

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

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS

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**ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE MINISTRY OF
INFORMATION FOR THE 2024 FINANCIAL YEAR**

DECEMBER 2023

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

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS ON THE ANNUAL
BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION FOR THE 2024
FINANCIAL YEAR**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2024 Financial Year was presented to Parliament by the Hon. Minister for Finance, Mr. Ken Ofori-Atta on 15th November, 2023 in accordance with Article 179 of the 1992 Constitution.

The Rt. Hon Speaker thereafter referred the Annual Budget Estimates in respect of the Ministry of Information to the Select Committee on Communications for consideration and report pursuant to Order 140(4) and Order 182 of the Standing Orders of the House.

2.0 DELIBERATIONS

The Committee, subsequently, met with the Hon. Minister for Information, Mr. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah and Officials of the Ministry of Information on 12th December, 2023 to consider the referral. An Official from the Ministry of Finance was in attendance at meeting to assist in the deliberations.

The Committee is extremely grateful to the Hon. Minister and the Officials for attending the meeting and clarifying issues raised during the deliberations.

3.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Committee referred to the under- listed documents during the deliberations:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of Parliament;
- iii. The Annual Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Information for the 2023 Financial Year;
- iv. The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) of Ministry of Information for 2024-2027;

- v. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2023 Financial Year; and
- vi. The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2024 Financial Year.

4.0 MANDATE, MISSION, VISION AND GOAL OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

4.1 Mandate of the Ministry

The mandate of the Ministry of Information is to disseminate information on public policies, programmes, projects and activities to the citizenry and to also gather feedback from the citizenry for policy review and refinement.

4.2 Mission of the Ministry

The mission of the Ministry is to facilitate free flow of adequate, timely and reliable information and feedback between government and its various publics for socio-economic empowerment and enhanced democratic citizenship.

4.3 Vision of the Ministry

The vision of the Ministry is to attain a free, united, informed and prosperous society with good governance through Development Communication.

4.4 Goal of the Ministry

The goal of the Ministry of Information is to bring governance closer to the people through constant engagement between public officials and the citizenry to engender policy refinement.

5.0 CORE FUNCTIONS

The following are the core functions of the Ministry of Information:

- i. Formulate policies for the Information Sector;
- ii. Provide public relations support to the Presidency and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs);
- iii. Collaborate with MDAs to effectively disseminate information on government policies, programmes and activities;
- iv. Gather and assess feedback on government policies, programmes and activities;

- v. Gather and process local and foreign news; and
- vi. Disseminate processed news to local and foreign subscribers.

6.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE MINISTRY

The policy objectives of the Ministry in line with the National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework (NMTDPF) are as follows:

- i. Deepen democratic governance;
- ii. Deepen transparency and public accountability;
- iii. Enhance capacity for policy formulation and coordination;
- iv. Demystify the Presidency and bring the President closer to the people;
- v. Promote the fight against corruption and economic crimes;
- vi. Improve participation of civil society (media, traditional authorities, religious bodies) in national development;
- vii. Promote discipline in all aspects of life;
- viii. Enhance Ghana's international image and influence; and
- ix. Promote Ghana's political and economic interest abroad.



7.0 AGENCIES UNDER THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

The Ministry consists of the Headquarters and the following Agencies:

- i. Ghana News Agency (GNA);
- ii. Information Services Department (ISD); and
- iii. Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC).

8.0 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE MINISTRY IN 2023

An amount of **One Hundred and Forty-One Million, Four Hundred and Sixty-Four Thousand, Three Hundred and Twenty-Eight Ghana Cedis (GH¢141,464,328)** was approved for the Ministry of Information to implement its programmes and activities for the 2023 financial year. Out of this allocation, an amount of One Hundred and Four Million, Four Hundred and Seventy-Eight Thousand, Eight Hundred and Sixty-Six Ghana

Cedis and Ninety-Two Pesewas (GH¢104,478,866.92) had been released and same expended as at September, 2023. Table 1 shows the details of the financial performance of the Ministry from January to October, 2023.

Table 1: Details of Financial Performance of the Ministry of Information

Expenditure Item/ Funding Source	Approved Budget	Released Budget (Jan – Oct)	Actual Payment (Jan – Oct)	Variance
Compensation of Employees				
GoG	111,158,131	110,522,016.92	110,522,016.92	636,114.08
Goods and Services				
GoG	2,782,200	1,207,928	1,207,928	1,574,272
IGF	21,729,514	19,283,720	19,283,720	2,445,794
Capital Expenditure				
GoG	840,000	436,566.80	436,566.80	403,433.20
IGF	4,954,483	816,408	816,408	4,138,075
Total	141,464,328	132,266,639.72	132,266,639.72	9,197,688.28

9.0 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION IN YEAR 2023

9.1 Headquarters of the Ministry

The Headquarters of the Ministry achieved the following in 2023:

- i. Commenced the process of drafting a Broadcasting Bill;
- ii. Set up five hundred and five (505) information units in various public institutions across the country;
- iii. Recruited and posted three hundred and fifty (350) RTI Officers to various government institutions;
- iv. Initiated the process to present an L.I for the RTI Act (Act 989) to Parliament;

- v. Developed an Online Records Management System (ORMS) which is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2023 to facilitate the implementation of RTI requests and reporting;
- vi. Held thirty-two (32) Minister's Press Briefings featuring sector Ministers, Regional Ministers and Heads of public institutions;
- vii. Held two (2) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) promotion road shows to provide a platform to engage stakeholders on the investments, developments, outcome and prospects of the STEM programme;
- viii. Held the Agenda 111 Impact Forum at Kpassa in Nkwanta North District, Oti Region to inform the public of job opportunities and other benefits of the project;
- ix. Executed a mass social media campaign with the hashtag **#verifyitfirst**, to reduce the spread of fake news by providing extensive information on what constitutes dis/misinformation;
- x. Held a stakeholders' review forum under the theme "Assessing the impact of Media Support Programmes"; and
- xi. Launched a media content complaints platform.

9.2 Information Services Department (ISD)

ISD executed the following activities in 2023:

- i. Launched a new website called "The Ghana Today" to identify and counter false information and provide users with accurate and reliable information;
- ii. Carried out one Public Education Campaign on the Ghana National Household Registry in Central, Volta and Oti regions;
- iii. Produced and distributed fifty (50) feature articles and eight hundred and 1130 news stories as at August 2023;
- iv. Produced 491 reports comprising of 388 situational and 103 reaction reports; and
- v. Generated 3,250 reports from the BONSU online reporting programme.

9.2 Ghana News Agency

Among others, GNA achieved the following in 2023:



- i. Secured a grant of \$3,000,000.00 from the African Development Bank to support of the reorganisation of the Agency;
- ii. Inaugurated a new Audit Committee;
- iii. Received approval from the Public Services Commission for new and updated organogram;
- iv. Disposed of one unserviceable vehicle at GNA's Bono office;
- v. Secured site plans for GNA office buildings in Ho, Bolgatanga and Tamale;
- vi. Produced 17,222 local news stories and 6,865 foreign stories; and
- vii. Five (5) staff received awards in 2023.

9.3 Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)

In 2023, GBC achieved the following:

- i. Procured 4 new FM Radio Transmitters to replace transmitters at Obonu (Tema), **Uniiq (Accra)**, Garden City (Kumasi) and Radio Savannah (Tamale);
- ii. Uniiq FM (Accra) now broadcasts on the Digital Audio Broadcast (DAB+) platform and it is placed on No. 1;
- iii. Created a new social media handle and had received almost GH¢1,000,000.00 as at September, 2023 from social media. The Corporation expects to generate more from this source;
- iv. Received approval from the Public Services Commission for new and updated organogram; and
- v. Produced bold new content to spice up GTV, GBC News, LSTV, Obonu and GBC social media.

10.0 OUTLOOK FOR 2024 FINANCIAL YEAR

10.1 Headquarters of the Ministry

In furtherance of its activities, the Headquarters of the Ministry has planned to undertake the following activities in 2024:

- i. Submit the Broadcasting Bill to Parliament and ensure its passage;

- ii. Lay the subsidiary legislation for the RTI Act before Parliament;
- iii. Introduce an Advertising Council Bill;
- iv. Continue the implementation of the Media Capacity Enhancement Programme;
- v. Support the implementation of the Framework for the Safety of Journalists in Ghana by the National Media Commission; and
- vi. Pursue Cabinet directive to inject capital and efficiency into New Times Corporation and Graphic Communications.

10.2 Information Services Department (ISD)

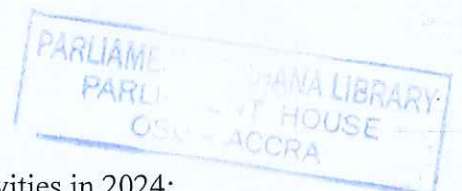
ISD plans to undertake the following in 2024:

- i. Purchase forty (40) communication rigs;
- ii. Provide computers and internet connectivity for ISD offices countrywide;
- iii. Purchase twenty-nine (29) vehicles to facilitate daily operations and monitoring of information dissemination activities;
- iv. Upgrade and enhance the skills of staff through relevant and comprehensive training programmes; and
- v. Renovate and refurbish ISD offices countrywide.

10.3 Ghana News Agency (GNA)

GNA plans to undertake the following programmes and activities in 2024:

- i. Set up a studio for the production of multimedia content;
- ii. Cover the 2024 general elections extensively;
- iii. Continue the coverage of local and foreign news events;
- iv. Train editorial staff in multimedia news production;
- v. Invest in equipment for speedy processing of stories; and
- vi. Renovate GNA office buildings.



10.4 Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)

GBC intends to carry out the following initiatives and programmes in 2024:

- i. Utilise social media as a key source of IGF;
- ii. Establish regional presence in 3 out of the 6 newly created regions in collaboration with the National Communications Authority;
- iii. Purchase two (2) OB vans to cover national programmes and assignments;
- iv. Dispose of Analogue Transmitters;
- v. Complete modernisation of TV and radio studios;
- vi. Replace 8 regional FM transmitters; and
- vii. Upgrade current DDT (T1) platform to accommodate more channels.

11.0 ANNUAL BUDGET ESTIMATES OF THE MINISTRY FOR 2024

The total amount of Two Hundred and Sixty-Seven Million, Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Nine Ghana Cedis (GHC267,798,909) has been allocated to the Ministry of Information and its Agencies for implementation of their activities for the 2024 Financial Year. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the allocation in respect of economic classification and the sources of funding:

Table 2: Budgetary Allocation by Economic Classification

Expenditure Item	Sources of Funding				Total (GH¢)	% of Allocation
	GOG (GH¢)	IGF (GH¢)	DP Funds (GH¢)	ABFA (GH¢)		
Compensation	148,898,448	-	-	-	148,898,448	55.6%
Goods and Services	8,021,801	32,834,927	-	-	40,856,729	15.3%
Capital Expenditure	70,000,000	8,043,732	-	-	78,043,732	29.1%
Grand Total	226,920,250	40,878,659	-	-	267,798,909	100%

Source: The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government for the 2024 Financial Year

12.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee made the following observations during the deliberations:

12.1 Low 2024 Budgetary Allocation

The Committee noted that the budgetary allocation to the Ministry and its agencies are woefully inadequate. Officials of the Ministry informed the Committee that though the Ministry and its agencies submitted a proposed budget of GH¢488,964,976.40 for the implementation of their activities for the 2024 financial year, an amount of GH¢226,920,249 has been allocated for that purpose, leaving a funding gap of GH¢262,044,727.40. The Committee considers this allocation insignificant in view of the critical programmes that the Ministry of Information has envisaged to implement.

In light of the above, the Committee urges the Ministry of Finance to provide additional funding during mid-year budget review to enable the Ministry undertake its operations.

12.2 Delayed Introduction of the Proposed Broadcasting Bill to Parliament

The Hon. Minister informed the Committee that the Ministry has commenced the process of drafting a Broadcasting Bill in line with Article 164 of the 1992 Constitution. A technical committee has collated inputs from stakeholders into the draft Bill and key positions have been agreed upon by the Ministry. Instructions have also been submitted to the Drafting Division at the Attorney General's Office. He, however, stated that even though the Ministry anticipated laying the Bill before the House in 2024, the Ministry would not be able to do so considering the allocated Goods and Services vote (GH¢4,378,925) to the Headquarters of the Ministry.

12.3 Broadcast Monitoring Centre

The Committee noted that the Ministry, in collaboration with the National Communications Authority and the National Media Commission, has launched a media content complaints platform known as the Broadcast Content Complaints Centre. Officials from the Ministry informed the Committee that the Centre seeks to monitor the electronic media space and eliminate inappropriate content. The public can access the Centre via a toll free number (0800-419-666).

12.4 Media Capacity Enhancement Programme

Officials of the Ministry informed the Committee that an impact assessment was conducted on the training held last year for ninety (90) media personnel across the country under the Media Enhancement Programme. The assessment revealed that media practitioners in the country need more training and as result, the independent working Committee for the Programme has drawn a plan for phase 2 to train the second cohort by the end of the year. The Officials further stated that the programme was a training for trainers, indicating that the beneficiaries of the training are expected to influence others.

12.5 Combatting Misinformation

The Committee observed that the Ministry, through the Information Services Department has launched a new website called the GhanaToday (www.ghanatoday.com) to combat the issue of misinformation and disinformation in the country. The website is a news platform which offers users a reliable and accurate source of information while dispelling misleading content.

12.6 GBC's Funding Challenges

The Committee noted that the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation continued to contend with a huge legacy debt. Officials of GBC informed the Committee that the Corporation currently has a legacy debt of GH¢78,231,416 arising from Judgement Debts, Electricity Bills and Long Service Awards. Officials of GBC, however, informed the Committee that Ministry of Finance has granted approval for GBC to raise an amount of GH¢40,000,000 to clear their Long Service Award debts, which constitute a significant component (44%) of GBC's Legacy Debt. The Committee urges the Ministry of Finance to source additional funding to complement the Corporation's efforts.

12.7 ISD Transformation Programme

The Committee was informed by the Officials of the Ministry that ISD has restructured its organogram and merged obsolete departments into new ones. Consequently, it has become imperative to equip the newly created departments with the necessary tools to meet the demands of modern communication. It came to the attention of the Committee (per pictorial evidence) that most of the offices of ISD across the nation are in deplorable condition and lack basic equipment such as computers, printers, cameras, and vans for effective service delivery. In order to cover an equipment list proposed for retooling of ISD across the nation, the Ministry presented and justified a proposed sum of GH¢297,631,464.50. Unfortunately, only a meagre amount of GH¢61,500,000 has been provided for the purpose. The allocated amount (GH¢61,500,000) will only be able to purchase about 40 vans to be used by the ISD offices in 261 districts. The Committee therefore urges the Ministry of Finance to reconsider and revise the budgetary allocation for the implementation of the ISD Transformation Agenda.

12.8 IGF Retention of GNA

The Committee observed that in 2023, GNA projected an IGF target of Three Hundred and Seventy-Three Thousand, Nine Hundred and Five Ghana Cedis (GH¢373,913.85) and had generated an amount of Three Hundred and Twenty-One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Five Ghana Cedis as at October 2023. The Committee was informed, however, that GNA retains only 33% of their Internally Generated Funds. It was noted that out of the GH¢321,905.70 generated, only GH¢52,008.15 was retained by the Agency.

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance reconsiders and grants GNA to 100% retention of its IGF to enable it pay off its debts as well as fund some of its critical programmes in 2024.

12.9 AfDB Grant to GNA

The Committee noted that the Ghana News Agency, with support from the Ministry, has secured a grant of Three Million US Dollars (\$3,000,000) from the African Development Bank to support the reorganisation of the Agency. Officials of GNA informed the Committee that once the funds are ready, the Agency intends to apply it to establish the GNA Act, renovate its office buildings, undertake trainings for staff and purchase vehicles for the Agency.

13.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

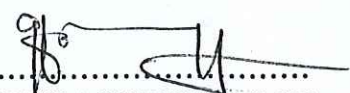
The Committee has critically examined the 2024 Annual Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Information and takes the considered view that the Estimates are justified. The Committee notes that despite the strong case for a significant improvement in the Annual Budgetary Allocation to the Ministry, no improvement has been made. Among other implications, it is feared that the implementation of key programmes such as Government Communications, Media Enhancement Capacity Programme and introduction of the proposed Broadcasting Bill will be hampered. The Committee urges the Ministry of Finance to find additional funds to fund the activities of the Ministry in 2024.

Despite the above, the Committee recommends to the House to adopt this Report and approve the sum of **Two Hundred and Sixty-Seven Million, Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Nine Ghana Cedis (GHC267,798,909)** for the implementation of the activities of the Ministry of Information for the 2024 Financial Year.

Respectfully submitted.


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HON. CYNTHIA MAMLE MORRISON
CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS




.....
ANTHONY AGYEKUM (MR)
CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE