

Supreme Court *E-Filing* Practice Directions, 2026

Implications for Legal Practitioners and Litigants

Dispute Resolution & ADR Insight

Introduction

On July 1, 2026, the Supreme Court of Nigeria launched its Digital Filing System. Following the introduction of the platform, and pursuant to the powers vested in the Apex Court pursuant to Section 236 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), the Honourable Chief Justice of Nigeria, Honourable Justice Kudirat Motonmori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun, GCON, issued *the Supreme Court (Mandatory Upload of Electronic Copies of Processes, Record of Appeal and Other Matters) Practice Directions 2026* to regulate its implementation and operation.

The Supreme Court Digital Filing System was intended to strengthen the Court's ability to verify the authenticity of filed documents, detect procedural irregularities, and maintain secure, transparent, and traceable records of all transactions conducted on the platform. By digitising filing and case management processes, the system seeks to enhance the efficiency, integrity, and accountability of the Court's administration, whilst aligning its operations, practices and procedures with global standards of judicial administration¹.

As with any significant procedural reform, however, the introduction of the system raises important practical and legal questions for legal practitioners and litigants. This Quick Note examines key provisions and implications of the new digital filing regime under the Supreme Court (Mandatory Upload of Electronic Copies of Processes, Records of Appeal and Other Matters) Practice Directions 2026.

Key Provisions

The new Practice Directions, 2026, introduce new obligations that every litigant and/or legal practitioner with a pending appeal, or intending to commence an appeal before the Supreme Court, ought to be familiar with and ensure compliance with:

Scope of Application

The new Practice Directions 2026 apply to both appeals currently pending before the Supreme Court and appeals initiated after the commencement of the Practice Directions.²

Mandatory Submission of E-Copies of Records & Processes

The Practice Directions mandate every party (or their Counsel) to submit electronic copies of Records of Appeal and processes filed in any appeal, which documents shall be saved in compliance with the proper naming format provided in the schedule to the Practice Direction⁵:

- Each party in a pending appeal shall submit electronic copies of records and processes filed and the processes served on it by the other party/ parties in the appeal on the NCMS portal.
- Each party in any appeal commenced after the Practice Directions is to submit on the NCMS portal electronic copies of processes filed.⁶

Effect of Noncompliance

Failing to comply with the mandatory submission requirements carries the consequence of the appeal not being scheduled for hearing unless the processes are filed in accordance with the Practice Directions.⁹

Use of Legal Email

Parties/Counsel seeking to access the **Nigeria Case Management System (NCMS)** can only do so using the legal mail system or any other electronic mail system as may be designated by the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court from time to time.³

Declaration of Authenticity

Each party/ Counsel making a submission of electronic copies of Records/processes on the NCMS portal is required to make a solemn declaration on oath in the manner provided on the portal, affirming that the electronic copies represent a true and complete version of the documents filed in Court.⁷

Timeline

The Practice Directions prescribe a timeline of thirty (30) days before the hearing in pending matters, for the submission of electronic copies of documents, and the hard copies to be submitted to the registry within seven (7) days or 48 hours before the hearing, whichever is earlier⁸.

Date of Transmission

Under the new Practice Directions, the Record of Appeal is deemed to have been transmitted on the day an electronic copy of the Record is uploaded to the NCMS platform and not the day it was submitted to the registry.¹⁰

Exemption for Indigent Parties:

Parties who have been granted leave as an indigent party under *Order 5 Rule 3 of the Supreme Court Rules 2024* shall not be required to pay the transmission fees or give security for costs.¹²

Fee for Transmission of Record:

The Practice Direction imposes a fee of ₦500,000 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira) alongside any other amount as may be assessed by the Registrar of the lower court, as the fee for the transmission of records. Furthermore, any party who seeks to transmit or upload any additional Record of Appeal shall pay a fee of ₦250,000 (Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira).¹¹

Default Fees

The Practice Directions provide for additional default fees of ₦10,000 (Ten Thousand Naira) for each day of failure to file any processes within the prescribed period under the Practice Directions.¹³

Transmission of Record

₦500,000

Additional Record of Appeal

₦250,000

Default Fees

₦10,000/day

Indigent Parties

Exempt

Compliance Timeline · At a Glance

30

Days before hearing

Submit e-copies to NCMS portal

7

Days before hearing

Hard copies to registry

48h

Before hearing

Whichever is earlier

Implication

Beyond the introduction of an additional transmission fee and the need for counsel to familiarise themselves with the e-filing platform, the Practice Directions introduce an additional procedural requirement in the appellate process by mandating the electronic transmission and uploading of the Record of Appeal before its physical transmission to the Supreme Court. Although the prescribed timelines for compiling and transmitting the Record of Appeal remain unchanged, counsel should factor this additional requirement into their case management to ensure timely compliance. Accordingly, parties who wish to appeal should take prompt steps upon delivery of judgment to initiate the compilation and transmission of the Record of Appeal, thereby minimising the risk of delay and ensuring compliance with the Practice Directions.

“The introduction of the Supreme Court's electronic filing system represents a significant step towards the effective integration of technology into the administration of justice at the Apex court.”

Conclusion

By digitising the filing and case management processes for appellate proceedings, the Practice Directions are expected to enhance efficiency, streamline case management, significantly reduce the administrative burden associated with manual filing, and improve access to justice. While the transition will require legal practitioners to adapt to new digital processes, the long-term benefits of a more efficient, transparent, and technology-driven appellate system are likely to outweigh any initial implementation challenges.



Efficiency



Streamlined
Case Mgmt



Integrity &
Transparency



Access to
Justice

Endnotes

1. Ameh Ochojila, "Supreme Court launches digital case system, makes e-filing mandatory" (Guardian, July 1, 2026) < <https://guardian.ng/news/supreme-court-launches-digital-case-system-makes-e-filing-mandatory> > accessed July 3, 2026
2. Supreme Court (Mandatory Upload of Electronic Copies of Processes, Record of Appeal, and Other Matters) Practice Directions, 2026, paragraph 2.
3. Ibid, paragraph 3.
4. Ibid, paragraph 5
5. Ibid, paragraph 7, and First Schedule
6. Ibid, paragraph 4.
7. Ibid, paragraph 9.
8. Ibid, paragraph 10.
9. Ibid, paragraph 11.
10. Ibid, paragraph 14.
11. Ibid, paragraph 15.
12. Ibid, paragraph 17. Under the Supreme Court Rules 2024, Indigent Parties are defined as "a party who is unable to bear the costs of an appeal to apply for leave to prosecute or defend the appeal". See Order 5 Rule 3
13. Ibid, paragraph 18.

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