/a				
Goal 13	Climate mitigation	Number of palm and other tree seedlings planted	10,000	50,000	75,000	100,000	150,000
		Area of land planted with trees	200Ha	350Ha	450Ha	550Ha	650Ha
Goals 11 & 13	Reduced cases of flooding in the State	Number of culverts and drainage systems reconstructed and maintained	120	140	180	150	100
		Number of occurrences of flooding in the State	8	5	3	2	1
Goals 3, 6 and 14	Reduced Water pollutants	Number of the incidence of water pollution recorded	NA	230	150	80	>10
Goal 13	Improved forest Cover	Area of land recovered from illegal farming activities and reforested	NA	10ha	25ha	60ha	80ha
		% Forest Area to Total Land Area	NA	5	9	15	20

Science, Technology and Innovation

Chapter 14

14.0 Introduction

The promotion of the development of science, technology, and innovation within Benue State is a critical necessity for the structural transformation and development of the State's economy. This is because of their potential contributions, which include increased efficiency in the way economic activities across all sectors of the economy are carried out, the creation of new goods and services, promotion of employment generation, and, by implication, the creation of wealth and improved quality of life for the residents of the State. This makes the promotion of activities related to the development of science, technology, and innovation a crucial component of efforts to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of the residents of Benue State. Such efforts will, among other things, position the State as one of the major hubs for science and technology-oriented activities, thus attracting private sector investment into the State, creating jobs, and raising incomes for the State's residents, particularly its youthful population. The State will also benefit from spill-over effects such as the development of activities in the agricultural, health, educational, and industrial sectors in the form of increased competitive advantage in the production of food crops, improved healthcare delivery, development of the industrial sector value-chain, and improved quality and increased access to educational services. These developments will contribute to an improvement in the quality of human capital in the State through the development of skills related to technology use and generation in the State's labour force.



14.1 Institutional Setting

The institution responsible for promoting the development of science, technology, and innovation in Benue State is the Benue State Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. It collaborates with other institutions such as the Business Engineering Skills Training (BEST) Centre, the Science and Technical Education Board (STEB), the National Technology Incubation Centre (NTIC), and the National Research Institute for Chemical Technology (NARICT).

The roles of the Benue State Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation include overseeing and coordinating various activities related to energy resources, scientific research,

technological advancements, and innovation initiatives. Its activities include the creation of a data bank for human and material resources, as well as identifying priority areas for Science, Technology, and Innovation development and application, all in alignment with the national development plan. The NTIC is responsible for implementing the National Policy on the incubation of technology in the country, while STEB is tasked with developing abilities and skills in science, technology, and engineering in schools within the State and supervising the activities of the State's technical and science colleges. NARICT operates a laboratory for testing chemicals, carrying out research activities, and developing chemicals, equipment, and machinery for the chemical industry in collaboration with private sector organisations. It also supervises activities related to plastics and chemicals.

The Benue State Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation adopts an aggressive approach to the development of technology and innovation, enabling it to unlock the potential of the non-oil sector and take advantage of both domestic and foreign markets. This will make the State less dependent on revenue from the federal government and generate income from the export of agricultural products. Since its creation, the Ministry has played a strategic role in the State's economy. The government has provided the necessary assistance that enabled the Ministry to achieve its goals by creating viable links between the relevant MDAs in the State, the federal government, and the private sector. It has also ensured sustainable mechanisms for the adequate funding of Science, Technology, and Innovation activities through national and international funding agencies such as the World Bank, the Bank of Industry, and

commercial banks. Additionally, the Ministry organises local and national science, technology, and innovation competitions and has promoted the commercialisation and transfer of appropriate research and development results annually.

14.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

The Ministry has been actively engaged in science, technology, and innovation by transferring knowledge and skills to youths and vulnerable people in the State. Some of the skills acquired include accounting, business and engineering. The Ministry has trained over 8,000 artisans in marketing, management, and accounting between 2020 and 2024. In engineering, welding and fabrication, electrical electronics, refrigeration and air conditioning, building technology, woodwork, metalwork, bricklaying and tiling, automobile mechanics, plumbing, tailoring, computer repairs, and more. Furthermore, 60 science and technical teachers have been trained.

The Ministry has also participated in local and national competitions in Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Engineering, Welding, Fabrication, production of mechanised agricultural equipment, and solar inverter production. The Ministry has organised and coordinated the Young and Junior Scientist and Technologist competitions at both the State and national levels. These youth competitions are organised in all 23 local government areas, enabling the Ministry to tap into the potential of youth at the grassroots level and promote a culture of science, technology, and innovation. The State has achieved excellent performance in national science and technology competitions, and improvements in the annual Science, Technology, and Innovations (STI)



exhibitions have led to the State winning numerous awards at national STI exhibitions and tech fairs.

The Ministry collaborates with technical schools under STEB and has trained youths in science and technology. Through effective partnerships with the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the World Bank under the IDEAS programme, STEB oversees the training of youths in digital skills. In addition, the Ministry monitors the activities of artisans and technicians to ensure they fabricate quality products meeting the standards set by the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON). It has also supported the development of skills at the Business Engineering Skills Training (BEST) Centre. The Ministry was involved in the production and fabrication of disinfectant tunnels in 2020 to help curb the spread of the coronavirus in the State and beyond, as well as supervising the installation and maintenance of solar-powered traffic and street lights in the State.

14.3 Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

14.3.1 Strengths

The strengths of the Benue State Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation include:

- The availability of qualified personnel and equipment, which enabled the Ministry to achieve success at the BEST Centre and STEB.
- The State government supports grants for training at both the State and local government levels. The Ministry also participates in national competitions.
- Support from financial institutions in the form of loans to trainees. The Ministry acts as a guarantor for trainees to access funds from commercial banks and procure equipment for their activities (e.g., the current World Bank IDEAS Project at STEB).
- Effective administrative management of resources.
- Teamwork and dedication of staff.



14.3.2 Key Challenges

The Benue State Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation faces several constraints in effectively performing its functions:

- Inadequate professionally trained personnel, which has reduced its capacity to effectively implement some aspects of the State's science, technology, and innovation policy, as the Ministry has to overwork the few skilled personnel available.
- Inadequate funding, which has limited the number and scope of programs implemented by the Ministry. Some key programs and projects, which could contribute to the State's development, have not been implemented.
- Lack of official vehicles for effective and efficient monitoring of projects. As a result, the Ministry has been unable to effectively monitor the implementation of its programmes, particularly in rural areas.
- Inadequate office accommodation, leading to overcrowded offices, which negatively affects the physical and mental health of staff, resulting in lower productivity.
- Insufficient office tools, equipment, and facilities, hindering the full utilisation of the human capital within the Ministry.
- Poor public power supply. The unreliable power supply has made it impossible to use some of the available equipment.
- Mergers with other MDAs under changing political administrations, which have often altered policy documents and the Ministry's delivery mandate.

- The appointment of technocrats as Chief Executives, which often limits their understanding and pursuit of the Ministry's objectives.

14.3.3 Threats

- Insecurity: The high level of insecurity in the State is a significant constraint on the Ministry's ability to implement its school-based programs, especially in rural areas. The Ministry is unable to deploy necessary staff to some communities.
- Ecological problems: These pose a major threat to the Ministry's ability to conduct its activities in rural communities.
- Lack of political will: This is a significant challenge for the Ministry in securing funding from the government. Lack of political will, resulting from differing policy priorities among successive political administrations, has led to the disruption and lack of continuity in the Ministry's activities, preventing some programmes and projects from being fully implemented.
- Inflation: The continued rise in inflation has negatively affected the Ministry's ability to implement existing projects. The rising costs of implementing activities have exceeded projected values, causing some projects to remain incomplete, while others are constrained in scope due to increased costs.

14.3.4 Opportunities

The Ministry has several opportunities:

- Financial support and grants from institutions such as the Bank of Industry, the African Development

Bank, the World Bank, the British Council, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

- Training opportunities from the British Council, the African Union (AU), and the Department for International Development (DFID).

14.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

14.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation is to make Benue State a national hub for science by improving its capacity to harness, develop, and utilise energy, science, technology, and innovation to build a large, strong, diversified, sustainable, and competitive economy that guarantees a high standard of living and quality of life for its citizens. The Ministry seeks to increase the contribution of science, technology, and innovation to the State's GDP, reduce youth unemployment, and create more jobs in the science and technology sectors.

Other objectives of the Ministry include:

- Developing a world-class science, technology, and innovation infrastructure and human capital base.
- Harnessing the knowledge and skills of the youth to achieve technological advancements in all areas of the economy.
- Increasing the contribution of the technology sector to the State's GDP, especially in areas such as the agricultural, health, and industrial sectors.
- Strengthening existing and establishing new partnerships with

international development agencies, the private sector, and research institutions for the promotion of science, technology, and innovation in the State.

- Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry and its partners to manage Science, Technology, and Innovation policies and programmes, including institutionalising systems for monitoring and evaluating projects.

14.4.2 Medium Term Targets

Against the background of the present administration's long-term goals, the Ministry has the following medium-term objectives:

- To provide and upgrade infrastructure at all levels of State-owned institutions by 2025.
- To promote quality science and technical education from 63% to 72% by 2029.
- To promote entrepreneurship skills ratio from 15:85 to 60:40 by 2029.
- To generate at least 20% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2029.
- To upgrade security equipment and infrastructure by 90% by 2029.
- To increase agro equipment input by 20% by 2029.
- To reduce industrial pollution by 35% by 2029.
- To improve transportation efficiency by 20% by 2029.
- To ensure 45% of healthcare facilities are technologically driven by 2029.
- To build capacity for disaster management by 2026.
- To establish early warning systems by 2025.

14.5 Key Sector Strategies and Projects

14.5.1 Policy Measures and Strategies to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

The following measures will be put in place to achieve the objectives of the Ministry:

- Introduction of annual science and technology training programmes which will be mandatory for science and technology teachers in both public and private schools in the State to ensure their knowledge and skills are regularly updated.
- Introduction of a young science and technologist cadets' initiative in primary and secondary schools in the State to promote engagement in science and technology-oriented activities by students.
- Partnership with the State's science and technology-oriented institutions and private sector organisations to conduct regular science and technology-oriented workshops and training for residents of rural communities.
- Partnership with willing foreign governments in developed economies to promote the transfer of technology, generating knowledge and skills via exchange programmes.
- Partnership with media organisations to introduce science and technology programmes to educate the State's residents on developments with respect to science and technology.
- Improved collaboration with the Standard Organisation of Nigeria to improve the quality of science

and technology outputs in the State.

- Introduction of guidelines on industrial waste disposal in the State.
- Investment in the upgrading of infrastructure in all State-owned science and technology-oriented institutions.
- Organisation of science and technology fairs to encourage the development of indigenous technologies in the State.

14.6 Flagship Programs, Projects and Indicative Cost

The following programmes will be introduced to facilitate the achievement of the objective of the plan with respect to science, technology, and innovation:

- Advanced scientific research and development programmes.
- Technology transfer and adaptation.
- Avenue for innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Continuous human capacity building and skills development.
- Capacity development for 190 Science and Technology Tutors and 80 facilitators at Hubs/Centres.

14.6.1 Projects

- Establishment of science research centres in the three senatorial zones.
- Development of technology and digital platforms in each senatorial zone in the State.
- Establishment of an innovation and entrepreneurship incubation centre in each senatorial zone.
- Establishment of business and engineering skills training centres.
- Renovation, furnishing, and equipping of the Ministry.
- Construction of an innovation hub

in the State capital.

- Renovation of classroom blocks at 12 Science and Technical Colleges and BEST Centre.
- Establishment of Technology Incubation Centres (TIC) in the Senatorial Zones.
- Establishment of Science Research Laboratories in the Senatorial Zones.
- Equipping and installation of technical workshops in the Ministry's headquarters.
- Equipping computer labs in all Science and Technical Colleges for NBTE accreditation.
- Installation of 100MW capacity solar mini-grids in the three Senatorial Zones of Benue State.
- Installation of boundary surveillance technology (Electric Field Meter) in the Senatorial Zones.
- Installation of 3D hybrid CCTV cameras in the Senatorial Zones.

14.6.2 Indicative Cost

The achievement of the goals for the science, technology, and innovation sector will entail an estimated public investment of 9.118 billion for the period 2025 to 2029. This investment will be used to fund the different projects in the sector with a view to ensuring that the State reaps the benefits of increased development of science, technology, and innovation.

14.7 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes for each of the 13 goals set for the science, technology, and innovation sector in this plan are presented in Table 14.1. It is expected that programmes will lead to improvements in the quantity and quality of activities with respect to science, technology, and innovation within the State.

Table 14.1: Sector Level Results Framework for Science, Technology and Innovation Sector

SDGs	Programme	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Targets	
					2027	2029
Goals 8, 9 10.	Human and infrastructural development	Effective, Efficient and Timely delivery of mandate, programs and projects.	Fully renovated, furnished and equipped offices	20%	30%	50%
			Well-structured curriculum on renewable energy technology	10%	25%	40%
			Percentage development of professional skills	30%	40%	50%
			Develop science and technical skills	35%	40%	45%
			Enhance effective collaboration for investment and sponsorship	10%	15%	25%
Goals 7	Clean renewable energy	Generate electricity using solar	Improved electricity from renewable energy source	0%	5%	10%
Goal 9 & 11	Security	Secured border areas	Improved security equipment and infrastructure	1%	3%	5%
Goals 1 and 2	Agricultural Input	Improved mechanized farming	Percentage increase in Agricultural produce	15%	20%	25%
Goals 3 & 6	Waste Management	Clean and safe ecosystem	Reduced environmental pollution	5%	10%	15%
Goal 8 & 9	Integrated Transportation	Reduced dependency on fuel	Improved transportation system	1%	3%	5%
Goal 3	Medical Technology	Efficient health care system	Increased equipment supplies to health care facilities	5%	10%	15%
Goal 10 & 13	Disaster Management	Improved disaster management capacity.	Reduced effect of disasters on victims	1%	3%	5%

Section 4

Social Development



15.0 Introduction

The Education and Knowledge Management sector is the backbone of Benue State's development, playing a vital role in shaping the minds of its citizens. This sector is the largest industry in the State and the primary employer of skilled labour. Both professionals and non-professionals in education are employed to teach and work in public and private schools within the State. The sector drives human capital development, economic growth, social mobility, and sustainable development. It also significantly contributes to Benue State's socioeconomic and political progress. Moreover, the sector promotes equitable and high-quality education for all residents of Benue, aiming to provide gender-sensitive educational services. It generates revenue for the State through the sale of school establishment forms, payment of school fees at various levels, and school renewal approvals. With its potential to develop a knowledge-based economy, the sector has the capacity to drive the State's economic growth.

15.1 Institutional Setting

The Education and Knowledge Management sector is tasked with formulating and implementing educational policies in Benue State. Several departments, agencies, and units work together to ensure accessible, equitable, high-quality, and gender-responsive education at all levels. Key initiatives include improving teaching and learning through curriculum reviews, organising teacher workshops, promoting science education, and enhancing

infrastructure through policies on Special Education, Mass Literacy, and Girl-Child Education. Major agencies and parastatals under this sector include: Benue State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Benue State Teaching Service Board (TSB), Adult and Non-Formal Education Agency (ANFEA), Benue State Examination Board (SEB), Benue State Scholarship Board (BSSB), Benue State Science and Technical Education Board (STEB), Benue State Quality Education Agency (BEQA), and Benue State Library Board. Prominent tertiary institutions include Benue State University Makurdi, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi, Federal University of Health Sciences Otukpo, Akawe Torkula Polytechnic Makurdi, and several state and private colleges of education. In addition, the State collaborates with federal agencies, international partners, and private organisations to improve infrastructure, provide teacher training, and promote science and technology education. The State has: 14 science and technical colleges, 65 government secondary schools, 225 grant-aided schools, 791 approved private primary schools, 1,023 approved private secondary schools, 420 Universal Basic Education junior secondary schools, and 2,724 public primary schools. Over the years, the government has shown a strong commitment to the education sector by constructing and renovating schools, recruiting qualified teachers, increasing budgetary allocation, and integrating ICT into education.



15.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

The Education sector in Benue State has shown significant growth over the years. In the past five years, there has been an increase in the number of primary and secondary schools within the State. Notably, Benue State is home to Nigeria's

first Federal University of Health Sciences, established in Otukpo in 2020. The sector experienced an initial decline in school enrolment, followed by an upward trend in enrolment rates for males and females in primary and secondary school categories, as shown in Table 15.1.

Table 15.1: School Enrollment

Year	Enrollment Rate for Primary Schools		Enrollment Rate for Secondary Schools	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2019	41.96	38.93	14.27	9.77
2020	38.08	34.65	14.26	13.44
2021	39.26	35.67	16.76	15.52

Source: Ministry of Education and Knowledge Management Data Base

Tables 15.2 and 15.3 highlight that the total school enrolment in 2020 was 815,860, compared to 1,860,395 in 2024, demonstrating significant growth in the State. The classroom ratio in 2020 was largely compliant with ministry specifications, except for Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE), which exceeded the acceptable standard of 1:40. By 2024, while ratios for

adult and non-formal education and primary levels remained within the acceptable range, other levels exceeded the standard. The qualified teacher-to-pupil ratio, which was within the standard in 2020, had increased to 1:52 by 2024, necessitating the recruitment of additional teachers to meet the acceptable standard.

Table 15.2: School Enrolment

Level	Enrolment 2020	Enrolment 2024
ECCDE	45,983	139,998
Primary	576,438	946,438
Junior Secondary School	135,258	539,952
Senior Secondary School	48,304	220,820
Adult Literacy Centres	9,877	13, 187
Total	815,860	1,860,395

Source: Ministry of Education and Knowledge Management Data Base

Table 15.3: Classroom Ratio by Levels

Level	Enrolment 2020	Enrolment 2024	Classrooms 2020	Classrooms 2024	Avg. No of Pupils per Classroom 2020	Avg. No of Pupils per Classroom 2024
ECCDE	45,983	139,998	380	486	121	288
Primary	576,438	946,438	17,663	23,979	33	40
Junior Secondary	135,258	539,952	4,872	6,234	28	87
Senior Secondary	48,304	220,820	2,468	3,530	20	63
Adult & non formal Education	9,877	13,187	540	721	18	18
Total	815,860	1,860,395	34,950	34,950	220	496

Source: Ministry of Education and Knowledge Management Data Base

Table 15.4: Qualified Teacher/Pupil Ratio

Level	Total Enrolment 2020	Total Enrolment 2024	Total no of Qualified Teachers 2020	Total no of Qualified Teachers 2024	Qualified Teacher -Pupil Ratio 2020	Qualified Teacher -Pupil Ratio 2024
Primary	576,438	946,438	19,587	19,587	1:29	1: 48
Junior Secondary	135,258	539,952	11,694	11,694	1:12	1:46
Senior Secondary	48,304	220,820	1,368	1,368	1:35	1:161
Total	760,000	1,707,210	32,649	32,649	1:25	1: 52

Source: Ministry of Education and Knowledge Management Data Base. Note: Acceptable Standard is 1: 40

15.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

15.3.1 Strength

- **Government's Commitment:** The State government has demonstrated a strong commitment to the education sector through the introduction of initiatives and increased funding aimed at strengthening education. This commitment offers a strong basis for improving curriculum development, teacher preparation, and school infrastructure.
- **Availability of Qualified Teachers:** The existence of skilled and qualified teachers is one of the major strengths of Benue's educational system. The consistent performance of students in primary and secondary schools in

public examinations is directly correlated with a highly qualified teaching staff.

- **Community Involvement:** The active participation of local communities in supporting education is another critical strength. Community involvement in Benue fosters the connection between schools and families, encouraging a collaborative approach to addressing local educational challenges.
- **Focus on Inclusivity:** Benue State has made notable efforts to create an inclusive education system, ensuring that all children, regardless of background, have access to learning opportunities. This focus on inclusivity promotes equal access to education for marginalised groups, including girls, children with disabilities, and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Supportive Policies and Programs:** The education sector in Benue is supported by a range of policies and programs aimed at improving education standards. Scholarship programs, school nutrition programs, and teacher training programs help enhance the efficiency of the State's educational system by ensuring that students not only enrol but also successfully finish school.
-

15.3.2 Key Challenges

The key constraints slowing down the growth of the education sector include:

- **Uneven Geographical Spread of Schools:** The unequal distribution of schools throughout the State causes inequalities in access, particularly for students who live in rural or isolated

locations.

- **Favouritism and Nepotism:** Issues of favouritism and nepotism in the hiring and promotion processes weaken the overall effectiveness of educational management and service delivery.
- **Misplacement of Priorities:** Neglecting important projects like infrastructure improvements or teacher training in favour of less urgent projects negatively affects the sector.
- **Insufficient Funding:** Despite increased efforts, the sector remains plagued by insufficient funding, which limits its capacity to run programs, maintain infrastructure, and provide instructional materials to schools.
- **Lack of Appropriate Budget Line to Address Capacity Gap Among Management Staff and School Administrators.**
- **Communal Crisis/Kidnapping:** The educational process is disrupted by communal conflicts and the fear of kidnapping, which makes schools insecure for both staff and pupils. These crises have the potential to impact enrolment and retention rates by causing school closures, community displacement, and family fear.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Inadequate physical infrastructure, including dilapidated buildings, a shortage of classrooms, insufficient sanitary facilities, and restricted access to clean water or electricity, affects some schools in Benue State. This has a detrimental effect on the classroom environment and may impair pupils' performance.
- **High Dropout Rates:** Students are dropping out of school at high rates, especially in secondary school. As of 2021, the dropout rate was 83.24% for

boys and 84.48% for girls. Premature school dropout is caused by several factors including poverty, limited access to high-quality education, early marriage, or the necessity to work to support their families.

- **Variability in Quality of Education:** There is inconsistency in the quality of education across schools in the State, with urban schools generally having better resources and teaching quality than rural schools.
- **Limited ICT Integration:** Lack of computers, internet connectivity, and other digital tools to improve learning is a problem in many schools, which limits the efficacy of contemporary teaching techniques and leaves instructors and students unprepared for the digital age.

15.3.3 Threats

- **Persistent Security Issues:** The safety of teachers, students, and school property is at risk due to Benue State's persistent security issues. School closures, academic calendar interruptions, and family anxiety result from this, which further deters students from attendance and retention in school.
- **Inadequate Funding of Programs:** While initiatives may be started to meet different educational needs, their effectiveness is frequently limited by financial constraints.
- **Non-release of Appropriated Funds for Program Implementation:** The execution of planned programs and projects is hampered by delays or non-release of appropriated funds, even when they are included in the budget. This further impedes sectoral growth by stalling advancement in areas like

infrastructure development, capacity building, and access to educational resources.

- **Political Instability and Policy Inconsistency:** Changes in government leadership or political priorities can lead to shifts in educational policies, causing disruptions or reversals in ongoing initiatives.
- **Cultural Barriers and Gender Inequality:** Many girls are prevented from attending school because of early marriages, domestic duties, or cultural traditions that place a lower value on education, making gender inequality a major issue.
- **Health Challenges:** The prevalence of health issues, including outbreaks of diseases, poor sanitation, and inadequate healthcare, affects students' ability to attend and perform well in school.
- **Economic Challenges and Poverty:** High levels of poverty in Benue State directly affect education, as many families are unable to afford school fees, uniforms, textbooks, or other educational supplies.

15.3.4 Opportunities

- **Increased Funding and Investment Opportunities:** With strategic investment from the public and private sectors, the quality and reach of education can be significantly improved.
- **Expansion of Vocational and Technical Education:** Benue State has the potential to expand its vocational and technical education programs, providing students with practical skills that are directly relevant to the local economy.
- **Adoption of E-Learning and**

Digital Education: The incorporation of digital learning platforms offers a significant opportunity to close access gaps to high-quality education. Digital technologies and e-learning can reach underserved groups, particularly those in remote locations, and improve the educational process through creative and engaging approaches.

- **Harnessing Community and Diaspora Support:** The Benue diaspora and local communities offer an enormous opportunity to support the sector. Assistance from the diaspora can include donations of money, partnerships, and mentorship to enhance educational infrastructure, provision of scholarships, and assistance to local schools. Communities can also contribute through school development projects.
- **Potential for Research and Innovation:** This presents a significant opportunity for the education sector in Benue State by fostering the development of context-specific solutions that address local educational challenges. Through research, educators can better understand the barriers to learning, such as poor infrastructure, socio-economic issues, and inadequate resources, and develop innovative strategies to overcome them.
- **Policy Reforms and Advocacy:** Policies addressing systemic problems, including insufficient financing, out-of-date curricula, and teacher shortages, might result from advocacy for reforms.

15.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

15.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

Under the 2025–2029 Benue State Development Plan, the broad objective will be to develop human capacity to drive productivity and protect the vulnerable (women, youths, and the differently abled) through functional science and technical education. Other specific objectives that will be pursued by the education sector include:

- To provide infrastructure at all levels of State-owned educational institutions.
- Reduce the student-to-teacher ratio to achieve a more personalised learning environment.
- Construct more classrooms in schools across the State.
- Ensure inclusive and universal access to free and compulsory primary education for all.
- To improve the availability and quality of education data for evidence-based decision-making.
- Strengthen the Benue Education Management Information System (BEMIS) as an innovative online real-time education data management tool.
- Establish a base station at the Ministry's Headquarters.
- Implement the 2025-2034 revised Benue State Strategic Education Plan (SESP) / State Education Sector Operational Plan (SESOP).

- Initiate a special science scholarship as an incentive for the study of science-based courses.
- Initiate access to scholarships for deserving indigent Benue students.
- Train mathematics teachers in best modern methods of teaching mathematics to make it attractive to learners.
- Increase the supply of science facilities/equipment in schools.
- Set up and equip skills acquisition centres in the State.
- Improve the retention rates of girls.
- Increase the enrolment rate in skills acquisition.
- Increase the supply of science facilities/equipment in schools.
- Improve the availability and quality of education data for evidence-based decision-making by upgrading the Education Management Information System (EMIS) from its present manual state to automated ICT capabilities through an EDU-PORTAL (Education Portal) by 2029.
- Ensure that at least 80% of education officials, teachers, and schools are actively using BEMIS for data management and decision-making.
- Ensure that the Ministry Headquarters can become a robust and reliable hub for education data management, supporting informed decision-making and improving education outcomes.
- Make significant progress in implementing the revised SESP/SESOP and improving the overall quality and effectiveness of the education system.
- Initiate special science scholarships of 40% as an incentive for the study of science-based courses.
- Initiate access to scholarships for 40,000 deserving indigent Benue students in 2029.
- Train Mathematics teachers in the best modern methods of teaching mathematics to make it attractive to at least 40% of learners by 2029.
- Increase the supply of science facilities/equipment in schools by 60%.
- Set up and equip skills acquisition

15.4.2 Medium Term Targets

The Ministry of Education and Knowledge Management (MoE & KM) will pursue the following targets in the medium term:

- Upgrade all public infrastructure that is dilapidated at all levels of State-owned educational institutions.
- Reduce the average number of students per class from 54 to 40 by 2029.
- Ensure inclusive and universal access to fee-free and compulsory primary education by all in 2029.
- iv. Promote science, technical, and entrepreneurship education, raising the Science/Humanities ratio from 15:85 to 60:40 by 2029.

centres in the 23 LGAs of the State

- Improve retention rates of girls by 20% in 2029.
- Increase enrolment rates in skills acquisition by 50% by 2029
- Increase the supply of science facilities/equipment in schools by 60%.

15.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

15.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

The policy thrust for 2025 to 2029 is centred on improving access to quality education, enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, and promoting relevant skills acquisition for economic empowerment. Strategies that will be deployed to achieve the sector objectives and deliver the expected outcomes aligned with the policy thrust will include enhancing the capacity of education institutions, teacher training, infrastructure development, resource allocation, establishing a robust Education Management Information System to inform policy and decision-making, implementing policies and programmes to increase access and equity for disadvantaged groups, focusing on teacher development, curriculum reform, and assessment, as well as enhancing and fostering partnerships with stakeholders, including communities, NGOs, and private sector organisations.

15.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

15.6.1 Programmes and Projects

The prospective programmes and projects that the education and knowledge

management sector will pursue in the medium term are diverse and ambitious. Each is designed to address critical needs and foster sustainable development in education.

The Infrastructure Development Programme will focus on enhancing the physical environment of schools. This includes the Construction and Rehabilitation of Schools' Project, which aims to improve existing structures and create new ones where needed. Additionally, the programme will ensure that schools are equipped with necessary resources through the Provision of Furniture, Equipment, and Materials. To maintain high standards, the Development of School Infrastructure Standards will ensure consistency and quality across all educational facilities.

The Teacher Professional Development Programme is designed to elevate the capacity of educators. Key projects under this programme include Teacher Training Workshops, which will provide continuous professional development, and the development of Teacher Training Modules, aimed at standardising training content. Educators will also benefit from Teacher Capacity Building Conferences, where they can exchange knowledge and learn about new teaching methodologies.

Through the Inclusive Education Programme, efforts will be made to ensure every child has access to education. This includes the Establishment of Special Needs Education Centres to support children with disabilities and Special Needs Education Training for Teachers to equip educators with the skills needed to support diverse learners. The programme

will also run Inclusive Education Awareness Campaigns to promote understanding, while Education in Emergencies will provide support in crises, and the School Feeding initiative will address nutritional needs to keep students in school. The increased access to scholarships by deserving Benue indigene students will help motivate them to study well. The focus on enrolment and retention of girls in school will help reduce the disparity in education between boys and girls, thereby promoting equality.

The Curriculum Implementation and Review Programme will focus on keeping educational content relevant and effective. It will involve the development of Teaching and Learning Materials to support educators, as well as Continuous Curriculum Review and Update to ensure that the curriculum remains up-to-date with societal needs. Teachers will also receive training on how to implement the curriculum through the Training of Teachers on the Use of Curriculum project, and the programme will also include Curriculum Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation to assess its effectiveness. Under the Assessment and Evaluation Programme, the focus will be on creating tools and systems to measure educational outcomes. The programme will involve Training for Teachers and Assessors to ensure accurate evaluation, as well as the development of Assessment and Evaluation Tools. Continuous monitoring will take place through the Continuous Assessment and Evaluation Monitoring project.

In the digital era, the Education Technology Programme will be crucial. It will introduce Digital Literacy Training

for teachers, preparing them to effectively integrate technology into their classrooms. There will also be a focus on Online Education Resources Development, ensuring that digital tools are available to enhance learning. Finally, the integration of Technology in Teaching and Learning projects, as well as digital education and literacy, will drive innovation in education through technology.

The Community Engagement and Participation Programme aims to foster greater collaboration between schools and the communities they serve. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Empowerment Programme will strengthen the role of parents in schools, while the Community-Based Education Initiatives Project will encourage local support for education. A Community Engagement Unit will be established to coordinate these efforts, alongside a Community Sensitisation and Mobilisation Initiative to raise awareness about the importance of education.

A Sustainable Funding Programme will be introduced to ensure long-term financial support for educational projects. This will include Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for Education Infrastructure Initiatives to attract investment, including improved research centres at Benue State University (BSU) that will lead to innovation in the State, establishment of satellite campuses to reduce overcrowding in BSU, as well as Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives, encouraging businesses to contribute to the education sector.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Programme will develop robust systems for tracking progress. This will include the

Development of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools Project and the Data Collection and Analysis initiative to provide accurate data. The Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation Programme will ensure that these systems are used effectively, and an Establishment of Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will be tasked with overseeing the project.

A special focus will also be placed on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education through the Benue STEM Revolution Programme. This programme will provide Teachers with Training and Development in STEM subjects, promote Partnership and Collaboration with relevant stakeholders, and ensure Student Support Engagement for learners pursuing STEM fields. It will also include a Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Programme Project to provide practical skills and a Monitoring and Evaluation component to track the impact of these initiatives.

The Education Management Information System programme will focus on data management through the Edu-portal Project, an online platform designed to streamline information collection and reporting, ensuring that decision-making is informed by reliable data.

15.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the goals outlined for the Education and Knowledge Management sector, the estimated public investment is approximately two hundred and twenty-six billion, seven hundred and fifty-six million, eight hundred and forty-nine thousand, one hundred and thirty-one naira, forty five kobo (226,756,849,131.45) for 2025-2029. It is

anticipated that a significant portion of the sector's investment will come from the private sector as the government reframes the education sector and implements policies to encourage domestic and foreign investment.

15.7 Expected Outcomes

The broad outcomes expected from the various interventions and specific benefits derivable from capital investments spread across the thirty-three (33) projects to be implemented under nine (9) broad programmes are presented in the matrices in Table 15.5. Each of these programmes and projects has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the Education and Knowledge Management sector objectives in the area of modernised and well-maintained educational institutions, improved learning environments, increased access to education for all, personalised attention to students, improved academic performance, enhanced teacher-student interaction, as well as increased classroom space.

Other outcomes include reduced overcrowding, increased research capability of Benue State University, increased access to education for disadvantaged groups, increased scholarships for deserving Benue students, improved learning outcomes for all students, increased digital education and literacy, reduced education disparities, especially enrolment and retention of girls, improved learning conditions, accurate and reliable data for decision-making, data-driven policy formulation and implementation, enhanced monitoring and evaluation, efficient and effective education data management, real-time data access and

analysis, centralised coordination and monitoring, enhanced communication and data sharing, improved response to education needs, aligned education policies and programmes, enhanced accountability and transparency, increased interest in science-based courses, improved mathematics teaching methods, increased student interest and

engagement, enhanced mathematics learning outcomes, improved science education infrastructure, enhanced hands-on learning experiences, equipped and trained workforce, enhanced employability and entrepreneurship, and improved economic growth and development.

Table 15.5: Education and Knowledge Management Sector-Level Result Framework

SDG	Outcome	KPI	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
SDG 4: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	Increased number of classrooms	Number of new classrooms constructed	34,229	37,229	39,227
	Enhanced school infrastructure and learning environments.	Amount of counterpart funding provided.	N/A	Provide 50% in counterpart funding.	Provide 80% in counterpart funding.
	Reduction in the number of sub-standard	Increased number of classrooms	8,473	4,873	1,473
	Increased number of furniture, equipment & Infrastructure in schools	Number of Furniture, Equipment & Materials Received by Schools	578,160	584,160	588,160
	Increased maintenance of schools	Percentage of Schools Receiving regular Maintenance	N/A	5%	15%
		Percentage of School meeting New Infrastructural Standards	40%	50%	70%
	Increased number of qualified teachers	Number of Teachers Trained	35,281	38,000	40,000
	Relevant modules developed	Number of Modules Developed	10,000	11,500	13,000
	Inclusive curriculum capturing Tiv, Idoma, and Iggede languages	Student performance in indigenous language subjects.	N/A	50%	80%
	Increased Special needs Centres	Number of Special Needs Education Centres Established	9	12	15
	Ensure universal access to free and compulsory	Number/ Percentage of primary schools offering	2724	100%	100%

SDG	Outcome	KPI	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
	primary education.	free education (disaggregated by LGA)			
		Enrolment rates in primary schools.	65%	Achieve 90% enrolment rates.	Achieve 100% enrolment rates.
		Retention rates in primary schools.	Current retention rates not available	Achieve 80% retention rates.	Achieve 100% retention rates.
	Enhance school infrastructure and learning environments	Number of technical/skills acquisition schools established.	14	Establish 17 technical/skills acquisition schools	Establish 18 technical/skills acquisition schools
		Enrolment rates in technical/skills acquisition programs.	N/A	30%	50%
	Increased access to scholarships for deserving Benue indigenes.	Number of scholarships awarded.	11,386	34,158	40,000
SDG 4: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. SDG 10: reduce inequality between and among countries.	Increased number of special needs teachers	Number of Teachers Trained for Special Needs Education	37	56	65
SDG 4: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. SDG 10: By 2030 reduce inequality within and among countries. SDG 16: promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions	Campaign across all LGAs in Benue State	Number of LGAs for Awareness Campaigns	N/A	13	23
	Increased education in IDP camps	Number of IDP Camps with formal learning facilities	7	21	27
	Increased literacy classes	Number of Literacy Classes Established	1,851	2,000	2,100
	Increased feeding of primary school students	No. of primary school students receiving Meals	412,783	419,783	423,783
		Enrolment rates in primary schools.	75%	Achieve 90% enrolment rates.	Achieve 100% enrolment rates.
		Attendance rates in primary schools.	N/A	Achieve 85% attendance rates.	Achieve 100% attendance rates.
SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	Improved teaching and learning materials	Number of Teaching & Learning Materials Developed	1,000	1100	1150
	Increased number of trained teachers in primary schools, secondary schools, COEs and BSU	Number of Teachers Trained in the use of Curriculum	17,640	19,000	20,000
	Enhanced teacher motivation and performance.	Teacher satisfaction and performance ratings	N/A	Achieve 80% satisfaction ratings.	Achieve 100% satisfaction ratings.
	Improved service delivery and quality assurance in schools.	Number of schools supervision visits conducted.	2,500	4,000	5,000

SDG	Outcome	KPI	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
		Compliance rates with educational standards.	N/A	Achieve 80% compliance rates.	Achieve 100% compliance rates.
	Accurate and accountable teacher workforce in public schools.	Accuracy of teacher payroll records.	N/A	Achieve 100% accuracy in payroll records.	Maintained 100% accuracy in payroll records.
	Increased number of trained teachers and assessors	Number of Teachers/Assessors Trained	18,000	22000	24000
	Improved level of evaluation	Number of Assessment & Evaluation Tools Developed in use for all Schools	5,318	6800	8000
	Technological driven education in the State	Number of Teachers Trained in Digital Literacy	18,000	19500	20500
		Percentage Level of the Education Resources Development	N/A	10%	15%
		Number of Schools Integrated in Technology	13	30	40
SDG: 16 promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions	Increased partnership and collaboration	Number of PPPs	3	6	8
		Number of Organisations Providing Corporate Services	N/A	3	5
	Enhanced service delivery in state-owned tertiary institutions.	Amount of funding allocated to tertiary institutions.	15%	17%	20%
SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, SDG 9: encompasses three important aspects of sustainable development: infrastructure, industrialization and innovation	Enhanced quality of education with a focus on science, computer, technical, and mathematics (STEM).	Number of Teachers Trained in public schools with an emphasis on science, computer, technical, and mathematics teachers to re-ignite public trust in public schools.	12,450	14000	15000
		Teacher-student ratios in STEM subjects.	N/A	Achieve a teacher student ratio of 1:30 in STEM subjects.	Achieve a teacher student ratio of 1:20 in STEM subjects.
		Number of Schools with Science Infrastructure	13	28	38
		Number of Student that Acquire Entrepreneur Skills	10,000	25,000	40,000
		Number of Partnership Collaborations	5	14	20
		M&E Feedback Report on Number of Student affected Percentages or Numeric	N/A	40%	60%
	Improved infrastructure and accreditation status at Benue State University.	Number of programmes accredited.	Current number accredited programs. (49)	Achieve accreditation for all programs.	-
	Enhanced research capabilities at Benue	Number of new research facilities established.	Existing research facilities	Establish 3 new research	Establish 5 new research

SDG	Outcome	KPI	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
	State University			facilities.	facilities.
		Number of special research grants awarded	N/A	Award 10 special research grants.	Award 20 special research grants.
SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	Reduced congestion at the main campus of Benue State University	Number of satellite campuses established.	0	Establish 1 satellite campuses.	Establish 2 satellite campuses.
		Student enrolment at satellite campuses	0	10%	30%
	Promote digital education and literacy	Number of schools and libraries with e-learning systems.	N/A	10%	15%
		Percentage of schools with digital literacy in the curriculum.	No digital literacy programs in school curriculums.	Digital literacy integrated into 10% of school curriculums.	Digital literacy integrated into 15% of school curriculums.
SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools	Enrolment rates of girls in primary and secondary schools.	35%	Increase enrolment rates of girls by 60%.	Increase enrolment rates of girls by 80%.
		Retention rates of girls in schools.	N/A	Improve retention rates of girls by 10%.	Improve retention rates of girls by 20%.
		Number of scholarships awarded to girls.	N/A	Award 300 new scholarships to girls.	Award 500 new scholarships to girls.

Sources: Ministry of Education for baseline data; targets are projections





16.0 Introduction

The health and human services sector is critical to human capital development and the realisation of Benue State's full developmental potential. It determines the extent to which the State harnesses its human resources and optimises demographic dividends. Access to quality and affordable healthcare ensures a healthy and productive labour force, which is required for accelerated growth. It reduces out-of-pocket expenses, frees up household income for productive investments, and enables individuals to live a socially and economically productive life, thus contributing to GDP growth and improving living standards.

The sector is well-organised in the State and repositioned to ensure the State achieves sectoral targets across the primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare levels. The development of the sector involves the provision of infrastructural amenities and services by skilled personnel. The sector has

infrastructural facilities that include buildings, medical and non-medical equipment, laboratory and diagnostic systems, drug storage facilities, ambulatory systems, and furniture, as well as ancillary amenities such as electricity, water, ICT, and sanitation facilities. It also involves manpower development, the provision of drugs and other essentials, and the deployment of health technologies for diagnostics and surgical operations. The provision of these infrastructural facilities and services determines the extent to which the State attains Universal Health Coverage in line with national priorities and Nigeria's commitment to the SDGs.

16.1 Institutional Arrangements

The health and human services sector comprises a supervising ministry and specialised agencies. The Ministry of Health and Human Services (MOHH) has the core mandate of formulating and implementing national and State health

policies and programmes. It also provides stewardship of the health sector by coordinating the provision of primary, secondary, tertiary, and specialised healthcare services, training health workers, managing data, and promoting research development. It has supervisory responsibility over the following agencies:

- • Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), responsible for key tertiary healthcare and manpower development institutions;
- • Hospitals Management Board (HMB), which coordinates and supervises the day-to-day management of all secondary healthcare facilities;
- • State Primary Health Care Board (SPHCB), responsible for the organisation and delivery of efficient and effective primary healthcare services;
- • Benue State Health Insurance Agency (BNSHIA), responsible for facilitating easy and stress-free financing for healthcare services among residents;
- • Benue State AIDS Control Agency (BENSACA), responsible for coordinating the multi-sectoral approach to AIDS control.
-

16.2 Situation Analysis

The health and human services sector has undergone transformational changes and holds promises for improvement. Yet, there are weaknesses and emerging challenges that may prevent Benue State from attaining universal access to healthcare services and achieving health-related SDGs. A review of the sector reveals the following key areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

16.2.1 Strengths

- Up-to-date sectoral policies, plans, and programmes
- Extensive health infrastructural facilities at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels
- Complementarity and synergy among MDAs in the provision of health services
- Availability of skilled personnel and training institutions
- A robust healthcare information management system
- Supportive healthcare financing (social insurance scheme for the formal and informal sectors)
- Commodity security (Rapid Test Kits (RTKs), Antiretroviral Drugs (ARVs) Opportunistic Infection Medicines (OIs), Polymerase Chain Reaction Tests (PCRs), Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITN), Malaria Rapid Diagnostic Tests (mRDTs), Microscopes for laboratory use, Sputum Cups used for sputum collection, Anti-Tuberculosis (Anti-Koch's Bacillus) Drugs, and Preventive Chemotherapy Medicines (PC), etc.)
- Availability of existing WDC structures

16.2.2 Weaknesses

- Over-reliance on funding by development partners
- Unbalanced skill mixes of health workforce with shortages of some key skilled personnel
- Weak public health emergency and surveillance infrastructure
- Inadequate infrastructural facilities, especially at lower levels of the health system

- Poor maintenance of healthcare infrastructure facilities
- Low health insurance scheme coverage and enrolment
- Insufficient data collection tools and low reporting rate
- Weak collaboration with CSOs/NGOs and development partners
- Weak logistics and supply chain management for essential drugs and commodities
- Non-availability of costed MSP
- Low private sector participation

16.2.3 Opportunities

- Strong political will to accelerate the development of the sector
- Commitment for continued funding from partners for treatment and diagnosis of diseases, provision of commodities (drugs for malaria, tuberculosis, HIV, family planning, etc.)
- Reintroduction of a bond scheme

for medical students to work for the State Government after graduation

- Established BHCPF, BNSHIA, and IMPACT
- Introduction of the Drug Management Agency (DMA) Bill

16.2.4 Threats

- Low budgetary allocation and low release of budgeted funds
- Protracted insecurity across the State
- Staff attrition
- Donor fatigue and the absence of sustainability plans in the event of cessation of donor funding

16.3 Performance of the Sector (2019-2023)

There has been growth in the health sector in Benue State through improvements in infrastructure, equipment, and health commodities like drugs, with interventions from the Basic Health Care Provision Fund. Primary healthcare





implementation of major policies such as the National Malaria Diagnosis and Treatment Policy, the Task Shifting Policy, the Waste Management Policy, and the Essential Drugs Policy. It also strengthened partnerships with the Federal Ministry of Health for the Basic Health Provision Fund and with international agencies (WHO and UNICEF) and international development partners (including the Global Fund, Hellen Keller International, and USAID). Programs implemented during the period under review included the Neglected Tropical Diseases, Malaria programme, TB/Leprosy programme, HIV/AIDS control programmes, Reproductive Health, Family Planning, Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response, Logistic Management Coordination, as well as the CoPREP project and IMPACT project. Other projects/priority initiatives executed included:

- The Drug Management Agency Bill has passed the Second Reading, awaiting approval
- Reintroduction of the training programme for Basic Nursing and Midwifery
- Re-approval of the BOND Scheme for Clinical Medical Students to boost human resources for Health in the State
- Provision of a special allowance of N100,000 for NYSC Doctors in the State
- Full accreditation of the Pharmacy Technician Department for the training of Pharmacy Technicians at the School of Health Technology
- Introduction of monthly essential primary healthcare outreach services (diagnosis and treatment) to five IDP camps
- The implementation of the policies, programmes, and projects in the sector has contributed to the achievement of

objectives of the sector. Specific achievements recorded between 2019 and 2023 include:

- Increase in the training of health workers from 10% to 40%
- Achievement of the targeted 15% budgetary allocation to the health sector, but budget release generally remained less than 50%
- Reduction in the incidence of out-of-stock syndrome to below 50%
- Full accreditation of 95% of courses offered in health institutions in the State
- 100% availability of functional PHS facilities in 276 wards of Benue State
- About 80% donor interventions integrated and harmonised with State sector plans
- Establishment of a platform for public and private sector dialogue for effective coordination and development of the health sector
- Facilitating inter-MDA coordination and synergy through bi-annual meetings

Overall, the sector is making progress towards achieving SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing for all), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 6 (Clean Health and Sanitation), and SDG 17 (Partnership for goals) between 2019 and 2023. Available data also shows about 50% performance in the implementation of the 2024 Annual Operational Plan.

16.4 Sector objectives, Strategies and Targets

16.4.1 Strategic Objectives

The broad objective of the health and human services sector is to enhance the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of

healthcare services in Benue State, ensuring equitable healthcare delivery and improved health outcomes across all demographics through preventive and curative interventions. The specific objectives are to:

- Improve healthcare service delivery and access to health services in the State;
- Increase healthcare coverage by strengthening the health insurance scheme in the State;
- Ensure the provision of basic healthcare services to all segments of the population;
- Improve the infrastructure and human resource capacity of the health sector;
- Strengthen health governance and management of the healthcare system;
- Improve health financing and the sustainability of healthcare services;
- Reduce maternal and child mortality and other diseases;
- Improve health information management and the integration of health data into decision-making.

16.4.2 Implementation Strategies

The strategies to achieve the sector objectives include:

- **Universal access and coverage**
- Improving healthcare access, enhancing maternal and child health services, and addressing preventive causes of death to significantly boost the health and survival of women and children;
- Strengthening preventive and curative health interventions to improve health outcomes, reduce disease burden, and improve overall

health standards;

- • Expanding and upgrading



households with at least two LLINs through a mass free distribution campaign;

- • Deploying RDT and/or microscopy to public and private facilities;

-

- • **Mental Health**

- • Strengthening the capacity of specialists and non-specialists to manage severe and mild/moderate mental illnesses, respectively, including substance use disorders in non-specialised mental health settings;

- • Establishing community-level psychosocial support services, especially during public health and other health emergencies;

- • Training and supporting community-based workers for the diagnosis and treatment of malaria under community case management of childhood illnesses;

-

- • **Communicable Diseases**

- • Integrating TB screening and referral/case-finding into the routine activities of non-TB public and private healthcare service providers, including providers at the community level, to increase case detection and notification;

- • Establishing a system for sustainable supply of HIV/AIDS testing commodities, laboratory supplies, drugs, and other commodities;

- • Developing and implementing a comprehensive hepatitis communication strategy across all levels;

- • Non-Transmittable Diseases

- Integrating NTD into service delivery in health facilities and relevant social services (especially water, sanitation, education);
- Strengthening the procurement and distribution system of relevant chemotherapeutic drugs and equipment to all health facilities and communities for the management of NTDs;
- Intensifying awareness campaigns;
- Strengthening Evidence Base
- Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation of projects and programmes under MOHH;
- Providing adequate ICT tools and solutions for the collection of programme data and reporting;
- Establishing an ICT Department to enable the seamless deployment of hardware and software;
- Establishing a Special Projects unit;
- Healthcare Financing
- Increasing capital expenditure performance targeted at improving public healthcare institutional infrastructures at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in all LGAs in the State;
- Implementing initiatives to lower healthcare costs and enhance financial accessibility for all citizens using social insurance schemes;
- Strengthening collaboration between NHIS and SHIS to explore inclusion of mental health into the benefit package of the social health insurance scheme;
- Developing capacities for

packaging PPPs projects for private sector investments.

16.4.3 Key Targets

Tracking progress towards ensuring healthy lives and well-being for the residents in the State will require setting performance targets consistent with the national health sector result framework and the SDGs. The following targets will be pursued during the period 2025-2029:

- Strengthen 982 of Public PHC facilities through renovation, re-modelling, and equipping with priority given to facilities providing essential ANC and PNC services;
- Establish 3 Specialist Hospitals;
- Increase access to healthcare services within a 5km radius to 75%;
- Ensure 75% of Public Healthcare Facilities have adequate staffing;
- Increase the total number of healthcare personnel (doctors, nurses, and midwives) from 1 medical personnel for every 7,464 people in the population to 1 medical personnel for every 4,556 people living in the State;
- Increase access to health insurance coverage to 60%;
- Increase access to free healthcare services for the vulnerable group from 58,296 to 500,000;
- Increase insurance coverage to 1 million;
- Reduce maternal and infant mortality ratio by 40%;
- Reduce the prevalence rate of all infectious diseases to less than 5%;
- Reduce maternal mortality from 70/100,000 to 42/100,000 live births;
- Increase immunisation coverage by 18%;
- Increase access to TB diagnostic and treatment services in 100 public PHCs and private care providers

promoting active case detection;

- Increase the budgetary allocation to health above 15% of the total annual budget.

Other age-standardised targets across major communicable and non-communicable diseases are in Table 16.1.

Table 16.1: Age-standardized targets across major Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases

	Top causes of death	Current Mortality per 100 000 population	Target (Projected Percentage Reduction-10% reduction per year)
	Neonatal conditions	118.8	50%
	Lower respiratory infections	103.1	50%
	Diarrheal diseases	72	50%
	Tuberculosis	63.4	50%
	Malaria	50.2	50%
	Ischaemic heart disease	30.5	50%
	Stroke	28.7	50%
	Congenital anomalies	24.7	50%
	HIV/AIDS	21.9	50%
	Meningitis	21.7	50%

16.5 Priority Programmes and Projects

The State will sustain the implementation of existing and new externally-funded and government-funded programmes and projects in the sector. The following are the priority programmes and projects that will be implemented during the period 2025-2029:

- Disease Control and Prevention Programme
- State Malaria Elimination Programme (SMEP)
- Tuberculosis/Leprosy Programme (TBL)
- Control of Neglected Tropical Disease Programme (NTDs)
- Nutrition Programme
- State AIDS and STIs Control Programme (SASCP)
- Immunisation Programme
- Reproductive Health Programme (RH)
- Mental Health Programme
- Blindness Prevention Programme
- Maternal and Child Health Improvement Programme
- Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR)
- Safe Motherhood Programme
- Antenatal, Postnatal, and Child Health Services.
- Construction and equipping of Facilities
- Renovation, re-modelling, and equipping 276 PHCs

- Upgrading 3 specialist hospitals in Vandeikya, Okpokwu, and Buruku LGAs
- Completion of renovation works for state medical stores
- Manpower Development: Provision of infrastructural facilities, equipment, and qualified academic and support staff for:
- Introduction of new programmes in BSUTH institutions
- Medical Administration Training Programme for health workers
- Health Information Management
- Dental Technicians
- Imaging Technicians
- Epidemiology and Disease Control
- Pharmacy (at the School of Health Technology)
- Upgrading the Environmental Health Medical Lab Science Department and Public Health Departments to College Level

16.6 Indicative Cost/Investment Requirement

The estimated amount of investment required for the period 2025-2029 to achieve the goals outlined for the sector is **84,292,832,295.52**. The total investment requirement for the priority projects and programmes will be shared among the public, private, and development partners.

16.7 Outcomes

Outcome, performance indicators, baseline data and targets are detailed in Table 16.2.

SDG	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
Goals 3, 5, 9, & 10	Improved Healthcare Infrastructure to increase Healthcare Access	Number of functional healthcare facilities Percentage of rural population with access	926	1091	1201
Goals 3 & 5	Reduced Maternal and Child Mortality	Mortality rate	Maternal Mortality Rate 165/100,000 MICS 2017	132/100,000	99/100,000
			Neonatal Mortality Rate 12/1000 LB	10/1000LB	7/1000LB
			Infant Mortality rate 17/1000 LB MICS 2021	14/1000LB	10/1000LB
			Under 5 Mortality Rate 24/1000 LB	19/1000LB	14/1000LB
Goals 3 & 5	Increased access to Drugs and Medical Consumables/Commodities		TB N 240,956,234 (Donor Supported)		
			HIV \$40,000,000.00 (Donor Supported)		
			NTDs N 20,000,000.00 (Donor Supported)		
			Malaria \$2,100,000.00 SMC N 6,000,000.00 (Donor Supported)		
Goals 3 & 5	Enhanced availability and quality of care	Number of Health care workers	844 (Doctors, Nurses and Midwives)	1156	1631
Goals 3 & 5	Health Insurance Coverage	Number of Insured Citizens	58,296 Enrollees	1,979,965	3,957,927
Sources: MICS, BNSHIA, DPS, DPRS, WHO					

Expected broad outcomes of interventions include:

- Improvement in life expectancy for pregnant women and infants
- Improved Standard of Healthcare Facilities
- Elimination of staff attrition and Staff turnover
- Elimination of catastrophic financial health burdens
- Elimination of counterfeit drugs while ensuring consistent supply of drugs and consumables
- Improvement in overall quality of health for all.



Women Affairs and Social Development

Chapter 17



17.0 Introduction

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development plays a pivotal role in advancing the development of Benue State by championing gender equality, safeguarding women's rights, and promoting social inclusion. Women constitute approximately 49% of the population and make substantial contributions to critical sectors such as agriculture, marketing, and distribution, which are fundamental to increasing food production and driving economic growth. Recognising the importance of women's empowerment, the Ministry strives to improve their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities while working to eliminate discriminatory practices that constrain their potential.

The Ministry actively defends the rights of women and children, advocating for laws to combat gender-based violence, abuse, and discrimination. It also ensures the implementation of international agreements on women's rights and social

development, embedding these priorities into State policies and programmes. Collaborating with the Benue State House of Assembly, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the Women Development Centre, Makurdi, the ministry raises awareness about women's rights and fosters social empowerment across the State.

Furthermore, the Ministry oversees the Benue State Rehabilitation Board, Apir, which advocates for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, ensuring they are not marginalised. Through these initiatives, the Ministry aims to create an inclusive society where women, children, and other vulnerable groups can thrive and contribute to the overall progress of Benue State.

17.1 Institutional Setting

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development is central to promoting gender equality and women's rights in

Benue State. It collaborates with the Benue State Rehabilitation Board, Apir, to implement policies and programmes addressing issues such as gender-based violence and discrimination. Partnerships with NGOs and civil society groups amplify the Ministry's efforts to advance women's empowerment and rights. The Ministry works with federal agencies and international organisations such as UN Women, UNICEF, and UNFPA, which provide funding, technical support, and global best practices to aid women's development programmes. This institutional framework fosters a supportive environment for advancing women's empowerment and social development in Benue State.

17.2 Sector Performance

From 2020 to 2024, the Ministry implemented several key initiatives to enhance women's welfare and empowerment. Cash transfer programmes targeted vulnerable groups, including widows, single mothers, and victims of domestic violence, significantly improving their living standards. Skill acquisition and training programmes empowered women and individuals with special needs, fostering entrepreneurship and economic independence. However, the ministry faced challenges with Gender-Based Violence (GBV), as reported cases increased due to heightened awareness and improved reporting mechanisms rather than an actual rise in incidents. Despite efforts to encourage women's participation in governance, their representation in elective and appointive positions has declined over the past five years, underscoring the need for renewed focus on political inclusion. While exact revenue figures are unavailable, donor support and partnerships have been crucial in funding the ministry's activities. This

performance review highlights the ministry's successes and the challenges it faces in promoting gender equality and social empowerment.

17.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

17.3.1 Strengths

Government Support: Access to State resources and political backing enhances policy implementation.

Donor Support: Strong partnerships with donors bolster the ministry's financing capacity.

Community Engagement: Close ties with local communities enable effective grassroots initiatives.

Established Network: Collaborations with NGOs, international bodies, and government agencies strengthen project execution.

17.3.2 Challenges

Limited Funding: Like many government bodies, the Ministry faces budget constraints, limiting its ability to execute large-scale programmes.

Bureaucracy: Government procedures can sometimes be slow and cumbersome, affecting the efficiency and speed of project implementation.

Limited Data: A lack of comprehensive data on women's issues hinders effective policymaking and programme development.

Economic Empowerment Programmes: The Ministry can implement programmes aimed at empowering women economically through skills training, microfinance, etc.

Cultural Barriers: Traditional gender roles and cultural norms hinder the Ministry's efforts to promote women's rights.



17.3.3 Opportunities

Despite the challenges, the following external opportunities exist to improve the performance of key variables in the sector in the medium term:

International Partnerships: There are opportunities to collaborate with international organisations for funding, expertise, and support in implementing gender-focused projects.

Policy Development: Opportunities exist to influence and develop policies that promote gender equality and protect women's rights.

Legal Reforms: There is scope for advocating for legal reforms to protect women against violence and discrimination.

Staff Training: The ongoing reforms by the current government provide an opportunity to strengthen staff capacities across the board.

17.3.4 Threats

Political Instability: Changes in government or political instability can affect the continuity and effectiveness of the Ministry's programmes.

Socio-Economic Challenges: High levels of poverty and unemployment exacerbate women's issues, making the Ministry's work more challenging.

Cultural Resistance: Resistance from conservative groups can impede efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights.

Resource Constraints: Limited financial and human resources affect the implementation and sustainability of programmes.

Public Perception: Misconceptions or lack of awareness about the Ministry's role and importance can affect public support and cooperation.

Political Interference: Political interference undermines the Ministry's autonomy, resulting in policies and programmes not tailored to the needs of the target population.

17.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

17.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of this sector is to promote gender equality, protect the rights of women, children, and the elderly, improve their health and well-being, and enhance the economic opportunities and participation of women in Benue State. The medium-term objectives include:

- i. Establish the Benue Women's Economic Empowerment Fund (BWEFF) with initial seed funding of 1 billion.
- ii. Provide entrepreneurship training

- and mentorship programmes for 5,000 women.
- iii. Offer microfinance loans to 10,000 women at single-digit interest rates.
- iv. Support 500 women-led SMEs with capacity building and access to markets.

17.4.2 Medium Term Targets

Targets to be pursued by this sector include:

- i. Increase the percentage of women in leadership positions to at least 45% by 2029.
- ii. Increase the proportion of women obtaining financial services to 25% by 2026.
- iii. Achieve a 30% reduction in maternal mortality ratio by 2029.
- iv. Ensure access to antenatal care for 95% of pregnant women by 2029.
- v. Reduce reported cases of gender-based violence by 50% and establish support centres for survivors by 2029.
- vi. Increase girl-child enrolment by 30%, aiming for a 95% enrolment rate by 2029.
- vii. Reduce poverty and hunger among women and children by 30% by 2029.
- viii. Enhance education and skills development for vulnerable populations by 25% by 2029.

17.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

17.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- i. Promote quota systems for women in government and corporate boards to increase female representation in decision-making positions.

- ii. Provide leadership training and capacity-building programmes for women to prepare them for leadership roles.
- iii. Offer microfinance initiatives and accessible credit options to empower women economically.
- iv. Deliver women-focused entrepreneurship training and support to enhance business skills and economic independence.
- v. Ensure access to family planning and reproductive health services to improve health outcomes.
- vi. Provide free or subsidised antenatal care services to promote maternal and child health.
- vii. Advocate for strengthened laws and enforcement against gender-based violence (GBV) to ensure justice.
- viii. Provide counselling, shelters, and other support services for survivors of GBV.
- ix. Train law enforcement officers and healthcare providers to handle GBV cases sensitively and effectively.
- x. Provide free or subsidised education for girls, along with scholarships and incentives to promote enrolment.
- xi. Implement social protection



programmes such as cash transfers and food assistance to reduce poverty among vulnerable groups.

- xii. Promote job creation and entrepreneurship initiatives to empower women, youth, and people with special needs economically.

17.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

17.6.1 Programmes and Projects

Government initiatives to enhance the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Benue State include:

Women's Empowerment Programme

- Leadership Development Project for Women
- Gender-Based Violence Support Services
- Women's Health and Wellness Initiative

Financial Inclusion Programme

- Microfinance Programme for Women

Health Programme

- Maternal and Child Health Project

Education Programme

- Vocational Training and Apprenticeships for Women and Girls

Poverty Reduction Programme

- Social Protection Project (Cash Transfers, Food Assistance)

17.6.2 Indicative Cost

The estimated public investment required for achieving the outlined goals is 23,286,238,867.00 for the period 2025–2029.

17.7 Expected Outcomes

The following are the expected outcomes from the implementation of the objectives: more diverse decision-making processes, increased representation of women's opinions, role models for future generations, economic empowerment of women, improved financial inclusion, increased access to credit and savings, improved healthcare outcomes for mothers, reduced infant mortality rates, improved health outcomes for mothers and babies, reduced complications during pregnancy and childbirth, increased access to quality healthcare, improved safety and security for women and girls, increased support for survivors of gender-based violence, reduced stigma around reporting gender-based violence, improved education outcomes for girls, increased opportunities for future generations, reduced gender gap in education, improved economic well-being for women and vulnerable populations, increased access to basic needs like food and shelter, reduced inequality, improved quality of life for women and vulnerable populations, improved education outcomes for girls, increased opportunities for economic empowerment, and reduced inequality. It is anticipated that these measures will contribute to a significant improvement in socio-economic indicators, potentially adding billions of Naira to the economic output by enhancing women's participation in the workforce and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the reduction in healthcare costs associated with maternal and infant health complications could save the State substantial resources, enabling the reallocation of funds to other critical sectors.

Table 17.1: Sector-Level Results Framework for Women Affairs and Social Development.

SDG	Outcome	Key performance Indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls	More diverse decision-making processes and increased representation of women's perspectives	Increased number of women in leadership position.	19.26%	35%	45%
SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls	Improved wellbeing for GBV survivors and increased access to GBV services	Reduced cases of genderbased violence	7622	6500	4000
SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing	Improved health seeking behaviour	Increased access to quality health care for women, girls and vulnerable person.	N/A	45%	60%
SDG 1: No Poverty	Improved economic well-being for women and vulnerable populations.	Increased access to credit and savings	N/A	18%	25%
SDG 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for All	Reduced maternal mortality rate	Increased number of women attending antenatal care	N/A	70%	95%
	Reduced infant mortality rates	Reduced number of child mortality	56%	30%	20%
SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All	Improved education outcomes for girls	Increased number of girls school enrolment and completion	N/A	15%	25%
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Increased opportunities for economic empowerment and reduced inequality.	Increased number of women, girls and vulnerable people with vocational skills	N/A	75%	95%
		Total number of people on the vulnerable register	8982	12500	14500
	Sources: Director Planning Research and Statistics, MOASW for baselinedata; targets are projections				



18.0 Introduction

Benue State has a vibrant youth population. With a total population of 5.7 million people, the youth constitute 2.1 million, representing 36.4% of the total population. Before the establishment of a full-fledged Ministry for Youth, Sports, and Creativity, a Department within the Benue State Ministry of Education handled youth affairs. Given the large youth population, it became necessary to establish a dedicated ministry to address their needs. Consequently, the Department of Youth, Sports, and Creativity was carved out of the Ministry of Education and elevated to a full-fledged Ministry in 1999. This move reflected the growing recognition of the importance of youth in national development. The

Ministry's creation aimed to enable the government to formulate and implement policies related to youth, sports, and creativity. Sports and the creative industry are pivotal areas that captivate the interest of the youth. Thus, the Ministry was geared towards youth development and harnessing their potential in sports and the creative industry for societal progress. In this regard, the onus lies on the Ministry to create an enabling environment for the youth, either individually or collectively, to thrive and contribute to the State's progress and general well-being.

The importance of the Youth, Sports, and Creativity industry cannot be overstated. It ensures the development of young people, promotes sports, and encourages

creativity. Specifically, it plays strategic roles in contributing to Benue State's economic growth through job creation in sports, creative industries, and youth-led initiatives. These roles include:

- a) Empowering young people through education, skills training, and employment opportunities.
- b) Providing platforms for youth engagement, participation, and leadership development.
- c) Addressing youth-related issues such as unemployment, poverty, and social unrest.
- d) Promoting sports as a tool for social cohesion and wellness.
- e) Developing sports infrastructure and facilities.
- f) Encouraging participation in sports, physical activities, and recreation.
- g) Fostering creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- h) Promoting arts, culture, and heritage.
- i) Supporting creative industries and talent development.

Given the significant resources available to the government over the past five years, coupled with the vibrant youth population and growing demand for creative services and sports development, the sector has immense growth potential. It can empower young people to become active and responsible citizens, promote sports for social cohesion and inclusivity, and foster national pride. The sector also has the potential to develop world-class sports talent and address youth restiveness. Furthermore, the sector could generate revenue through sports events, tourism, and creative industries, contributing to poverty reduction in the State.

18.1 Institutional Setting

The government has established the following institutions to enable the sector to perform its strategic roles and achieve its core mandates:

- (i) Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Creativity (MYSC).
- (ii) Benue State Sports Council (BSSC).
- (iii) Benue State Council for Arts and Culture (BSCAC).
- (iv) Benue State Sports Marketing and Lottery Board.

The key mandates and activities of these institutions include:

- i. Formulating and implementing policies.
- ii. Empowering youth through sports development.
- iii. Promoting creative industries and cultural activities.
- iv. Developing and managing sports infrastructure.
- v. Supporting athletes.
- vi. Engaging youth in community development and civic participation.
- vii. Collaborating with stakeholders to promote youth development through sports.
- viii. Monitoring and ensuring effective implementation of programmes and policies.
- ix. Establishing zonal youth and sports centres across the State.

Data on the sector's growth trajectory is limited. However, figures from the Benue State Government (BNSG) Annual Reports (2019-2023) and the Benue Economic and Environmental Survey (BEES, 2020) indicate that the sector contributed 5% to GDP, 10% to employment, and 10% to poverty reduction over five years, generating 200 million in revenue. Data for the creativity

department, established in 2024, is not yet available. The available figures highlight sluggish growth in the past five years, with limited investment in sports infrastructure and the creative industry.

18.2 Sector Performance 2020-2024

A review of the sector's performance over the past five years reveals that no significant age or gender disparities exist in the Youth, Sports, and Creativity sector in Benue State. Youths of all genders and capabilities participated freely in sporting activities. However, the sports infrastructure is grossly inadequate and in various states of disrepair. The existing facilities are few, outdated, and require complete replacement. Additionally, a dietary kitchen for Benue athletes remains nonexistent. The government appears committed to the sector's development, as reflected in the 2016–2025 development

plan, which outlines result-oriented policies, viable programmes, and projects designed to transform the lives of Benue youth through sports and creativity. The plan includes the provision of state-of-the-art sports facilities in every Local Government Area to identify and nurture talent in sports, as well as mentorship, role modelling, and leadership training programmes for youth. It also calls for developing sports facilities for the vulnerable and physically challenged in the State.

Despite these plans, most policies, programmes, and projects remain unimplemented. However, the current administration has introduced a few measures to revitalise the moribund sector. These include renovating sporting facilities such as the Aper Aku and McCarthy stadia and increasing funding for sporting activities. With the renewed





attention given to the sector, it is hoped that participation in sports and youth development activities will receive a significant boost in Benue State.

18.3 Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

18.3.1 Strengths

- i. The high number of youth in the population provides the required talents for the sector.
- ii. Availability of raw talents awaiting nurturing.
- iii. Abundance of natural resources.
- iv. Suitable weather conditions for sports development.

18.3.2 Challenges/Weaknesses

- i. Absence of a practical and workable policy for sports.
- ii. The moribund state of school sports.

- iii. Lack of an enabling environment for participation in the sector across the State.
- iv. Frequent changes in administrative personnel.
- v. Inadequate funding.
- vi. Insufficient equipment, facilities, and proper reward systems.
- vii. Lack of capacity building for coaches and administrative personnel.
- viii. Inadequate reward systems for athletes and sports administrators within the State.

18.3.3 Opportunities

- i. Availability of manpower.
- ii. Presence of key institutions that can partner with the sector.
- iii. An established board (Benue State Sports Marketing and Lotteries Board) tasked with revenue

- generation.
- iv. A government committed to the development of youth, sports, and creativity.
- v. Availability of vast land to establish facilities across the State.

18.3.4 Threats

- i. Security threats arising from the activities of herdsmen.
- ii. Poaching of athletes by other States.
- iii. Better reward systems for athletes and sports administrators in foreign clubs.
- iv. Youth indulgence in substance use to enhance performance.
- v. Economic challenges, including inflation and the high cost of living.

18.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

18.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the Youth, Sports, and Creativity sector during the State's Development Plan (2025-2029) is to empower and develop the potential of youths through inclusive and accessible opportunities in sports, creativity, and cultural activities. This will foster their physical, emotional, and cognitive growth, and promote their active participation in the development efforts of the State. The specific objectives include:

- i. Empowering the youth.
- ii. Developing sports infrastructure.
- iii. Promoting creative industries.
- iv. Preserving the cultural heritage of Benue State.
- v. 18.4.2 Medium-Term Targets (2025-2029).

18.4.2 Medium Term Targets(2025-2029)

The medium-term targets for the five-year plan are:

- i. Increase youth employment and entrepreneurship opportunities by 35% by 2029.
- ii. Reduce the number of out-of-school youths by 30% through increased access to quality education and vocational training by 2026.
- iii. Increase youth representation in leadership positions and decision-making processes by 20% by 2029.
- iv. Reduce youth vulnerability to crime, violence, and substance abuse by 30% by 2029.
- v. Increase participation in sports and physical activity by 25% by 2029.
- vi. Identify and train at least 150 young athletes in various sports by 2029.
- vii. Win at least three national championships in various sports by 2029.
- viii. Generate a minimum of 100 million from sports tourism and events.
- ix. Organise at least 10 community sports events annually, engaging a minimum of 1,500 citizens per event.
- x. Upgrade the Benue State Sports Council to meet sector standards, fostering robust sports administration by 2026.

18.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

18.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

The following strategies and policy measures will be deployed over the plan period:

- (i) Empowering youth for sustainable development.
- (ii) Promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles among citizens.



- (iii) Developing sports talent.
- (iv) Encouraging community engagement.
- (v) Enhancing the State's image among other States.
- (vi) Generating revenue and creating jobs through sports tourism and events.
- (vii) Promoting and preserving the State's rich cultural heritage while developing its tourism potential.
- (viii) Developing sports infrastructure.
- (ix) Promoting arts and culture.
- (x) Developing the creative industry.

18.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects, and Indicative Cost 2025-2029

18.6.1 Programmes

The identified programmes include:

- (i) Provision of sports facilities.

- (ii) Supply of sports equipment.
- (iii) Organisation of grassroots sports competitions.
- (iv) Participation in national and international competitions.
- (v) Secondary school festival of creative arts and crafts.
- (vi) Benue Creative Dance Championship Concert.
- (vii) Talent Hunt/Development (Benue Holiday Camp and Benue Got Talent).
- (viii) Comedy shows (e.g., Benue of a Thousand Laughs).
- (ix) Celebration of World Creativity Day.
- (x) Youth empowerment and skills acquisition training.
- (xi) Youth fellowship and exchange programmes.
- (xii) Youth awareness and education activities.

- (xiii) Benue Youth Parliament.
- (xiv) International/ African Youth Day celebrations.
- (xv) Youth involvement in agriculture.

18.6.2 Projects

Proposed projects include:

- (i) Construction of mini-stadia and courts in all Local Government Areas.
- (ii) Construction of multipurpose indoor sports halls.
- (iii) Construction of swimming pools.
- (iv) Provision of athletes' hostels.
- (v) Supply of balls, rackets, and other sports kits.
- (vi) Supply of gym and athletics equipment.
- (vii) Organisation of the Benue State Sports Festival.
- (viii) Hosting of the Governor's Cup football competition.
- (ix) Organisation of inter-local government competitions.
- (x) Organisation of the Benue River Carnival.
- (xi) Preparation and participation in national and international sports festivals.
- (xii) Construction of Youth

Development Centres in the three zones of the State.

- (xiii) Establishment of a Creative Hub/Centre in all 23 LGAs for talent harnessing and training.
- (xiv) Construction of an ultra-modern film cinema industry and film academy.
- (xv) Purchase of film equipment.

18.6.3 Indicative Cost

The estimated public investment required to achieve these goals is 36.765 billion for the five-year plan period (2025–2029). The commitment of the current administration, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, is expected to revitalise the moribund sector and achieve the outlined targets within the plan period.

18.7 Expected Outcomes

Broadly, the expected outcomes from these high-level strategies, policy measures, and significant public investment in the sector include enhanced confidence and self-esteem among youth, as well as improved leadership and decision-making skills among the youth, among other benefits. Specifically, the expected outcomes from achieving the sector objectives are detailed in Table 18.1.

Table 18.1: Sector-Level Results Framework for Youth, Sports and Creativity

SDGs	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline 2024	Target	
				2027	2029
SDG 8	Increased youth empowerment	Percentage of youth taking leadership roles in community or sports organizations	5%	15%	26%
SDG 8	Increased youth access to education and vocational training	Increased enrolment rates in secondary and tertiary education	N/A	20%	35%
		Enhanced access to vocational training and apprenticeships	N/A	15%	20%
		Number of youths registered in sports and creative programs	2500	3500	5000
		Frequency of youth engagement in organized events (e.g., sports tournaments, art festivals)	5/year	15/year	20/year
		Number of community-based sports and creative activities organized	115	150	250
SDG 8	Improved youth skills and talent development	Frequency of youth engagement in organized events (e.g., sports tournaments, art festivals).	115	200	300
		Number of youths completing certified skill development programs	10200	15,000	20,000
		Success rate of youth advancing to higher levels of skill in chosen activities	50%	70%	85%
SDG 8	Enhanced youth employability and entrepreneurship	Percentage of youth gaining employment after training or participation in programs	60%	70%	85%
		Percentage number of youth accessing entrepreneurial funding or grants.	<1%	15%	23%
		Number of partnerships with businesses for youth internships/apprenticeships	2%	15%	30%
SDG 11	Better youth representation and engagement in decision-making processes	Number of youth representatives in decision-making bodies (government, community, etc.)	3%	17%	25%
		Number of youth consultation forums organized	1%	10%	20%
SDG 11	Improved sports infrastructure and facilities	Number of new or upgraded sports facilities	None	10	20
		Percentage of youth-friendly sports facilities available in each community.	1%	15%	25%
SDG 17	Improved collaboration with national and international sports Organisations	Number of partnerships formed with national and international sports bodies	30	35	40
		Increase in funding or sponsorship from national and international organizations	None	5	10

SDG 11	Improved social cohesion and	Number of community events and sports programs aimed at youth	115	150	200
SDG 11	Enhanced social inclusion and diversity	Participation by youth with disabilities	1%	7%	10%
		Number of programs tailored to marginalized or minority groups.	50	70	90
Goal 8	Increased revenue generation through sports and creativity for economic growth	Revenue generated through youth-led sports and creative enterprises.	4 billion Naira	8 billion Naira	10 billion Naira
Sources: Ministry of Youth, Sports and Creativity, 2024 Budget. Budgeted data; targets are projections					

Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management

Chapter 19



19.0 Introduction

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHA&DM) coordinates the activities of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) relevant to it, as they provide crucial data, information, and actions related to emergency relief, displaced communities, existing emergency policies, relief programmes, and projects. The sector was established in May 2023 to oversee and implement various activities. It is still in its early phases. Although MDAs within the sector have existed, their operations were not previously coordinated in this way. The establishment of the ministry offers an opportunity to strengthen the organisation of special and vulnerable groups, improve resource allocation mechanisms, and foster collaborations

with national and international assistance agencies.

19.1 Institutional Setting

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management operates within a multi-sectoral framework, collaborating with key institutions at both State and Federal levels to ensure coordinated responses to emergencies, social welfare challenges, and humanitarian issues. This collaboration is especially critical given the increasing numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and communities affected by flooding, communal disputes, farmer-herder conflicts, and acts of terrorism. Services for people with disabilities have also become a priority, necessitating strategic

partnerships to ensure inclusive service delivery. Although previous development plans, such as the State Action Plan, Benue State Humanitarian Response Plan (BSHRP), Rapid Response Fund Plan, Durable Solutions Action Plan, Biometric Registration of IDPs Plan, and Land Allocation for Refugee Farming Plan, did not specifically benchmark this sector, current realities demand a stronger focus on humanitarian interventions. The Federal Government and international partners have significantly contributed by providing relief items, health services, and social assistance to displaced populations. The Ministry's effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate depends on robust institutional collaboration with the following partners: The Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA) provides critical data on emergency situations, displaced communities, and relief efforts. The Ministry of Water Resources, Environment, and Climate Change addresses flood management, water resources, and environmental hazards. The National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) facilitates social welfare programmes, including cash transfers and youth employment initiatives. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order ensures access to justice, upholds human rights, and resolves land and other disputes, in conjunction with the Benue State Commission for Peace and Reconciliation. The Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development focuses on post-disaster economic recovery and rural development. The Ministry of Finance: Oversees funding for disaster management and humanitarian programmes. The Budget and Economic Planning Commission ensures budget allocation and provides evidence-based data on vulnerable groups and their facilities through the Social Register. The Benue State Primary Health Care Board offers primary healthcare services to displaced persons and vulnerable groups.

The Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism leads public awareness campaigns and disseminates critical information on emergencies and social services. The Ministry of Lands and Survey manages land issues and resettlement efforts for displaced communities. The Ministry of Education and Knowledge Management oversees the education of displaced children, ensuring continuity in learning. The Ministry of Women Affairs advocates for the rights of women and vulnerable groups, particularly within displaced populations.

19.2 Sector Performance

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs has documented several achievements, including: successful collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on biometric data capture and IDP registration in Benue State, the foundation-laying ceremony for the construction of an ultra-modern conference hall equipped with a situation room for humanitarian coordination meetings and training sessions, establishment of a reliable coordination tool for all implementing partners operating in Benue's humanitarian domain, Ongoing efforts to mediate and maintain peace between IDPs and their host communities, building synergy among line ministries and departments responsible for delivering humanitarian assistance to IDPs, successful coordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to manage Cameroonian refugees and IDPs in Benue State.

A summary of individuals affected by humanitarian crises annually, from 2018 to 2024, is presented in Table 19.1. The table categorises persons displaced due to Fulani Herdsmen attacks, military attacks, and flooding.

Table 19.1: IDPs DISPLACED AS A RESULT OF FULANI HERDSMEN ATTACKS

Year	Households	Individuals	0-5yrs	6-17yrs	18-59yrs	60+ years	Disabled	Remark
2018/19	82,658	483,672	112,617	159,444	193,056	18,575	792	2 nd
2020	29,249	203,230	28,341	67,093	104,299	3,497	111	5 th
2021	128,390	818,049	122,091	288,741	460,031	7,186	2,742	1 st
2022	58,431	409,017	61,354	201,979	142,935	1,549	2,347	3 rd
2023								
2024**	34,442	132,104						4 th
MILITARY ATTACKS								
2021	2,402	27,196	4,002	5,416	17,399	379	166	
FLOOD VICTIMS								
			Injured	Deaths	Houses Lost	Farmland Lost in Hectares		
2021	18,349	134,797	74	23	1,818	20,468		

Source: Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management. NB: *2024 is still being compiled and the final aggregate will be released at the end of the year.

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs has established formal coordination frameworks with national and international stakeholders, including NGOs, UN agencies, and government bodies, ensuring smooth collaboration during emergencies. The ministry employs trained professionals, such as emergency responders, logisticians, and social workers, experienced in disaster management and humanitarian relief.

Strong partnerships with NGOs, donor agencies, and the private sector enable access to additional resources, expertise, and funding during crises. It also engages with community leaders and local networks to raise awareness, conduct preparedness campaigns, and ensure aid reaches vulnerable populations effectively. Moreover, the ministry often has access to emergency funds and pre-designed contingency plans that guide immediate action during crises.

19.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

19.3.1 Strength

The ministry often has formal coordination frameworks with national and international stakeholders, including NGOs, UN agencies, and government bodies, to ensure smooth collaboration during emergencies.

The ministry employs trained professionals, including emergency responders, logisticians, and social workers, with experience in disaster management and humanitarian relief. Also, Strong ties with NGOs, donor agencies, and the private sector allow the ministry to access additional resources, expertise, and funding during emergencies. Also, often work with community leaders and local networks to raise awareness, conduct preparedness campaigns, and ensure aid reaches the most vulnerable populations. And the ministry may have emergency funds and

pre-designed contingency plans to guide immediate action during crises.

19.3.2 Key Challenges

- i. Humanitarian Relief Response Capacity Gaps: Limited coordination, logistics, and staffing delay aid delivery, reducing the effectiveness of interventions.
- ii. Insufficient Funds: Delays or cuts in essential services affect the ministry's ability to meet urgent needs and sustain long-term interventions.
- iii. Inadequate Operational Vehicles/Motorcycles for Field Operations: These delays in reaching remote areas hinder field assessments, monitoring, and aid distribution.
- iv. Limited Response Equipment for Other Disasters: The inability to respond swiftly to unforeseen crises like floods, fires, or epidemics leaves affected populations vulnerable.
- v. Poor Office Accommodation: Substandard working conditions impede staff productivity and planning, slowing response activities.
- vi. Inconsistent Supply of Emergency Relief Materials: Irregular supplies disrupt aid delivery, leaving vulnerable populations without critical resources during emergencies.
- vii. Temporary Solutions: Non-durable remedies fail to address long-term needs, leaving displaced individuals in precarious

situations.

- viii. Non-Compliance of Some NGOs with Government Policies: Discrepancies between NGO operations and government policies cause disruptions, affecting service delivery to communities.
- ix. Challenges for Special Needs Groups: People with disabilities often lack specialised facilities in camps, exacerbating their difficulties.
- x. Neglect of Secondary Education and Vocational Training: Limited education and skill-building opportunities for youths increase dependency on aid, hindering their rehabilitation.



19.3.3 Threats

- i. The continuation of scenarios causing humanitarian crises, such as conflicts and natural disasters, suggests a likely increase in the number of displaced persons and households.
- ii. Increased displacement will strain available resources, diminishing

the per capita impact of aid across affected individuals and households.

- iii. Global financial constraints may reduce the size and value of funds received for humanitarian efforts.

Despite these challenges, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs is expected to play an increasingly significant role in the growth and development of Benue State.

19.3.4 Opportunities

The development of humanitarian affairs and disaster management policies and plans, informed by past experiences, offers a roadmap for success when implemented under the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons in Benue State.

Creating Mitigation and Recovery Departments within the ministry will enhance its capacity to deliver sustainable solutions. As a relatively new entity, the ministry has the opportunity to recruit skilled staff and build the capacity of existing personnel for effective coordination of durable solutions and SOLID (Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons) initiatives.

Conducting host community perception surveys could provide valuable insights to mitigate disasters and address humanitarian challenges more effectively.

19.4 Medium Term Objectives and Targets

19.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The Ministry's broad objective is to provide critical data, information, and interventions regarding disaster assistance, displaced communities, and emergency relief policies, programmes, and initiatives.

Specific objectives include:

- i. Enhancing the well-being and quality of life for vulnerable populations in Benue State.
- ii. Strengthening disaster resilience and risk reduction through effective management and mitigation strategies.

19.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- a) Improve housing and shelter conditions for vulnerable populations by 40% by 2029.
- b) Strengthen social protection systems for vulnerable populations by 2029.
- c) Enhance education and skills development for vulnerable populations by 25% by 2029.
- d) Increase access to healthcare services for vulnerable populations by 40% by 2029.
- e) Conduct regular disaster risk assessments by 2025.
- f) Establish early warning systems by 2025.
- g) Enhance emergency response funds by 2026.
- h) Develop and implement disaster recovery plans by 2025.
- i) Strengthen disaster management institutions by 2025.
- j) Build capacity for disaster management by 2026.

19.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

19.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- a) Improved housing and shelter conditions for vulnerable populations by 40% by 2029.
- b) Strengthen social protection systems for vulnerable populations



by 2029.

- c) Enhance education and skills development for vulnerable populations by 25% by 2029.
- d) Increase access to health care services for vulnerable populations by 40% by 2029.
- e) Conduct regular disaster risk assessments by 2025.
- f) Establish early warning systems by 2025.
- g) Enhance emergency response funds by 2026.
- h) Develop and implement disaster recovery plans by 2025.
- i) Strengthen disaster management institutions by 2025.
- j) Build capacity for disaster management by 2026.

19.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

19.6.1 Programmes and Projects

Prevention of natural and technological hazards: This involves proactive measures to reduce the likelihood of disasters caused by natural forces (like floods, earthquakes) or technological hazards

(like industrial accidents or chemical spills). Prevention strategies include land-use planning, infrastructure design (e.g., dams, fire-resistant buildings), and enforcing safety regulations for industries. **Mitigation of loss and impacts of disaster:** Aims to reduce the severity of the damage that disasters cause, focusing on structural and non-structural interventions. This can include infrastructure improvements, early warning systems, and public awareness campaigns.

Preparedness and training for response: Involves planning, training, and capacity building to ensure that individuals, communities, and organisations can respond effectively to disasters. It includes developing contingency plans, conducting drills, stockpiling resources, and training personnel.

Response and actions to save lives and property in a crisis: The response phase occurs immediately after a disaster strikes and focuses on protecting lives, reducing the impact on property, and providing emergency aid to affected populations. Actions include search and rescue,

emergency medical care, evacuation, and distribution of relief materials (like food, water, and shelter).

Recovery efforts beyond the emergency periods: Focuses on rebuilding communities and restoring normalcy after the immediate crisis has passed. This includes rehabilitation of infrastructure, restoring livelihoods, and addressing long-term psychological, social, and economic impacts. It can take months or years, depending on the scale of the disaster.

These programmes and projects have been coordinated by the main institutions partnering with the Ministry. Specifically, the programmes in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps include:

- i. Medical outreaches to Camps and specific Outreach posts in three Local Government Areas (Guma, Gwer, and Gwer West) offering lab, pharmacy, and consultancy services.
- ii. Biometric Capture of IDPs: Sponsored by the International Organization for Migration (IOM),

this project ensures proper documentation and tracking of IDPs across camps.

- iii. Distribution of food and non-food items to the IDP Camps, also relief materials from NEMA, other donor agencies (UNHCR, IOM, Save The Children, PLAN International, MSF, IRC, etc.), and faith-based organisations.
- iv. Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM): The State government works actively to ensure the effective coordination of camp activities, including resource distribution, health services, and monitoring.
- v. National Social Investment Programme (NSIP): Through the NSIP, the government provides social safety nets, such as cash transfers and employment initiatives, benefiting both IDPs and vulnerable residents of Benue State.
- vi. Primary Schools in Camps with UN Support: Several IDP camps



operate primary schools with the backing of UN agencies, ensuring children's education continuity despite displacement. This intervention helps reduce learning disruptions and provides a sense of stability for young learners.

- vii. **School Feeding Programmes by NSIP:** In partnership with the National Social Investment Programme, school feeding initiatives are implemented in designated primary schools, including those in IDP camps. These programmes encourage school attendance and improve children's nutrition.

19.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the goals outlined for the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management sector, the

estimated public investment is N1,862,623 million for the period 2025-2029.

19.7 Expected Outcomes

The broad outcomes expected from the various interventions and specific benefits derivable from capital investments spread across the thirty-one (31) projects to be implemented under twelve (12) broad programmes. Each of these programmes and projects has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the Ministry of Humanitarian and Disaster Management sector objectives in: improved response to early warning signs, enhanced emergency response to humanitarian crises, improved response equipment and machinery, and resettlement of displaced persons in ancestral homes.

Table 19.2: Sector-Level Results Framework for Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management

SDGs	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11	Improve response to early warning signs		10%	30%	40%
Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11	Enhance emergency response to humanitarian crisis		20%	40%	65%
Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11	Improved Response equipment and machinery		20%	40%	65%
Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11.	Resettlement of Displaced persons in Ancestral homes		30%	60%	80%

Section 3

Governance and Public Administration



20.0 Introduction

Governance is vital for strengthening institutions, improving public sector management skills, and ensuring accountability in the provision of infrastructure and services. It aims to establish a clear, transparent, and well-defined legal, regulatory, and institutional framework to enhance investment, probity, and accountability in leadership. The governance framework underpins the administration, organisation, allocation, and stewardship of human and material resources within the State. The governance sector has the potential to moderate the business environment, provide a legal and political framework, enhance law and order, and curb corruption. The ability of the State to achieve commercial and industrial development, improve living standards, reduce poverty, and increase employment hinges on the robustness of its governance framework.

20.1 Institutional Setting

Governance in Benue State is driven by the traditional three arms: the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary, which operate independently but cooperatively. While periodic elections are held for the Executive and Legislature, the Judiciary is primarily staffed through appointments. The Executive arm is headed by the Executive Governor, who serves as the Chairman of the Executive Council. His appointees, designated as heads of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), Commissioners, and Special Advisers, are also members of the council. The Benue State Civil Service constitutes the powerhouse for the executive arm of government. Currently, the Civil Service

has 17 Ministries, 98 Ministerial Departments, Agencies, and Parastatals. The Executive Council comprises 30 male members and 2 female members. The Benue State workforce totals approximately 48,288 persons, distributed as follows: Local Government Area (LGA) staff: 15,000, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB): 14,923, MDAs: 13,365, Others (Judiciary, Benue State University (BSU), Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH)): 5,000

The Benue State House of Assembly has 32 elected members, including 2 females. The Legislative Arm is headed by the Speaker, elected from among the members. Other principal officers include the Deputy Speaker, the Majority and Minority Leaders, and the Chief Whip. The Legislature is supported by the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, six Heads of Department, and over 100 administrative staff. In alignment with Nigeria's democratic structure, Local Government Councils are elected bodies comprising an executive with a unilateral legislature. Benue State has 23 Local Government Councils, each managed by Chairmen and Councillors. The LGAs are divided into 31 State Constituencies, grouped into 11 Federal Constituencies and 3 Senatorial Zones. The Judiciary is the third arm of government. It includes the High Court, Magistrate Court, Area Court, and Customary Court of Appeal. It is headed by the Chief Judge, who serves as the Chairman of the Judicial Service Commission (JSC), responsible for the appointment, promotion, and discipline of judicial officers. The Judiciary interprets laws and administers justice.

Though traditional institutions are not formally recognised by the 1999 Constitution as part of government, they play a significant role in governance, particularly in maintaining peace and order at the grassroots level. In recognition of their contributions, the Benue State Government has established a four-tier Traditional Council System.

The Local Government Area Traditional Council comprises District Heads within an LGA and is chaired by a Second-Class Chief. At the Intermediate Area Councils level, at least two LGAs form a council headed by a First-Class Chief. The Tiv Traditional Council and the Idoma Traditional Council are the two main area councils, each headed by a First-Class Chief. As the world transitions towards digitisation, Benue State must adopt technology across governance processes, security, data management, the judiciary, and legislation. Before the 2016–2025 Plan, the State Civil Service faced challenges such as: poor staff attitude to work, an embargo on recruitment, leading to significant succession gaps, infrastructure deficits and inefficient ICT adoption, limited opportunities for capacity building, training, and retraining staff. In recent years, particularly during 2023–2024, efforts have been made to address these issues. Infrastructure improvements are underway, and the work environment, including the Benue State Secretariat that houses most ministries, is being enhanced.

20.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

The governance structure in the State, by gender in relation to the composition of key stakeholders across the three arms of

government, is highly skewed in favour of the male gender. This imbalance does not align with the 35% affirmative action stipulated in the Nigerian Gender Policy and Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Furthermore, the budget performance during the period under review indicates that the State's capacity to commit to its set-out plans needs improvement, with an average performance of 59% recorded during the study period. Notable changes from the baseline include an increase in legislative constituencies from 30 to 32, an expansion in the number of ministries from 13 to 17, and an increase in the size of the State Executive Council from 30 to 32 members.

In Benue State, the legislature contributed to economic growth by enacting impactful legislation. The Annual Appropriation Bills served as a guide for the executive in resource allocation. Additionally, the introduction of private member bills alongside executive bills reflects the legislators' commitment to exploring innovative ways to promote development and improve the well-being of the State's citizens.

For instance, the budget allocated for certain projects increased from 20 billion to 25 billion, reflecting a growth of 25%. Meanwhile, the cost of legislative processes saw an increment from 5 billion to 6.5 billion, a rise of 30%, indicating prioritisation in governance-related expenditures.

Table 20.1: Bills Passed by the Benue State House of Assembly

Bills	Total Number Passed	9 th Assembly	10 th Assembly**
Executive Bills	51	40	11
Private Member Bills	36	15	21
Total	87	55	32

NB: **Bills passed between 2023 and 2024

20.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

20.3.1 Strength

Benue State has a long history of strong governance structures rooted in its traditional system. From the grassroots upwards, the Local Government Area (LGA) traditional council is composed of District Heads within the LGA and is chaired by a Second-Class Chief. At the intermediate level, Area Councils are formed by at least two Local Government Area Traditional Councils, and each is headed by a First-Class Chief. The two Area Councils in Benue State are the Tiv Traditional Council and the Idoma Traditional Council, both chaired by First-Class Chiefs.

20.3.2 Challenges

The challenges identified in the governance system of the State include:

- The low level of staff training and retraining weakens the staff's ability to deliver professional services, thereby undermining the governance structure's capacity to deliver on its mandate.
- The limited adoption and utilisation of ICT have reduced the efficiency of service delivery and hinder compliance with global best practices.
- Poorly managed infrastructure and facilities present a weak image of

the Civil Service.

- The level of budget performance does not adequately support the optimisation of goals or the achievement of results.
- There is a high tendency for brain drain, particularly among professionals in the Service, such as doctors and engineers, due to inefficiencies and inadequate welfare provisions within the system.
- Strict non-compliance with Civil Service rules threatens the survival and success of the system.

20.3.3 Opportunities and Potentials

- Addressing the wide gender gaps in governance structures and participation will enhance gender equality ratings for the State and attract corresponding commendations and support from national and international bodies.
- Improving the level of technological adoption offers opportunities to leverage the latest advancements, ensuring global parity and competitiveness for the system.
- The Executive has the potential to formulate and implement policies that could lift the people of Benue State out of poverty and foster

development. These include policies on agricultural mechanisation, investment opportunities, and social inclusion.

- iv. The State House of Assembly can continue to make laws that support good planning and the effective implementation of actions by the Executive, while also performing oversight functions to ensure compliance.
- v. The Judiciary can strengthen the justice system and enhance the maintenance of law and order.
- vi. The strength of the governance sector lies in its large size and the quality of human resources available to it.
- vii. Adequate physical structures exist within the State Secretariat and its environs to accommodate all ministries, departments, and agencies, with room for future expansion.

20.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

20.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

- i. To draft and advise on policies that will best promote even and balanced development of the State.
- ii. To formulate socio-economic priorities in line with the vision and core values of the State.
- iii. To coordinate the formulation and implementation of Government Programmes as contained in the annual plans, budgets, short-term, medium-term, and perspective plans.
- iv. To ensure social justice and human welfare at all levels of the State and across all categories of citizens,

excluding none.

- v. To determine how best the fundamental objectives and directive principles of State Policy, as contained in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, can achieve the major objectives of optimal development and suggest amendments that may be required in light of encountered realities.

20.4.2 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

- i. Establish a responsive, efficient, and effective governance structure that leverages technology to deliver quality services, promote transparency, and drive sustainable development in Benue State.
- ii. Transform the civil service into a responsive, efficient, and effective machinery for sustainable development.
- iii. Strengthen harmonious intergovernmental relations and traditional institutions for effective governance and sustainable development.

20.4.3 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- i. Digital Governance and Institutional Reform.
- ii. Fostering collaborative governance and institutional synergy for sustainable development.
- iii. Transforming the civil service for efficient, effective, and citizen-centric governance.

In addition, a comprehensive, holistic, and robust coordination framework has been designed for implementation during the plan horizon, 2025–2029. Key elements of the framework include:

Health Sector Coordination Team

This streamlines communication, collaboration, and care management among principal healthcare agencies to include secure messaging and communication, care planning and coordination, data integration and analytics, task management, and workflows. This will lead to outcomes such as improved patient outcomes, enhanced care team collaboration, better data-driven decision making, and increased efficiency and productivity.



Membership composition

Ministry of Health - Sector Chairman/Lead; Benue State Health Insurance Agency - Member; Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH) - Member; Benue State Primary Health Care Board - Member; Benue State Hospital Management Board - Member; Benue State AIDS Control Agency (BENSACA)-Member

Education Sector Coordination Team

Streamlines communication, collaboration, and resource management among educational institutions on issues such as secure messaging and communication, lesson planning and curriculum management, grade tracking and progress monitoring, student information systems, parent-teacher conference scheduling, resource sharing and library management, event calendar and scheduling, analytics and reporting. The expected outcomes are improved student outcomes, enhanced teacher productivity, increased parent engagement, streamlined administrative tasks, better resource allocation, and data-driven decision making.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Education and Knowledge Management - Chairman/Sector Lead; Benue State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) - Member; Benue State

Library Board - Member; Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education - Member; Benue State Polytechnic, Ugbokolo - Member; Bureau for Education Quality Assurance - Member; College of Education, Katsina-Ala - Member; College of Education, Oju - Member; Benue State University College of Health Sciences - Member; Benue State Exams Board - Member; Benue State University (BSU) Makurdi - Member; Benue State Teaching Service Board (TSB)-Member; Benue State Science and Technical Education Board - Member; Benue State Scholarship Board - Member; Akawe Torkula Polytechnic, Makurdi - Member.

Finance Sector Coordination Team

This streamlines financial management, communication, and collaboration among key financial agencies to feature activities such as financial planning, accounting and bookkeeping, invoice management and payment processing, expense tracking and reporting, cash flow management, investment tracking, tax management, and financial analytics and insights. The expected outcomes are improved financial visibility and control, enhanced collaboration among finance teams, automated financial processes, reduced

errors and increased accuracy, better decision making, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Finance – Chairman/Sector Lead; Office of the Accountant General – Member; Debt Management Office – Member; Benue State Internal Revenue Service (BIRS) – Member; Public Procurement Commission – Member; Fiscal Responsibility Commission – Member; NOVUS Micro Finance Bank – Member.

Information Sector Coordination Team

This team enables efficient management, sharing, and synchronisation of information across various stakeholders. The team exhibits features of data integration from multiple sources, secure information sharing with authorised parties, facilitates communication and teamwork, workflow automation which streamlines processes and tasks, data analytics that provide insights and visualisations, security and access control that ensures information and data protection, and scalability and flexibility which adapt to changing needs. The expected outcomes will be improved

information accuracy and consistency, enhanced collaboration and productivity, better decision making, reduced errors and inefficiencies, increased transparency and accountability, and real-time information sharing.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism – Chairman/Sector Lead; Chief Press Secretary to the Governor – Alternate Chairman; Technical Adviser to the Governor on Information – Member; Benue State Television Corporation – Member; Radio Benue Corporation – Member; Benue Printing and Publishing Corporation (BPPC) – Member; Government Printing – Member; and Benue State Council for Arts and Culture – Member.

Technology and Digital Economy Coordination Team

This is a centralised platform that integrates, manages, and coordinates various technological systems and tools to enhance efficiency, productivity, and innovation. Its activities entail integration, which connects disparate systems and tools to include video conferencing, instant messaging, email management, and social media integration; automation that streamlines workflows and processes; data analytics that provides insights and visualisations; collaboration that facilitates communication and teamwork; security that ensures data protection and compliance; and scalability that adapts to changing needs. The expected outcomes are blockchain solutions, artificial intelligence, and machine learning, e-commerce integration and digital payments, improved efficiency and productivity, enhanced decision making, better collaboration and communication, increased innovation and competitiveness, reduced costs and





complexity, and real-time monitoring and analytics.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy – Chairman/Sector Lead; Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation – Alternate Chairman; Benue Digital Infrastructure Company – Member; Benue State Digital Infrastructure Services Management Enforcement Agency (BENDISMEA) – Member; Business and Engineering Skills Training (BEST) Centre – Member.

Infrastructure Sector Coordination Team

This streamlines the planning, design, construction, and management of infrastructure projects, as well as collaboration among key infrastructure MDAs. Planning and design include project management tools, geographic

information systems, building information and asset management; construction and operations include supply chain management, logistics and coordination, quality control and assurance, maintenance scheduling; collaboration and communication; and analytics and insights, including data analytics, performance monitoring, and cost tracking. The expected outcomes from these activities within this sector include improved project efficiency, enhanced collaboration, reduced costs, increased transparency, better decision making, and enhanced urban development outcomes, leading to empowered communities.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development – Chairman/Sector Lead; Ministry of Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals – Alternate Chairman; Ministry of Power, Renewable Energy and Transport – Member; Benue State Urban

Development Board – Member; Bureau of Special Projects & Infrastructure – Member; Benue Links Nigeria Ltd – Member.

Agriculture, Cooperatives and Rural Development Sector Coordination Team:

This integrates technology, resources, and relevant agencies to enhance agricultural productivity, cooperative efficiency, and rural development. The agriculture activities include farm management, crop monitoring, livestock management, market access, and extension services; cooperative activities include member management, financial management, inventory management, meeting management, and training and capacity building; rural development includes project management, funding management, resource allocation, impact tracking, and community engagement.

The outcome from this collaboration and coordination of file sharing, messaging, and data analytics leads to improved agricultural productivity, enhanced cooperative efficiency, increased rural incomes, better decision making, and empowered rural communities.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security – Chairman/Sector Lead; Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development – Alternate Chairman; Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP); Akperan Orshi Polytechnic, Yandev; Bureau of Agricultural Development and Mechanisation.

Water, Environment and Climate Change Sector Coordination Team:

This is the hub that integrates data, resources, and stakeholders to address the interconnected challenges of water management (monitoring, forecasting,



and optimisation), environmental sustainability (air, land, and water quality tracking), and climate change (modelling, forecasting, and mitigation strategies). The tracking and analysis of laws and policies, as well as innovation and knowledge sharing, are also key features of this sector. Outcomes from this collaboration include improved decision making, increased efficiency and effectiveness, better resource allocation, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Water Resources, Environment, and Climate Change – Chairman/Sector Lead; Benue State Water Board – Member; Benue State Rural and Water Supply and Sanitation Authority – Member; Special Adviser on Climate Change, ACRESAL Coordinator – Member.

Social Development Sector Coordination

This sector integrates women, girls, youths, sports, creativity, and the vulnerable for social development, which fosters inclusive growth, empowerment, and community engagement. For girls and women, it solicits gender equality advocacy, economic empowerment programmes for women and girls, women's health and wellness initiatives, and girl education and skills training. For the youths, issues associated with leadership and development programmes, mentorship and coaching, education and skills training, employment and entrepreneurship support, and health and wellness initiatives are at the hub of this activity. Sports focus on community sports programmes, youth sports development, professional sports training, sports infrastructural development, and sports events management. Creativity addresses arts and culture programmes, music and dance training, visual arts and



design, literary and poetry programmes, innovation and entrepreneurship support; while activities for the vulnerable are captured in the social protection services. Expected outcomes include empowered women and girls, engaged and skilled youth, healthy and active communities, a vibrant arts and culture scene, and inclusive and equitable social development.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Sports, Youths, and Creativity – Chairman/Sector Lead; Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development – Alternate Chairman; Benue State Sports Council – Member; Benue State Sports Marketing and Lottery Board – Member; Benue State Rehabilitation Board, Apir – Member; Women Development Centre – Member.

Humanitarian and Disaster Management Sector Coordination Team

This team streamlines response efforts, enhances collaboration, and improves outcomes in humanitarian crises and disasters. Key components of this sector



include emergency response, which entails coordination, logistics, and resource allocation; disaster risk reduction, which entails preparedness, mitigation, and prevention; humanitarian aid, dealing with food, shelter, health, and protection services; and recovery and reconstruction, which are long-term rebuilding and development. Activities such as a Situation Room ensure real-time monitoring and situation awareness, resource management of donations, volunteers, and asset tracking, collaboration tools for communication, coordination, and information sharing, data analytics to provide insights, reporting, and decision support; and training and capacity building are the relevant features of this team. The expected outcomes from the performance of these activities will ensure enhanced response efficiency, better disaster risk management, improved recovery and rehabilitation, stronger coordination and collaboration, and more resilient communities.

Structure

Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management – Chairman/Sector Lead; Ministry of Health – Member; Ministry of Youth and Sports – Member; Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) – Member; Benue State Ministry of Special Duties – Member.

Industry, Trade and Investment Sector Coordination Team:

This team facilitates economic growth, trade, and investment by connecting businesses, governments, and stakeholders. Its key components include Industry Development, which entails sector-specific support and resources; Trade Facilitation, which focuses on Export-Import guidance, market access, and logistics; Investment Promotion, which provides opportunities, incentives, and regulatory support; Business Matching, which involves B2B connections, networking, and partnership formation; and Market Research and Intelligence, which offers data, insights, and trend analysis. Features evidenced in this hub include a Virtual Marketplace that will ensure online platforms for buying and selling; an Investment Portal that showcases projects and funding opportunities; a Trade Formation Centre that deals with market research and trade agreements; Business Incubator models that comprise Mentorship, training, and resources; and Networking Events that include conferences, seminars, and workshops. The expected outcomes from these activities will be increased trade and investment, enhanced business competitiveness, improved market access, job creation, economic growth, and a diversified economy.

Membership Composition

Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment – Chairman/Sector Lead; Benue State Bureau of Entrepreneurship & Wealth Creation – Member; Benue State Investment and Property Company – Member.

Justice, Law Enforcement, Security and Public Order Team

This platform integrates technology, resources, and stakeholders to enhance justice (courts, legal aid, and alternative dispute resolution), law enforcement (policing, investigations, and forensic science), security (border control, cybersecurity, and counter-terrorism), and public order (emergency response, disaster management, and community safety). Activities contained herein include Case Management, which involves tracking and analytics of justice and law enforcement; Crime Data Analysis, which encompasses predictive policing and crime mapping; Digital Forensics, which deals with evidence collection and analysis; Emergency Responses, which entail real-time coordination and dispatch; and Training and Capacity Building, which involves workshops, simulations, and exercises. This will produce outcomes such as improved justice outcomes, enhanced law enforcement efficiency, increased security and public safety, better emergency response, and reduced crime rates.

Structure

Ministry of Justice and Public Order – Chairman/Sector Lead; High Courts – Alternate Chairman; Customary Courts – Member; Judicial Service Commission – Member; Citizens Mediation Centre, Makurdi – Member; Bureau of Homeland Security – Member; Office of the Special Adviser on Internal Security – Member; Office of the Special Adviser on External

Security – Member.

Economic Management Team

This team provides strategic guidance and oversight for Budget and Economic Planning, which coordinates budget preparation, analysis, and develops strategies for economic development; Fiscal Policy, which coordinates and analyses taxation and public expenditure; and Financial Management, which oversees public financial management, accounting, and reporting. Additionally, Investment Promotion attracts and facilitates foreign and domestic investment. The expected outcomes include improved economic growth, enhanced fiscal discipline, increased investment, informed decision making, enhanced collaboration and coordination, increased transparency, and accountability. Measurable indicators will include GDP growth rate, fiscal deficit/surplus, investment inflows, trade balance, unemployment rate, poverty reduction, and economic competitiveness ranking.

Structure

Fiscal Policy Specialist – Commissioner for Finance (Chairman/Team Lead); Budget



and Economic Planning Specialist – Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning (Alternate Chairman); Financial Management Specialist – Accountant General (Member); Members of the Economic Management Team may expand membership on an ad hoc basis, as the need arises. Those invited on an ad hoc basis or as observers cease membership at the end of such a meeting.

Multispectral Coordination Team

This team integrates diverse expertise to address complex challenges, ensuring comprehensive and effective solutions as it monitors multiple data sources, creates coordinated plans and policies, while optimising resource utilisation. The expected outcomes include enhanced situational awareness, comprehensive solutions, increased system efficiency, and better decision making.

Structure

Budget and Economic Planning Commission (Sector Lead/Chairman); Bureau for International Development and Cooperation (Member); Bureau of Statistics (Member); Delivery Unit (Member); Representative from the Office of the Secretary to the State Government (Member); Office of the SDGs (Member); Office of the Technical Adviser on Monitoring and Evaluation (Member).

Governance Coordination Team

This team ensures effective governance, policy implementation, and coordination among agencies, stakeholders, and citizens. This is undertaken under the framework of aligning policies and programmes, facilitating information sharing and joint initiatives, stakeholder engagement, data-driven insights for informed decision making, and streamlining information dissemination, governance feedback, and evaluation. It should be noted that the Governance

Coordination Team will require quarterly feedback from all the teams on performance.

Structure

Governor (Chairman); Deputy Governor (Alternate Chairman); Secretary to the State Governor (Secretary); Chief of Staff (Member); Head of Service (Member); Principal Private Secretary (Member); Commissioner for Justice/Attorney General (Member); Commissioner for Finance (Member); Chief Press Secretary to the Governor (Member); Director General/CEO Budget and Economic Planning (Member); Special Adviser on Intergovernmental Affairs (Member).

20.4.4 Existing programmes

- i. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – World Bank-Assisted Agriculture Value Chain Development for rice, cassava, etc.
- ii. Institutional Strengthening Programmes of Public and Civil Society Organisations.
- iii. Capacity Building/Training Programmes for Sustainable Development.
- iv. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (Humanitarian Support and Coordination).
- v. World Bank-Assisted Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) Conditional Cash Transfers, SME Support, Community and Social Development Agency (CSDA), National FADAMA Programme.
- vi. UNICEF's WASH Project to make Benue Open Defecation-Free.
- vii. Rural and Urban Roads Construction and Rehabilitation.
- viii. Rural Electrification Programmes.

Table 20.2: List of MDAs with Government Cash Counterpart Contribution (GCCC)

Admin	Receipt Description
SDGs)	NATIONAL LIVESTOCK TRANSFORMATION PLAN (NLTP).
SDGs)	SDGS-FEDERAL GOVT. GRANT TO STATES INTERVENTION IN SDG PROGRAMM ES
SDGs)	AUDA - NEPAD SMALL HOLDER FARMER CAPABILITIES PROGRMME FOR THE STATE.
(BENSEMA)	contribution from 23-LGAs in the state to support IDPs & Disaster victims at LG
(BENSEMA)	UNHCR cash interventions for IDPs in the state: #100,000 X 3,000 household X 12
(BENSEMA)	NEMA interventions: distribution of commodities & food stuff to IDPs)
(BENSACA)	World Bank-HIV III Program
(BENSACA)	United Nation Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) HIV III Program
(BENSACA)	United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF)-HIV III Program
Ministry of Information	UNICEF GRANT: PSEA/HACT GRANTS TRAINING OF STAFF OF THE MINISTRY
Ministry of Information	UNICEF GRANT: FIRST 1000 DAYS GRANTS IN 5 COMMUNITIES
Ministry of Information	UNICEF VCM GRANTS FOR INFORMATION & SERVICE DELIVERY IN ONE LGA
Ministry of Information	UNICEF GRANT: TRAINING OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS & FRONTLINE WORKERS
Ministry of Information	UNICEF GRANT: CHILD'S SURVIVAL RADIO MAGAZINE SERIES
Ministry of Information	UNICEF GRANT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS COMMUNITIES
Ministry of Information	UNICEF GRANT: JINGLES, PICTURECARD, AUDIO-VISUALS ON CHILD FIRST 1000 DAYS
Local Govt. Service Commission	CONTRI. TO FUND MDA RECURRENT EXPENDITURE FROM COUNCILS' ALLOCATION
Akperan Orshi Polytechnic, Yandev.	ATVET INTERVENTION(NEPAD): BENUE STATE FINANCING PLAN
Office of the Accountant-General	Federal Government Loan to State (Budget Support)
Office of the Accountant-General	State Action on Business Enabling Reforms (SABER)
Office of the Accountant-General	CURRENT DOMESTIC GRANTS: World Bank SFTAS Grant
Debt Management Office	Borrowing From Commercial Banks
Min. of Industry, Trade & Investment	INVESTMENT PROMOTIONS AGENCY - WORLD BANK 3-YEAR INTERVENTION (\$5.5MILLION) RESULT BASE PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME/ MONITORING AND EVALUATION. PARTNERS [NASSI, BESIMA, FACAN AFAN ETC)
BSB&EPC	Federal Government IDP Emergency Response Funding
BSB&EPC	Water Aid Projects (Benue state Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency)
BSB&EPC	(MWR) 3RD NATIONAL WATER SUPPLY REFORM PROJECT (World Bank)
BSB&EPC	United Nation's Fund for Population Activities: Reproductive Health /Gender based Violence-(BSPC, Min. of Health, Info.,youth & Sports etc.)
BSB&EPC	Food & Agriculture Organization - Food Security (Min. of Agric. & Food Security)
BSB&EPC	United Nation Development Programme - Human Capital Development (State - Wide)
BSB&EPC	International Fund for Agricultural Development - Agricultural Support Programme (Value chain development programme-BNARDA, MANR)
BSB&EPC	United Nations Children Fund Thriple Threat_ (BERWASA/HEALTH -) Water Sanitatrion and Hygiene (WASH) , Women Reproductive Health
BSB&EPC	FADAMA III -Federal Government Agricultural support to states Covid-19 Action Recovery & Economic Stimulus Programme (BNARDA, MANR)
BSB&EPC	BILL GATES FOUNDATION - Agricultural Input Support Value Chain (Min. of Agric. & food Security)
BSB&EPC	Community & Social Development Agency/Action Recovery & Economic Stimulus Programme NG-CARES (world Bank)- (BSPC)
BSB&EPC	FOREIGN GRANTS: WOFE

BSB&EPC	LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANT FOR DEEDS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
BSB&EPC	BENUE STATE CARES COORDINATION UNIT FOR NIGERIA COVID -19 ACTION RECOVERY AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS (World Bank Grant) PROGRAMME FOR RESULT
BERWASSA	RURAL SANITATION & HYGIENE PROMOTION IN NIGERIA (RUSHPIN) GLOBAL SANITATION FUND PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT)
BERWASSA	UNICEF: SANITATION HYGIENE & WATER IN NIGERIA (SHAWN)
BERWASSA	WATER AID -CLEAN WATER, HYGIENE & SANITATION (USAID)
BERWASSA	PARTNERSHIP FOR EXPANDED WATER SUPPLY & HYGIENE(P-WASH)
BERWASSA	LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION ON SCALE -UP COMMUNITY LED TOTAL SANITIZATION (CLTS) FOR OPEN DEFECATION FREE(ODF), LGAS (WATER AID)
BERWASSA	REHABILITATION OF BOREHOLES-ACCESS TO SAFE CLEAN WATER, SANITATION HYGIENE & WATER IN NIGERIA (SHAWN) (UNICEF)
BERWASSA	FUNDING FOR SCALE OF CLTS/ODF BY UNICEF
BNARDA	International Fund for Agricultural Dev. (IFAD)/Value Chain Dev. Programme (VCDP)
Min. of Science, Tech. & Innovation	Grants from 23 LGC for Dev. of Science and Tech. in the State (50,000 X 23 X 12)
Min. of Women Affairs & Social Welfare	United Nation Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)-Child family planning, maternal health, HIV& AIDS support
Benue State CSDA	International Development Association (IDA)-Child Development grant Program
Min. of Edu. and Knowledge Mgt (SUBEB)	(NGOs)- Education Support funding for Secondary Education in the state
(SUBEB)	Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE)
(SUBEB)	Global Chinese Conference on Computers in Education (GCCCE) Grant
(SUBEB)	LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION FUNDING
Benue State Polytechnic, Ugbokolo	TETFUND non-Capital support
Benue State Polytechnic, Ugbokolo	Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND): infrastructural support
College of Education, Katsina-Ala	Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND): infrastructural support
College of Education Oju	Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND): infrastructural support
College of Education Oju	NEED ASSESSMENT FUND: FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BSU, Makurdi	Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) FGN Infrastructural Intervention Support
Akawe Torkula Polytechnic, Makurdi	TETFUND Capital Intervention in critical Infrastructure needs
Min. of Health and Human Services	Saving One Million Lives (SOML)-Maternal and Child Health (World Bank)
Benue State Health Insurance Agency	National Health insurance Scheme (NHIS) Contribution for Basic Health Care Provision Fund(BHCPF)
Benue State Health Insurance Agency	BHCPF annual grant from the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGON) of not less than one percent (1%) of the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF)
Benue State Health Insurance Agency	National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) Decentralized Facility Financing – DFF for Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF)
BSUTH	CAPITAL DOMESTIC GRANTS: TETFUND Intervention Projects
BSUTH	CURRENT DOMESTIC GRANT: TETFUND NON-CAPITAL GRANTS
BSUTH	GRANTS FROM NGOS
BSUTH	GRANTS FROM INDIVIDUALS
Primary Health Care Board	CURRENT DOMESTIC GRANTS (LGHA GRANTS)
Primary Health Care Board	CURRENT FOREIGN GRANT: FROM UNICEF FOR ACSM HPV, MNCAH
Primary Health Care Board	(ICRC) International Committee of the Red Cross ICRC Water and Sanitation Support
Primary Health Care Board	(APIN): AIDS Prevention Initiative in Nigeria (APIN) Public Health Initiative
Primary Health Care Board	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) -Maternal and Newborn and Child Health

20.5 Medium Term Targets

- 1) Implement e-governance platforms for 80% of government services by 2026.
- 2) Ensure online availability of 90% of government services by 2029.
- 3) Establish a robust feedback mechanism for citizens by 2025.
- 4) Publish 90% of government data in open format by 2025.
- 5) Reduce average service delivery time by 50% by 2025.
- 6) Implement a digital workflow system for 80% of government processes by 2025.
- 7) Establish a citizen engagement platform for 50% of government agencies by 2026.
- 8) Sustain intergovernmental relations with international agencies.
- 9) Increase citizen participation in government decision making by 30% by 2026.
- 10) Train 80% of government staff on digital literacy and e-governance by 2027.
- 11) Establish a digital innovation hub for government staff by 2025.
- 12) Review and update the civil service rules and regulations by 2025.
- 13) Train 80% of civil servants on core skills by 2025.
- 14) Develop a leadership development programme by 2025.
- 15) Reduce processing time for citizen services by 30% by 2025.
- 16) Implement a citizen engagement platform by 2025.
- 17) Implement an online platform for transparency and accountability by 2025.
- 18) Develop a digital transformation roadmap by 2025.
- 19) Implement an e-governance platform by 2025.
- 20) Establish a functional intergovernmental relations framework by 2025.
- 21) Increase collaboration among government tiers by 30% by 2025.
- 22) Strengthen the role of traditional institutions in governance by 2025.
- 23) Increase participation of traditional institutions in decision making by 25% by 2025.
- 24) Train 80% of government and traditional institution staff on intergovernmental relations by 2025.
- 25) Increase citizen participation in decision making by 50% by 2029.
- 26) Establish a feedback mechanism for citizens by 2025.
- 27) Develop a policy coherence framework by 2025.
- 28) Increase alignment of policies among government tiers by 25% by 2025.

20.6 Indicative Cost

The achievement of the objectives of the governance sector requires an estimated public investment of **N25.5 billion** for the period during which the plan is to be implemented (2025–2029). In a bid to develop more reliable public services, the government will deploy available skill sets within project planning and utilise new technologies, ensuring greater value for money in the provision of public infrastructure and services

20.7 Expected Outcomes

The three programmes, which are to be implemented in twenty projects within the

Governance sector in Benue State, as presented in the framework in Table 20.3, are expected to generate positive outcomes for the governance sector objectives. These outcomes have the

potential to strengthen the rule of law, discourage corruption, and enhance business performance, ultimately leading to increased State income.

Table 20.3: Sector-Level Results Framework for Governance

SDGs	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
Goals 16,17	Digitization of the Civil service and Improved E Governance	Percentage of Government services delivered online	<10%for all government services	30%for all government services	80%for all government services
		Number of MDAs that have their operations digitized	<10%for all government services	30%for all government services	80%for all government services
		Number of active government websites	<10%for all government services	30%for all government services	80%for all government services
Goals 16,17	Ensure responsive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels of government	Geographical spread of key appointments	At least one per LG in cabinet and only 2 women in the EXCO and Legislature	At least one per LG in cabinet, representative of PLWD and 15 percent composition of women in the EXCO and Legislature	At least one per LG in cabinet, representative of PLWD and 25 percent composition of women in the EXCO and
Goals 16,17	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels of government in the State	Improved citizen engagement	Publish annual data on performance and other surveys	Publish annual data on performance and other surveys	Publish annual data on performance and other surveys
Goals 16,17	Increased Public Participation	Number of stakeholder consultations conducted	< 5 Annually	Above 23 annually	Above 50 annually



21.0 Introduction

Economic growth and security are intertwined. There can be no long-term economic growth without security. The opposite is true since extensive and ongoing poverty can jeopardise a nation's stability. The security and law enforcement sector has a constitutional role in maintaining law and order, providing correctional programmes for offenders, and implementing crime prevention measures in society. It is also set to make Benue safer and more secure for economic development and growth and create a safe and secure environment for everyone living in Nigeria at large. The previous Plan had not benchmarked law enforcement, but this Plan acknowledges the importance of this sector to any development pursuit. The need for a

specific focus on law enforcement arises from the increase in crime rates and armed conflicts across the country and in Benue State in particular. The cases of communal conflicts, farmer-herder conflicts, kidnapping, and banditry have become pervasive in the State and justify planning for law enforcement over the next cycle. The inadequate manpower and technology constrain the potential of the sector to support enforcement activities.

21.1 Institutional Setting and Strategy

The main government institutions in the sector active in the State are the Nigerian Police Force, the Nigerian Correctional Service, and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps. Maintaining law and order is vested in these institutions, which are mandated and have demonstrated the

willingness to pursue this. They have not perfected their intelligence gathering, prosecution, and punishment practices, but they have a lot of room to improve their processes and practices. The State strategy for security and law enforcement is based on the Code of Conduct of the Nigerian Police Force, the Nigerian Correction Service Act, 2019, and all acts and edicts establishing law enforcement at the national level, as well as the laws in force at the State level that ensure law and order is maintained, such as the Benue State Livestock Guards. These laws are binding on all police and correctional service officers, and the Code of Conduct reflects international conventions for law enforcement. The strategy of the Correctional Centres is that they are owned by the Federal Government and derive their operational powers from the Act, which is amended to allow State governments to build additional correctional facilities within the State to decongest the centres.

21.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

The efforts of security agencies in enforcing the law have resulted in several convictions and incarcerations in correctional facilities across the length and breadth of the State. These efforts have, however, not been without setbacks in terms of political interferences and compromises. Data on prosecuted and convicted inmates across the State by gender showed that between 2019 and 2020, there were one thousand four hundred and twenty-five males and thirty females convicted and incarcerated in correctional centres across the State. The age distribution of the convicted inmates shows that those between the ages of twenty-six and fifty years had the highest number of inmates, totalling six hundred and ninety-seven, followed by those aged twenty-one to twenty-five, who had five hundred and eighteen inmates.

Table 21.1: Distribution of Convicted Inmates 2019 - 2020

Year	18-20 YRS			21-25 YRS			26- 50 YRS			51 + YRS		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2019	81	8	89	422	7	429	348	7	355	15	1	16
2020	122	1	123	88	1	89	339	3	342	10	2	12
TOTAL	203	9	212	510	8	518	687	10	697	25	3	28

Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission (BSB&EPC), 2024

An assessment of the initiatives so far shows that the Police operations in the State, including Operations Zenda and Whirlstroke, have helped to reduce crime and maintain law and order across the State. They have also been able to respond to the crisis in parts of the State. Also, the State Livestock Guards' efforts have helped to ensure compliance with the

Anti-Open Grazing Law and to stem the tides of Farmer- Herder Clashes, which have been rampant in farming communities. The data presented in Table 21.1 reflects the effort of security and law enforcement institutions in the State to tackle criminality; however, the fact that criminal acts are still prevalent in the State buttresses the need for strategic planning

and a boost in the activities of enforcing agents in tackling the menace.

21.3 Strength, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

21.3.1 Strengths

- i. The Federal Government has provided financial, technical, and other support for the Police Force and the Correctional Services.
- ii. The State Government has augmented the efforts of the FG by providing logistics for their operations.
- iii. The welfare schemes of the Police Force have been revived, and a Trust Fund for their families has also been established.

21.3.2 Key Challenges of the Sector

- i. The presence of the police is more dominant in the urban areas than in the rural areas, and as such, those areas remain more vulnerable.
- ii. Low level of Technology adoption and use in policing and other law enforcement activities
- iii. Low level of Intelligence gathering for investigating and fighting

crime.

- iv. Delays in the prosecution of cases
- v. Overcrowded facilities for remanding arrested persons and inmates in the station and the correctional facilities.

21.3.3 Opportunities

1. The gaps found in technology adoption and intelligence gathering can be closed with the latest technology, and the sector can benefit from the catch-up mentality.
2. The sector can benefit from international technology and skills enhancement support to ensure compliance with global best practices.

21.3.4 Threats

- i. The pervasive levels of insecurity risk the life and survival of the personnel of the Staff of the Police Force, correctional services as well as other related players

21.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

21.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029



The medium-term objectives are:

1. To partner with other relevant Security Agencies and the public in gathering, collating and sharing information and intelligence to ensure the safety and security of every segment of the society.
2. To participate in efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of crime while ensuring that any criminal act is investigated to bring the criminals to justice in a fair and professional manner
3. To build a gender-sensitive and gender-friendly Police Force that will give equal opportunity to female Police Officers while at the same time respecting their peculiarities.
4. Taking custody of all persons legally interned.
5. Providing safe, secure and humane custody for inmates.
6. Initiating behaviour modification in inmates through the provision of medical, psychological, spiritual and counselling services for all offenders, including violent extremists.
7. Empowering inmates by deploying educational and vocational skills training programmes and facilitating incentives and income generation through Custodial Centres, farms and industries.
8. Administering noncustodial measures, including community service, probation, parole, restorative justice measures and any other noncustodial measure assigned by a court of competent jurisdiction.

21.4.2 Medium Term Targets

1. Decrease crime rate by 80% in Benue State within the planned period
2. Establish community policing initiatives in 70% of local governments in Benue State by 2027
3. Upgrade the security equipment and infrastructure in 90% of Local Government Areas
4. Promote inter-agency collaboration to establish joint task force operations in all Local government
5. To strengthen the implementation of the Anti-Open Grazing Law for enhanced security, economic growth, and the development of Benue State.'

21.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

21.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

1. Ensure effective security cooperation and partnership between the traditional institutions and security agencies towards community policing.
2. Technology-enabled gadgets like CCTV can be used to enhance security monitoring and investigation.
3. Empower communities to establish community policing and neighbourhood watch programmes within communities
4. Address the root cause of perennial security challenges in communities
5. To ensure the most comprehensive and reliable amnesty programs across Benue State by facilitating employment,

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training, the grant of scholarships, and entrepreneurship among militia converts in the State.

21.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

21.6.1 Programmes and Projects

The maintenance of Law and Order has consequences for achieving socioeconomic goals. Some of the programmes that will be used to pursue these objectives include;

- Operation Zenda Joint Task Force (To tackle criminal activities)
- Operation Whirl Stroke (To combat forms of Terrorism)
- Benue State Livestock Guards (to ensure compliance with the Anti open grazing Law)
- Mining Marshals (to provide security at mining sites)
- Logistics support from the State government
- Supply of Vehicles to the police to support the movement.

21.6.2 Indicative Costs

To achieve the goals and objectives outlined for the Security and Law Enforcement sector, the estimated public investment is N1.62 billion for 2025-2029. The government of Benue State is poised to reposition the security and law enforcement architecture of the State in the face of daunting challenges that have impacted its agricultural potential and socioeconomic development. The proposals in this Plan will seek to strengthen the ability of the State to combat criminal tendencies and resolve conflicts associated with communal clashes and the enforcement of the rule of law.

21.7 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes are shown in Table 21.2.

Expected Results and Targets

Table 21.2 Sector-Level Results Framework for Security and Law Enforcement

SDG	Outcome	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target	
				2027	2029
Goals 16 & 17	Reduced crime rate	Crime rate in the State	High	Medium	Low
Goals 16 & 17	Improved Security of Human Lives	Incidents of Conflict	Very Frequent	Occasional	Low
Goals 16 & 17	Enhanced security Infrastructure	Response rate	Very slow	Fast	Very fast
Goals 16 & 17	Effective community Policing	Size of community police	Small (inadequate)	Big (adequate)	Bigger (adequate)
Goals 16 & 17	Inter-Agency Collaboration	Enhanced collaboration	Weak	Strong	Stronger

22.0 Introduction

The justice sector plays an important role in the development and progress of any society. It upholds and enforces laws, provides legal advice on criminal matters, prosecutes serious cases, and defends civil matters against the government. It also institutes, takes over and discontinues criminal actions. A strong and effective justice sector is essential for creating a stable and prosperous society where all individuals and corporate organisations can live and operate in a peaceful and orderly society. The Citizens Mediation Centre within the Ministry offers alternative dispute resolution. The security agencies in the State are responsible for maintaining law and order, investigating crimes and prosecuting offenders. The Correctional Service is responsible for custody, rehabilitation and reintegration of convicts. The Ministry also maintains public order by working with law enforcement to prevent crime and hold offenders accountable. It develops policies and programs to address crime prevention, rehabilitation, and victim support.

The justice sector in Benue State significantly boosts the State's GDP by providing essential legal services to individuals, businesses, and government agencies. It also employs numerous professionals, reducing unemployment rates and improving the quality of life for residents. It also helps reduce poverty by



providing legal tools for asset protection and livelihood security.

Government commitment to justice is crucial for a fair and equitable society, as it is the foundation of a functioning democracy. This commitment is demonstrated through establishing and maintaining a strong legal system, which protects individual rights and enforces them through a fair judiciary. Governments also provide access to legal representation for those who cannot afford it. They also address social inequalities and promote equal opportunities, such as combating discrimination, improving access to justice, and addressing economic disparities.

22.1 Institutional Setting

The justice sector in Benue State is comprised of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, Citizens Mediation Centre, and Rent Tribunal. Security (Benue State

Civil Protection Guards comprising Community Volunteer Guard known as Vigilante Group, Livestock Guards), the police force and other security agencies, and the Correctional Service, which are federal government agencies.

Specifically, the justice sector in Benue State is comprised of the following institutions:

1. Ministry of Justice and Public Order,
2. Citizens Mediation Centre,
3. Rent Tribunal.
4. Security (Benue State Civil Protection Guards, which is comprised of the Community Volunteer Guard, known as Vigilante Group, Livestock Guards), the police force, other security agencies, and the Correctional Service are federal government agencies.

Strengthening the justice sector is crucial for promoting the rule of law, protecting human rights, and a fair legal system. It involves addressing challenges and weaknesses within the sector, such as improving access to justice for all individuals, enhancing the capacity and professionalism of legal institutions, and promoting accountability and transparency. By expanding access to justice, governments can address inequalities marginalised populations face, such as discrimination, lack of information, and limited resources. Modernising legal institutions and processes can reduce delays and backlogs, leading to quicker case resolution. Lastly, establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the performance of legal institutions can build public trust and ensure fair and impartial justice.

22.2 Sectoral Performance

The Ministry of Justice has implemented various policies, projects, and initiatives, including the establishment of the Department of Public Order, the Department for Planning, Research, and Statistics, legal departments in all MDAs, and enhanced pensions for magistrates and legal officers. Due to increased funding, improved infrastructure, and new policies, the Ministry of Justice has witnessed significant growth.

The Ministry of Justice has shown positive trends in key indicators from 2020 to 2024, indicating improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system and law enforcement agencies. The clearance rate of criminal cases has steadily increased, indicating an efficient justice system. The conviction rate has also increased, indicating a strong prosecution system. The number of crimes reported and solved has decreased, indicating successful crime prevention and law enforcement strategies. The court system's efficiency has also improved, with a reduced average time to resolve cases and a decrease in the backlog of pending cases. These trends demonstrate the Ministry's commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring public safety, indicating a well-functioning justice system.

22.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

22.3.1 Strength

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order is key in maintaining order and holding individuals accountable. Its strength lies in its established legal framework, competent officials, commitment to justice

and fairness, determination, and management encouragement. It ensures the State's justice system effectively serves citizens' needs and its ability to enforce laws, provide a fair judicial system, and respond to emergencies.

22.3.2 Challenges

The Ministry of Justice faces numerous challenges due to the constantly changing legal landscape, operational challenges, resource constraints, and external pressures. These challenges affect its ability to provide citizens justice, including inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of manpower. Other challenges include political instability, insecurity caused by banditry, Terrorism, and kidnapping. These challenges can hinder justice administration and public trust and undermine the independence and impartiality of the justice system.

22.3.3 Opportunities

The opportunities for the Ministry of Justice are embracing technology to enhance its crime investigation and prosecution capabilities; utilising surveillance cameras and digital forensics can enhance the Ministry's ability to gather evidence and prosecute offenders, fostering collaboration and strengthening partnerships with other agencies, NGOs, and the private sector to tackle complex issues, enhancing community engagement through community policing initiatives and neighbourhood watch programs to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the public, promoting transparency, investing in staff training and professional development to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The

Ministry of Justice has significant potential for growth and development, with investments in addressing challenges, improving efficiency for society's common good, and reducing criminality.

22.3.4 Threats

Corruption, political interference, and inadequate funding pose significant threats to the Ministry of Justice and Public Order. Corruption can lead to biased decisions, unfair treatment, and weakening the legal system. Political interference can compromise the independence and impartiality of the justice system, resulting in unequal treatment of citizens and weakening the rule of law. Inadequate funding can also lead to backlogs of cases, delays in court proceedings, and a lack of access to justice for marginalised communities. To ensure the integrity and efficiency of the justice system, governments must take proactive measures to protect human rights and promote justice for all.

22.4 Sectoral Objectives and Targets

22.4.1 Sector Objectives 2025 – 2029

The Ministry of Justice's broad objective in the medium term is to establish the principles of the rule of law and fundamental human rights through a technologically advanced, effective, and efficient justice administration system that promotes expeditious access to justice for all.

The medium-term objectives include the following:

- a) Improve access to justice,
- b) Strengthen law enforcement and promote the rule of law
- c) Improve the efficiency of the

- judicial system,
- d) Enhance coordination between justice sector agencies.
- e) Improve the criminal justice system,
- f) Reduce crime rates,
- g) Promote respect for human rights and ensure the safety and security of citizens.

22.4.2 Medium-Term Targets

- a) To increase the number of people accessing justice by 50% by 2029
- b) To provide modern gadgets and equipment to law enforcement to strengthen their operations by 60% by 2029. rule of law
- c) To provide technologically advanced Improve the efficiency of the judicial system,
- d) To facilitate regular coordination meetings between justice sector agencies to ensure collaboration and efficiency.
- e) To review 90% of the obsolete laws and enact new laws to improve the criminal justice system by 2029.
- f) To provide Reduce crime rates,
- g) Promote respect for human rights and ensure the safety and security of citizens.

22.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

22.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- a) Infrastructure and adequate modern equipment are provided to facilitate and enhance professionalism and quality legal services.
- b) Improve the management capacity of the Ministry

through staff training and continuing education.

- c) Improve the overall conditions of Correctional Centres and the Young Offender institutions.
- d) Improved security of life and property.
- e) Improved human rights protection.
- f) Increased Monitoring & Evaluation.
- g) Reduced number of cases in Court due to utilisation of the ADR mechanisms.
- h) Reduced the number of criminal and civil cases in the courts.

22.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

22.6.1 Programmes and Projects

To enhance its effectiveness and promote the development of the justice sector, it is essential to implement various programmes and projects that can address key challenges and improve justice services. The office infrastructure at the Ministry and the Area Chambers headquarters is outdated and needs new, repair or renovation. The Ministry of Justice needs to invest in infrastructure, technology, and staff training to improve the justice sector. Modern office complexes with advanced technology can reduce administrative burdens and create a more transparent justice system. Legal aid services can ensure equal access to justice for all citizens, especially marginalised communities. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms like mediation and arbitration can expedite dispute resolution. Investing in modern

office facilities can enhance staff experience and ensure timely justice delivery. Technology solutions like case management systems and electronic filing can streamline processes, reduce paperwork, and improve transparency. Capital investment in training programs can also foster professionalism, integrity, and accountability within the justice sector.

Specifically, the following programmes and projects will be implemented during the Plan horizon:

- a. Purchase of Law books and updating the Ministry of Justice library to become e-justice
- b. Training of Legal officers in relevant areas
- c. Payment of subscription fees to professional bodies
- d. Construction of office complex/buildings
- e. Provision of legal services
- f. Promotion of monthly reports of judicial officers
- g. Designation of special courts towards handling specialised aspects of litigation
- h. Strengthening the office of the public defender
- i. Continuous review of the law, especially criminal law and administration of the criminal justice law
- j. Quick dispensation of litigations

22.6.2 Indicative Cost

To achieve the goals of enhancing and improving the justice sector, the estimated cost for implementing programmes and

projects is 20.6 billion. The indicated amount is required to reposition this sector for her responsibilities of law interpretation and providing legal advisory services to the executive, legislature, and public. This will provide infrastructure, technological advancement, and training to reposition the Ministry of Justice for optimal performance.

22.7 Expected Outcomes

One of the expected outcomes from the Ministry of Justice is the improvement of facilities and infrastructure at the Ministry's headquarters in Makurdi and the Area Chambers. By investing in modern buildings, technology, and equipment, the Ministry can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system. This can lead to faster resolution of cases, reduced backlog of cases, and improved access to justice for all citizens. Additionally, modern facilities and infrastructure can create a more conducive environment for lawyers and litigants, thereby enhancing the overall quality of justice delivery.

Another expected outcome from investment in the Ministry of Justice is enhancing legal aid services. By investing in personnel and technology solutions training programs, the Ministry can improve access to justice for marginalised and vulnerable populations. This can help ensure that all citizens, regardless of socioeconomic status, have equal access to legal representation and can effectively navigate the legal system. Furthermore, investment in the Ministry of Justice can lead to the development of alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms. By investing in mediation centres, arbitration facilities, and training programs for

mediators and arbitrators, the Ministry can promote the resolution of disputes outside of the traditional court system. This can help reduce the burden on the courts, expedite the resolution of cases, and promote a more collaborative and

cost-effective approach to conflict resolution.

Specific benefits of capital investment in the Ministry of Justice include improved efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system, enhanced access to justice for all

Table 22.1: Justice and Public Order Sector-Level Result Framework

SDG	OUTCOME	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	BASELINE	2025	2027	2029
Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.	Improved infrastructure and facilities	Percentage Number of Offices to be constructed and renovated	80% of offices to be constructed and renovated	5%	10%	20%
	Improved efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system	Percentages number of cases prosecuted	80% of cases to be handled efficiently and effectively	5%	15%	20%
	Increased number of Correctional Centres and the Young Offender institutions.	Number of Correctional Centres	3 Federal Correctional Centres	1	2	3
	Reduced number of cases in Court due to utilisation of the ADR mechanisms.	Percentage number of cases determined through ADR Mechanisms	2% of cases determined through Mediation	5%	10%	15%
	Improved human rights protection.	Percentage Number of courts to be constructed and renovated	80% of human rights violations	5%	10%	20%
	Reduced the number of criminal and civil cases in the courts	Percentages number of cases filed	98% of cases not resolved through ADR	5%	15%	20%
	Increased economic development	Improve the justice sector to enhance investment, economic growth	70% of the legal justice sector is not effective in enhancing development and investment	5%	10%	15%

23.0 Introduction

The Judiciary plays an important role in the development and progress of any society. It dispenses justice, protects human rights and ensures the society's peace, order and development. A strong and effective judiciary is essential for creating a stable and prosperous society where all individuals and corporate organisations can live and operate in a peaceful and secure society. The Judiciary is a vital pillar of any democratic society, upholding the rule of law and ensuring justice for all. It serves as the guardian of the Constitution, interpreting and applying the law to resolve disputes and protect individual rights. The Judiciary also checks the powers of the executive and legislative branches, ensuring they do not exceed their constitutional authority. It provides a forum for resolving disputes, interprets and applies the law, and checks the powers of other branches of government through judicial review. Overall, the Judiciary is essential for maintaining social order and the principles of democracy.

The Judiciary is responsible for resolving disputes and conflicts between individuals and groups. This includes civil and criminal disputes and conflicts between individuals, government and corporate organisations. The Judiciary in Benue State significantly boosts the State's GDP by providing employment to numerous professionals, reducing unemployment rates and improving the quality of life for residents. It also helps reduce poverty by providing legal tools for asset protection and livelihood security. It also generates revenue through probate fees, court fees and fines. It also ensures a secure and peaceful society, attracting investment and increasing economic activity and tax revenue for the state government.



23.1 Institutional Setting

The Judiciary in Benue State is comprised of the High Court of Justice, Customary Court of Appeal, Magistrate Courts, Area Courts, and Judicial Service Commission. There are 20 High Courts and One Customary Court of Appeal that hears and determines appeals from Area Courts as courts of superior record. There are 47 Magistrate Courts, 1 Senior Magistrate Court, 33 Upper Area Courts and 52 Grade 1 Area Courts, which are inferior courts responsible for hearing and determining civil and criminal cases across the State.

Judicial institutions play a vital role in upholding the rule of law and ensuring justice is served in society. By interpreting and applying the Constitution and laws, resolving disputes, protecting individual rights, and promoting transparency and accountability, judicial institutions help maintain a fair and just legal system. These institutions must fulfil their responsibilities with integrity, impartiality, and dedication to upholding the

principles of justice.

The Judiciary in Benue State is comprised of the following institutions:

- i. High Court of Justice,
- ii. Customary Court of Appeal,
- iii. Magistrate Courts,
- iv. Area Courts and
- v. Judicial Service Commission.

Table 23.1: Number of Courts in Benue State

S/N	Name of Court	Number
1	High Court of Justice	20
2	Court Registrar's Office	47
3	Senior Magistrate Court	1
4	Upper Area Courts	33
5	Grade I Area Court	52
	Total	153
	Inspectorate Office	7

23.2 Sectoral Performance

Benue State's Judiciary has grown significantly due to increased judicial officers, government funding, and improved infrastructure. The Judiciary (Fund Management Law), 2021 and Constitution (Fifth Alteration Act), 2023, grants financial autonomy to the Judiciary, allowing for investment in court construction, appointing more judges, and capacity-building programs. The Judiciary has implemented key policies, programs, and projects in the last 5 years to achieve set objectives. These include an internal control system for quick justice dispensation, the introduction of a point of sale for revenue collection, staff training, re-training, the construction of courts, and ICT/research centres.

The review of available data from 2019 to 2024 reveals an average reduction in caseloads and backlogs, which usually strain resources and cause delays in case resolution. Adoption of technological advancements like electronic filing systems and online portals to improve efficiency and transparency, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms like mediation and arbitration to reduce court burdens and

promote faster, more cost-effective resolutions and offer flexibility, confidentiality, and control over case outcomes, while also promoting cooperation and consensus-building.

23.3 Strength, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

23.3.1 Strength

Benue State's Judiciary's strength lies in its established legal framework, competent personnel, and commitment to justice and fairness, ensuring effective and efficient citizen service. The Judiciary is a vital part of a democratic society, playing a crucial role in upholding the rule of law, ensuring justice, and protecting individual rights. Its strength lies in its independence, which allows it to make impartial decisions without political influence. The Judiciary also checks on the power of other government branches, ensuring their actions align with the Constitution and principles of justice. It is responsible for interpreting and enforcing laws safeguarding citizens' rights, including protection from discrimination and due process. Additionally, the Judiciary serves as a

forum for resolving disputes, maintaining social order and ensuring justice and a fair and just society.

23.3.2 Challenges

Benue State's Judiciary faces challenges such as inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure, lack of modern gadgets, corruption, and inefficient and ineffective systems, leading to a slow and uninspiring system. Other challenges facing the Judiciary in Benue State are political interference, political instability, insecurity as a result of banditry, Terrorism and kidnapping. The backlog of cases is another challenge which hinders timely and efficient dispute resolution, causing delays and limiting access to justice for individuals and businesses.

23.3.3 Opportunities

The opportunities for the Judiciary are to improve and strengthen its operations and use of technology, alternative dispute resolution, and enhanced diversity and inclusivity as enablers for expeditious justice delivery. The Judiciary has the potential for growth and development, requiring government, civil society, and stakeholders to invest, address challenges, and improve efficiency to promote the rule of law, social justice, and economic development.

23.3.4 Threats

Political interference, corruption, attacks on judicial independence, and budget cuts pose significant threats to the Judiciary. Political interference can lead to biased judges, erode public trust, and compromise the integrity of the legal system. Corruption can lead to bribery and a breakdown of trust in the justice system. Attacks on judicial independence can result in intimidation, harassment, or physical violence, endangering individual judges and compromising the rule of law. Budget cuts and resource constraints can also lead to backlogs and delays in justice administration,

denying individuals their right to a fair trial.

23.4 Sectoral Objectives and Targets

23.4.1 Sector Objectives 2025 – 2029

The broad objective of the Judiciary is to uphold the rule of law, ensure a fair and impartial justice system, provide timely and efficient resolution of legal disputes, and uphold the rights and freedoms of individuals in society.

The medium-term objectives include the following:

- a) Increase access to justice for marginalised groups by 2034
- b) Reduce case backlog by 2034
- c) Strengthen the independence of the Judiciary by 2034
- d) Implement an efficient case management system by 2034
- e) Enhance the use of technology in justice administration by 2034
- f) Implement measures to enhance transparency and accountability in government by 2034
- g) Strengthen anti-corruption measures by 2034.

23.4.2 Medium Term Targets

- a) Construction of more courts and improved infrastructure will increase access to justice for marginalised groups by 50% by 2034.
- b) Reduce the case backlog by 70% by 2034 through the appointment of more judges and the adoption of technological advancements like electronic filing systems and online portals.
- c) Strengthen the independence of the Judiciary by 80% by 2034 through full implementation of the Judiciary (Fund Management Law), 2021 and Constitution (Fifth Alteration Act), 2023.
- d) By automating court processes and procedures, an efficient case management system will be implemented by 70% by 2034.
- e) Enhanced the capacity of judges to

handle complex cases by 70% by 2024 through training and capacity building.

23.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

23.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

- a) Provides infrastructure and adequate modern equipment to facilitate and enhance the dispensation of quick and qualitative justice.
- b) Improve the management capacity of the Judiciary through training and continuing education of the judiciary staff.
- c) Reform the Benue State Judiciary to create room for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
- d) Improve Criminal and Civil Procedure Rules, Regulations and Practice Directions for efficient justice administration.
- e) Increase personnel for the Judiciary
- f) Increased Monitoring & Evaluation

23.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

23.6.1 Programmes and Projects

Several initiatives and programmes have been identified as prerequisites for improving the judiciary system at Benue State. These initiatives can be classified into three major programmes: infrastructural development, technological advancement and capacity building. Infrastructure development can also improve the efficiency of the Judiciary by providing the necessary resources and facilities for judges, lawyers, and court staff to carry out their duties effectively. The construction of modern courtrooms equipped with the latest technology can streamline court proceedings and reduce paperwork, leading to faster cases being resolved. The construction of ultra-modern court complexes in Makurdi and across the State's local governments will address the current

infrastructural deficit that negatively impacts the performance of the Judiciary.

Another important programme that triggers development in the Judiciary is technology. Implementing e-filing systems, case management software, and online court proceedings can streamline court processes and reduce delays. Technology can also improve access to justice by making court services more accessible to the public. By embracing technology, the Judiciary can become more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the people's needs.

Another key programme that can help improve the Judiciary is capacity building for judges and court personnel. This programme can include training sessions, workshops, and seminars to enhance the knowledge and skills of judges and court staff. By investing in the professional development of judicial officers, the Judiciary can become more competent and efficient in handling cases and delivering justice.

23.6.2 Indicative Cost

The estimated cost for implementing programmes and projects to successfully achieve the goals for improving the Judiciary from 2025 to 2029 is 88.2 billion. This will assist in carrying out the necessary reforms to deliver access to justice quickly

The amount will be used to provide infrastructure, technological advancements, and training to reposition the Judiciary for optimal performance.

23.7 Expected Outcomes

One expected outcome of capital investment in the Judiciary is the modernisation of court facilities and infrastructure. Many court buildings are outdated and need repair, impacting justice delivery. Governments can create a more efficient and user-friendly judicial system by investing in new court

buildings, technology, and equipment. Modern court facilities can help to streamline court processes, reduce delays, and improve the overall experience for litigants, lawyers, and judges.

Another expected outcome of capital investment in the Judiciary is the reduction of case backlogs. In many countries, the Judiciary is overwhelmed with pending cases, leading to delays in resolving disputes. By investing in additional courtrooms, judges, and support staff, governments can help reduce case backlogs and ensure that cases are resolved in a timely manner. This can help improve access to justice and enhance public trust in the judicial system.

Capital investment in the Judiciary can also improve the quality of justice delivered. By providing judges with training, resources, and support, governments can help ensure that cases are decided fairly and impartially. Investing in technology can also help improve the efficiency of court processes and reduce the likelihood of errors. By enhancing the quality of justice delivered, governments can strengthen the rule of law and promote respect for human rights.

In addition to these expected outcomes, specific benefits can be derived from capital investment in the Judiciary. For example, investing in the Judiciary can help attract and retain qualified judges and staff. Governments can ensure that competent and dedicated professionals staff the Judiciary by providing competitive salaries, training opportunities, and a supportive work environment. This can help to improve the quality of justice delivered and enhance public confidence in the judicial system.

Furthermore, capital investment in the Judiciary can help promote economic development and investment. A strong and efficient judicial system is essential for creating a favourable business environment and attracting foreign investment. By ensuring that disputes are resolved quickly and fairly, governments can help to reduce legal uncertainty and promote economic growth. This can lead to job creation, increased tax revenues, and improved living standards for all members of society.



Table 23.2: Judiciary Sector Level Result Framework

SDG	OUTCOME	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	BASELINE	2025	2027	2029
Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.	Modernised court facilities and infrastructure	Percentage Number of courts to be constructed and renovated	80% of Court to be constructed and renovated	5%	10%	20%
	Reduced delays in hearing and determination of cases	Percentages number of cases filed	80% of cases not determined expeditiously	5%	15%	20%
	Reduction of case backlogs	Percentages number of cases filed	80% of backlog cases	10%	15%	25%
	Improve the quality of justice delivery	Percentage number of judges receiving training	70% of judges do not receive training	10%	15%	20%
	Enhance public confidence in the judicial system.	Percentage number of litigants	70% of litigants are not confident in the judicial system	5%	10%	15%
	Promote economic development and investment	Improve legal system to enhance investment, economic growth	70% of the legal system is not effective in enhancing development and investment	5%	10%	15%



24.1 Introduction and Institutional Setting

The legislature plays a crucial role in the development of the State, as it is responsible for law-making, oversight, representing the citizens, and promoting their well-being. The legislature in

Benue State legislature is comprised of the following institutions:

- House of Assembly, and
- House of Assembly Service Commission

The State House of Assembly has two main structures: Political and Administrative. The political structure comprises 32 elected legislators. The Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and other principal officers head this group. The administrative structure comprises the House staff. The Clerk of the House, Deputy Clerk, Heads of Departments, and other staff head this group.

The legislature in Benue State contributes significantly to the State's GDP by providing high-impact legislation that is essential for individuals, businesses, and government agencies to operate. It also ensures a secure and peaceful society, attracts investment and increases economic activity and tax revenue for the government.

24.2 Sectoral Performance

The legislature has achieved significant milestones due to increased government funding, improved infrastructure, and the passage of the Benue State House of Assembly (Fund Management Law), 2021, which enhanced efficiency and citizen participation. Several impact legislations were passed to address insecurity, improve



internal revenue generation, address gender-based violence and harmful widowhood practices, and strengthen chieftaincy matters.

24.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

24.3.1 Strength

The strength of the State legislature sector lies in its established framework, structure, and commitment to upholding separation of powers and checks and balances in governance.

24.3.2 Challenges

The legislature often waits for executive action to address social and economic issues, while inadequate funding, an infrastructure deficit, and administrative challenges hinder House performance. Other challenges include executive interference, political instability, insecurity caused by banditry, Terrorism, and kidnapping.

24.3.3 Opportunities

The opportunities for the legislature are embracing technology, fostering collaboration, promoting transparency, and investing in staff training and professionalism.

24.4 Sectoral Objectives and Targets

Review all obsolete laws in the State and bring them into conformity with current trends and international best practices. Strengthen the law-making process by promoting robust public hearings on all bills.

Encouraging legislators to sponsor Private Member Bills (PMBs) that would address critical challenges confronting the people.

Ensure effective and efficient oversight functions

Strengthen representative roles of the legislature to their constituencies.

24.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

- Provides infrastructure and adequate modern equipment to facilitate and enhance robust, effective and efficient legislation and representation.
- Improve the legislature's management capacity through training and

continuing education of Assembly and Assembly Service Commission staff.

- Improved the law-making process by promoting robust public hearings on all bills.
- Increased number of private sponsored Member Bills (PMBs)
- Increased effective and efficient oversight functions.
- Improved relationship of the legislators with their constituencies.
- Improved relationship of the legislature with the Executive and judicial arms of government.
- Improved relationship of the legislature with the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

24.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

24.6.1 Programmes

The programmes identified are:

- Promotion of sustainable energy usage, reducing reliance on non-renewable resources within Assembly Complex
- Enhancement health responsiveness and prioritizes employee well-being at Assembly Clinic
- Strengthen a culture of safety and accountability through monitoring at Assembly Complex
- Encouragement of digital literacy and improved efficiency in legislative processes
- Fosters a culture of learning and research among legislators and staff.
- Support collaboration and professional development through organized meetings and training.
- Encouragement of accurate documentation and accessibility of legislative records.
- Promotion of pride and efficiency in the workplace environment.

- Enhancement of accountability and performance improvement practices.
- Instills safety awareness and readiness among staff.

24.6.2 Projects

The projects are:

- Purchase of Motor Cycles
- Purchase of Office Furniture and Fittings
- Purchase of Motor Vehicles
- Purchase of Vans
- Purchase of Trucks
- Purchase of Buses
- Purchase of Ambulance for Assembly Clinic
- Purchase of Computers
- Purchase of Computer Printers
- Purchase of Photocopying Machines
- Purchase of Scanners
- Purchase of Shredding Machines
- Purchase of Generating Sets
- Installation of Solar Light Equipment/Renewable Energy within Assembly Complex
- Purchase of Canteen/Kitchen Equipment
- Purchase of Health/Medical Equipment
- Purchase of Fire Fighting Equipment
- Purchase of Library Books and Equipment (e-library)
- Purchase of Security Equipment
- Installation of CCTV at Assembly Complex
- Construction of Residential Lodge
- Furnishing of Residential Lodge
- Landscaping of Residential Lodge and Construction of Car Park
- Construction of House of Assembly Clinic
- Provision of Equipment/Furnishing of Assembly Clinic
- Constituency Projects
- Construction/Provision of Multipurpose/Conference Hall
- Furnishing of Multipurpose/Conference Hall/Audio Visual Equipment
- Construction/Provision of Water Facilities (Motorized Borehole) at Assembly Complex & Residential Lodge
- Construction of Power Generating Plants House



- Construction of ICT Hub
- Provision of ICT Equipment/ Furnishing
- Landscaping of Assembly Complex
- Construction of Car Park at Assembly Complex
- Construction of Printing Press/Publishing Complex
- Purchase of Printing/Publishing Machines and Equipment
- Construction of House of Assembly Chapel
- Furnishing of House of Assembly Chapel
- Rehabilitation/Repairs of Assembly Building
- Acquisition of Non-Tangible Assets (Computer Software Acquisition)
- Research and Development
- Anniversaries/Celebrations
- Digitize Record Keeping in the House (Votes and Proceedings and Hazards)
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Oversight Management and Implementation to Assess Performance, Measure

Outcomes, etc.

24.6.3 Indicative Cost

The estimated cost for implementing programmes and projects to successfully achieve the goals for improving the legislature from 2025 to 2029 is **60.501 billion**. This will assist in carrying out the necessary reforms to establish rules/laws and principles that promote justice, order, and the welfare of society.

The amount will be used to deliver infrastructure development, enhance operational efficiency, promote health and safety, digitize processes, and improve capacity building within the Assembly and its associated facilities.



25.0 Introduction

The Finance and Fiscal Sustainability sector in Benue State plays a crucial role in driving economic growth, development, and prosperity. It is responsible for enhancing revenue generation, resource allocation, economic stability, managing the State's financial resources, ensuring efficient public spending, managing the State's debt profile, investment attraction and job creation. The sector contributes directly to the State's GDP through revenue generation and indirectly through employment and growth by managing the State's financial health, promoting economic activities, and ensuring fiscal stability.

Benue State's Finance and Fiscal Sustainability sector has great potential to support the State's socioeconomic growth. By placing a high priority on effective financial management and fiscal

sustainability, the sector can significantly reposition Benue State as an economically thriving region in Nigeria that can propel inclusive development and long-term prosperity.

The sector can help create a stable economic climate that supports growth and development by boosting revenue generation, strengthening public financial management, guaranteeing debt sustainability, and encouraging transparency and accountability. With anticipated gains in income growth, public service delivery, economic diversification, and investment climate, the sector's socioeconomic outlook is favourable.

25.1 Institutional Setting

The Finance and Fiscal Sustainability Sector is responsible for formulating policies that pertain to the economic growth and stability

of the State. Even though this sector's contributions are mainly indirect, they are crucial for establishing a stable economic climate that promotes economic growth, the reduction of poverty, and more general state development goals. Some key institutions in this sector and their functions include the Benue State Board of Internal Revenue Service, which is responsible for tax administration and collecting internally generated revenue (IGR) within the State. The Debt Management Office manages the State's debt portfolio to ensure that borrowing is sustainable and aligned with fiscal policy objectives. It is also responsible for debt monitoring and servicing. The Benue State Ministry of Finance is the central coordinating body for all financial activities of the state government. It oversees public expenditure, debt management, and fiscal policy formulation. The Office of the Accountant General of the State is responsible for managing the State's financial accounts and ensuring proper accounting and financial reporting of all government transactions. Benue State Bureau of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs manages the financial affairs of local governments in Benue State, including the disbursement of funds to local councils and oversight of their financial management. Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission focuses on budget preparation, economic planning and development strategies for the State. The BSB & EPC works to align financial resources with development goals and priorities. The Bureau for International Cooperation and Development focuses on resource mobilisation from donor partners and Official Development Assistance (ODA). Benue State Investment and Property Development Company facilitates

investments and manages state-owned assets and properties to generate revenue and promote economic development. Benue State Bureau of Public Procurement ensures transparency, accountability, and efficiency in procuring goods and services for the state government. It regulates public procurement processes to prevent corruption and waste. Benue State Bureau of Statistics provides statistical data and information to support the State's planning, budgeting, and policy formulation. Benue State Audit Service Commission oversees the auditing of state finances and ensures that public funds are managed according to legal and regulatory standards. Benue State has made strides towards increasing accountability in public finance management, improving public access to budget information, and releasing regular financial reports.

25.2 Sector Performance, 2020-2024

Several indicators, such as higher internally generated revenue (IGR), better public financial management, better debt management techniques, and increased transparency and accountability, show the growth of the Finance and Fiscal Sustainability sector in Benue State over the past five years. The Benue State Board of Internal Revenue's (BIRS) reforms and enhanced tax administration have led to a steady rise in IGR. The State's internal revenue has increased marginally from ₦17,179,638,193.96 in 2019 to ₦19,198,906,258.17 in 2023. The result of these initiatives is a more varied revenue stream. To maintain financial discipline and transparency, Benue State has improved budget preparation, execution and monitoring.

From 2020 to 2024, Benue State's Finance and Fiscal Sustainability sector gradually

improved in all major performance metrics. The State has achieved notable progress in augmenting its internal revenue, refining public financial management, guaranteeing the sustainability of its debt, and augmenting transparency and accountability. These initiatives have improved public service delivery, strengthened economic resilience, and created a more stable fiscal climate. Nonetheless, there are still difficulties, especially in completely diversifying revenue streams and preserving budgetary restraint in the face of economic volatility.

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especially in completely diversifying revenue streams and preserving budgetary restraint in the face of economic volatility.

25.3 Strength, Challenges and Opportunities

25.3.1 Strength

- * Agricultural potential – Benue State is known as the "food basket" of Nigeria, with vast agricultural resources. The State has a significant comparative advantage in producing products, including yams, rice, cassava, and fruits, because of its large fertile land and ideal climate. In addition to increasing domestic revenue through trade and exports, this agricultural wealth is a foundation for agro-industrial growth, creating jobs and raising living standards. Agriculture earnings can be further utilised with the correct fiscal techniques, giving the State's finances a steady source of income.
- * Natural resources – The State has abundant natural resources, including mineral deposits and forests, including



large mineral deposits like coal, gypsum, and limestone, which strengthen its economy. Through mining and forestry operations, these resources offer opportunities to generate income. By utilising these resources, it is possible to increase internally generated revenue (IGR) and draw in private sector investment, which will lessen the need for government support. These resources have the potential to be a long-term cornerstone of fiscal sustainability if effectively managed, supporting both environmental preservation and economic expansion.

- * Strategic location – Benue State's central location in Nigeria positions it as a critical hub for trade and commerce. Its proximity to several other states and the capital city, Abuja, makes it an ideal transit route for goods and services. This strategic positioning allows the State to generate substantial revenue through trade, transportation, and logistics.
- * Human capital – The State has a large and growing population with a relatively high level of education. A skilled and educated workforce attracts investment as businesses and industries seek areas with competent human resources
- * Government initiatives – The State government has implemented various initiatives to improve fiscal sustainability, such as the Benue State Fiscal Sustainability Plan.

25.3.2 Key Challenges

- * Dependence on federal allocations – Benue State relies heavily on federal allocations, which can be unpredictable and unreliable.

- * Limited internally generated revenue – The State has limited sources of internally generated revenue, making it difficult to fund its budget.
- * Inefficient tax collection – Tax collection in the State is often inefficient, leading to loss of revenue.
- * Corruption is a significant challenge in the State's finance and fiscal sector.
- * Lack of economic diversification – The State's economy is largely dependent on agriculture, making it vulnerable to fluctuations in the agricultural sector.

25.3.3 Threats

- * Economic Downturns – Economic downturns can reduce federal allocations and impact the State's economy.
- * Security Challenges – Security challenges, such as herders-farmers conflicts, can impact agricultural production and economic growth.
- * Competition from other states – Other States may compete with Benue State for investment and resources.
- * Global economic trends – Global economic trends, such as trade wars and recessions, can impact the State's economy.

25.3.4 Opportunities

- * Agricultural development – The State's agricultural potential can be leveraged to drive economic growth and diversification.
- * Investment in infrastructure – Infrastructure such as roads and bridges can improve trade and commerce.
- * Private sector partnerships – Partnering with the private sector can bring investment and expertise.
- * Economic empowerment programs –

Implementing economic empowerment programs can improve human capital and reduce poverty.

25.4 Medium-Term Objectives and Targets

25.4.1 Sector Objectives, 2025-2029

The broad objective of the Finance and Fiscal sustainability sector is to enhance internally generated revenue (IGR) to support sustainable development and ensure efficient, effective, and sustainable public expenditure management for optimal service delivery. Specifically, the sector will seek to:

- * To increase IGR
- * To increase IGR-to-GDP ratio.
- * Increase tax base.
- * Reduce tax evasion.
- * Implement a modern revenue administration system.
- * Train revenue staff on new technology.
- * Publish quarterly revenue reports.
- * Establish a revenue transparency portal.
- * Develop a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework.
- * Increase budget execution rate.
- * Reduce expenditure arrears.
- * Publish a timely and accurate financial management system.
- * Conduct regular audits and investigations.
- * Establish a citizen engagement platform.
- * Conduct regular citizen satisfaction surveys.
- * Positioning Benue for grants, partnerships and loans.
- * Working with all relevant federal MDAs to attract financing, partnerships, grants and economic growth.
- * Reduce cost of governance.

25.4.2 Medium Term Targets

The following targets will be pursued

rigorously by the sector:

- * Increase IGR by 20% annually for the next 3 years
- * Achieve an IGR-to-GDP ratio of 15% by 2026
- * Increase tax registration by 30% by 2025
- * Reduce tax evasion by 25% by 2026
- * Implement a modern revenue administration system by 2025
- * Train 80% of revenue staff on new technology by 2026
- * Publish quarterly revenue reports by 2025
- * Establish a revenue transparency portal by 2026
- * Develop a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework by 2025
- * Achieve a 90% budget execution rate by 2025
- * Reduce expenditure arrears by 50% by 2026
- * Publish a timely and accurate financial management system by 2026
- * Conduct regular audits and investigations by 2026
- * Establish a citizen engagement platform by 2025
- * Conduct regular citizen satisfaction surveys by 2026

25.5 Key Sector Strategies and Policies

25.5.1 Policy Measures to achieve the objectives, 2025-2029

Some of the high level sector objectives that will be pursued include revamping of government owned companies and assisting them in securing investments in their ventures, grow IGR, fully automate financial operations of AG/MOF/BIRS/Payroll, inculcate budgetary discipline, monitoring and cost optimisation, fund agriculture, wealth creation and SMEs via direct interventions, FGN interventions and multilateral



agencies, new and improved website for MOF, social media campaigns, continuous training and recruitment of subject matter experts, establish and build the Benue sovereign fund and sinking fund to stabilise government operations, continued focus on timely salary and pension payment as well as commencement of backlog payments, partnership with MDAs on various schemes on skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, work with Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to free up funds held by orders of various courts, SME support and work with DMO to access long term funding for projects and strategic investments.

25.6 Flagship Programmes, Projects and Indicative Cost

25.6.1 Programmes and Projects

In the medium term, several high-level programs and projects are proposed for the finance and fiscal sector to enhance its efficiency and sustainability in Benue State. One of the key initiatives is the Revenue Enhancement Programme, which aims to modernise revenue collection and administration. This will involve implementing a cutting-edge revenue administration system to increase transparency, streamline processes, and

boost internally generated revenue. Additionally, there will be a focus on training revenue staff in using new technologies, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills to maximise the benefits of these systems.

The Budget Management Programme seeks to improve fiscal discipline by developing a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). This framework will guide budget planning and ensure financial resources are efficiently allocated over multiple years. Another critical component of this program is reducing expenditure arrears, which will improve financial stability and credibility by addressing past debts and obligations.

The Financial Management Programme will focus on conducting regular financial audits to strengthen financial oversight. These audits will ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with financial regulations, contributing to sound fiscal governance.

Citizen involvement is also a priority through the Citizen Engagement Programme. This initiative will establish a citizen engagement platform, providing a forum for the public to voice their concerns, participate in decision-making, and offer feedback on government performance. Regular citizen satisfaction surveys will gauge public opinion on fiscal policies and service delivery, fostering greater trust between the government and the populace.

The Grants and Partnerships Programme aims to attract external funding and strategic partnerships to support development projects in Benue State. By securing grants and collaborating with national and international partners, the State can mobilise additional financial resources, thereby driving economic growth and improving public service delivery.

25.6.2 Indicative Cost

An estimated **₦51.685 billion** in public investment is needed to meet the objectives set forth for the finance and fiscal sustainability sector between 2025 and 2029. As the government repositions the finance sector and implements strategies to stimulate private domestic and foreign investment, private sector investment is expected to account for a substantial part of the total sector's investment.

25.7 Expected Outcomes

The matrices in Table 25.1 show the general results anticipated from the several interventions and specific benefits derived from capital investments dispersed throughout the eight (8) projects to be carried out under the five (5) broad programs. Each of these programmes and projects has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the finance and fiscal

sustainability sector objectives in increased IGR, increased IGR-to-GDP ratio, increased tax registration, reduced tax evasion, enhanced transparency and accountability, trained revenue staff, timely and accurate financial information for decision-making, easy access to revenue information for citizens and stakeholders, improved resource allocation and utilisation, increased budget execution rate, reduced expenditure arrears, improved financial discipline and accountability, minimised fraud and corruption, enhanced citizen participation and feedback, improved service delivery and responsiveness, increased access to external funding and resources, improved development prospects and opportunities, enhanced collaboration and coordination, improved access to federal resources and opportunities minimised waste and inefficiency and improved financial prudence and responsibility.



Plan Implementation, Coordination and Communication

Chapter

26

26.1 Communication Purpose (Goal)

The *raison d'etat* for this communications strategy are:

- Instruction – inform and guide Benue People and Stakeholders on the Benue State Development Plan's Vision, Mission and Objectives, including priority Policies, Programmes and Projects meant to develop the State and how to participate and carry it forward.
- Inspiration – Motivate the Benue People and stakeholders to proceed in a definite way that will make the Plan succeed and develop themselves and the State through Behavior, Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice changes that will lead to progress.
- Advocacy – persuading policymakers and People in key strategic positions to

do the right thing, adopt the right behaviours, and put in place the right structures, policies and resources, including deploring their social capital to bring about the desired development of the Benue People and State in general.

26.2 Communication Objectives

The overall objective of the BSDP Communications Strategy is to send "Call to Action, Participation, and Engagement" messages to ensure the smooth implementation of the BSDP's overarching vision, missions, and objectives by all stakeholders (MDAs, LGAs, Communities, Media, Private Sector, CSOs, NGOs, and the general public).





The audience is reached to learn about the Plan, respond to messages, and actively participate and engage in implementing it.

More specifically, BSDP Communications Strategy aims at:

- Raising awareness on BSDP by communicating and disseminating key information; getting feedback from stakeholders on modalities and status of implementation, including policy, programme and project Outcome and Impact results communication.
- Creating a platform for policy advocacy and dialogue through the use of evidence-based information for decision-making;
- Enhancing implementation effectiveness of BSDP by publicising priority areas;
- Establishing an official communication channel in BSB&EPC to harvest stakeholders' feedback and
- Mobilising participation and engagement of stakeholders through clear articulation of their roles and responsibilities using various communications channels, products, events and programmes.

26.3 Implementation and Coordination Framework

26.3.1 Communication Governance

To ensure that our communications are timely, accurate and consistent, they must be approved by the Director General (DG) of the Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission/Chairperson of the Grass Roots Sensitization and Mobilization Committee or its authorised delegate in the MDA/service area that they relate. When a communication cuts across MDA service areas or local government areas, the DG and Secretary to the State Government (SSG), who are responsible for planning and policy coordination and implementation (or their delegates), give the final approval.

Any MDA/ service area content should be approved by the relevant Honourable Commissioner or Local Government Chairperson in the first instance, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Grassroots Sensitization and Mobilization Committee. The same governance arrangements apply to proactive communications with the media.

26.3.2 Communication Coordination Group

The Benue State Development Plan Communications Strategy shall be governed and implemented by the Grassroots Sensitization and Mobilization Committee, which is chaired by the Director General of the Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission, who shall constitute the Committee from the following stakeholder groups and also appoint an external Development Communication, Participation and Engagement Consultant to managed and facilitate the implementation of the Benue State Development Plan's communication strategy and activities, including going round the MDAs, State Economic Sectors and Local Government Areas to harvest Policy/ Programme/Project Outcome and Impact Results and communicate same to Stakeholders promptly. The stakeholders' groups are:

- Governor's Office
- Secretary to State Government Office (Policy Coordination Unit)
- Ministry of Information
- Radio Benue
- BNARDA (Agricultural Extension Unit)
- NGO
- Chair, Local Government Development Officers Forum
- Benue Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Religious and Traditional Institutions
- External Development Communication, Participation and Engagement Consultant.
- Secretariat: Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission.

26.3.3 Stakeholders Communication Channels



Messages will be delivered strategically, as indicated in the Communication Implementation Plan, to ensure that all the target audiences are reached effectively and that the communication objectives are achieved. We also need to be mindful of the channels we use if we want our communications to be received and understood by the intended audiences.

Communication channels are the tools and methods we use to send information and messages to an intended audience. They can be used to send information two-way (that is, top-bottom and bottom-top) and even three-way (that is, across).

They can be print, digital, or face-to-face and include presentations, briefings, reports, meeting minutes, newsletters, audio, video, animation, webpages, social media, team meetings, and events, among other things.

Communication channels need to be in place and endorsed, and there needs to be an awareness of them to get the correct information and messages to the correct people at the correct time. The most effective ones need to be used to achieve

this, and this will depend on several variables, for example, the subject matter of the communication, what it seeks to achieve, its urgency and, its intended audience and their communications needs, among others. Various channels would be used because there may also be different target audiences for communication and audiences will engage differently.

Communications are also more likely to work if they are not 'one way,' where an agency only uses its channels to communicate to audiences from the top to the bottom, which will create challenges. Communication between people, from the



start, implies that there is an existing or potential relationship, and it must be two ways (both up and down and down and up) so that there are opportunities for audiences to share their questions, views, ideas, concerns or issues on what is being communicated. This enables people to contribute to shaping the subject matter of what is being communicated (as appropriate).



Communication, participation, and engagement are not separate for us. Therefore, participation and engagement feature within our communication channels, and we have no separate participation and engagement strategy for our engagement with stakeholders but an integrated approach. Hence, we will use the following key multiple channels known to have a significant impact on attitude/mindset change, including Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and activities to improve the flow of communications and information on BSBP implementation to key target audiences, raise awareness and knowledge on the priority aspects as developed for general and specific publics, including communicating Outcome and Impact results.

26.3.4 Communication Channels, Tools and Tactics

The BSB&EPC and partners will capitalise on well-established communication resources and networks in Benue State and Nigeria to communicate and disseminate key messages targeting all audiences identified in the situation analysis. The message format will vary to suit different groups, as indicated in the audience communication needs assessment. It will include, but not be limited to, TV and Radio spots, advertising, news coverage, special program productions, interactive talk



shows, guest/expert appearances in call-in programs and media campaigns, etc.

Radio Benue and Radio Nigeria, Nigeria Television Stations, Radio and Video Documentaries, E-Newsletter, E-Mail list serve, Daily and Weekly Newspapers, Website, Social media, Culturally appropriate information materials/channels, Inter-Personal

Communication, Bulk SMS, Promotional Materials, Special Thematic Campaigns and Stakeholders' Engagements, Public Events, Media/Journalists engagement, Publications, Community and Sectoral Albums, Information Education and Communications (IEC), Exhibitions, and Workshop/Seminars/Training.



Financing the Plan

Chapter

27



27.0 Introduction

Nigeria's fiscal space is generally tight. The rate of increase in public finances does not also match the growing population and increasing development needs. Financing the development priorities that would cause transformational changes in Benue State requires adopting fiscal measures and making critical financing decisions to free up fiscal space, increase revenue inflow, and enhance efficiency in resource utilisation.

27.1 Financing Objectives

Financing this Plan requires making strategic choices that will complement fiscal and other reforms at the federal level. The objectives of policy decisions during the plan period will be to:

- a) entrench fiscal discipline to cut costs and free up resources for accelerated and inclusive growth;
- b) enhance allocative efficiency to ensure delivery of development priorities, and
- c) optimise alternative financing

options to bridge the existing gap and sustain the positive trajectory.

27.2 Financing Strategy

Financing this Plan will require bold steps to cut costs, enhance efficiency in resource allocation, and optimise alternative sources of funding. The following strategies will be adopted to achieve these broad objectives.

27.2.1 Cutting Cost

Cutting the operating cost of government is crucial in enabling governments to spend more on development priorities. Strategies to be adopted to cut costs and stabilise revenue streams for financing development priorities include:

- a) moderating growth of recurrent expenditure to free up space for financing development priorities;
- b) capping the share of total loans dedicated to recurrent expenditure at 30% throughout the plan period;
- c) adopting revenue stabilisation mechanisms (such as building financial buffers and developing contingency financing plans) to address the effects of revenue volatility and slippages between budget and actual expenditure;
- d) strengthening public financial management agencies in the State, especially the Debt Management Office, Fiscal Responsibility Commission and Procurement Agency;

27.2.2 Enhancing Allocative

Efficiency

Decisions on the allocation of financial resources matter a lot. The State Government will take the following strategic actions to ensure it gets the most out of the scarce resources:

- a) ensuring policy linkage and intergovernmental collaboration to streamline budgets of State and LGAs and enhance coordination efficiency;
 - b) ramping up share of capex in total budget from 44.15% during the period 2017-2022 to 60% by 2027 and further 70% by 2029;
 - c) prioritising releases for Capex to ensure 100% release by 2029, up from an average of 16.9% during 2017-2022;
 - d) increasing share of capex for the development of agricultural infrastructure and strengthening of processes from an average of 10.05% during 2019-2022 to 15% by 2027 and 25% by 2029;
- prioritising releases for capex for development of agricultural infrastructure and strengthening of processes to significantly improve the situation from as low as 2.07% in 2022 to 65% by 2027 and 100% by 2029;

27.2.3 Optimising Financing Option

Overdependence on FA receipts is not sustainable. It also limits the capacity of the State to finance development priorities. Efforts to reduce the dependence will focus on:

- a) Doubling the share of IGR in total revenue to 30% by 2029, up from an average of 18.83% during 2017-2022;
- b) significantly increasing performance in IGR from an average of 38.45% during 2017-2022 to above 75% by 2027 and 95% by 2029;

- c) develop a perspective plan for borrowing during the plan period, which will be revalidated and operationalised using annual borrowing plans;
- d) developing a pipeline of projects for PPP financing and incentivising private investments in these projects;
- e) exploring global funding for green initiatives such as carbon capture projects;
- f) optimising facilities negotiated by the federal government;
- g) demonstrating transparency and accountability and intensifying engagement with international development partners for strategic partnerships and development assistance;

27.3 Aligning LG Priorities with Plan Strategic Focus

The philosophy of this Plan is based on intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration. It is underpinned by the universal principles of federalism that govern the sharing of power, responsibilities and accountabilities. Achieving the goal and strategic objectives in this Plan will require well-coordinated participation of the 23 LGAs in Benue State. It will require taking policy actions that include the following:

- a) Aligning fiscal strategy of the 23 LGAs with State policies with particular attention paid to:
 - o developing LGA medium-term expenditure frameworks that are consistent with the State MTEF;
 - o promoting intergovernmental

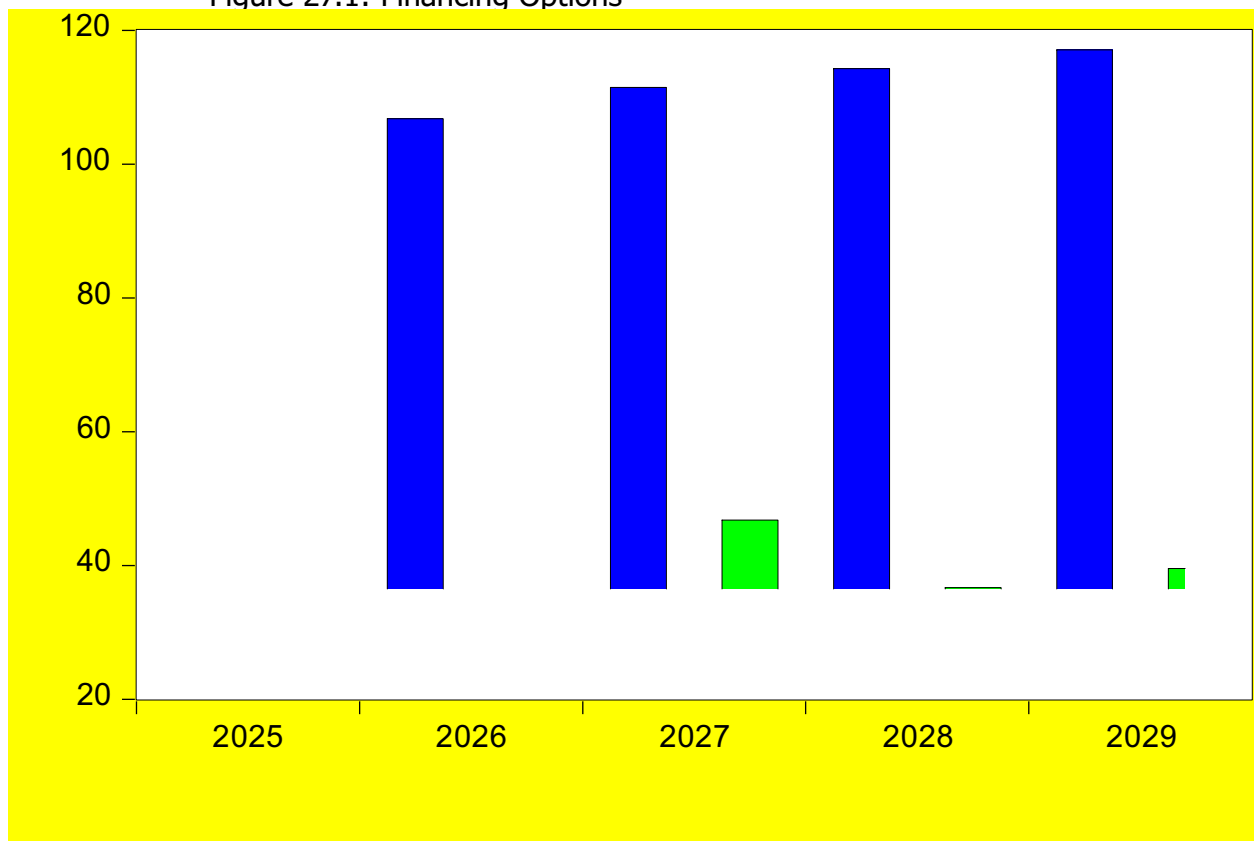
- o collaboration and co-financing of strategic priorities;
- o prioritising capex for agricultural, rural and human capital development;
- o progressively increasing the share of capex in the annual budget to an average of 60% and releases for capex to an average of 85% by 2029;
- o increasing share of IGR in total revenue of LGAs to an average of 10% and actual performance to not less than an average of 85% by 2029;
- o strengthening public financial management

structures and processes (especially budgeting, cash management and procurement, and auditing) at the LG level in line with federal and State reform priorities;

27.4 Financing Requirement

Benue State's financial resources profile clearly shows the high proportion of federally distributed revenues in the total revenue inflows. The fiscal outlook for the medium term shows the continued dominance of this source of revenue. However, the tight space is expected to ease if current fiscal and monetary reforms are sustained and remedial actions are taken to tame the negative effect of inflation. This is expected to create a modest buoyancy in the government budget, which must be used efficiently to deliver development outcomes.

Figure 27.1: Financing Options



The total financing requirement for the Plan is ₦1.78 trillion. This amount is to be financed by both the public and private sectors. The public sector is expected to provide up to 91% (₦1.62 trillion) of the total investment requirement, while the private sector invests nearly 5% (₦89.1 billion). Private investment in this context is limited to public-private partnerships (PPPs) investments. Direct private investments are not included. About 4% of the total financing requirement (₦70.03 billion) is expected as aid and grants for donor-funded or assisted projects.

27.5 Financing Options

The BSDP 2025-2029 is to be financed using three major options. The public financing option comprises budgetary

provisions of the State Government and the 23 LGAs in the State. The two other options are private financing and aid/grants of governmental (through multilateral and bilateral agencies) and nongovernmental organisations.

27.5.1 Public Financing

The total sum of ₦1.62 trillion is the projected public financing available for implementing this Plan over the next 5 years. This amount comprises ₦871.8 billion in revenue for the State and ₦750.25 billion for the 23 LGAs in the State. Close to two-thirds (₦562.72 billion) of the projected state revenue comes from the FA. ₦122.32 billion (14.03%) and 186.85 billion (21.43%) are expected from IGR and other sources (grants and loans), respectively.

Table 27.1: State Government Financing Available

Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total
FAAC	218.17	268.44	314.57	361.74	408.91	1,571.84
IGR	34.07	37.47	40.73	44.03	47.33	203.64
Others	112.25	138.74	163.10	187.99	212.89	814.97
Total Government Revenue	364.49	444.66	518.41	593.77	669.12	2,590.45

Source: BSB & EPC and TWG projects

The financial plan for the ₦5,780.358 billion expenditure over the next five years relies heavily on public financing, which contributes ₦2.59 trillion (44.8% of the total projected cost). This revenue will be sourced from Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC), Internally Generated Revenue (IGR), and Other Revenue Sources. With an estimated contribution of ₦1.572 trillion (60.7% of public financing), FAAC remains the largest revenue source. Its consistent allocation provides a stable foundation for funding recurrent and capital expenditure within the plan. The IGR will contribute about ₦203.64 billion (7.9%). The Benue State Government will also enhance this

stream by implementing revenue reforms such as digitization of tax collection, incentivizing formal business registration, and widening the tax base by targeting previously untapped sectors. Other sources include VAT, excess crude, grants, and loans, contributing ₦814.97 billion (31.5%). This diverse revenue pool presents an opportunity to leverage additional financing tools. The total projected annual revenue (as shown in Table 27.2) indicates progressive growth from ₦364.49 billion in 2025 to ₦669.12 billion in 2029.

To ensure the successful implementation of this Development Plan, innovative

financing strategies are essential to bridge the funding gap and accelerate sustainable growth. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are critical pillars for mobilizing resources, unlocking private sector expertise, and fostering inclusive development across key sectors. With the remaining funding gap estimated at approximately 3.19 trillion, PPPs will be strategically leveraged to finance projects with clear revenue-generating potential. These partnerships will focus on sectors such as infrastructure development, healthcare, education, agriculture, and renewable energy. Infrastructure development will include roads, bridges, and urban rail systems to improve transportation networks, reduce travel costs, and enhance trade competitiveness. Industrial parks and economic zones will also be prioritized to create modern hubs for manufacturing and processing industries, encouraging private investment and driving industrialization. In healthcare, PPP initiatives will facilitate the construction and management of modern hospitals, diagnostic centers, and telemedicine facilities through Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) arrangements. This approach will expand access to quality healthcare services while minimizing government spending. Similarly, education will benefit from the development of infrastructure such as classrooms, research centers, and vocational training institutions, which will help bridge the skills gap and equip the workforce with market-relevant competencies. Agriculture will be a key focus area, with PPP investments directed toward large-scale farming, irrigation systems, processing plants, and storage facilities to reduce post-harvest losses,



ensure food security, and enhance value-chain development. In addition, renewable energy projects such as solar farms, wind energy facilities, and mini-grid systems will provide affordable, clean, and reliable power to underserved areas, complementing the State's energy mix and supporting industrial and economic growth.

To attract and sustain private sector interest in PPPs, the State government will adopt several strategic measures to create a conducive investment environment. A transparent and well-defined legal and regulatory framework will be enacted to ensure fairness, accountability, and competitiveness in project procurement and implementation. The government will provide incentives such as tax holidays, subsidies, and risk-sharing mechanisms to reduce investment costs and enhance project viability. Collaborating with local and international investors, the State will establish partnerships with global financial institutions, development agencies, and investment firms to secure financing and technical expertise for high-impact projects. Furthermore, community participation will be prioritized to ensure buy-in from host communities, minimize resistance, and promote the equitable distribution of project benefits. To boost investor confidence, a robust monitoring

and evaluation framework will be established to track project implementation, assess performance, and ensure transparency and accountability. These measures will enhance the attractiveness of the State as a destination for private investment, ensuring that PPP projects are aligned with socio-economic priorities and capable of delivering sustainable outcomes.

In addition to PPPs, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) will play a vital role in financing the Development Plan, contributing approximately 10% of the total cost, or 578.036 billion. FDI inflows will complement domestic resources and PPP initiatives by providing capital, advanced technologies, and expertise necessary for large-scale development projects. The State will adopt a targeted approach to attract foreign investments in priority sectors, ensuring alignment with its developmental goals. Manufacturing and industrialization will be key focus areas, with FDI directed toward the establishment of manufacturing plants, industrial clusters, and special economic zones (SEZs) to boost industrial output, create jobs, and stimulate value addition. Collaborating with multinational corporations will also encourage technology transfer and skills development, enhancing local capacity. Similarly, renewable energy will benefit from foreign investment in solar, wind, and biomass projects, addressing the State's energy deficit while promoting clean energy adoption.

By partnering with global energy firms, the State will finance and deploy innovative energy solutions to power industries and households. FDI will also target agriculture and agro-business, focusing on commercial farming,

mechanized agriculture, and the development of agro-industrial processing facilities. These investments will strengthen the agricultural value chain, reduce reliance on food imports, and open new opportunities for export-driven growth. In the technology and digital economy sector, foreign investments will support the expansion of broadband infrastructure, data centers, and technology hubs to position the State as a hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and e-governance. This will stimulate job creation and drive economic diversification by unlocking new opportunities in the digital space. Furthermore, investments in tourism and hospitality will unlock the State's potential as a tourism destination, with the development of hotels, resorts, and eco-tourism projects that attract international visitors, generate foreign exchange, and promote cultural heritage preservation.

To attract and retain foreign investors, the State government will implement policies that create a stable and investor-friendly business climate. Macroeconomic stability, ease of doing business, and strong investor protection mechanisms will be prioritized to enhance confidence and minimize risks. The development of critical infrastructure such as transportation, power, and digital connectivity will provide the necessary support for smooth business operations, while the establishment of a dedicated Investment Promotion Agency will streamline investment approvals, facilitate regulatory compliance, and provide one-stop-shop services for investors. Additionally, public sector reforms will strengthen governance structures, combat corruption, and reduce

bureaucratic bottlenecks, further enhancing the State's attractiveness as an investment destination. The government will collaborate with international trade organizations, foreign embassies, and multilateral institutions to explore bilateral investment opportunities and attract reputable foreign investors. By strategically leveraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), the State will mobilize significant resources to fund its

Development Plan. The targeted focus on infrastructure, healthcare, education, agriculture, renewable energy, and industrialization will address funding challenges while driving inclusive growth and socio-economic transformation.

The total sum of ₦725.82 billion is projected to be available for financing priorities in this Plan. This amount comprises ₦708.32 billion (97.6%) expected from FAAC and ₦17.5 billion (2.4%) as IGR.

Table 27.2: LG Available Financing

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total
FAAC	132.79	138.62	142.07	145.61	149.23	708.32
IGR	1.99	2.19	2.29	4.01	7.02	17.5
Total	134.78	140.81	144.36	149.62	156.25	725.82

Source: BSB & EPC and TWG projects

The economic base of Benue State is the aggregate economic resources (private businesses and public enterprises) that produce wealth and income for the residents. It forms the basis from which revenues collectable by both the State and LGs are generated. Therefore, the 23 LGAs in the State have a critical role to play in growing the economy, building the human capital base, and improving the living standard of the residents. This is reflected in the share of LGA financing, which is expected to be up to 46.2% of total public financing.

27.5.2 Private Financing

The private sector is expected to play a greater role in financing this Plan. Private finances are expected to be injected into priority sectors in two major ways.

- **Direct financing:** In this case, private investors finance projects of their choice. The private entity or group has full divestiture and owns and operates the asset or business.

- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):**

Governments at the State and LG levels identify and prepare viable projects for private sector investment. PPPs may take the form of i) private sector investing in and managing public assets (using contractual agreement such as service, lease or concession contract), ii) private sector investing in, managing and transferring (Built, Operate and Transfer) new assets or business to government, or iii) a joint venture that requires both government and private sector financing and manage an asset of the business.

Overall, the private sector is expected to inject financial resources to the tune of ₦129.523 billion or 5% of the total financing requirement of this Plan. This volume of resources will be injected through PPPs. This Plan does not include the volume of resources injected through direct investment. It is, however, expected

to increase significantly with general improvement in the business environment in the State and special incentives provided in priority sectors.

27.6 Measures for Increasing Private Sector Financing

Attracting the projected level of private finances will require strategic and well-coordinated actions. These include:

- Improving the general business environment by improving the State's Ease of Doing Business ranking (from 23rd in 2023 to top 15 by 2027 and top 10 by 2029), which focuses on the following critical areas:
 - security,
 - infrastructure (electricity, transportation, logistics and internet),
 - regulatory environment (business registration, land and property ownership, tax payment, contract enforcement, etc),
 - skills and labour availability,
 - transparency and accountability,
 - economic opportunities (access to funding, forex and customers)
- providing targeted incentives to

encourage investments in priority sectors;

- strengthening the legal framework to address barriers to private investments;
- strengthening institutional capacity at State and LG levels for effective PPP management and
- reducing political risks with a framework for ensuring continuity.

27.7 Aid and Grants

There is a general commitment to the realisation of the SDGs. International development partners have committed financing resources to support countries in financing their development priorities in line with the SDGs. Official development assistance to Nigeria forms of one the financing options of this Plan. Benue State is expected to continue benefiting from government (through multilateral and bilateral agencies) and nongovernmental financing of development priorities. 103.618 billion is expected to be injected into projects and programmes in the State.

Plan Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Chapter

28



28.1 Current Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting System

Very few past development plans were designed and structured to be implemented through annual budgets derived from the Medium Term Sector Strategy (MTSS), which in turn are derived from the development plan.

Currently, the State Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is very weak as there is no formal mechanism for evaluating projects and programmes at regular intervals to assess whether or not they are delivering the results they were designed to achieve. Besides, the evaluation of programmes is not centrally coordinated, tends to be ad-hoc, and the focus is usually on spending (outputs) rather than on outcomes. Similarly, currently practised monitoring consists mainly of verification visits that do not feed into a more systematic data collection and analysis process. The

produced reports often focus on implementation and inputs rather than on the results of the intervention.

There is hardly any analysis of progress towards pre-determined project outcomes. An important missing component of the system is effective data collection for rigorous analysis to aid evidence-based decision-making. Access to good-quality performance data for decision-making purposes is severely constrained by data acquisition costs and capacity limitations, among other reasons.

At the institutional level, there is no constitutional requirement or specific legislation mandating the conduct of M&E activities across all government bodies. Thus, many MDAs are performing one M&E function or another without a central coordination point to feed into a state-wide M&E system. Moreover, there are no standardised guidelines for M&E functions, which has led to the lack of minimum standards to guide M&E practice and poor understanding of M&E roles and definitions among the MDAs. For instance, project and programme supervision, inspection, auditing, oversight and evaluation are often confused as M&E; therefore, monitoring and evaluation are poorly executed, and M&E reports are of little or no value for decision-making in government.

Furthermore, certain key institutions that would either use M&E products and services to improve their performance or help generate demand for M&E activities often lack the technical capacity in M&E to do so. Also, inadequate M&E funding for comprehensive M&E is a serious challenge in the State. There is also a lack of political support for using M&E findings for project/programme/policy

management and results-based measurement. Therefore, the pitfalls for state M&E should be resolved to pave the way for transparent assessment of interventions.

28.2 Enhancing Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting System

An installation of a structured, implementable, credible and flexible M&E system consisting of a set of organisational structures, management processes, standards, strategies, plans, indicators, data and information collection systems, reporting lines and accountability relationship which will enable the State and MDAs to discharge their M&E functions effectively.

The state M&E system is intended to enable the government to track the effectiveness of its programmes and projects, which are required to accomplish the objectives of the Benue Strategic Development Plan vision.

The system will provide the government with a better means of learning from past experience and demonstrating results, improving service delivery and accountability to key stakeholders.

It is also intended to complement performance-based budgeting and resource allocation, which requires more robust monitoring and evaluation at the operational level of projects and programmes.

The institutionalisation and reinforcement of the state M&E system across all levels of government should improve the capacity, capability, and effectiveness of translating strategic plans and programmes into outcomes and impact, thereby maintaining a clear linkage between planning and implementation.

The system will set the standards for examining progress, reviewing strategies and, at appropriate stages, evaluating performance and impact against design with clear evidence on the record of implementation and data to support findings relating to the measurement of outputs and outcomes.

Therefore, the system is expected to foster an evidence-based assessment of State government performance and enhance the government's execution capacity over time.

Figure 28.1: Institutional Framework for Plan Implementation

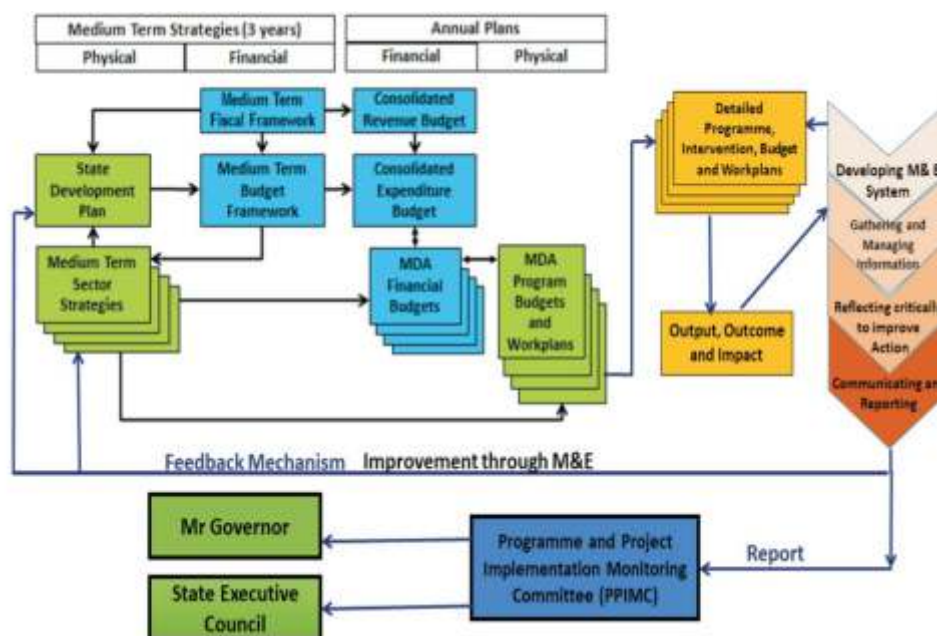
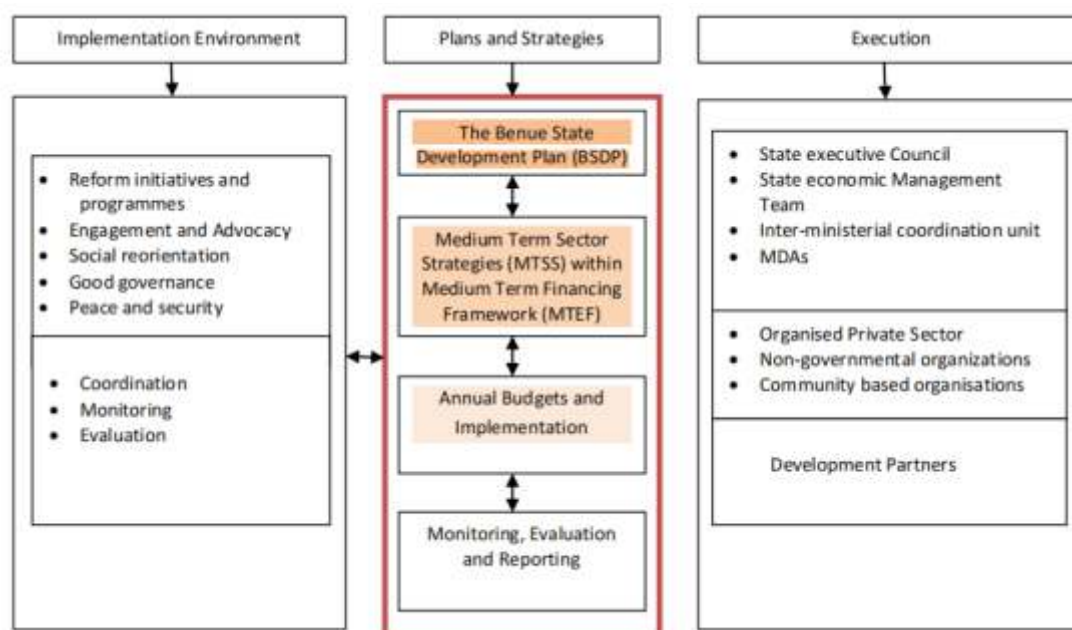


Figure 28.2: Institutional Framework for Plan Implementation



To implement the BSDP successfully, the following operational guidelines are critical:

- 1) The BSDP will be the basis of drawing up the Medium-Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs) within the context of a Medium-Term Expenditure (MTEF) and Annual Budgets to drive the implementation of the plan at sector levels and to be executed by MDAs.
- 2) All strategic objectives, goals, and targets of the plan will be directly linked to the MTSS and the annual budgets and based on outputs and outcomes.
- 3) Key performance indicators (KPIs) have been developed for performance measurement based on present goals and targets of outputs and outcomes at all planning and implementation levels.
- 4) Efficient use of resources and value for money with enhanced coordination, transparency and accountability in all operations.
- 5) Private-sector-led and other institutional reform initiatives and support of stakeholders in the implementation process at all levels.

- 6) Effective participatory monitoring and evaluation throughout the project cycle and taking corrective measures at appropriate times.

28.3 Approach to Plan Implementation Monitoring

Monitoring deals with routine collection and analysis of information to track progress against set plans and check compliance with established targets and standards. It will occur at every MDA level across the State by the Planning, Research and Statistics Department (PRSD), and coordination will be done by the Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Economic Planning, Budget and Development to enable the implementing agency to troubleshoot and ensure proper implementation swiftly. The main objectives of monitoring are to provide the stakeholders with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives; track performance against targets established during the plan development; project policy to let management/stakeholders know when things are on track or going wrong; provide a valuable base for review/ evaluation; and

whether you are doing what you planned to do or not.

Monitoring will be performed on different dimensions of the results chain, and the best will be embraced in implementing the State Development Plan. Some of the common types of monitoring are:

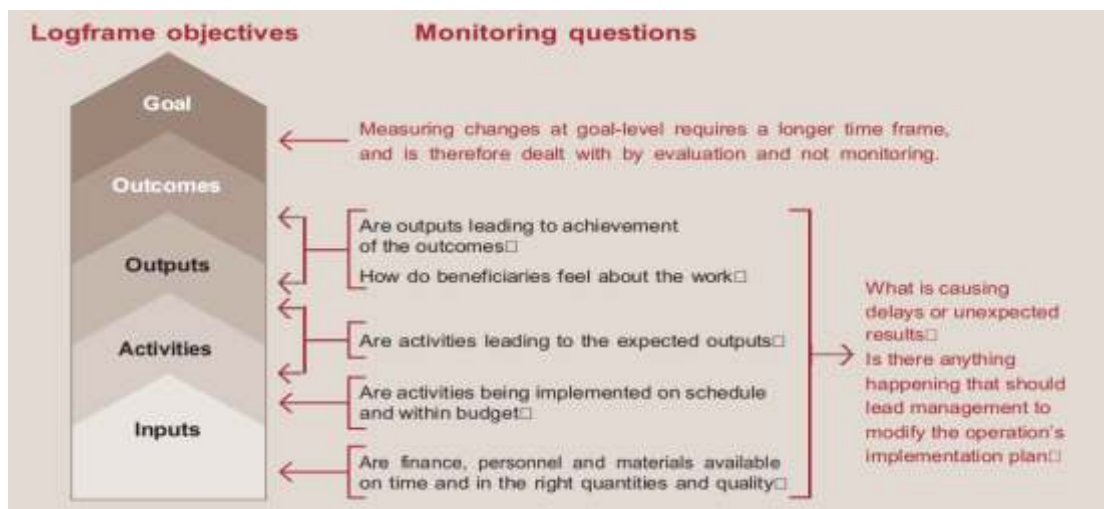
- a) Financial monitoring of Programme/project expenditures and comparing them against the approved budgets;
- b) Progress monitoring examines achievement against set outputs and timelines;
- c) Physical monitoring examines whether activities are in accordance with planned targets and
- d) Outcome and impact monitoring tracks evidence of changes occurring amongst the target population.

28.4 Monitoring Questions and the Log Frame

The State will embrace key monitoring questions as they relate to the log-frame objectives presented in Figure 28.3:

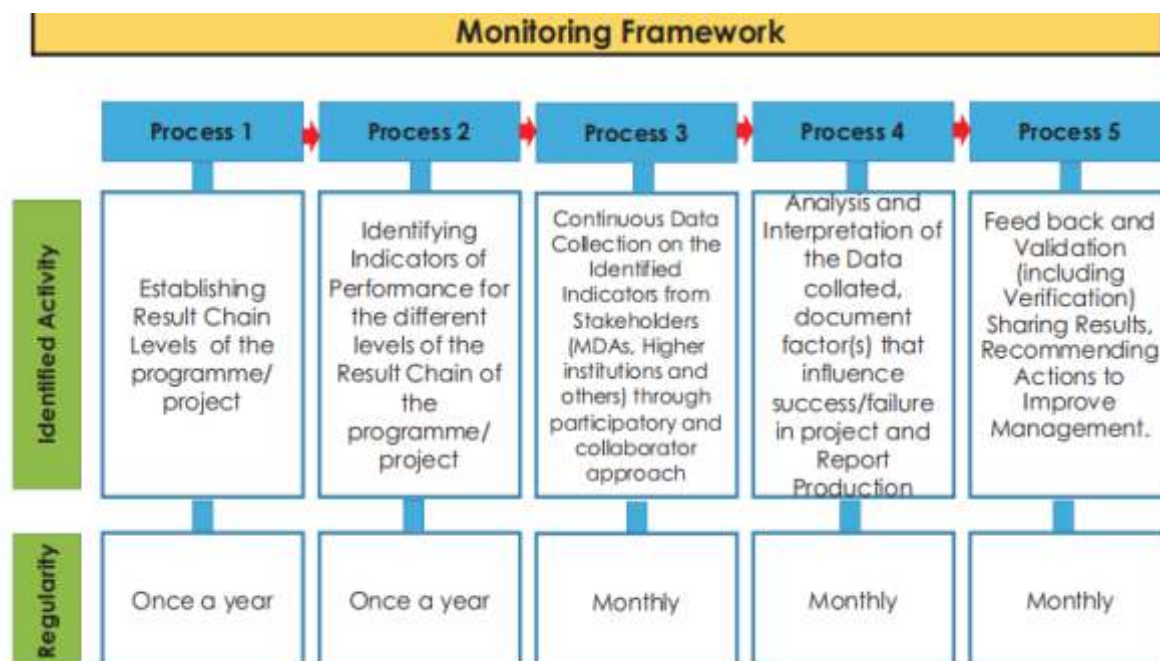


Figure 28.3: Plan Implementation Monitoring Log Frame



The monitoring framework is divided into phases, and Figure 28.4 describes the entire monitoring process in the State.

Figure 28.4: Monitoring Framework



28.5 Approach to Plan Performance Evaluation

The State will adopt the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED) definition of performance evaluation as "an assessment, systematic and objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results". The performance evaluation aims to evaluate programmes and projects' design, implementation and performance. It also determines the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. An evaluation will provide credible and useful information, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both beneficiaries and State decision-makers. Benue State Government is committed to creating evidence-based, credible and objective information on the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of

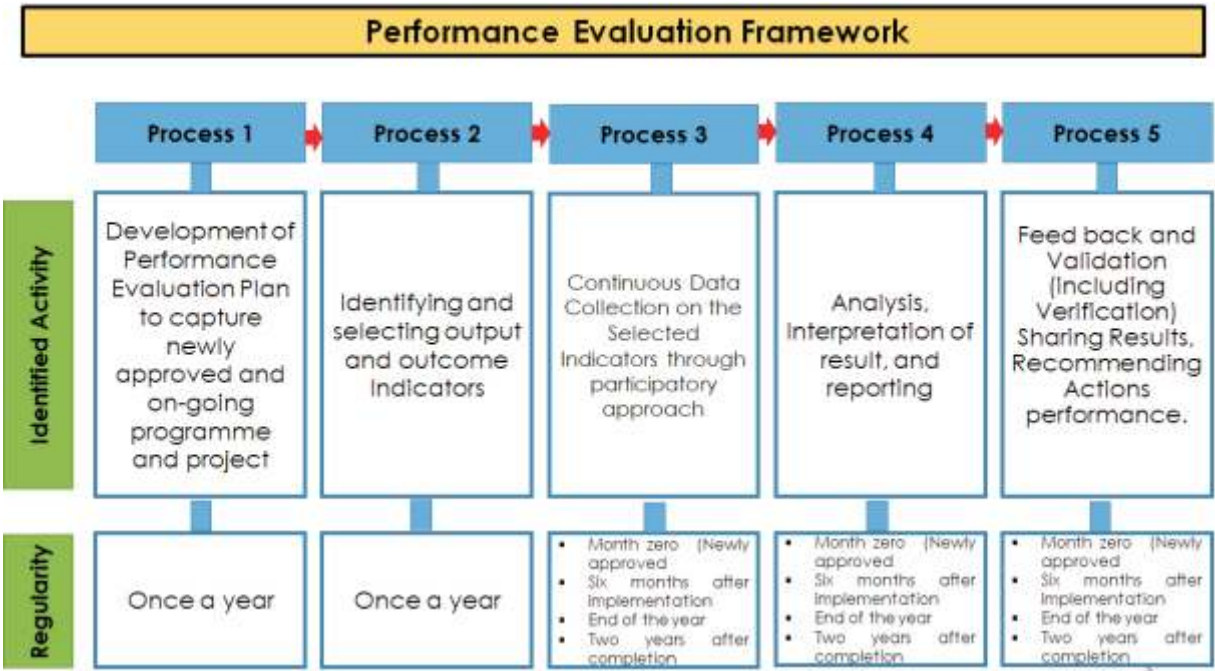
schemes, projects and programmes to ensure the overall development of the State. Therefore, as part of the State plans to develop a comprehensive evaluation plan that explains how the programmes, projects and activities identified in the State Strategic Development Plan (BSDP) and Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs) should plan for measuring their successful effort, a performance evaluation plan is necessary for making appropriate reviews and analysis of the programme and project implementation process. Thus, a performance evaluation plan is a process for determining what and how to implement the evaluation in line with its purpose.

To achieve this, the State will develop a performance evaluation plan at the beginning of each year (January) based on the programmes and projects identified against each Ministry, Department, and Agency in

the implemented MTSSs and approved budget. This plan shall be implemented in collaboration with the Planning, Research and Statistics department in each MDA across the State.

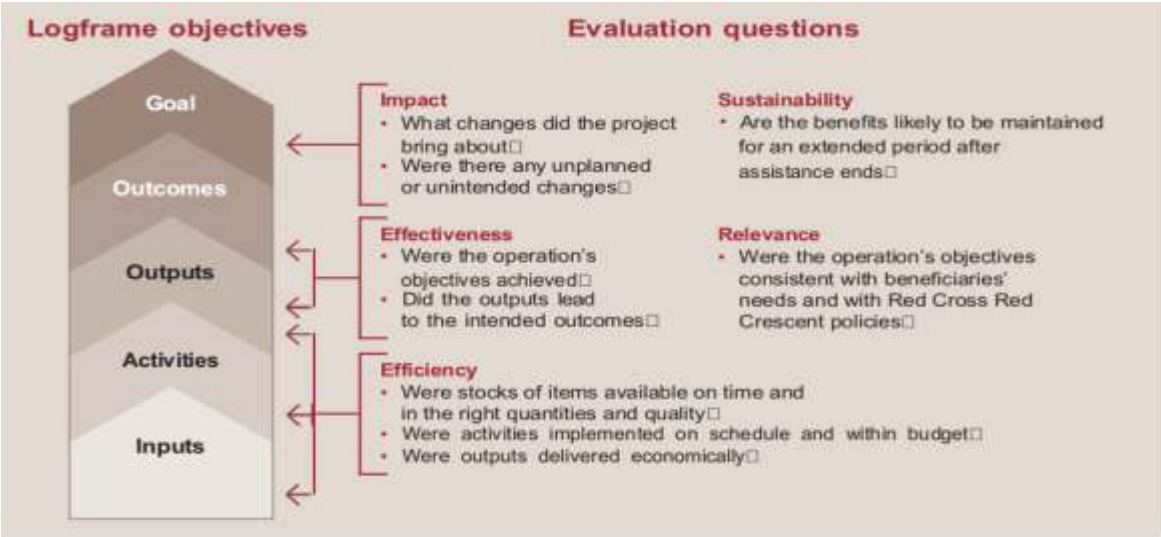
The performance evaluation framework for programmes and projects is divided into phases, and the Figure 28.5 describes the whole evaluation process in the State.

FIGURE 28.5: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (I)



Thus, in line with best practices and international standards, the State will adopt evaluations that involve identifying and reflecting on the effects of what has been done and judging their worth. The Figure 28.6 summarizes key evaluation questions related to the log frame objectives, which focus more on how things will be performed and what difference has to be made.

FIGURE 28.6: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (II)

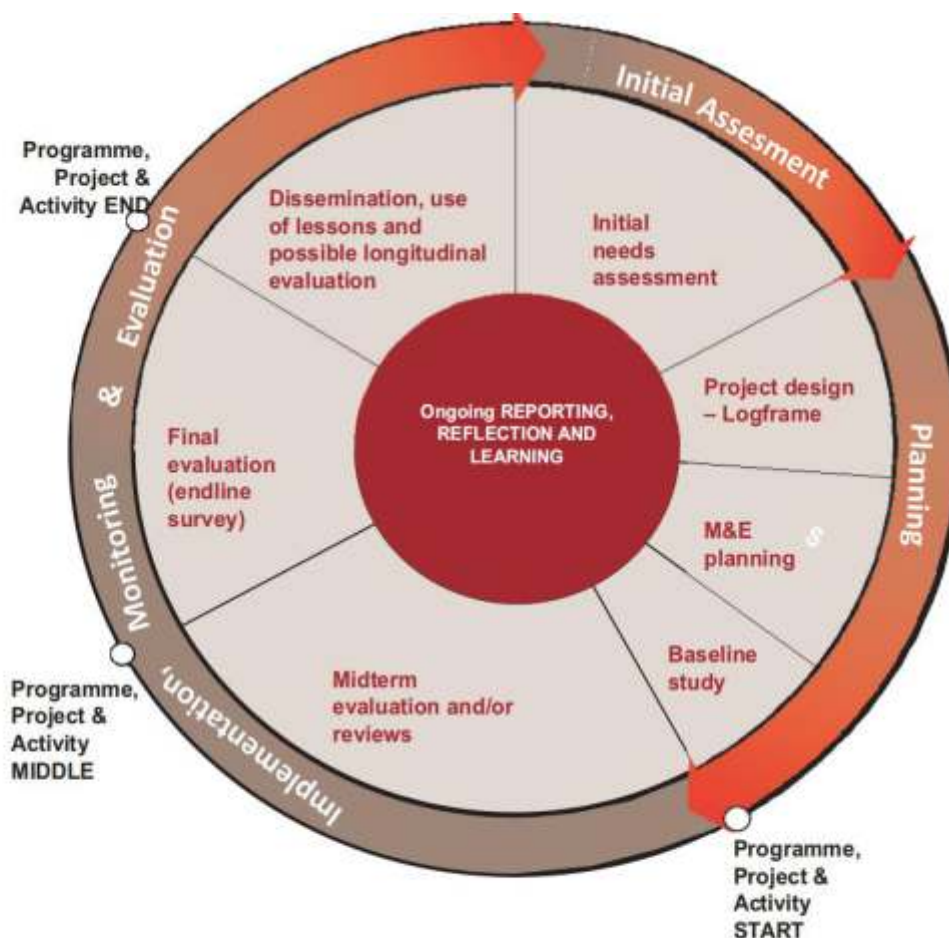


28.6 Evaluation Questions and the Log Frame

Performance indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, will be derived for each output and outcome, and a performance measurement strategy will be crafted that identifies how each indicator will be measured (data source, measurement approach, frequency of measurement, etc). Some indicators will be measured through the implementation of ongoing monitoring systems, others via special data collections, and others via ad hoc but more comprehensive evaluation.

The performance measurement strategy will be put in place in an M&E plan at all levels, with the intent that some elements of information are being gathered and used on an ongoing basis by the programme and project to assist in implementation and decision-making. Other details on longer-term results would be measured and analyzed at the time of evaluation (mid-term and final) using the ongoing monitoring information and data/information gathered via primary data collection methods. The system that will be implemented in the State concerning the performance monitoring and evaluation process is represented in the Figure 28.7.

Figure 28.7: Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Roadmap



The roadmap provides details of the step-by-step stages of key activities in the monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (MER) framework. Different decision-makers demand different types of information. Therefore, the State will embrace the use of performance indicators available at every level to meet the information needs of various stakeholders at different levels.

Indicators provide critical Monitoring and Evaluation data at every level (and stage) of programme, project, and activity implementation. Therefore, indicators are available at different intervention levels and used for different purposes.

The purpose of the M&E roadmap is to promote a common understanding and reliable practice of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in implementing the Benue State Development Plan.

28.7 Approach to Plan Review

The routine review of this SDP will be at three (3) years intervals, but any aspect of the plan can be reviewed at any time the State Executive Council directs the review. The review will be based on the findings from the sectors' annual performance reviews and on developments and emerging social, economic and political issues, etc.

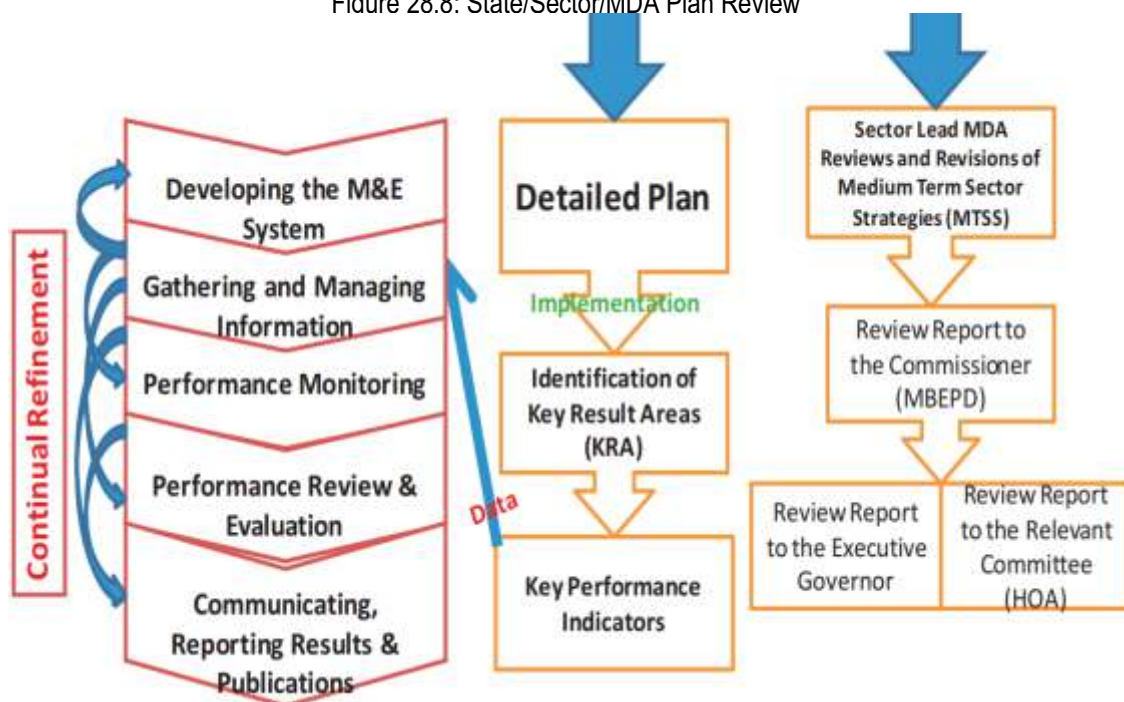
The sectors will base the annual rollover of their MTSS on the reviewed SDP and the results of their yearly sector performance reviews. In reviewing the SDP and the MTSSs, particular attention will be paid to

the enabling factors that have facilitated the achievements recorded, the constraining factors and loopholes that have made some targets unachievable, and new/emerging issues of critical importance to the development of the State. Appropriate strategies will then be developed to strengthen the observed enabling factors, ameliorate the constraints and internalize the emerging issues. The plan revision should be as participatory as possible by involving all relevant stakeholders (private sector, CSOs, communities, Development Partners and others).

As part of the State Plan, guidelines shall be developed and implemented for the M&E operationalization to drive the implementation of the State Development Plan, prompt and adequate reporting, and dissemination of information. To drive successful implementation, a range of tools, systems, and resources need to be put in place. The guidelines shall be reviewed on a regular basis in line with current issues, acceptable standards, and best practices.

Moreover, each MDA in the State, including the Tertiary Institutions and Local Government Areas, is to systematically plan the M&E budget early in the programme/project design (i.e., during the MTSS annual review meetings and annual budget preparation) process so that adequate funds are allocated and available for M&E activities, at least 3% of the programme, project, and activity cost.

Figure 28.8: State/Sector/MDA Plan Review



Appendices

LIST OF STEERING COMMITTEE

S/N	NAME	MINISTRY	Designation in Steering Committee
1	His Excellency, Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia	Executive Governor, Benue State Government, Government House Makurdi	Chairman
2	His Excellency, Hon. Barr. Samuel ode	Deputy Governor, Office of the Deputy Governor, Government House Makurdi	Alternate Chairman
3	Serumun Aber Esq	SSG, Benue State Cabinet Office, Makurdi	Deputy Chairperson
4	Prof. Jerome Andohol	Benue State Budget and Economic Planning Commission	Secretary
5	Hon. Matthew M. Aboh	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	Member
6	Hon. Kwaghgba Amande	Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy	Member
7	Hon. Prof. Moses Ogbaji	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	Member
8	Hon. Micheal Oglegba	Ministry of Finance	Member
9	Hon. Manaseh Alumo	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment	Member
10	Rt. Hon. Nick Eworo	Ministry of Science, Technology & Innovation	Member
11	Hon. Barr. M.O. Omale Omale	Ministry of Power, Renewable Energy and Transport	Member
12	Hon.ImojimeTiza Isaac Orya	Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development	Member

13	Hon. Ugwu Odoh	Ministry of Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change	Member
14	Hon. Mrs. Joy Ahunde Luga	Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development	Member
15	Hon. Barr. Martin T. Shaagee	Ministry of Lands, Survey and Solid Minerals	Member
16	Hon. Barr. Fidelis Mnyim	Ministry of Justice and Public Order	Member
17	Hon. Mrs. Anna Itodo	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare	Member
18	Hon. Rev. Dr. Fredrick Ikyaan	Ministry of Education and Knowledge Management	Member
19	Hon. Dr. Yanmar M. Ortese	Ministry of Health and Human Services	Member
20	Rt. Hon. Terkimbi Ikyange	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Creativity	Member
21	Hon. Kunde Aondowase Ephraim	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management	Member
22	Dr. Emmanuel Chenge	Principal Private Secretary to the Executive Governor	Member
23	Rt. Hon. Paul Biam	Chief of Staff to the Executive Governor	Member
24	Sir Tersoo Kula	Chief Press Secretary	Member
25	Denen Aondokaa	Special Adviser, Bureau of Local Government and Chief Affairs	Member
26	Air Comdr. Isreal Gbamwuam	DG, Homeland Security	Member
27	Hon. Alex Addingi	Special Adviser, International Investment	Member

28	Joseph Har	Special Adviser, Internal Security	Member
29	Lt. Col. Alexander A. Igbaya (Rtd)	Special Adviser, External Security	Member
30	Hon. Fidelis Unongo	Special Adviser, Special Duties and Inter- Governmental Affairs	Member

LIST OF CENTRAL WORKING GROUP

S/N	NAME	MINISTRY	Designation in Central Working Group
1	Prof. Jerome Andohol	DG, BSB&EPC Makurdi	Chairman
2	Ge Matthew Terver JP.	Director Macroeconomics, BSB&EPC, Makurdi	Secretary
3	Dr. Ijirshar Victor Ushahemba	Department of Economics, BSU	Member
4	Leonard Aondoaseer Viashima	DG, Bureau of International Development and Cooperation, Makurdi	Member
5	Ruth Nandi Taple	Technical Assistant on Monitoring and Evaluation, Government House Makurdi	Member
6	Ochanya Oko	Technical Assistant on Agriculture, Government House Makurdi	Member
7	Engr. Mlumun Joyce Ikpaahindi	Technical Assistant on Infrastructure, Government House Makurdi	Member

LIST OF TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

• Prof. Jerome T. Andohol	Dir. General/CEO	BSB&EPC	Chairman
• Moses Tor Levah mni	Perm. Sec.	BSBEPC	Member
• Ge Matthew Terver	Dir. Macroeconomics	BSBEPC	Sec. TWG
• Makir Terfa D.	Dir. Tech. Coop.	BSBEPC	Member
• Hon Ngukuran	DPRS	MCDE	Member
• Dr Tondo Dennis T.	DDP	MESTI	Member
• Fele William		MWASW	Member
• Dr Victor U. Ijirshar		BSU	Member
• TPL Emily M. Adaaku		MLSSM	Member
• Terzungwe Chugh	Dir. Sport	MYSC	Member
• Dr Gele William T.	DPRS	MOE&KM	Member
• Calista A. Michael	DPRS	MIT&I	Member
• Mogen Terseer	Dir. Coops.	MCRD	Member
• Engr. Wuam Tekura		MCRD	Member
• Ruth Nandi Taple	TA (M&E)	GHM	Member
• Adams Veronica		BLG&CA	Member
• Engr. Moses Kwaghbo	ADEE	MPRET	Member
• Ikye-Dodo Victoria	Dir. Stat.	BSBEPC	Member
• Igbana Veronica	DER	BADM	Member
• Atoo Timothy T	SO	JSC	Member
• Benjamin Emaikwu Sunday	DPRS	MWRE&CC	Member
• Edache Enyikwola	DPRS	MA&FS	Member
• Daniel A. Seer	Exe. Director	NEFNAI NGO	Member
• Asaa Terlumun Upwa	Dir. of Budget	BSBEPC	Member
• Engr. Amile M S	CCE	MWH&UD	Member
• A. O. Omenka Esq	Dir. Legal	BSBEPC	Member
• Sevav A. Ezekiel	DPRS	BIRS	Member
• Auwalu Garba	DPRS	MOF	Member
• Tsaga Alexander	CPS	MHADM	Member
• Suakor Nicholas	D(MAWAWDS)	AG's Office	Member
• Suleh Samuel T.	SG/PS	MOJ	Member
• Nyikyaa Helen	Perm Sec	MWA&SW	Member
• Akume John Ayila	PS	MYS&C	Member
• Solomon Iorpev	T.A Media, Publicity &Strategic Comm		Member
• Mom Lazarus Ahangba	Chair	BENGONET	Member
• Michael Anuriochi Calista	DPRS	MITI	Member
• Engr. Sunday Ibu	DES	MWRE-CC	Member
• Benjamin Emaikwu Sunday	DPRS	MWRE-CC	Member
• Alubo Felicia E. Mrs	Perm. Sec.	Deputy Governor's Office	
• Aboh E. Tile	AG	State Audit	
• Beatrice N. Tsavmbu Ph.D	Perm Sec	MOH&HS	
• Engr. Sende Isaac	PS	MC&RD	
• Terfa Jusionia Iveren	CPS	MOA&FS	
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