

— A CITIZEN'S GUIDE FOR NIGERIA'S 2027 ELECTIONS

How to Read a Manifesto

Was this written by someone who plans to govern,
or by someone who only plans to win?

6

Our administration will prioritise the revitalisation of the agricultural value chain ², creating 5 million jobs ¹ for our teeming youth and ensuring food security for all Nigerians. Through an enabling environment ³ for private sector participation, we will reposition agriculture as the engine of national prosperity and end our dependence on food imports ⁴ within our first term ⁵.

Invented for this guide. It passes none of the six questions.



Photo: The House of Representatives, National Assembly, Abuja. © Shiraz Chakera, via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0.

PUBLISHED

October 2026

PREPARED BY

SimpleFix Nigeria

for Policy Literacy & Public Benefit

simplefixnigeria.org
contact@simplefixnigeria.org

Contents

START HERE

Why this guide exists 03

Before you start: three steps 05

THE METHOD

The six questions 08

Red flags at a glance 08

1 Can it be checked? 09

2 Is it this office's job? 10

3 What does it cost, and who pays? 11

4 Who loses? 12

5 How will it happen? 13

6 Where did it come from? 14

PUTTING IT TO WORK

Worked example 16

Scoring 18

Reading legislative candidates 21

Promises you hear, not read 22

Turning your score into action 23

Reading the party 25

LIMITS AND REFERENCE

What this guide cannot do 26

Where to find what you need 27

Plain words 28

The checklist 30

Why this guide exists

A manifesto is a job application. The person who wrote it wants the job, so it is written to be believed, not to be checked. That does not make it worthless. It is the only written record a candidate volunteers, and anything written down can be tested.

This guide shows you how to test it. It asks one question of any campaign document:

Was this written by someone who plans to govern, or by someone who only plans to win?



Photo: Campaign rally, 2015. Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0.

The method is deliberately plain. It does not ask whether a plan sounds inspiring or bold. It asks six practical questions: can the promise be checked, is it this office's job, what does it cost, who loses, how will it actually happen, and where did it come from.

It names no party and no candidate. It works on any document, for any office, from President to State House of Assembly.

Who this is for: voters, students, community and faith leaders, journalists, civic educators, and anyone who has been handed a seventy-page PDF and told it is a plan. You do not need to be an economist or a lawyer. Where a technical word cannot be avoided, it is explained in the [Plain words](#) section near the end.

Key dates

○ 19 August 2026	Campaigns open: President and National Assembly
○ 9 September 2026	Campaigns open: Governorship and State Houses of Assembly
● Saturday 16 January 2027	Presidential and National Assembly elections Campaigning stops 24 hours before.
● Saturday 6 February 2027	Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections Campaigning stops 24 hours before.
○ 29 May 2027	New terms begin, running to 2031

Governorship elections hold on 6 February in 28 states. Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Ekiti, Imo, Kogi, Ondo and Osun elect their governors on separate calendars, but their State Assembly elections still hold on 6 February.

Two ways to use this guide

You do not have to do everything in this guide to get value from it. Choose the level that fits your time.

The quick read

Time

About 20 minutes per manifesto

Suits

Any voter

What you do

Pick the five biggest promises and run them through the six questions. Read the “first 100 days” page. Check whether the document mentions debt at all.

The full check

Time

An afternoon per manifesto

Suits

Journalists, civic groups, study circles, and anyone who wants to go deeper

What you do

Run every major chapter through the six questions, compare the document with the party’s past manifestos, check the figures against public data, and complete the scoring sheet.

The quick read is enough to separate a serious document from a slogan sheet. The full check is what lets you say, with evidence, which serious document is strongest. Both are on the [checklist at the back of this guide](#). Print it, or save it on your phone.

Before you start: three steps

1 Make sure the document is real

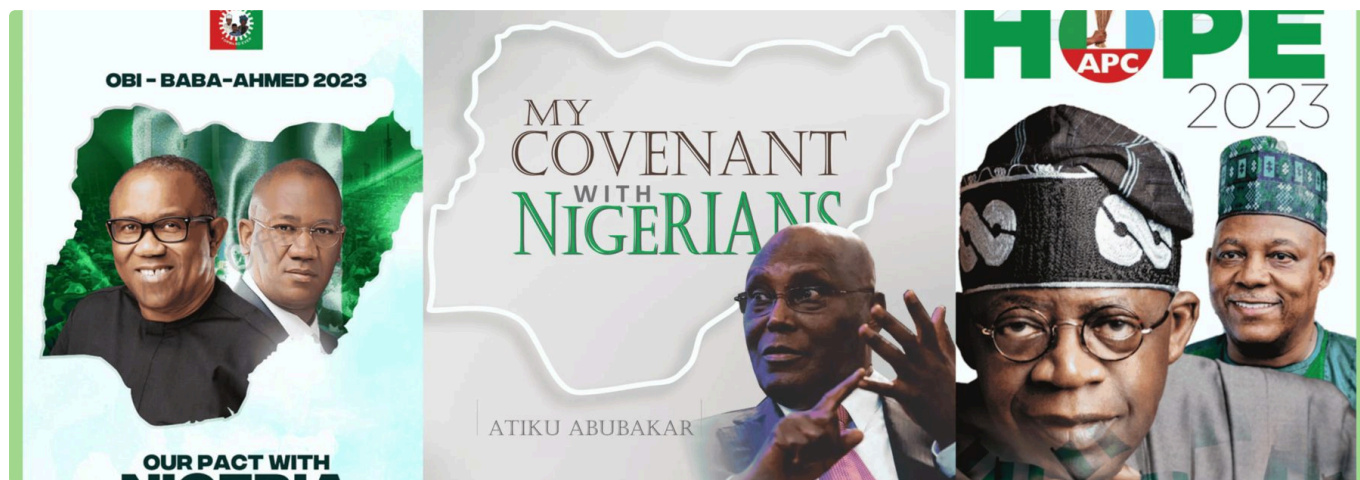


Photo: Covers of the 2023 manifestos of the Labour Party, the Peoples Democratic Party and the All Progressives Congress. Composite by SimpleFix Nigeria; covers reproduced for criticism and review.

Election seasons produce fakes: forged manifestos, doctored screenshots, edited audio and AI-generated video. Before you spend twenty minutes on a document, spend two minutes confirming it came from the campaign.

- **Get it from the source:** the candidate's or party's official website, a verified social media account, or the party secretariat.
- **Check the date and version.** Campaigns update their documents. Make sure you are not scoring an old draft, or a rival's parody.
- **Be most careful with forwarded messages, screenshots and short clips.** If you cannot trace it to an official source, do not score it and do not share it.
- **Slow down when something makes you angry or afraid.** Content designed to provoke is content designed to be forwarded without checking.

2 Write down what you care about

Before you open any manifesto, write down the three issues that matter most to you and your household. It might be security on your road, the price of food, school fees, power supply, jobs for young people, or care for an older parent.

When you read, find what each document says on those three issues first. Then notice what it does not say. A document that is silent on the issue it most obviously needs to address has made a choice, and that silence is information.

3 Know which document you are holding

Many arguments about manifestos are really arguments between people reading different things. Separate them before you start.

Party manifesto and constitution

What it is

The party's standing programme and internal rules

How binding

Governs the party, not the person elected

What to watch for

Rarely read, and almost never cited after the primaries

Candidate manifesto

What it is

Written for this election, by or for this candidate

How binding

Binds nobody, but it is the candidate's own words

What to watch for

Often differs from the party manifesto without explanation

Campaign promises

What it is

What is said at rallies, on radio, in debates and in video clips

How binding

Easy to deny later

What to watch for

Usually more generous and more specific than the written text

Track record

What it is

Budgets passed, projects delivered, laws signed, votes cast

How binding

The only one that has already happened

What to watch for

The gap between past promises and past delivery is your best single guide

In Nigeria, parties often work as vehicles rather than programmes, so a candidate's manifesto can differ sharply from the party's. Read both anyway. The size of the gap tells you how much the party will restrain the candidate once in office.

When a promise made at a rally is more generous than the written manifesto, treat the written version as the real position. People put in writing what they expect to be held to.



THE METHOD

Six questions for any promise

Every important promise in a campaign document can be run through six questions. Each one can be answered from the document itself, plus information that is publicly available.

1 Can it be checked?

2 Is it this office's job?

3 What does it cost, and who pays?

4 Who loses?

5 How will it happen?

6 Where did it come from?

The six questions

Every important promise in a campaign document can be run through six questions. Each one can be answered from the document itself, plus information that is publicly available.

1 Can it be checked?

Could anyone prove in 2031 whether this promise was kept?

2 Is it this office's job?

Does the office being contested actually control this?

3 What does it cost, and who pays?

Is there a figure, and is there a real source of money?

4 Who loses?

Every real decision costs somebody something. Does the document say who?

5 How will it happen?

By what legal step, and how long does that step really take?

6 Where did it come from?

Is it sourced, consistent, original and signed?



The rule that keeps it fair

Decide what matters to you before you read any manifesto. If you choose your standards after you know whose document you are reading, the method stops testing your choice and starts defending it.

In practice, this means that if you plan to use the weighted [scoring sheet](#), you fill in your weights first, before you open a single document. It takes five minutes, and it is the cheapest protection there is against the natural habit of finding reasons to agree with the candidate we already like.



Red flags at a glance

Each of these suggests a document written to win rather than to govern. Each points to the part of this guide that explains it.



Most commitments use vague verbs: prioritise, ensure, reposition, create an enabling environment

QUESTION 1



Numbers with no starting point and no date, like "ten million jobs"

QUESTION 1



Promising someone else's job, or saying nothing about the office's own job

QUESTION 2



"Blocking leakages" or "fighting corruption" carrying the whole funding plan

QUESTION 3



Silence on debt, the single largest claim on federal revenue

QUESTION 3



Everyone gains and nobody pays

QUESTION 4



A constitutional change listed as a first-100-days achievement

QUESTION 5



No sources, no named authors, paragraphs recycled from the last manifesto

QUESTION 6



A document, screenshot or clip you cannot trace to an official source

BEFORE YOU START, STEP 1



No published manifesto weeks into the campaign

IF THERE IS NO MANIFESTO

1

Can it be checked?

A promise that can never be proved false is not really a promise. Start with the verbs.

Cannot be checked	Can be checked
prioritise, ensure, promote, encourage	<u>build, pay, abolish, sell, repeal</u>
create an enabling environment	<u>raise X from A to B</u>
reposition, revamp, reinvigorate	<u>complete by (date)</u>
give attention to, place emphasis on	<u>allocate ₦X to (a named budget line)</u>
work with stakeholders to	<u>sign into law within (period)</u>

Take ten pages and count. If most of the commitments use words from the left-hand column, you are holding a wish list, not a plan.

Then check the number

A number on its own is not enough. A promise you can check names four things:

a what is being counted	b where it stands today, with a source	c where it will be	d by when
-----------------------------------	--	------------------------------	---------------------

“Ten million **c** jobs”

✗ What is counted	✗ Today, with a source	✓ Where it will be	✗ By when
-------------------	------------------------	--------------------	-----------

“Ten million jobs” fails three of the four. It does not say what counts as a job, how many there are today, or by when. Nobody can check it in 2031, and that is usually why it was written that way.

“Raise the share of fully immunised children **a** from the level recorded in the 2023–24 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey **b** to 70% **c** by December 2030 **d**”

✓ What is counted	✓ Today, with a source	✓ Where it will be	✓ By when
-------------------	------------------------	--------------------	-----------

This one can be checked by anyone with the next survey.

Score it

- 0** ○○ Mostly vague verbs, no starting figures.
- 1** ●○ Firm verbs, but targets without starting figures or dates.
- 2** ●● The main promises state what is counted, where it stands today, the target and the date.



Ask the candidate

“How will we know in 2031 whether you kept this promise?”

2 Is it this office's job?

Nigeria's Constitution divides power between federal, state and local government. Mark each promise F, S, L or C, then ask whether the office being contested actually controls it.

F

Federal (the Exclusive List, plus the federal share of shared subjects)

Police and armed forces, currency, customs, immigration, defence, foreign affairs; the national grid and power moving between states

S

State, or shared with the federal government in practice

Land, basic and secondary education, state roads, state electricity markets, agriculture

L

Local government

Primary health centres, markets, refuse collection, primary schools (jointly with the state)

C

Needs a change to the Constitution

Creating new states, restructuring, independent candidacy, reserved seats for women

Changing the Constitution is deliberately hard. It needs two-thirds of the members of each chamber of the National Assembly (at least 73 senators and 240 members of the House of Representatives), and then the approval of at least 24 of the 36 State Houses of Assembly.

What a change to the Constitution needs

Senate

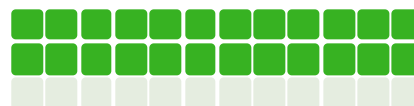
73 of 109

House of Representatives

240 of 360

State Houses of Assembly

24 of 36



Two failures come up again and again, and they point in opposite directions.

Promising someone else's job

A presidential candidate pledging to run primary health centres, or a governorship candidate pledging to strengthen the naira, is campaigning for an office they are not contesting. This is not always dishonest; sometimes it is simply careless. But it cannot be delivered.

Ignoring your own job

The mirror failure: a candidate for an office that really does control a problem, saying nothing about it. Note those silences. They are chosen.

Three areas that have recently moved



Electricity

Electricity is on the Concurrent List, which the federal and state governments share. Since the 2023 constitutional changes and the Electricity Act 2023, states can create and regulate their own electricity markets, while the national grid and power moving between states remain federal. Power supply is now very much a governorship question. Tag it S, unless the promise is about the national grid, which is F.

needs the approval of 24. Even once approved, no state police service can begin work until that state's own Assembly passes a law meeting national minimum standards, and the state then funds, recruits and trains the force. So read a state police promise closely: is it about the amendment, the state law, or a working police service? Each runs on a different timetable. It also makes your State Assembly vote unusually important this year.



State police

At the time of writing (October 2026), a constitutional amendment to create state police has passed the National Assembly and was sent to the 36 State Houses of Assembly on 16 September 2026. It



Local government funds

The Supreme Court's July 2024 judgment on local government allocations is already law. Wider proposals for local government autonomy still need a constitutional change. A candidate who promises "local government autonomy" should say which of the two they mean.

Score it

- 0 ○ ○ The main promises are outside the office's power.
- 1 ● ○ Mostly within the office's power, with no thought for who else must cooperate.
- 2 ● ● Clear about what the office controls, and honest about where the state, the Assembly or another tier must cooperate.



Ask the candidate

"Which part of this can you deliver alone, and whose cooperation do you need for the rest?"

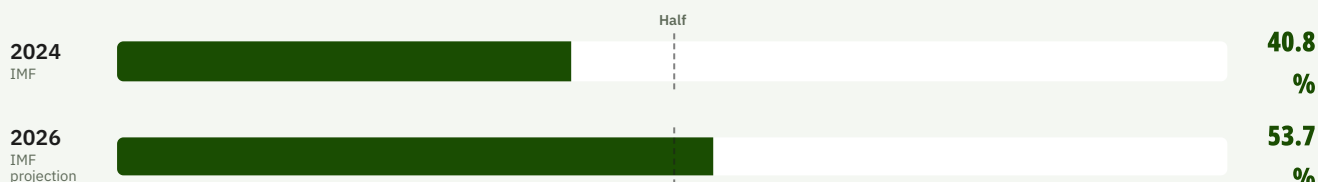
3 What does it cost, and who pays?

Every promise is a claim on a limited pot of money. Find out the size of the pot before you read the promises.

The federal pot

Figure	Value	Source
2026 budget as signed into law (17 April 2026)	₦68.32trn	2026 Appropriation Act
2026 budget as first proposed (December 2025)	₦58.18trn , with revenue projected at ₦34.33trn	Appropriation Bill presented to the National Assembly
2026 deficit (the gap between spending and revenue)	Estimates range from ₦23.85trn (4.28% of GDP, on the original proposal) to ₦31.45trn (6.41%, on the signed budget)	Original proposal; BudgIT analysis

Interest payments as a share of federal revenue



Two lessons follow. First, slightly more than half of federal revenue is already committed to paying interest on existing debt before a single new promise is funded. Everything a candidate proposes must fit into what is left, alongside salaries, security and projects already under way.

Second, even the government's own budget has more than one deficit figure in circulation. If professionals disagree about the arithmetic of a signed budget, a manifesto that offers no arithmetic at all should not reassure you.

The question, then, is not whether a promise is desirable. It is whether all the promises, added together, fit.

What to look for

- Is there a naira figure attached to the main promises, or only to the introduction?
- Is there a named source of money: a specific tax, a specific saving, a specific sale of government assets, a specific loan?
- Is "blocking leakages" or "fighting corruption" carrying the whole funding plan? Fighting corruption matters, but it is not a budget line. It is a hope.
- Does the document mention debt at all? Silence on the single largest claim on federal revenue is itself a finding.

At state level

Same question, different pot. Look up the state's share of the monthly federal allocation ([FAAC](#)) and the money it raises itself (internally generated revenue, or [IGR](#)). Then ask whether the manifesto's building programme is several times larger than both together. A governorship manifesto that never mentions the state's own revenue has not been costed.

Score it

- 0** ○○ No figures, or figures with no source of money.
- 1** ●○ Partly costed, but vague about funding.
- 2** ●● The main promises are costed, with a named and believable source of money.



Ask the candidate

"What will this cost, and where exactly will the money come from?"

4 Who loses?

A manifesto in which nobody loses anything contains no real policy. Every real decision takes something from somebody: money, a privilege, a subsidy, a contract, or time.

Search the document for words that signal a cost:

reduce

remove

phase out

end

stop

sell

restructure

discontinue

deregulate

merge

Then ask who each sentence is about.

Is anyone named as bearing the cost?

Importers, contractors, a subsidised industry, a group of public servants, a tier of government that would lose revenue. A document that promises more to everyone and less to no one has never been through a budget meeting.

Is there help for those who lose out?

Serious plans say who will be hurt, for how long, and what will cushion them. “Transitional support” with no amount and no method is not a cushion.

Does it take a position on the big reforms already made?

The removal of the petrol subsidy and the unification of the exchange rate affect every household. Any serious 2027 candidate must say whether they will continue, change or reverse them, and what that choice would cost. A manifesto that never mentions them is avoiding the central economic question of this election.

This is the most even-handed question in the guide. It catches a candidate who promises big government spending and a candidate who promises market reforms in exactly the same way, because both are only being asked to show their arithmetic.

Score it

0



Everyone gains and nobody pays.

1



Costs acknowledged in general terms.

2



Those who lose are named, with how long it will last and specific help for them.



Ask the candidate

“Who will pay for this, and what will you do for them?”

5 How will it happen?

A promise without a route is a wish. Ask what legal step delivers each promise, and how long that step really takes.

Executive order or directive

Weeks

The President or Governor alone, within existing law

Action by a ministry, agency or regulator

Months

Officials using a legal power that already exists

A new law (an Act or a State Law)

A legislative session or more

A majority in the legislature, then the executive's signature

A change to the Constitution

Years, and often never

Two-thirds of each chamber of the National Assembly, then 24 of 36 State Assemblies

Cooperation from other governments

Unknown

Governors or local councils agreeing voluntarily; nobody can compel them

Now look at the timing. Most manifestos include a “first 100 days” section, and it is often the most revealing page in the document.



The warning sign

Anything that needs a constitutional change, or the voluntary cooperation of other governments, listed as a first-100-days achievement. Creating new states is the clearest example. No President can do it in 100 days, because the arithmetic in the table above does not allow it.

This does not necessarily mean the candidate is lying. It usually means the document was written by a publicity team rather than a policy team, and that is itself worth knowing.



The good sign

A candidate who writes “we will send the bill in our first session, and expect the process to take two to three years” has shown you they understand how government works. Give that real credit. It is rare precisely because it sounds less exciting.

Score it

- 0 ○ ○ No legal route named anywhere.
- 1 ● ○ Routes named for some promises, but the timing is unrealistic.
- 2 ● ● A legal route for each main promise, with timing that matches the route.



Ask the candidate

**“Can you do this alone?
If not, who has to
vote for it, and how
long will that take?”**

6 Where did it come from?

Ask where the document came from. There are four checks, and none of them needs special access.

Compare it with the last one

Put the 2027 manifesto beside the same party's or candidate's 2023 and 2019 documents and look for repeated paragraphs. A target repeated unchanged after four years, with no explanation of why it was missed, suggests the document is a ritual rather than a plan.

Check the figures

Does any number carry a source, such as the NBS, the CBN, the World Bank, or a named survey with a year? A document that cites nothing is asking for your faith. One that cites five-year-old figures is hoping you will not notice.

Check that the numbers agree

Add up the stated costs. Compare the jobs figure in the agriculture chapter with the one in the summary. Numbers that do not match across chapters show sections written separately and never reconciled, which tells you something about how the administration would coordinate.

Ask who wrote it

Is there a named policy team, advisory council or drafting committee? Named authors can be questioned. Anonymous ones cannot.

One more point. A thin manifesto from a candidate with a long record is different from a thin manifesto from a first-time candidate. For the first, the record is the main evidence and the document is mostly marketing. For the second, the document is nearly all the evidence there is, so its thinness matters more.

Score it

- 0** ○○ No sources, no named authors, largely recycled.
- 1** ●○ Some sources, some original content.
- 2** ●● Sourced figures, named authors, clearly written for this election.



Ask the candidate

"Who wrote this plan, and where do your figures come from?"

2027

HOW TO READ A MANIFESTO

Putting it to work

From a worked example to a score, and from a score to a question asked in public.

Worked example

Reading legislative candidates

Turning your score into action

Scoring

Promises you hear, not read

Reading the party

Worked example

The paragraph below is invented. It belongs to no party and no candidate. It is written in a style common to Nigerian campaign documents across the political spectrum.



Photo: Rice farmer. Photobyamin, via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

6

Our administration will prioritise the revitalisation of the agricultural value chain ², creating 5 million jobs ¹ for our teeming youth and ensuring food security for all Nigerians. Through an enabling environment ³ for private sector participation, we will reposition agriculture as the engine of national prosperity and end our dependence on food imports ⁴ within our first term ⁵.

Wavy lines mark verbs that cannot be checked. Numbers match the six questions below.

Fifty-five words, several apparent commitments, and it passes none of the six questions.

1	Can it be checked?	0
	"Prioritise", "revitalise", "ensure" and "reposition" cannot be checked. "5 million jobs" has no definition, no starting figure and no date.	score
2	Is it this office's job?	0
	Agriculture is shared between federal and state governments, and land is controlled by state governors under the Land Use Act. Nothing here says which part the office being contested actually controls.	score
3	What does it cost?	0
	No figure anywhere. The funding plan is "an enabling environment", which costs nothing and therefore commits to nothing.	score

4 Who loses? **0**
score

Cutting food imports quickly tends to raise food prices for city households in the short run. Nobody is named and no help is offered.

5 How will it happen? **0**
score

Imports end “within our first term”, but no tool is named. A tariff, an import ban, foreign-exchange restrictions and farm subsidies are very different routes with different legal steps.

6 Where did it come from? **0**
score

No source for any claim, and no named author. The wording is generic enough to sit in almost any campaign document, which is exactly what comparing it with past manifestos would test.

Simple score **0** out of 12

The same promise, written so it can be checked

We will raise domestic milled rice output ¹ from X tonnes (NBS, 2026) ^{1 6} to Y tonnes by December 2030 ¹, through a ₦Z billion loan guarantee scheme ^{3 5} funded from the existing agricultural credit line in the federal budget ³. We expect this to raise retail rice prices by about A% over the first eighteen months ⁴, and we will protect the poorest households through cash transfers to families on the National Social Register ⁴.

Numbers show which of the six questions each part now answers.

Notice what changed. The ambition did not shrink. The promise simply became something a journalist, or any voter, can check in 2030. That is why the second version is so much rarer than the first.

Scoring

Score each document 0, 1 or 2 on each of the six questions. You can stop at the simple score, or go one step further and add weights.

The simple score

Add the six scores together for a total out of 12.

Scoring promise by promise? Give the document the mark most of its main promises earn: 2 if most score 2, 0 if most score 0, otherwise 1.

10–12 A plan for governing.

Rare. Treat the costings as claims to verify rather than facts, but the candidate has accepted being checked.

7–9 A serious attempt with weak spots.

Look at which questions it failed: a document strong on costing but weak on jurisdiction carries a different risk from the reverse.

4–6 A positioning document.

It tells you what the candidate wants to be seen caring about, which is real information, but not what they will do.

0–3 A slogan sheet.

Set it aside and judge the candidate on record, backers and team.

The weighted score (optional)

Some questions will matter more to you than others. If cost matters most to you, give it more weight. Do this before you read any manifesto.

- 1 Share 100 points across the six questions. For example: 25 for checking, 10 for jurisdiction, 25 for cost, 15 for who loses, 15 for route and 10 for source.
- 2 Score each document 0, 1 or 2 on each question, as above.
- 3 For each question, multiply your weight by the score. Add the six results together and divide by 2. The answer is a score out of 100.

Example. With the weights above, a document scoring 2, 1, 1, 0, 2 and 1 earns $(50 + 10 + 25 + 0 + 30 + 10) \div 2 = 62.5$ out of 100.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Weight	25	10	25	15	15	10
Score	2	1	1	0	2	1
Weight × score	50	10	25	0	30	10
						$125 \div 2 = \mathbf{62.5}$ out of 100

Read a weighted score the same way as a simple one: 80 and above is a plan for governing, 55–79 a serious attempt with weak spots, 30–54 a positioning document, and below 30 a slogan sheet.



Score it on your phone

The online scorecard adds up your scores and weights as you go, keeps your notes on the evidence, and saves everything on your own device.

simplefixnigeria.org/manifesto-scorecard/

The scoring sheet

Print this page, or copy it into a notebook. Fill in your weights before you open any manifesto.

Question	Your weight (total 100)	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C
1. Can it be checked?				
2. Is it this office's job?				
3. What does it cost?				
4. Who loses?				
5. How will it happen?				
6. Where did it come from?				
Simple total (out of 12)				
Weighted total (out of 100)				

Four rules for using the sheet

- **Compare like with like.** Score governorship manifestos against other governorship manifestos, not against a presidential one.
- **Compare against the ballot, not against perfection.** The question is which option on your ballot is strongest, including the incumbent's record. No manifesto will score 12.
- **Be fair between incumbents and challengers.** An incumbent has a record to judge; a challenger has mainly a document. Do not let a tidy document from a newcomer outweigh four years of evidence, in either direction.
- **Score every office on your ballot.** Senate, House of Representatives and State Assembly candidates matter as much as the top of the ticket. Their documents are usually the thinnest and the least examined, which is exactly where your attention counts most.

Reading legislative candidates

The six questions were built mainly for executive offices: President and Governor. Legislators do a different job.



Photo: Members of the House of Representatives during a session in the Green Chamber. Official X (Twitter) account of the House of Representatives.

They make laws, approve and monitor budgets, oversee the executive, and represent their constituents. They do not build roads or hire teachers. A legislative candidate who promises boreholes and roads is promising someone else's job.

For Senate, House of Representatives and State Assembly candidates, ask these instead:

What laws will you sponsor, support or oppose?

A good answer names specific bills or problems, not “quality representation”.

How will you use your budget and oversight powers?

Which ministry, agency or programme will you watch, and how?

Where do you stand on the big votes ahead?

For State Assembly candidates this year, that includes the state police amendment and any state law to set up a police service.

If you are already in office, what is your record?

Look for bills sponsored, motions moved, attendance, and how your constituency projects were chosen and delivered. The National Assembly publishes its Votes and Proceedings, and civic trackers summarise them.

Questions [1](#), [5](#) and [6](#) apply in full to legislators. Questions [3](#) and [4](#) apply whenever a legislator promises to fund or cut something.

Promises you hear, not read

Most voters will meet campaign promises at a rally, on the radio, in a debate or in a short video, not in a PDF. The same method works on a spoken promise. Keep four questions in your head:

What exactly is being promised?

Listen for the verb. “We will look into” is not “we will build”.

Is it this office’s job?

A National Assembly candidate cannot build your road.

Where is the money?

If the answer is “we will block leakages”, there is no answer.

Is it in the written manifesto?

If a promise appears only in speeches, treat the written version as the real one.

When you hear a promise worth tracking, write it down with the date, the place and who said it. Memories fade; notes do not.

Turning your score into action

A score is only useful if it changes something: your vote, a conversation, or what a candidate feels obliged to say next.

Ask the questions in public

Each of the six questions ends with a question for the candidate. Use them at town halls, on radio phone-in programmes, at candidate debates and in replies to campaign posts. Short, specific and polite questions are the hardest to dodge.



Image: Community meeting. AI-generated illustration.

Questions for the candidate

- 1 "How will we know in 2031 whether you kept this promise?"
- 2 "Which part of this can you deliver alone, and whose cooperation do you need for the rest?"
- 3 "What will this cost, and where exactly will the money come from?"
- 4 "Who will pay for this, and what will you do for them?"
- 5 "Can you do this alone? If not, who has to vote for it, and how long will that take?"
- 6 "Who wrote this plan, and where do your figures come from?"

Keep a copy

Save every manifesto you score as a PDF, with the date you downloaded it and where you got it. If it is on a website, save the page to the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine (web.archive.org), so that a copy exists even if the original is edited or removed. Your saved copy becomes the evidence when the term is reviewed in 2031.

Share responsibly

If you share your scores, share your working: the score for each question, and the line in the manifesto that earned it. Keep what the document says separate from what you think of the candidate. Never share documents or clips you could not verify in [Step 1](#). A careful scorecard, with the evidence shown, can change minds. An insult changes no one: those who agree cheer, and those who disagree dig in.

Reading the party

Parties file their constitutions with INEC. These are rarely read, and often more revealing than any manifesto.

A manifesto describes what a candidate would like to do. A party constitution describes how the party actually works, and the party is what remains when the promises meet reality.



Image: Gavel. AI-generated illustration.

Four clauses that matter

How candidates are chosen

Under the Electoral Act 2026, parties may choose candidates only by direct primaries, in which all registered members can vote, or by [consensus](#). Consensus is valid only if every cleared aspirant voluntarily withdraws and endorses one candidate in writing; if that agreement fails, the party must hold a direct primary. Read how your party defines and certifies consensus, and find out how the candidates on your ballot were actually chosen.

Discipline

Who can discipline an elected member, and for what? A party that can sanction its own President or Governor has some hold over them. A party that cannot is little more than a letterhead.

Money

How are nomination fees set, and where do they go? High fees quietly decide who can run, long before voters see the ballot.

Whether the manifesto binds anyone

Does the constitution say the party's programme binds the people elected on its platform? Very few do. Check for yourself, and weigh the party manifesto accordingly.

The gap test

Put the party manifesto beside the candidate's manifesto and mark every point where they disagree.

A wide gap means the candidate, not the party, is what you are really voting for: the platform will not restrain them, for better or worse. A narrow gap means the party has a programme and the candidate is carrying it. Either can work. Not knowing which one you are dealing with is the real risk.

What this guide cannot do

Four limits, stated plainly, because a method that oversells itself is exactly what it claims to detect.

A manifesto is a weak predictor of performance

Delivery depends on the oil price, the National Assembly, the people who financed the campaign, and events nobody can foresee. A high-scoring document from a candidate who cannot execute is worth less than an average document from one who can.

A good document can be written cynically

Costings and sources can be bought from consultants with no intention of delivering them. What this guide detects is a willingness to be checked. That is a real signal, but not a guarantee.

It cannot see what is not written

Deals, debts and alliances rarely appear in manifestos.

It says nothing about values

Two manifestos can both score 12 and want opposite things. This guide tells you which documents are serious. It does not tell you which future you want, and it is not meant to.



Photo: Claw hammer and bent nails on a wooden plank. Pixabay, via Pexels, Pexels licence (free to use).

Look beyond the document

Use your manifesto score as one input, alongside four questions about the candidate:

Record

What did they do the last time they held power, whether in government, business or the community?

Financing

Who is paying for the campaign, and what might those backers expect in return?

Coalition

Who stands beside them? Their allies will shape what they can and cannot do.

Team

Who would actually run things? Look for named advisers and likely appointees, and at what they have done before.

The document tells you what someone is willing to put in writing. The record and the coalition tell you what they will be able to do once in office.

Where to find what you need

Election timetable and candidate lists	INEC (inecnigeria.org)
Candidates' personal particulars	INEC's published particulars of candidates (Form EC9)
Party constitutions and manifestos	INEC party registration records; party websites and secretariats
Candidate manifestos	Official campaign websites and verified accounts; party secretariats. If you request one by email, keep the reply.
Past manifestos for comparison	Party archives; newspaper archives; civic organisations; the Wayback Machine (web.archive.org)
Federal budget figures	Budget Office of the Federation ; BudgIT
State budgets and revenue	State budget portals; National Bureau of Statistics reports on internally generated revenue; BudgIT's state analyses
Economic and social data	National Bureau of Statistics (NBS); Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN); Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
Laws, bills and legislative records	National Assembly (Votes and Proceedings); PLAC (placng.org); Yiaga Africa

If there is no manifesto

That is a finding, not a gap in your research. Write down the date you looked and where you looked.

Presidential and National Assembly campaigns opened on 19 August 2026, and governorship and State Assembly campaigns on 9 September 2026. A candidate who has not published a programme weeks into the campaign has made a choice. It may be strategic: a written plan creates things to be held to, and a front-runner may see no reason to create any. Or there may simply be nothing to publish. Either way, score the absence rather than waiting for the document. A missing manifesto scores 0 on every question, and the candidate is judged on record, financing, coalition and team.

Plain words

Baseline	Where something stands today, from a named source. The starting point a promise is measured from.
Concurrent List	Subjects on which both the federal and state governments can make laws, such as electricity and education.
Consensus candidate	A candidate chosen when every other cleared aspirant withdraws in writing, instead of by a vote of party members.
Constitutional amendment	A change to the Constitution (formally, an “alteration”). It needs two-thirds of each chamber of the National Assembly and 24 of the 36 State Assemblies.
Debt service	Money spent on interest and repayments for government borrowing.
Deficit	The gap between what a government plans to spend and what it expects to collect, usually filled by borrowing.
Exclusive List	Subjects only the federal government can make laws on, such as defence and currency.
FAAC	The Federation Account Allocation Committee, which shares federally collected revenue among the federal, state and local governments each month.
IGR	Internally generated revenue: money a state raises itself through its own taxes, levies and fees.
Jurisdiction	The area over which an office has legal power.
Trade-off	What is given up in order to get something else.
Weighting	Deciding in advance how much each question counts towards your final score.

A note on sourcing

Wherever this guide uses a figure, it names the source so you can check it. All figures are correct as of October 2026. Apply the same standard to every manifesto you read: a number you cannot trace to a source is not evidence, however confidently it is printed.

- **Election dates and campaign periods:** INEC, Revised Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2027 General Election (February 2026).
- **Candidate nomination rules:** Electoral Act 2026, sections 84–88.

- **2026 budget:** Appropriation Bill as presented to the National Assembly (December 2025) and Appropriation Act as signed (17 April 2026). Deficit range from the original proposal and BudgIT's analysis of the signed budget.
- **Interest as a share of revenue:** International Monetary Fund projections for 2024 and 2026.
- **State police:** Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Sixth Alteration) Bill, 2026, transmitted to the State Houses of Assembly on 16 September 2026.
- **Local government funds:** Supreme Court of Nigeria judgment on local government allocations, July 2024.

Image credits

- **The House of Representatives, National Assembly, Abuja** (Cover): © Shiraz Chakera, via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0.
- **Campaign rally, 2015** (Why this guide exists): Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0.
- **Covers of the 2023 manifestos of the Labour Party, the Peoples Democratic Party and the All Progressives Congress** (Before you start): Composite by SimpleFix Nigeria; covers reproduced for criticism and review.
- **Members of the House of Representatives during a session in the Green Chamber** (Contents page; Reading legislative candidates): Official X (Twitter) account of the House of Representatives.
- **Rice farmer** (Worked example): Photobyamin, via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.
- **Community meeting** (Turning your score into action): AI-generated illustration.
- **Gavel** (Reading the party): AI-generated illustration.
- **Claw hammer and bent nails on a wooden plank** (What this guide cannot do): Pixabay, via Pexels, Pexels licence (free to use).
- **The City Gate of Abuja** (Back cover): Wang-gp, via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Images are cropped to fit the layout and are not covered by this guide's CC BY 4.0 licence: each keeps its own licence and credit, as listed here. Licence texts: CC BY-SA 2.0 at creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0 and CC BY-SA 4.0 at creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0.

The checklist

Print this, or save it on your phone. Use it on one manifesto at a time.

Before you open anything

- ☐ Confirm the document is real and comes from an official source
- ☐ Write down your three most important issues
- ☐ Note which office you are assessing, and what that office controls
- ☐ If you are using weights, write them down now (total 100)

The quick read (about 20 minutes)

- ☐ Pick the five biggest promises and run each through the six questions below
- ☐ Read the “first 100 days” section: does anything there really need years?
- ☐ Check whether the document mentions debt at all
- ☐ Find what it says on your three issues, and what it leaves out

1. Can it be checked?

- ☐ Firm verbs, or vague ones?
- ☐ For each main promise: what is counted, where it stands today, the target, the date?

2. Is it this office's job?

- ☐ Tag each promise F / S / L / C, and check the office controls it
- ☐ For anything tagged C: does the document admit it needs 24 State Assemblies?

3. What does it cost?

- ☐ Naira figures on the main promises, with a named source of money?
- ☐ Does it acknowledge that interest takes over half of federal revenue?

4. Who loses?

- ☐ Is anyone named as bearing a cost, with specific help offered?
- ☐ Does it take a position on fuel subsidy removal and exchange-rate policy?

5. How will it happen?

- ☐ Is the legal step named for each main promise, with timing that matches?

6. Where did it come from?

- ☐ Compared with the last manifesto? Figures sourced and dated?
- ☐ Do the numbers agree across chapters? Are the authors named?

Finally

- ☐ Score 0–2 on each question and add up (apply your weights if you set them)
- ☐ Repeat for your Senate, House of Representatives and State Assembly candidates
- ☐ Compare against who is actually on your ballot, not against perfection
- ☐ Save a dated copy of every document you scored



Evidence. Clarity. Action.

The Country is Ours Alone.



ONLINE SCORECARD

Score a manifesto on your phone

Scan the code to run any candidate's manifesto through the six questions, with your scores added up as you go.

simplefixnigeria.org/manifesto-scorecard/

This guide is published by SimpleFix Nigeria. It endorses no party, candidate or platform. Reuse, adaptation and translation into any Nigerian language are welcome, with attribution.

simplefixnigeria.org
contact@simplefixnigeria.org
[@simplefixng](https://twitter.com/simplefixng)
SFN/MG/2026/05 · October 2026

Background photo: The City Gate of Abuja. Wang-gp, via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

© 2026 SimpleFix Nigeria. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0). You are free to share and adapt this material for any purpose, provided appropriate credit is given to SimpleFix Nigeria and the contributors. Full licence terms at creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0. Images keep their own licences; see Image credits.