

NASS Members increased Agency budget by 5000 percent



communities in South West with N1,000,000,000 budget allocation. Supply of employment materials/kits/starter packs in Alagbe, Koko Ebiye, Erinja, Ebute, Ijofin with N500,000,000 budget allocation; Construction of block of classrooms at St. Peters College (Junior) School, Olomore with budget allocation of N500,000,000, and Construction of Immigration office building, Ogun state

BudgIT Foundation, Nigeria's civic tech organization, has revealed that the National Assembly in a budget padding spree of the 2024 Fiscal Appropriation Act, inserted over N40 billion in the Federal College of Fisheries and Marine Technology, Lagos 2024 proposed budget. According to BudgIT report, the Federal College of Fisheries and Marine Technology, Lagos State in Southwest Nigeria submitted a proposed budget of N667 million to the National Assembly for 2024. However, the civic organization, which raises the standards of transparency, citizen engagement and accountability, especially in public finance, said the National Assembly approved N40.88 billion for the college. By approving N40.88 billion for the college against the N667 million it proposed, BudgIT explained that the lawmakers padded the budget with a margin of N40.22 billion, representing over 5000% increment.

with N500,000,000 budget allocation. Many Nigerians believed that the National Assembly is the worst citadel of corruption as the issue of budget padding has long become a recurring decimal that has made a mess of the whole budget process.

According to the organization, the National Assembly inserted 12 projects running into billions and hundreds of millions. BudgIT in a short statement on its social media account on Thursday said, "The Federal College of Fisheries and Marine Technology's 2024 proposed budget was N667 million. "But what was approved by the National Assembly was N40.88 billion. A margin of N40.22 billion! An increase of more than 5,000%. "@nassNigeria, we hope it will not be business as usual in the review of the 2025 proposed budget." The inserted projects include Provision of tricycle in selected communities: Urua Inyang, Ifuho, in Akwa Ibom State with N200,000,000 budgetary allocations; Training of unemployed youths in some selected

The case of the Federal College of Fisheries and Marine Technology is just a tip of the iceberg when compared to the volume of budget padding that permeate every MDA's through the National Assembly. Another unbelievable case of budget padding in the 2024 appropriation Act was details of the inappropriate insertions in the budget of the Secretary of Government. Some of these included ERGP29241541 which is the renovation and construction of selected schools in Kano Municipal worth N198,370,60. ERGP20241542 which is the Renovation/Equipping of selected Hospitals in Kano Municipal worth N297,665,991. ERGP20241544 which is the Procurement and distribution of branded laptops to students in Kano Municipal worth N49,592,652. And several others. These were clear case of deliberate insertion with a view of diverting and stealing tax payers' monies as the Office of the Secretary of Government has nothing to do with these projects because they are outside the jurisdiction of the Office. These and others must have been inserted by the lawmakers in active connivance with their cohorts in these offices and Agencies with a singular aim to defraud the Nigerian people and enrich themselves. The big question now is how long will these cycle of deceit and criminality will continue in the budget process in Nigeria.

BudgIT raises alarm over omission of breakdown of key entities

BudgIT, a leading civic-tech organization committed to promoting transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery in Nigeria, has raised concerns about several legacy issues in the 2025 Federal Government Proposed Budget. The organization is calling on the National Assembly to address these irregularities proactively, exercise its “Powers of the Purse” responsibly, and allow robust public participation in the budget review process. The aim, according to BudgIT, is to ensure that the final approved budget reflects the true needs and preferences of Nigerians, focusing on job creation, poverty reduction, and inclusive, broad-based economic growth. A review of the Federal Government's budget performance over the past few years reveals a significant discrepancy between the government's macroeconomic assumptions and the actual outcomes, leading to serious fiscal risks. These risks include unforeseen government obligations, challenges in budget financing, and a worrying increase in public debt. BudgIT specifically flagged the government's inflation projection of 15% for 2025 as unrealistic, given that inflation was at 34.6% as of November 2024. The surge in inflation has been driven by both monetary factors—such as exchange rate fluctuations and increased money supply—and the constant rise in food and energy prices, with no clear roadmap from the government for short-term resolution. While the oil price projection of \$75 per barrel appears feasible in light of global market trends, BudgIT cautioned the National Assembly against increasing the oil price benchmark to create fiscal space for budgetary insertions, a practice that has been observed in prior years

In previous years, BudgIT has identified numerous budgetary insertions by the National Assembly that deviate from the federal government's constitutional mandates and priorities. These insertions are often directed to Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) that lack the capacity to effectively implement the allocated projects. For instance, in 2021, 5,601 capital projects were added during the review process. This number grew to 6,462 projects in 2022 and reached 7,447 insertions amounting to N2.24 trillion in the 2024 budget. Despite the National Assembly's constitutional authority to appropriate funds, these additions often distort the original intent of the executive's proposed budget and disconnect it from the country's long-term development agenda. Many of these inserted projects lack proper conceptualization, design, and cost estimation, rendering them ineffective and infeasible.

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Another concern raised by BudgIT is the omission of several MDAs, commissions, and councils from the 2025 budget breakdown. Key entities such as the National Judicial Council (₦341.63 billion) and TETFUND (₦940.5 billion) are absent, as are the budgets of over 60 government-owned enterprises (GOEs), including the Nigeria Ports Authority, Nigeria Customs Service, and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA). This lack of transparency further exacerbates concerns about accountability and public oversight.

BudgIT pointed out a combined ₦2.49 trillion allocated to five regional development commissions (Niger Delta, South West, North East, North West, and South East) under the umbrella of personnel costs. This allocation clouds the true nature of these commissions' operational expenses and raises questions about the efficiency and transparency of fund utilization. For comparison, the Ministry of Interior, which oversees several key security agencies, has a significantly lower recurrent non-debt expenditure allocation of N648.84 billion. Equally concerning is the absence of funding for the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road, a major infrastructure project, from the 2025 budget. This omission suggests that if the project does receive funding, it may require the reallocation of resources from other critical initiatives, potentially hindering their successful implementation. BudgIT also expressed concern over President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's recent statements regarding the retirement benefits for military generals, including the provision of a bulletproof SUV, fully paid foreign medical treatment, and other welfare packages.

These provisions contradict the president's earlier commitments to reduce the cost of governance, and such expenditures risk inflating the budget, widening the fiscal deficit, and undermining the morale of lower-ranking military personnel who lack comparable benefits despite facing greater risks. In its call to action, BudgIT urges the National Assembly to prioritize the national interest over personal or parochial concerns and ensure that the approved budget fosters economic growth, reduces poverty and inequality, and focuses on the needs of the most vulnerable Nigerians. The organization believes that a well-executed budget can stimulate economic activities, promote macroeconomic stability, and facilitate the long-term development of Nigeria. As the National Assembly reviews the 2025 Proposed Budget, BudgIT is appealing to lawmakers to uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and responsibility in budgetary decisions.