

## Nigeria Moves Nutrition Policy From Donor Aid To Domestic Finance

Nigeria's fiscal reforms and tightening global development financing environment are forcing policymakers to confront a difficult reality: critical social programmes can no longer depend indefinitely on external donors. The decision by the Nutrition 774 Initiative Strategic Board, chaired by **Vice President Kashim Shettima**, to adopt a domestic financing model for nutrition interventions signals an emerging policy shift from aid dependence to institutional self-financing. With a N500bn nutrition funding gap, declining donor commitments and growing pressure on government to improve human capital outcomes, nutrition is increasingly being repositioned not merely as a health intervention but as an economic investment tied to productivity, workforce quality and long-term national development. **Enam Obiosio** writes.



Vice President Kashim Shettima

**V**ice President Kashim Shettima, Chairman of the Nutrition 774 Initiative Strategic Board and National Council on Nutrition, has directed the adoption of a domestic financing model as the primary funding architecture for nutrition interventions in Nigeria. At the Second High-Level Strategic Board Meeting of the Nutrition 774 Initiative in Abuja, the board mandated the Federal Ministry of Finance and key stakeholders to activate existing financing instruments, including the Presidential Nutrition Intervention Fund (PNIF) and the ring-fenced Sugar-Sweetened Beverage (SSB) Levy. The board also directed the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) to accelerate the inauguration of the remaining State Councils on Nutrition and Local Government Committees on Food and Nutrition. Shettima further called for progress on the proposed National Nutrition Bill and warned that Nigeria must prepare for declining donor support by building sustainable domestic funding mechanisms.

### DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Nigeria is attempting to move nutri-

tion financing from a donor-supported framework to a domestically funded governance system anchored on fiscal instruments, legislation and institutional accountability.

### DECISION MEMO

The most consequential decision taken by the Nutrition 774 Initiative Strategic Board was not the activation of another government programme. It was the recognition that donor-dependent nutrition financing may no longer be sustainable.

For decades, nutrition interventions across many developing countries have relied heavily on development partners, international agencies and philanthropic organisations. While those partnerships

remain important, changing global economic realities are reducing the certainty of long-term external funding.

Nigeria's response appears to be evolving from programme management to financing reform.

By adopting a domestic financing model, the government is effectively acknowledging that nutrition outcomes must increasingly be funded from within the country's own fiscal architecture. The significance of this shift extends beyond nutrition policy.

It represents an emerging attempt to link social development directly to economic planning.

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# CBN Reports Rising Gas Export Earnings In Q1 2026

By Kingsley Ani

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), in its Balance of Payments Highlights for Q1 2026, reported that Nigeria's gas export earnings increased to \$2.53 billion from \$2.24 billion in Q4 2025. The improvement coincided with a stronger external sector performance, lifting the goods account surplus to \$5.95 billion from \$1.77 billion in the preceding quarter and contributing to a 255.71 percent increase in the current account surplus to \$4.98 billion. The growth reflects ongoing investments in gas infrastructure, expanded export capacity and the federal government's gas-led diversification strategy.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Gas is gradually evolving from a supplementary export commodity into a more meaningful contributor to Nigeria's external earnings, helping to broaden the country's foreign exchange base beyond crude oil.

## DECISION MEMO

The latest Balance of Payments data suggests that Nigeria's external sector gains are increasingly being supported by structural changes within the energy sector. While crude oil remains dominant, rising gas exports indicate that diversification efforts are beginning to produce measurable foreign exchange outcomes.

According to the CBN, "Gas exports increased slightly to US\$2.53 billion in Q1 2026, from US\$2.24 billion recorded in Q4 2025." Though modest in isolation, the increase becomes more significant when viewed alongside the sharp expansion in the goods account surplus and current account position.

The figures reinforce the strategic rationale behind the federal government's Decade of Gas initiative. For years, Nigeria's vast gas reserves represented an



underutilised economic asset. The current trajectory suggests that infrastructure investments, export market development and production expansion are beginning to improve monetisation outcomes.

The broader implication is that Nigeria's external resilience is becoming less dependent on a single commodity stream. The simultaneous rise in gas export receipts and decline in petrol import expenditure indicates a gradual strengthening of energy sector efficiency and foreign exchange retention.

However, gas earnings remain materially smaller than potential reserve capacity would suggest. Sustained gains will depend on continued infrastructure development, stable production levels and Nigeria's ability to remain competitive in increasingly contested global gas markets.

## DATA BOX

- Gas export earnings Q1 2026: \$2.53 billion
- Gas export earnings Q4 2025: \$2.24 billion
- Quarter-on-quarter increase: \$290 million
- Goods account surplus Q1 2026: \$5.95 billion
- Goods account surplus Q4 2025: \$1.77 billion
- Goods account surplus Q1 2025: \$3.35 billion
- Current account surplus Q1 2026: \$4.98 billion

- Current account surplus Q4 2025: \$1.40 billion
- Current account growth: 255.71 percent
- Petrol import bill Q1 2026: N87.40 billion
- Petrol import bill Q1 2025: N2.27 trillion
- Reduction in petrol imports year-on-year: N2.18 trillion

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

### Who Wins

- Gas producers and exporters
- Federal Government revenue and foreign exchange managers
- Midstream and gas infrastructure investors
- Industries linked to gas value chains
- External reserves and balance of payments stability

### Who Loses

- Economies of scale enjoyed by fuel importers
- Businesses dependent on import-intensive energy supply chains
- Competitors in export markets if Nigeria continues expanding gas volumes

## POLICY SIGNALS

- Gas is becoming a central pillar of export diversification policy.
- Energy sector reforms are increasingly focused on foreign exchange generation.
- Government is prioritising gas monetisation alongside crude oil production.
- Reduced fuel import dependence is improving external sector efficiency.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The data strengthens the investment case for gas infrastructure, processing facilities, transportation networks and export-oriented energy projects. Rising export receipts and stronger external balances suggest that gas is becoming one of the more credible long-term growth segments within Nigeria's energy economy.

## Nigeria Moves Nutrition Policy From Donor Aid To Domestic ...

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Vice President Shettima made this clear when he stated: "The domestic financing architecture must be activated now, in this administration, within this governance cycle, and under the accountability of this Board."

The statement transforms nutrition from a welfare discussion into a fiscal governance issue.

The urgency becomes more pronounced when viewed through the lens of human capital development. Unlike infrastructure projects that can be delayed and resumed, nutrition outcomes are highly time-sensitive. Poor nutrition during early childhood often results in irreversible developmental consequences.

Shettima highlighted this reality when he warned: "The first 1,000 days of a child's life do not wait for memos, circulars, or budget negotiations. While we deliberate, children across this country are within a window of growth that cannot be recovered once lost."

This observation explains why the administration is increasingly linking nutrition to productivity, education and economic competitiveness rather than limiting it to public health outcomes.

The broader architecture of the initiative also reveals an important governance lesson. The board is not treating nutrition as the responsibility of the health sector alone. Agriculture, Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Education, Water Resources, Women Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Protection have all been assigned implementation responsibilities.

This reflects a growing recognition that malnutrition is not merely a food problem. It is an institutional co-

ordination problem.

Agriculture influences food availability. Budget authorities determine funding releases. Education shapes behavioural outcomes. Water and sanitation affect health conditions. Social protection influences household resilience.

**The private sector must recognise nutrition as an economic issue, because productivity begins with a healthy body and a capable mind**

Failure in any one of these areas can weaken nutrition outcomes.

The board's insistence on activating the remaining State Councils on Nutrition and Local Government

Committees further underscores the reality that nutrition outcomes are ultimately delivered at the sub-national level. National policy may establish direction, but implementation occurs within states, communities and households.

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the meeting was the treatment of nutrition as an economic variable.

According to Shettima, "The private sector must recognise nutrition as an economic issue, because productivity begins with a healthy body and a capable mind."

This reframing has significant implications. A malnourished population affects workforce productivity, educational attainment, healthcare costs and long-term economic growth. In effect, nutrition becomes an investment in future labour quality.

The challenge, however, remains financing.

The board acknowledged a N500bn funding gap. Closing that gap will require more than policy declarations. It will require consistent budget releases, operational financing instruments, legislative support and stronger accountability mechanisms.

The proposed National Nutrition Bill therefore becomes a critical component of the architecture. Without legal backing, many of the reforms may remain dependent on administrative goodwill rather than statutory obligation.

The administration's broader message appears clear: nutrition policy must move beyond advocacy into implementation, and implementation requires money, institutions and accountability.

Whether the strategy succeeds will depend less on the quality of the resolutions adopted and more on the

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# ECOWAS Bank Approves \$75m, €105m To Strengthen Regional Growth

By Olumide Johnson

The ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), at the conclusion of its 98th Ordinary Session of the Board of Directors, approved \$75 million and €105 million in financing facilities to support energy security, private sector expansion, industrial development and small business financing across West Africa. The approvals include a €80 million credit line for Coris Holding SA, a €25 million syndicated Murabaha facility for Société Nationale d'Électricité du Sénégal (SENELEC), a \$50 million facility for Stratcon Energy and Trading Limited of Ghana linked to refined product supplies from Dangote Refinery, and a \$25 million facility for Topaz Multi-Industries SA of Guinea.

### DECISION HIGHLIGHT

EBID is directing capital towards productive sectors that address three regional constraints simultaneously, energy availability, private-sector financing and industrial capacity.

### DECISION MEMO

The latest approvals illustrate a deliberate shift from isolated project financing towards integrated regional economic strengthening. Rather than concentrating resources in a single sector, EBID has targeted financial intermediation, energy security and manufacturing capacity, three areas that significantly influence economic competitiveness.

The largest allocation, a €80 million credit line to Coris Holding SA, underscores the bank's focus on expanding access to finance for businesses. With



transformation.”

Donkor further noted that the facilities align with

98th Ordinary Session of the EBID Board of

Directors

### WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

#### Who Wins

- Small and medium-sized enterprises across West Africa
- Energy distributors and electricity consumers
- Regional manufacturing firms
- Dangote Refinery-linked supply chains
- Financial institutions supporting productive sectors

#### Who Loses

- Businesses constrained by inefficient supply chains
- Import-dependent industries lacking competitiveness
- Regions with weak access to development finance

### POLICY SIGNALS

- Regional development finance is shifting towards productive-sector investment.
- Energy security remains a core economic priority across West Africa.
- SME financing is increasingly viewed as a growth and employment strategy.
- Import substitution and industrial capacity development are gaining policy support.

### INVESTOR SIGNAL

The approvals reinforce confidence in sectors linked to energy infrastructure, industrial production, trade finance and SME lending. The inclusion of Dangote Refinery within a regional supply framework also highlights growing opportunities around intra-African value chains and energy distribution networks.

### RISK RADAR

- Energy supply disruptions could affect project outcomes.
- Currency volatility may influence repayment capacity across markets.
- SME credit quality remains sensitive to economic conditions.
- Industrial expansion depends on stable trade and logistics networks.
- Regional political and regulatory risks could affect implementation timelines.

**EBID is directing capital towards productive sectors that address three regional constraints simultaneously, energy availability, private-sector financing and industrial capacity**

small and medium-sized enterprises accounting for more than 70 percent of Coris Holding's loan portfolio, the facility effectively channels development finance into one of the region's most employment-intensive segments.

Energy security forms the second pillar. The €25 million SENELEC facility, arranged with the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation, is designed to support refined petroleum supplies for power generation. The separate \$50 million financing for Stratcon Energy and Trading Limited, supported through a partnership with Dangote Refinery, extends the strategy beyond electricity into broader regional fuel supply resilience.

Industrialisation constitutes the third component. The \$25 million facility for Topaz Multi-Industries SA aims to strengthen local manufacturing capacity in Guinea through raw material imports, supporting import substitution and employment generation.

Dr George Agyekum Donkor, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of EBID, said that the approvals demonstrate the bank's commitment to “support transformative initiatives that strengthen productive capacities, secure energy supply, and expand access to finance for businesses, particularly SMEs, which are the true engines of our region's economic

the bank's Growth, Resilience, Optimisation Strategy for 2026-2030, suggesting that future financing will increasingly target projects capable of improving regional economic self-sufficiency and resilience.

### DATA BOX

- Total approvals:
  - \$75 million
  - €105 million
- Coris Holding SA:
  - €80 million credit line
  - SMEs represent more than 70 percent of loan portfolio
- SENELEC:
  - €25 million syndicated Murabaha facility
  - Arranged with International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation
- Stratcon Energy and Trading Limited:
  - \$50 million facility
  - Linked to Dangote Refinery refined product supply
- Topaz Multi-Industries SA:
  - \$25 million facility
  - Supports industrial raw material imports
- Approval platform:

## Nigeria Must Stop Exporting Potential And Start Creating Value

For decades, we have watched a familiar cycle repeat itself across Nigeria's extractive industries. We dig resources from the ground, ship them abroad in raw form, and then wonder why the jobs, technology, industrial capacity and real wealth are created elsewhere. The result has been an economy that often exports potential but imports value. That is why the emergence of the \$400 million rare earth processing plant being developed by Hasetins Commodities Limited in Nasarawa State deserves attention far beyond the mining sector.

This project is not merely another industrial investment. It represents the type of economic transition Nigeria has talked about for years but has struggled to achieve. If successfully completed and operated as envisioned, it could become evidence that Nigeria is finally beginning to move from extraction to processing, from commodity dependence to industrial value creation.

The most important statement made during the federal government's inspection was not about equipment, construction progress or regulatory compliance. It came from Hasetins Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Prince Jidayi, who observed: "For decades the narrative has been of raw extraction and immediate export. Hasetins is advancing that." That single statement captures the strategic significance of the project.

Rare earth minerals are no longer obscure commodities. They are becoming central to the global economy. They power electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies, advanced electronics, defence systems and modern manufacturing. As countries race to secure critical mineral supply chains, resource-rich nations face a choice. They can remain suppliers of raw materials or become participants in higher-value segments of the production chain. We believe Nigeria must choose the

second option.

The proposed plant is expected to add 12,000 tonnes annually to Hasetins' existing processing capacity, raising total output to 18,000 tonnes per annum. More importantly, it has the potential to position Nigeria as Africa's leading rare earth processing hub. That matters because processing creates significantly more value than extraction alone. It generates skilled jobs, attracts technology, deepens industrial capabilities and strengthens domestic supply chains.

Equally encouraging is the Federal Government's insistence on compliance, environmental responsibility and community engagement. Too often, mining projects across Africa have been associated with environmental degradation, social conflict and limited local benefits. The comments from officials of the Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals Development suggest an attempt to establish a different model.

Deputy Director, Oladehinde Oladusi, rightly noted that the company had gone beyond simply obtaining access to mineral resources. According to him, the project reflects a commitment to environmental standards, proper planning and advanced technologies designed to minimise hazards associated with rare earth processing.

We find this significant because industrialisation without environmental responsibility is not development. It is merely deferred damage. If Nigeria wants to become a serious player in critical minerals, it must demonstrate that mining and processing can coexist with environmental protection, community welfare and regulatory accountability.

The project's potential employment impact also deserves attention. Officials have indicated that job creation could be substantial once operations commence. Combined with Hasetins' plan to establish regional and satellite separation

centres that integrate artisanal miners into formal supply chains, the initiative could help transform mining from a fragmented activity into a structured economic ecosystem. This is precisely the direction Nigeria's mining sector should be taking.

We are particularly encouraged by the emphasis on local participation. Hasetins says it intends to provide safety equipment, training and offtake arrangements for artisanal miners. If implemented effectively, this approach could improve incomes, enhance safety standards and reduce informality within the sector.

Of course, caution remains necessary. Nigeria has seen ambitious industrial projects announced before without achieving their full promise. The true measure of success will not be the size of the investment or the scale of the facility. It will be whether the plant operates sustainably, creates jobs, transfers technology and stimulates broader industrial development. Yet the signals are encouraging.

The global transition towards clean energy is accelerating. Demand for critical minerals is rising. Countries are competing to secure supply chains. In this environment, exporting raw minerals is increasingly becoming an outdated development model.

We believe the Hasetins project points towards a more intelligent alternative. It recognises that the future belongs not to countries that merely own resources, but to countries that process, refine, innovate and create value from those resources.

Nigeria has spent too many years exporting dirt and importing prosperity. The rare earth project in Nasarawa offers an opportunity to reverse that equation. If government, investors and communities remain aligned, this may become more than a mining project. It may become a blueprint for the industrial future Nigeria has long sought.

### 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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# DMO Reopens N1.2trn Bonds Amid Tight Liquidity Conditions

By Kingsley Ani

The Debt Management Office (DMO), on behalf of the federal government, plans to raise N1.2 trillion through the reopening of two Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) bonds at an auction scheduled for 22 June 2026, with settlement on 24 June 2026. The offer comprises N600 billion of the 22.60 percent FGN JAN 2035 bond and N600 billion of the 16.2499 percent FGN APR 2037 bond. Investors will be allotted based on the yield-to-maturity that clears the auction, with subscriptions priced at N1,000 per unit, a minimum investment of N50.001million and semi-annual coupon payments. The issuance comes amid aggressive liquidity tightening by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and elevated fixed-income yields.

### DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The federal government is testing domestic market depth with one of the largest recent bond reopenings, relying on institutional demand despite a high-yield environment shaped by monetary tightening.

### DECISION MEMO

The significance of the N1.2tn issuance lies not only in its size but in its timing. With the CBN actively withdrawing liquidity through Open Market Operations (OMO), government borrowing is increasingly occurring in a market where capital is expensive and competition for funds is intensifying.

The reopening strategy allows the government to raise substantial funding without creating new benchmark securities, deepening liquidity in existing issues while supporting its domestic borrowing programme.

The differing coupon structures reveal the evolution of Nigeria's interest-rate environment. The 10-year FGN JAN 2035 bond carries a 22.60 percent coupon, reflecting more recent high-rate conditions, while the 20-year FGN APR 2037 bond retains its original coupon of 16.2499 percent. Actual investor returns, however, will depend on auction-clearing yields rather than coupon rates alone.

The offer also highlights the continued importance of institutional investors in Nigeria's sovereign debt market. Pension fund administrators and insurance



Ms. Patience Oniha, Director-General of DMO

companies remain natural buyers of long-dated government securities because of their need for predictable cash flows, duration matching and tax-efficient assets.

More broadly, the auction reflects a policy balancing act. Fiscal authorities require substantial domestic financing, while monetary authorities remain focused on liquidity control and inflation management. The resulting environment has elevated yields but also strengthened investor appetite for sovereign fixed-income instruments.

### DATA BOX

- Total issuance size: N1.2tn
- Auction date: 22 June 2026
- Settlement date: 24 June 2026
- FGN JAN 2035 Bond:
  - Tenor: 10 years
  - Size: N600bn
  - Coupon: 22.60 percent
- FGN APR 2037 Bond:
  - Tenor: 20 years
  - Size: N600bn
  - Coupon: 16.2499 percent
- Unit price: N1,000

- Minimum subscription: N50.001m
- Coupon payments: Semi-annually
- Principal repayment: Bullet repayment at maturity

### WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

#### Who Wins

- Pension fund administrators seeking long-duration assets
- Insurance companies matching long-term liabilities
- Fixed-income investors benefiting from elevated yields
- Federal Government through access to domestic funding

#### Who Loses

- Borrowers competing for liquidity in the domestic market
- Corporates facing higher funding costs
- Investors positioned for declining yields in the near term

### POLICY SIGNALS

- Government remains committed to domestic debt financing.
- Bond reopenings are increasingly preferred for market liquidity management.
- Tight monetary policy continues to influence sovereign borrowing costs.
- Institutional investors remain central to government funding strategy.

### INVESTOR SIGNAL

The auction offers exposure to sovereign credit at historically elevated yield levels. Investor focus will centre on bid-cover ratios, clearing yields and the strength of demand from pension funds and insurance firms, all of which will provide signals on market liquidity and future interest-rate expectations.

### RISK RADAR

- Persistent monetary tightening could push borrowing costs higher.
- Large sovereign issuances may crowd out private-sector borrowers.
- Yield volatility could affect secondary market valuations.

## Nigeria Moves Nutrition Policy From Donor Aid To Domestic ...

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speed with which financing mechanisms are activated and governance structures become functional.

### DATA BOX

#### Financing Metrics

- Estimated nutrition financing gap: N500bn
- Domestic financing model adopted
- Key financing instruments:
  - Presidential Nutrition Intervention Fund (PNIF)
  - Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Levy ring-fence

#### Governance Metrics

- Coverage target: 774 Local Government Areas
- Remaining State Councils on Nutrition to be inaugurated: 26
- Remaining Local Government Committees on Food and Nutrition to be established: 304

#### Policy Instruments

- National Nutrition Bill
- Nutrition 774 Initiative
- National Council on Nutrition
- State Councils on Nutrition
- Local Government Committees on Food and Nutrition

### WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

#### Who Wins

- Children in vulnerable communities
- State governments with functional nutrition structures
- Local governments implementing nutrition interventions
- Healthcare and nutrition service providers
- Human capital development objectives under the Renewed Hope Agenda

#### Who Loses

- Communities dependent on inconsistent donor-funded programmes
- States delaying nutrition governance reforms
- Households affected by weak service delivery systems
- Institutions that fail to align funding with implementation responsibilities

### POLICY SIGNALS

- Nigeria is preparing for a future of reduced donor dependence.
- Human capital development is becoming a central economic policy objective.
- Nutrition is being repositioned from a health issue to a productivity issue.

- Dedicated financing mechanisms are emerging as preferred funding channels.
- Greater accountability is being transferred to states and local governments.

### INVESTOR SIGNAL

The creation of domestic nutrition financing mechanisms could stimulate opportunities across food fortification, agricultural value chains, nutrition products, healthcare delivery, maternal and child health services, educational feeding programmes and social impact investments. It also signals growing government interest in measurable human capital outcomes.

### RISK RADAR

- Delays in activating financing instruments.
- Insufficient budget releases despite appropriations.
- Legislative delays affecting the National Nutrition Bill.
- Weak subnational implementation capacity.
- Continued reliance on fragmented interventions.
- Economic pressures limiting government funding commitments.
- Governance structures existing without operational financing.

# NEC Approves N83.2bn Flood Fund, Regional Policy

By Ogbuefi O. Emelike

The National Economic Council (NEC), chaired by Vice President Kashim Shettima, approved N83.21 billion for flood preparedness and climate disaster mitigation, representing 50 percent of the N166.42 billion requested by the Anticipatory Action Task Force (AATF). The approval was granted during the recent council's meeting in Abuja amid forecasts of severe flooding during the 2026 rainy season. Simultaneously, NEC advanced consideration of the National Regional Development Policy (NRDP) 2026-2030, a framework presented by the Ministry of Regional Development to address regional disparities, coordinate development commissions and align sub-national development planning with national priorities. The Council directed further consultations with state governors and the Nigeria Governors' Forum before final adoption.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

NEC is attempting to institutionalise two preventive governance models simultaneously, anticipatory disaster financing and coordinated regional development planning.

## DECISION MEMO

The significance of the N83.21bn approval lies in its departure from Nigeria's traditional disaster management approach. Historically, public spending has been concentrated on post-disaster relief. NEC's decision signals a shift towards pre-emptive financing aimed at reducing economic losses before disasters occur.

Prince Bassey Otu, Governor of Cross River State, described the intervention as a policy departure, stating: "This is the first time, as a nation, that we are taking proactive steps. Most times, we wait until floods have caused significant damage before taking action."

Otu further explained the rationale behind the council's decision: "Council underscored the importance of the Anticipatory Action Task Force in addressing disasters and climate-related emergencies across the country. Members agreed that NEC must not always be seen reacting to disasters after they occur but should take steps to prevent or mitigate their impact."

The decision to approve only half of the requested amount reflects fiscal caution rather than policy hesi-



NEC Meeting

and the digital economy.

Together, both decisions point to a broader governance theme: replacing fragmented interventions with framework-based planning designed to improve resilience, coordination and long-term development outcomes.

## DATA BOX

- Flood intervention approved: N83.21bn
- Original proposal: N166.42bn
- Approval ratio: 50 percent
- Funding mechanism: Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC)
- Anticipatory Action Task Force (AATF)
- Policy under consideration:

Education  
Industrialisation  
Digital economy

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

### Who Wins

- Flood-prone communities and agricultural regions
- State governments implementing climate resilience programmes
- Regional development commissions
- Infrastructure and climate adaptation projects
- Communities facing long-standing development deficits

### Who Loses

- Areas dependent on reactive disaster response systems
- Projects operating outside coordinated regional planning frameworks
- Regions unable to effectively implement preparedness measures

## POLICY SIGNALS

- Government is moving towards anticipatory disaster financing.
- Climate resilience is becoming a mainstream fiscal priority.
- Regional development planning is receiving renewed institutional attention.
- Federal and state coordination is being positioned as a core development tool.
- Development commissions may operate under a more unified policy framework.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The flood intervention programme and proposed regional policy framework suggest growing opportunities in climate adaptation infrastructure, water management, agriculture resilience, regional infrastructure and development finance. The proposed Regional Development Bank could create an additional institutional financing channel for long-term projects.

## RISK RADAR

- The approved funding may prove insufficient if flooding exceeds forecasts.
- Delays in fund deployment could weaken preventive outcomes.
- Coordination challenges between federal and state governments may affect implementation.
- Regional policy adoption could vary across states.
- The proposed Regional Development Bank remains subject to policy approval and execution risks.

... The idea is to deploy what is currently available in a proactive manner and establish mechanisms that can reduce the impact of flooding before it occurs

tation. According to Otu, "The idea is to deploy what is currently available in a proactive manner and establish mechanisms that can reduce the impact of flooding before it occurs." The Council also indicated that additional funding could be released as conditions evolve.

The parallel discussion on the National Regional Development Policy suggests NEC is also seeking to address structural development imbalances through a more coordinated framework. Abba Yusuf, Governor of Kano State, explained that the policy seeks to coordinate regional development plans, strengthen oversight of regional development commissions and align interventions with national priorities including infrastructure, food security, energy, industrialisation

National Regional Development Policy 2026-2030

- Key regional policy components:
  - Regional Development Policy Framework
  - Coordination of regional development commissions
  - State-level policy adoption
  - Proposed Regional Development Bank
- Focus sectors:
  - Economic growth
  - Food security
  - Energy
  - Infrastructure
  - Healthcare

# FG Issues Tax Transition Framework To Protect Reform Certainty

By Olumide Johnson

The federal government, through the Federal Ministry of Finance, has released transition guidelines for the implementation of Nigeria's new tax regime, which took effect on 1 January 2026. The framework clarifies how taxpayers, businesses and revenue authorities will manage tax liabilities, audits, disputes, incentives, exemptions and compliance obligations spanning both the repealed and newly enacted tax laws. The guidelines follow the enactment of the Nigeria Tax Act 2025, Nigeria Tax Administration Act 2025, Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Act 2025 and Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Act 2025, which collectively restructured Nigeria's tax administration system.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The government is prioritising implementation certainty, seeking to reduce legal ambiguity and compliance disruptions that typically accompany major tax reforms.

## DECISION MEMO

Large-scale tax reforms often succeed or fail during implementation rather than legislation. The significance of the transition guidelines lies in their attempt to establish clear operational boundaries between the old and new tax systems, thereby reducing regulatory uncertainty for businesses and investors.

A central feature of the framework is the preservation of legal continuity. Tax liabilities arising before 1 January 2026 remain subject to repealed laws, while transactions occurring thereafter fall under the new regime. This approach addresses concerns over retrospective application and provides a clearer basis for compliance, audits and dispute resolution.

Taiwo Oyedele, Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, stated that the framework is designed to ensure "clarity, fairness and administrative certainty" while creating a common understanding between taxpayers and revenue authorities.

Equally significant is the treatment of fiscal incentives. Existing tax exemptions and incentives granted under previous laws will remain valid until expiry, reducing the risk of policy disruption for businesses that made investment decisions under the former framework. However, new applications and pending requests will be assessed under the new legislation, signalling a gradual migration rather than an abrupt policy break.

The broader objective extends beyond administration. By consolidating multiple tax statutes, strengthening coordination among tax authorities and transforming the former Federal Inland Revenue Service into the Nigeria Revenue Service, the reforms seek to improve compliance efficiency, reduce multiple taxation concerns and enhance Nigeria's investment competitiveness.

The transition guidelines therefore represent the operational bridge between tax reform legislation and practical implementation, a stage that will ultimately determine whether the reforms achieve their revenue mobilisation and investment objectives.

## DATA BOX

- Effective date of new tax regime: 1 January 2026
- Key laws:
  - Nigeria Tax Act 2025
  - Nigeria Tax Administration Act 2025
  - Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Act 2025
  - Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Act 2025
- Transitional coverage:
  - Tax liabilities
  - Returns and assessments
  - Audits and investigations
  - Disputes and enforcement actions
  - Tax incentives and exemptions



- Record-keeping obligations
- Institutional reform:
  - Federal Inland Revenue Service transformed into Nigeria Revenue Service
- Implementation agencies:
  - Nigeria Revenue Service
  - State Internal Revenue Services
  - Federal Capital Territory Internal Revenue Service
  - Local Government Revenue Authorities

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

### Who Wins

- Businesses requiring regulatory certainty
- Investors with existing tax incentives
- Tax practitioners and compliance professionals
- Revenue authorities operating under a harmonised framework

### Who Loses

- Taxpayers relying on ambiguity within overlapping tax laws
- Entities delaying compliance adjustments
- Businesses expecting legacy incentive treatment for new applications

## POLICY SIGNALS

- Tax reform is moving from legislation to execution.
- Government is emphasising certainty and continuity over abrupt policy change.
- Revenue administration is becoming more integrated across government tiers.
- Non-oil revenue mobilisation remains a strategic fiscal priority.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The preservation of existing incentives and the prohibition of retrospective application reduce transition risk for investors. The framework provides greater predictability for investment planning, although long-term confidence will depend on consistent implementation and administrative efficiency.

## RISK RADAR

- Divergent interpretation of transition rules across tax authorities.
- Capacity constraints during early implementation stages.
- Compliance adjustment costs for businesses migrating to new requirements.
- Potential disputes involving transactions spanning both tax regimes.
- Reform credibility will depend on uniform enforcement and administrative coordination.

**Existing tax exemptions and incentives granted under previous laws will remain valid until expiry, reducing the risk of policy disruption for businesses that made investment decisions under the former framework**



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# Regency Alliance Insurance Launches Rights Issue To Strengthen Growth Capacity

By Kingsley Ani

Regency Alliance Insurance Plc has signed a Rights Issue Agreement to raise approximately N3.04 billion through the issuance of 3.201 billion ordinary shares of 50 kobo each at 95 kobo per share. The recent offer, structured on the basis of one new share for every five existing shares held, was formally launched at the company's Lagos headquarters. The capital raise, which has secured approvals from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX), opens on 22 June 2026 and closes on 3 July 2026. According to management, proceeds will be deployed towards underwriting expansion, digital transformation, claims efficiency and new product development targeting underserved market segments.

### DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Regency Alliance is raising growth capital from a position of operational strength, signalling a strategic recapitalisation focused on market expansion and technology investment rather than regulatory survival.

### DECISION MEMO

The Rights Issue reflects a broader restructuring underway across Nigeria's insurance industry, where recapitalisation is increasingly being used not only to satisfy regulatory expectations but also to improve underwriting scale and competitive positioning.

Unlike distressed capital raises aimed at repairing balance sheets, Regency Alliance enters the market with total assets exceeding N22bn and an already strengthened capital base following recent restructuring initiatives. The proposed raise therefore appears designed to expand capacity rather than close solvency gaps.

Chief Wale Taiwo, Acting Chairman of Regency Alliance Insurance Plc, framed the transaction as a long-term strategic commitment. According to Taiwo, "Today's signing is more than a formality. It is a statement of belief, belief in our people, our strategy, and the trust our customers and shareholders have placed



L-R: Mr Kehinde Oyadiran, Director, Regency Alliance Insurance Plc; Dr Comfort Otegbeye, Director; Mr Bode Oseni, Managing Director; Chief Wale Taiwo, Chairman, and Mrs. Anu Shobo, Executive Director Corporate Services & Company Secretary, at signing of its Rights Issue Agreement in Lagos

underserved segments across Nigeria and beyond."

His comments indicate a strategic shift towards retail insurance penetration and digitally enabled distribution, areas widely viewed as critical growth frontiers in Nigeria's underinsured market.

The transaction also aligns with broader industry trends. With insurers collectively pursuing more than N130bn in recapitalisation initiatives, the sector is being repositioned towards stronger risk retention, larger underwriting capacity and reduced dependence on foreign reinsurance markets.

collectively

### WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

#### Who Wins

- Existing shareholders who participate in the offer
- Policyholders benefiting from stronger underwriting capacity
- Small and medium enterprises targeted by new products
- Digital insurance consumers and younger demographics
- The wider insurance industry through stronger capitalisation

#### Who Loses

- Existing shareholders who do not take up their rights
- Smaller insurers unable to keep pace with recapitalisation trends
- Operators dependent on outdated distribution and service models

### POLICY SIGNALS

- Insurance recapitalisation is evolving from a compliance exercise into a growth strategy.
- Regulators are encouraging stronger local underwriting capacity.
- Digital transformation is becoming central to insurance competitiveness.
- Retail and underserved market penetration is emerging as a key industry priority.

### INVESTOR SIGNAL

The Rights Issue suggests management expects future growth opportunities to justify additional capital deployment. Investors should focus on whether the new capital translates into premium growth, stronger claims management, digital distribution scale and improved underwriting profitability.

### RISK RADAR

- Shareholder participation levels may affect capital mobilisation targets.
- Competitive pressures could intensify as multiple insurers recapitalise simultaneously.
- Digital investments may take longer than expected to generate returns.
- Retail market expansion could face adoption and distribution challenges.
- Industry-wide recapitalisation may increase pressure on underwriting margins and market share.

**Regency Alliance is raising growth capital from a position of operational strength, signalling a strategic recapitalisation focused on market expansion and technology investment rather than regulatory survival**

in us over the years."

Taiwo added that, "This capital raise will give us the firepower to meet evolving risks, expand our reach, and deepen the promise we make to every policyholder." He also urged shareholders to participate fully, noting that exercising their rights would protect investments from dilution while allowing participation in future growth opportunities.

The operational rationale was further outlined by Bode Oseni, Managing Director of Regency Alliance Insurance Plc. Oseni stated: "The proceeds from this rights issue will accelerate our digital transformation, enhance claims efficiency, and enable us to introduce innovative products tailored to SMEs, Gen Z, and other

### DATA BOX

- Rights Issue size: 3.201 billion ordinary shares
- Share value: 50 kobo each
- Offer price: 95 kobo per share
- Estimated capital raise: N3.04bn
- Offer ratio: 1 new share for every 5 shares held
- Opening date: 22 June 2026
- Closing date: 3 July 2026
- Regulatory approvals:
  - Securities and Exchange Commission
  - Nigerian Exchange Limited
- Regency Alliance total assets (2025): Over N22bn
- Industry recapitalisation target: More than N130bn

# Alake Urges Mineral Value Addition As AFNIS Attracts \$600m



Dr. Dele Alake, Honourable Minister of Solid Minerals Development

By Johnson Emmanuel

The Honourable Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr. Dele Alake, represented by Martins Imonitie, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Nigeria Solid Minerals Company, recently called on African countries to move beyond raw mineral exports and focus on value addition, industrialisation and regional collaboration ahead of the 5th African Natural Resources and Energy Investment Summit (AFNIS) in Abuja. Speaking at a press conference, Alake said that the continent must leverage rising global demand for critical minerals and energy transition opportunities to drive economic transformation. Archibald Troko, Director of Strategy and Platform Development at Core International, disclosed that AFNIS has attracted more than \$600m in investments over the last four years.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Nigeria and other African resource-rich economies are increasingly seeking to shift from commodity extraction models towards value-chain ownership and industrial processing.

## DECISION MEMO

The central message from AFNIS is that Africa's resource advantage may no longer lie in extraction alone but in its ability to capture greater economic value from processing, manufacturing and supply-chain participation.

For decades, many African economies have remained exporters of raw minerals while importing higher-value finished products. Alake's intervention reflects growing concern that this model limits employment creation, industrial development and long-term wealth retention.

According to Alake, "Africa must move from being merely a source of raw materials production to becoming a centre of value creation, industrialisation and shared prosperity." He added that "our resources must become catalysts for economic transformation, job creation, technological advancement, infrastructure development and long-term wealth creation for African people."

The timing is significant. Global competition for critical minerals is intensifying as countries seek secure supply chains for energy transition technologies. This

creates an opportunity for African nations to negotiate stronger positions within global value chains rather than remaining suppliers of unprocessed commodities.

The summit's theme, 'One Africa, One Resource Vision,' suggests an emerging push towards regional coordination on project financing, technology transfer, energy infrastructure and mineral processing. Such collaboration could improve bargaining power and attract larger pools of investment.

Archibald Troko, Director of Strategy and Platform

**Africa must move from being merely a source of raw materials production to becoming a centre of value creation, industrialisation and shared prosperity**

Development at Core International, provided evidence of investor interest, revealing that AFNIS has attracted over \$600m in investments within four years. Troko also stressed the need to "seek development partners to help de-risk the sector so that local investors can also begin to take their share."

The broader implication is that African mining policy is evolving from resource ownership towards resource monetisation, industrialisation and economic integration.

## DATA BOX

- Investment attracted through AFNIS: More than \$600m
- AFNIS lifespan: Five years
- Summit edition: 5th African Natural Resources and Energy Investment Summit

- Summit theme: "One Africa, One Resource Vision"
- Key focus areas:
  - Critical minerals
  - Energy infrastructure
  - Regional value chains
  - Project financing
  - Technology transfer
- Countries expected:
  - Democratic Republic of Congo
  - Kenya
  - Uganda
  - South Sudan
  - Somalia
  - Liberia
  - Mauritania

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

### Who Wins

- Mineral processing companies
- African manufacturing industries
- Resource-rich economies pursuing value addition
- Technology and infrastructure providers
- Local investors if sector de-risking succeeds

### Who Loses

- Economies dependent on raw mineral exports
- Businesses positioned solely around commodity extraction
- Countries unable to develop processing capacity and industrial ecosystems

## POLICY SIGNALS

- Resource beneficiation is becoming a strategic policy priority.
- African governments are seeking greater participation in mineral value chains.
- Regional collaboration is gaining prominence in mining and energy policy.
- Investment attraction is increasingly tied to industrialisation objectives rather than extraction volumes.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The combination of rising global demand for critical minerals, growing policy support for local processing and more than \$600m already mobilised through AFNIS suggests expanding opportunities in mineral beneficiation, refining, logistics, energy infrastructure and industrial processing across Africa.

## RISK RADAR

- Infrastructure deficits may constrain value-addition ambitions.
- Policy inconsistency could discourage long-term investment.
- Technology and financing gaps may slow industrialisation efforts.
- Global commodity price volatility remains a key risk.
- Competition from established mineral-processing jurisdictions could limit market share gains.

**For decades, many African economies have remained exporters of raw minerals while importing higher-value finished products**

# NITDA Challenge Matching Model Repositions Local Tech For Institutional Adoption

By Olumide Johnson

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), in partnership with Tech Revolution Africa, has launched the DNICE Builders Festival ahead of the 2026 Digital Nigeria Conference and Exhibition. The initiative invites government agencies, non-governmental organisations and private sector institutions to submit operational challenges in areas including financial inclusion, regulatory compliance, healthcare distribution, data infrastructure and supply chain logistics. The identified problems will be matched with growth-stage African technology startups, which will pitch deployment plans and seek investment commitments at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja, in August. The programme replaces a conventional hackathon approach with a structured challenge-discovery, start-up-matching and deployment pathway.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

NITDA is shifting innovation policy from technology creation to problem procurement, creating a formal mechanism through which institutions define operational bottlenecks and local technology firms compete to solve them.

## DECISION MEMO

The significance of the DNICE Builders Festival lies less in technology development and more in market coordination. Nigeria's technology ecosystem has historically produced solutions searching for customers, while large institutions often struggle to identify deployable local innovations. NITDA's intervention attempts to convert institutional inefficiencies into a visible pipeline of commercial opportunities.

Dr Aristotle Onumo, Director of Stakeholder Management and Partnerships at NITDA, framed the initiative as a structural bridge between demand and supply within the innovation ecosystem. According to Onumo, "Our objective at NITDA is to foster an environment where local innovation directly services institutional needs. The DNICE Builders Festival bridges



Stakeholders at the 2025 Digital Nigeria Conference and Exhibition

strengthen local content participation by creating predictable demand channels for indigenous technology providers while giving institutions access to tested solutions without lengthy procurement experimentation.

## DATA BOX

- Initiative: DNICE Builders Festival
- Organisers: National Information Technology Development Agency and Tech Revolution Africa
- Venue: Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja
- Timeline: August 2026 showcase and deal room
- Focus sectors:
  - Financial inclusion
  - Regulatory compliance
  - Healthcare distribution
  - Data infrastructure
  - Supply chain logistics
- Process:
  - Institutional challenge submission
  - Startup matching and engineering review
  - International deal room and deployment pitches
- Target participants:
  - Government agencies
  - Non-governmental organisations
  - Private sector institutions
  - Growth-stage African startups

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

### Who Wins

- Nigerian and African growth-stage technology firms seeking commercial deployment opportunities
- Public institutions requiring cost-effective digital solutions
- Investors looking for validated problem-solution opportunities
- Local content and digital transformation initiatives

### Who Loses

- Technology ventures dependent on speculative innovation without market validation
- Institutions that maintain fragmented, non-digital operating systems
- Solution providers unable to demonstrate deployment readiness

## POLICY SIGNALS

- NITDA is prioritising adoption and implementation metrics over innovation activity metrics.
- Government digital policy is increasingly focused on domestic technology utilisation.
- Public-private collaboration is becoming a preferred mechanism for digital transformation.
- Innovation policy is moving towards challenge-led

**The significance of the DNICE Builders Festival lies less in technology development and more in market coordination**

procurement frameworks.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The initiative improves visibility into real institutional demand, potentially reducing market-entry uncertainty for technology investors. Startups capable of demonstrating deployment-ready solutions may gain faster access to commercial contracts, strategic partnerships and follow-on capital.

## RISK RADAR

- Weak institutional participation could reduce the quality of challenge pipelines.
- Procurement and regulatory bottlenecks may delay solution deployment.
- Limited post-event execution could weaken commercial outcomes.
- Funding commitments may not automatically translate into long-term implementation contracts.
- Matching quality between institutional needs and startup capabilities will determine programme credibility.

**NITDA's intervention attempts to convert institutional inefficiencies into a visible pipeline of commercial opportunities**

the historic disconnect between large-scale public or private enterprises and our domestic tech ecosystem."

The programme also introduces a deployment-first model that prioritises commercial implementation over prototype development. By exposing verified institutional challenges to startups already possessing technological capabilities, NITDA seeks to reduce adoption friction and shorten the path from innovation to execution.

Glory Olamigoke, Co-founder of Tech Revolution Africa, identified the central market failure as coordination rather than talent scarcity. "Africa does not suffer from a shortage of technical talent; it suffers from a coordination gap between complex, systemic problems and the builders who can solve them," she said. Her assessment suggests the initiative is designed to improve technology absorption rather than technology production.

If executed effectively, the framework could



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# FG Locates Interior Design As N30bn Creative Economy Asset

By Ovio Peters

The Honourable Minister of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa, recently said that Nigeria's interior design industry contributes approximately N30 billion annually to the economy, underscoring its growing importance within the creative sector. Speaking through Moriam Ajaga, Special Assistant to the President on Arts and Culture, at the 2026 Interior Design Summit in Abuja, Musawa called for stronger policy, financing and institutional support for the industry. She commended the Interior Designers Association of Nigeria (IDAN) and its Federal Capital Territory Chapter for advancing professional standards, curriculum reforms and hosting Africa's first Culture and Design Festival. Titi Ogufero, Founder of IDAN, highlighted the need to balance technology, culture and sustainability in design practice.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The federal government is increasingly positioning design and creative services as economic sectors capable of generating value, jobs, investment and global influence beyond traditional arts and entertainment.

## DECISION MEMO

The N30bn contribution attributed to the interior design industry signals a broader shift in how Nigeria's creative economy is being defined. Rather than focusing solely on music, film and cultural exports, policymakers are increasingly recognising design-led industries as contributors to economic output, enterprise development and national branding.

Musawa argued that the sector occupies a strategic position within Nigeria's creative ecosystem, linking culture, innovation, manufacturing and professional services. According to her, "Nigeria has climbed 16



Mrs. Hannatu Musa Musawa, Honourable Minister of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy

**The federal government is increasingly positioning design and creative services as economic sectors capable of generating value, jobs, investment and global influence...**

places on the Global Soft Power Index. This is proof that when culture is taken seriously, at the highest level of government, the world takes notice."

The minister disclosed that the Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy has inaugurated four high-level drafting committees to develop policy and financing frameworks across creative industries, including design. She further stated that "the ministry's 2023 Nigeria Everywhere strategy is embedding our creative industries into Nigeria's global brand."

A notable policy direction emerged from Musawa's call for greater utilisation of local design expertise in public infrastructure. "Government buildings, federal institutions, and public institutions should be show-cases for our homegrown design excellence," she said. The statement suggests an emerging local-content approach that could create demand for indigenous creative professionals.

The discussion around grants, tax incentives and investment readiness programmes also indicates a shift from advocacy towards commercial ecosystem development.

Titi Ogufero, Founder of IDAN, reinforced the sector's evolving role, noting that the industry's challenge is to balance "Nature, Culture and Technology in the Digital Age" amid accelerating technological change and growing demand for culturally relevant and human-centred spaces.

The broader implication is that design is increasingly being treated as an economic asset capable of strengthening Nigeria's creative exports, soft power and domestic value creation.

## DATA BOX

- Annual contribution of interior design industry: N30bn
- Event: 2026 Interior Design Summit
- Location: Abuja
- Industry support measures under consideration: Grants, Tax incentives, Investment readiness programmes
- Creative economy milestone: Nigeria climbed 16 places on the Global Soft Power Index
- Institutional initiatives: Four high-level drafting committees established for creative-sector policy and financing frameworks
- Strategic platform: Nigeria Everywhere Strategy

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

### Who Wins

- Interior designers and creative professionals
- Design-focused SMEs

- Creative industry investors
  - Educational institutions supporting design training
  - Local suppliers within the design value chain
- Who Loses**
- Foreign suppliers benefiting from weak local content participation
  - Creative businesses unable to adapt to technological change
  - Informal operators lacking professional standards and certification

## POLICY SIGNALS

- Creative industries are being integrated into national economic development planning.
- Government is considering fiscal and financing support mechanisms for creative enterprises.
- Local content utilisation may become more prominent in public projects.
- Design is being repositioned as both a cultural and economic asset.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The industry's estimated N30bn annual contribution and the government's interest in financing frameworks, incentives and investment readiness programmes point to emerging opportunities across design services, creative infrastructure, furniture manufacturing, architecture, hospitality and cultural branding.

## RISK RADAR

- Limited access to finance could constrain industry expansion.
- Weak enforcement of professional standards may affect quality and competitiveness.
- Dependence on imported materials could increase production costs.
- Policy intentions may not translate into effective implementation.
- Skills gaps and technology adoption challenges could slow industry growth.

# FG NITT Advance National Transport Databank Through PPP Model



Mr. Bayero Salih Farah, Director-General of NITT

By Ayo Susan

The federal government, through the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), recently signed a concession agreement with Asia Arab Investment Nigeria Limited (AAI) for the implementation of the Smart National Transport Databank (S-NTDB). The project, approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) under a public-private partnership (PPP) framework, will establish Nigeria's first integrated multimodal transport intelligence platform. Speaking at the Abuja signing ceremony, Boboye Oyeyemi, former Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps, Funsho Adebisi, Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Transportation represented by Olusegun Omotola, Director of Legal Services, Bayero Salih Farah, Director-General of NITT, and Jobson Oseodion Ewalefoh, Director-General of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC), outlined a Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) project that will commence with pilot deployment in Kaduna, Lagos, Nasarawa, Borno, Enugu, Edo and the Federal Capital Territory.

## DECISION HIGHLIGHT

The federal government is moving to replace fragmented transport data systems with a national intelligence architecture designed to support planning, safety, revenue optimisation and multimodal integration.

## DECISION MEMO

The Smart National Transport Databank represents a shift from infrastructure-led transport management to data-led transport governance. While Nigeria has historically invested in roads, rail and ports as standalone assets, the project seeks to create a unified intelligence layer capable of connecting transport decision-making across modes.

Oyeyemi described the initiative as "one of the most ambitious transport technology projects ever conceived in Nigeria," noting that it would address fragmented data systems, weak planning, poor traffic management, inadequate safety interventions and revenue leakages.

The project's significance lies in its ability to convert

transport activity into actionable intelligence. Through real-time data collection and analysis, policymakers could gain visibility into mobility patterns, infrastructure utilisation, safety risks and enforcement gaps that have traditionally operated outside a coordinated framework.

Adebisi said that the platform would provide a comprehensive mechanism for "collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating transport and mobility data nationwide." He added that the investment would support "safer roads, more efficient mobility, improved transport planning and enhanced national security."

Farah emphasised that the initiative is "not merely an ICT project but a national transport intelligence infrastructure." His description suggests the government views data as a strategic transport asset rather than an administrative by-product.

**While Nigeria has historically invested in roads, rail and ports as standalone assets, the project seeks to create a unified intelligence layer capable of connecting transport decision-making across modes**

The project's journey from a resolution of the 12th National Council on Transport in 2012 to regulatory approvals by the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission and eventual FEC endorsement also highlights the growing use of public-private partnerships to finance large-scale digital infrastructure.

The broader implication is that transport policy is increasingly being linked to digital transformation, with data quality becoming a determinant of infrastructure efficiency, security management and economic com-

petitiveness.

## DATA BOX

- Project: Smart National Transport Databank (S-NTDB)
- Delivery model: Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT)
- Private partner: Asia Arab Investment Nigeria Limited
- Regulatory approvals:
  - Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission
  - Presidential endorsement
  - Federal Executive Council approval
- Infrastructure components:
  - 250 solar-powered smart gantries
  - traffic management centres in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory
  - Central national data centre
  - RFID-enabled smart e-tags
  - Automated vehicle identification systems
- Transport modes covered:
  - Road
  - Rail
  - Maritime
  - Inland waterways
  - Aviation
  - Pipelines
- Pilot locations:
  - Kaduna
  - Lagos
  - Nasarawa
  - Borno
  - Enugu
  - Edo
  - Federal Capital Territory

## WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

### Who Wins

- Transport regulators and planners
- Road safety and security agencies
- Logistics and mobility operators
- Infrastructure investors
- Transport users benefiting from improved system efficiency

### Who Loses

- Operators benefiting from weak monitoring systems
- Activities contributing to revenue leakages
- Fragmented data management processes across transport agencies

## POLICY SIGNALS

- Government is prioritising data-driven infrastructure management.
- Public-private partnerships remain central to infrastructure financing.
- Transport integration is becoming a national policy objective.
- Digital transformation is expanding beyond administrative services into core economic infrastructure.

## INVESTOR SIGNAL

The project signals growing opportunities in intelligent transport systems, digital infrastructure, mobility technology, traffic management solutions, data analytics and public-private partnership investments. It also reinforces government commitment to technology-enabled infrastructure development.

## RISK RADAR

- High implementation complexity across multiple transport modes.
- Data privacy and cybersecurity vulnerabilities.
- Coordination challenges among transport agencies.
- Long-term sustainability depends on system adoption and maintenance.
- PPP execution risks could affect deployment timelines and investment returns.

# FG Seeks N200bn Cooperative Bank Capital To Deepen Inclusion

By Ayo Susan

The federal government has unveiled plans to raise N200 billion in share capital for the proposed Cooperative Bank of Nigeria through the mobilisation of at least 10,000 cooperative societies nationwide. The initiative was recently announced in Kaduna during the North-West Zonal Engagement of the Ministerial Advocacy Tour on the Cooperative Bank of Nigeria Share Capital Mobilisation and Cooperative Sector Digitalisation Drive. Senator Aliyu Abdullahi, Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security and Supervising Minister of Cooperative Affairs, said that the bank forms a central pillar of the Renewed Hope Cooperative Reform and Revamp Programme. The government simultaneously launched a Cooperative Sector Digitalisation Drive anchored on a National Cooperative Digital Architecture Platform, a National Cooperative Smart Registry, a Cooperative Verification Number (CVN) and a Cooperative Member Identification Number (CoopID) to improve transparency and access to financial services.

**DECISION HIGHLIGHT**

The federal government is attempting to create a member-owned financial institution backed by digital governance infrastructure, positioning cooperatives as a formal channel for capital mobilisation, financial inclusion and enterprise financing.

**DECISION MEMO**

The proposed Cooperative Bank is less a banking project than an effort to institutionalise cooperative finance within Nigeria's formal financial architecture. By aggregating capital from thousands of cooperatives, the government is seeking to convert fragmented community savings structures into a scalable financing platform for agriculture, housing, transportation and small enterprise development.

Senator Abdullahi described the ambition in broad economic terms: "Through this collective effort, we aim to mobilise approximately N200 billion in share capital and establish a strong, sustainable and nationally owned cooperative financial institution capable of supporting agricultural development, enterprise growth, financial inclusion, housing, transportation, value-chain development and wealth creation for millions of Nigerians."

The proposed ownership structure reveals the government's attempt to balance cooperative control with external capital. According to Abdullahi, "Under the proposed ownership framework, 65 per cent of the bank's equity shall be wholly owned and controlled by cooperative societies and cooperators," while institutional investors, development finance institutions, development partners and qualified investors will hold 30 percent, with employees retaining five percent through an Employee Share Ownership Scheme.

The digitalisation component is equally significant. Rather than merely creating a new financial institution, the government is attempting to address longstanding governance, identity and accountability challenges within the cooperative movement. Abdullahi said the digital framework would improve transparency, eliminate ghost cooperatives and facilitate access to interventions and financial services.

He further described the initiative as transformational, stating: "The Cooperative Bank of Nigeria is more than a financial institution; it is the foundation of a broader cooperative economic ecosystem that will unlock opportunities for generations of cooperators and contribute significantly to the realisation of the Renewed Hope Agenda."

Supporting the initiative, Murtala Dabo, Kaduna State Commissioner for Agriculture representing Governor Uba Sani, highlighted the role of financial inclusion in expanding economic participation. According to Dabo, "Over 2.5 million accounts have been opened for previously excluded citizens, while millions more have been integrated into formal economic systems through expanded identity registration and targeted empowerment programmes."

Dabo argued that financial inclusion has become a delivery mechanism for agricultural and social interventions. "A substantial proportion of the farmers benefiting from Kaduna State's agricultural programmes today were previously excluded from formal financial services. Through our financial inclusion drive, these farmers have been



Senator Aliyu Abdullahi, Minister of State for Agriculture & Food Security/ Supervising Minister of Cooperative Affairs

identified, profiled, banked and integrated into formal economic systems."

Dr Mohammed Ibrahim Awwal, Provost and Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Cooperative College, Kaduna, framed both initiatives as structural reforms, noting: "Today's engagement focuses on two transformative initiatives that have the potential to redefine the future of the cooperative movement in our country, the establishment of the Cooperative Bank of Nigeria and the Cooperative Sector Digitalisation Drive."

Collectively, the interventions suggest a policy shift towards using cooperatives as vehicles for financial inclusion, domestic capital formation and economic formalisation.

**DATA BOX**

- Proposed share capital: N200bn
- Target cooperative societies: 10,000
- Equity structure:
  - 65 percent: Cooperative societies and cooperators
  - 30 percent: Institutional investors, development finance institutions, development partners and qualified investors
  - 5 percent: Employee Share Ownership Scheme
- Digitalisation tools:
  - National Cooperative Smart Registry
  - Cooperative Verification Number (CVN)
  - Cooperative Member Identification Number (CoopID)
- Kaduna financial inclusion milestone:
  - More than 2.5 million new accounts opened for previously excluded citizens
- Target beneficiaries:
  - Farmers
  - Artisans
  - Traders
  - Small businesses
  - Cooperative members

**WHO WINS / WHO LOSES**

- Who Wins**
- Cooperative societies and their members
  - Farmers and agricultural value-chain participants

- Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
- Institutional investors seeking exposure to grassroots finance
- Financial technology providers supporting cooperative digitalisation

**Who Loses**

- Informal financing channels facing formal competition
- Unregistered cooperatives unable to meet verification standards
- Entities benefiting from weak cooperative oversight and opaque records

**POLICY SIGNALS**

- Government is elevating cooperatives into mainstream economic policy.
- Financial inclusion strategy is increasingly linked to ownership and capital formation.
- Digital identity systems are becoming central to programme delivery and accountability.
- Cooperative governance reforms are emerging as a prerequisite for future intervention programmes.

**INVESTOR SIGNAL**

The proposed ownership structure creates an entry point for institutional investors into a potentially large cooperative finance market. If governance and digital verification systems are effectively implemented, the Cooperative Bank could become a new channel for credit expansion, rural financing and domestic capital mobilisation.

**RISK RADAR**

- Mobilising N200bn from cooperative societies may take longer than projected.
- Governance weaknesses that affected previous cooperative finance models could re-emerge.
- Regulatory approvals and licensing requirements may delay implementation.
- Digital adoption challenges could slow sector-wide integration.
- Balancing cooperative control with investor expectations may create governance pressures.
- Credit quality and operational risk management will be critical to long-term sustainability.

# Mastercard Is Betting On Nigeria's SMEs And The Numbers Suggest It Is Right

Whenever I think about the future of Nigeria's economy, I return to one simple reality: no country achieves sustainable prosperity without a thriving small business sector. Governments can formulate policies, central banks can manage monetary conditions, and large corporations can attract investment, but the real engine of economic expansion remains the millions of entrepreneurs who create jobs, generate income and keep commerce moving. That is why I find the latest Mastercard SME Confidence Index both encouraging and instructive. It provides a rare glimpse into how Nigerian entrepreneurs see their future and, more importantly, what they believe will get them there.

The headline statistic is impossible to ignore. About 81 percent of Nigerian SMEs are confident about the next 12 months. In a business environment still grappling with inflationary pressures, financing constraints and elevated operating costs, such confidence is not a trivial finding. It suggests that beneath the noise of macroeconomic challenges, many entrepreneurs see opportunities that outweigh the risks. More significantly, 68 percent expect revenue growth in the coming year. This optimism is not detached from reality. It is rooted in experience. More than half of SMEs surveyed, 56 percent, reported revenue growth over the past year, indicating that confidence is being supported by actual business performance.

What I find most revealing, however, is the complete consensus around digital payments. According to the survey, 100 percent of Nigerian SMEs agree that digital and online payments are vital to growing their businesses. It is rare to find unanimous agreement on any issue within the business community. When every respondent identifies the same factor as critical to growth, policymakers and investors should pay attention. To me, this finding confirms that

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digital payments are no longer merely a convenience. They have become essential business infrastructure.

For decades, Nigerian commerce relied heavily on cash transactions. While cash remains important, it has limitations. It restricts market reach, complicates record-keeping, increases security risks and often limits access to formal financial services. Digital payments solve many of these problems. They make transactions faster, safer and more transparent. More importantly, they connect businesses to a larger economy. A merchant in Aba can sell to a customer in Abuja. A fashion entrepreneur in Lagos can receive payments from buyers across Africa. A technology startup in Enugu can serve clients globally. Digital payments remove geographical barriers and expand commercial possibilities.

This is where Mastercard's role becomes increasingly significant. I do not see Mastercard merely as a payment company. I see it as part of the infrastructure supporting

Nigeria's transition towards a more digitised economy. The company's focus on payment acceptance, digital commerce and financial inclusion aligns closely with the needs identified by entrepreneurs themselves. The survey shows that mobile payment adoption among SMEs stands at 67 percent, card acceptance at 45 percent and online payments at 42 percent. Meanwhile, 57 percent of businesses now operate through both physical and online channels. These figures indicate that digitisation is already underway. The challenge is no longer whether businesses will embrace digital tools. The challenge is how quickly the remaining gaps can be closed.

I am particularly impressed by Mastercard's efforts to lower barriers to digital adoption. Many Nigerian SMEs operate with limited resources. They cannot always afford expensive point-of-sale infrastructure or sophisticated payment systems. Solutions such as Tap on Phone, QR Pay-by-Link and SME-in-a-Box directly address this challenge by allowing merchants to accept payments using devices they already own. This approach matters because technology adoption often depends less on innovation and more on affordability. The easier and cheaper it becomes for businesses to accept digital payments, the faster adoption will occur.

The survey also reveals something important about the mindset of Nigerian entrepreneurs. Their priorities are remarkably strategic. Seventy-nine percent identify training and upskilling staff as a major growth priority. Seventy-eight percent want to digitise their businesses. Seventy-three percent see value in accepting digital payments across multiple channels. These are not the priorities of businesses merely trying to survive another year. They are the priorities of businesses preparing for long-term competitiveness. They reflect a growing recognition that sustainable growth depends on people, technology and operational efficiency.

I believe this mindset is one of the most encouraging aspects of the report. Successful economies are not built solely on entrepreneurship. They are built on productive entrepreneurship. There is a difference. Productive entrepreneurs invest in skills, systems, technology and innovation. They focus on scalability and sustainability rather than short-term gains. The Mastercard findings suggest many Nigerian SMEs are moving in that direction.

Yet ambition alone is not enough. Businesses also need capital. This brings me to what may be the most important statistic in the entire report. Sixty-nine percent of SMEs are seeking credit to grow their businesses. That figure tells a story that every banker, investor and policymaker should understand. Nigerian entrepreneurs want to expand. They want to hire workers, purchase equipment, increase inventory and enter new markets. What often stands in their way is access to finance.

The survey reveals another important detail. Sixty-three percent of SMEs currently use personal cards for business spending because they are convenient and accessible. While this demonstrates entrepreneurial adaptability, it also highlights a weakness in the financial ecosystem. Business owners are often forced to blur the line between personal and commercial finance because dedicated business financing solutions remain insufficient. This is where Mastercard's emphasis on commercial cards and structured credit solutions becomes particularly relevant.

I believe one of the most transformative developments in SME financing will be the integration of payment data into credit assessment. Digital transactions create records. Records create visibility. Visibility improves risk assessment. Improved risk assessment increases lending confidence. In other words, every digital payment potentially contributes to a future credit profile. Businesses that operate digitally become easier to finance because lenders can better understand their performance. This is why digital payments should be viewed not only as transaction tools but also as gateways to capital.

The report also demonstrates that Nigerian entrepre-



neurs understand growth requires more than finance and technology. Sixty percent identified stronger physical and digital security as a critical business enabler, while 52 percent highlighted mentorship and advisory support. I find this particularly insightful because it reflects a holistic understanding of enterprise development. Businesses do not succeed because they receive funding alone. They succeed when funding is combined with knowledge, security, operational efficiency and strategic guidance.

Mastercard appears to recognise this reality. Beyond payment solutions, the company is investing in broader ecosystem development. Through initiatives such as Start Path and Product Express, it is supporting local fintech innovation and helping entrepreneurs develop new financial products. This approach acknowledges an important truth. No single institution can solve the challenges facing SMEs. Sustainable progress requires collaboration among payment providers, banks, fintech firms, regulators and development partners. Mastercard's partnership-oriented model reflects this understanding.

I am equally encouraged by the company's emphasis on cybersecurity. As more businesses adopt digital tools, trust becomes indispensable. Entrepreneurs will only embrace digital systems if they believe their transactions and customer data are secure. Mastercard's investment in tokenisation and its Trust Center resources addresses a concern that often slows digital adoption. Security is not a peripheral issue. It is a prerequisite for confidence in the digital economy.

Ultimately, what stands out to me about the Mastercard SME Confidence Index is not simply the optimism it records. It is the clarity it reveals. Nigerian entrepreneurs know what they need. They need digital payments. They need access to capital. They need training and technology. They need security and advisory support. Most importantly, they need institutions willing to help them access these tools at scale.

The findings suggest Mastercard understands this opportunity. Gabriel Swanepoel, Division President for Africa at Mastercard, noted that Nigerian entrepreneurs represent one of the most ambitious SME communities anywhere in the world. I agree. The evidence supports that conclusion. What impresses me even more is that this ambition is increasingly matched by practical action. Businesses are digitising. They are seeking training. They are adopting new payment channels. They are looking for growth capital.

Nigeria's economic future will not be determined solely by government budgets, oil production figures or foreign investment announcements. It will be shaped by the success of millions of small businesses. Every SME that expands creates jobs. Every entrepreneur that gains access to finance generates economic activity. Every merchant that adopts digital payments strengthens the formal economy. Every business that invests in skills improves national productivity.

For these reasons, I believe Mastercard's strategy deserves attention. The company is not simply facilitating transactions. It is helping to build the infrastructure through which entrepreneurial ambition can become economic reality. If Nigeria's SMEs continue on their current trajectory and if institutions like Mastercard continue providing the tools, partnerships and financial solutions they require, the next chapter of Nigeria's growth story may well be written not by large corporations, but by the entrepreneurs who power the nation's economy every day.