



**GUIDELINES FOR LICENSING
IT PROJECTS CLEARANCE
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE
FIRMS
2026**

**Issued by the National Information Technology
Development Agency**

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<p>1.0 This Guideline shall be described as the 'Guidelines for Licensing IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firms'.</p>	LONG TITLE
<p>2.0 This Guideline may also be cited as the 'IT Projects Clearance Licensing Guidelines'.</p>	SHORT TITLE
<p>3.0 The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) is committed to ensuring that Licensed IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firms operate in accordance with established standards and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>These guidelines aim to provide a coordinated and standardized approach for licensing firms in compliance with the Guidelines for Clearance of Information Technology (IT) Projects by Federal Public Institutions (FPIs) 2026.</p>	EXPLANATORY NOTE
<p>4.0 These guidelines are issued pursuant to:</p> <p>a. Section 6 of the NITDA Act 2007 which mandates the Agency to do the following, among others:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">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;</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">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;</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">iii. render advisory services in all information technology matters to the public and private sectors; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">iv. perform such other duties, which in the</p>	AUTHORITY

opinion of the Agency are necessary or expedient to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of the Agency under the NITDA Act.

- b. Guidelines for Clearance of IT Projects by Federal Public Institutions (FPIs) [as amended] 2026.

5.0 The title for this guideline is '**Guidelines for Licensing IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firms**' and shall come into effect when issued by NITDA.

COMMENCEMENT

- 6.0**
- a. **Advanced Competencies:** competence that can be proven through requisite experience, academic qualification or professional certification.
 - b. **Information Technology (IT):** Encompasses all forms of technology used to create, store, process, transmit, and use information in its various forms.
 - c. **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.
 - d. **Federal Public Institutions (FPIs):** Any organization established or owned by the Federal Government in Nigeria.
 - e. **Licensed IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firm:** Otherwise referred to as Compliance Assurance Firm in this document are firms licensed by NITDA to support FPIs in designing their IT projects, providing technical guidance and conducting Quality Assurance assessments in alignment with NITDA's guidelines and other relevant standards and regulations.
 - f. **IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Process:** A process established by NITDA to license qualified IT firms to provide assessment and technical guidance to FPIs for

DEFINITIONS

the IT Projects Clearance Process.

- g. **Quality Assurance Assessment:** Assessment carried out by Compliance Assurance Firms and supervised by NITDA for all FPIs IT projects throughout the project life cycle.
- h. **Verifiable Regulatory Records (Artefacts):** These are structured, evidence-based compliance records generated by Licensed IT Project Clearance Compliance Assurance Firms and submitted through the NITDA ITPC Portal.

7.0 These guidelines outline the requirements and procedures for licensing Compliance Assurance Firms in Nigeria. The aim is to ensure that these firms operating in Nigeria have the necessary expertise and resources to provide effective IT assessment and compliance services.

SCOPE

- 8.0**
- a. Establish a pool of qualified firms to support IT projects assessment and technical guidance for FPIs;
 - b. Enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of NITDA's IT Projects Clearance process;
 - c. Promote compliance with NITDA's guidelines and best practices for IT projects; and
 - d. Foster a market for professional IT audit and advisory services in Nigeria.

PURPOSE

9.0 All Compliance Assurance Firms conducting **IT Projects proposal assessment** shall:

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE FIRMS

- a. Comply with NITDA Regulatory Instruments, National Laws and Adopted International Standards as listed in section 18.0;
- b. Ensure that every IT Project Design produces Verifiable Regulatory Records (artefacts) capable of independent audit by NITDA;
- c. Submit to the FPI a detailed pre-assessment report for essence of IT Projects Clearance in accordance with the Operational Manual and Code of Conduct for NITDA Licensed IT Compliance Assurance Firms document; and

- d. Submit through the ITPC portal, the compliance evidence for each IT project design showing applicable Verifiable Regulatory Records (artefacts) for NITDA's assessment and clearance. These include but not limited to:
 - i. Regulatory Compliance Matrix;
 - ii. Risk and Non-Conformance Register;
 - iii. Standards Conformance Report;
 - iv. Indigenous Content and Local Capacity Report; and
 - v. Cybersecurity and Data Protection Compliance Report.

Similarly, all Compliance Assurance Firms conducting **Quality Assurance Assessment** shall:

- a. Comply with all relevant standards and regulations as listed in section 18.0;
- b. Ensure that each IT project being implemented is compliant with NITDA clearance conditions issued for the project;
- c. Not execute Quality Assurance Assessment on a project it is implementing but engage a separate Compliance Assurance Firm for that purpose; and
- d. Submit to NITDA, Quality Assurance assessment reports that cover the entire IT project life cycle.

10.0 This licensing process outlines the requirements and procedures for Compliance Assurance Firms to demonstrate their competence and capability in delivering IT project compliance services, as mandated by NITDA.

- 10.1**
 - a. Firm must be registered with NITDA as an Indigenous ICT Company;
 - b. Firm must maintain Licensed IT professionals as outlined in **Section 11.0**;
 - c. Firm must adhere to the standards as stated in **Section 15.0**; and
 - d. Firm must submit annual reports and undergo

LICENSING PROCESS FOR COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE FIRMS

Licensing Requirements

surveillance audits.

- 10.2** Submit application form and required documents:
- a. Company profile;
 - b. Certificates (e.g. CISA, CISM, CISSP);
 - c. Proof of company registration with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and NITDA; and
 - d. Pay application fee.

Stage 1: Pre-Assessment

- 10.3** NITDA conducts a documentation review of firm's submissions and firms may be required to submit additional documents where necessary. NITDA may also conduct on-site assessments to further evaluate firm's capabilities before issuance of NITDA License.

Stage 2: Documentation Review

- 10.4** Upon meeting all the necessary requirements, NITDA issues licenses to qualified firms, subject to compliance with provisions of these guidelines.

Stage 3: License Issuance

11.0 a. Technical Expertise

QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

- i. **Core Areas:** Systems Architecture, Enterprise Architecture, Software Development and Testing, Networking, Cloud Technologies, Cybersecurity, IT Governance, IT Project Management, Hardware Testing, Data Centre Management, IT systems Audits, Security Audits, IT Project Risk Assessments, IT compliance Audits, Legal IT Expertise, Regulations, Public Policy Analysis and Development, Public Procurement.
- ii. **Optional Specializations:** Sector-specific knowledge (health-care, finance, etc.), specific frameworks (agile, ITIL), specific technologies or vendor solutions. Recognized certifications like CISA, CISSP, ITIL, PMP, etc., depending on the desired tier.

b. Professionalism and Ethics

All firms are expected to have membership of professional bodies demonstrating commitment to ethics and standards.

12.0 Compliance Assurance Firms will be accredited at one of three tiers. The criterion for each tier is specified as follows:

**TIERED
ACCREDITATION**

12.1 a. Team Composition

Tier 1

- i. Core IT team with Advanced Competencies in at least ten (10) domains as stated in **Section 11.0**;
- ii. Experienced project management team with proven leadership capabilities; and
- iii. Demonstrate ability to lead and manage complex IT projects.

b. Experience

- i. Minimum of Fifteen (15) years cumulative experience working on IT projects or related services; and
- ii. Successful participation in at least Five (5) large-scale IT projects.

c. Project Cost

Must have handled projects exceeding One Hundred and Fifty (₦150,000,000.00) million Naira.

12.2 a. Team Composition

Tier 2

- i. Core IT team with Advance Competencies in at least Five (5) domains as stated in **Section 11.0**; and
- ii. At least one experienced project manager.

b. Experience

- i. Minimum of Ten (10) years cumulative experience working on IT projects or related services; and
- ii. Successful participation in Five (5) medium-scale IT projects.

c. Project Cost

Must have handled projects worth up to Fifty

(₦50,000,000.00) million Naira.

12.3 a. Team Composition

Tier 3

- i. Core IT team with Advance Competencies in at least Two (2) domains as stated in **Section 11.0**; and
- ii. At least One experienced project manager.

b. Experience

- i. Minimum of Five (5) years cumulative experience working on IT projects or related services; and
- ii. Successful participation in at least Three (3) medium-scale IT projects.

c. Project Cost

Must have handled projects with cumulative worth of up to Twenty (₦20,000,000.00) million Naira.

NITDA shall determine the appropriate tier for a firm. Firms that also wish to upgrade to a higher tier shall submit a fresh application that meets the requirements of the targeted tier.

13.0 There shall be an established fee structure for the license process, including application, license and renewal. All fees are non-refundable.

FEES

a. **Application Fees:** ₦100,000.00.

b. **License Fees:**

- i. Tier 1: ₦20,000,000.00.
- ii. Tier 2: ₦10,000,000.00.
- iii. Tier 3: ₦2,000,000.00.

c. **Annual Appraisal Fees:**

- i. Tier 1: ₦7,500,000.00
- ii. Tier 2: ₦4,500,000.00
- iii. Tier 3: ₦1,000,000.00

13.1 The validity of a license issued to Compliance Assurance Firms shall be for two years from the date of issuance.

License Validity

The validity period is designed to ensure that only organizations that continue to meet the required standards of competence, compliance and operational integrity are permitted to operate within the ecosystem.

14.0 NITDA shall maintain and publish a comprehensive list of Compliance Assurance Firms following the fulfilment of requirements and licensing processes.

COMPREHENSIVE LIST

NITDA shall delist any firm from the comprehensive list that violates the code of conduct and/or does not meet the performance requirements based on the annual appraisal.

15.0 Compliance Assurance Firms shall:

STANDARDS

- a. Maintain objectivity and avoid conflicts of interest;
- b. Protect sensitive project and government data; and
- c. Deliver assessment reports and technical guidance that meet NITDA's requirements.

16.0 NITDA shall mandate a supervised reassessment of specific projects (where necessary).

REASSESSMENT

17.0 a. NITDA shall establish a process for receiving and investigating complaints regarding the conduct of Compliance Assurance Firms.

COMPLAINTS, SANCTIONS, AND APPEALS

b. Violations of standards, including breaches of confidentiality, conflicts of interest, misrepresentation, or substandard work, may result in the following sanctions:

- i. Warnings;
- ii. Suspension of License;
- iii. Revocation of License;
- iv. Financial Penalties; and/or

- v. Legal Action (as applicable under Nigerian law).
- c. NITDA reserves the right to publicly disclose sanctions imposed on Compliance Assurance Firms to protect the integrity of the IT Projects Clearance process.
- d. Compliance Assurance Firms facing sanctions may appeal the decision to an independent body appointed by NITDA or a redress panel set up by NITDA, subject to the following:
 - i. Appeals must be filed in writing within 2 weeks of receiving notice of the sanction, after which any such appeal will not be accepted; and
 - ii. The appeals body will review the case, may conduct its own investigation, and will issue a final decision to uphold, modify, or reverse the sanction.

18.0 The following regulatory instruments should be adhered to by Compliance Assurance Firms when conceptualizing IT projects for FPIs:

- 18.1**
- a. NITDA Act 2007;
 - b. Guidelines for Clearance of IT Projects by Federal Public Institutions (2026);
 - c. Guidelines for Licensing IT Projects Clearance Compliance Assurance Firms (2026);
 - d. Nigeria Government Enterprise Architecture (NGEA);
 - e. Nigeria e-Government Interoperability Framework, 2019 (Ne-GIF);
 - f. NITDA Cybersecurity Framework;
 - g. National Cloud Computing Policy;
 - h. NITDA Software Testing and Certification Framework; and
 - i. Guidelines for Nigerian Content Development in ICT 2019.

18.2 a. Bureau of Public Procurement Act 2007;

ANNEXURE

NITDA Regulatory Instruments

National Laws

- b. Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023;
- c. Fiscal Responsibility Act;
- d. Freedom of Information Act;
- e. National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS);
- f. National Cybersecurity Policy;
- g. Nigeria First Policy; and
- h. Federal Government's Executive Orders 003 and 005.

- 18.3**
- a. ISO/IEC 27001 (Information Security Management);
 - b. ISO/IEC 20000 (IT Service Management);
 - c. ISO 22301 (Business Continuity Management);
 - d. ISO/IEC 38500 (IT Governance);
 - e. ISO/IEC 900:2015 (Quality Management System);
 - f. COBIT (Control Objectives for Information and Related Technologies);
 - g. ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library); and
 - h. NIST Cybersecurity Framework.

**Adopted
International
Standards** (*where
applicable*)

Made at Abuja this 10 Day of April 2026

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