

NCC LAUNCHES NEW LICENCE FOR INTERNATIONAL A2P MESSAGING AGGREGATOR SERVICES

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INTRODUCTION

On 8th July 2025, the Nigerian Communications Commission (“NCC” or “the Commission”) released the **Licence Framework for International Application-to-Person (A2P) Messaging in Nigeria**,¹ which introduces a new licence titled the **International Application-to-Person (A2P) Messaging Aggregator Service Licence**.² This license was introduced pursuant to the powers conferred on the Commission in the Nigerian Communications Act, 2003 (NCA, 2003).³

For clarity, an Application-to-Person (A2P) message is a type of text message that is sent from a software or automated system to a person’s mobile phone. It’s commonly used by businesses and service providers to send things like bank alerts, appointment reminders, delivery updates, promotional or transactional messages. Unlike personal texts, A2P messages are not sent by individuals but are automatically generated by applications to reach many people at once.

This new International A2P License is aimed at regulating the carriage of international A2P messages into Nigeria and addressing persistent issues such as spam, fraud, grey routes, and revenue leakages in the messaging ecosystem. However, this licence is not applicable to Mobile Network Operators (MNOs).

NOTE: Interested applicants must submit duly completed application forms, together with all supporting documents within seven (7) days of the date of the publication.⁴ Any application submitted after the deadline will not be entertained.⁵

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL A2P LICENSE FRAMEWORK

Some key provisions of the International Application-to-Person (A2P) Messaging Aggregator Service Licence are discussed below:

Licence Terms

Licence Fee: Proposed fee of **₦10,000,000.00 (Ten Million Naira)**⁶

Tenure: 5 (five) years, renewable for an additional 5 (five) years. ⁷

1 Hereinafter “International A2P License Framework”.

2 Hereinafter “International A2P License”

3 Nnenna Ukoha, ‘Commencement of Licensing for the Provision of International A2P Messaging Aggregator Services’ (NCC Media Center, 9 July 2025) <<https://ncc.gov.ng/media-center/public-notice/commencement-licensing-provision-international-a2p-messaging-aggregator>> accessed 9 July 2025.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Paragraph 4.3 of the International A2P License Framework.

7 Paragraph 4.3 of the International A2P License Framework.

Renewal Conditions: Payment of all applicable regulatory fees and full compliance with the Commission's existing obligations and guidelines, with a 6-month notice prior to expiry. ⁸

Purpose of the Licence ⁹

The purposes of the License include:

- i. To carry International A2P messages into Nigeria through a single gateway;
- ii. To implement unified rules and protections to protect Nigerian subscribers from spam and fraud attacks by enhanced security protocols, and
- iii. to protect user data and ensure the confidentiality and integrity of A2P messaging services.

Eligibility Requirements ¹⁰

Applicants for the International A2P Messaging Licence must:

- i. Be a corporate entity duly registered in Nigeria, with supporting documentation submitted to the Commission.
- ii. Submit a contract agreement with at least one Host Network Operator or National Carrier to the Commission.
- iii. Provide evidence of financial capacity to support both capital (CAPEX) and operational (OPEX) expenditures required for effective service delivery.
- iv. Fulfil any other conditions or requirements that may be specified by the Commission from time to time.

Key Licensing Conditions ¹¹

To obtain and maintain the International A2P Messaging Aggregator Licence, the following conditions must be met:

- i. Regulatory Compliance:** Licencees must comply with the Nigerian Communications Act and all applicable regulations issued under it.
- ii. Data Protection:** Robust consumer data protection protocols must be implemented, in compliance with the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 (NDPA) and other relevant laws.
- iii. Sender ID Requirements:** A2P messages without an approved sender ID must not be accepted by originating operators or forwarded to the subscriber by the terminating network operator.
- iv. Spam Control:** Licencees must ensure that unsolicited, untargeted, or bulk messages (SPAM) are not sent to subscribers.
- v. Opt-in/Opt-out Rights:** Consumers must retain the right to opt-in or opt-out of any service or promotional messaging at any time.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Paragraph 4.1 of the International A2P License Framework.

¹⁰ Paragraph 5.0 of the International A2P License Framework.

¹¹ Paragraph 4.6 of the International A2P License Framework.

The A2P Licence will cover services like:¹²

1. Aggregation of international A2P messages for licenced Nigerian operators
2. Transmission of SMS, MMS, and similar messaging formats
3. Transactional communications (e.g., for banking, payments)
4. Delivery of alerts, notifications, and service reminders
5. Subscriber protection through opt-in/opt-out mechanisms
6. Implementation of network and messaging security measures

Regulatory Intent and Future Outlook¹³

The NCC has noted that the licensing framework will be periodically reviewed to account for market dynamics, technological innovation, and emerging threats in the messaging ecosystem. This move aligns with broader policy goals to promote transparency, protect consumer data, and ensure that industry players operate under a unified, enforceable standard.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of the International A2P Messaging Licence marks a significant transformation in the regulatory landscape of A2P messaging in Nigeria. It is a strategic response to long-standing industry challenges, including spam, fraud, grey routing, and revenue leakages.

A key element of this framework is the implementation of a Centralized SMS Firewall, which will serve as a regulatory gateway for all international A2P traffic. This system is essential for safeguarding the integrity of short message communications, enforcing compliance, and addressing emerging threats.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Any company intending to provide services that involve sending Application-to-Person (A2P) messages from outside Nigeria into the country is now required to obtain a licence from the Commission. The licence costs ₦10,000,000 (Ten Million Naira) and is valid for five years, with the possibility of renewal for another five years upon meeting the prescribed conditions. Eligible companies must submit their applications within seven days of the NCC's official publication dated 8th July 2025, with the application window closing on 15th July 2025. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the licence may result in regulatory sanctions, including fines, suspension, or revocation of the licence.

¹² Paragraph 4.1 of the International A2P License Framework.

¹³ Paragraph 15.0 of the International A2P License Framework.

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