



Guidelines for Clearance of
IT PROJECTS
for Federal Public Institutions

2024

1.0 PREAMBLE

In response to the dynamic landscape of technology and the evolving needs of public governance, these revised guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for the clearance of Information Technology (IT) projects within Federal Public Institutions (FPIs).

The revised guidelines ensure a coordinated, standardized, and orderly approach to deploying IT systems by FPIs. FPIs are required to obtain clearance from the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) for their IT projects.

2.0 AUTHORITY

These guidelines are issued pursuant to section 6 of the NITDA Act 2007 which mandates the Agency to do the following, among others:

- i. create a framework for the planning, research, development, standardization, application, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and regulation of Information Technology practices, activities and systems in Nigeria and all matters related thereto and for that purpose;
- ii. develop guidelines for electronic governance and monitor the use of electronic data interchange and other forms of electronic communication transactions as an alternative to paper-based methods in government, commerce, education, the private and public sectors, labour, and other fields, where the use of electronic communication may improve the exchange of data and information;
- iii. render advisory services in all information technology matters to the public and private sectors; and
- iv. perform such other duties, which in the opinion of the Agency are necessary or expedient to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of the Agency under the NITDA Act.

3.0 TITLE AND COMMENCEMENT

The title for these guidelines is 'Guidelines for Clearance of Information Technology (IT) Projects by Federal Public Institutions (FPIs)' and shall come into effect when issued by NITDA.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- a. Information Technology (IT):** Encompasses all forms of technology used to create, store, process, transmit, and use information in its various forms.
- b. Information Technology (IT) Projects:** Any governmental activity relating to information technology which involves direct or indirect costs and includes the creation/development, acquisition, and/or distribution of IT products, applications, and services.
- c. Federal Public Institutions (FPIs):** Any organization established or owned by the Federal Government in Nigeria.
- d. IT Project Clearance Compliance Assurance Process:** A process established by NITDA to license qualified IT firms to provide technical guidance to FPIs for the implementation of the IT Project Clearance process.
- e. Licensed IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firm:** Otherwise referred to as Compliance Assurance Firm in this document are firms licensed by NITDA to provide IT project assessment and technical guidance services in alignment with NITDA's guidelines.
- f. Quality Assurance Assessment:** Assessment carried out by NITDA for FPIs' IT projects costing one billion naira (N1,000,000,000) and above or equivalent.

5.0 SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all IT projects undertaken by FPIs, including but not limited to the development, implementation, enhancement, or retirement of IT systems, applications, infrastructure, and services. They are intended to be applicable to projects of varying scale, complexity, and duration, across all FPIs. Section 6.7 specifies relevant thresholds for requiring IT projects clearance as applicable.

6.0 GUIDELINES

FPIs shall obtain approval from NITDA for all their IT projects. This approval will be granted following an assessment process involving a Licensed IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firm. NITDA shall ensure that all submissions meet the requisite guidelines.

6.1 Responsibilities of FPIs

FPIs shall:

- a. Select a firm from NITDA's list of Licensed IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firm.
- b. Engage the firm to conduct an assessment and provide technical and regulatory guidance. These include but not limited to the following:
 - i. Justification and Deliverables;
 - ii. System Integration/Interoperability;
 - iii. Preference for Indigenous Content; and
 - iv. Adherence to Relevant Regulations and Guidelines.
- c. Submit via their selected Compliance Assurance Firm, the project proposal, assessment report, technical guidance and all relevant documentations to NITDA through the IT Project Clearance (ITPC) portal.

6.2 Responsibilities of NITDA

NITDA shall:

- a. Maintain a list Licensed IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firm;
- b. Review submissions from FPIs who have undergone the assessment process, taking into account the following:
 - i. Organizational Mandates;
 - ii. Minimization of Project Duplication;
 - iii. System Integration/Interoperability;
 - iv. Preference for Indigenous Content; and
 - v. Adherence to Relevant Regulations and Guidelines.
- c. Ensure that submissions meet the requisite guidelines;
- d. reserves the right to conduct further evaluation and engage the FPI directly, if necessary; and
- e. issue approval and clearance certificate.

6.3 Timeframes

Upon receipt of the clearance request, NITDA shall evaluate the submission within 10 working days. Upon completion of the evaluation, a clearance decision shall be issued, approving or rejecting the project proposal based on adherence to requisite technical and regulatory guidelines as stated in section 6.1.

Where there is a need for further clarification on FPI's IT Project, NITDA shall request additional information to be submitted within 3-5 working days via the NITDA ITPC portal or designated email address. FPIs are expected to work with their selected Compliance Assurance Firm to provide the information in a timely manner. Where the FPI fails to provide further information within the stipulated time, NITDA reserves the right to reject the project.

6.4 Quality Assurance Assessment

There shall be a Quality Assurance (QA) assessment for projects costing one (1) billion naira and above or its equivalent. All projects requiring Quality Assurance Certification shall be initiated upon confirmation of the project completion by the FPI before project closure. FPIs are mandated to notify NITDA via the ITPC portal or designated email address that the project is completed and ready for closure and QA assessment within 7 working days of completion. Non-compliance to the quality assurance directive risks applicable sanctions.

6.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

There shall be from time-to-time oversight conducted to ensure the assessment of the IT project performance. This is to measure effective progress and identify areas of improvement. By so doing, FPIs can enhance transparency, accountability, and ultimately the success of their IT initiatives.

6.6 Quality Assurance and Monitoring & Evaluation Assessments Responsibilities

a) FPIs Shall:

- i. Provide timely and accurate project data and documentation to NITDA;
- ii. Actively participate in oversight activities conducted by NITDA;
- iii. Where applicable, set-up steering and technical committees for the implementation of the project involving NITDA and other relevant stakeholders;
- iv. Make a provision from the project cost for the QA and M&E processes;
- v. Implement recommendations arising from the oversight process; and
- vi. Ensure compliance with project objectives and timelines.

b) NITDA shall

- i. Provide oversight guidelines and standards;
- ii. Assess submitted project data and documentation and provide feedback;
- iii. Schedule and conduct QA and M&E inspection visits;
- iv. Document QA and M&E findings, and provide recommendation to FPIs; and
- v. Issue QA certificate to FPIs where applicable.

6.7 Thresholds

The thresholds for requiring IT projects clearance and Quality Assurance Certificates shall be based on the following tiers:

S/N	Category	Range (in Naira)	Clearance Requirement	Quality Assurance	M&E
a.	Tier 1	1,000,000,000 and above	Yes	Yes	Yes
b.	Tier 2	10,000,000 – 999,999,999	Yes	No	Yes
c.	Tier 3	0 – 9,999,999	No	No	No

7.0 COMPLIANCE

All FPIs engaged in the execution of IT projects are mandated to undergo an assessment process conducted by Licensed IT Project Compliance Assurance Firms. This assessment process is aimed at ensuring compliance with established standards, guidelines, and best practices in IT project implementation.

8.0 BREACH

Any breach of these Guidelines is a criminal offence under Section 17 of the NTDA Act 2007.

9.0 ENFORCEMENT

NITDA shall enforce compliance with the provisions of these Guidelines in accordance with section 18 of the NITDA Act 2007 that stipulates appropriate penalties.

10.0 REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

These Guidelines shall be reviewed and amended accordingly, from time to time.