

The Gambling Control Act, 2025:

a New Regulatory Era for Kenya's Gambling Sector

prepared by
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LAWYERS SHAPING KENYA'S GROWTH



The enactment of the *Gambling Control Act, 2025 (the Act)* repeals the decades-old *Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Act* and introduces a modern, comprehensive framework aimed at strengthening regulation, enhancing consumer protection, and formally integrating online gambling into the legal regime.

At the core of these reforms is the establishment of the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Kenya (the Authority), now responsible for licensing, compliance, and enforcement across the entire sector

Kenya's gambling industry has entered a new chapter.

Establishment of the Gambling Regulatory Authority

The Authority replaces the **Betting Control and Licensing Board (BCLB)** and assumes full jurisdiction over all gambling activities in Kenya. It is now the central body for:

- Licensing and registration
- Compliance monitoring
- Enforcement and oversight

The Act also establishes the **Gambling Appeals Tribunal**, mandated to hear and determine:

- Appeals from decisions of the Authority or the National Lottery Board
- Complaints arising from gambling transactions
- Disputes concerning gambling machines and equipment
- Other matters as prescribed under the Act

Licensing Requirements

Section 29 of the Act introduces more stringent licensing criteria, including:

- Applicants must be body corporates with a minimum of 30% Kenyan ownership
- All gambling-related revenues must be deposited in accounts held with authorized Kenyan financial institutions

Licensees are further required to furnish insurance security bonds or bank guarantees, scaled according to the type of gambling activity

Type of Gambling

Minimum Security Requirement

Online Gambling

K.Shs. 100,000,000

National Lottery

K.Shs. 100,000,000

Casinos & Slot Machines

K.Shs. 20,000,000

Non-online Gambling

K.Shs. 20,000,000

Totalisator & Prize Competitions

K.Shs. 5,000,000

Amusement with Prizes

K.Shs. 200,000

Licensed Premises for Online Gambling

K.Shs. 500,000

These guarantees may be drawn upon by the Authority to cover liabilities or damages arising from licensed operations.

Regulation of Online Gambling

For the first time, the Act provides a comprehensive legal framework for online gambling. Key provisions include:

- Mandatory activity-specific licenses (e.g., sports betting, online casinos, lotteries)
- Use of certified gambling systems, accessible to the Authority for monitoring
- Mandatory verification of player identity and age, with strict prohibitions on underage gambling
- All financial transactions must be processed through authorized channels approved by the **Central Bank of Kenya and the Authority**
- Operators must maintain a customer care center within Kenya and provide full access to their systems for regulatory oversight

Advertising and Responsible Gambling

The Act introduces robust advertising restrictions and player protection measures:

- TV and radio advertisements are **banned between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.**, except during live sports broadcasts
- At least **20%** of advertisement airtime must promote responsible gambling
- Celebrity endorsements and lifestyle advertising are prohibited
- Advertising near learning institutions is restricted to protect minors and vulnerable groups

Operators are also required to implement self-exclusion programs and are prohibited from extending credit to players or marketing to individuals who have self-excluded.

Implementation and Transition

The Act was assented to on 7 August 2025 and came into force on 25 August 2025.

Transitional provisions include:

- Existing licenses issued under the repealed law remain valid until expiry, after which renewals must be submitted to the Authority
- Tax provisions under the repealed Act remain in force until new regulations are enacted under the current framework

Key Takeaway

The Gambling Control Act, 2025 marks a significant regulatory shift in Kenya's gambling landscape. With enhanced compliance obligations, stricter licensing standards, and stronger consumer safeguards, operators must now align their structures, systems, and advertising practices with the new regime to ensure continued compliance and operational continuity.

For further information on how the Act may affect you or your business, feel free to reach out to our Commercial Transactions Team:

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