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Nigeria to return to sovereign Sukuk market in Q3

Interviewee: Patience Oniha — Director-General, Debt Management Office Nigeria

 ${\it Interviewer: \bf Vineeta\ Tan-Managing\ Editor,\ Islamic\ Finance\ news}$

NIGERIA: The Nigerian government is likely to return to the sovereign Sukuk market in the third quarter (Q3) of this year, becoming a familiar face in the space and certainly the most active in the African region, as the Debt Management Office (DMO) looks to further strengthen the country's Islamic finance repertoire by diversifying its Sukuk offerings to support a wider array of Nigeria's development, IFN has learned.



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"We are in the process of appointing [Sukuk] transaction parties — I expect that by the third quarter of this year, [the Sukuk] will be out," Patience Oniha, the director-general of Nigeria's DMO, revealed at IFN OnAir Nigeria Roadshow yesterday.

The upcoming offering, the government's fourth, will once again adopt the tried-and-

tested Ijarah structure. The tenor, however, has yet to be decided as it would depend on market conditions. The previous three papers — issued in 2017, 2018 and 2020 respectively — carried a sevenyear maturity. Proceeds from the impending Sukuk facility will be channeled toward road projects.

Despite a challenging first offering four years ago, driven mainly by a lack of understanding of Sukuk and Islamic finance in general by the Nigerian people, the West African nation's Sukuk journey can be characterized as successful as every offering outperformed the last by demand. Its 2017 NGN100 billion (US\$242.34 million) debut was marked by a 5.8% oversubscription, the sophomore paper was

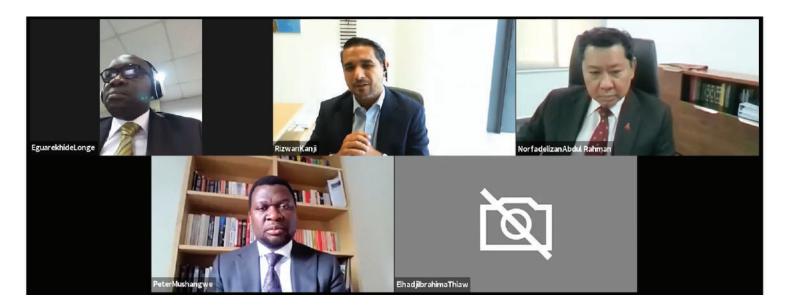
oversubscribed by 32% and its most recent Sukuk offering attracted an astounding subscription level of 446%, leading to its largest Sukuk to date at NGN150 billion (US\$363.52 million).

As Africa's largest economy by GDP, Nigeria is actively diversifying its funding pool, and Islamic finance is a major focus for the country.

Going forward — it may not be in the near-term, ie 2021 — but we will need to upscale the Sukuk issuance to include other projects, maybe stand-alone projects from road projects

"Going forward — it may not be in the near-term, ie 2021 — but we will need to upscale the Sukuk issuance to include other projects, maybe stand-alone projects from road projects. More importantly, we will be looking to support revenue-generating projects to service the Sukuk. It is a journey — we are at the early stages," Oniha said. Apart from different underlying projects and structures, this also extends to potentially issuing in different currencies.



















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Keynote Address:



Temi Popoola — Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Exchange Limited

System Restart: Islamic Finance in Nigeria

Panelists:



Rizwan Kanji — Partner, Akin Gump (Moderator)



Eguarekhide Longe — Managing Director, AIICO Pension Managers Limited



Elhadji Ibrahima Thiaw — Country Manager, Senegal, The Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit



Norfadelizan Abdul Rahman — Managing Director, Taj Bank



Peter Mushangwe — AVP – Analyst, Financial Institutions Group, Moody's **Investors Service**

IFN shines the spotlight on Nigeria's Islamic finance and banking industry, an emerging market which has rapidly evolving regulatory and supervisory structures that support its growth. Even more potential lies in the country's large Muslim population making up almost half of the entire nation's population, as well as the government's interest in the Islamic capital market to address its large financing requirements.

Tremendous government support has propelled the development of regulatory controls in the industry; in 2009, guidelines for the operation of Islamic financial institutions were released, and in 2013, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Nigeria issued regulations on Sukuk.

However, there seems to be a lot more room for growth and development opportunities in Nigeria as there is a need for a stronger development of regulatory infrastructure, ethical and sustainable financing abilities and ultimately greater awareness in Islamic finance for all and not just for the Muslim community.

The financial turmoil that Nigeria has experienced during the past years, as well as the constant decrease in oil prices amid the coronavirus pandemic, has put Nigeria in a situation where the country needs to find sustainable solutions for its economic development. Islamic finance can be an interesting track to find new ways to finance the economy at the country level. Given its position as the country with the

fifth-largest Muslim population in the world, Nigeria could play a

central role and serve as a hub for the flourishing of Islamic finance in sub-Saharan Africa for the benefit of Muslims and non-Muslims. One of the key areas where Islamic finance could play a tremendous role in the Nigerian economy is the financing of infrastructure. In this regard, Sukuk can be a good means to finance infrastructure and other public–private priority investments in Nigeria.

Elhadji Ibrahima Thiaw is the country manager for Senegal at the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit.

<u>TESTIMONIALS</u>

ISMAIL OLOJEDE

The Oke Ogun Polytechnic Saki Nigeria

"Very grateful to have attended."



ZAYYAD IBRAHIM

Premium Pension

"It's an interesting forum, in fact a remarkable one. On this note, the existence of Islamic finance will greatly bring about development in the banking sector."



Confiance Employee Benefits Advisory

"Excellent and enlightening."



IBRAHIM LAWAN ROGO

Northern Nigeria Flour Mill (NNFM)

"The forum has been very enlightening to us for the possibilities that abound in Shariah compliant forms of financing."



Skyview Capital

"Very well organized."



ANITA GOPALDAS

Nigerian Exchange

"It was a very insightful topic and the panelists clearly articulated their views in an easy-tounderstand manner. Very engaging and will be watching out for the next event."



Foresight Securities & Investment

"Very insightful event."



MARYAM ABDU

Marbebs Consulting

"This is a very interesting and educative forum."



PFI Capital

"Good and commendable."



ABUBAKAR ABDULKAREEM

e-Health Africa

"It's an awesome event."



Galama Investment & Resources Management

"It is very informative. I look forward to next year's event."



DR. JOHNSON OKOH

National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

"Discussions are quite enriching!"



Biz Expansion Consulting

"Good event."







Nigeria: Tapping the Islamic financial market

The Nigerian government has, for a few years now, taken an interest in supporting the Islamic finance industry, resulting in more Shariah compliant players and products entering the market. NESSREEN TAMANO writes an overview of the West African nation's Islamic finance and banking sector, and its developments in the last decade since its establishment.

Regulatory landscape

Nigeria has regulations in place to accommodate Islamic finance: in 2009, guidelines for the operation of Islamic financial institutions were released, and in 2013, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Nigeria issued regulations on Sukuk.

In 2015, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) established the Financial Regulation Advisory Council of Experts, which advises regulators on Shariah-related matters, and three years later, the CBN issued Islamic banking regulations that also cover Shariah microfinance banks. The National Pension Commission also approved the investment of pension funds in Shariah compliant assets, and the following year, the Rules Governing the Listing of Sukuk and Similar Debt Securities went into effect.

In 2020, the central bank revealed its plan to release a non-interest regulatory framework, mainly to support SMEs affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Banking and finance

There are two fully-fledged Islamic banks in Nigeria: Jaiz Bank was established in 2013 and listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange in 2017, and in July 2019, the central bank granted TAJ Bank an operational license. Stanbic Bank runs an Islamic banking window while Sterling Bank in 2020 received regulatory approval to restructure and spin off its Islamic window into a stand-alone non-interest bank serving the retail and commercial segments.

There are four Shariah compliant microfinance institutions — Al-Barakah Microfinance Bank, Tijarah Microfinance Bank, I-Care Microfinance Bank and Giginya Microfinance Bank which was launched in Sokoto in February 2020. Nigeria enjoys strong backing from the IsDB, which has supported the National Hajj Commission as well as the country's agricultural and manufacturing sectors, among others.

Sukuk

The Islamic capital market in Nigeria has seen much activity in the past few years. The federal government's debut Sukuk facility was issued in 2017, a NGN100 billion (US\$255.35 million) facility utilized to finance the budget deficit and road infrastructure. A sophomore Sukuk issuance of the same size followed in 2018 — both were oversubscribed.

In June 2020, the Debt Management Office issued the country's third sovereign Sukuk, originally planned for issuance in 2019, worth NGN150 billion (US\$393.18 million) and which was oversubscribed four times, to fund the construction of 44 road projects. From the private sector, Nigeria-based Africa Finance Corporation issued a debut Sukuk paper worth

US\$150 million in 2017. Meanwhile, the IsDB, the International Organization for Migration and the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission held discussions on a Diaspora Humanitarian Sukuk facility to support Nigerians both at home and abroad.

Takaful

The Takaful sector is regulated by the National Insurance Commission, which introduced a framework in 2013 allowing operators to offer Mudarabah, Wakalah and hybrid products, in addition to enabling conventional insurers to run Islamic windows. In 2020, the regulator announced plans to issue microTakaful regulations to introduce microinsurance services in the country.

African Alliance Insurance was the first to offer Takaful products in 2003. The other fully-fledged Takaful operators in the country are Lagos-based Noor Takaful; Jaiz Bank's Takaful subsidiary; Salam Takaful Insurance Company; and Cornerstone Takaful Insurance Company.

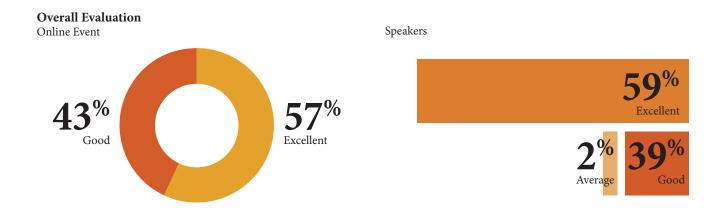
Asset management

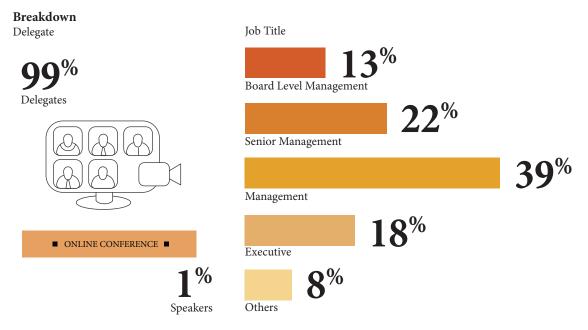
Nigeria is home to fully-fledged Islamic investment manager Lotus Capital, which launched the country's only Shariah compliant index in collaboration with the Nigerian Stock Exchange in 2012. The fund manager introduced the Lotus Halal Equity ETF (exchange-traded fund) in 2014, the first Islamic ETF in Nigeria, and in 2016 rolled out the Lotus Halal Fixed Income Fund. Stanbic IBTC Asset Management, ARM Investment Managers, Kord Capital and Marble Capital all offer Islamic solutions.

In 2020, FBNQuest Asset Management, a subsidiary of FBN Holdings, launched its FBN Halal Fund, followed by United Capital debuting its Sukuk Fund, an open-ended mutual fund. In early 2021, financial services group Norrenberger also launched its openended mutual Islamic fund, to be followed by a second Shariah fund by December 2021. Meanwhile, the Pension Fund Operators Association of Nigeria announced its plans to establish an Islamic pension fund by the first half of 2021.

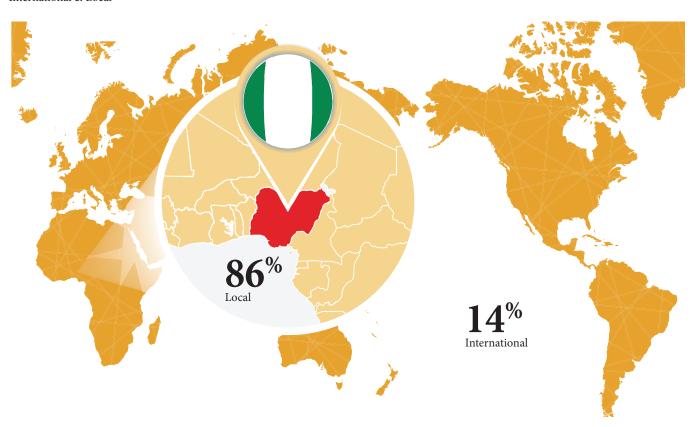
Outlook

Nigeria's Islamic finance and banking industry, while nascent, enjoys rapidly evolving regulatory and supervisory structures that support its growth. Even more potential lies in the country's large Muslim population making up almost half of the entire nation's population, as well as the government's interest in the Islamic capital market to address its large financing requirements.



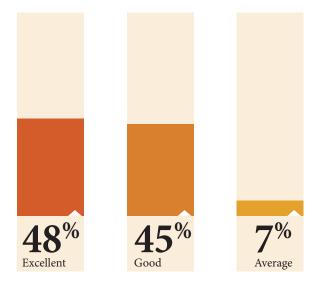


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Session Evaluation

System Restart: Islamic Finance in Nigeria



Delegates Who Would Like to Attend IFN Nigeria OnAir Roadshow 2022







1%

Viewership



640



66

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