

**IN THE THIRD SESSION OF THE EIGHT PARLIAMENT OF THE FOURTH
REPUBLIC OF GHANA**



**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE ON
THE 2024 BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE ELECTORAL
COMMISSION**

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Financial Year Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2024 Financial Year was presented to Parliament on Wednesday, 15th November, 2023 by the Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Planning, Mr. Ken Ofori-Atta in accordance with Article 179 of the 1992 Constitution and Section 21 (3) of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921).

Pursuant to Order 140 (4) of the Standing Orders of the House, the Rt. Hon. Speaker referred the Annual Budget Estimates of the Electoral Commission (EC) to the Special Budget Committee for consideration and report.

The Committee hereby presents its Report as follows:

2.0. DELIBERATIONS

The Committee was assisted by officials of the Electoral Commission led by the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission, Mrs. Jean Adukwei Mensa and the Deputy Chairman Dr. Eric Asare Bossman and Officials of the Ministry of Finance.

The Committee is grateful to the Chairperson and the officials for the assistance.

2.1. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Committee referred to the following documents during its deliberations:

- a. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- b. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana;
- c. The Public Financial Management Act, 2016, (Act 921)
- d. The Electoral Commission Act, 1993 (Act 451);
- e. The Political Parties Act 2000 (Act 574);
- f. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2023 Financial Year;
- g. Report of the Special Budgets Committee on the Annual Estimates of the Electoral Commission for the 2023 financial year; and
- h. Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for 2024 –2027.

3.0. MISSION STATEMENT

The Electoral Commission is mandated under Article 43(1) of the 1992 Constitution and the Electoral Commission Act, 1993 (Act 451), to organize and supervise all public elections and referenda in Ghana, to advance the course of democracy and good governance through free, fair and transparent elections.

3.1. THE GOAL OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The goal of the Electoral Commission is to be an institution adequately resourced, staffed with professionally trained and motivated personnel, totally independent in the performance of its functions and dedicated to efficient delivery of free, fair and transparent elections to advance the course of democracy and good governance for sustainable development.

The Commission's development goals under the National Medium Term Development Policy Framework (NMTDPF) are to:

- a. Maintain a stable, united and safe society;
- b. Strengthen Ghana's role in international affairs;
- c. Deepen democratic governance;
- d. Integrate Ghanaian in diaspora in national development; and
- e. Improve participation of civil society (media, traditional authorities, religious bodies) in national development.

3.2. CORE FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

The functions of the Electoral Commission are prescribed under Article 45 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. The core functions of the Commission are to:

- i. compile the register of voters and revise it at such periods, as may be determined by law;
- ii. demarcate the electoral boundaries for both national and local government elections;
- iii. conduct and supervise all public elections and referenda;
- iv. educate the people on the electoral process and its purpose;
- v. undertake programmes for expansion of the registration of voters;
- vi. properly store election materials; and
- vii. perform such other functions as may be prescribed by law.

4.0. 2023 BUDGET PERFORMANCE OF EC AS AT NOVEMBER, 2024

The Electoral Commission was allocated an amount of **Three Hundred and Ninety-Eight Million and Forty-Seven Thousand, Six Hundred and Six Ghana Cedis (GH¢398,047,606.00)**, for the implementation of its planned programmes and activities in the 2023 Financial Year. Out of this an amount of **GH¢397,741,696.00** was from GoG whilst a total amount of **GH¢305,910.00** was from its Internally Generated Funds (IGF).

As at November, 2023 however, a total amount of **GH¢390,239,701.79** representing **98.04%** of the Appropriation, has fully been released to the Commission for its operations. Details of the actual expenditure trend is shown in the table below.

**Table 1: 2023 Allocation and Actual Releases as at November, 2023
(GH¢)**

Item of Expenditure	Appropriation (A)	Released Budget (B)	Actual Payment (C)	Variance (GH¢) (A-B)
Compensation	75,761,696.00	68,110,032.64	68,110,032.64	7,651,663.36
Goods & Services	309,305,910.00	309,149,669.15	92,288,811.69	156,240.85
CAPEX	12,980,000.00	12,980,000.00	11,370,577.51	-
Total	398,047,606.00	390,239,701.79	171,769,421.84	7,807,904.21

The actual expenditure of the Commission during the period which stands at GH¢**171,769,421.84** was expended on the following activities:

- i. Conducted by-elections in Kumawu and Assin North Constituencies;
- ii. Undertook 2023 Limited Registration and Exhibition of Voters Register towards the conduct of the District Level Election;
- iii. Supervised Constituency, Regional and National Executive Officers' elections for some political parties (NPP, NDC, GUM & LPG);
- iv. Conducted flagbearer and parliamentary candidate Elections for some political parties (NDC, NPP, LPG & GUM);
- v. Recruited 77 additional Staff (Secretaries, Security Personnel and Drivers);
- vi. Created the Guan and Jasikan Constituencies through the enactment of Constitutional Instruments (C.I); and
- vii. Conducted capacity development for staff (Finance & Accounts staff), trained Registration Officers, Returning Officers and other Polling Staff ahead of voter's registration, exhibition and the District Level Elections.

5.0. OUTLOOK FOR 2024

In the 2024 Financial Year, the Commission has programmed to pursue the following activities among others:

- a. Undertake the continuous voter registration exercise;
- b. Conduct the Presidential and Parliamentary elections;
- c. Undertake institutional and electoral reforms of the existing laws; and
- d. Provide citizens access to electoral education and services as well as inspect political party offices.

5.1. 2024 BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR EC

For the implementation of the above programmes and activities, the Electoral Commission has been allocated an amount of **Seven Hundred and Eighty-Six Million and Nine-hundred and Thirty-Four Thousand, Seven Hundred and Sixty-Four Ghana Cedis (GH¢786,934,764.00)** for the 2024 Financial Year, comprising Government of Ghana's (GoG) allocation of **GH¢782,558,024.00** and **GH¢4,376,740.00** Internally Generated Funds (IGF).

Table 2: Economic Classification of the 2024 Allocation (GH¢)

Classification	EC's Proposal (A)	MoF Ceiling (B)	Variance (A-B)
Compensation	95,083,150.77	87,653,063.00	(97,430,087.77)
Goods/ Services	680,840,836.86	606,449,009.00	(74,391,827.86)
IGF	4,376,740.00	4,376,740.00	-
CAPEX	151,732,800.00	88,455,952.00	(63,276,848.00)
Total	932,033,527.63	786,934,764.00	(145,098,763.63)

Detailed disbursement of the 2024 Allocation among the various programs and Sub-Programs shown in the Table 3 below:

Table 3: 2024 Budgetary Allocation by Cost Center

Budget Program	Budget Sub-Program	Allocation (GH¢)
Management/Administration	Human Resource and General Services	171,611,874
	Finance	892,270
	Information Technology	72,198,900
Electoral Services	Compilation of the Voters Register	219,726,372
	Conducting Elections	322,505,348
TOTAL		786,934,764

6.0. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee after a careful scrutiny of the Estimates of the Electoral Commission made the following observations and recommendations:

6.1 Budgetary Shortfalls

The Committee noted that the Electoral Commission intends to undertake a number of activities and procure equipment for a successful conduct of the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. Significant among these is the procurement of additional BVDs and BVR kits to enable the Commission increase the number of polling stations for a smooth poll, recruitment and training of electoral officers, replacement of exited staff, upgrade of Data Centre and the purchase of ICT equipment.

The Commission in view of the critical need for these expenditure items to effectively implement its planned programmes and activities, proposed a budgetary requirement of a sum of **GH¢932,033,527.63** for the 2024 Financial Year.

The Committee observed that the Ministry of Finance however, has capped the Allocation to a total amount of **GH¢786,934,764.00** resulting in a budget shortfall of **GH¢140,722,023.63**.

Again, the Commission further informed that the shortfall would compel the Commission to reduce its critical activities necessary for a successful conduct of the 2024 general elections and therefore, appeals to the Committee to intervene to ensure that the proposed budgetary amount is approved and released on time to enable the Commission undertake these planned programme as scheduled.

The Committee is of the view that, the activities of the Electoral Commission is time-bound and extremely critical to the stability of the country and therefore, any impediment in the way of the Commission may be costly to the country. The Committee observed further that all the items listed are election - related activities and cannot be suspended due to shortfalls and non- releases of budgetary allocations.

Table 4 below details the impact of shortfall of items and activities critical to enable the Commission undertake preparatory programmes ahead of the general elections on 7th December, 2024.

Table 5: Impact of the Shortfall in the 2024 Budgetary Allocations (GH¢)

NO.	ACTIVITY	COST
A. GOODS/SERVICES		
i.	Sittings of DRRC, Challenges and Adjudication	12,804,050
ii.	Publicity	6,246,720
iii.	Recruitment and Interview of Election Officials	4,106,900
iv.	Maintenance of Residential and Office Buildings	17,334,157.86
v.	Procurement of BVDs	33,900,000
	Sub-Total	74,391,827.00
B. CAPEX		
i.	Construction of Warehouse	20,000,000.00
ii.	Renovation and Refurbishment of Office and Residential Accommodation	15,000,000.00

iii.	Upgrade of Data Centre, Software Upgrade, Purchase of ICT Equipment	28,276,848.00
Sub -Total		63,276,848.00
C. COMPENSATION		
i.	Replacement of Exited Staff, etc.	7,430,087.77
D. IGF		(4,374,740.00)
Grand Total		140,722,023.63

Additionally, the Commission shall have to suspend other capital investment activities amounting to GH¢47,957,417.86.

The Committee therefore strongly recommends to the Ministry of Finance to reallocate the sum of GH¢140,722,023.63 and ensure timely releases of the fund from the contingency vote to support the Commission for the smooth conduct of the 2024 Elections.

6.2. Wrongful Placement of Voters

The Committee noted that in 2023, the Commission successfully registered additional 910,996 Ghanaians during the Limited Voter Registration exercise, however, the Committee was informed that the decision by the Commission to limit the registration to its District Offices resulted in wrong placement of some voters in polling stations.

The Commissioner acknowledged the probability of the incidence of wrong placements, and assured the Committee that steps would be taken to rectify this and other anomalies recorded during the exercise.

The Committee therefore, urges the Commission to take steps to expand access to potential voters by opening registration centers at the polling stations and at electoral areas to make it easily accessible by qualified Ghanaians to be enrolled on the Voters' Register.

6.3. Registration of New Voters

The Committee informed that a continuous registration of voters in 2024 would be undertaken and hence the proposed C.I which was intended to govern the continuous registration process would be presented to Parliament by the Commission to ensure smooth continuous registration across the country.

Members of the Committee however, reiterated that the existing C.I. makes clear provisions for the EC to engage in continuous registration without any restrictions and therefore, urges the Commission to take steps to activate those provisions in the C.I. to ensure that persons who attains the mandatory age and are of sound mind and willing to participate in the elections are not disenfranchised by the s and actions of the Commission.

6.4. Discontinuation of the use of Indelible Ink on Election Day

The Committee was informed that the Commission intends to discontinue the use of Indelible Ink to mark out persons who will cast their votes on election days. The Committee expressed grave concerns about the proposal having regards to its potential to create chaos and misunderstanding during elections. The Commissioner stated that the Commission takes the view that the biometric register and the equipment to be deployed are credible enough to detect multiple voting or any anomaly on the of voting and hence the decision to do away with the Indelible Ink.

The Committee however, expressed reservations and strongly suggested to the Commission to review its decision to discontinue the use of the Indelible Ink on the day of voting. The Committee therefore, recommends the use of a dual system involving the combination of both the indelible Ink and the biometric verification system to eliminate the incidence of multiple voting from the electoral process and to improve the integrity of the elections.


The Committee further urged the Commission to engage broadly and arrive at a consensus on the matter to avoid unnecessary tension before, during and after the upcoming General Elections.

7.0. CONCLUSION

The Committee having carefully scrutinised the Estimates recommends to the House to adopt its Report and approve the sum of **Seven Hundred and Eighty-Six Million and Nine-hundred and Thirty-Four Thousand, Seven Hundred and Sixty-Four Ghana Cedis (GH¢786,934,764)** and further requests that the Ministry of Finance avails the shortfall of **GH¢140,722,023.63** in order that the processes and the conduct of the Presidential and General Elections in 2024 would not be compromised.

Respectfully submitted.


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HON. OSEI KYEI-MENSAH-BONSU
(MAJ. LEADER/CHAIRMAN,
SPECIAL BUDGET COMMITTEE)


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JOANA ABENA SAKYI ADJEI (MRS.)
(SPAC SPECISL BUDGET COMMITTEES)

18TH DECEMBER, 2023

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