



IMO STATE REGULATION FOR THE APPROVAL AND OVERSIGHT OF LARGE-SCALE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS.

19th October, 2025

ENACTED by the authority vested in the Imo State Investment Promotion Agency (ISIPA) pursuant to Section 9 of the Imo State Investment Promotion Agency Law, 2010, and in furtherance of the provisions articulated in the Imo State FRILIA Executive Order and by all other powers enabling it in that behalf, the following Regulations are hereby made:

PART I: PRELIMINARY

Article 1: Citation and Commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Large-Scale Agricultural Investment Approval Regulations 2025.
2. These Regulations shall come into operation on the 20th day August, 2025 and shall apply throughout the territorial jurisdiction of Imo State

Article 2: Interpretation

In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

- a. "Ministry/Department/Agency" shall denote the Imo State Investment Promotion Agency established under Imo State Investment Promotion Agency Law, 2010
- b. "Stakeholder" shall denote the Investors, Investment Host Community, Community Town Union, civil Society Organization, Banks and Credit Lenders etc
- c. "FRILIA Principles" shall be construed in accordance with the framework of FRILIA as promulgated by Imo State under Imo State FRILIA Executive Order; 2023
- d. "Large-scale agricultural investment" shall mean and include any agricultural enterprise exceeding 10 hectares in land area or requiring capital investment above Fifty Million Naira (N50,000,000.00) monetary units;
- e. "ESIA" shall refer to a comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment or such other environmental and social analysis required by and conducted in accordance with Imo State Environmental Transformation Commission Law, 2008 as amended.
- f. "FRILIA Toolkits/Guidelines" shall refer to toolkits or guidelines developed by the Imo State FRILIA Technical Committee and approved by the Imo state FRILIA steering committee as established by the Imo State FRILIA Executive Order

Article 3: Application and Scope

1. The provisions contained herein shall apply to:

- a) All natural persons, corporate entities, and consortia seeking to undertake large-scale agricultural investments within the territorial boundaries of [insert name] State;
- b) All large-scale agricultural investment transactions involving land use, water rights, or natural resource exploitation for agricultural purposes;
- c) All phases of project development from conception through implementation to decommissioning.

2. Nothing in these Regulations shall be construed as limiting or abrogating any existing rights, obligations, or remedies available under any other enactment.

PART II: APPROVAL MECHANISM

Article 4: General Provisions

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall serve as the authority responsible for the administration, oversight, and enforcement of these Regulations

Article 5: Approval Conditions

In furtherance of enhancing the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of the State's Investment Approval Process, the following toolkits, which incorporate FRILIA principles, shall be mainstreamed into the Investment Approval Process (IAP) established by this Regulation.

Stakeholder Engagement: Toolkit/Guideline

<http://mobp.im.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/Imo-State-Stakeholder-engagement-toolkit.pdf>

Objectives: The Toolkit captures a range of approaches and methodologies to identify and proactively enable the participation of all stakeholders towards empowering them to make an informed decision throughout FRILIA implementation

Environmental and Social Risk Management Toolkit/Guideline

<http://mobp.im.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/IMO-STATE-ENVIRONMENTAL-AND-SOCIAL-RISKS-TOOLKITS.pdf>

Objective: The toolkit provides a guide for the investor on implementing the various safeguards for environmental and social sustainability, including the health and safety of its stakeholders

Land Access, Easement and Involuntary Resettlement Management Toolkit/Guideline

<http://mobp.im.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/IMO-STATE-FRILIA-Resettlement-toolkit.pdf>

Objective: The toolkit supports the consultative process of physically and/or economically displaced Project Affected Entities (PAEs) and Project Affected Communities (PACs) to help ensure improved livelihoods post-displacement

Valuation and Compensation Toolkit/Guideline

<http://mobp.im.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/Imo-State-Valuation-and-Compensation.pdf>

Objective: The toolkit describes processes to objectively identify, enumerate, and assess replacement values, assign eligibility, and undertake gender-sensitive valuations of immovable assets, loss of access to natural resources, and any other forms of valuable unexhausted improvements within and around a defined project area

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) Toolkit/Guideline

<http://mobp.im.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/IMO-STATE-GRM-Toolkits-2.pdf>

Objective: The toolkit provides an avenue for stakeholders to understand the concept of grievances, capturing grievances, responding to grievances, monitoring, aggregation of grievances, including the grievance escalation procedure, and exploration of alternative dispute resolution medium or the open court systems

Community Needs Assessment and Development Toolkit/Guideline

<http://mobp.im.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/IMO-STATE-COMMUNITY-NEED-ASSESSMENT-TOOLKIT.pdf>

Objective – This toolkit supports the commitment of investors to Community Social Responsibility (focus on women and youth empowerment, utilization of local content, minority and vulnerable groups, knowledge transfer, and improved community infrastructure) and helps investors to identify and analyze the needs of the community that will be affected by the investment

Communication Strategy

<http://mobp.im.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/IMO-COMMUNICATION-STRATEGY.pdf>

Objectives: Introduce the FRILIA toolkits to stakeholders, sensitize stakeholders on the toolkits and their applicability, ensure stakeholder buy-in, and ensure access to the toolkits during FRILIA implementation.

Article 6: Stakeholder Engagement

<http://mobp.im.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/Imo-State-Stakeholder-engagement-toolkit.pdf>
Stakeholder engagement shall be in accordance with the procedures and processes set out in the approved FRILIA stakeholder engagement toolkit /Guideline

Article 7: The approval process for large-scale agricultural investments shall comprise Six stages distinct stages as hereinafter prescribed.

Stage One - Preliminary Application and Due Diligence

1. Prospective investors shall submit to the Imo State Investment Promotion Agency in the prescribed form and manner:

- a) A duly executed application form as set forth in Schedule 1
- b) Certified copies of constitutional documents, including but not limited to certificates of incorporation and memorandum of association;
- c) Audited financial statements demonstrating financial capacity;

- d) A comprehensive project concept note detailing:
 - i. Project objectives and scope;
 - ii. Proposed land requirements;
 - iii. Anticipated employment creation;
 - iv. Proposed value chain integration.
 - v. Potential risks and benefits for the affected community.
 - e) Such other information as may reasonably be required by [insert name of Ministry, Department, or Agency] and set forth in Schedule __.
2. The [insert name of Ministry, Department, or Agency] shall, within [insert no.] working days of receipt of a complete application:
- a) Conduct thorough screening and due diligence on the applicant and investment using the [insert name] state screening toolkit, including but not limited to:
 - i. Verification of corporate standing;
 - ii. Assessment of financial viability;
 - iii. Examination of previous investment track record;
 - b) Initiate preliminary community engagement where the proposed project area has been identified.
 - c) Determine preliminarily whether the proposed investment is reasonably likely to comply with all applicable FRILIA principles.
3. Failure to submit complete documentation as prescribed shall render the application null and void.

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency may invite other identified stakeholders, including but not limited to Potential Investors, Host Community and Relevant Government MDAs , to participate at this stage. The participating stakeholders shall collaborate and share responsibilities as follows:

Shared Responsibilities:

- Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall coordinate all activities relating to the investment
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food security shall preside the over FRILIA Technical Committee, and provide technical assistance required for the investment
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development shall provide sensitization and advocacy measures
- Local Government Areas shall provide sensitization and Education measures
- Host Community shall provide lands required for investment
- Investors shall provide investment capital

Stage Two - Site Identification and Community Consultation

Upon satisfactory completion of Stage One, the Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall:

- A. Continue to provide information and resources that the potential investor may need to proceed with the investment.
- B. Coordinate the investor's interaction with other government agencies and help the investor locate service providers.
- C. Arrange for site visits for the investor after notifying local officials and communities of investor interest.
- D. Notify local government officials, other ward and community stakeholders to engage in internal consultations and then to respond preliminarily whether they might welcome the investment.

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency may invite other identified stakeholders, including but not limited to Relevant MDAs, Host Community to participate at this stage. The participating stakeholders shall collaborate and share responsibilities as follows:

Shared Responsibilities:

- Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall coordinate all activities relating to the investment
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food security shall preside the over FRILIA Technical Committee, and provide technical assistance required for the investment
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development shall provide sensitization and advocacy measures
- Local Government Areas shall provide sensitization and Education measures
- Host Community shall provide lands required for investment
- Investors shall provide investment capital

Stage Three: Potential Investor Proceeds or Withdraws

Upon satisfactory completion of Stage two:

- A. The investor reacts to the community's initial response to the potential investment and the investor's assessment of the viability of the investment and potential site. If the investor decides to withdraw, the process stops. If the investor wishes to consider a different location within the State, the process reverts to Stage 2. The process also ends if the community decides not to proceed.
- B. If the potential investor decides to proceed and the community is supportive, the investor should engage further, build relationships with the community, and get them fully involved. The investor and the community (with legal assistance provided by Ministry of Justice should begin to discuss a community engagement plan to guide the ongoing consultations.

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency may invite other identified stakeholders, including but not limited to All relevant MDAs, Host Community, to participate at this stage. The participating stakeholders shall collaborate and share responsibilities as follows:

Shared Responsibilities:

- Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall coordinate all activities relating to the investment
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food security shall preside the over FRILIA Technical Committee, and provide technical assistance required for the investment
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development shall provide sensitization and advocacy measures
- Local Government Areas shall provide sensitization and Education measures
- Host Community shall provide lands required for investment
- Investors shall provide investment capital

Stage Four: Investor Enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) with Imo State Investment Promotion Agency and Representatives of the Affected Communities

- A. Imo State Investment Promotion Agency does more in-depth due diligence on the investor and shares additional due diligence findings with other stakeholders.
- B. Consultations with the community continue, and a community engagement plan may be agreed to at this point.
- C. If all parties continue to be supportive of the proposed investment, they attempt to agree on an MoU that covers the framework of the investment, how much land is required, benefits that may accrue to the community, commitments to ongoing consultation, preparation of an ESIA, etc. The MoU does not legally commit any party to enter into a final agreement on the proposed investment.

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency may invite other identified stakeholders, including but not limited to Relevant MDAs, Investor, Host Community to participate at this stage. The participating stakeholders shall collaborate and share responsibilities as follows:

Shared Responsibilities:

- Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall coordinate all activities relating to the investment
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food security shall preside the over FRILIA Technical Committee, and provide technical assistance required for the investment
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development shall provide sensitization and advocacy measures
- Local Government Areas shall provide sensitization and Education measures
- Host Community shall provide lands required for investment
- Investors shall provide investment capital

Stage Five: Investor Completes and Shares a Feasibility Study, Business Plan, and an Independent Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)

- A. Imo state Investment Promotion Agency makes its determination whether the ESIA is acceptable and notifies the investor within 7 days of receiving it.
- B. If not already completed, a community engagement plan should be finished in this stage.
- C. Land lease discussions can continue (if begun in a previous stage) or begin. Leases should not be finalized and signed until Stage 6.

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency may invite other identified stakeholders, including but not limited to Relevant MDAs, Investors, Host Community to participate at this stage. The participating stakeholders shall collaborate and share responsibilities as follows:

Shared Responsibilities:

- Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall coordinate all activities relating to the investment
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food security shall preside the over FRILIA Technical Committee, and provide technical assistance required for the investment
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development shall provide sensitization and advocacy measures
- Local Government Areas shall provide sensitization and Education measures
- Host Community shall provide lands required for investment
- Investors shall provide investment capital

Stage Six: The parties enter into the Final Agreement

A. The final agreement is likely to be contained in several individual agreements or could be combined into one document. While the precise requirements will vary, an approved investment is likely to include some or all of the following:

1. Land lease agreement
2. Outgrower contract(s)
3. Community impact and benefit agreement
4. Community engagement plan
5. Environmental and Social Compliance
6. Monitoring plan
7. Inclusive, accessible, and equitable dispute resolution mechanisms

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall review the final agreement(s) and determine whether it and the investment as a whole complies with all applicable FRILIA principles.

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency may invite other identified stakeholders, including but not limited to Relevant MDAs, Investors, Host Community to participate at this stage. The participating stakeholders shall collaborate and share responsibilities as follows:

Shared Responsibilities:

- Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall coordinate all activities relating to the investment
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food security shall preside the over FRILIA Technical Committee, and provide technical assistance required for the investment
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development shall provide sensitization and advocacy measures
- Local Government Areas shall provide sensitization and Education measures
- Host Community shall provide lands required for investment
- Investors shall provide investment capital

Article 8: INVESTMENT SCREENING

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall conduct investment screening throughout the approval process described in Article 7 in accordance with the FRILIA investment screening toolkit to assess the potential impacts of investments approved under this Regulation.

The Imo State Investment Promotion Agency shall ensure that the investment screening process is transparent and based on a thorough assessment of potential risks and opportunities

Article: 9 Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

The investor shall establish a GRM pursuant to an agreement with the affected community which shall be in accordance with the FRILIA GRM toolkit to address complaints and grievances related to investments under this Regulation.

The GRM shall:

- Provide accessible channels for stakeholders to submit grievances, as outlined in the FRILIA GRM Toolkit
- Ensure timely and effective response in accordance with the procedures set out in the FRILIA GRM Toolkit
- Investigate grievances and work towards resolving them, using the guidelines provided in the FRILIA GRM Toolkit

Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the GRM, using metrics and indicators specified in the FRILIA GRM Toolkit.

PART III: FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 10: Offenses and Penalties

1. Any person who:

- a) Wilfully provides false or misleading information in any application;
- b) Fails to comply with any condition of approval;
- c) Undertakes any agricultural investment without proper authorization;

shall be guilty of an offense and liable on conviction to:

- i. A fine not exceeding One Hundred thousand (N100,000.00) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 Months years, or both;
- ii. Suspension or revocation of investment approval;
- iii. Disqualification from future investment opportunities for a period not exceeding [insert no.] years.

Article 11: Severability

If any provision of this regulation is held invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in effect.

SCHEDULES

Schedule 1: Prescribed Application Form

Schedule 2: Schedule of Fees and Charges

Schedule 3: Standard Reporting Templates

Signed this 19th October, 2025.



Prof. Jude Nzeako

DG Imo State Investment Promotion Agency