



Operationalization of Financial Autonomy for the Office of the Auditor-General

The principal legal framework for public audit in Kano State is the Kano State Audit Law 2020⁹⁶ signed by Governor Abdullahi Ganduje on 14th October 2020. The principal law has been amended and cited as Kano State Audit (Amendment No. 2) Law 2021⁹⁷ also signed by Governor Ganduje on 21st December 2021. The law established the Kano State Audit Service Commission and Office of the Auditor-General for Kano State and other matters connected therewith.

S.31(1) of the principal law states that “the Auditor-General shall prepare his budget proposal containing revenue and expenditure after receiving call circular and submit the proposal to the Ministry of planning and budget as part of the budget process”.

Also, amendment 8(b) of the Kano State Audit (Amendment No. 2) Law 2021 states that “all funds appropriated by the House of Assembly to defray expenses incurred by the office of the Auditor-General

shall be a first line charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the State. Any amount standing in credit of the office of the Auditor-General in the annual budget shall be paid directly to the Auditor-General for management and disbursement as approved by the House of Assembly”

The budget proposal for the Office of the Auditor-General for Kano State ought to be submitted directly to the House of Assembly and not the Ministry of Planning and Budget. The Kano State Audit Law 2021 not addressing this issue continues to subject the independence of the Auditor-General to Executive interference and manipulations. Although evidence⁹⁸ suggest that funding to the Office of the Auditor-General for Kano State is being charged on the first line to the Consolidated Revenue Fund and released quarterly from 2021. The gap in the legal framework needs amending to ensure the Auditor-General for Kano State submits revenue and expenditure estimates directly to the House of Assembly and not the Ministry of Planning and Budget.

Lack of Transparency in the Process of Appointing Auditor-General

S.24(1) of the Principal Law states that “the Auditor General shall be appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Audit Service Commission, subject to the confirmation by the House of Assembly in accordance with the provision of section 126 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended”. Although Section 24(1) was amended to replace “Audit Service Commission” with “Civil Service Commission”, section 24(2) as stated in the Amendment Law provided for the attributes, professional qualification, and experience of a person to be appointed as Auditor-

General for Kano State. Nothing in the legal framework points to the procedure to be followed in appointing the Auditor-General for Kano State. Such procedure would include advertising the vacancy online and in newspaper publication for a minimum number of weeks and setting a date for interview of shortlisted candidates.

Stating and clarifying procedures to be followed in appointing who becomes Auditor-General is very important to ensure the best candidate for such sensitive and important position emerges.

Audit Mandate Execution

Although the Office of the Auditor-General for Kano State says⁹⁹ it has included compliance and performance audit in its 2021 audit work plan, the Auditor-General should ensure implementation to encourage adherence to fiscal and procurement regulations by government agencies in the State and to guarantee value for money on programs and projects implemented by the government of Kano State.

⁹⁶ https://budgetpedia.ng/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwfpisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=334&wpfd_file_id=2567&token=&preview=1

⁹⁷ <https://financekanostate.files.wordpress.com/2021/12/kano-state-audit-amendment.pdf>

⁹⁸ SAE Index 2021 Research Survey

⁹⁹ SAE Index 2021 Research Survey



Effectiveness of Public Accounts Committee

It is not evident if the Public Accounts Committee of Kano State House of Assembly has reviewed the report of the Auditor-General for 2020 and whether recommendations were made to the Executive to address fiscal abuses and public finance management gaps. The duty of the Public Accounts Committee is to improve public finance management practices and by extension achieve accountability in the utilization of public funds in Kano

State. The role of the Public Accounts Committee in ensuring timeous review of annual audit reports cannot be overemphasized and very crucial to concluding the audit action cycle for proper accountability. Recommendations of Public Accounts Committee to improve accountability in the utilization of public funds must also be taken seriously and implemented as quickly as possible.

Citizens' Participation in the Audit Process

There's no evidence the full audit report of Kano State Auditor-General for 2020 financial year has been published for citizens' access. However, the audited financial statement of the state for 2020¹⁰⁰ is accessible to the public. Lack of access to the complete report of the Auditor-General is responsible for low participation of citizens in the audit process of Kano State especially in using audit information to demand accountability or engagement with the Office of the Auditor-General and Public Accounts Committee. However, the Office of the Auditor-General for Kano State is commended for

organizing the 5th annual audit forum to disseminate¹⁰¹ Audited Financial Reports of the State Auditor General for the Financial Year 2020 contained in the Citizens' Accountability Report. It is important that citizens who are mostly affected by audit issues and public finance management gaps are able to engage with the Office of the Auditor-General and Public Accounts Committee to ensure their opinions and experiences reflect in planning and executing audit functions as well as the oversight role of the Parliament.

¹⁰⁰ <https://financekanostate.files.wordpress.com/2021/07/kano-state-financial-statement-for-the-year-2020.pdf>

¹⁰¹ <https://kanostate.gov.ng/2021/09/24/kano-state-citizens-accountability-report/>