



KENYA GAZETTES THE GAMBLING CONTROL (LICENSING) REGULATIONS, 2026

Legal Notice No. 111 | Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 162

Published 30th June 2026

A. INTRODUCTION

On 30 June 2026, the Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, in consultation with the Board of the newly established [Gambling Regulatory Authority](#) (“GRA” or “the Authority”), gazetted the [Gambling Control \(Licensing\) Regulations, 2026](#) (“the Regulations”), made under section 119(2) of the [Gambling Control Act, 2025 \(No. 14 of 2025\)](#) (“the Act”). The Regulations operationalise the licensing regime under the Act.

All existing operators licensed under the repealed Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Act have a sixty (60) -day transition window from the date of publication to migrate to the new regime.

B. KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR OPERATORS

- 1. Centralised licensing framework.** The Regulations establish a unified licensing regime under the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA), consolidating the regulation of gambling activities under a single regulator and standardising the licensing process across all gambling sectors.
- 2. Expanded licensing obligations.** Licensing requirements extend beyond gambling operators to include manufacturers, assemblers, importers, distributors, repairers, testing laboratories, and gambling software and platform providers, creating regulatory oversight across the entire gambling value chain.
- 3. Licensing of key persons.** Directors, significant shareholders, beneficial owners,



key gambling employees, and certain foreign personnel are subject to individual approval or licensing requirements, including fit-and-proper assessments, police clearance certificates, and, where applicable, valid work permits.

4. **Significant capital requirements.** The Regulations prescribe substantial minimum capital thresholds that vary depending on the licence category and operating model. Online operators generally face higher financial thresholds than their land-based counterparts, making capital adequacy a key consideration for both market entry and continued operations.
5. **Higher cost of regulatory compliance.** Applicants should anticipate significant application, licence, renewal, annual operating, and other regulatory fees, in addition to the costs of meeting ongoing compliance obligations such as audits, inspections, certification, and reporting.
6. **Extensive application and disclosure requirements.** Licence applications require comprehensive disclosure of corporate ownership, beneficial ownership, funding sources, financial capacity, governance structures, business plans, technical systems, operational policies, and other supporting documentation, reflecting heightened regulatory scrutiny during the licensing process.
7. **Robust governance and compliance framework.** Applicants are expected to maintain comprehensive compliance programmes, including anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CFT) policies, responsible gambling policies, data protection measures, dispute resolution procedures, internal controls, and appropriate staff training.
8. **Enhanced regulatory oversight.** The GRA has broad supervisory powers, including conducting pre-licensing inspections of

premises, systems, security arrangements, internal controls, and operational processes, as well as ongoing inspections to monitor compliance.

9. **Strict ongoing compliance obligations.** Licensees must continuously comply with licence conditions and regulatory requirements. Failure to commence operations within prescribed timelines, maintain required records, submit statutory returns, protect customer data, pay annual licence fees, or comply with audit requirements may result in suspension, revocation, or other enforcement action.
10. **Separate approvals for promotional gambling activities.** Prize competitions, promotional campaigns, lotteries, and similar marketing initiatives are subject to distinct licensing and compliance requirements, meaning businesses using promotional gaming as a marketing tool may require separate regulatory approval.
11. **Greater emphasis on beneficial ownership and transparency.** The Regulations require detailed disclosure of beneficial ownership and corporate control structures, reinforcing transparency, accountability, and regulatory oversight of ownership and control within the gambling industry.
12. **Licences are personal and non-transferable.** Regulatory fees are generally non-refundable, licences cannot be transferred, and non-compliance may attract administrative sanctions, financial penalties, licence suspension or revocation, and, where applicable, criminal liability.
13. **Transitional compliance for existing operators.** Existing licence holders are required to transition to the new licensing framework within the prescribed period, while pending applications will be determined under the new regulatory regime.



C. LICENSING CATEGORIES, FEES AND DURATION

Consolidated from Part II (regulations 4–18), the Second Schedule (Fees) and the Fourth Schedule (Duration of Licences).

Reg.	Licence Category	Application Fee (KES)	Licence Fee (KES)	Annual Operating Fee (KES)	Duration
4	Table Games & Slot Machines (Casino)	Land-based: 2,500,000 Online: 5,000,000	Land-based: 5,000,000 Online: 50,000,000	Land-based: 1,500,000 Online: 5,000,000	Land-based: 3 Years Online: 1 Year
5	Bookmaker (On/Off-the-course)	Land-based: 2,500,000 Online: 5,000,000	Land-based: 5,000,000 Online: 50,000,000	Land-based: 1,500,000 Online: 5,000,000	Land-based: 3 Years Online: 1 Year
6	Totalisator (On/Off-the-course)	On-course: 50,000 Online: 500,000	On-course: 100,000 Online: 2,000,000	On-course: 200,000 Online: 500,000	1 Year
7	Prize Competition	10,000 (commercial & non-commercial)	Commercial: 10% of promotion budget (90 days) / 20% (180 days) Non-commercial: 10% of prize budget (90 days) / 20% (180 days) Extension (30 days): KES 50,000 or 10% of additional budget, whichever is higher	N/A	90 or 180 days (base duration: 3 months)
8	Bingo	Land-based: 50,000 Online: 500,000	Land-based: 100,000 Online: 2,000,000	N/A	1 Year
9	Pool Betting Scheme	Land-based: 1,000,000 Online: 2,000,000	Land-based: 2,500,000 Online: 5,000,000	Land-based: 1,500,000 Online: 1,500,000	1 Year
10	Public Lottery	Long-term: 5,000,000 Short-term: 10,000 Online: 5,000,000	Long-term: 10,000,000 Short-term: 100,000 Online: 20,000,000 Incidental: 2,000,000 (long) / 100,000 (short) Private: 4,000,000 (long) / 500,000 (short)	Long-term & Online: 2,500,000 Short-term: N/A	Long-term: 3 Years Short-term: 3 months Online: 1 Year
11	Online Gambling (Bookmaker / Lottery / Casino)	See online figures above	See online figures above	See online figures above	1 Year
12	Equipment Manufacture / Assembly	100,000	N/A (annual licence only)	500,000	1 Year
13	Equipment Sale / Distribution	100,000	N/A (annual licence only)	500,000	1 Year



14	Equipment Testing	100,000	N/A (annual licence only)	500,000	1 Year
15	Gambling Software / Platform	200,000	N/A (annual licence only)	1,000,000	1 Year
16	Equipment Repair & Servicing	100,000	N/A (annual licence only)	500,000	1 Year
17	Key Gambling Employee	Local: 50,000 Foreign: 50,000	Local: 100,000 Foreign: 200,000	N/A	1 Year
17	Directors / Significant Shareholders	Local: 50,000 Foreign: 50,000	Local: 100,000 Foreign: 200,000	N/A	1 Year
18	Cross-County Media Promotions & Advertising Authorisation	50,000	Approval fee: 6% of advertising budget	N/A	3 Months
-	Other Fees (Additional game / Duplicate licence / Premises transfer)	Additional game: 10,000 Duplicate licence: 100,000 Premises transfer: 500,000	N/A	N/A	N/A

D. APPLICATION, PROCESSING AND DECISION TIMELINES

1. Applications must be submitted in the prescribed form together with the applicable supporting documents, prescribed fees, and evidence that the applicant has satisfied the eligibility requirements for the relevant licence category.
2. Where the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA) is satisfied that an application complies with the Act and the Regulations, it will grant the relevant licence upon payment of the prescribed licence fee, submission of any applicable security or performance bond, and fulfilment of any other applicable licensing requirements.
3. Where an application is refused, the GRA is required to notify the applicant in writing of the refusal and specify the grounds for the decision within 14 days of making the decision.
4. Before issuing a licence, the GRA may conduct an on-site inspection of the applicant's premises to assess, among other matters, the suitability of the premises, the adequacy of security and safety systems, internal

controls, management information systems, operational processes, data security measures, and the separation of the gambling business from any associated businesses.

5. Licence applications are to be determined within 30 days of receipt, provided the applicant has complied with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.
6. Applicants seeking renewal of a licence must submit their renewal applications at least 90 days before the licence expires, together with the prescribed documentation and renewal fees. The GRA is required to issue a renewed licence to a successful applicant within 30 days of receiving the renewal application and to notify unsuccessful applicants of the reasons for rejection within 14 days of its decision.

E. SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF LICENSES

1. The GRA may suspend or revoke a licence where a licensee, among other things:
 - fails to commence operations within six months of the licence being issued;



- ceases or suspends operations for more than three months without the GRA's approval;
- fails to maintain records required under the Act or the Regulations;
- obtains a licence through false, misleading or incomplete information or by concealing material facts;
- breaches any licence condition;
- becomes insolvent or is otherwise unable to effectively conduct its operations;
- fails to adequately safeguard confidential data or information under its control;
- fails to submit statutory records or returns required under the Act or the Regulations;
- amalgamates with another entity or transfers its business, assets or liabilities without the approval of the GRA and other relevant government agencies;
- is subject to a winding-up order or passes a resolution for voluntary winding up;
- fails to pay the prescribed annual licence fees; or
- fails to satisfy the audit requirements under the Act or the Regulations.

2. Before suspending or revoking a licence, the GRA must notify the affected licensee and provide

it with an opportunity to make representations. In appropriate cases, the GRA may, instead of suspending or revoking the licence, direct the licensee to remedy the breach within a specified period and may impose monetary or other sanctions.

3. Upon revocation of a licence, the licensee is required to:

- safeguard player deposits, liabilities and personal data;
- where directed by the GRA, hand over its database in the format specified by the Authority and thereafter erase all data from its own systems in the manner directed by the GRA;
- surrender the revoked licence to the GRA within seven (7) days; and
- immediately cease carrying on any business or activity authorised by the licence.

4. A person who fails to surrender a revoked licence and cease operations commits an offence and is liable, upon conviction, to a fine not exceeding KES 500,000, imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or both. In addition, the GRA is required to publish every suspension or revocation, together with the grounds for its decision, in the Kenya Gazette and in two newspapers of nationwide circulation or other media of national coverage.

F. FINANCIAL THRESHOLDS OPERATORS SHOULD MODEL NOW

The Regulations prescribe the following minimum gambling capital, total initial working capital, including money and equipment, an operator must hold to obtain and maintain a licence. This table reproduces the Third Schedule in full.

Licence	Land-Based / On-the-Course (KES)	Online (KES)
Casino	100,000,000	100,000,000
Bookmaker	50,000,000	100,000,000
Public Lottery (Long-term)	150,000,000	150,000,000
Totalisator	50,000,000	100,000,000
Bingo	5,000,000	50,000,000
Prize Competition (Commercial)	100,000,000	100,000,000
Pool Betting	50,000,000	100,000,000
National Lottery	2,000,000,000	2,000,000,000



G. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS - IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED

1. Licences issued under the repealed Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Act (Cap. 131) that were valid immediately before the commencement of the Regulations will remain in force for sixty (60) days from the date of publication of the Regulations.
2. Existing licence holders must, within the 60-day transitional period, apply for the appropriate licence under the new regulatory framework in accordance with the Gambling Control (Licensing) Regulations, 2026.
3. Any licence application submitted under the repealed legal framework that remains pending at the commencement of the Regulations will be determined in accordance with the Gambling Control (Licensing) Regulations, 2026, rather than the repealed regime.
4. Existing operators should treat the transitional period as a critical compliance window. Failure to apply for and obtain the appropriate licence within the prescribed period may expose operators to regulatory enforcement action, including the risk of carrying on gambling activities without a valid licence under the new regulatory framework.

H. RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

In light of the new licensing framework, operators should take proactive steps to ensure timely compliance with the Gambling Control (Licensing) Regulations, 2026. Key priorities include:

1. Conduct a licensing gap analysis to determine the licences required under the new regime for each business activity, including gambling operations, equipment-related activities, software and platform services, and promotional gambling activities.
2. Review corporate governance and ownership structures to identify all

beneficial owners, significant shareholders, directors, and key gambling employees who require approval, licensing, or supporting documentation under the Regulations.

3. Assess financial readiness by confirming compliance with the prescribed minimum capital requirements, security or performance bond requirements (where applicable), and budgeting for the revised application, licence, renewal, and annual operating fees.
4. Strengthen internal compliance frameworks, including reviewing and updating AML/CFT policies, responsible gambling policies, data protection measures, dispute resolution procedures, governance documents, and internal controls to ensure they meet the enhanced regulatory requirements.
5. Prepare licensing documentation early, including business plans, audited financial statements, technical documentation, beneficial ownership disclosures, police clearance certificates, tax compliance certificates, and other supporting documents required for the relevant licence category.
6. Review third-party arrangements to ensure that equipment manufacturers, importers, distributors, testing laboratories, repairers, software providers, and other service providers engaged by the business hold, or are in the process of obtaining, the licences required under the Regulations.
7. Plan for regulatory inspections by reviewing the adequacy of premises, security arrangements, operational processes, information technology systems, record-keeping practices, and internal controls before submitting licence applications.
8. Take advantage of the transitional period by preparing and submitting applications under the new licensing framework well before the expiry of the 60-day transitional window to minimise business disruption and avoid potential regulatory non-compliance.

HOW WE CAN HELP

At CM Advocates LLP, we are well positioned to assist gambling operators, investors, suppliers,



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and other industry stakeholders in navigating the new regulatory framework. Our team can provide end-to-end legal and regulatory support, including:

- conducting regulatory gap analyses and licensing readiness assessments;
- advising on the appropriate licence categories and licensing strategy for different business models;
- preparing, reviewing, and submitting licence and renewal applications;
- reviewing corporate structures, beneficial ownership disclosures, and governance arrangements to ensure regulatory compliance;
- developing and reviewing AML/CFT, responsible gambling, data protection, and other mandatory compliance policies;
- advising on commercial agreements involving gambling operators, technology

providers, equipment suppliers, and other industry participants;

- providing ongoing regulatory compliance support, including advice on inspections, licence conditions, reporting obligations, and regulatory engagements with the Gambling Regulatory Authority; and
- representing clients in enforcement proceedings, regulatory investigations, and disputes arising under the Gambling Control Act, 2025 and the Regulations.

If you would like to discuss how the Gambling Control Act, 2025 and the Gambling Control (Licensing) Regulations, 2026 may affect your business, or require assistance with licensing, regulatory compliance, or related legal matters, please contact the contributor to this legal alert via his email below. Alternatively, you may reach out to our Gambling, Betting & Lotteries Practice Group at gbg@cmadvocates.com. Our team would be pleased to assist you in navigating the new regulatory framework and ensuring your business remains compliant.

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