



How to Obtain a Film Production License in Nigeria (2026 Complete Guide)

Description

Nigeria's film industry; popularly known as Nollywood, is the **second-largest film industry globally by volume**, producing thousands of films annually. Yet, behind every successful production lies a crucial legal requirement many creators overlook: **regulatory licensing and approvals**.

If you plan to shoot, produce, distribute, or exhibit films in Nigeria, compliance with government regulations; especially those enforced by the **National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB)**, is **mandatory**.

This guide provides a **step-by-step, legally accurate breakdown** of:

- Film production licensing requirements
- Costs and official fees
- Application procedures
- Required documents
- Processing timelines
- FAQs and common mistakes

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1. Overview of Film Licensing in Nigeria

Unlike many countries, Nigeria does not issue a single “film production license.” Instead, film production is regulated through **multiple approvals and licenses**, including:

- Film permit (for shooting)
- Film censorship certificate
- Distribution or exhibition license

These are coordinated primarily by:

- National Film and Video Censors Board
- Nigerian Film Corporation

Without these approvals, your film **cannot legally be distributed, exhibited, or monetised** in Nigeria.

2. Regulatory Authorities Responsible

2.1 National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB)

National Film and Video Censors Board

- Established under Act No. 85 of 1993
 - Regulates film production, distribution, and exhibition
 - Issues censorship and classification certificates
 - Licenses distributors, exhibitors, and production facilities
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2.2 Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC)

Nigerian Film Corporation

- Issues **film permits for shooting**
- Oversees production logistics and filming approvals

A film permit is required before filming and typically costs **\$350-\$500 per production**.

3. Types of Film Licenses & Permits in Nigeria

License Type	Issuing Authority	Purpose
Film Permit	Nigerian Film Corporation	Permission to shoot
Censorship Certificate	NFVCB	Approval for public release
Distribution License	NFVCB	Permission to market films
Exhibition License	NFVCB	Cinema/public viewing rights

Key Insight:

You need **multiple approvals; not just one license, to operate legally**.

4. Legal Framework Governing Film Production

Film production in Nigeria is governed by:

- NFVCB Act (1993)
- Copyright Act (2022)
- NFVCB Regulations

The law mandates that:

- All films must be **submitted for censorship and approval before release**
 - Only licensed entities can distribute or exhibit films
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5. Step-by-Step Process to Obtain a Film Production License in Nigeria

STEP 1: Register Your Production Company

Before applying for any license:

- Register with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)
 - Include film production in company objectives
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STEP 2: Obtain a Film Permit (For Shooting)

Apply through:

- Nigerian Film Corporation

Requirements:

- Project synopsis
 - Crew list
 - Equipment list
 - Production schedule
 - Letter of intent
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Cost:

- \$350 – \$500 per production

Timeline:

- 3–14 working days
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STEP 3: Apply for Film Censorship Certificate

This is the **most critical approval**.

Issued by:

- National Film and Video Censors Board
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STEP 4: Submit Film for Classification

You must submit:

- Film copy
 - Synopsis
 - Application form
 - Payment receipt
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STEP 5: Obtain Distribution License (Optional but Required for Commercialisation)

If you intend to distribute:

- Apply for NFVCB distributor license
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STEP 6: Obtain Exhibition License (If Applicable)

Required for:

- Cinemas
 - Viewing centres
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6. Requirements & Documentation

6.1 Film Censorship Certificate Requirements

- Completed NFVCB application form
 - Film/video copy
 - Synopsis
 - Passport photograph
 - Payment receipt
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6.2 Distributor License Requirements (NFVCB)

- Certificate of incorporation
 - Memorandum & Articles of Association
 - Director details
 - Tax Identification Number (TIN)
 - Company profile
 - Bank reference
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6.3 Exhibition License Requirements

- Company registration documents
 - CEO passport photograph
 - Bank statement
 - Viewing centre profile
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7. Official Fees & Costs

7.1 Film Permit

Item	Cost
Film Permit	\$350 – \$500

7.2 Censorship Certificate Fees

Category	Cost
Short films	₦10,500+
Feature films	Up to ₦150,000
Online content	₦50,000 flat

7.3 Distribution License

Type	Cost
National Distributor	₦512,000
Regional Distributor	₦257,500

7.4 Exhibition License

Item	Cost
Processing Fee	₦3,000
License Fee	₦10,000

8. Processing Timeline

Process	Timeline
Film Permit	3-14 days

Process	Timeline
Censorship (online)	24 hours
Censorship (standard)	Up to 7 days
Distributor License	Varies

9. Application Procedure (Detailed)

Step-by-Step Breakdown

1. Download Application Form

From NFVCB official portal

2. Pay Fees via REMITA

Steps:

- Select NFVCB under MDA
 - Choose service
 - Generate RRR
 - Make payment
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3. Submit Application

Options:

- Online (for digital content)
 - Physical submission at NFVCB office
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4. Review & Classification

NFVCB:

- Reviews film
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- Assigns rating
 - Issues certificate
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5. Receive Certificate

- Digital or physical
 - Mandatory for release
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10. Compliance & Post-License Obligations

After obtaining approval:

- Display classification rating
 - Use NFVCB seal
 - Avoid content violations
 - Maintain compliance with regulations
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11. Common Mistakes That Lead to Rejection

1. Failure to obtain censorship certificate
 2. Submitting incomplete documents
 3. Not paying via official REMITA channel
 4. Incorrect company structure
 5. Ignoring distribution licensing
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12. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do I need a license to shoot films in Nigeria?

Yes. A **film permit is mandatory** before shooting.

Can I release a film without NFVCB approval?

No. It is illegal to distribute or exhibit a film without certification.

How long does it take to get approval?

- 24 hours (online content)
 - Up to 7 days (standard films)
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What happens if I don't comply?

You risk:

- Film seizure
 - Fines
 - Shutdown of production
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Is a production company required?

Yes. Most permits require a registered Nigerian entity.

13. Common Misconceptions About Film Licensing in Nigeria

Misconception 1: "One license covers everything"

False

You need **multiple approvals**

Misconception 2: “Only foreign filmmakers need permits”

False

All productions require permits

Misconception 3: “Online content doesn’t need approval”

False

Even digital films require NFVCB certification

Misconception 4: “You can shoot first and regularize later”

False

This can lead to shutdown and penalties

14. Final Thoughts

Obtaining a film production license in Nigeria is not a single-step process, it is a **multi-layered regulatory framework** involving:

- Film permit (shooting)
- Censorship certificate (release)
- Distribution/exhibition licenses (commercialisation)

The **National Film and Video Censors Board** remains the central authority, ensuring that all films meet Nigeria’s cultural, legal, and ethical standards.

Category

1. Industry Insights

ICA (Ibe Chido & Associates)