**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

**2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS: MEDIA ACCREDITATION GUIDELINES**

**WHY ACCREDITATION?**

For the safety of all participants in the electoral process, every person in the polling environment on Election Day will have some form of accreditation from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). These include poll workers, registered voters, party agents, domestic and international election observers, local and foreign journalists as well as special guests of the Commission. Accreditation is also required for assistants like translators, orderlies, drivers and audio-visual handlers.

**APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION**

Media organsiations intending to send representatives to report the election procedures must apply to INEC for the accreditation of every such individual. Relevant application forms are available online at [www.inecnigeria.org](http://www.inecnigeria.org) or may be collected in person (Monday to Friday, 8.30 a.m.. to 4.00 p.m.) from the Department of Voter Education and Publicity, INEC Headquarters Annex, 10 Blantyre Street, (Near Barcelona Hotel), Wuse 11, Abuja; or from the state (head) offices of INEC for media organisations/journalists intending to cover the elections in the respective states. Applications must be received not later than 6th February 2015.

**GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITATION**

I. **Liaison Personnel**

Media organisations are advised to assign Liaison Officer(s) to coordinate the accreditation of their nominated staff by INEC. The Liaison Officer(s) will be required to visit the INEC national or state offices, as may be relevant, to submit the accreditation application documentation. The Liaison Officer will also be the organisation’s contact person to be reached with further information by INEC.

II. **Documents required for Accreditation Application**

1. Duly completed application forms with two passport photographs of each staff of the media organisation being assigned for election reportorial duties.
2. A covering letter on the media organisation’s letterhead outlining the names and duties (e.g. Correspondent/Reporter, Cameraman, Translator, Driver, etc).
3. Proof of identity (e.g. a professional ID Card, International Passport, etc).

III. **Submission of Documents**

The media organisation’s Liaison Officer shall submit the application to:

1. The Director, Voter Education and Publicity (D,VEP) at INEC Headquarters Annex, 10 Blantyre Street, Wuse 11, Abuja with regard to journalists who will be at the National Headquarters’ Media Centre on Election Day and at the National Collation Centre for the Presidential election; and
2. The Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), through the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) in respective of states across the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), for journalists who will be covering elections in those states or the FCT.

IV. Deadline for Submission: Submission of all documents for accreditation will end at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 11th February, 2015 at the National Headquarters and 4.00p.m. on Thursday, 12th February, 2015 in respect of accreditation in the States. No submission received after this time will be entertained

V. **Issuance of Accreditation**

Upon processing the application for accreditation, INEC will require persons for whom accreditation is being sought to go to INEC Headquarters Annex, Blantyre Street, Wuse 11, Abuja, in regard of (i) above, or the respective state offices of INEC in regard of (ii) above, for the issuance of accreditation tags and kits. The issuance of accreditation tags and kits will be done simultaneously nationwide from **Monday, 9th February, 2015**

**Please Note**: INEC reserves the right to withhold accreditation from any organisation or journalist whose professional identity is not adequately verifiable.

**VI. Responsibilities of Accredited Journalists**

With proper accreditation, journalists and allied staff have the endorsement of INEC to cover election procedures unhindered within the respective jurisdictions for which they have been accredited. It is expected, however, that journalists’ conduct in the polling environment will reflect strict professional ethics as well as high level of dispassion and objectivity. To this end:

1. Accredited journalists are allowed to:

* Be in the Polling Unit from the opening of poll on Election Day and observe all stages of the polling process – from voter accreditation, through the voting period, to the counting of ballot papers cast and pasting of results – provided they do not interfere with polling process or compromise the voter’s statutory right to secrecy of his/her vote;
* Move around the Polling Unit, as long as their movements do not obstruct the flow of voters or the work of polling officials;
* Interview voters, observers or other personalities in the polling environment without interfering with the polling process;
* Observe the deployment of sensitive materials ahead of Election Day polling, and the retrieval of used and unused sensitive materials after the polling processes.

1. Accredited Journalists *are not allowed* to:

* Film, photograph or interview any individual within the polling zone without his/her consent;
* Film or photograph any voter marking a ballot paper, or acquire pictures, film footage or audio commentary that reveals personal details of the voter;
* Film, photograph or copy the Register of Voters, Voter Cards or any other documents as would infringe on the privacy of any voter’s choice
* Handle any polling materials in the Polling Unit.

**LINE OF AUTHORITY**

Accredited journalists, like everybody else in the polling environment, shall be subject to direction of and prohibitions by the Presiding Officer.

**Please Note:** INEC reserves the right to revoke the accreditation of any journalist who defies the Presiding Officer or violates the professional codes of journalist practice.

For further questions on Media Accreditation, please contact Mr. Sylvanus Yepe 08034258308, Nneka Eluogu 08033144270, Nasiru Zakari 08036368009 or Ibrahim Babangida 08032965896