

# EDO STATE SMALL CLAIMS COURT

## SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)



### 1. PREAMBLE

This Service Level Agreement (SLA) is developed in line with the **Practice Directions on Small Claims Court, 2020** issued by the Honourable Chief Judge of Edo State. The SLA defines clear service standards, timelines, responsibilities, and performance benchmarks for the efficient operation of the Edo State Small Claims Court, in furtherance of access to justice, speedy dispute resolution, and improvement of the business-enabling environment.

### 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SLA

The objectives of this SLA are to: - Ensure speedy, inexpensive, and efficient resolution of small claims disputes. - Provide certainty and transparency on timelines and court processes for court users. - Improve public confidence in the justice delivery system. - Support Edo State's Business Enabling Reform Action Plan (BERAP) by strengthening contract enforcement and dispute resolution.

### 3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This SLA applies to: - All Magistrates' Courts designated as Small Claims Courts in Edo State. - Judicial officers, court registries, bailiffs, and administrative staff involved in Small Claims Court operations. - Litigants, businesses, and members of the public accessing Small Claims Court services.

### 4. SERVICE STANDARDS AND TIMELINES

#### 4.1 Commencement of Action

- Eligible claims shall be screened and marked "**Qualified for Small Claims**" upon filing.
- Filing and payment of applicable fees shall be completed on the same day of submission.

**Service Standard:** Same day

#### 4.2 Assignment of Cases

- Small Claims files shall be forwarded to the Administrative Magistrate within **24 hours** of filing.
- Assignment to a Magistrate shall be completed within **24 hours** of receipt.

**Service Standard:** Maximum of 48 hours from filing

#### 4.3 Service of Summons

- Summons shall be served by the Court Registry within **7 days** of filing.
- Affidavit of Service shall be filed within **2 days** of service.
- Where service is unsuccessful, an Affidavit of Non-Service shall be filed immediately after expiration of service period.

**Service Standard:** Maximum of 9 days

#### 4.4 Filing of Defence, Admission, or Counterclaim

- Defendant shall file Defence, Admission, or Counterclaim within **7 days** of service of Summons.
- Reply to Defence or Counterclaim shall be filed within **5 days** of service.

**Service Standard:** Strict adherence to statutory timelines

#### 4.5 Hearing and Case Management

- The Court shall encourage amicable settlement at first appearance, not exceeding **7 days**.
- Where settlement fails, pre-trial conference and hearing shall be conducted expeditiously.
- Adjournments shall be granted only in exceptional circumstances and not more than once per party.

**Service Standard:** Hearing period not exceeding **30 days** from first hearing date

#### 4.6 Delivery of Judgment

- Judgment shall be delivered within **14 days** of completion of hearing.
- Entire proceedings from filing to judgment shall not exceed **60 days**.
- Certified copies of judgment shall be issued within **7 days** of delivery.

**Service Standard:** Full resolution within 60 days

#### 4.7 Enforcement of Judgment

- Judgment debtor shall comply and pay judgment sum within **14 days** of delivery of judgment.
- Enforcement proceedings shall commence immediately upon default.

**Service Standard:** Enforcement actions initiated within 7 days of default

#### 4.8 Appeals

- Notice of Appeal shall be filed within **14 days** of judgment.
- Records of appeal shall be compiled and transmitted within **14 days** of filing the Notice of Appeal.

**Service Standard:** Appeal records ready within 14 days

### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 5.1 The Court

- Ensure strict compliance with timelines set out in the Practice Directions and this SLA.
- Promote transparency, fairness, and efficiency in proceedings.

#### 5.2 Registry Staff

- Ensure prompt filing, processing, assignment, and service of court processes.
- Maintain accurate records and case tracking.

#### 5.3 Bailiffs and Designated Officers

- Effect timely service of court processes.

- File affidavits of service or non-service within stipulated timelines.

#### 5.4 Court Users

- Provide accurate information and comply with filing requirements.
- Adhere strictly to timelines and court directives.

### 6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING

- Monthly reports shall be generated on case inflow, resolution timelines, and compliance with SLA standards.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) shall include average case duration, service efficiency, and user satisfaction.

### 7. COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISM

- Court users may submit complaints or feedback through the Court Registry.
- All complaints shall be acknowledged within **48 hours** and resolved within **7 days** where practicable.

### 8. REVIEW OF THE SLA

This SLA shall be reviewed periodically to reflect operational realities, reforms, and policy directions of the Edo State Judiciary.

### 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Service Level Agreement shall take effect immediately upon approval by the Edo State Judiciary and shall remain in force until reviewed.

Signed by:



Coordinator, Edo State Small Claims Court