

BELIZE:

**ELECTRICITY LICENSING AND CONSENT REGULATIONS,
2026 (PROPOSED)**

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BELIZE:

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

NO. OF 2026

REGULATIONS made by the Public Utilities Commission, with the approval of the Minister responsible for electricity, in exercise of the powers conferred upon them by section 58 of the Electricity Act, Chapter 221 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020, and all other powers thereunto them enabling.

(Gazetted, 2026)

PART I

Preliminary

Citation. **1.** These Regulations may be cited as the

**ELECTRICITY LICENSING AND CONSENT REGULATIONS,
2026.**

Interpretation. **2.** In these Regulations–

“Act” means the Electricity Act;

“aggregator” means a class of licence issued under these Regulations to any person who owns or operates distributed energy resources and who seeks to collectively undertake commercial arrangements with a utility;

“application” means an application for a licence, permit, transfer, renewal or modification of a licence or permit under these Regulations;

“backup generation and supply” means a class of licence issued to any person who–

- (a) generates electricity as a backup facility in order to supply power whenever there is an interruption to its main electricity supply; or
- (b) installs energy storage systems up to the capacity limit as specified by Order of the Commission;

“capacity limit” means the maximum capacity, expressed in MWe, for electricity generation, transmission, storage or distribution for a particular licence class as specified, from time to time, by Order of the Commission;

“community generation and supply” means a class of licence issued to any person who generates electricity and the entire output is for the purpose of supplying an unserved or underserved community as determined by the Commission;

“defective filing” means a licence application which does not meet all formal and procedural requirements under these Regulations or any other law;

“distributed energy resources” means small-scale electricity supply or demand side resources that are interconnected to the electrical grid and are energy resources located close to load centres that can be used individually or in aggregate;

“effective date” means the date on which a licence takes legal effect;

“electricity activities” means electricity services that persons undertake or intend to undertake, including, but not limited to, electricity generation, cogeneration, provision of energy storage and ancillary services, system operations, and the transmission of electricity, its distribution, supply, provision of distributed energy resources, and trading;

“grid code” means the technical specifications which define the parameters a facility connected to a public electric grid has to meet to ensure safe, secure and proper functioning of the electric system;

“independent power producers” or “IPP” means a class of licence issued to any person only after that person is successful in any calls for competition administered by the Commission;

“intermediate distributed generation” means a class of licence issued to any person who generates electricity from a capacity not exceeding the peak demand for oneself and who is permitted to sell the excess and to trade electricity services with the utility. The generation capacity limit for this class of licence shall be as specified by Order of the Commission;

“intermediate self-generation and supply” means a class of licence issued to any person who generates electricity and the entire output is for the purpose of supplying oneself only. The generation capacity limit for this class of licence shall be as specified by Order of the Commission;

“kW” means a thousand Watts;

“kW_e” means a thousand Watts peak;

“kWh” means a thousand Watts-hours;

“licence” refers to any document issued by the Commission which authorizes the licensee to carry out the activity specified in the licence under the conditions prescribed in the licence;

“licence applicant” means any person who files an application for the issuance of a licence in accordance with these Regulations;

“licensee” means any person who holds a licence issued by the Commission under these Regulations;

“major distributed generation” means a class of licence issued to any person who generates electricity from a capacity not exceeding their peak demand for oneself and who is permitted to sell the excess. The generation capacity limit for this class of licence shall be as specified by Order of the Commission;

“major self-generation and supply” means a class of licence issued to any person who generates electricity and the entire output is for the purpose of supplying oneself only. The generation capacity limit for this class of licence shall be as specified by Order of the Commission;

“minor distributed generation” means a class of licence issued to any person who generates electricity for personal use and is permitted to sell the excess. The generation capacity limit for this class of licence shall be as specified by Order of the Commission;

“minor self-generation and supply” means a class of licence issued to any person who generates electricity and the entire output is for the purpose of supplying oneself only. The generation capacity limit for this class of licence shall be as specified by Order of the Commission;

“MW” means a million Watts;

“MW_e” means a million Watts peak;

“MWh” means a million Watts-hours;

“network licence” means a licence issued to a person for the transmission of electricity in an authorised area;

“network and retail” means a licence issued to a person for the transmission, distribution and supply of electricity in an authorised area;

“person” means an individual, company or organization;

“reseller” means a class of licence issued to any person who procure electricity for the purpose of supplying electricity services to other persons within a defined physical area;

“Sole-sourced IPP” means a class of licence issued to a single developer without competition often justified for unique circumstances, as determined by the Commission, such as expansions, emergencies, or innovative proposals;

“temporary generation” means a class of licence issued to any person, who shall provide electricity services for a pre-determined period using a mobile generation unit or to test some innovative technology;

the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity through the prescribed licence and consent regime.

(2) Notwithstanding sub-regulation (1), any operation of a project meant for electricity self-generation for less than seventy-five kilowatts (75 kW) shall not require a licence or consent under these Regulations.

PART II

Licence Categories and Licensee Responsibilities

4.—(1) The Commission may issue a licence for the generation, transmission and supply of electricity under one of the following categories—

Types of licences.

- (a) licence to all persons—
 - (i) minor self-generation and supply;
 - (ii) minor distributed generation; and
 - (iii) backup generation and supply;
 - (iv) intermediate self-generation and supply;
 - (v) intermediate distributed generation;
- (b) licence to persons of a class—
 - (i) community generation and supply;
 - (ii) reseller;
 - (iii) aggregator; and
 - (iv) temporary generation; and
- (c) licence to a particular person—
 - (i) major self-generation and supply;
 - (ii) major distributed generation;
 - (iii) independent power producers;
 - (iv) network licence;
 - (v) network and retail; and
 - (vi) Sole-sourced IPP.

5.—(1) The generation and/or storage of electric power shall be subject to a licence issued by the Commission.

Licence for electricity generation.

(2) The holder of a licence for generation and/or storage of electricity shall, subject to the approval of the Commission, have the right to—

- (a) generate and/or store electrical power to enable a supply to oneself;
- (b) generate and/or store electrical power and may sell it to other licensees or other customers in an authorised area, subject to market rules promoting competition, as promulgated by the Commission; and
- (c) access the transmission or distribution networks in accordance with a contractual agreement between the licensee and any other licensees.

Licence for
electricity
transmission.

6.—(1) The transmission of electric power shall be subject to a licence issued by the Commission.

(2) The holder of a licence for transmission of electricity shall have the right to—

- (a) buy, transmit and sell electrical energy inside Belize on their network to other licensees connected to the transmission network inside their authorised area;
- (b) use the transmission network for the provision of non-electricity services, subject to any infrastructure sharing or joint use approved by the Commission; and
- (c) may buy, transmit and sell electrical energy on a cross border basis subject to terms and conditions approved by the Commission.

Licence for
electricity
supply.

7.—(1) The supply of electricity shall be subject to a licence issued by the Commission.

(2) The holder of a licence for supply of electricity shall have the right to—

- (a) purchase electrical power from generation, transmission or other supply licensees and sell it to consumers inside Belize, consistent with any licence conditions set by the Commission;
- (b) access the distribution network in accordance with a licence obligations and associated general terms and conditions set by the Commission; and
- (c) use its distribution and supply network for the provision of non-electricity services, subject to any infrastructure sharing or joint use approved by the Commission.

- 8.** A licensee shall not—
- Prohibitions for licensee.
- (a) perform other electricity functions or activities outside those authorised in any licence conditions explicitly set by the Commission;
 - (b) perform any modifications which might influence the compatibility of the network with generators, distribution networks and neighbouring networks, which may adversely affect safety and the security of supply.

PART III

Registration and Licence Application Procedure

Licence Application

- 9.** An application for registration or for a licence shall be made in the form and manner prescribed by the Commission.
- Registration and application

Licensee to comply with licence conditions.

- 10.** A licensee shall comply with all terms and conditions of a licence set by the Commission.

Licence application submission and review.

- 11.** The Commission shall review all applications and shall process them in accordance with these Regulations.

Fees. Schedule.

- 12.** (1) An applicant for a licence shall pay to the Commission the applicable non-refundable application or registration fee as set out in Schedules I to III of these Regulations.

(2) A licensee shall pay the applicable Annual Licence Fee as set out in Schedules I to III .

(3) Annual License Fees shall comprise of:

- (a) a Fixed Component; and
- (b) where applicable, a Variable Component,

in the respect of the applicable category of licence specified in Schedules I to III.

(4) The Annual Licence Fee shall be payable:

- (a) for the first year, on a pro-rated basis from the date of issue of the licence to the last day of the calendar year;
- (b) thereafter, at the end of each calendar year; and
- (c) for the final year, on a pro-rated basis from the commencement of the calendar year to the expiry or surrender of the Licence.

(5) Where the Variable Component of the Annual Licence Fee is determined by reference to audited financial statements, the amount due shall be calculated upon submission of the audited financial statements and paid to the Commission no later than ninety (90) days after the end of the Licensee's fiscal year.

Defective filing.

13. (1) A licence application determined by the Commission to be incomplete shall be considered a defective filing.

(2) A licence application from an applicant who has not made full payment of all fees due to the Commission under a prior licence shall be considered a defective filing until full payment of the outstanding balance is made.

(3) The Commission may require the applicant to cure the defective filing before any further Commission proceedings take place.

14. (1) An applicant for a Licence to All shall only be required to register their activity with the Commission.

Licence application procedure.

(2) If the Commission determines that the application for registration is complete, it shall issue a certificate of registration.

(3) An applicant for a licence to persons of a class, licence to a particular person, and shall be subject to the procedures below

15. (1) Upon receipt of a licence application, the Commission shall cause a file to be opened to track the application which shall reflect all procedural and substantive decisions made on the licence application.

(2) The Commission within a reasonable time not exceeding ninety days after the receipt of the application, complete its review against the criteria for licence issuance under Regulation 16, and, notify the applicant as to whether its application:

- (a) is complete and satisfies the requirements for licence issuance subject to the procedures for public consultation specified herein;
- (b) is defective and needs to be resubmitted for review after the defects have been cured and such resubmission shall be treated as an application in the first instance;
- (c) is incomplete but may be further considered within its original application window provided that the missing data or information is submitted by a given deadline; or
- (d) is rejected in accordance with Regulation 17 of these Byelaws and advise whether or not the applicant is entitled to resubmit at a future point in time.

(3) If the Commission determines that the licence application is complete and satisfies the criteria, before granting the licence, it shall publish a public notice on the Commission's website, at its headquarters or on any digital platforms that is widely used by the general public, stating—

- (a) that the Commission proposes to grant a licence to the applicant ;
- (b) the reasons why it proposes to grant a licence; and
- (c) specifying the time within which representations or objections with respect to the proposed licence may be made.

(4) Directly affected parties and local authorities shall lodge any objection with the Commission within twenty-eight days after the publication of the notice and shall clearly set out the reasons for their objection on either of the following grounds:

- (a) the applicant fails to meet one or more of the criteria of licence issuance set out in Regulation 16; or
- (b) the objecting party can provide justification to support a rejection of the licence application for the reasons stated in Regulation 17 (c) through (e).

(5) Within a period not exceeding fifteen days after receiving an objection from the public, the Commission shall notify the applicant and the objector in the case where the objection is found to be relevant and may schedule a hearing of objections or otherwise provide the applicant an opportunity to respond in writing to the objection within fourteen days from the day the applicant is notified.

(6) The hearing of objections shall be conducted under specific procedures issued by the Commission, and the duration of the hearing shall not be considered as part of the licence processing timeline.

(7) The Commission shall make known its decision regarding any objection within fourteen days of receiving the applicant's response to the objections or, where scheduled, within fourteen days after the conclusion of the hearing. In making its decision, the Commission shall inform the applicant in writing whether:

- (a) the licence is granted as requested;
- (b) the licence is granted with conditions precedent that must be satisfied to cure any defects identified or resolve any valid objections received; or
- (c) the licence application is rejected due to sufficient evidence to sustain any objections received and the Commission shall advise whether or not the applicant is entitled to resubmit at a future point in time.

Criteria for
licence issuance.

- 16.** The Commission shall issue a licence to an applicant who—
- (a) fulfils all technical, operational and safety conditions in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and standards;
 - (b) has demonstrated the technical and financial capacity and readiness to perform all related activities applied for and to provide safe and reliable services in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and standards;
 - (c) has demonstrated the technical and financial capacity to decommission the physical facilities covered by the licence upon termination of the licence term in full compliance with all applicable technical and environmental requirements;
 - (d) has sufficient employees with appropriate qualifications to perform its activities;
 - (e) has demonstrated the capacity to provide accounting reports and other financial information required by the Commission in the format and detail prescribed;
 - (f) has provided appropriate financial guarantees of performance to assure that the licensee will fulfill all licence conditions, including, but not limited to, surety bonds, escrow accounts or letters of credit;
 - (g) fulfils all established criteria for the protection of the environment;
 - (h) has right, title and interest to conduct the proposed activities on the site selected, or can obtain such right, title and interest;
 - (i) has demonstrated that they will comply with all applicable laws and other regulations, including but not limited to, regulations made by the Commission regulations and decisions of the Commission; and
 - (j) has satisfied any other substantive criteria that the Commission determines necessary to fully protect the public health, safety and welfare.

Reasons for
rejection of
licence
application.

- 17.** The Commission shall reject a licence application if—
- (a) the application was incomplete and the requested information was not submitted within the deadline set by the Commission;
 - (b) the applicant failed to demonstrate that it could meet the criteria for licence issuance under Regulation 16;

- (c) the Commission determines that granting the licence may result in unfair competitive advantage or market disruption;
- (d) the Commission determines that granting of the licence may create excessive capacity or infrastructure duplication leading to economic or operational inefficiencies ; or
- (e) the Commission determines it is necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

PART IV

Licence Amendment and Renewal

- 18.** A Licence holder shall file an application for any licence renewal at least three hundred and sixty one hundred and eighty days prior to the expiration of the current licence or such shorter period as the Commission may determine. Application for renewal of licence.
- 19.** A licence renewal shall be subject to the same procedures and approval criteria as an initial licence application. Procedure for renewal of licence.
- 20.** Where the Commission has decided to renew a licence, the Commission shall issue the licence not later than thirty days prior to the expiration of the current licence. Timing for renewal of licence by commission.

PART V

Licence Withdrawal, Suspension, and Cancellation

- 21.**—(1) The Commission may withdraw a licence not yet operational if the licensee— Withdrawal of licence.
- (a) obtained the licence through fraud or the misrepresentation or non-disclosure of a material fact; or
 - (b) willfully or unreasonably contravenes any provision of the Act, Regulations, Orders, or Codes of Practices;
 - (c) fails to comply with the terms and conditions upon which the licence was issued; and
 - (d) becomes insolvent or is adjudged bankrupt.
- (2) The Commission shall inform the licensee in writing of the grounds upon which the Commission proposes to withdraw the licence and shall give the licensee a reasonable opportunity to make representations against the proposed withdrawal.
- (3) Where the licensee chooses to make a representation, it shall make its representation within thirty days from the date of its receipt of the

Commission's letter informing it of the grounds upon which the Commission proposes to withdraw its licence.

(4) The Commission shall take into cognizance the representation made by the licensee in reaching a final decision and such decision of the Commission shall be communicated to the licensee in writing.

(5) If the Commission decides to withdraw a licence, it shall notify the licensee of its decision in writing, and may make orders to that effect.

(6) A licence which has been withdrawn cannot be reactivated, amended, renewed, or have the tenure extended.

Conduct inquiry.

22.—(1) The Commission may on its own initiative or upon receiving a complaint or information from any consumer, interested parties, other relevant authorities or other licensees, initiate an inquiry into the conduct or activities of any licensee.

Suspension and cancellation of licence.

23.—(1) The Commission may suspend or cancel a licence if the licensee—

- (a) obtained the licence through fraud or the misrepresentation or non-disclosure of a material fact;
- (b) willfully or unreasonably contravenes any provisions of the Act, Regulations, Orders, or Codes of Practices;
- (c) has failed to comply with any term or condition of the licence, the breach of which is expressly declared to render it liable to suspension or cancellation;
- (d) becomes insolvent or is adjudged bankrupt; or
- (e) is unable to fully and efficiently discharge the duties and obligations imposed by the licence due to financial constraints.

PART VI

Consent

Consent required for generation facilities and transmission lines.

24.—(1) Notwithstanding that a person may have a valid licence granted by the Commission, A generating station or facility shall not be constructed, extended or operated, except in accordance with a consent granted by the Commission.

(2) In granting consent under sub-regulation (1), the Commission may—

- (a) apply reasonable restrictions on the siting and operation of electric generators as they affect air emissions, water quality, noise, flora and fauna, archaeological patrimony and conflicting land uses; and
- (b) regulate the use of electric generators in order to promote health, safety, welfare gains and sustainable development goals.

(3) Notwithstanding that a person may have a valid licence granted by the Commission, An electric transmission line shall not be installed or kept installed above or under the ground, except in accordance with a consent granted by the Commission.

(4) In granting consent under sub-regulation (3), the Commission may—

- (a) apply reasonable restrictions on the siting of electric lines as they affect flora and fauna, archaeological sites and conflicting land uses; and
- (b) regulate the use of electric lines in order to promote health, safety and sustainable development goals.

(5) The Commission may include such terms and conditions and such standards of construction or operation when granting consent that the Commission determines appropriate for the safe and proper operation and maintenance of any relevant facilities or for protection of, or mitigation against damage to, the physical environment.

(6) The Commission may by Order further elaborate on the types of generating stations and any related or associated production process defined as “relevant proposals” under the Act.

25.—(1) Notwithstanding regulation 23, the Commission may grant exemption from obtaining a consent for the following—

Exemption from consent.

- (a) a terrestrially-located generation station which is to be constructed or extended and which shall—
 - (i) not exceed one-(1) MW in aggregate at a site; or
 - (ii) be operated in co-generation mode and will not exceed two-(2) MW in aggregate at a site;
- (b) an aquatic or wetland-located generation station which is to be constructed or extended and which shall not exceed two hundred and fifty-(250) kW in aggregate at a site;
- (c) a fossil-fuel fired generation station which is to be constructed or extended and which shall—

- (i) not exceed five hundred-(500) kW in aggregate at a site; or
 - (ii) be operated in co-generation mode and shall not exceed one-(1) MW in aggregate at a site;
- (d) a generating station or facility, or an electric transmission line as the Commission may determine by Order from time to time.
- (2) An exemption under sub-regulation (1) shall not exempt persons from having to obtain–
- (a) any requisite written approval in order to ensure compliance with the prevailing construction codes for electric systems; and
 - (b) other permits or approvals from any local authorities, planning and building authorities or environmental compliance authorities as may be applicable.
- (3) The Commission shall register a generation facility which is granted exemption from obtaining a consent.

Application for consent.

25.–(1) An application for consent under this Part shall be made in writing in such form and in such manner, and shall contain such information and particulars and shall be accompanied by such details as may from time to time be specified by the Commission or as may be contained in any respective general authorisation made by Order of the Commission.

(2) Upon receipt of the application for a consent, the Commission shall review the application and notify the applicant within twenty-eight days of any further information required to process that application and of the deadline for submission of such further information.

(3) An application for a consent under this section shall be accompanied by a non-refundable fee as set out in the Schedule IV.

(4) Within fourteen days after making an application, the applicant shall–

- (a) publish a notice of the application in at least two local newspapers with national circulation; and
- (b) directly notify any relevant authorities having jurisdiction in respect of physical planning and approval of environmental compliance plans.

(5) The notices referred to in sub-regulation (4) shall specify a period of not less than twenty-eight days in which any interested person or any relevant authorities having jurisdiction in respect of physical planning and approval of environmental compliance plans may object.

(6) Where any relevant authority notifies the Commission that it objects to the application and its objection is not withdrawn, and where the Commission does not propose to accede to the application subject to such modifications or conditions as will give effect to the objections of the relevant authority, the Commission shall—

- (a) cause a public inquiry to be held; and
- (b) before determining whether to give the consent, consider the objection and the report of the person who held the inquiry.

(7) Before granting a consent, the Commission shall give notice—

- (a) stating that it proposes to grant the consent;
- (b) stating the reasons why it proposes to grant the Consent; and
- (c) specifying the time, not being less than twenty-eight days from the date of publication of the notice, within which representations or objections with respect to the proposed consent may be made and shall consider any representations or objections which are duly made and not withdrawn.

(8) A notice under sub-regulation (7) shall be given by publication in such manner as the Commission considers appropriate for bringing it to the attention of persons likely to be affected by the granting of the consent.

(9) In deciding whether to grant a consent, the Commission shall take the following into account—

- (a) the matters set out in the application;
- (b) any submission received during the process of consultation as set out in sub-regulations (4), (5) and (6); and
- (c) any other considerations the Commission determines necessary.

PART VII

Miscellaneous Provisions

26.—(1) The licence applicant may request a specific period of time for the licence term in the application;

Term of licences.

(2) The Commission shall issue a licence for a defined period of time, and may make provisions for the licence to be renewed for a subsequent period thereafter.

(3) The maximum term for a licence shall be fifteen years, and the maximum renewal period shall be ten years.

(4) Where a person has enjoyed a licence term as prescribed in sub-regulation (3) and is desirous of continuing to conduct electricity activities, that person shall apply for a new licence as provided for in Part III.

27. The Electricity Licensing and Consent Regulations, as amended, is repealed.

Repeal.
S.I. 39 of 2024.
S. I. 154 of 2024.
S.I. 69 of 2025

28. Notwithstanding the repeal, any person who is currently conducting electricity activities pursuant to a licence granted by the Commission prior to the entry into force of these Regulations may continue to conduct the relevant electricity activity in accordance with that licence until the expiry of their current term and upon expiry of that term, shall apply for a new licence pursuant these Regulations.

Transitional.

29.—(1) It is an offence to conduct relevant electricity activities within Belize without obtaining the appropriate licence or consent of the Commission.

Offence and penalty.

(2) Offences and enforcement penalties shall be pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Electricity Act and the Public Utilities Commission Act.

CAP. 221.
CAP. 223.

MADE by the Public Utilities Commission this day of , 2026.

**DEAN MOLINA
CHAIRPERSON
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

APPROVED by the Minister responsible for electricity this day of , 2026.

HON. MICHEL CHEBAT
Minister of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics & E-Governance
(Minister responsible for electricity)

SCHEDULE I
Licence to All Persons
 [regulation 12]

Licence Category	Registration	Annual Licence Fee		
		Fixed Component	Variable Component	Total
Minor Self-Generation and Supply	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minor Distributed Generation	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Backup Generation and Supply (>75 kW)	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Intermediate Self-Generation and Supply	\$1000.00	\$250.00	\$0.00	Sum of Fixed and Variable
Intermediate Distributed Generation	\$1000.00	\$250.00	\$3.00/kW of installed capacity	Sum of Fixed and Variable

SCHEDULE II
Licence to Persons of a Class
 [regulation 12]

Licence Category	Application	Annual Licence Fee		
		Fixed Component	Variable Component	Total
Community Generation and Supply	\$1000.00	\$250.00	\$3.00/kW of installed capacity	Sum of Fixed and Variable
Reseller	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Aggregator	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Temporary Generation	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

SCHEDULE III
Licence to a Particular Person
[regulation 12]

Licence Category	Application	Annual Licence Fee		
		Fixed Component	Variable Component	Total
Major Self-Generation and Supply	\$2,000.00	\$1000.00	\$0.00	Fixed
Major Distributed Generation	\$2,000.00	\$1000.00	\$4.00/kW of installed capacity	Sum of Fixed and Variable
Independent Power Producers	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	0.5% of Gross Audited earnings on sales to entities other than a Network & Retail Licensee	Sum of Fixed and Variable
Network Licence	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	0.5% of Gross Audited earnings	Sum of Fixed and Variable
Network and Retail	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	1% of Gross Audited Earnings	Sum of Fixed and Variable
Sole-sourced IPP	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	0.5% of Gross Audited earnings on sales to entities other than a Network & Retail Licensee	Sum of Fixed and Variable

SCHEDULE IV
Consent Fees
[regulation 25(3)]

Consent Type	Fee
All Consents	10% of the Relevant Application/Registration Fee