How to Obtain a Meter Asset Provider (MAP) License in Nigeria

Description

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Securing a **Meter Asset Provider (MAP) license** is a vital step in participating in Nigeria's evolving electricity metering landscape. MAPs enable the private sector to finance, procure, supply, install, maintain, and replace electricity meters on behalf of Distribution Companies (DisCos). The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) regulates and issues MAP licenses to eligible entities. In this in-depth guide, you will learn *exactly* how to become a licensed MAP, including requirements, detailed steps, timelines, costs, and more.

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1. Understanding the MAP License & Its Regulatory Basis

1.1 What Is a MAP License?

A **Meter Asset Provider (MAP)** license grants a company the authority to provide comprehensive metering services, including financing, procurement, supply, installation, maintenance, and replacement of meters for DisCos. NERC grants this as a *permit*, valid per procurement exercise.

According to NERC:

- MAPs are entities granted permits to provide such metering services.
- The license's tenure is **15 years** from issuance by NERC.
- Each permit applies to a specific procurement process; so to work with multiple DisCos or procurement rounds, multiple permits are required.

1.2 Regulatory Instrument

The authoritative regulatory instrument is the **"Meter Asset Provider (MAP) & National Mass Metering Programme (NMMP) Regulations 2021."** This can be downloaded via NERC's Licensing & Authorisation portal.

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The MAP regulatory framework became effective in **March 2018**, and enforceable from **April 3, 2018**. The law aims to:

- Encourage independent and competitive metering services,
- Eliminate estimated billing,
- Attract private investment,
- Close the metering gap in NESI,
- Boost revenue assurance.

2. Eligibility & Requirements for MAP Applicants

To qualify for a MAP permit, applicants must satisfy technical, financial, and organisational criteria as stipulated by NERC.

2.1 Mandatory Documentation

Applicants must submit:

Document	Description
Incorporation Documents	Certificate of Incorporation and Memorandum & Articles of Association (MEMART)
Tax Clearance Certificate	Valid tax compliance certificate
Audited Financial Statements	Certified audited accounts for **three (3) consecutive years** before application year
Resumes of Key Personnel	Detailed CVs of Board, management, and technical staff
Business Plan	Ten-year business plan outlining strategy, financing, operations
Relevant Experience	Proof of experience in asset finance, metering, and related services
Back-Office System Capability	Evidence of technology systems for financial, inventory, customer data, real-time monitoring, ability to interface with DisCos' vending platforms

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2.2 Compliance with Other Regulatory Codes

Applicants must commit to adhering to:

- **Metering Code**
- **Guidelines for Certification of Metering Service Providers**
- Other relevant NERC regulations

2.3 Local Content Requirement

MAPs must source a minimum of **30% of metering volumes from local meter manufacturers**, to support domestic capacity.

3. Step-by-Step Process for Obtaining a MAP License

Here is a streamlined sequence of steps:

Step 1: Due Diligence & “No-Objection” Prequalification

- NERC conducts a due diligence review of your documents.
- If successful, NERC issues a **“No-Objection” certificate**, allowing you to participate in DisCo procurement tenders.

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Step 2: Procurement by DisCo

- DisCos launch procurement via *Expressions of Interest (EoI)* advertised in at least two national newspapers and their website.
- Interested prequalified MAPs submit bids.

Step 3: Bid Evaluation & Award

- DisCo evaluates submissions and awards the successful bidder(s).
- A *Meter Service Agreement (MSA)* and *Service Level Agreement (SLA)* are then executed between the DisCo and MAP.

Step 4: Formal MAP Permit Application

- After winning the bid, submit a formal application to NERC for grant of MAP permit, including all required documents.

Step 5: NERC Evaluation & Permit Grant

- NERC reviews your application for compliance with all statutory, technical, technology, and local content requirements.

- Upon approval, NERC issues the **MAP Permit** (valid for 15 years, specific to that procurement).

Step 6: Execute Agreements & Begin Operations

- After permit issuance:
    - Finalise your MSA and SLA with the DisCo.
    - Deploy metering assets as agreed.
    - Implement service delivery, including maintenance, replacements, and customer service.

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4. Timelines & Fees

4.1 Processing Time

- NERC aims to process MAP permit applications within **3 months**.

4.2 Fees

- Exact fee schedule is part of NERC's publicly available "Schedule of fees (Requirements for License Permits and other Authorisations)" downloadable from the Licensing & Authorisation section.

- Fees generally align with cost recovery and administrative overheads, but since they are subject to updates, refer to the official schedule.

5. Summary Table: MAP Licensing Overview

Component	Details
Regulatory Instrument	MAP & NMMP Regulations 2021 (NERC)
Effective Date	Regulations effective from 8 Mar 2018; enforceable from 3 Apr 2018
Permit Validity	15 years per procurement process
Documentation Required	Incorporation documents, tax clearance, audited accounts, resumes, business plan, experience, system capabilities
Local Content Requirement	To Obtain more than 30% meters from local manufacturers
Process Steps	Prequalification → EoI/Bidding → Permit Application → Permit Grant → Agreements → Deployment
Processing Time	3 months for permit issuance
Fees Structure	Published by NERC in “Schedule of fees…” schedule
Post-Permit Agreements	MSA and SLA with DisCo required
Compliance Requirements	Metering Code, MSP Guidelines, other NERC regulations

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6. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1: What is the difference between a Meter Asset Provider and a Meter Service Provider?
A: A **Meter Asset Provider (MAP)** finances, supplies, installs, maintains, and replaces meters and must be licensed by NERC. A **Meter Service Provider (MSP)**, on the other hand, is certified to **manufacture, supply, vendor, or install** metering systems but does not necessarily engage in financing or ongoing asset management.

Q2: How long is a MAP license valid for?
A: A MAP permit is valid for **15 years** from issuance and is specific to the procurement process it was granted for.

Q3: Can one MAP serve multiple DisCos with a single license?
A: No. Each MAP permit is tied to a particular DisCo procurement process. To serve multiple DisCos or procurement rounds, separate permits must be acquired.

Q4: What local content requirements apply to MAPs?
A: MAPs must source at least **30% of meter volumes from local manufacturers**, promoting domestic industry capacity.

Q5: What happens if a customer's meter breaks?
A: The MAP is obligated to repair or replace a customer's meter within **two (2) working days** at no extra cost, as long as it's within the amortisation period and the damage is not due to the customer's willful action.

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Q6: What are the main goals of the MAP regulation?
A: The Regulation aims to:

- Encourage independent, competitive metering services
- Eliminate estimated billing
- Attract private investment
- Accelerate meter rollout to close coverage gaps
- Enhance revenue assurance for DisCos

7. Common Misconceptions Addressed

1. **Misconception:** *You only need one MAP license to serve the entire country.*
   Reality: MAP permits are **specific to each procurement**; multiple permits are needed across DisCos or projects.

2. **Misconception:** *MAPs can bypass local sourcing rules.*
   Reality: They must procure **at least 30% of meters locally** to meet local content obligations.

3. **Misconception:** *MAP license lasts indefinitely.*
   Reality: Valid for **15 years**, but strictly tied to one procurement action.

4. **Misconception:** *Customers bear the cost of meter replacement during amortisation.*
   Reality: MAPs must repair or replace within **2 working days at no extra cost**, unless damage was willful by customer.

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8. Action Plan / Next Steps

1. **Download the Regulations & Fee Schedule:** Visit NERC's Licensing & Authorisation page and download:
   - **MAP & NMMP Regulations 2021**
   - **Schedule of Fees for License Permits and Authorisations**

2. **Prepare Required Documents:** Gather all required documentation as outlined above.

3. **Apply for Prequalification:** Submit to NERC for due diligence and No-Objection.

4. **Watch for DisCo EoIs:** Monitor newspapers and DisCo websites for tenders.

5. **Bid & Win:** Participate in procurement, secure contract.

6. **Apply for MAP Permit:** Submit application with documentation and procurement proof.

7. **Obtain Permit & Execute Agreements:** Once issued, sign MSA/SLA and begin deployment.

8. **Ensure Compliance:** Maintain local content, deliver customer service, and adhere to required regulatory standards.

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Conclusion

Securing a **Meter Asset Provider (MAP) license** in Nigeria is a structured, transparent process grounded in the NERC's **MAP & NMMP Regulations 2021** and related governance instruments. With meticulous preparation, comprehensive documentation, due diligence, bid participation, and adherence to technical and local content requirements, your organisation can become an approved MAP, playing a critical role in closing the metering gap nationwide.

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