

Nigeria Turns AfCFTA Policy Into Projects

• The Trade Agenda Moves From Strategy To Execution Across Key Sectors

Nigeria's AfCFTA journey is entering a decisive phase. After years of treaty-making and cautious positioning, 2025 marked a clear shift from ambition to execution, as policy commitments were translated into institutions, market access tools, and logistics interventions designed to make continental trade workable in practice. **Enam Obiosio** examines whether that emerging framework can now deliver what signatures alone could not, measurable exports, scalable firms, and sustained investment, and why 2026 will be the year Nigeria's AfCFTA strategy is judged not by intent, but by outcomes.

The country's AfCFTA strategy crossed an execution threshold in 2025, moving from treaty obligations to system building. The Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment led a concentrated push that stitched policy, institutions, trade facilitation, and market intelligence into a national AfCFTA operating model. The result is a compact of actions that materially change Nigeria's position inside the continental market.

Key institutional leaps signal a new phase. The AfCFTA Central Coordination Committee was inaugurated to unify over 20 stakeholder institutions across the public and private sectors, the Committee published a National Action Plan Framework, and an Institutional Barometer was created to measure performance and accountability. Significantly, Nigeria became the first AfCFTA State Party to conclude and publish the five-year implementation review prescribed by Article 28, a move that reframes implementation as a monitored enterprise rather than an administrative box.

On market-facing interventions, the ministry gazetted Nigeria's Provisional Schedule of Tariff Concessions for Trade in Goods, making Nigerian exports eligible for preferential tariff treatment in partner markets that have reciprocally gazetted their schedules. To address the perennial logistics cost problem, the government launched a dedicated Exports Air Cargo Corridor to East and Southern Africa, in partnership with Uganda Airlines and UNDP, with cargo rates reported at 50 percent to 75 percent cheaper than prevailing alternatives.

Nigeria also prioritised digital trade. In November 2025 the country ratified the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade, it conducted a national mapping of digital services that identified more than 200 firms across 17 sectors, and it convened a Regional Digital Trade Market Access and Regulators' Roundtable which established a working group among five priority countries. At the continental leadership level, Nigeria secured hosting rights for high-visibility platforms including the Intra-African Trade Fair 2027, the Creative Africa Nexus 2026, and the AfCFTA Council of Ministers meeting for 2026.

Collectively, these steps aim to reduce trade friction, create visible incentives for exporters, and give Nigerian firms a head start at regulation and market access. But making policy useful requires firms that

can meet buyer specifications, financiers willing to underwrite exports and working capital at scale, and state and non-state actors that sustain coordination. The Institutional Barometer will be crucial to ensure the Central Coordination Committee's commitments turn into measurable outcomes.

Implementation risks are real. Lower carriage costs on one corridor will not offset gaps in standards compliance, customs automation, and last-mile logistics across dozens of markets. Yet the combination of tariff activation, logistics intervention, digital trade readiness, and convening power positions Nigeria to convert domestic production into continental sales, provided the private sector and financiers move at pace with policy.

DATA BOX

- AfCFTA Central Coordination Committee: 20+

cheaper for East and Southern Africa routes.

- Hosting wins: Intra-African Trade Fair 2027, Creative Africa Nexus 2026, AfCFTA Council of Ministers 2026.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins

- Export-ready manufacturers, agro-processors and textile firms able to meet standards and scale.
- Digital service exporters targeted at Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa.
- Logistics and trade-enabler firms that capture corridor volume and efficiencies.

Who Loses

- Small producers absent product standard upgrades and market intelligence.
- Firms dependent on expensive freight networks



Dr. Jumoke Oduwole, Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment

stakeholder institutions.

- Five-year AfCFTA implementation review: completed and published, first among State Parties.
- Provisional Schedule of Tariff Concessions gazetted: April 2025.
- Digital services mapping: 200+ firms across 17 sectors.
- Exports Air Cargo Corridor: cargo rates 50–75%

that fail to access the new corridor.

POLICY SIGNALS

- Nigeria is shifting from AfCFTA advocacy to operationalisation.
- Digital trade is an explicit national priority, supported by ratification and firm mapping.
- Trade facilitation now includes tactical logistics interventions, such as subsidised air cargo corridors.

Eterna Plc launches a N21.52bn rights issue to strengthen its balance sheet and fund downstream expansion.

Read the full Decision Memo in Pg 9

Nigeria's 2026 economic agenda marks a shift from stabilisation to growth, targeting jobs, investment, and a \$1 trillion economy.

Discover what's Nigeria 2026 economic agenda is all about in Pg 2

Nigeria's equity market crosses N100 trillion, as President Tinubu frames the milestone as a new economic reality.

Read the full story in Pg 7

Nigeria Eyes 2026 As Transition Year For Growth

• Jobs, Capital, A \$1tn Economy Drive The Government's Agenda

By Johnson Emmanuel

The Federal Government has laid out an expansive economic agenda for 2026, positioning the year as a turning point in Nigeria's reform cycle, from stabilisation to expansion. The strategy is designed to accelerate growth, create jobs, and mobilise large volumes of domestic and foreign investment as the economy targets a \$1 trillion GDP by 2036.

In a statement signed by the Honourable Minister of State for Finance, Doris Uzoka-Anite, the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu said it is building on reforms implemented over the past two years, including exchange rate unification, energy market restructuring, and fiscal consolidation.

According to the government, 2026 marks the point where policy emphasis shifts decisively from macro stabilisation to output expansion, capital formation, and productivity growth. The new strategy is anchored on macroeconomic predictability, sector-specific investment pathways, and disciplined policy execution, all aimed at restoring investor confidence and reducing uncertainty.

The Honourable Ministry of Finance stated that it will anchor a Growth Acceleration and Investment Mobilisation Strategy to strengthen stability and position Nigeria as a preferred destination for long-term foreign direct investment. The objective is to scale output, deepen domestic value creation, and move the economy onto a credible trajectory toward a \$1 trillion GDP by 2036.

A key pillar of this ambition is the domestication of supply chains under the Nigeria First Policy, using local raw materials, labour, and intellectual property while building an open, export-oriented economy supported by strong domestic demand.

On macroeconomic coordination, the government pledged close alignment with the Central Bank of Nigeria to support disinflation, exchange rate stability, and orderly credit conditions. Fiscal and monetary coordination, it said, remains essential to compress sovereign risk premiums and lower the cost of capital for both public and private investment.

The ministry adopted the CBN's December 30, 2025 macroeconomic outlook as its baseline and said it would work with the apex bank and the Nigeria Revenue Service to implement a disinflation and growth acceleration strategy aimed at restoring investment-grade fundamentals over the medium term.

Growth will be driven through a sector-led strategy designed to unlock private capital and stimulate exports and domestic demand. Barriers to entry are to be dismantled, price controls reduced, and a willing-buyer willing-seller philosophy embedded into sector regulations. Priority sectors identified include energy and gas-based industrialisation, agribusiness and food value chains, manufacturing and light industry, housing and urban infrastructure, healthcare and life sciences, digital services, creative and tourism industries, logistics and distribution infrastructure, as well as solid minerals and critical metals.

Federal ministries, state governments, and development partners are expected to align around a common investment thesis built on policy clarity, bankable projects, and rapid removal of regulatory bottlenecks. Sector-specific working groups will be established to fast-track reforms and investment pipelines capable of absorbing large volumes of capital.

Capital formation sits at the centre of the 2026 agenda. The government plans reforms to deepen capital and insurance markets, expand long-tenor local currency instruments, improve liquidity and transparency, and strengthen investor protections. Regulatory changes are expected to increase participation by pension funds, insurance firms, and institutional investors, while insurance reforms will

focus on recapitalisation, supervision, and expanded coverage to manage economic and climate risks.

To translate macro reforms into welfare gains, the government said it would prioritise financial inclusion and expand consumer credit to households, microenterprises, and the informal sector. Partnerships with banks, microfinance institutions, fintech firms, and credit guarantee schemes will be deepened, with particular focus on women, youth-led enterprises, and first-time borrowers.

The Ministry of Finance also announced it would assume responsibility for development finance functions previously handled by the central bank, issu-

ing new guidelines for a forward-looking DFI strategy. With Nigeria estimated to require about N246 trillion in long-term capital through 2036, institutions such as the Bank of Industry and the Nigerian Export-Import Bank are to be strengthened to de-risk priority sectors and crowd in private investment.

On fiscal sustainability, the government said it would strengthen non-oil revenue mobilisation through improved compliance, digital systems, and transparency. New federal tax laws will take effect from January 1, 2026, alongside the rollout of a Revenue Optimisation Platform across ministries and agencies.

A major shift is the adoption of electronic receipts

FG Maps 2026 as Nigeria's Transition Year for Jobs, Capital and \$1tn Economy

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

- The Decision**
Transition From Stabilisation To Growth Engine
- What Changed**
2026 Growth Acceleration & Investment Mobilisation Strategy
- Who Benefits**
Investors, Job-Intensive Sectors, Capital Markets
- Who Pays**
Fiscal Flexibility, Non-Compliant Firms

What's at Stake? Capital Market

WHO WINS WHO LOSES

- WHO WINS**
Long-Term Investors And DFIs
Job-Intensive and Export-Oriented Sectors
Capital Markets And Institutional Investors
Households Accessing Expanded Credit
- WHO LOSES**
Short-Term Rent-Seeking Activities
Firms Reliant On Opaque Revenue And Tax Systems
Sectors Unable To Adapt To Tighter Compliance

POLICY SIGNALS

- Nigeria Is Moving From Reform Correction to Growth Scaling.
- Capital Mobilisation, Not Stimulus, Is The Growth Engine: Fiscal and Monetary Policy.

RISK RADAR

- Weak Execution Across Ministries And Sectors
- Slippage in Debt Restructuring Plans
- Revenue underperformance Despite New Systems

2026 GROWTH AGENDA SNAPSHOT

- Target GDP (2036): \$1 trillion**
- Estimated Long-Term Capital Requirement: ₦246 trillion**
- Policy Phase Shift: Stabilisation to Expansion (2026)**
- Electronic Receipts Mandatory: January 1, 2026**
- New Federal Tax Laws Effective: January 1, 2026**

BOTTOM LINE: Nigeria is shifting from fixing imbalances to scaling growth. Credibility now rests on execution discipline.

AFCTA

as the sole legal proof of payment for all federal services, from railway tickets and birth certificates to customs duties, effective January 1, 2026. The government expects this to improve real-time revenue visibility, reduce leakages, and strengthen cash management.

The government also pledged deeper coordination with Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited and petroleum regulators to improve revenue assurance and fiscal accountability, while

reviewing pricing and domestic supply constraints that limit capital expansion in the sector.

Finally, the administration said it would restructure Nigeria's domestic debt profile to reduce short-term interest burdens, extend maturities, and free up fiscal space for infrastructure, human capital, and growth-enhancing investments. Lower debt servicing costs, it argued, would crowd in private investment and redirect capital toward productive sectors.

Private Credit Targets Nigeria's SME Credit Gap

● ARM's N200bn Platform Aims To Unlock Long-Term Business Financing



L-R: Mrs. Yinka Edu, Partner at UUBO law firm; Mounir Bouba, ED, ARM Investment Managers; Wale Odutola, Group Chief Executive Officer of ARM Holdings; Deji Opeola, the Chief Executive Officer of ARM Private Debt Fund, and Sola Selene, CEO Leadway Trustees at the lunch of ARM Private Debt Fund in Lagos. | Credit: ARM Private Debt Fund.

By Olumide Johnson

ARM Investment Managers has unveiled a N200 billion private debt programme designed to expand access to long-term financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria.

The initiative was announced in Lagos with the launch of Series I of the ARM Private Debt Fund, a closed-ended private credit vehicle targeting scalable SMEs across priority sectors.

Series I is seeking an initial raise of N25 billion as part of the broader N200 billion shelf programme registered under applicable regulatory frameworks. The fund will deploy capital through senior secured term loans, revolving credit facilities, and selective subordinated debt.

Decision Context:

SMEs contribute nearly half of Nigeria's GDP and over 80 percent of employment, yet face chronic long-term credit constraints.

Capital Structure:

N200 billion private debt shelf programme, with an initial N25 billion Series I raise.

Instrument Mix:

Senior secured loans, revolving facilities, and selective subordinated debt.

Strategic Objective:

Bridge Nigeria's SME financing gap while delivering stable, risk-adjusted returns to long-term investors.

MEMO

ARM's private debt launch is a response to a structural failure rather than a cyclical gap. Despite SMEs' dominance in employment and economic output, the banking system remains ill-suited to provide long-tenor capital at scale. Regulatory constraints, rising interest rates, and balance-sheet pressures have made banks increasingly risk-averse, leaving viable businesses underfunded.

The private debt fund is positioned as an institutional alternative to this constraint. By focusing on senior secured, asset-backed, and covenant-protected facilities, ARM is prioritising capital preservation alongside growth financing. The design reflects a recognition that SME credit in Nigeria requires both patience and discipline, not concess-

sional lending.

Sector selection reinforces this logic. Manufacturing, trade and distribution, agribusiness value chains excluding primary agriculture, services, logistics, and technology-enabled businesses offer clearer cash-flow visibility and asset cover than informal micro-enterprises. The objective is not broad financial inclusion, but scalable enterprise financing capable of compounding value.

From an investor perspective, the fund's targeted return profile of roughly 300 basis points above the Federal Government of Nigeria's 10-year bond reframes SME exposure as a yield-enhancing diversifier rather than a developmental concession. The emphasis on governance, underwriting, and active portfolio management signals an attempt to institutionalise private credit standards within a market long dominated by bank lending.

At a macro level, the initiative reflects a deeper

shift toward alternative asset classes. As articulated by ARM Holdings' leadership, infrastructure, private debt, agriculture, and other underrepresented sectors are increasingly viewed as the engines of inclusive growth. Private credit, in this context, becomes a bridge between idle long-term capital and productive enterprises constrained by traditional finance.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins:

- Scalable SMEs with strong cash flows but limited bank access
- Institutional investors seeking yield diversification
- Value chains benefiting from expanded SME capacity

Who Loses:

- SMEs unable to meet governance and credit standards
- Banks constrained by capital and regulatory limits

POLICY SIGNALS

The fund underscores a growing policy reality that inclusive growth will increasingly rely on capital market and private credit solutions rather than bank balance sheets alone.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Private credit is emerging as a viable, institutionally structured asset class in Nigeria. Investors are being offered yield premium with downside protection through security, covenants, and active management.

RISK RADAR

- Credit execution risk in a volatile macro environment
- FX and inflation pressures affecting SME cash flows
- Limited secondary liquidity typical of private debt vehicles.

ARM's N200 billion programme is ultimately a bet on structure. By institutionalising private credit, the firm is positioning SME finance not as a policy aspiration, but as an investable asset class capable of delivering both impact and returns.

DATA BOX

Total programme size: N200 billion

Series I target: N25 billion

Nigeria SME financing gap: \$32.2 billion

Africa SME credit gap: Over \$40 billion

Private credit AUM in Africa: \$3.3 billion

Target return: ~300bps above FGN 10-year bond

Portfolio allocation: Minimum 80% in senior secured, asset-backed facilities

Governance by Design, Not by Default

When a financial holding company refreshes the boards of its non-bank subsidiaries with regulatory clearance in hand, the action should be read not as routine compliance but as a signal. The recent board appointments across non-commercial banking subsidiaries of First HoldCo Plc, following approvals from Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), offer such a signal. For regulators, investors, and the wider market, this moment invites a deeper conversation about what modern governance should look like in Nigeria's increasingly complex financial ecosystem.

We see in these appointments a deliberate attempt to separate symbolism from substance. Boards were not merely filled; they were curated. Across asset management, capital markets, securities brokerage, trusteeship, and insurance, the profiles reflect experience, diversity of thought, and sectoral depth. This matters because governance failures in Nigeria's financial history rarely stemmed from the absence of boards; they arose from boards that existed in form but not in function.

Consider the spread. At First Asset Management Limited, leadership anchored by deep exposure to banking, capital markets, and consulting sends a message about fiduciary seriousness. At FirstCap Limited, the mix of public and private sector finance experience suggests an appreciation of policy risk alongside market risk. At First Securities Brokers Limited, coming on the heels of its strong performance on the Nigerian Exchange, the appointments look like an effort to ensure that commercial success is matched by oversight discipline, not undermined by it.

For SEC, this is precisely the

governance posture the market has been calling for. Nigeria's capital markets are evolving from transactional platforms into long-term capital formation engines. That shift demands boards that understand not just quarterly performance but disclosure standards, conflicts management, and investor protection across cycles. We believe the SEC's role should now go beyond approvals to active post-appointment supervision, testing whether these boards translate credentials into conduct.

The insurance and brokerage angle is even more instructive. For NAICOM, the appointment of seasoned professionals to insurance brokerage and trust-related entities reinforces an overdue truth: insurance governance cannot remain a compliance footnote. With penetration still low and public trust fragile, NAICOM's regulatory philosophy must keep pushing firms toward boards that can manage underwriting risk, claims integrity, and reputational exposure with equal rigor.

We are particularly struck by the emphasis on trusteeship and estate management. In a market where intergenerational wealth transfer, pension reform, and collective investment schemes are expanding, weak governance in trust structures would be systemic, not isolated. Appointing leaders with decades of global banking and wealth management experience signals recognition of this latent risk. It also places a burden on regulators to ensure that such experience is not diluted by legacy practices or internal inertia.

The broader lesson for Nigeria's financial holding companies is clear. Conglomerate structures amplify both opportunity and risk. Non-bank subsidiaries are no longer peripheral appendages; they are revenue drivers, reputational

carriers, and regulatory stress points. Governance, therefore, must be designed intentionally across the group, not inherited unevenly from the banking core.

We note, too, the public articulation by Mr. Femi Otedola, emphasizing resilience, stakeholder value, and economic contribution. These are appropriate ambitions, but they also set measurable expectations. Resilience is tested in downturns, not expansions. Stakeholder value includes minority investors and clients, not just balance sheets. Economic contribution is judged by transparency and market confidence, not press statements.

For the SEC and NAICOM, this episode should become a reference point. It demonstrates how regulatory approval, when aligned with credible board composition, can nudge institutions toward better outcomes without heavy-handed intervention. But it also underscores the need for vigilance. Approvals are the beginning of accountability, not the end.

We therefore argue that regulators should use this moment to deepen board effectiveness reviews, insist on continuous director education, and demand clearer disclosures on how boards of non-bank subsidiaries manage risk, remuneration, and related-party transactions. The credibility of Nigeria's financial system will increasingly depend on how well governance travels down the holding company chain.

In the end, markets reward clarity. When governance is intentional, investors speculate less and trust more. If these appointments translate into stronger oversight and cleaner execution, then both regulators and the market will have gained. If not, the lesson will be harsher. We believe Nigeria cannot afford the latter.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Why StakeBridge Exists

Nigeria does not suffer from a lack of information. It suffers from a lack of clarity. Every reform cycle produces volumes of data, statements, and commentary, yet ordinary readers, investors, and decision-makers are often left asking the same questions, what actually changed, who gained, who lost, and what happens next.

StakeBridge Media exists to answer those questions without noise.

We are not economists writing for economists. We are journalists who believe that policy, markets, and corporate decisions should be explained in plain language, anchored in evidence, and framed around consequences. Our reporting begins where traditional coverage often stops, at the decision point.

That is why we practise Decision Memo Journalism.

Each story asks a simple set of questions. What decision was made. Why it mattered. Who benefited. Who bore the cost. What signal readers should watch next. This structure is not a style choice. It is a discipline.

Nigeria's economy is too important for vague optimism or abstract critique. Citizens deserve reporting that respects facts without hiding behind jargon. Investors deserve context without hype. Policymakers deserve scrutiny without hostility.

StakeBridge is a bridge between data and meaning. We did not chase headlines. We traced outcomes. We showed how inflation slowed but food prices stayed high. How FX calmed but confidence remained conditional. How reforms stabilised the system but jobs lagged behind.

This is the work we will continue to do.

Not to predict the future, but to clarify the choices shaping it.

Enam Obiosio

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Why Investors Are Repricing Strategy In 2026

• Resilience Now Matters More Than Cycle-Driven Returns

By Olumide Johnson

Global investors are entering 2026 with muted macro expectations and heightened risk awareness, according to PwC's Global Investor Survey. Fewer than one-third of respondents expect global gross domestic product (GDP) growth to exceed 2%, shifting investor focus away from economic tailwinds toward company-level resilience, governance strength, and disciplined innovation execution.

Decision Context:

Persistent inflation, geopolitical fragmentation, cyber exposure, and technology disruption continue to constrain global growth expectations.

Investor Recalibration:

Capital allocation decisions are increasingly tied to resilience metrics rather than macro recovery assumptions.

Strategic Priority:

Protect cash flows while pursuing innovation that demonstrably reshapes productivity, margins, and revenue.

Time Horizon:

Average investor holding periods now exceed five years, favouring durable transformation over short-term performance spikes.

MEMO

The 2026 investor mindset marks a structural shift. Rather than waiting for macro conditions to improve, capital providers are effectively outsourcing growth responsibility to corporate leadership. Resilience is no longer a defensive attribute; it is the entry ticket to innovation capital.

Investors are clear-eyed about risk density. Cyber threats, technological disruption, inflation, and geopolitical stress are no longer episodic concerns but permanent operating conditions. The survey shows that more than half of investors rate cyber and technology risks as high or extreme, reinforcing the expectation that companies must actively manage downside exposure while still delivering transformation.

What differentiates investable firms is not the scale of innovation spend but the credibility of execution. Investors want evidence that technology investments translate into productivity gains, cost curve shifts, and sustainable revenue, supported by governance that prevents fragility. This explains why transparency and control frameworks now carry valuation weight comparable to growth narratives.

The result is a repricing of leadership credibility. Companies that articulate how innovation survives stress scenarios earn patience. Those that rely on macro recovery to mask structural weaknesses do not.

DATA BOX

- Investors expecting global GDP growth above 2%: <33%
- High or extreme cyber risk exposure: 55%
- High or extreme technology disruption risk: 53%
- Average investment horizon: Over 5 years

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins:

- Companies with strong risk governance tied to innovation outcomes
- Firms able to quantify productivity and

margin protection

- Boards that integrate resilience into capital allocation

Who Loses:

- Businesses reliant on cyclical recovery narratives
- Firms with opaque technology and risk disclosures

POLICY SIGNALS

Investor capital is aligning with regulatory and supervisory emphasis on resilience, governance, and risk transparency rather than stimulus-driven

growth.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Capital patience exists, but only for companies that demonstrate disciplined transformation and credible downside protection.

RISK RADAR

- Underestimating cyber and technology execution risk
- Treating resilience as compliance rather than strategy
- Failing to connect innovation spend to financial outcomes

COST OF LIVING

Headline Inflation Retreats, But Core Pressures Stay Sticky as Base Effects Reframe Nigeria's CPI

By Kingsley Ani

Nigeria's inflation narrative shifted materially at the end of 2025, not because prices suddenly stopped rising, but because the statistical lens changed.

The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) December 2025 Consumer Price Index (CPI) release introduced a maximised index reference period, rebasing year on year inflation against the average CPI of 2024, rather than December 2024 alone. This methodological adjustment, aligned with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) CPI manuals, recalibrated inflation readings across headline, food, and core indices. Against this revised framework, headline inflation moderated sharply in December, while underlying core inflation remained elevated, revealing a widening divergence between headline relief and structural price pressures.

MEMO

At first glance, Nigeria's December inflation numbers appear to mark a turning point. Headline inflation slowed meaningfully, food prices eased on a month-on-month (M/M) basis, and rural inflation even dipped into mild deflation. Yet beneath this calmer surface lies a more complex and less comforting reality.

The recalibration of the CPI base has successfully stripped out artificial spikes caused by methodological distortions, allowing inflation data to better reflect current price dynamics. This explains why year-on-year (Y/Y) headline inflation fell to the mid-teens in December, even as Nigerians continued to experience elevated living costs.

However, core inflation tells a different story. At 18.63 percent Y/Y in December, and 18.04 percent in November, core prices remain stubbornly high. This persistence indicates that non-food, non-energy price pressures such as rent, transport services, healthcare, education, and personal services are still embedded in the economy.

The November data reinforces this view. Even before the December rebasing effect, headline inflation stood at 14.45 percent year on year, while core inflation was already running well above headline levels. Month on month readings in November were also elevated across headline,

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

- **Reporting Authority:**
Nigerian Bureau of Statistics
- **Reference Period:**
December 2025 CPI, base year 2024 = 100
- **Key Adjustment:**
12-month index reference period maximisation
- **Headline Signal:**
Inflation deceleration driven by base effects and food price easing
- **Underlying Signal:**
Core inflation remains sticky despite headline relief

food, and core indices, signalling that momentum was still building as the year closed. In essence, Nigeria has not exited its inflation problem. It has simply moved into a new phase where food-driven volatility is easing, but structural cost inflation remains entrenched.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins

- Food consumers benefiting from short-term price corrections
- Policymakers seeking statistical clarity after rebasing distortions
- Rural households experiencing slower inflation momentum

Who Loses

- Urban households facing persistent service and housing costs
- Businesses exposed to sticky input and operating expenses
- Fixed income earners whose purchasing power remains under pressure

POLICY SIGNALS

- Inflation moderation is now method-driven, not demand-driven
- Monetary authorities must look beyond headline relief to core trends
- Structural reforms in logistics, energy, housing, and services remain urgent
- Fiscal coordination is needed to prevent cost pressures from re-accelerating

INVESTOR SIGNAL

- Headline inflation easing improves sentiment, but does not yet justify aggressive rate easing
- High core inflation supports a prolonged tight monetary stance
- Fixed income instruments benefit from disinflation optics, but duration risk remains
- Equity investors should favour sectors with pricing power and low input elasticity

RISK RADAR

- Re-acceleration risk if food supply shocks return
- Misinterpretation of rebased data leading to premature policy easing
- Core inflation inertia undermining real income recovery
- FX pass-through risks resurfacing into services inflation

DATA BOX

November 2025 Inflation Snapshot

- Headline inflation (Y/Y): 14.45%
- Headline inflation (M/M): 1.22%
- Food inflation (Y/Y): 11.08%
- Food inflation (M/M): 1.13%
- Core inflation (Y/Y): 18.04%
- Core inflation (M/M): 1.28%

December 2025 Inflation Snapshot

- Headline inflation (Y/Y): 15.15%
- Headline inflation (M/M): 0.54%
- Food inflation (Y/Y): 10.84%
- Food inflation (M/M): -0.36%
- Core inflation (Y/Y): 18.63%
- Core inflation (M/M): 0.58%

Source: NBS

What N100tn Market Cap Reveals About Market Confidence

• Behind The Rally, Investors Are Weighing Sustainability, Risk

By Jeremiah Obeche

Nigeria's equity market has crossed a psychological and financial milestone, with the Nigerian Exchange surpassing N100 trillion in market capitalisation for the first time. For President Bola Tinubu, the moment goes beyond record-setting numbers, it marks what he described as the birth of a new economic reality.

In a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Mr. Bayo Onanuga, the President commended corporate Nigeria, investors, and capital market stakeholders for driving the milestone. He described the achievement as both a signal to global investors and a call for Nigerians to participate more actively in domestic wealth creation.

The headline number is supported by strong market performance. The NGX All-Share Index closed 2025 with a return of 51.19 percent, significantly higher than the 37.65 percent recorded in 2024. According to the President, the performance ranks among the strongest globally, outpacing major international benchmarks such as the S&P 500 and FTSE 100, as well as several emerging-market peers within the BRICS+ group.

For the administration, the market rally is being framed as a validation of reform. Tinubu argued that Nigeria is no longer a frontier market to be overlooked, but a destination where value is being actively discovered. In his view, the stock market's performance reflects broader economic health and growing investor confidence.

The President pointed to robust results across sectors, highlighting industrial firms that have localised supply chains, banks that have demonstrated resilience and technological innovation, and technology companies contributing to growth narratives. These, he said, show that Nigerian companies are capable of delivering competitive returns in a challenging global environment.

Beyond equities, Tinubu linked the market milestone to macroeconomic stabilisation. He said monetary tightening and the removal of distortionary "ways and means" financing had helped restore naira stability and bend the inflation curve. According to him, inflation declined over eight consecutive months, falling from a 24-month high of 34.8 percent in December 2024 to 14.45 percent in November 2025. Inflation, he added, is projected to fall below 10 percent by the end of the year.

The President also highlighted external sector improvements. Nigeria recorded a current account surplus of \$16 billion in 2024, while the Central Bank of Nigeria projects a rise to \$18.81 billion in 2026, up from \$16.94 billion in 2025. Foreign reserves, he said, have crossed \$45 billion, providing the Central Bank of Nigeria with greater capacity to maintain stability and reduce speculative pressures on the naira.

Infrastructure and social sector developments were also cited as part of the broader turnaround. Tinubu pointed to expanding rail networks, completed arterial roads, revitalised ports, improvements in healthcare delivery, declining medical tourism costs, and education support through the Nigeria Education Loan Fund and increased university research grants.

The underlying policy question, however, is whether the capital market rally can broaden participation and sustain momentum. While valuations have risen sharply, the durability of confidence will depend on earnings growth, macro stability, and the ability of more Nigerians to access and trust the market.

Tinubu concluded by urging citizens to view the N100 trillion milestone not as an endpoint but as an

invitation to participate in nation-building through investment. He pledged continued commitment to transparency, growth, and the full implementation of tax and fiscal reforms from January 1.

DATA BOX (NGX MARKET MILESTONE)

- Market Capitalisation: N100 trillion+
- NGX All-Share Index Return (2025): 51.19%
- NGX All-Share Index Return (2024): 37.65%

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

- The Decision**
Cyclical surge, or durable shift in economic confidence?
- What Changed**
President Tinubu Hails N100tn Milestone
- Who Benefits**
 - ▶ Listed Companies
 - ▶ Local & Foreign Investors
 - ▶ Pension Funds
- Who Pays**
 - ▶ Late Investors
 - ▶ Underinvested Households

NGX MARKET MILESTONE

- Market Capitalisation: **N100 trillion+**
- NGX All-Share Index Return: **51.19%**
- NGX All-Share Index Return: **37.65%**
- Inflation Peak: **34.8%** (Dec 2024)
- Foreign Reserves: **\$45 billion+**
- Current Account Surplus (2024): **\$16 billion**
- Projected Current Account (2026): **\$18.81 billion**

What's at Stake? Capital Market Momentum Sustained?

- Earnings, Inflation, FX Stability
- 2026 Licensing Round

BOTTOM LINE

- Listed Firms Accessing Higher Valuations
- Long-Term Investors & Pension Funds
- Sectors Aligned with Reform & Localization

RISK RADAR

- Earnings slowdown after rally
- Inflation or FX reversal
- Narrow market breadth and limited retail inclusion

BOTTOM LINE: Durable growth, not a one-time surge

- Inflation Peak: 34.8% (Dec 2024)
- Inflation Level: 14.45% (Nov 2025)
- Foreign Reserves: \$45 billion+
- Current Account Surplus (2024): \$16 billion
- Projected Current Account (2026): \$18.81 billion

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins

- Listed firms accessing higher valuations
- Long-term investors and pension funds
- Sectors aligned with reform and localisation

Who Loses

- Late entrants facing elevated prices
- Households not yet participating in capital markets

POLICY SIGNALS

- Capital market confidence is rebounding strongly.
- Reforms are being validated through asset prices.
- Domestic participation is now a strategic priority.



For assistance on matters concerning **Tax Identification Number (TIN)** and other tax-related enquiries. **Taxpayers** are hereby informed to reach out to us via:

 helpdesk@nrs.gov.ng

 0209 460 2700



Inside Eterna's N21.52bn Rights Issue

• Why The Move Is About Control, Balance Sheet Repair, Not Fresh Barrels

By Hannah Yemisi

Eterna Plc has opened a N21.52 billion rights issue to existing shareholders, signalling a deliberate effort to reinforce its balance sheet while funding expansion across its downstream energy operations. The offer covers 978,108,485 ordinary shares priced at N22.00 each and runs from January 12 to February 18, 2026, with rights fully tradable on the Nigerian Exchange during the acceptance window.

Decision Context:

Downstream energy operators are operating in a volatile environment shaped by FX pressures, working capital strain, and the need for scale-driven efficiency.

Capital Action:

N21.52 billion rights issue through the issuance of 978.1 million ordinary shares.

Offer Structure:

Three new shares for every four held by shareholders on record as of November 27, 2025.

Strategic Objective:

Strengthen financial position, fund asset upgrades, expand distribution footprint, and improve operational resilience.

MEMO

Eterna's rights issue is best read as a sequencing decision rather than a growth gamble. Before accelerating barrels, outlets, or logistics, the company is choosing to reset its capital base. In a sector where margin volatility and FX exposure can quickly erode operational gains, balance sheet strength becomes a competitive asset.



The pricing of the offer at N22.00 per share points to a capital raise designed for participation rather than speculation. In prioritising existing shareholders through a rights structure, Eterna is anchoring expansion plans to ownership continuity, limiting dilution anxiety while raising patient capital.

Strategically, the deployment plan reveals a dual-track logic. On one hand, there is visible expansion. Retail outlet growth, LPG asset upgrades, aviation fuelling operations, and logistics fleet acquisition all point to volume-led competitiveness. On the other hand, a notable portion of proceeds is earmarked for working capital, inventory financing, and trade payables. This suggests management is acutely aware that downstream scale without liquidity discipline can amplify risk rather than returns.

The inclusion of lubricant blending plant upgrades and ESG-related investments also reflects a quiet repositioning. Lubricants and cleaner energy segments offer more stable margins than pure fuel retailing, while ESG spend increasingly shapes financing access, regulatory goodwill, and institutional investor appetite.

Taken together, the rights issue reads less like an aggressive expansion bet and more like a control move, designed to stabilise operations first, then scale selectively in a market that still punishes overleveraged players.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins:

- Existing shareholders who exercise rights and preserve ownership
- Operations dependent on stable working capital and inventory cycles
- Segments with higher-margin potential such as lubricants and LPG

Who Loses:

- Shareholders who do not take up rights and face dilution
- Short-term traders expecting immediate price action rather than balance sheet repair

POLICY SIGNALS

The transaction underscores how downstream operators are adapting to a tighter policy and FX environment. Capital market funding, rather than bank leverage, is increasingly the preferred route for financing operational expansion and resilience.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

For investors, the rights issue flags a company prioritising financial stability before growth acceleration. Long-term value hinges less on headline expansion and more on execution discipline, margin protection, and the ability to convert scale into sustainable cash flows.

RISK RADAR

- Weak rights uptake could dilute strategic intent
- FX volatility may pressure inventory financing despite fresh capital
- Expansion execution risk across multiple asset classes
- Margin compression if retail growth outpaces demand or pricing power

Eterna's move is ultimately a bet on preparedness. In a downstream market where shocks are frequent and liquidity is king, the company is choosing to load the balance sheet before loading the trucks.

DATA BOX

Total funds to be raised:
N21.52 billion

Shares on offer: 978,108,485
ordinary shares

Offer price: N22.00 per share

Offer ratio: 3 new shares for
every 4 held

Offer period: January 12 to
February 18, 2026

Use of proceeds: Retail expansion,
plant upgrades, LPG and
aviation assets, logistics fleet,
working capital, ESG projects

Regulators Unite To Unlock Oil, Gas Capital

• Closer Coordination Is Easing Barriers For Investors In The Sector

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

- The Decision**
Align Upstream & Midstream-Downstream Regulation?
- What Changed**
NUPRC + NMDPRA Joint Problem-Solving Teams & Coordination Meetings
- Who Benefits**
Investors, Operators, Government Revenue
- Who Pays**
Regulatory Arbitrageurs, Agencies with Siloed Mandates

REGULATORY COORDINATION UPDATE

- Meeting Date: January 8, 2026
- Location: NUPRC Headquarters, Abuja
- Coordination Structure: Joint representatives & Quarterly Meetings:
- Licensing Round Blocks on Offer:
- Pre-Bid Conference: January 14, 2026 | Lagos

What's at Stake?

Unified Petroleum Regulatory Framework

What to Watch

Regulatory Task Committees, 2026 Licensing Round

BOTTOM LINE

2026 Licensing Round

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

- Investors** seeking predictable regulation
- Operators** with integrated value-chain assets
- Government revenue from accelerated project timelines

RISK RADAR

- Coordination Commitments Not Translating Into Action
- Inter-Agency Disputes Resurfacing Under Pressure

BOTTOM LINE: Alignment is an Investment Enabler

tween upstream, midstream, and downstream operations are often blurred, making close collaboration unavoidable. She described the meeting as the beginning of deeper engagement, aimed at ensuring the industry grows sustainably and at scale.

As part of this renewed engagement, the NUPRC sought the support of the NMDPRA in the ongoing licensing round and invited the Authority's leadership to the pre-bid conference scheduled for January 14, 2026, at Eko Hotels and Suites in Lagos. The licensing round, which offers 50 oil and gas blocks, is positioned as a key investment lever for boosting reserves and attracting new capital into the sector.

Responding in a press statement by Eniola Akinkuotu, Head, Media and Strategic Communication, the Chief Executive of NMDPRA, Saidu Aliyu Mohammed, highlighted the shared institutional roots of both agencies as successors to the defunct Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR). He stressed that differences between the regulators should be resolved internally and amicably, noting that improved cooperation is essential for sector credibility.

The renewed partnership signals an acknowledgement that regulatory coherence is as important as fiscal terms and geology in attracting investment. For Nigeria's oil and gas sector, where projects often span multiple regulatory jurisdictions, consistent interpretation and aligned oversight could significantly lower execution risk.

DATA BOX (REGULATORY COORDINATION UPDATE)

- Meeting Date: January 8, 2026
- Location: NUPRC Headquarters, Abuja
- Coordination Structure: Joint representatives and quarterly meetings
- Licensing Round Blocks on Offer: 50
- Pre-Bid Conference: January 14, 2026, Lagos

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins

- Investors seeking predictable regulation
- Operators with integrated value-chain assets
- Government revenue from accelerated project timelines.

Who Loses

- Regulatory inefficiencies and overlapping mandates
- Projects delayed by inter-agency misalignment.

POLICY SIGNALS

- Regulatory coordination is now an explicit investment tool.
- Nigeria is reducing non-fiscal barriers to oil and gas capital.
- Execution discipline is becoming as important as policy design.

RISK RADAR

- Coordination commitments not translating into action
- Inter-agency disputes resurfacing under pressure
- Delays in licensing round execution despite alignment

By Ayo Susan

Nigeria's petroleum regulators are moving to reduce long-standing coordination gaps across the oil and gas value chain, as the upstream and midstream-downstream authorities seek to present a more unified regulatory front to investors.

At a meeting held on January 8, 2026, at the NUPRC headquarters in Abuja, the NMDPRA agreed to intensify collaboration to improve regulatory efficiency and support sector growth.

Both agencies resolved to nominate designated representatives to jointly address regulatory issues that cut across their mandates. The objective is to ensure seamless regula-

tion, reduce duplication, and resolve disputes quickly in the interest of industry stability.

To institutionalise the collaboration, the regulators agreed to hold quarterly coordination meetings. These engagements are intended to strengthen working relationships and allow emerging regulatory challenges to be addressed before they escalate.

The Commission Chief Executive of NUPRC, Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, emphasised that cooperation between the two regulators is essential given the interconnected nature of the oil and gas value chain. She noted that the sector remains central to Nigeria's economy and that regulators must act as enablers rather than obstacles to growth.

According to Eyesan, the boundaries be-

What 32 Incoming Vessels Say About Lagos Port Throughput, Supply Dynamics

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

- **Decision Context:**
Nigeria's ports remain a critical choke point for fuel supply, food security, and industrial inputs amid logistics cost pressures.
- **Operational Update:**
Advance notice of inbound vessels across Lagos ports.
- **Cargo Mix:**
Energy products, food staples, fertiliser, and containerised goods.
- **Strategic Objective:**
Maintain steady cargo flow and minimise supply disruptions through coordinated port operations.



Dr. Abubakar Dantsoho Managing Director/CEO of NPA

By Ayo Susan

Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has announced that 32 vessels carrying petroleum products, food items, and general cargo are scheduled to arrive at Apapa Port, Tin-Can Island Port, and Lekki Deep Sea Port in Lagos between January 12 and January 30.

This information is made possible as a result of the efficiency of the authority. Mr. Abubakar Dantsoho, the Managing Director (MD) of NPA, has always highlighted efforts in port modernisation and digital transformation to improve efficiency.

According to the authority's Daily Shipping Position, the incoming vessels are laden with crude oil, aviation fuel, petrol, gasoline, bulk wheat, fertiliser, urea, bitumen, containers, and general merchandise, reinforcing sustained cargo movement across Nigeria's busiest maritime corridor.

MEMO

The arrival schedule of 32 vessels into Lagos ports is more than a routine logistics update. It offers a real-time snapshot of Nigeria's import-dependent supply chain and the pressure points shaping inflation, fuel availability, and industrial activity.

The concentration of petroleum products, including petrol, diesel, aviation fuel, and crude-related cargoes, highlights continued reliance on maritime

inflows to stabilise domestic energy supply. In parallel, shipments of wheat, fertiliser, urea, and food items underscore the ports' role in sustaining food production and consumption cycles.

Operationally, the mix of vessels waiting to berth, already discharging, and scheduled to arrive illustrates a system running close to capacity but maintaining throughput. With 10 vessels awaiting berthing and 31 currently discharging across Apapa, Tin-Can, and Lekki, the ports are functioning as active distribution nodes rather than passive entry points.

Lekki Deep Sea Port's inclusion alongside the legacy Apapa and Tin-Can facilities signals a gradual redistribution of cargo traffic. While Apapa and Tin-Can remain dominant, Lekki's growing role reflects long-term efforts to decongest Lagos logistics and improve turnaround times.

For policymakers and market participants, steady port activity reduces the risk of sudden supply shocks. For businesses, it provides visibility into input availability, particularly for energy and agriculture-linked sectors sensitive to delays and cost overruns.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

- Who Wins:**
- Energy marketers and distributors benefiting from steady fuel inflows
 - Agro-industrial players relying on fertiliser and wheat imports
 - Port operators maintaining high asset utilisation

Who Loses:

- Businesses exposed to any unexpected berthing delays
- Importers facing demurrage risks if congestion intensifies

POLICY SIGNALS

The update reinforces the importance of port efficiency as an economic stabiliser. Sustained cargo handling supports fuel supply management, food

security, and inflation containment.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Consistent port activity signals resilience in trade flows and underpins confidence in logistics, energy distribution, and consumer goods sectors tied to import volumes.

RISK RADAR

- Congestion risk if vessel arrivals outpace berthing capacity
- Weather or operational disruptions affecting discharge schedules
- Cost escalation from delays feeding into fuel and food prices

The steady stream of vessels into Lagos ports suggests that while Nigeria's supply chains remain stretched, throughput is being maintained. In an economy sensitive to logistics shocks, port activity has become a frontline indicator of macro stability rather than a back-end operational detail.

DATA BOX

Expected vessels: 32
Arrival window: January 12–30
Ports covered: Apapa, Tin-Can Island, Lekki Deep Sea Port

Cargo categories:

Petroleum products: crude oil, petrol, diesel, aviation fuel, condensate
Food and agro-inputs: wheat, fertiliser, urea, soya beans, fresh fish
Industrial cargo: bitumen, bulk gas
Containers and general merchandise

Current port status:

- Vessels waiting to berth: 10
- Vessels discharging cargo: 31



Why the N40bn Third Mainland Bridge CCTV Centre Signals A New Enforcement Logic

By Johnson Emmanuel

The Federal Government of Nigeria has commissioned a N40 billion Close Circuit Television (CCTV) Camera Centre dedicated to the Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos. The facility, unveiled on Sunday, is designed to provide continuous surveillance and real-time monitoring across one of Africa's busiest urban transport corridors.

The commissioning positions the bridge within a technology-enabled security and traffic management framework, marking a shift from reactive enforcement to persistent digital oversight.

MEMO

The Third Mainland Bridge CCTV Centre represents a recalibration of how Nigeria approaches urban infrastructure security. Rather than episodic patrols and post-incident interventions, the government is embedding surveillance as a permanent layer of infrastructure management.

The choice of the Third Mainland Bridge is instructive. As a critical economic artery linking Lagos' mainland and island districts, disruptions on the bridge carry outsized economic and safety costs. Surveillance coverage allows authorities to detect incidents early, coordinate emergency responses, and deter criminal activity through visibility.

At N40 billion, the investment also signals a willingness to treat digital systems as core infrastructure, not auxiliary add-ons. In dense urban environments, data and visibility increasingly determine the effectiveness of physical assets. Cameras, command centres, and analytics now shape how roads function as much as concrete and steel.

The project aligns with broader smart-city ambitions, where traffic flow, security, and main-

tenance are managed through integrated platforms. If effectively operated, the centre could reduce response times, support evidence-based enforcement, and extend the operational lifespan of the bridge by preventing misuse and damage.

However, value will ultimately depend on governance. Surveillance infrastructure delivers returns only when paired with trained personnel, clear operating protocols, and accountability. Without these, high-capex systems risk becoming underutilised symbols rather than functional tools.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins:

- Commuters, through improved safety and faster incident response
- Security agencies with real-time situational awareness
- The Lagos economy, via reduced disruption risks

Who Loses:

- Criminal activity reliant on anonymity
- Inefficient enforcement methods dependent on delayed reporting

POLICY SIGNALS

The commissioning signals a policy shift toward technology-led urban security and infrastructure management, treating surveillance as a public-good investment rather than a discretionary expense.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

For investors, the project underscores growing public-sector demand for security technology, systems integration, and smart-city solutions, opening opportunities for private participation in operations and maintenance.

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Decision Context:

- Urban congestion, crime risks, and infrastructure stress have increased on critical transport arteries, raising the cost of incidents and response delays.

Infrastructure Action:

- Deployment and commissioning of a dedicated CCTV Camera Centre for the Third Mainland Bridge.

Capital Commitment:

- N40 billion public investment in surveillance and command infrastructure.

Strategic Objective:

- Improve security response, traffic control, and asset protection through continuous monitoring.

RISK RADAR

- Operational sustainability and maintenance funding
- Data privacy and civil liberties concerns
- Skills gaps limiting effective use of surveillance data
- Risk of system downtime without redundancy planning

The N40 billion CCTV Centre on the Third Mainland Bridge reframes urban security as infrastructure policy. Its success will be measured not by cameras installed, but by whether visibility translates into safer movement, faster response, and lower economic friction on Lagos' most critical bridge.



DATA BOX

Project: Third Mainland Bridge CCTV Camera Centre

Capital cost: N40 billion

Asset covered: Third Mainland Bridge, Lagos

Core functions:

- o Real-time surveillance
- o Traffic monitoring
- o Incident detection and response coordination

Ownership: Federal Government of Nigeria

Innovation Without Illusion In The AI Trade

Investors Are Stress-Testing Narratives As 2026 Valuations Tighten

By Ogbuefi O. Emelike

Investors are doubling down on enterprise-wide artificial intelligence (AI) adoption as a primary growth driver, but with stricter expectations around discipline, governance, and measurable returns, according to PwC's Global Investor Survey. While confidence in AI-led productivity gains is high, disclosure satisfaction remains low.

Decision Context:

AI adoption has moved from experimentation to valuation relevance.

Investor Expectation:

AI must deliver measurable productivity, profitability, and revenue gains.

Governance Requirement:

Clear AI policies, controls, validation, and performance metrics.

Capital Bias:

Preference for enterprise-wide AI transformation over isolated pilots.

MEMO

Investors are no longer debating whether AI matters. They are debating who is executing it properly. The survey reveals strong conviction that AI has already delivered productivity, margin, and revenue gains across portfolios. However, belief does not equal blind trust.

The credibility gap lies in disclosure. Fewer than four in ten investors say companies adequately explain their AI strategies, governance frameworks, or performance outcomes. This gap creates valuation friction. Investors may believe in AI's potential, but they are reluctant to fully price it without evidence.

What investors want is not ambition but instrumentation. KPIs that tie AI to unit cost reductions, cycle time improvements, and revenue uplift are now essential. Equally critical are governance guardrails, data integrity, security architecture, and leadership fluency. AI value, in the investor view, must be repeatable and defensible.

This is why AI is no longer treated as a technology upgrade. It is assessed as an operating model transformation. Companies that scale AI responsibly gain capital confidence. Those that oversell without proof face scepticism.

DATA BOX

- Investors seeing AI-driven productivity gains: 86%
- Profitability improvements attributed to AI: 71%



Investors may believe in AI's potential, but they are reluctant to fully price it without evidence

- Revenue gains attributed to AI: 66%
- Investors willing to increase investment in AI leaders: 78%
- Satisfaction with AI strategy disclosure: 37%

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins:

- Firms with enterprise-wide AI deployment and KPIs.
- Companies with strong AI governance and disclosure
- Leaders able to link AI to financial performance.

Who Loses:

- Companies relying on AI publicity without

metrics

- Firms with weak data quality or governance controls.

POLICY SIGNALS

AI governance, disclosure, and accountability are emerging as de facto market standards ahead of formal regulation.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

AI attracts capital, but only when supported by measurable outcomes and credible governance architecture.

RISK RADAR

- AI investment without performance instrumentation
- Data security and model risk exposure
- Leadership capability gaps in AI oversight

AFRIMA 2026, Nigeria's Creative Economy Balance Sheet

● What Hosting The Awards Could Unlock For Investment, Revenue



By Ovio Peters

The 9th edition of the All-Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) 2026, held in Lagos, once again positioned Nigeria as a continental creative hub. Beyond trophies and performances, the event reopened a recurring policy and investor question: what is the financial weight and economic implication of hosting Africa's largest music awards on Nigerian soil?

Using conservative industry benchmarks and comparable large-scale live events, indicative financial assumptions suggest AFRIMA operates not just as a cultural platform, but as a high-value creative economy transaction. All figures referenced below are assumptions for analytical illustration only, not official AFRIMA disclosures.

Decision Context:

Nigeria continues to position the creative economy as a non-oil growth pillar, with music and live entertainment as export-facing sectors. Africa's music industry is transitioning from cultural recognition to structured economic relevance.

Host-City Choice:

Lagos hosting AFRIMA for the third time reinforces its role as Africa's creative capital.

Economic Lens:

Large-scale cultural events increasingly justify public and private support based on measurable financial spillovers.

Strategic Objective:

Convert cultural prestige into tourism revenue, sponsorship inflows, and long-term creative industry investment.

MEMO

The major winners included Rema, Burna Boy, Yemi Alade, Shallipopi, and Phyno, alongside a broad continental spread of winners across Eastern, Southern, Northern, and Central Africa. Rema emerged as the night's most decorated act, securing Artiste of the Year, Best Male Artiste in Western Africa, and Best African Artiste in African RnB and Soul. Burna Boy won Album of the Year, while Shallipopi claimed Song of the Year and Best African Collaboration.

Viewed through a financial lens, AFRIMA functions as a multi-layered economic engine. Based on reasonable assumptions drawn from comparable international awards and African mega-events, an AFRIMA-scale ceremony in Nigeria could operate on a N1.3 trillion to N1.5 billion total event budget and revenue envelope.

On the revenue side, assumed ticket sales from a two-night event hosting approximately 10,000 attendees could generate around N230 million, assuming a blended ticket price of N23,000 across VIP, premium, and general categories. Sponsorship is the dominant lever. With a title sponsor, multiple tier-one and tier-two partners, and brand integrations, sponsorship inflows could reasonably reach N850-900 million, accounting for more than half of total event revenue.

Broadcast rights, streaming partnerships, concessions, merchandise, and host-city support could conservatively add another N400 million, bringing total

assumed revenue to roughly N1.5 billion.

Costs tell the other half of the story. Artist performance fees, including headline acts and cross-border logistics, could absorb N500 million alone. Production, staging, lighting, audio-visuals, and broadcast setup could exceed N300 million, while venue hire, security, accommodation, marketing, and logistics could jointly approach N400 million. With contingency included, total assumed costs could land near N1.35 - 1.4 billion.

Under this assumed structure, AFRIMA could generate an operating surplus in the range of N100 - 150 million, excluding longer-term tourism, brand, and investment spillovers. The real economic value, however, lies beyond the event P&L. Hotel occupancy, flight traffic, local transport, advertising spend, and informal sector activity potentially multiply direct spend by two to three times across the Lagos economy.

The awards themselves act as market signals. Winners gain catalogue valuation, touring leverage, and sponsorship appeal. Host cities gain soft power, while investors gain a clearer view of Africa's monetisable creative assets.

DATA BOX (Indicative Assumptions Only)

- Assumed total revenue: ~N1.5 billion
- Ticket revenue: ~N230 million
- Sponsorship revenue: ~N860 million
- Broadcast, concessions, grants: ~N410 million
- Assumed total costs: ~N1.37 billion
- Indicative operating surplus: ~N120 million
- Estimated attendees: ~10,000

All figures are analytical assumptions, not official AFRIMA data.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Who Wins:

- Nigerian creative professionals and service vendors
- Lagos hospitality, transport, and tourism ecosystem
- Artistes whose awards translate into higher market value

Who Loses:

- Cities unable to host large-scale creative infrastructure
- Informal creatives without access to monetisation channels

POLICY SIGNALS

AFRIMA underscores why creative economy policy cannot be symbolic. Events of this scale justify structured incentives, intellectual property (IP) protection, tourism collaboration, and export-focused cultural policy.

The scale and visibility of AFRIMA reinforce the need for creative economy policies that treat music as an export sector, not just cultural expression. Touring infrastructure, and cross-border licensing frameworks are increasingly policy-relevant.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Awards recognition increasingly correlates with monetisation potential. For investors, AFRIMA operates as a soft diligence tool for catalogue acquisition, brand partnerships, and African entertainment platforms.

RISK RADAR

- Overdependence on sponsorship funding
- Rising artist and production costs compressing margins
- Weak IP enforcement limiting long-term value capture
- Event economics vulnerable to FX and inflation shocks

AFRIMA 2026 shows that Africa's music industry is no longer just a cultural statement. Even on conservative assumptions, it is an investable economic activity. The real opportunity for Nigeria lies not only in hosting the applause, but in owning the infrastructure that turns creativity into durable value.

What N2.73tn OMOs Demand Reveals About CBN Policy In 2026

● Market Behaviour Is Shaping The Central Bank's Next Moves

By Kingsley Ani

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) opened the 2026 monetary year with strong investor demand at its first Open Market Operations (OMOs) auctions, recording total subscriptions of N2.727 trillion across two medium-term maturities. Despite the heavy oversubscription, stop rates remained tightly clustered between 19.34 percent and 19.40 percent, reinforcing the signal that monetary conditions remain deliberately tight.

Demand at the January 6, 2026 auction was skewed toward longer tenors, with the 210-day OMO bill accounting for the overwhelming share of bids.

Decision Context:

Inflation risks and exchange rate management continue to dominate monetary policy priorities at the start of 2026.

Policy Action:

OMO auction with N300 billion offered per tenor across 161-day and 210-day bills.

Market Outcome:

N2.727 trillion total subscriptions, heavily concentrated in longer-dated instruments.

Strategic Objective:

Sustain liquidity absorption and anchor interest

rate expectations at elevated levels.

MEMO

The first OMO auctions of 2026 were less about price discovery and more about signalling. In opening the year with sizable offerings and holding rates close to late-2025 levels, the CBN made clear that easing is not yet on the table.

Investor behaviour reinforced this message. Demand gravitated decisively toward the 210-day paper, where N2.451 trillion in bids dwarfed interest in the shorter 161-day tenor. This preference reflects both yield certainty and a market view that high rates will persist for longer than previously anticipated. In such an environment, duration becomes protection rather than risk.

Yet the most telling element of the auction was not demand, but allotment. While both tenors were offered at N300 billion, the CBN fully allotted only N245.08 billion on the 210-day bill, while keeping allocations on the shorter paper relatively constrained. This selective approach highlights a tactical bias toward locking up liquidity over longer horizons rather than rolling over short-dated instruments that quickly re-enter the system.

The stop rates themselves carried policy weight. Marginal rates of 19.34 percent and 19.40 percent align almost perfectly with late-December outcomes, suggesting that the CBN is prioritising rate stability as a policy anchor. In effect, the Bank is using OMOs not to test the market, but to condition it.

Historical context strengthens the interpretation. Late-December 2025 auctions saw partial allotments even amid lower subscription volumes. In contrast, the full absorption of longer-dated paper in early January highlights a deliberate escalation in liquidity sterilisation as the new year begins.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

- Who Wins:**
- Fixed-income investors locking in near-20 percent yields
 - The CBN, through effective liquidity absorption
 - Foreign portfolio investors seeking rate clarity

- Who Loses:**
- Borrowers facing sustained high funding costs
 - Growth-sensitive sectors reliant on cheaper credit

The N2.73 trillion subscription figure is not a sign of imminent easing. It is evidence of a market adjusting to a central bank determined to stay restrictive, even as the calendar turns to a new year.

What ₦2.73tn OMO Demand Says About CBN's 2026 Monetary Posture

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Inflation, FX Management Dominate

₦300bn Offered per 161, 50 Day Bills

₦2.73tn Total Subscriptions Longer Maturity Bias

Liquidity Tightening Rate Anchoring

Liquidity Tightening & Rate Anchoring

OMO AUCTION METRICS

Total ₦2.727 trillion

₦277bn

↑19.34%
June 16, 2026

Offer size: **300bn**

₦2451tn

↑19.40%
August 4, 2026

Maturity: **August 4, 2026**

Offer size per tenor: **₦300bn**

WHO WINS · WHO LOSES

Fixed-Income Investors Locking in Near-20% Yields

The CBN, Through Effective Liquidity Absorption

WHO WINS · WHO LOSES

Borrowers Facing Sustained High Funding Costs

Growth-Sensitive Sectors Reliant On Cheaper Credit

POLICY SIGNALS

The auctions reaffirm CBN's inflation-first stance.

Liquidity management remains defensive, with OMOs deployed as a primary sterilization tool rather than a transitional instrument toward easing.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

The yield environment is being intentionally preserved, Investors should expect steady interest payments ternrates to spot with duration, increasingly favored over restructuring opportunities.

RISK RADAR

Prolonged tight liquidity could weigh on private-sector credit growth

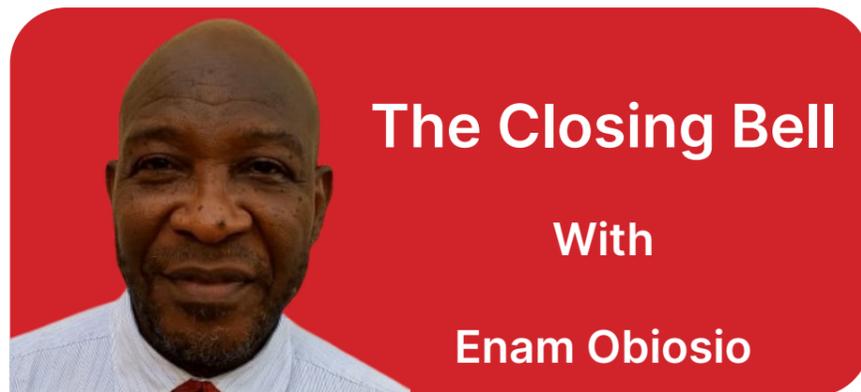
High real rates may dampen investment momentum

Sudden shifts in inflation or FX conditions could force abrupt policy recalibration.

The ₦2.73 trillion subscription figure is not a sign of imminent easing. It is evidence of a market adjusting to a central bank determined to stay restrictive, even as the calendar turns to a new year.

DATA BOX	
Total subscriptions: N2.727 trillion	161-day OMO:
Subscriptions: N277 billion	Allotment: N259 billion
Stop rate: 19.34%	Maturity: June 16, 2026
210-day OMO:	Subscriptions: N2.451 trillion
Allotment: N245.08 billion	Stop rate: 19.40%
Maturity: August 4, 2026	Offer size per tenor: N300 billion

Why Nigeria's 2026 Growth Story Demands Vigilance, Not Complacency



Read the 2026 economic outlook of Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise by Mr. Muda Yusuf with a mixture of reassurance and unease. Reassurance because the diagnosis reflects a country that has stepped back from the edge of macroeconomic instability. Unease because the path from stabilisation to durable, inclusive growth remains narrow, fragile, and exposed to familiar Nigerian risks that we have historically underestimated at our peril.

I share the view of cautious optimism. Nigeria has earned that optimism, not by accident, but through difficult reforms that carried real social and political costs. The macroeconomic environment in 2025 was far from perfect, yet it laid a foundation that should not be dismissed. Inflation began to moderate, policy credibility improved, and distortions that had accumulated over years of avoidance were confronted more directly. These are not trivial achievements in an economy of Nigeria's scale and complexity.

However, optimism must be anchored in realism. A projected GDP growth of between 4.0 and 4.5 percent in 2026 is encouraging, especially when placed against Nigeria's recent growth history. Yet growth alone is not the ultimate test. The real question is whether this growth will be resilient, broad-based, and capable of improving living standards in a country where population growth continues to exert relentless pressure on jobs, incomes, and social cohesion.

The expectation that moderating inflation will strengthen domestic demand is sound. Inflation has been the single most corrosive force against household welfare over the past two years. Its moderation would ease pressure on real incomes, restore some consumer confidence, and allow businesses to plan with greater certainty. More importantly, it could create room for gradual monetary easing. High interest rates have been a necessary stabilisation tool, but they have also choked private investment, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises that lack access to patient capital.

That said, I remain concerned about the pace and sequencing of any monetary easing. Nigeria's inflation challenge is not purely monetary. Structural drivers, insecurity, energy costs, logistics inefficiencies, and exchange rate pass-through effects remain powerful. Premature easing could reignite inflationary pressures, undermine hard-won credibility, and weaken the naira. The Central Bank will need to tread carefully, balancing growth imperatives with the discipline required to entrench price stability.

The emphasis on services as the primary growth engine is realistic. Telecommunications, finance, construction, real estate, and trade have consistently demonstrated resilience and adaptability.

These sectors respond quickly to policy signals and benefit disproportionately from macroeconomic stability. Yet I worry about an economy that leans too heavily on services while the real sector struggles under the weight of insecurity, high costs, and infrastructure deficits.

Agriculture and manufacturing cannot remain hostage to insecurity and logistics failures. When insecurity disrupts farming communities, transport corridors, and supply chains, the consequences extend far beyond food inflation. They affect employment, rural incomes, and national cohesion. Growth that excludes these sectors risks becoming shallow, urban-centric, and socially fragile.

The outlook for capital markets is one of the more compelling aspects of the CPPE assessment. The potential listing of the Dangote Refinery could be transformative. It would deepen market liquidity, broaden sectoral representation, and send a strong signal to both domestic and foreign investors about Nigeria's commitment to market-based financing. Such a listing could catalyse a virtuous cycle of confidence, transparency, and capital inflows.

However, capital markets thrive on consistency. Policy credibility must be sustained, not episodic. Investors, particularly long-term institutional investors, price risk not only on current reforms but on their durability. Any perception of policy reversal, regulatory arbitrariness, or political interference would quickly erode the gains achieved so far. I am encouraged by the assertion that policy credibility remains strong, but I also know how quickly credibility can be squandered in the face of fiscal pressures or political expediency.

Security remains the most persistent and underappreciated risk to the 2026 outlook. It is not merely a social or humanitarian issue, it is an economic constraint of the highest order. Insecurity distorts investment decisions, raises the cost of doing business, and weakens productivity across sectors. It also undermines the very growth narrative that policymakers seek to project. Without measurable improvements in security, especially in agricultural belts and logistics corridors, growth projections risk becoming aspirational rather than achievable.

Fiscal vulnerability is another area that demands sober reflection. Nigeria's fiscal performance remains highly sensitive to oil price shocks, despite years of rhetoric about diversification. The reality is that oil revenue still plays an outsized role in stabilising public finances. Any adverse movement in global oil markets could quickly reopen fiscal gaps, intensify borrowing pressures, and complicate macroeconomic management.

The projected debt service burden of over N15 trillion in the 2026 appropriation, accounting for about half of projected revenue, is deeply concerning. This is not merely a statistical issue. It reflects

a shrinking fiscal space that limits the government's ability to invest in infrastructure, social services, and growth-enhancing interventions. When debt service consumes such a large share of revenue, the quality of governance is tested, and difficult trade-offs become unavoidable.

I am particularly concerned about the implications for social investment. Growth that is not accompanied by visible improvements in living standards risks losing public legitimacy. If households do not feel relief through better services, more jobs, and improved purchasing power, macroeconomic success will remain abstract. This is where inclusive growth must move from rhetoric to reality.

High power, energy, and logistics costs continue to weigh heavily on productivity. These are structural constraints that cannot be resolved through macroeconomic policy alone. They require sustained investment, regulatory clarity, and institutional coordination. Until Nigerian businesses can access reliable power at competitive costs and move goods efficiently across the country, productivity gains will remain limited, and competitiveness will suffer.

Geopolitical tensions add another layer of uncertainty. Global trade flows, commodity prices, and capital movements are increasingly shaped by geopolitical considerations beyond Nigeria's control. In such an environment, resilience becomes as important as growth. Nigeria must strengthen buffers, diversify export markets, and reduce exposure to external shocks.

The pre-election context of 2026 introduces political economy risks that cannot be ignored. Fiscal and political uncertainties often intensify in pre-election years, as pressures mount to increase spending, relax discipline, or delay reforms. The emergence of resistance that could undermine tax revenue expectations is particularly troubling. Tax reform is essential for fiscal sustainability, yet it is also politically sensitive. Managing this tension will require transparency, communication, and fairness in implementation.

Despite these concerns, I agree that 2025 laid a solid foundation of macroeconomic stability. Stabilisation is not glamorous, but it is indispensable. Without it, growth becomes unsustainable and volatile. The outlook for 2026, as presented by CPPE, is reassuring in its balance. It does not ignore risks, nor does it exaggerate achievements.

What matters now is execution. Sustaining reform momentum will require political will, institutional discipline, and public trust. Security challenges must be addressed with urgency and seriousness. Fiscal management must prioritise sustainability over short-term convenience. Monetary policy must remain anchored in credibility, even as it responds to growth needs.