



HOW TO OBTAIN A FILM DISTRIBUTION LICENSE IN NIGERIA

Description

If you are an aspiring film distributor or an established company looking to distribute films legally in Nigeria, obtaining a **Film Distribution License** is a mandatory step governed by Nigerian law. This license ensures that your distribution activities comply with the Nigerian National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) regulations, safeguarding intellectual property rights and maintaining quality control in the Nigerian film industry.

This comprehensive guide will walk you through the **exact process, requirements, costs, and procedures** to obtain a Film Distribution License in Nigeria based on the official NFVCB guidelines. Whether you want to distribute Nigerian Nollywood movies or foreign films, this article covers everything you need to know, helping you to navigate the process smoothly and legally.

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1. What is a Film Distribution License?

A **Film Distribution License** authorises individuals or companies to distribute films (feature films, documentaries, shorts, etc.) within Nigerian territory legally. This license is issued by the **National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB)**, the regulatory body responsible for regulating the production, distribution, exhibition, and importation of films in Nigeria.

Without this license, distributing films in Nigeria is illegal and may attract severe penalties, including fines and imprisonment.

2. Why is a Film Distribution License Necessary in Nigeria?

- **Legal Compliance:** Ensures compliance with Nigerian film laws and regulations.
- **Censorship Approval:** Films distributed must be certified for public viewing.
- **Intellectual Property Protection:** Safeguards against piracy and unauthorised distribution.
- **Quality Control:** Maintains the standard and appropriateness of film content.
- **Market Credibility:** Licensed distributors gain trust from cinemas, producers, and consumers.

3. Regulatory Authority for Film Distribution License in Nigeria

The **National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB)**, established under the National Film and Video Censors Board Act Cap N147 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, is the authorised government agency responsible for issuing Film Distribution Licenses in Nigeria.

- **Official Website:** <https://nfvcb.gov.ng>

The NFVCB ensures all film distributors comply with the set standards before granting licenses.

4. Step-by-Step Process to Obtain a Film Distribution License in Nigeria

Step	Description	Details
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Step 1	Visit NFVCB Office or Official Website	Obtain the license application form from NFVCB headquarters or download it from the official website.
Step 2	Fill Out Application Form	Provide all necessary details, including company information, films intended for distribution, and prior experience.
Step 3	Prepare and Attach Required Documents	Attach all required supporting documents (see Requirements section below).
Step 4	Pay the Application Fee	Pay the prescribed application and licensing fees through NFVCB approved channels.
Step 5	Submit Application	Submit the completed form and all documents at the NFVCB office or via the online portal (if available).
Step 6	Application Review & Verification	NFVCB reviews documents, may request additional info or conduct an inspection of your business premises.
Step 7	License Approval & Issuance	Upon successful verification and approval, the Film Distribution License is issued.
Step 8	Display License & Begin Distribution	Display your license in your business premises and begin legal film distribution.

5. Requirements & Documents Needed for the Application

Applicants must submit the following documents as per NFVCB's official guidelines:

Document	Description
Completed Application Form	Filled and signed license application form.
Company Registration Certificate	Certificate of Incorporation from the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).
Tax Clearance Certificate	Evidence of tax compliance from the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).
Passport Photographs	Recent passport-sized photographs of Directors and key management personnel.

Document	Description
Valid Identification	National ID Card, International Passport, or Driver's License of directors/owners.
Business Premises Evidence	Proof of business address such as a lease agreement or utility bill.
Curriculum Vitae (CV) of Key Personnel	CVs showing experience in film distribution or related fields.
Evidence of Payment	Receipt showing payment of the application and licensing fees.
Detailed Business Plan	Outline of distribution activities and marketing strategy.
Film Catalogue	List of films intended for distribution, including licenses from producers or rights holders.

Note: All documents must be submitted in original or certified true copies.

6. Cost of Obtaining a Film Distribution License

The NFVCB stipulates various fees associated with licensing. Below is a breakdown of costs as per the official website and latest notices:

Fee Type	Amount (₦)	Description
Application Fee	50,000	Non-refundable fee for processing the application.
Annual Licensing Fee	300,000	Fee for the issuance of the Film Distribution License valid for one year.
Inspection Fee	120,000 or more	Charged if an on-site verification or inspection is required.
Renewal Fee	250,000	Fee to renew the Film Distribution License annually.

Important: All payments must be made to the NFVCB official accounts or approved channels to avoid fraud.

7. Processing Time and Validity of the License

- **Processing Time:** Typically, it takes **2 to 4 weeks** from the date of submission for the NFVCB to review and issue the Film Distribution License.
- **Validity:** The license is valid for **one year** and must be renewed annually before expiration.
- **Renewal:** Renewal requires re-submission of a renewal application and payment of the renewal fee.

8. Renewing a Film Distribution License in Nigeria

To renew your Film Distribution License:

Step	Action
1	Obtain the renewal application form from NFVCB or their website.
2	Fill and submit the form along with proof of business operations.
3	Pay the renewal fee of ₦250,000.
4	Submit all documents before the current license expires to avoid penalties.
5	Await confirmation and issuance of the renewed license.

9. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1: Can I distribute films in Nigeria without a Film Distribution License?

A: No. Distributing films without a license from NFVCB is illegal and may lead to penalties including fines, seizure of materials, and possible prosecution.

Q2: Is the Film Distribution License transferable?

A: No. The license is issued to the named individual or company and cannot be transferred without official approval from NFVCB.

Q3: How long does the Film Distribution License last?

A: It is valid for one year and must be renewed annually.

Q4: Can foreigners obtain a Film Distribution License in Nigeria?

A: Yes, foreigners can apply but must comply with all legal requirements, including registering a Nigerian company if required.

Q5: Is the license only for distributing Nollywood films?

A: No, the license covers both local and foreign films intended for distribution in Nigeria.

Q6: What happens if my application is rejected?

A: You will be notified with reasons and may reapply after addressing the deficiencies.

10. Common Misconceptions About Film Distribution Licensing in Nigeria

Misconception	Reality
You don't need a license if distributing online only.	Online distribution in Nigeria also requires a license under NFVCB regulations.
License is just a formality and easy to get without meeting requirements.	NFVCB strictly enforces compliance; failure to meet criteria leads to rejection.
Paying the fee guarantees license approval.	Payment alone does not guarantee approval; all documents and conditions must be met.
Once issued, the license is permanent.	The license must be renewed yearly, or it becomes invalid.
Only companies can apply, individuals cannot.	Both companies and individuals can apply, provided they meet all requirements.

11. Conclusion

Obtaining a **Film Distribution License in Nigeria** is a vital legal step to operate as a film distributor within the country. The **NFVCB** enforces strict guidelines to regulate the industry, protect copyrights, and maintain film standards. Following the **steps outlined** in this guide will ensure your application is successful, and your film distribution business operates legally and professionally.

Make sure to gather all the required documents, pay the correct fees, and submit your application through the official NFVCB channels. Stay updated with NFVCB announcements via their official website or contact their office for clarifications.

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