

**Edun Backs MREIF Expansion To Scale Affordable Housing Finance Delivery**

PG 10



**FTSE Russell Reclassifies Nigeria, Citing Infrastructure Gains Amid Structural Gaps**

PG 13



## NNPC Adds Cawthorne Grade To Deepen Export Optionality, Monetisation Drive

**Exports First Cargo To Netherlands, Reinforcing Production Growth, Export Diversification Strategy**

NNPC Limited's launch of the Cawthorne crude grade signals a shift from volume to value in Nigeria's oil strategy. Beyond a routine export, it reflects tighter alignment between production, infrastructure, and market positioning. By introducing a premium light, sweet stream into Europe, NNPC is advancing pricing strength and portfolio flexibility. In

this story, **Enam Obiosio** examines whether this execution can scale into consistent volumes and durable revenue in a competitive, transition-driven market.

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited has introduced a new crude grade, Cawthorne, into the

international market, exporting its first cargo to the Netherlands. The 950,000-barrel maiden shipment, loaded on MT Eburones on 5 April 2026, was evacuated via the Cawthorne Floating Storage and Offloading vessel offshore Bonny, Rivers State.

Cawthorne blend, with an API gravity of 36.4, enters Nigeria's

light, sweet crude category, positioning it alongside established grades such as Bonny Light. The development extends Nigeria's export crude slate, following recent additions including Nembe and Utapate.

**CONT. ON PG 2**

### NSIA Opens NIFG EOI To Broaden Private Capital Participation In Infrastructure

By Johnson Emmanuel

The Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) has recently announced a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) under the Nigeria Infrastructure Fund Group (NIFG) framework, inviting private sector participants to engage in infrastructure financing and development initiatives. The outreach positions the Authority as a coordinating platform for capital mobilisation into priority national infrastructure projects.

#### DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The NSIA is expanding its infrastructure financing strategy by formally soliciting private sector participation through a structured Expression of Interest process.

#### DECISION MEMO

The issuance of an Expression of Interest under the NIFG signals a de-

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Engr. Bayo Ojulari, GCEO of NNPC

### Zenith Bank Enters Kenya Through Paramount Acquisition Despite Regional Expansion

By Olunide Johnson

Zenith Bank Plc has recently completed the acquisition of 100 percent of the issued share capital of Paramount Bank Kenya Limited, following regulatory approvals from authorities in Nigeria and Kenya. The transaction, confirmed by Company Secretary, Michael Osilama Otu, marks Zenith Bank's entry into the Kenyan banking market.

The Competition Authority of Kenya approved the deal in January 2026, subject to employee retention conditions, with Zenith committing to retain all 78 staff for at least 12 months.

#### DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Zenith Bank Plc is executing a market entry strategy into East Africa via acquisition, positioning itself alongside other Nigerian banks expanding regionally.

**CONT. ON PG 7**

# Dimon Flags Geopolitical Risk To Inflation Outlook, Prolonged Rate Cycle



Mr. Jamie Dimon, Chief Executive Officer of JPMorgan Chase & Co

By Kingsley Ani

**J**amie Dimon, Chief Executive Officer, JPMorgan Chase & Co., has recently warned in his annual shareholder letter and subsequent interview that a potential escalation involving Iran could disrupt global energy markets and reignite inflationary pressures. He noted that such developments could affect fuel prices, manufac-

turing costs, and broader supply chains, despite current resilience in the United States economy.

Dimon described inflation as the potential “skunk at the party,” cautioning that geopolitical instability could alter macroeconomic trajectories.

#### DECISION HIGHLIGHT

JPMorgan Chase & Co. is signalling heightened geopolitical risk as a key variable that could sus-

tain inflation and extend restrictive monetary policy conditions.

#### DECISION MEMO

Dimon’s intervention reframes the inflation outlook from a purely domestic monetary issue to a geopolitically driven supply-side risk. His assessment suggests that current disinflation trends remain vulnerable to external shocks, particularly in

... the outcome of current geopolitical events may very well be the defining factor in how the future global economic order unfolds...

## NNPC Adds Cawthorne Grade To Deepen Export Optionality...

CONT. FRM COVER

#### DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The NNPC has operationalised a new crude stream as part of a structured portfolio expansion strategy, linking upstream asset optimisation with export infrastructure to improve evacuation reliability and commercial throughput.

#### DECISION MEMO

The introduction of Cawthorne crude reflects a deliberate shift from volumetric production targets to value-based asset monetisation. By positioning the grade within the premium light, sweet segment, the NNPC is targeting refining systems that prioritise higher petrol and diesel yields, thereby enhancing pricing resilience in competitive markets.

The Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC, Engr. Bashir Bayo Ojulari, underscored the move as execution-driven rather than symbolic, stating: “We are moving decisively from resource potential to resource monetisation, ensuring that every asset delivers measurable commercial out-

comes.” Ojulari, in a release by Mr. Andy Odeh, Chief Corporate Communications Officer, NNPC, added that the development is part of a broader strategy to “grow production, deepen market relevance, and strengthen Nigeria’s position as a reliable global energy supplier.”

The deployment of the Cawthorne Floating Storage and Offloading vessel introduces a logistics layer that reduces evacuation bottlenecks from Oil Mining Lease 18, effectively aligning up-



energy markets where disruptions can transmit rapidly across global supply chains.

Dimon stated that “the outcome of current geopolitical events may very well be the defining factor in how the future global economic order unfolds,” indicating that macroeconomic stability is increasingly contingent on geopolitical developments.

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stream production with export readiness. This suggests a tightening of the value chain, where infrastructure is synchronised with production increments to minimise downtime and revenue leakage.

The decision also aligns with federal production targets of three million barrels per day and gas output of 12 billion cubic feet per day by 2030, indicating that crude grade diversification is being used as a lever to support aggregate output expansion while maintaining market competitiveness.

#### DATA BOX

- API gravity: 36.4 (light, sweet category)
- Maiden cargo: 950,000 barrels
- Export destination: Netherlands
- Loading date: 5 April 2026
- Evacuation asset: Cawthorne Floating Storage and Offloading vessel
- Strategic target: 3 million barrels per day crude; 12 billion cubic feet per day gas by 2030

CONT. ON PG 5

# External Reserves Decline Highlights FX Intervention, Capital Flow Pressures

By Johnson Emmanuel

Nigeria's external reserves declined by approximately \$850 million within three weeks, falling from \$50.03 billion on 11 March 2026 to \$49.18 billion as of 1 April 2026, reversing a nine-month accumulation trend. The development has been linked to sustained foreign exchange interventions by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), capital flow volatility, and external debt obligations.

Market participants, including forex traders and operators, attribute the decline to multiple concurrent pressures, including election-related fiscal spending and cautious foreign investor behaviour.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The CBN is sustaining active foreign exchange market intervention to stabilise the naira, despite resulting drawdowns on external reserves.

## DECISION MEMO

The recent decline in reserves reflects a trade-off between exchange rate stability and external buffer accumulation. The CBN's intervention strategy, aimed at managing currency volatility, has required sustained dollar injections into the market, directly impacting reserve levels.

The President of Association of Bureau De Change Operators of Nigeria, Mr. Aminu Gwadebe, noted that "the CBN's efforts to stabilise the naira... have contributed to the decline," adding that capital flow volatility and election-related spending pressures are compounding factors.

Similarly, forex trader, Alhaji Basir Kanjiwa, highlighted that "each time the central bank injects dollars into the market, it draws down on reserves," pointing to a structural reliance on intervention in the absence of sufficient inflows.

The reversal of the upward reserve trend suggests that underlying inflows, including oil reve-



Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, Governor of CBN

nues and foreign investments, have not fully offset demand pressures. This indicates persistent structural vulnerabilities, including high import dependence and limited diversification of foreign exchange sources.

The Chief Executive Officer of Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, Dr. Muda Yusuf, contextualised the decline as marginal, stating that "we are talking about a drop of less than two percent... not something drastic enough to warrant any major worry."

The CBN's earlier projection of reserves rising to \$51.04 billion in 2026 underscores a divergence between forecast assumptions and short-term market dynamics. While reforms and improved inflows are expected to support reserves, current pressures highlight sensitivity to both domestic fiscal cycles and global capital conditions.

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Import-dependent sectors benefit from exchange rate stabilisation driven by central bank interventions.

Consumers may experience reduced short-term currency volatility.

However, the central bank absorbs reserve depletion risk.

Foreign investors remain cautious, limiting inflows and contributing to capital volatility.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The development signals continued reliance on intervention-led exchange rate management rather than fully market-driven pricing.

It also highlights the need for structural reforms to boost non-oil exports and diversify foreign exchange inflows.

Election-cycle fiscal pressures remain a relevant factor in external balance management.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The decline presents a mixed signal. While reserves remain at relatively strong levels, the

drawdown indicates vulnerability to capital outflows and policy intervention costs.

Investor confidence will depend on sustained inflows, transparency in foreign exchange management, and consistency in reform implementation.

## RISK RADAR

Reserve sustainability risk is evident if intervention levels remain high without corresponding inflows.

Capital flow volatility risk persists amid global interest rate sensitivity and investor caution.

Fiscal pressure risk increases during election cycles, impacting external balances.

Structural risk remains due to dependence on oil exports and high import demand.

Policy execution risk exists if reforms fail to translate into measurable foreign exchange inflows.

**The reversal of the upward reserve trend suggests that underlying inflows, including oil revenues and foreign investments, have not fully offset demand pressures**

## DATA BOX

- Reserve decline: \$850 million (three weeks)
- March 11, 2026: \$50.03 billion
- April 1, 2026: \$49.18 billion
- Peak (February 2026): \$50.45 billion
- Import cover: 9.68 months
- 2026 projection: \$51.04 billion

## Nigeria's Food Waste Crisis Is Not a Supply Problem It Is a Systems Failure

We are not facing a food shortage problem. We are confronting a systems failure of staggering proportions, one that we have normalised for far too long.

When a country wastes 38 million tonnes of food annually, the highest on the African continent, the issue is no longer agricultural productivity. It is structural inefficiency.

We must be clear about what this means. Every tonne of wasted food represents wasted water, wasted energy, wasted labour, and wasted capital. It represents a breakdown between production and consumption, between policy intent and operational reality. It is not just an environmental issue, it is an economic contradiction.

We produce, and we lose. We harvest, and we discard. We invest, and we fail to deliver value. This is not accidental. It is systemic.

Zissimos Vergos, Deputy Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, did not understate the issue when he described food waste as "a squandering of precious resources" and "a missed opportunity to combat hunger." He is correct, but we must go further. It is also a failure of coordination, infrastructure, and accountability.

We cannot continue to speak about food insecurity in the same breath as we ignore the scale of waste embedded within our own system. The contradiction is too large to ignore. A country that loses 38 million tonnes of food annually cannot credibly claim that scarcity is its primary challenge. It lies in the absence of storage infrastructure, weak rural road networks, and limited cold chain systems that make it impossible to preserve value between farm and market. It lies in the inability to connect smallholder farmers to processors and structured markets. It lies in a consumption culture that has not inter-

nalised the cost of waste. We are not short of food. We are short of systems.

The environmental implications alone should compel urgency. Food waste contributes up to 10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and as much as 40 percent of methane emissions. That places Nigeria not just as a domestic outlier, but as a contributor to a global sustainability challenge. But even that framing is incomplete. The deeper issue is economic.

When Amb. Philbert Johnson, Director of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation Sub-Regional Office in Nigeria, stated that food systems underpin "wealth, health, and security," he was pointing to something fundamental. Efficient food systems are economic multipliers. Inefficient ones are economic drains.

Nigeria's current position places it firmly in the latter category. We are bleeding value at scale. And yet, the policy response remains fragmented.

Yes, there are signals of intent. The Circular Economy Roadmap. The Interministerial Circular Economy Committee. Efforts to develop a National Plastic Waste Management Regulation. These are not insignificant steps. They indicate awareness. They indicate direction. But awareness is not execution.

Balarabe Lawal, Minister of Environment, acknowledged that food waste "affects not only our environment, but also our economy and society." That acknowledgement is important, but it must now translate into measurable outcomes. Because the scale of the problem demands more than statements. It demands system redesign. We must move from reactive interventions to structural correction.

First, infrastructure must be treated as a non-negotiable foundation. Rural roads, storage facilities, and cold chain systems are not optional enhancements, they

are core economic assets. Without them, production gains will continue to evaporate before they reach the market.

Second, value addition must be institutionalised. Perishable goods cannot remain at the mercy of weak logistics. Processing capacity must be expanded to convert raw output into shelf-stable products, linking farmers directly to industrial demand.

Third, behavioural change must be engineered, not assumed. Waste reduction cannot rely solely on awareness campaigns. It must be embedded into education systems, pricing structures, and regulatory frameworks. We must also confront a harder truth. Food waste persists because it is not priced correctly.

When waste carries no immediate consequence, it becomes embedded behaviour. Until the cost of inefficiency is internalised across the value chain, from producers to consumers, the system will continue to tolerate loss at scale. This is where policy must become decisive.

We cannot continue to approach this as a peripheral sustainability issue. It is a central economic priority. Every tonne of food saved is value retained. Every inefficiency eliminated is productivity gained. We must therefore reframe the conversation. This is not about reducing waste for environmental optics. It is about recovering economic value, strengthening food security, and improving system efficiency. The data has already made the case.

The question now is whether we are prepared to act with the urgency and discipline that the situation demands. Because if we are not, we will continue to operate an economy where abundance coexists with scarcity, where production coexists with loss, and where potential is consistently undermined by preventable failure.

### 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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# Lafarge Africa Engagement Reflects Industry Alignment With Government Industrialisation Agenda

By Olumide Johnson

Lafarge Africa Plc's Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Lolu Akinyemi, alongside executive management, recently had a courtesy visit to Dr. Jumoke Oduwole, Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment. The engagement focused on aligning corporate strategy with Nigeria's industrialisation priorities, with emphasis on public-private collaboration and private sector-led growth.

Akinyemi reaffirmed Lafarge Africa Plc's commitment to supporting industrial expansion, while Oduwole acknowledged the company's role in job creation and economic development.

**DECISION HIGHLIGHT**

Lafarge Africa Plc is reinforcing strategic alignment with federal industrial policy through direct engagement, positioning itself within government-led industrialisation and private sector growth frameworks.

**DECISION MEMO**

The engagement reflects a deliberate positioning by Lafarge Africa Plc within Nigeria's evolving industrial policy landscape, where government-private sector coordination is increasingly central to economic expansion.

Akinyemi emphasised the role of sustained collaboration, indicating that the company is aligning its operational strategy with national development priorities. This suggests an intent to secure policy visibility and maintain relevance within infrastructure and industrial supply chains.

Dr Jumoke Oduwole acknowledged Lafarge Africa Plc's contribution to employment and economic activity, reinforcing the government's reliance on established industrial players to drive execution of its broader agenda.

The discussion around private sector-led growth indicates a policy orientation that prioritises corporate participation in scaling industrial output. However, the interaction remains at a signalling stage, with no disclosed commitments, timelines, or project-specific frameworks.

This type of engagement typically functions as a coordination mechanism, aligning expectations between policymakers and large corporates. Its effectiveness will depend on translation into ac-



Dr. Jumoke Oduwole, Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment (r), with Mr. Lolu Akinyemi, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Lafarge Africa Plc Group

tionable programmes, particularly in areas such as infrastructure development, manufacturing expansion, and supply chain localisation.

**WHO WINS / WHO LOSES**

Lafarge Africa Plc strengthens its policy alignment and potential access to government-backed industrial initiatives.

The Federal Government benefits from private sector engagement in advancing industrialisation objectives.

However, smaller industry participants may face competitive pressure if policy alignment disproportionately favours established corporates.

**POLICY SIGNALS**

The engagement signals continued reliance on public-private partnerships as a delivery mechanism for industrial policy.

It reinforces the government's emphasis on private sector-led growth and industrial expansion.

**INVESTOR SIGNAL**

The interaction provides a mild positive signal, indicating policy continuity and corporate alignment with government priorities.

However, absence of concrete commitments limits immediate investment implications.

**RISK RADAR**

Execution risk remains, as engagements without defined outputs may not translate into measurable outcomes.

Policy concentration risk may emerge if benefits accrue primarily to large incumbents.

There is also signalling risk, where strategic alignment does not convert into operational impact.

## NNPC Adds Cawthorne Grade To Deepen Export Optionality...

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**WHO WINS / WHO LOSES**

Winners include upstream partners within Oil Mining Lease 18, who benefit from improved evacuation capacity and potentially enhanced pricing for light, sweet crude. European refiners gain access to an additional high-yield feedstock aligned with clean fuel output requirements.

The NNPC strengthens its commercial positioning through portfolio diversification.

Potential losers are heavier crude producers facing relative discounting in a market that continues to favour lighter grades, alongside logistics operators not integrated into the Floating Storage and Offloading-linked evacuation model.

**POLICY SIGNALS**

The move reinforces a policy direction centred on production scaling through asset optimisation rather than solely new discoveries. It signals regulatory alignment between the Nigerian NNPC and the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) in enabling faster route-to-market mechanisms.

The emphasis on partnerships and operational discipline indicates continuity in reform implementation under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration, with execution metrics increasingly prioritised over policy articulation.

**INVESTOR SIGNAL**

The introduction of a new export grade within a structured rollout of multiple crude streams suggests a maturing commercial framework

within the NNPC. Investors may interpret this as a shift towards predictable asset monetisation and improved revenue visibility.

The integration of evacuation infrastructure with production assets reduces operational risk, which could support improved valuation metrics for upstream-linked investments. The focus on light, sweet crude also aligns Nigeria's output with demand segments less exposed to refining complexity constraints.

**RISK RADAR**

Execution risk remains, particularly in sustaining consistent production volumes from Oil Mining Lease 18 to support regular cargo scheduling. Infrastructure reliability of the Floating Storage and Offloading system introduces operational dependency risks.

# Conflict Data Weaknesses Persist As Unknown Actors Dominate Ondo Violence Patterns

By Olumide Johnson

**N**extier convened a stakeholder engagement on 17 March 2026 to review six months of primary data on violent conflict in Ondo State, covering September 2025 to February 2026. The session presented findings from the Nigeria Violent Conflicts Database, developed with support from the Strengthening Peace and Resilience in Nigeria Programme, and brought together representatives from key security, statistical, and civil institutions.

The data revealed that 47 percent of violent incidents were attributed to unknown armed actors, highlighting attribution challenges in conflict environments. The analysis also showed widespread geographic impact, with over half of Local Government Areas recording at least one incident.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Nextier is advancing a data-driven peacebuilding model centred on primary data collection, institutional collaboration, and early warning system strengthening to improve conflict response accuracy.

## DECISION MEMO

The engagement reflects a shift towards evidence-based conflict management, where data quality and attribution accuracy are positioned as central to policy effectiveness. However, the findings expose structural limitations in Nigeria's conflict intelligence architecture.

The high proportion of incidents linked to unidentified actors indicates a critical gap in attribution capacity. This undermines targeted intervention design, as response strategies depend on clear

nals a policy orientation towards prevention rather than response. However, early warning systems are only as effective as the speed and coordination of subsequent action. Without defined response protocols, improved data visibility may not translate into reduced conflict incidence.

The underlying implication is that Nigeria's peacebuilding framework is transitioning from narrative-based assessments to data-driven analysis, but has not yet resolved the operational constraints required to convert insight into intervention.

## DATA BOX

- Unknown actors: 47% of violent incidents
- Highest incident month: September 2025 (25%)
- Geographic spread: 56% of Local Government Areas affected
- Data period: September 2025 to February 2026

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Security and policy institutions gain improved visibility into conflict patterns, enhancing strategic planning capacity.

Local communities may benefit from more targeted interventions if data systems translate into actionable responses.

However, unidentified perpetrators benefit from attribution gaps, which limit enforcement precision and accountability.

Investors and economic actors in affected regions remain exposed to persistent security uncertainty.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The initiative signals increasing policy reliance on data-driven approaches to conflict management.

It also indicates a shift towards institutional collaboration, though coordination mechanisms remain



identification of threat actors and conflict drivers. Without this, policy responses risk remaining reactive and generalised.

The Nigeria Violent Conflicts Database represents an attempt to institutionalise conflict data systems at the community level. Its expansion across multiple states suggests a move towards decentralised intelligence gathering. However, the effectiveness of such systems depends on verification standards, interoperability across agencies, and sustained stakeholder coordination.

The participation of institutions including the National Human Rights Commission, National Orientation Agency, Department of State Services, and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps indicates recognition of the need for multi-agency alignment. Yet, the engagement also highlighted persistent challenges in data reporting, access, and validation, suggesting that institutional fragmentation remains a constraint.

The emphasis on early warning mechanisms sig-

underdeveloped.

There is an implicit recognition that existing security responses lack sufficient analytical grounding.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The findings present a cautious signal. While improved data systems enhance transparency around security risks, high levels of unattributed violence indicate persistent uncertainty.

Investment decisions in affected regions will remain sensitive to the effectiveness of early warning systems and the credibility of coordinated responses.

## RISK RADAR

Attribution risk remains elevated, with nearly half of incidents linked to unknown actors.

Coordination risk persists across multiple agencies involved in data collection and response.

Execution risk is evident in translating data insights into timely interventions.

# Dimon Flags Geopolitical Risk To Inflation Outlook, Prolonged ...

CONT. FRM PG 2

The reference to supply chain disruptions across sectors such as shipbuilding, agriculture, and food production highlights the breadth of potential transmission channels. This reinforces the view that inflation risks are no longer isolated to demand-side dynamics but are structurally embedded in global production systems.

His caution also implies a policy constraint for the United States Federal Reserve, where renewed inflationary pressure could delay monetary easing. The prospect of "higher for longer" interest rates introduces a tightening bias that could affect credit conditions, investment flows, and financial market stability.

At the same time, his acknowledgement of continued economic resilience suggests a dual-track outlook, where underlying strength coexists with elevated downside risks. This creates a policy environment defined by uncertainty rather than directional clarity.

## DATA BOX

- Key risk factor: Potential Iran-related geopolitical escalation
- Transmission channels: Energy markets, supply chains, commodity prices
- Policy implication: Prolonged higher interest rates
- Economic condition: Resilient but showing signs of weakening consumption

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Energy producers may benefit from elevated commodity prices driven by supply disruptions. Central banks retain policy leverage but face constrained flexibility.

Consumers and manufacturing sectors face cost pressures from rising input and fuel prices.

Interest rate-sensitive sectors may experience prolonged financing constraints.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The outlook signals increased sensitivity of monetary policy to geopolitical developments.

It reinforces the persistence of supply-side inflation risks despite prior tightening cycles.

There is an implicit need for policy coordination between energy security and economic stability frameworks.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The warning introduces a cautious outlook for global markets, with heightened volatility tied to geopolitical developments.

Investors may anticipate prolonged restrictive monetary conditions, affecting asset pricing and capital allocation decisions.

## RISK RADAR

Geopolitical escalation risk remains the primary trigger for renewed inflation.

Energy market volatility poses systemic risk across sectors.

Monetary policy risk is elevated, with potential delays in rate normalisation.

Supply chain disruption risk persists across global production networks.

There is also macro uncertainty risk, as resilience coexists with emerging economic pressures.

# Nigeria-Senegal Energy Partnership Signals Shift Toward Regional Integration Strategy

By Jeremiah Obeche

Nigeria and Senegal have recently initiated high-level bilateral engagement focused on deepening cooperation across the energy value chain. Senegal's Minister of Energy, Birame Souleye Diop, alongside executives from Petrosen, engaged with Nigeria's Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Dr. Heineken Lokpobiri, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited in Abuja.

The engagement centres on collaboration in refining, gas monetisation, upstream investment, and institutional development, reflecting a broader shift towards intra-African energy cooperation.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Nigeria and Senegal are repositioning from competitive hydrocarbon producers to collaborative partners, leveraging complementary assets to drive regional energy integration and industrial growth.

## DECISION MEMO

The bilateral engagement reflects a structural shift in Africa's energy strategy, where scale constraints, financing pressures, and infrastructure deficits are driving cross-border collaboration. Rather than competing for capital and market share, Nigeria and Senegal are aligning capabilities across refining, gas, and upstream development.

Nigeria's refining expansion, anchored by large-scale domestic capacity, presents a downstream integration opportunity for Senegal, which remains reliant on imports. Conversely, Senegal's rapid progress in liquefied natural gas development introduces complementary expertise to Nigeria's gas monetisation agenda.

The engagement suggests a move towards shared value chains, where refining, gas processing, and distribution are regionally optimised rather than nationally siloed. This aligns with broader con-



Dr. Heineken Lokpobiri, Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources

tinental frameworks promoting intra-African trade and energy security.

Dr. Lokpobiri, and Diop are advancing a cooperation model that integrates policy alignment with commercial collaboration. The involvement of the NNPC and Petrosen indicates that the partnership is being structured at both governmental and operational levels.

The framework also intersects with emerging continental financing mechanisms, particularly the Africa Energy Bank, suggesting that capital mobilisation is being embedded into the partnership design.

However, the effectiveness of this collaboration will depend on execution clarity, particularly in structuring joint ventures, aligning regulatory regimes, and ensuring that shared projects are commercially viable. Without these, the partnership risks remaining declarative rather than trans-

formative.

## DATA BOX

- Nigeria upstream target: \$10 billion investment
- Nigeria production target: 2 million barrels per day
- Nigeria upstream investment ambition: \$30 billion by 2030
- Senegal production: ~100,000 barrels per day (Sangomar)
- Senegal output (2025): 36.1 million barrels
- Exploration campaign (Senegal): \$100 million
- Nigeria gas initiatives: \$2 billion

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Nigeria strengthens its position as a regional energy hub, leveraging scale and infrastructure.

Senegal gains access to refining capacity, technical expertise, and expanded market integration.

Private investors benefit from larger, cross-border project pipelines with potential risk-sharing structures.

However, standalone national operators may face competitive pressure as regional integration reshapes market dynamics.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The partnership signals a transition from resource nationalism to regional coordination in Africa's energy sector.

It reflects policy alignment with continental initiatives promoting intra-African trade, energy security, and industrialisation.

There is also a clear shift towards integrating financing mechanisms, such as the Africa Energy Bank, into project development frameworks.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The collaboration provides a positive signal for investors seeking scale and diversification in African energy markets.

# Zenith Bank Enters Kenya Through Paramount Acquisition Despite...

## CONT. FRM COVER

## DECISION MEMO

The acquisition reflects Zenith Bank Plc's transition from a West Africa-focused institution to a pan-African expansion model. By acquiring an existing licensed entity, the bank bypasses the time and regulatory complexity associated with greenfield entry, accelerating market access.

Zenith Bank Plc stated that the deal represents "a significant step toward our long-term strategic growth agenda and a strong inroad into the East African markets," signalling intent to follow client activity across borders and deepen regional integration.

The choice of Paramount Bank Kenya Limited, a smaller player with limited market share, indicates a low-disruption entry strategy. The Competition Authority of Kenya noted that the transaction does not materially alter market concentration, with dominant banks retaining over 99.8 percent of market share. This suggests that Zenith's initial positioning will be incremental rather than immediately competitive at scale.

The expansion aligns with a broader trend among Nigerian banks, including Access Bank Plc, United Bank for Africa Plc, and Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc, which have pursued East African growth to diversify earnings

and capture intra-African trade flows.

Zenith's strengthened capital base, following a N614.65 billion hybrid capital raise that increased capital by 160 per cent, provides the financial capacity to support cross-border expansion and absorb integration costs.

However, the acquisition's effectiveness will depend on Zenith's ability to scale operations within a highly competitive Kenyan banking sector and differentiate beyond existing incumbents.

## DATA BOX

- Acquisition: 100% of Paramount Bank Kenya Limited
- Regulatory approval: Competition Authority of Kenya (January 2026)
- Employee retention: 78 staff (minimum 12 months)
- Market share impact: No significant change; competitors retain 99.8%+
- Capital raise: N614.65 billion
- Capital growth: 160% increase

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Zenith Bank Plc gains immediate entry into East Africa's largest banking market.

Paramount Bank Kenya Limited benefits from capital backing and potential operational scaling.

Customers may gain access to expanded cross-border banking services.

However, existing Kenyan incumbents maintain dominant market control, limiting immediate competitive disruption.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The approval signals openness within Kenyan regulatory frameworks to foreign bank participation under defined conditions.

It also reflects increasing intra-African banking integration aligned with regional trade and financial connectivity objectives.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The acquisition provides a positive signal of Zenith Bank Plc's growth ambition and capital deployment capacity.

Investors may interpret the move as part of a broader regional diversification strategy, though returns will depend on execution in a competitive market.

## RISK RADAR

Integration risk remains, particularly in aligning operations across jurisdictions.

Competitive risk is high given entrenched incumbents controlling market share.

Regulatory risk persists in navigating dual-market compliance requirements.

Execution risk is evident in scaling a small acquired entity into a meaningful market position.



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# AI Adoption Raises Originality Concerns Within Communication, Creative Industries

By Kingsley Ani

The Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of TPT International, Mr. Adetokunbo Modupe, has outlined a conceptual framework examining the interaction between Native Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, and Artificial Intelligence in modern communication practice. The perspective assesses the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations and creative industries, highlighting both efficiency gains and emerging concerns around originality and skill displacement.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The analysis positions Artificial Intelligence as an enabling tool whose effectiveness depends on its integration with human cognitive and emotional capabilities, rather than as a standalone substitute.

## DECISION MEMO

The framework presented by Modupe positions the Artificial Intelligence discourse from a binary conflict narrative to a layered interaction model. Native Intelligence is identified as foundational, enabling the development of Emotional Intelligence and the creation of Artificial Intelligence systems. This hierarchy suggests that Artificial Intelligence is inherently dependent on human cognitive inputs for relevance and direction.

Modupe argues that Artificial Intelligence enhances operational efficiency through automation, data analysis, and idea generation, particularly within Public Relations workflows. However, he raises a structural concern regarding the erosion of originality, noting that widespread access to Artificial Intelligence tools may compress the distinction between skilled practitioners and less experienced users.

The implication is a shift in competitive advantage from execution capability to conceptual depth. As Artificial Intelligence reduces barriers to entry, the differentiating factor becomes the quality of underlying human insight rather than technical output alone.

He also highlights a functional risk within creative industries, where speed and automation may displace depth and originality. The transition of roles, such as art direction towards prompt-based execution, indicates a reconfiguration of professional skill sets.

The analysis concludes that Artificial Intelligence is neither inherently disruptive nor inherently beneficial. Its impact is conditional on governance by Native and Emotional Intelligence. Where these are weak, Artificial Intelligence may amplify superficial outputs; where they are strong, it may enhance differentiated value creation.

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Professionals with strong foundational think-



Mr. Adetokunbo Modupe, Chairman/ Group Chief Executive Officer of TPT International

ing and emotional intelligence capabilities gain, as Artificial Intelligence amplifies their productivity and output quality.

Technology-enabled practitioners benefit from reduced execution time and expanded creative tools.

Conversely, practitioners reliant on technical execution without conceptual depth face erosion of competitive advantage.

Industries dependent on originality may experience quality dilution if Artificial Intelligence is used without adequate intellectual grounding.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The analysis signals a need for capability development frameworks that integrate Artificial Intelligence literacy with cognitive and emotional skill building.

It also indicates a potential shift in professional standards, where originality and conceptual rigour become more explicitly valued.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

Artificial Intelligence adoption in communication and creative sectors presents efficiency gains and scalability opportunities.

However, long-term value creation will depend on the ability of firms to maintain differentiated intellectual capital rather than commoditised outputs.

## RISK RADAR

Originality risk is elevated, as Artificial Intelligence may standardise outputs across practitioners.

Skill dilution risk emerges where tool usage replaces foundational expertise.

Reputational risk may arise if perceived creativity is not supported by authentic intellectual input.

There is also structural risk in workforce reconfiguration, as roles evolve faster than capability development.

# NSIA Opens NIFG EOI To Broaden Private Capital Participation ...

CONT. FRM COVER

liberate shift towards institutionalising private capital participation in infrastructure delivery. Rather than direct sovereign-led project execution, the Authority is positioning itself as a capital aggregator and transaction enabler.

This approach reflects an underlying constraint in public balance sheets, where infrastructure funding gaps require blended finance structures and private sector risk-sharing. By inviting Expressions of Interest, the authority is effectively testing market appetite, pricing expectations, and partnership structures before full project deployment.

The NSIA's move aligns with its broader mandate to catalyse long-term investments while de-risking entry for private investors. The framework suggests a transition from opportunistic project financing to pipeline-based infrastructure development, where capital allocation is guided by structured engagement rather than ad hoc negotiations.

However, the absence of disclosed project-specific metrics or defined investment parameters indicates that the process is still at a pre-transaction stage. The effectiveness of this approach will depend on conversion rates from Expressions of Interest to bankable deals, as well as the Authority's capacity to structure commercially viable projects within Nigeria's regulatory and macroeconomic environment.

## DATA BOX

- Initiative: Nigeria Infrastructure Fund Group Expression of Interest
- Sponsor: Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority
- Objective: Private sector participation in infrastructure financing
- Stage: Early engagement, pre-transaction pipeline development
- Structure: Public-private capital mobilisation framework

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

The Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority gains a broader investor base and potential co-financing capacity.

Private investors gain early access to infrastructure opportunities and pipeline visibility.

Government benefits from reduced fiscal burden in infrastructure delivery.

However, execution risk may disadvantage smaller participants lacking capacity to engage in complex transactions.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The move signals a shift towards structured public-private partnerships in infrastructure financing.

It reinforces the role of sovereign investment vehicles as intermediaries rather than direct project funders.

There is also an implicit acknowledgement of fiscal constraints in funding large-scale infrastructure independently.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The Expression of Interest provides an entry point for institutional investors seeking exposure to Nigeria's infrastructure sector.

Investor response will depend on clarity of project pipelines, risk allocation frameworks, and return structures.

## RISK RADAR

Conversion risk remains high between Expressions of Interest and actual financial close.

Regulatory and policy uncertainty may affect investor confidence.

# Edun Backs MREIF Expansion To Scale Affordable Housing Finance Delivery

By Ayo Susan

The Honourable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, recently received a delegation from the Ministry of Finance Incorporated Real Estate Investment Fund (MREIF) following a progress presentation by Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI). The briefing positioned the fund as a financing platform delivering real estate funding at below double-digit rates.

Edun described the initiative as “highly successful” and called for its expansion to increase access to affordable housing, with participation from fund managers, merchant banks, trustees, legal advisers, and capital market operators.

**DECISION HIGHLIGHT**

The federal government is signalling intent to scale the MREIF as a central instrument for affordable housing finance and broader financial sector mobilisation.

**DECISION MEMO**

The endorsement of the MREIF reflects a policy shift towards structured, market-linked financing solutions in addressing Nigeria’s housing deficit. By positioning the fund as a scalable platform, the government is attempting to bridge the gap between high commercial lending rates and the need for accessible housing finance.

Edun stated that the initiative demonstrates “the power of innovation, flexibility, and strategic collaboration,” indicating that the model relies on coordinated participation across financial and capital market institutions.

The fund’s delivery of financing at below double-digit rates suggests partial de-risking mechanisms, likely supported by sovereign backing or blended finance structures. This introduces a pricing intervention within the housing finance market, where affordability constraints have historically limited mortgage penetration.

The multi-stakeholder composition of the initiative, involving fund managers, merchant banks, trustees, and legal advisers, indicates an attempt to institutionalise housing finance through capital market structures rather than direct fiscal allocation.

However, the emphasis on expansion highlights a scale gap between current deployment and national housing demand. Without sufficient capitalisation, pipeline development, and distribution mechanisms, the fund risks remaining a targeted intervention rather than a systemic solution.

**DATA BOX**

- Financing rate: below double-digit
- Structure: multi-stakeholder (fund managers, merchant banks, trustees, legal advisers, capital market operators)
- Policy alignment: affordable housing, inclusive growth, financial sector mobilisation
- Status: operational with expansion mandate

**WHO WINS / WHO LOSES**

Prospective homeowners benefit from improved access to lower-cost housing finance.

Financial institutions gain participation opportunities within structured investment vehicles.

Government advances policy objectives on housing and financial inclusion.

However, traditional lenders operating at higher interest rates may face competitive pressure.

**POLICY SIGNALS**

The initiative signals a shift towards blended finance and capital market-driven solutions in housing delivery.

erated risk exposure.

Investor interest will depend on clarity of returns, governance structures, and scalability of the fund.

**RISK RADAR**

Scale risk remains, given the gap between cur-



Mr. Wale Edun, Honourable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy

It reinforces the role of Ministry of Finance Incorporated as an asset manager driving strategic investments.

There is also an implicit move towards reducing reliance on direct fiscal spending in housing.

**INVESTOR SIGNAL**

The fund presents a structured entry point into Nigeria’s real estate financing market with mod-

erent fund capacity and national housing demand.

Execution risk is evident in project pipeline development and distribution efficiency.

Pricing risk may arise if subsidised rates are not sustainable.

There is also governance risk, particularly in maintaining transparency and accountability across multiple stakeholders.

**The multi-stakeholder composition of the initiative, involving fund managers, merchant banks, trustees, and legal advisers, indicates an attempt to institutionalise housing finance through capital market structures rather than direct fiscal allocation**

# Insurance Recapitalisation Reform Marks Sector Reset Ahead Of July 2026 Deadline

By Ayo Susan

The National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) has recently initiated a sector-wide reform programme anchored on the Nigerian Insurance Industry Reform Act 2025, with a recapitalisation deadline set for July 2026. The initiative is being led by Olusegun Omoshin, Commissioner for Insurance and Chief Executive Officer of NAICOM, who outlined a transformation agenda aimed at strengthening solvency, underwriting capacity, and market confidence.

The reform is positioned as part of a broader economic alignment with the Federal Government's long-term growth objectives.

**DECISION HIGHLIGHT**

The NAICOM is enforcing a recapitalisation-driven restructuring of Nigeria's insurance sector to improve financial resilience, scale underwriting capacity, and reposition the industry for expanded economic participation.

**DECISION MEMO**

The recapitalisation directive represents a structural reset of Nigeria's insurance market, targeting longstanding weaknesses in capital adequacy, low penetration, and limited risk absorption capacity. By mandating stronger capital bases, the NAICOM is attempting to recalibrate the sector's ability to underwrite large-scale risks and support economic activity.

Omoshin framed the reform as a transformation opportunity, stating that it is intended to "fortify solvency and amplify underwriting capabilities." he said that the objective is to "instill unparalleled confidence among consumers" and drive "sustainable growth, financial inclusion, and resilience."

The July 2026 deadline introduces a hard compliance horizon, forcing insurers and reinsurers to either raise capital, consolidate, or exit. This suggests an impending market rationalisation, where weaker players may be absorbed or displaced by better-capitalised entities.

The reform also signals a shift from regulatory supervision focused on compliance to one centred on financial strength and systemic stability. By linking recapitalisation to broader economic ambitions, including alignment with national growth targets, the policy positions the insurance sector as a more active contributor to capital formation and risk management.

However, the success of the reform will depend on execution clarity, particularly in defining capital thresholds, ensuring transparent valuation processes, and maintaining regulatory consistency throughout the transition period. Without these, recapitalisation risks becoming a balance sheet exercise rather than a structural transformation.



Mr. Olusegun Omoshin, Commissioner for Insurance/Chief Executive Officer of NAICOM

**DATA BOX**

- Reform framework: Nigerian Insurance Industry Reform Act 2025
- Recapitalisation deadline: July 2026

**WHO WINS / WHO LOSES**

Well-capitalised insurers and reinsurers gain

**The reform also signals a shift from regulatory supervision focused on compliance to one centred on financial strength and systemic stability**

scale advantages and improved market positioning.

Policyholders benefit from enhanced solvency and potentially stronger claims settlement capacity.

Investors may gain access to a more stable

and investable insurance sector.

Smaller or undercapitalised firms face consolidation pressure or market exit.

**POLICY SIGNALS**

The reform signals a regulatory shift towards capital strength as the foundation of sector credibility.

It aligns the insurance industry with broader economic policy objectives, positioning it as a support mechanism for growth and risk management.

There is also an implicit move towards market consolidation and reduced fragmentation.

**INVESTOR SIGNAL**

The recapitalisation programme provides a conditional positive signal, indicating a pathway towards a more resilient and scalable insurance market.

However, investor participation will depend on clarity of regulatory frameworks, transparency in capital raising processes, and the stability of the operating environment.

**RISK RADAR**

Execution risk remains, particularly in enforcing compliance within the specified timeline.

Market disruption risk may arise from consolidation pressures and potential firm exits.

Regulatory risk persists if policy implementation lacks consistency or clarity.

There is also capital raising risk, as macroeconomic conditions may constrain access to funding for affected firms.



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# FTSE Russell Reclassifies Nigeria, Citing Infrastructure Gains Amid Structural Gaps



By Kingsley Ani

**F** TSE Russell has restored Nigeria to Frontier Market status from “Unclassified”, following approval by its Index Governance Board based on recommendations from its Equity Country Classification Advisory Committee and Policy Advisory Board. The reclassification, announced in March 2026, will take effect from September 2026.

The decision reflects improvements in market infrastructure and accessibility within the Nigerian capital market, particularly upgrades linked to the Nigerian Exchange Group Plc. The disclosure highlights enhancements in trading systems, settlement processes, and transparency as key drivers.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

FTSE Russell has re-admitted Nigeria into its Frontier Market index universe, signalling that recent infrastructure and regulatory reforms have met minimum global investability thresholds, while acknowledging unresolved structural inefficiencies.

## DECISION MEMO

The reclassification represents a technical validation of Nigeria’s market reforms rather than a full endorsement of market depth or liquidity resilience. FTSE Russell’s methodology combines structural metrics with investor experience, indicating that Nigeria’s capital market has crossed baseline thresholds for accessibility, repatriation, and operational efficiency.

The Nigerian Exchange Group Plc’s infrastructure upgrades appear central to the decision. The Group Managing Director (GMD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Nigerian Exchange Group Plc, Mr. Temi Popoola, stated: “This milestone reflects... deliberate efforts to strengthen the underlying market infrastructure that supports efficient trading, transparency, and investor access.” Popoola added that the focus

remains on “deepen[ing] reforms, address[ing] identified gaps, and sustain[ing] momentum towards higher market classifications.”

The inclusion signals progress in aligning Nigeria’s post-foreign exchange volatility environment with global investor expectations. However, FTSE Russell’s retention of identified gaps, including foreign exchange liquidity constraints and limited derivatives infrastructure, suggests that Nigeria’s re-entry is conditional on continued reform continuity.

The decision also reflects improved regulatory coordination across market institutions, particularly in capital repatriation and settlement efficiency, where a T+2 cycle now operates. This aligns Nigeria with standard practices in comparable frontier markets, reducing friction for cross-border investors.

## DATA BOX

- Classification change: Unclassified to Frontier Market
- Effective date: September 2026
- Review cycle: March 2026 interim review
- Settlement cycle: T+2
- Assessment ratings: “Pass” across regulatory oversight, capital repatriation, brokerage competitiveness, tax framework, settlement efficiency

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Global asset managers and index-tracking funds gain access to a reclassified market, enabling portfolio reallocation into Nigeria. Domestic listed companies benefit from potential liquidity inflows and improved valuation benchmarks.

The Nigerian Exchange Group Plc strengthens its institutional credibility as infrastructure improvements receive external validation.

However, markets competing for frontier allocations may experience marginal capital rebalancing. Domestic investors could face increased exposure to foreign-driven volatility as inflows

and outflows intensify.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The reclassification reinforces the effectiveness of incremental, infrastructure-led reform within Nigeria’s capital market. It signals that regulatory coordination across the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and market operators is yielding measurable outcomes.

At the same time, the explicit identification of gaps in foreign exchange depth and derivatives markets indicates that policy focus must now shift from access to sophistication, particularly in liquidity management and risk hedging instruments.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The Frontier Market status restores Nigeria’s eligibility within FTSE Russell-tracked indices, potentially triggering passive inflows from index-linked funds. It also improves Nigeria’s visibility within active frontier and emerging market allocation strategies.

However, the signal remains qualified. Investors are likely to interpret the reclassification as an entry point contingent on foreign exchange stability, transaction cost efficiency, and continued reform execution.

## RISK RADAR

Foreign exchange market depth remains a primary constraint, with potential implications for capital repatriation despite current improvements.

Market structure risks persist, particularly limited derivatives availability and evolving custody and clearing frameworks.

There is also reform sustainability risk, where policy inconsistency or regulatory slippage could reverse classification gains.

Finally, increased foreign participation introduces volatility risk, as Nigeria becomes more sensitive to global risk-off cycles and capital flow reversals.

# NESG Advances Creative Economy Reform Through Multi Committee Policy Framework Rollout



Mrs. Hannatu Musa Musawa, Honourable Minister of Arts, Culture, and Creative Economy (left), with other stakeholders, during the signing of the MoU.

By Ovio Peters

The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy, recently inaugurated four policy drafting committees to drive reform in Nigeria's creative and cultural sectors. The initiative follows a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed over a year earlier and is supported by development partners including United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), European Union (EU), and International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Key participants included Hannatu Musa Musawa, Honourable Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy; Dr Ikenna Nwosu, Facilitator, Tourism, Hospitality, Entertainment, Creatives, Culture and Sports Industry Policy Commission; and Ms Seun Ojo, Head, Public Affairs and Public Policy, Nigerian Economic Summit Group.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The NESG and Federal Ministry are institutionalising creative sector reform through a structured, multi-committee policy development framework.

## DECISION MEMO

The inauguration of four specialised committees signals a transition from advocacy to policy architecture within Nigeria's creative economy. By segmenting responsibilities across policy development, financing and incentivisation, inter-ministerial coordination, and international financing engagement, the framework attempts to address longstanding fragmentation in governance and execution.

Musawa emphasised the sector's potential for "innovation, investment, and inclusive growth," indicating a policy orientation towards economic contribution rather than cultural preservation alone.

The involvement of the NESG introduces private sector influence into policy formulation, aligning with a broader trend of co-created economic reforms. The inclusion of development partners such as UNESCO, UNDP, EU, and IFC suggests an external validation layer and potential access to technical and financial resources.

However, the effectiveness of the framework will depend on inter-ministerial alignment and the conversion of committee outputs into enforceable policy instruments. Historically, Nigeria's creative sector has been constrained less by policy absence and more by implementation gaps, funding limitations, and regulatory overlap.

The introduction of an International Conference on Financing component indicates an attempt to directly link policy development with

## The involvement of the NESG introduces private sector influence into policy formulation ...

capital mobilisation, positioning the sector within broader investment narratives rather than purely domestic policy cycles.

## DATA BOX

- Committees established: 4  
Creative Economy Policy Development  
Financing and Incentivisation  
Inter-Ministerial Technical Sessions  
International Conference on Financing
- Stakeholders: Public sector, private sector, development partners
- Development partners: UNESCO, United Nations Development Programme, European Union, International Finance Corporation

- Policy basis: Memorandum of understanding (signed over one year prior)

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Creative industry participants gain potential access to structured policy support and financing pathways.

Government gains a coordinated framework for sector development and economic diversification.

Development partners gain influence in shaping sector standards and frameworks.

However, fragmented operators may face compliance and formalisation pressures as policy structures tighten.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The initiative signals a shift towards formalising the creative economy as a strategic economic sector.

It reinforces inter-ministerial coordination as a prerequisite for sector-wide reform.

There is also a move towards integrating cultural industries into national investment and growth strategies.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The framework presents early-stage signals of improved governance and potential deal flow within the creative sector.

Investor confidence will depend on clarity of incentives, enforceability of policies, and scalability of financing mechanisms.

## RISK RADAR

Execution risk remains high, particularly in translating committee outputs into actionable policy.

Coordination risk persists across multiple ministries and stakeholders.

Funding risk may arise if financing mechanisms are not sufficiently capitalised.

There is also policy continuity risk, especially if implementation timelines extend beyond political cycles.

# Media King Tests Cloud WiFi Model In Nigeria's High-Density Connectivity Market



By Hannah Yemisi

**M**edia King Group, a Croatian public WiFi provider founded by Darko Kraljević, is entering Nigeria to pilot a cloud-managed WiFi model, positioning the country as its African launch market. The rollout, led locally by Charles Okpaleke and Media King Nigeria, targets high-density urban areas and underserved communities, with initial deployments expected in 2026.

The model shifts network processing from physical access points to centralised cloud infrastructure, aiming to address persistent performance and scalability failures in Nigeria's public connectivity ecosystem.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Media King is deploying a cloud-based WiFi architecture in Nigeria to test a lower-cost, scalable alternative to infrastructure-heavy public connectivity models.

## DECISION MEMO

The entry into Nigeria reflects a strategic decision to validate a high-density connectivity solution in one of Africa's most structurally constrained broadband markets. Nigeria's history of failed public WiFi initiatives, including efforts by global technology firms, underscores the execution challenge Media King is attempting to solve.

Darko Kraljević, Founder, Media King Group, stated that "Nigeria will be the starting point for the entire African market," indicating a scale-first strategy contingent on local validation.

The company's model reassigns network intelligence from edge hardware to the cloud, transforming access points into low-cost transmission nodes while centralising traffic management and bandwidth allocation. This architecture directly addresses congestion and performance degradation in high-user-density environments.

Afam Anyika, Chief Executive Officer, Media King Nigeria, highlighted the cost dimension, noting that "60-70% of budgets" in traditional

deployments are infrastructure-driven, positioning the new model as a capital efficiency play.

Commercial viability is structured around indirect monetisation, with free end-user access funded through advertising, data analytics, and public sector applications. This introduces a platform-based revenue model, where connectivity becomes a gateway for data-driven services.

However, regulatory positioning remains contested. The company's interpretation of licensing requirements, particularly under the Nigerian Communications Commission's Internet Code of Practice, introduces compliance ambiguity. While

in traditional models

- Business model: Free WiFi funded by advertising and data services
- Use cases: Urban connectivity, public services, analytics, advertising
- Expansion potential: Continental rollout following Nigeria validation

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Media King gains first-mover advantage in deploying alternative connectivity architecture in a high-demand market.

Local partners benefit from reduced capital requirements and operational participation.

End users gain access to free public connectivity.

Traditional infrastructure-heavy providers may face competitive pressure from lower-cost models.

## POLICY SIGNALS

The deployment highlights regulatory gaps in defining licensing frameworks for hybrid connectivity models.

It signals increasing relevance of public-private partnerships in broadband expansion.

There is also a shift towards data-driven infrastructure as part of urban service delivery.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The model presents a differentiated infrastructure-light investment opportunity, particularly in high-density emerging markets.

Investor interest will depend on regulatory clarity, monetisation efficiency, and scalability beyond pilot deployments.

## RISK RADAR

Regulatory risk remains significant, particularly

**The entry into Nigeria reflects a strategic decision to validate a high-density connectivity solution in one of Africa's most structurally constrained broadband markets**

Media King asserts reliance on partnerships with licensed providers, enforcement clarity will be critical to scalability.

The broader implication is a shift from infrastructure-led connectivity to service-layer innovation, where network efficiency, cost structure, and monetisation models determine viability.

## DATA BOX

- Deployment target: Nigeria as African launch market
- Budget structure: 60-70% infrastructure cost

around licensing and compliance with Nigerian Communications Commission requirements.

Execution risk is elevated in adapting the model to Nigeria's power and infrastructure constraints.

Monetisation risk persists if advertising and data-driven revenues do not scale as projected.

Adoption risk exists in user behaviour and network reliability perception.

There is also scalability risk if initial deployments fail to demonstrate consistent performance under real demand conditions.

# Nigeria's Nightlife Economy Reveals The Demand We Keep Mispricing

I have studied the numbers closely, and the conclusion is unavoidable. Nigeria's nightlife is not leisure, it is a functioning economic system that has been consistently misread and undervalued. When over N900 billion is processed annually across more than 27,000 venues, the issue is no longer scale, it is classification.

What we are observing is not a fringe activity but a structured flow of capital, employment, and behavioural economics operating outside formal recognition. The problem is not that the sector is invisible, it is that it has been intellectually dismissed. That dismissal is no longer sustainable.

The data reveals a dual-market structure that is critical to understanding how value is created and distributed. At the base sits the community nightlife system, characterised by high transaction frequency and low-ticket sizes. These are neighbourhood bars, informal lounges, and local gathering points that drive volume and employment. Over 54,000 Nigerians are engaged nightly within this segment, with labour expanding significantly during peak periods.

At the top sits a concentrated premium layer where fewer participants generate disproportionate value through high spend. This is where the economics become instructive. A brand like Quilox has not merely operated within this layer, it has defined it. By establishing a minimum spend of over N1 million per VIP table, it reset pricing expectations across the market and created a new consumption category.

This is not incidental pricing behaviour. It is deliberate market construction. Once that threshold was normalised, other operators adjusted accordingly, positioning themselves relative to a standard they did not originate. The implication is clear, pricing in Nigeria is not purely demand-driven, it is perception-driven and highly responsive to structured experience.

The spending patterns reinforce this. During the 2024 Dettu December season, select high-end clubs generated up to N360 million in a single day, with VIP tables reaching N1.2 million per night. These figures demonstrate concentrated liquidity operating within a narrow time window, typically a four-hour peak cycle. This compression of value into limited timeframes highlights the efficiency of premium-tier nightlife as a revenue engine.

The shift in payment behaviour further amplifies this dynamic. Bank transfers have overtaken both cash and card payments in nightlife transactions, exceeding card usage by nearly two million events during peak hours. This transition reduces transactional friction and alters spending psychology. When high-value transactions are executed through identical digital interfaces as lower-value ones, perceived financial thresholds diminish, enabling rapid escalation in spend.

This behavioural shift has broader implications. It suggests that Nigeria's consumption constraints are not solely income-driven but are influenced by environment, perception, and ease of transaction. Where these factors align, spending expands beyond conventional expectations.

This creates a contradiction that policy frameworks have not adequately addressed. Nigeria is often

characterised as an economy under pressure, yet within that same environment, there exists sustained high-value discretionary spending. The coexistence of constrained incomes and premium consumption indicates that economic participation is segmented rather than uniformly suppressed.

The implication is that demand exists, but it is selectively activated. Nightlife, particularly at the premium level, provides one of the clearest case studies of this activation. The sector demonstrates that when experience, branding, and payment infrastructure align, liquidity is released at scale.

This is why the sector's exclusion from formal economic prioritisation is problematic. Tosin Eniolorunda, Chief Executive Officer of Moniepoint, noted that local nightlife operators are a critical part of Nigeria's economic architecture. This assessment is accurate but incomplete. The sector is not just part of the architecture, it is part of the liquidity system itself.

Each operational night activates a network of suppliers and service providers, including beverage distributors, food vendors, logistics operators, security personnel, and transport services. The economic impact extends beyond direct transactions to a wider ecosystem that remains largely unmeasured in policy terms.

The structural insight here is not limited to nightlife. The same pattern appears across multiple sectors in Nigeria. High fragmentation at the base, high value

**Over 54,000 Nigerians are engaged nightly within this segment, with labour expanding significantly during peak periods**

concentration at the top, and informal systems supporting formal economic outcomes. Nightlife simply provides a clearer lens because of its immediacy and visibility.

The Quilox example is particularly instructive because it demonstrates how pricing can redefine market behaviour. Conservative estimates suggest that VIP table sales alone could exceed N4 billion annually, excluding additional revenue streams such as general admission, events, and ancillary services. This level of value generation within a single brand



ecosystem indicates that the upper tier of the nightlife economy functions with a degree of efficiency and scalability that is not widely acknowledged.

Similarly, the broader Lagos market generated N4.32 billion across just 15 clubs within a single December period, reinforcing the concentration of value within premium urban clusters. At the same time, states such as Kwara lead in transaction frequency despite lower venue density, illustrating the volume-driven dynamics at the base of the market.

These insights collectively point to a misalignment between observed economic behaviour and policy interpretation. The sector is both large and structured, yet it is not treated as a strategic economic priority. This limits opportunities for optimisation, including formalisation, taxation efficiency, infrastructure support, and data integration.

More importantly, it obscures lessons that could be applied to other sectors. The ability to create high-value demand within constrained environments, the role of digital payments in accelerating liquidity, and the impact of branding on pricing power are not nightlife-specific phenomena. They are transferable economic principles.

Ignoring these dynamics reduces policy effectiveness because it disconnects strategy from actual behaviour. An economy cannot be managed accurately if significant portions of its activity are dismissed or misunderstood.

The central issue, therefore, is not whether Nigeria's nightlife economy is large. The data has already resolved that question. The issue is whether it is being interpreted correctly. At present, it is not.

What I see is a system that demonstrates the presence of demand, the responsiveness of consumers to structured experiences, and the capacity for rapid capital circulation when friction is reduced. These are indicators of economic potential, not anomalies.

The failure to recognise this leads to broader misjudgements about the Nigerian economy. It reinforces narratives of constraint without adequately accounting for areas of demonstrated liquidity and resilience.

This is not an argument for elevating nightlife above other sectors. It is an argument for analytical consistency. If a sector processes N900 billion annually, employs tens of thousands of people, and influences behavioural patterns across consumption and payment systems, it warrants structured attention.

The broader implication is that Nigeria's economic reality is more complex than current frameworks suggest. It is not defined solely by scarcity or constraint, but by uneven distribution, selective activation, and structural inefficiencies in how value is captured and scaled. Nightlife, in this context, is not the story. It is the evidence.

And until that evidence is properly integrated into how we think about the economy, we will continue to misprice not just nightlife, but Nigeria itself.