



Understanding the Online Harm Protection Bill: Key Proposals and Implications

Introduction

Nigeria is proposing a new approach to digital regulation through the Online Harm Protection Bill ("Bill"), currently under consideration at the National Assembly. Developed by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) through a multi-stakeholder process, the Bill reflects a shift toward public interest regulation—centred on user protection, platform accountability, and democratic participation. It is designed to address emerging digital risks, including misinformation, algorithmic bias, surveillance capitalism, and gaps in content governance.

Key Highlights of the Proposed Bill

- **Expanded Regulatory Scope:**

The Bill aims to establish a legal foundation for addressing online harms, strengthening transparency obligations, and integrating human rights principles into digital governance.

- **User-Centred Oversight:**

Digital platforms are treated as critical infrastructure. The framework introduces safeguards around civic participation, equitable content governance, and responsible use of personal data.



• Institutional Mechanisms:

The Bill proposes four new oversight bodies to support implementation and accountability:

- (i) the Online Harm Protection Center for inter-agency coordination,
- (ii) a Multi-Stakeholder Council to incorporate input from industry, civil society, and regulators,
- (iii) a Redress Panel to adjudicate user complaints relating to platform decisions, and
- (iv) an Independent Oversight Forum to ensure transparency and maintain public trust.

Implications for Stakeholders

• Tech Companies and Digital Platforms:

If enacted, the Bill is expected to introduce compliance obligations covering content moderation practices, user data handling, and platform accountability. Companies may need to engage with newly established oversight bodies and review internal policies for alignment.

• Investors:

The proposed legislation is likely to shape the regulatory landscape for tech transactions in Nigeria. Due diligence for mergers, acquisitions, and investment in digital platforms may need to incorporate prospective OHP compliance exposure and operational readiness.

• International Service Providers:

The proposed framework signals Nigeria's intent to apply domestic standards to all digital services operating within its jurisdiction. Foreign entities may need to review contractual, compliance, and operational practices to ensure alignment with Nigerian standards.

• Civil Society and Rights Advocates:

The proposed institutional structure offers a formal role for civil society in shaping Nigeria's digital policy direction, including opportunities for engagement on user rights and platform accountability.

• End Users and the General Public:

The Bill seeks to provide individuals with stronger protection against harmful digital practices and access to clear redress mechanisms for challenging platform decisions.

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The proposed Online Harm Protection Bill represents a significant development in Nigeria's digital policy environment. Once enacted, businesses, investors, and digital platforms will need to adapt to its governance and compliance demands. For advisory on navigating the proposed framework, assessing risk exposure, or preparing engagement strategies, contact us at info@scp-law.com or visit www.scp-law.com.

