



# FAQs On Copyright In Nigeria

## ? What is copyright?

Copyright assures authors, songwriters, photographers and other creators that they can publish their work without fear of unauthorised use. It is the exclusive legal right given to a creator, for a fixed number of years, to print, publish, perform, film or record literary, artistic or musical material.

## ? Should I register my work to benefit from copyright?

The Nigerian Copyright Act does not require registration. The owner of the work may however be required to deposit a copy of his or her work with the Nigerian Copyright Commission to serve as notification to the public.

## ? When will a piece of work be deemed eligible for copyright?

Under the Nigerian law, a piece of work is deemed eligible for copyright where sufficient effort and energy has been expended on the work to give it an original character and it has been fixed in any definite medium of expression now known or later developed. Examples of copyrights are

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|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------------------|
| <b>a.</b> | Literary works | <b>d.</b> | Cinematographs films |
| <b>b.</b> | Musical works  | <b>e.</b> | Sound recordings     |
| <b>c.</b> | Artistic works | <b>f.</b> | Broadcasts           |

## ? Who can claim copyrights in Nigeria?

By the provisions of the Copyrights Act, Below are a few examples of the categories of individuals, companies and others who may claim copyright in Nigeria:

- a.** Nigerian citizens or people domiciled in Nigeria;
- b.** Individuals commissioned or employed to make a piece of work in their employment, unless otherwise stipulated in writing;
- c.** Individuals to whom a license of the work has been granted;
- d.** The Federal or State Government in cases it has commissioned someone to create a piece of work;
- e.** Companies registered under the Nigerian Law that produce copyrighted work, and
- f.** Non-Nigerian citizens who are citizens of or domiciled in a country that is a party to an obligation in a treaty or other international agreement, to which Nigeria is also a party.

## ? How long does copyright protection last for in Nigeria?

The Copyright Act does not confer an indefinite right to the owner of the copyright. Depending on the type of work involved, copyright protection may last between 50 and 70 years after a creator's lifetime.

## ? How do I use copyrighted work without infringing the rights of the owner?

The Nigerian Legal system recognises the principle of "fair use". This means that in certain circumstances, copyrighted material may be used without permission from the owner.