



ROLE OF PENSION SECRETARIAT IN BOARD OPERATIONS



Role of Pension Secretariat in Board Operations

Aligning governance support with Kenya's regulatory standards





Definition & Purpose

Administrative engine supporting trustees and sustaining day-to-day scheme operations.

Mandate & Governance

Anchored in transparency and accountability; aligns with global governance norms.

Core Responsibilities

Documentation, meetings, stakeholder communication, compliance tracking, and trustee support.

Kenyan Context (RBA)

RBA standards emphasize clear administration and structured trustee support.

Ecosystem Coordination

Connects trustees with administrators, custodians, and fund managers for seamless delivery.

Retirement Benefits Act (1997)

Establishes the RBA and the legal basis for scheme setup, governance, supervision, and administration; defines trustee appointments, duties, and liabilities.

Good Governance Guidelines

Prescribe codes of conduct, risk management, communication policies, transparency standards, and conflict-of-interest protocols for schemes.

Implications for the Secretariat

Drives robust documentation, compliance monitoring, and member communication—aligning operations to protect members and enhance effectiveness.



Core Principles

Accountability, transparency, integrity, and protection of stakeholders guide effective schemes.

Operational Enablers

Robust administration for accurate reporting, timely decisions, clear communication, and risk control.

Secretariat's Role

Embed principles by informing trustees, documenting processes, and upholding internal controls.

Kenya Alignment

RBA governance guidelines mirror global norms, supporting compliant, effective boards.





Board Processes & Documentation

Prepare high-quality board papers, structured packs, and timely information for sound decisions.

Meeting Coordination

Schedule trustee meetings, set agendas, collate provider reports, and distribute materials.

Records & Compliance

Maintain minutes and statutory records to meet transparency and accountability expectations.

Outcomes for the Board

Reduce operational risk and enable trustees to focus on investment, compliance, and risk.

Secretariat Role: Compliance Support



Compliance is a critical aspect of pension scheme management, and the secretariat plays an indispensable role in ensuring ongoing adherence to laws, guidelines, and regulations. In Kenya, the RBA enforces strict compliance requirements to safeguard member interests, prevent mismanagement, and reduce operational and investment risks.

Core responsibilities

Tracking regulatory deadlines, coordinating audits, ensuring timely filings, and maintaining compliance registers.

Regulatory alignment

Supporting trustees during inspections and ensuring actions align with the Retirement Benefits Act, Good Governance Guidelines, and RBA updates.

Global good practice

Emphasizing proactive risk identification and adherence to internal policies, consistent with Kenya's governance framework.



Secretariat Role: Communication Management



Purpose

Enable timely, accurate flow of information among trustees, providers, regulators, and members.

Key responsibilities

Prepare official correspondence, issue member notices, coordinate service provider engagements, and brief trustees on emerging issues.

Governance standards

Open, transparent communication underpins trust and aligns with global and Kenyan good governance guidelines.

Outcomes

Clear decisions, consistent reporting, and stronger stakeholder confidence in scheme operations.

Secretariat Role: Risk Management Support



Why it matters

Risk management underpins pension governance—protecting members and stabilizing scheme operations.

Frameworks and standards

Guidelines call for structured risk registers, internal controls, and audit processes.

Global expectations

Proactive oversight spans investment, operational, regulatory, and cybersecurity risks.

Secretariat in action

Facilitates risk assessments, coordinates audits, documents mitigations, and delivers timely reports to trustees.

Outcome

Stronger stability and better, informed trustee decisions.



Secretariat Role: Investment Oversight Support



Core Support

Delivers timely, accurate reports to trustees and monitors actions.

Compliance with Limits

Ensures investments align with regulatory asset allocation thresholds.

Committee Coordination

Schedules meetings, tracks performance, and prepares decision packs.

Transparency & Governance

Supports global standards for accountability and robust oversight.



Core Secretariat Responsibilities

Prepare agendas and board packs, take accurate minutes, track action points, and follow up on outstanding matters.

Governance Significance

Structured meeting management underpins sound pension governance globally, ensuring clear decisions and reliable documentation.

Kenya: Compliance Context

RBA guidelines require accurate records and transparent decision-making; disciplined meeting practices help trustees stay compliant.

Outcomes for the Board

Enhanced governance continuity and more efficient, well-documented deliberations.



Regulatory expectations

RBA mandates formal certification and ongoing training to uphold fiduciary standards.

Secretariat role

Identify needs, coordinate schedules, maintain records, and ensure RBA compliance.

Global good practice

Continuous professional development strengthens board effectiveness and alignment with industry trends.



Scope of Monitoring

Assess objectives across investment results, governance effectiveness, and provider efficiency.

Secretariat's Role

Compile performance reports, track KPIs, coordinate audits, and prepare evaluation summaries.

Regulatory & Global Standards

Regular reviews are expected globally; in Kenya, RBA mandates audits and compliance checks.

Outcome

Strengthens trustee oversight and pinpoints areas for improvement.





Transparency & Accountability

OECD-aligned principles ensure clear reporting, roles, and stakeholder trust.

Prudent Investment & Risk Oversight

Disciplined strategies and robust controls safeguard assets across cycles.

Framework Design & Execution

Global benchmarks guide policies, decision rights, and performance monitoring.

Alignment with Kenyan Standards

Harmonization strengthens credibility and assures responsible fund management.

Kenya-Specific Governance Requirements



Regulatory framework

Retirement Benefits Act and Good Governance Guidelines set rules for trustees, service providers, conflicts, and reporting.

Trustee and fiduciary duties

Trustees act in members' best interests, manage conflicts, and ensure prudent, compliant decision-making.

Service providers

Custodians safeguard assets; administrators handle day-to-day operations under documented mandates.

Transparency and protection

Clear roles, reporting, and oversight enhance governance quality and protect member interests.





Coordination Hub

Links trustees with administrators, custodians, actuaries, and fund managers to align timelines and deliverables.

Compliance Steward

Ensures service providers meet Kenya's regulatory duties and contractual obligations.

Informed Decision Support

Delivers accurate, timely reports so trustees can make sound governance decisions.

Global Benchmark

Integrated coordination is widely recognized as a hallmark of effective pension governance.

Ethical conduct in governance

Trustees and providers carry fiduciary duties; adherence to codes and ethics is mandatory.

Conflict-of-interest controls

Register conflicts, disclose timely, and apply recusal to safeguard decisions.

Secretariat's role

Maintain conflict registers, document disclosures, and monitor policy compliance.

Global outcome

Strong ethics reduce risk, build trust, and protect member interests.



Rising digital exposure

Schemes face higher risks from breaches, cyberattacks, and system vulnerabilities.

Global expectations

Pension funds are expected to enforce robust controls and cybersecurity policies.

Kenya governance focus

Guidelines emphasize data protection and cyber risk awareness in scheme oversight.

Secretariat's role

Secure records handling, coordination of IT audits, and scheme-wide data protocols.



Case Study: Improvements in Kenya's Pension Governance



Stronger Governance & Oversight

RBA reforms clarified fiduciary duties, tightened risk controls, and embedded accountability across schemes.

Supervision, Compliance & Education

Enhanced inspections, stronger enforcement, and public education improved transparency and trust.

Investment Modernization & Member Security

Updated guidelines improved portfolio quality, reduced mismanagement, and safeguarded member benefits.

Role of the Secretariat

Operationalizes reforms daily, sustaining compliance culture and member-focused service.



Digitization and data transparency

Technology streamlines administration, improves reporting accuracy, and elevates real-time visibility for stakeholders.

Sustainability-focused investing

Schemes integrate ESG factors to manage long-term risk and align portfolios with societal objectives.

Enhanced regulatory oversight

Global reforms are raising governance standards through clearer rules, stronger reporting, and risk controls.

Member engagement and literacy

Digital tools personalize communications, improving decisions and trust in retirement outcomes.





Strategic Role of Secretariat

Strengthens board operations, governance, compliance, risk oversight, and overall scheme performance.

Trustee Actions

Leverage the secretariat strategically, invest in continuous capacity building, and align governance to global best practice and Kenya's regulations.

Outcomes

Greater transparency, improved sustainability, and enhanced member protection through effective collaboration.



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