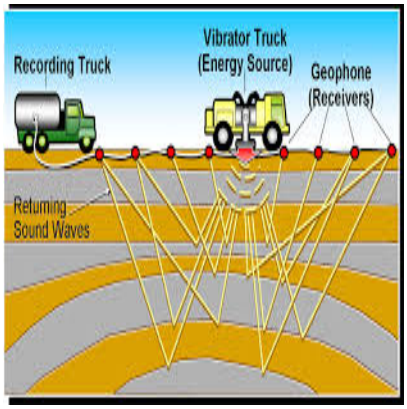

How to Obtain a Seismic Data Acquisition Permit: For Geological Surveys in Nigeria (Official, Step-by-Step Guide)

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Description

What is a Seismic Data Acquisition Permit, and who issues it?

In Nigeria's upstream sector, **seismic (geophysical) data acquisition** is regulated by the **Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC)**. Within NUPRC, the **Exploration & Acreage Management Department (EAM)** is expressly responsible for "issuing permits and approvals for geophysical data acquisition" (i.e., seismic surveys).

NUPRC administers applications and approvals through its online licensing portals (CELPS/ELPS/OGISP). You will file and track requests digitally.

At-a-glance: the process, timing, and costs (read this first)

- **Who applies:** Upstream licensees/lessees and their qualified service providers seeking to carry out seismic (geophysical) surveys. The EAM department handles the permits.

- **Where to apply:** NUPRC's **Central Electronic Licensing and Permit System** (CELPS/ELPS) and, where relevant, the Oil & Gas Industry Service Permit (OGISP) portal.

- **Core fees (NUPRC official 2025 Temporary Fees & Rents Regulations):**

  - **Processing fee for permit on geophysical data acquisition (per survey per block): ₦1,350,000**.

  - Related fees commonly tied to a seismic program include:

    - Processing fee for geophysical data export (per survey per block): **₦625,000**

    - Processing fee for permit on in-country geophysical data processing/reprocessing/specialised processing (per survey per block): **₦1,350,000**

    - Processing fee for permit for processing/reprocessing/specialised processing of geophysical data abroad (per survey per block): **₦1,350,000**

    - **Revalidation of approval** to conduct geophysical data survey (per sample location/program): **₦1,350,000**
      (All amounts and wording above are reproduced from the NUPRC Official Gazette: Upstream Petroleum Fees and Rents (Temporary) Regulations, 2025.)

- **Environmental permission:** NUPRC's **Upstream Petroleum Environmental Regulations, 2022** require an **Environmental Permit for seismic activities before commencement**. Factor this into your critical path.

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- **Service-company permitting (if you are a contractor):** The **OGISP guidelines (2024)** prescribe how service companies obtain the **Oil & Gas Industry Service Permit** (General/Major/Specialised categories), with **statutory fees of ₦5,000 / ₦25,000 / ₦250,000** plus service charges, and a **published processing SLA** (3 working days for most applications).

The full procedure: How to obtain a Seismic Data Acquisition Permit in Nigeria

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Step 1: Confirm you are the right applicant (and assemble your team)

- **Regulatory owner:** NUPRC (EAM Department) "is solely responsible for issuing permits and approvals for geophysical data acquisition." Ensure your organisation is either the **licensee/lessee/operator** of the acreage or a **properly permitted service company** engaged by the operator.

- **If you are a contractor:** Obtain/renew your **Oil & Gas Industry Service Permit (OGISP)** in the appropriate category (often **Specialised**) via the OGISP portal, uploading corporate registrations, TCC, NSITF, profiles/CVs, and relevant professional certifications (e.g., COMEG/COREN where applicable). Fees and document list are enumerated in the official OGISP guideline.

Step 2: Create or access your NUPRC online account(s)

- **CELPS/ELPS** (Central Electronic Licensing & Permit System) login/registration page is the official gateway to digital licensing and permit services. Create your company account, verify it, and maintain accurate corporate info.

- **OGISP** (for service companies): The OGISP guideline confirms all applications must be submitted online via **https://ogisp.nuprc.gov.ng** with a six-step flow (visit site → create profile/login → complete form → make payment → upload documents → submit).

Step 3: Obtain the mandatory Environmental Permit for Seismic Activities

Before you mobilise, NUPRC's **Upstream Petroleum Environmental Regulations (2022)** require **"an Environmental Permit for seismic activities before commencement of Seismic operations in Nigeria."** Build this into your project plan and file on the appropriate NUPRC channel.

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Step 4: Prepare your seismic program dossier for the permit request

At minimum, your request should align with NUPRC's exploration/acreage management oversight and environmental rules. While the Commission publishes the **fees** and **departmental responsibility** explicitly, the **operational submission** typically covers:

- **Survey description** (per survey **per block**, consistent with the fee line item).
- **Operational details** that NUPRC seeks under its Acreage Management & Drilling framework (e.g., **vessel name and type**, area of operation, vessel position/speed during operations, **seismic acquisition parameters** for offshore work).
- **Evidence of environmental compliance** (your seismic Environmental Permit per Step 3).
- **Where contractors are engaged:** the **service company's OGISP permit** details and supporting competence/certification, as OGISP prescribes.

Tip: OGISP requires that **all documents be uploaded online** (PDF/PNG/JPEG), with a size limit and that **payments are valid for 12 months**. NUPRC expects

complete documentation before payment and notes that applications are **processed within 3 working days** (Major/Specialised may take up to two weeks with further verification).

Step 5: File your Seismic Data Acquisition Permit application online

- Submit your request **digitally** via NUPRC's licensing portal (CELPS/ELPS) and attach all supporting documents. Use the portal's **live chat/email** channels listed in OGISP if you need processing support.

- Ensure your **payment remittance** aligns with the exact seismic line item (below). NUPRC's 2025 official fees/gazette lists the **"Processing fee for permit on geophysical data acquisition (per survey per block): ₦1,350,000."**

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Step 6: Address any NUPRC clarifications and secure approval

- OGISP explains NUPRC may return applications for additional documents or information. Once compliant, the permit is granted, recorded on your profile, and becomes visible for verification on the portal.

Step 7: Conduct operations in line with NUPRC regulations

- **Field conduct & reporting:** The Acreage Management, Drilling & Production Regulations require, among other things, that operators provide details of **survey vessels** and **seismic acquisition parameters** during offshore operations. Stay aligned with **good oilfield practice** and applicable safety and environmental regulations.

- **Revalidation (if needed):** Where your approval lapses or scope requires continuation, the fees schedule provides for **Revalidation of approval to conduct geophysical data survey**.

Official fees you should budget (NUPRC 2025 Gazette)

All fees below are taken verbatim from the **Upstream Petroleum Fees and Rents (Temporary) Regulations, 2025** published by NUPRC in the Federal Government Official Gazette. Keep in mind that NUPRC periodically updates fees by regulation; always check the current Gazette.

Purpose (as stated by NUPRC)	Official Fee
Processing fee for permit on geophysical data acquisition (per survey per block)	**₦1,350,000**
Processing fee for **geophysical data export** (per survey per block)	₦625,000
Processing fee for **in-country geophysical data processing, reprocessing, specialised processing** (per survey per block)	₦1,350,000
Processing fee for **processing/reprocessing/specialised processing of geophysical data abroad** (per survey per block)	₦1,350,000
Revalidation of approval to conduct geophysical data survey (per sample location/program)	₦1,350,000

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(Source: NUPRC, Upstream Petroleum Fees & Rents (Temporary) Regulations, 2025.)

Environmental pre-condition: Obtain the **Environmental Permit for seismic activities** before commencement, as mandated by NUPRC's Upstream Petroleum Environmental Regulations (2022).

Documentation checklist (mapped to official NUPRC sources)

Corporate/eligibility

- Evidence that you are the **licensee/lessee/operator** of the block or a **properly permitted service company** engaged by the operator. (EAM issues geophysical permits; OGISP governs service-company permitting.)

Regulatory/technical

- **Survey program** defining scope **per survey per block** (matches fee construct).
- **Operational specifics** for offshore work (vessel name/type; area; position/speed; seismic acquisition parameters), as contemplated by the Acreage Management, Drilling & Production Regulations.
- **Environmental Permit (Seismic)** per the 2022 Environmental Regulations.

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If you are a service company (contractor)

- Valid **OGISP** permit (General/Major/Specialised) obtained via the OGISP portal, including CAC docs, TCC, NSITF, company profile, staff CVs, and any **professional/regulatory certifications** (e.g., COMEG/COREN where applicable)—with **online-only submission** and published fees/SLA.

Where/how to submit—and expected processing time

- **Submission:** NUPRC's **CELPS/ELPS** system for licensing/permits (login/register online). elps.nuprc.gov.ng
- **Service-company permits: OGISP** portal with a 6-step, online-only process (including Remita payments). ogisp.nuprc.gov.ng

- **Processing time:** OGISP guideline states **3 working days** for most applications; **Major/Specialised** may require additional verifications but **not exceed two weeks**. (Apply this expectation when your seismic application involves OGISP-permitted contractors.)

Compliance after approval

- **Operate to NUPRC Safety & Environmental regulations** and **good oilfield practice** (Upstream Petroleum Safety Regulations, 2022).
- **Notify/provide operational data** as required (vessel details and seismic parameters for offshore programs).
- **Data management & export:** If you plan to export or process geophysical data **in-country** or **abroad**, apply for the corresponding approvals and budget the **exact fees** shown above. Also note the broader data governance under the **National Data Repository Regulations (2020).**
- **Revalidation:** Where programs extend or require continued authorisation, use the **Revalidation of Approval to Conduct Geophysical Data Survey** line item.

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End-to-end timeline (typical)

1. **Pre-application:** compile corporate eligibility + contractor OGISP status; outline survey program per block.
2. **Environmental permit:** file for **Seismic Environmental Permit** and secure it ahead of mobilisation.

3. **Online filing:** submit your **Seismic Data Acquisition Permit** request on NUPRC's portal, attach documents, pay the **₦1,350,000** processing fee for the **permit on geophysical data acquisition (per survey per block)**.

4. **Processing:** 3 business days typical (allow up to **two weeks** if additional verifications apply in a Major/Specialised context).

5. **Approval:** download/verify permit in portal; align field execution with safety/environmental regs and any reporting obligations (e.g., vessel/parameter data).

6. **During/after acquisition:** if exporting or processing data, file the corresponding requests and pay the stipulated fees; revalidate approvals if needed.

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Frequently Asked Questions (answered strictly with NUPRC sources)

1) Who exactly issues seismic (geophysical) data acquisition permits in Nigeria?
NUPRC's Exploration & Acreage Management Department. The department page states it is "solely responsible for issuing permits and approvals for geophysical data acquisition."

2) Is there a separate environmental approval for seismic work?
Yes. NUPRC's **Upstream Petroleum Environmental Regulations (2022)** require **an Environmental Permit for seismic activities before commencement**.

3) How much is the NUPRC processing fee for a Seismic Data Acquisition Permit?
Per the **2025 Official Gazette**, the **processing fee for permit on geophysical data acquisition (per survey per block) is ₦1,350,000**. Related geophysical fees (export, in-country/abroad processing, and revalidation) are also listed and commonly apply to a seismic program.

4) Where do I submit my application?
Through NUPRC's online portals. **CELPS/ELPS** is the central licensing/permit system;

OGISP applies to service-company permits with clearly published steps. elps.nuprc.gov.ng ogisp.nuprc.gov.ng

5) How long does processing take?
The OGISP guideline (for service permits) states **3 working days** (with Major/Specialised cases subject to additional verification up to **two weeks**). Use that as a practical guide when seismic applications involve OGISP-permitted contractors.

6) What details could NUPRC require about offshore seismic operations?
The **Acreage Management, Drilling & Production Regulations** require information including **survey vessel name/type**, **area of operation**, **position/speed**, and **seismic acquisition parameters**.

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7) Do I need to revalidate if the seismic program extends?
Yes, NUPRC lists a **Processing fee for Revalidation of Approval to Conduct Geophysical Data Survey**.

8) Are there official rules on data governance and export?
Yes. Beyond specific **export/processing fees** in the 2025 Gazette, the **National Data Repository Regulations (2020)** govern upstream data management in Nigeria.

9) Do broader upstream policies affect permit applications (e.g., decarbonisation)?
NUPRC periodically issues regulations and templates affecting upstream approvals (e.g., fees/rents, commercial rules). Always check current publications on **nuprc.gov.ng** during filing. *(For context on evolving policy emphasis, see industry reporting on NUPRC's decarbonisation template roll-out; confirm current applicability with NUPRC publications.)*

Common misconceptions (and the official position)

"We can start seismic right after payment."
Not quite. The **Environmental Permit for seismic activities must be in place before commencement**. Payment alone does not guarantee issuance, NUPRC requires **complete documentation** and formal approval.

"Only operators can interact with NUPRC; service providers don't need permits."

Incorrect. **Service companies** must obtain an **OGISP** permit in the appropriate category (often **Specialised**) with prescribed documents/fees and **online-only** submission.

“Fees are negotiated.”
No. The Commission publishes official **fees in the Gazette** (e.g., **₦1,350,000** per survey per block for geophysical data acquisition permits) and related geophysical data processing/export fees.

“Environmental and technical approvals are handled offline.”
No. **NUPRC mandates online submissions** via its portals and cautions against physical visits for service permits. Use the **CELPS/ELPS** and **OGISP** channels and their published communication routes.

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Practical templates you can mirror (based on NUPRC’s structure)

A) Seismic Permit Application Cover Note (what to include):

- Programme name, **block(s) and survey type** (2D/3D/OBN/transition zone), **“per survey per block”** scope alignment.
- Survey window, footprint, source/receiver parameters; logistics; HSE summary; environmental permit reference.
- Offshore operations specifics if applicable (vessel name/type; operating area; position/speed data logging; acquisition parameters).
- Contractor details including **OGISP permit** references and competence certifications.

B) Data management & export plan (permissions you may need):

- If you will **process data in-country** → apply under **in-country geophysical processing/reprocessing/specialised processing** (₦1,350,000 per survey per

block).

- If you will **process abroad** → apply under **processing/reprocessing/specialised processing of geophysical data abroad** (₦1,350,000 per survey per block).
- If you will **export data** → apply under **geophysical data export** (₦625,000 per survey per block).
- If the program timeline changes → consider **Revalidation of approval**.

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Full compliance map (what governs your seismic project)

- **Permitting Authority & Scope:** NUPRC **EAM Department** (geophysical data acquisition permits).
- **Submission & Tracking: CELPS/ELPS** (licensing portal), **OGISP** (service permits), all-digital workflow. elps.nuprc.gov.ng ogisp.nuprc.gov.ng
- **Fees: Upstream Petroleum Fees & Rents (Temporary) Regulations, 2025** (Official Gazette).
- **Environment: Upstream Petroleum Environmental Regulations, 2022** (compulsory **Environmental Permit for seismic**).
- **Operational oversight: Acreage Management, Drilling & Production Regulations** (offshore seismic operational information and good practice). nuprc.gov.ng

- **Data governance: National Data Repository Regulations, 2020** (plus explicit export/processing approvals and fees).

Troubleshooting & pro tips (straight from official texts)

- **Upload readiness before payment:** OGISP stresses **have all documents ready** before payment; payments are **valid for 12 months**, non-refundable.
- **Communication & changes:** After submission, you **cannot self-edit** documents; change requests go to **nuprc@nuprc.gov.ng** (cc **celaps@nuprc.gov.ng**, **ogisp@nuprc.gov.ng**) as per OGISP's instructions. ogisp.nuprc.gov.ng
- **Processing SLA:** Plan for **3 working days** where possible; allow **up to two weeks** if additional verifications are required for Major/Specialised.
- **Keep your portal profile current:** OGISP requires **accurate registered/operational addresses, directors, key staff, phone and email**; changes must be promptly communicated (with a small administrative cost).

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Conclusion

If you follow the **official NUPRC pathway,** secure the **Seismic Environmental Permit**, file the **Seismic Data Acquisition Permit per survey per block** through **CELPS/ELPS**, ensure your **service providers hold valid OGISP permits**, and budget the **published fees,** you will be aligned with Nigeria's upstream rules from application to acquisition and subsequent data handling. Every requirement and fee above is taken directly from **NUPRC's own publications and portals**, so you can proceed with confidence and verifiable compliance

Category

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