

# NGO bills proposed between 2015-17

Between 2015 and the beginning of 2017, legislators in the Senate and House of Representatives proposed five Bills whose provisions impact the regulation of philanthropic and civil society space in Nigeria. The Bills are yet to be promulgated, but those who seek to ensure an enabling environment for civil society should be aware of some of the proposed provisions and their implications, should parliament approve the Bills. A timeline of the bills appears below.

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Bill	Chamber/Floor	Timeline	Regulatory proposal	Stage
<b>Non-Governmental Organizations Regulation and Coordination Bill, 2015 (SB 111)</b>	Senate	Introduced on October 20, 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bill will require all NGOs to register in order to operate.</li> <li>• It will establish a Board to regulate and coordinate NGO activities. The Board will thus take over the powers of the Corporate Affairs Commission with respect to the regulation of NGOs.</li> <li>• The Board will have broad powers to register or refuse registration to NGOs, including if an organization's proposed activities or procedures are not in the "national interest."</li> <li>• Registration will be valid for 5 years; NGOs will have to re-register after this period.</li> </ul>	Passed by the Senate as at May 2018 and now at the House of Representatives for review and concurrence as at August 20, 2018.
<b>Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Regulatory Commission Bill, 2016 (HB 585)</b>	House of Representatives	Passed second reading on July 14, 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will be mandatory for all NGOs to register in order to operate. The list of registration requirement is extensive and burdensome.</li> <li>• NGOs will have to re-register every 2 years.</li> <li>• An NGO Regulatory Commission will be set up with broad powers to refuse or cancel registration, and to supervise, coordinate and monitor NGO activities.</li> <li>• NGOs will have to obtain prior approval from the Commission for projects. This would likely constrain their ability to carry out activities independently and impede timely execution.</li> <li>• NGOs will be required to share extensive financial information with the Commission.</li> <li>• Violation of the Bill's provisions will attract steep fines or criminal penalties.</li> </ul>	Public hearing conducted on December 13, 2017.  Awaiting Committee report as at August 20, 2018.

Bill	Chamber/Floor	Timeline	Regulatory proposal	Stage
<b>Civil Society Commission of Nigeria Bill, 2016 (HB705)</b>	House of Representatives	Introduced on June 15, 2016.	Text of the bill not publicly available.	1st reading as at June 15, 2016.
<b>Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act (Amendment) Bill, 2016 (HB410)</b>	House of Representatives	Introduced on March 2, 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bill seeks to provide an effective and comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the prevention, prohibition, detection, prosecution and punishment of money laundering and related offences.</li> <li>• It sets out a framework to strengthen civil society's accountability and transparency and address stereotypes of NGOs being used as conduits for money laundering.</li> <li>• It will provide protections for whistleblowers, set limits for cash transactions, and establish money laundering control measures.</li> </ul>	Awaiting Committee report as March 2, 2016.
<b>Lobbying Regulation Bill, 2016 (SB 258)</b>	Senate	Introduced on June 15, 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bill seeks to establish lobbying as a profession in Nigeria and regulate it, ultimately encouraging public participation and facilitating transparency and accountability in the lawmaking process.</li> <li>• It will create awareness on the work of the National Assembly, promote mobilization, and encourage a more extensive research process in law-making and policy development.</li> <li>• Lobbyists are to be registered by the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly, with lobbying certificates renewed every year. Lobbyists will file annual returns and reports on their activities.</li> <li>• The Bill's definition of lobbying could potentially include the activities of NGOs. If so, the sector will face an additional layer of registration and reporting, a procedural challenge that may negatively impact the work of smaller organizations.</li> <li>• The Bill may also prevent NGOs from conducting advocacy due to the costs associated with registering as a lobbyist.</li> </ul>	1st reading as at June 15, 2016.