

(O.M Atoyebi & Partners)

## Foreword

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Every year, a transformative moment redefines the course of our collective reality. Across the nation and the globe, we have witnessed modifications in norms, traditions, and the very fabric of industries. These modifications go far beyond mere disruptions; they are calls to adapt, innovate, and thrive in an ever-evolving ecosystem.

The year 2024 has been a testament to the harmony between challenges and solutions, thoughts and outcomes, and means and ends. It is a year where the fusion of Artificial Intelligence with the legal sector reached unprecedented heights, introducing a legal-tech ecosystem that reshaped traditional legal practices. This integration not only streamlined processes but also re-imagined the delivery of legal services, paving the way for a future where technology and jurisprudence harmoniously co-exist.

We are stewards of progress, charged with navigating these transformative currents while preserving the sanctity of justice. This foreword serves as an invitation to reflect on the developments that defined 2024, exploring their implications for law, business, and society at large. Let us delve into these insights with a keen mind and a resolute spirit, as we prepare to step boldly into the opportunities and challenges of 2025.



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## **TECHNOLOGY**

Generative AI in 2024
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#### **Generative AI in 2024**

Generative ΑI has rapidly evolved over the past few years, 2024 marking a key with milestone in its development. the most notable One ofadvancements was the release of ChatGPT-4.0 Mini by OpenAI, brought cutting-edge which capabilities to various sectors across the globe. This version of ChatGPT introduced a more efficient and personalized user experience, allowing businesses, educators, and content creators to leverage AI in unprecedented ways.

In Nigeria, it was particularly impactful in fields such as education, customer service, and media. Nigerian startups and businesses began adopting ChatGPT-4.0 Mini for content generation, customer support, and automation, significantly reducing operational costs and time spent on repetitive tasks.

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In education, the AI-powered tool became a valuable resource for both students and teachers, aiding in everything from help with homework help to curriculum development. Furthermore, generative AI started to gain popularity in Nigerian media, helping journalists and content creators produce articles and videos more efficiently.

However, the increased use of generative AI in 2024 has also raised ethical concerns. One of the primary challenges was potential misuse of AI-generated content for misinformation or malicious purposes. With the growing reliance on AI tools, Nigerian authorities and tech experts began discussing the need for frameworks to regulate the use of generative AI. While the government did not pass any 2024 specific legislation in addressing AI misuse, there are growing calls for clearer guidelines to ensure that AI technologies are used responsibly, especially to prevent misinformation.



#### **Humanoid Robots**

Humanoid robots are receiving more prominence and making notable impact across various sectors, from entertainment banking, to revolutionizing customer service and operational efficiency. In the food industry, robots are being introduced in restaurants to greet customers, take orders, and serve food, improving both the speed and quality of service.

Nigeria is the first to build a humanoid robot in Africa which was unveiled in 2022. In August 2023, First Bank Plc also unveiled a humanoid robot making it the first in Nigeria's financial services space. This robot assists customers with basic inquiries, such as account balance checks and provides information about bank services, helping to reduce wait times and enhance customer experience.

In 2025, it is expected that humanoid robots will become more commonplace, and businesses will leverage them to handle repetitive tasks and improve efficiency.

We should see more industries adopting this technology to improve operations and customer service, while specific laws should be enacted to guide its usage.



## **Blockchain**

In 2024, the blockchain industry significant Nigeria saw developments, even outside of frameworks. In the legal blockchain financial space, traction gained as more Nigerian startups and fintech companies integrated it into their operations for improved transparency and efficiency. For example, several blockchainbased systems payment emerged, helping **Nigerians** access faster and more affordable remittances. Blockchain was also used to enhance the security of financial data and streamline banking processes, especially in terms of digital identity management.

The Nigerian government's push for a digital economy further fueled blockchain adoption. In 2024, Blockchain-based initiatives in agriculture gained attention with the establishment

of blockchains like Agbatoken, which enables farmers to trace the origin and journey of crops, ensuring quality control and reducing fraud. Additionally. Nigerian startups working on decentralized finance (DeFi) solutions and tokenization of assets are gaining momentum, investment offering new opportunities and financial products to Nigerians.

As we move into 2025, Nigeria is expected to see even more blockchain-driven innovations across sectors. The rise of decentralized applications (dApps) blockchain's and integration into everyday business operations will likely continue, alongside the ongoing development of regulations and legal frameworks to ensure secure and effective adoption.

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#### **Smart Contracts**

In 2024, Smart contracts, which are self-executing contracts with the terms of the agreement directly written into code, saw growing adoption across finance, supply chain, and even real estate.

Nigerian fintech startups embraced these contracts for decentralized finance (DeFi) applications, offering services like peer-to-peer lending and trading, further automated expanding access to financial services in the country. The real estate sector also saw applications of smart contracts, particularly in property transactions. Through blockchain technology, the process of buying, selling, and transferring property became more transparent and efficient, as smart contracts allowed for the automated execution of deals, reducing paperwork, fraud risks, and delays.

Supply chain management also benefited from smart contracts in 2024, as businesses in agriculture and manufacturing used blockchain to track goods from production to delivery. Smart contracts ensured that each step of the supply chain was transparent and verifiable, providing consumers with proof of product origin and quality, and automating payments upon fulfillment of conditions.

Looking forward, smart contracts expected are to become even more integrated Nigeria's business into landscape. With advancements in blockchain technology and interest from growing the government, we may see further adoption in sectors like healthcare, education, and public services in 2025.



## **ENERGY**

Adoption of the Nigerian Electricity Act 2023
Fuel Subsidy Removal & Establishment of
Refineries

Presidential CNG Initiative (PI-CNG)



The Nigerian Electricity Act **2023** was established to rectify persistent challenges within the country's power sector. particularly inefficiencies in power generation, distribution, and transmission. It aims to Nigeria's historically reform troubled power sector, targeting ongoing electricity shortages, inefficiencies, and regulatory hurdles. One of the initiatives of the Act is the empowerment of Independent Power Producers (IPPs), facilitating their ability to only sell electricity directly to thereby consumers, decentralizing power distribution reducing and dependence on a centralized Agency.

In 2024, some states in a bid to implement the Electricity Act have started the process of



enacting state-specific electricity that will regulate the bills distribution and marketing of within electricity their respective jurisdictions. States, like Ekiti, Lagos, Bayelsa, and Enugu, are already at the forefront of this initiative, with many of these bills still at in the reading stage. The passage of these state-level laws holds immense potential to address long-standing issues such as power shortages, inefficiency, and uneven distribution across the country, but it also introduces a range of challenges that must be navigated before the full benefits can be realized by 2025.

As stated earlier, one of the primary goals of the Nigerian Electricity Act 2023 is to provide states with the autonomy to manage electricity distribution in a manner that is tailored to their specific needs.



This is expected to lead to improvements in power supply reliability, especially in urban areas where electricity demand is highest. States like Lagos, which has one of the largest populations and economies in Nigeria, will be able to address localized power challenges more efficiently.

For Instance, the Nigeria national grid suffered collapses and disturbances 12 times in the course of in the year 2024, thus occasionally leading to blackouts all over the country on each of such instances.

By 2025, upon enactment of these state electricity laws there is expected to be reliability and consistency of power supply. States should be able to address local issues more swiftly, leading to fewer outages and a more stable energy supply. This will have a direct impact on both residential and commercial consumers, who

have long struggled with erratic power supply availability.

See also, for more details on the <u>Nigerian electricity act 2023</u>.



# Fuel Subsidy Removal & Establishment of Refineries

Historically, the fuel subsidy had been a significant drain on Nigeria's fiscal resources. consuming an estimated 30-40% of the national budget annually. The removal of this subsidy, though contentious, is expected to create fiscal space for the government to invest in infrastructure, healthcare, and education. As of 2023, when the fuel subsidy was removed, the immediate impact was astronomical hike in fuel prices, increased leading to transportation and production costs, which were felt acutely by consumers and businesses.

However in September 2024, Dangote refinery began processing petrol, being one of the world's largest single-train refineries, boasting an impressive capacity to process



over 650,000 barrels of crude oil daily, it is expected to reduce Nigeria's dependence on fuel imports, and reshape the landscape of the country's oil industry, reducing supply chain bottlenecks and driving down the price in the long term.

The Dangote refinery and Portrefinery Harcourt which commenced operation in December 2024 offer promising energy prospects for sufficiency, job creation, economic diversification Nigeria. The operation of both refineries must be efficient and profitable to ensure they meet domestic demand. any operational inefficiencies, corruption, or logistical bottlenecks in distribution could undermine the anticipated benefits.

With these recent developments, 2025 holds the





potential for significant transformation in the energy sector characterized by reduced fuel importation and expanded refining capacity. It is expected other state-owned the refineries will be renovated to begin operation. If executed effectively, these initiatives could mark the dawn of a new era of economic growth, and self-sufficiency, energy positioning Nigeria as a regional energy leader and accelerating its long-term development prospects.





## Presidential CNG Initiative (PI-CNG)

In 2023, the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu launched the **Presidential** CNG Initiative (Pi-CNG) to adoption promote the of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as a cleaner, more affordable fuel alternative for vehicles. This initiative has been a significant step in addressing the growing challenges of rising fuel costs, environmental pollution, and the need for more sustainable transportation options across Nigeria. The government's approach involves introducing CNG-powered buses to provide a solution to these problems.

In 2024, the federal government launched 100 luxury buses powered by CNG, offering free rides to passengers until January 2025. This initiative serves multiple purposes. It alleviates the financial strain on

Nigerian commuters, especially in the face of increasing fuel prices. by providing free transportation. Additionally, it introduces citizens the to CNG-powered benefits of vehicles, which are a more ecoeco-friendlier friendlyan conventional alternative to gasoline and diesel vehicles. CNG is known for emitting fewer pollutants, making it a cleaner option that helps reduce air pollution in the country's bustling cities.

This move not only aims to reduce transportation costs but also strengthens energy security by utilizing the country's vast natural gas reserves. Moreover, the government has taken steps to improve the infrastructure needed for widespread CNG use, including the construction of fueling stations across key regions of the country. This infrastructure is critical in



ensuring that CNG-powered vehicles have easy access to refueling, making it more feasible for Nigerians to adopt this new mode of transportation.

As the initiative progresses into 2025, the government expected to increase efforts to expand the use of CNG in public transport across the country. More buses may be introduced, and other states could begin to adopt the model set in the FCT. Additionally, with the continued support of government policies and the expansion of CNG fueling infrastructure, it is likely that CNG will become a more common and reliable alternative to traditional fuels.

As a result, the Pi-CNG initiative is expected to play a pivotal role in Nigeria's journey toward a more sustainable and energy-secure future,

while providing economic benefits for citizens and contributing to the reduction of harmful emissions in the country's transportation sector.



## FINANCE

Electronic Forex Trading Framework by Central Bank of Nigeria

National Digital Economy and E-Governance Bill 2024
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# Electronic Forex Trading Framework by Central Bank of Nigeria

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) introduced the Electronic Forex Trading Framework on December 1, 2024., featuring the Electronic Foreign Exchange Matching System (EFEMS) in the interbank foreign exchange market. This new system is enhance expected to governance, transparency and facilitate market-friendly a that will be exchange rate accessible to the public, and also speculative activities, reduce market distortions eliminate and give the CBN improved capabilities oversight effectively regulate the market. It aims to address Nigeria's crisis ongoing forex bv improving transparency, reducing speculative trading, and enhancing the operational efficiency the foreign of exchange (FX) market.

The EFEMS utilizes the Bloomberg B-Match platform to facilitate interbank trading of the U.S. Dollar against the Naira. This initiative is expected to stabilize the Naira by curbing market distortions caused by speculators and unregulated activities.

By improving market integrity and providing a more predictable trading environment, **EFEMS** represents a significant step in CBN's efforts to enhance Nigeria's FX market and economic recovery. support the framework's However. will depend success consistent policy enforcement, robust integration by authorized dealers, and the resilience of broader economic fundamentals. If these conditions are met, the Naira could see improved stability and credibility in the coming year.



## National Digital Economy and E-Governance Bill 2024

The National Digital Economy and E-Governance Bill 2024 seeks to enable the growth of digital digital economy and Nigeria governance in by improving the certainty of digital transactions. digital service delivery, and related matters. Primarily, the Bill aims drive economic growth to through digital technology, improve public service delivery, create and a competitive environment for the Nigerian digital economy. It also seeks to create export-oriented capacities in Nigeria's digital economy, support international digital trade and investments, and provide a legal framework for these activities.

If passed into law, it is projected to promote digital infrastructure development, widespread access to digital services and lead to more efficient and transparent government services, such as online portals for tax payments, license applications, and other government transactions.

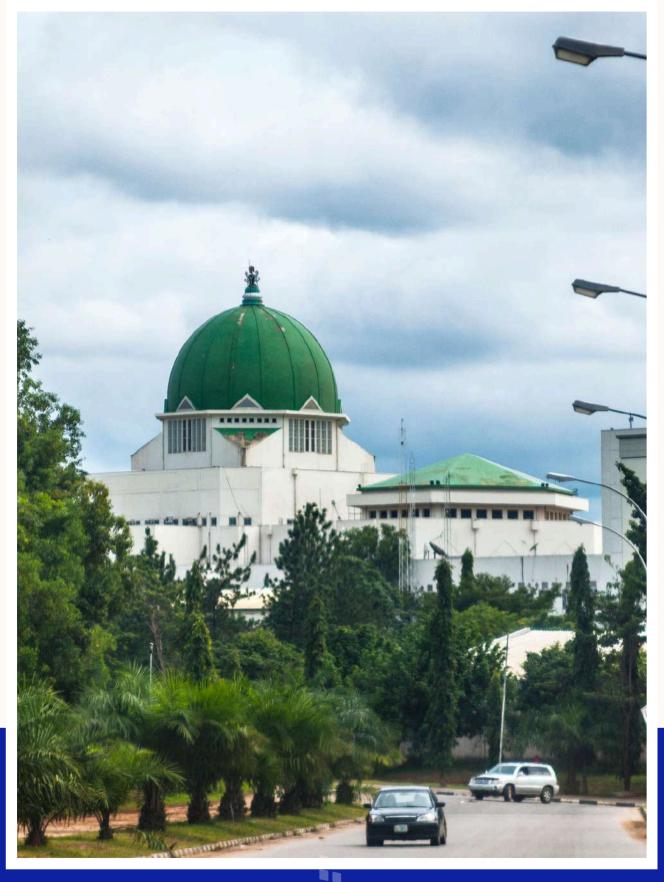


#### **FinTech**

The Nigerian fintech sector is experiencing significant growth and innovation, with companies launching new services, raising funding, and expanding their customer base. Several significant changes were made in the fintech sector in the outgoing year 2024, which is very encouraging. For instance, in October 2024, Moniepoint Inc. successfully raised \$110 million in equity financing to drive financial inclusion and support across Africa, it is to platform make the more innovative, transparent, and secure. A, also, Kuda bank is said to have raised undisclosed amount of funding from investors, reportedly now valuing the company at over \$1 billion while OPay acquired PayCom, a Nigerian fintech company, to expand its payment reach services and more customers.

The Fintech industry growth is projected to continue in 2025, driven by the increasing adoption of digital financial services and innovation in the sector. Digital Payments will continue growing, with a projected value of \$15 billion by 2025.

The GITEX NIGERIA event, scheduled for September 2025, will also provide a platform for the Nigerian fintech sector to showcase its potential, with a focus on innovation, investment, and collaboration. The event will bring together government leaders, investors, startups, and industry giants to drive growth and development in the sector.



## NIGERIAN POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Local Government Autonomy
Nigerian Foreign Policy
Protest and Human Rights Protection



## **Local Government Autonomy**

decades. funds Over two allocated to states and local governments from Nigeria's Federation Account have been deposited into a joint account and according to Section 162 of the 1999 Constitution, each local government is entitled to its rightful share from this account. However, many state have routinely governors this provision violated withholding these funds entirely or releasing only a fraction, while some remove democratically elected local chairmen government and replace them with "Caretaker Committees," loyal the to rather than the governors people. This unconstitutional practice has deprived citizens of essential services and undermined grassroots democracy.

However, on July 11, 2024, the Supreme Court of Nigeria delivered a landmark judgment in Attorney General of the Federation  $\mathbf{v}_{\bullet}$ **Attorney** General of Abia State & 35 **Ors** where it reaffirmed the constitutional autonomy of local governments as an independent third tier of government, emphasizing their financial and operational independence. The Court ruled that withholding funds allocated to local governments by state governments is unconstitutional and illegal and directed the federal government to make directly payments to the accounts of democratically elected local government councils, reinforcing their financial autonomy.

The Supreme Court's ruling mandates that the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC)



manage direct payments to the 36 and 774 local states the through governments Federal Account Allocation Committee (FAAC). This change ensures that local governments control their finances. can fostering effective more governance and service delivery at the grassroots level.

there been However, has resistance from some State and Local Governments officials. For Government instance, in Oyo State, the 33 Local Government Chairmen rejected the Supreme Court's Decision, aligning with Makinde's Sevi Governor opposition that the judgement is only but a distraction. Such actions statements or undermine the Constitution and the authority of the Supreme Court, the supremacy of the Court's decisions must upheld to prevent the erosion of democratic institutions.

In 2025, if the decision of the Supreme Court is properly implemented and state governments are bypassed in the disbursement process of local government funds, we should experience a more direct of involvement the in community government development projects, such as healthcare, education, and without infrastructure, unnecessary delays or interference. This shift is enhance expected to the operational independence of governments, local making them more responsive to grassroots needs.

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## Nigerian Foreign Policy

Nigeria's foreign policy objective the under current administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is basically to promote the best possible outcomes for Nigeria in all engagements with other nations and restore peace and stability in the West African sub-region and the African continent. In his inaugural speech, the President promised to retool Nigeria's foreign policy to more effectively lead the regional continental quest for collective prosperity.

In 2024, the Minister of Foreign Affairs summed up the Tinubu administration's foreign policy into 4D doctrine which is anchored on Democracy, Development, Demography and Diaspora. This policy is centred on promoting democracy, driving economic development, harnessing Nigeria's demographic potential and engaging with the diaspora community.

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President Tinubu embarked on high-powered international crucial engagements where decisions concerning Nigeria and the African continent were reached. The strategic trips have seen Nigeria seeking and sealing bilateral and multilateral partnerships. These diplomatic trips have also been for other purposes, including expanding Nigeria's defence and security relations as well as convincing investors about opportunities in the country. At International forum, both the President and the Vice President have deployed their marketing skills to restore investors' confidence in the country's business climate.

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Since their inauguration, the president and vice president have undertaken over 40 trips across 26 countries, collectively spending over 180 days on foreign engagements. In 2025, the perspective of the foreign policy employed by president is not expected to change, it is projected that the president and his ministers will take more trips outside the country to better secure with partnerships foreign powers.



## **Protest and Human Rights Protection**

have become **Protests** recurring feature of Nigeria's socio-political environment, driven by economic hardship, corruption, and governance deficits. In 2024. notable protests included labour strikes over fuel subsidy removal and demands for a higher minimum The removal of wage. subsidy, while aimed at reducing fiscal deficits, has led to a hike in transportation and sparking living costs, widespread discontent among While citizens. protests populace's underscore the demand for accountability and better governance, they also highlight the tension between economic reforms and public welfare.

The End Bad Governance protest was one of the very popular protests that took place in August 2024, people took to the streets across Nigeria in peaceful protests against the rising cost of living and endemic corruption. Apart from concerted efforts to prevent the protest, desperate measures were taken by the government to punish the protesters. The Nigeria Police allegations denied Force of force excessive use and calls dismissed for an investigation. However, over 1,200 people were detained and over 146 people including minors were arraigned and charged with treasonable felony.

Looking ahead to 2025, the outlook for protests and human rights protection will largely depend on the government's response to citizens' grievances. Proactive measures. such implementing social safety nets, addressing unemployment, and fostering dialogue with society, could mitigate tensions. Conversely, heavy-handed a dissent approach to could exacerbate public discontent and further strain the economy.



## **TAXATION**

Nigerian Tax Bill 2024 Appropriation Bill 2025





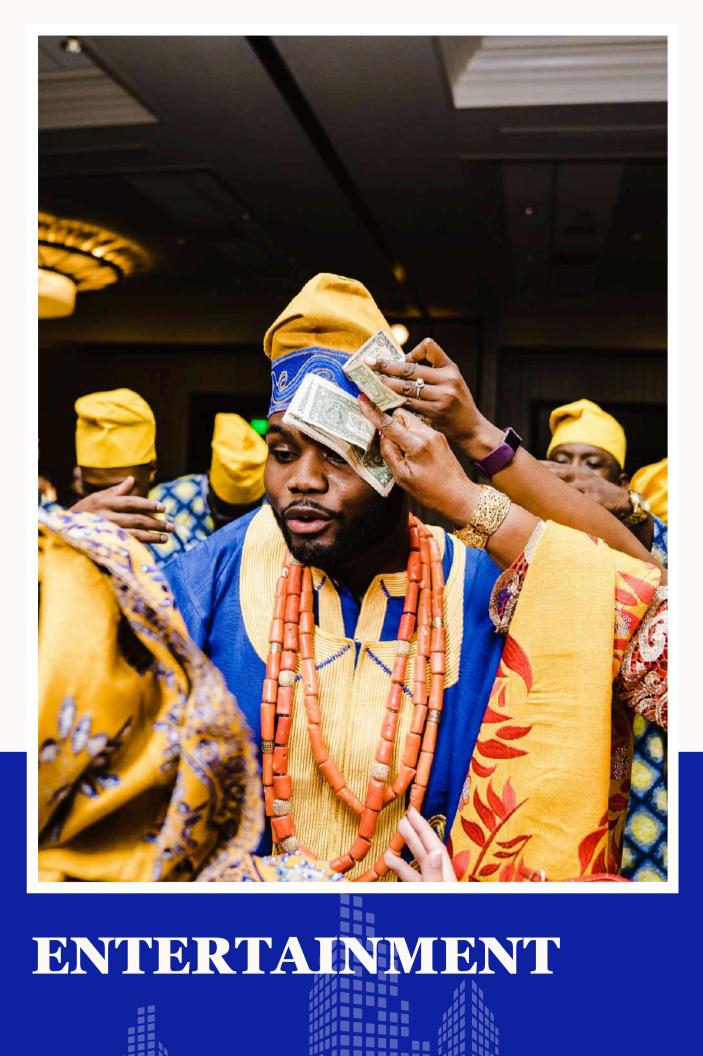
## **Appropriation Bill 2025**

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) has recently adopted the proposed budget for 2025. The 2024 budget performance is said to have achieved a 75% increase in revenue to the sum of N14.55 trillion and 85% increase in expenditure representing 85% of its target.

A government budget estimate of N47.90 trillion is outlined in budget the 2025 proposal, which was presented to the joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives in December 2024. This budget is designed to rising tackle the economic The President challenges. that emphasized the 2025 budget is anchored on a theme of "Restoration: securing peace, Rebuilding Prosperity".

The proposed 2025 budget's objective primary is consolidate the key policies instituted to restructure the economy, boost human capital, increase the volume of trade and investment, bolster oil and gas production, the revive manufacturing and sector increase competitiveness. Hence, it seeks to meet both short-term financial demands and long-term sustainability objectives. As these measures are implemented, they will play crucial role in shaping Nigeria's economic landscape in the coming years.





As we wrap up 2024, the Nigerian entertainment industry has been marked by significant milestones, innovations, global shifts, particularly with increasing influence of the Nigerian talent across music, film, and social media. The year saw the continued dominance of platforms, digital rising international recognition for Nigerian creatives, and ongoing evolution in the way content is consumed.

Nigerian In music, stars continued to break barriers. Burna Boy took home the Grammy Award for Best Global Music Album for the second year running, solidifying his position as a global icon. On front, Nollywood the film continued its rise on the world and across different stage platforms, with Nigerian films showcased at major international festivals, expanding the global appeal of Nigerian storytelling.

During the course of the year, streaming platforms like Amazon Prime, Disney+, Netflix, Showmax, **Apple Music and Spotify** allow Nigerians to export their talent to a global audience. Nollywood films, afrobeats songs, digital content are now just a click away for anyone around the world.

Also, YouTube, TikTok and **Instagram** content creators are now becoming major players in entertainment industry, with many earning impressive incomes from the creator fund options from apps advertising brands. In 2024, social media platforms like TikTok took a significant step by expanding their Creator Fund to Nigeria, enabling Nigerian creators to earn revenue from their content. This move helped fuel the growth of a new generation of Nigerian influencers, giving them opportunities to monetize their creativity.

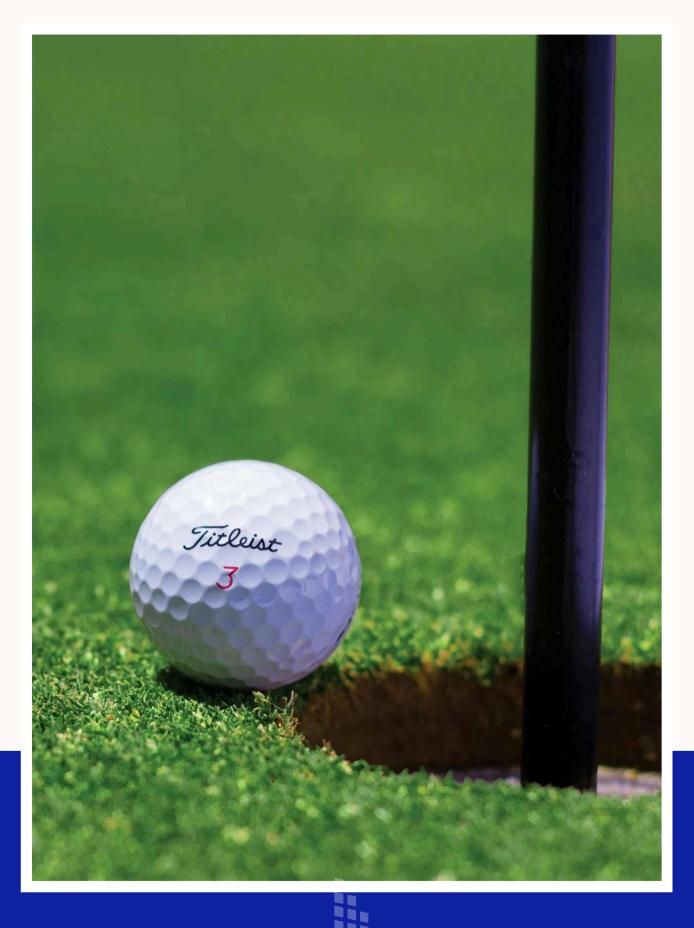


The fashion industry also gained international attention, blending traditional styles with modern flair. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment had in October 2024 said Nigeria's e-commerce fashion market is projected to hit \$423 million by the end of the year.

talent, suggests that 2025 will see an even more dynamic and interconnected entertainment industry.

As we look toward 2025, the entertainment landscape will undoubtedly be shaped by the ongoing digital transformation, streaming with platforms investing even more in African content. Nigerian music, film, and fashion will continue to shine on the global stage, with increased international collaborations and a deeper integration of African narratives in mainstream media.

The rise of global streaming services, paired with the international success of Nigerian



## **SPORT**







In Nigeria, sports play an important social and cultural role by providing a form of social glue which bonds communities and creates a broader unified society.

In 2024, Nigeria's sports scene was not very encouraging. Team Nigeria's outing comprising 88 athletes across 12 sports for the Paris Summer Olympics produced zero medals. Although Nigeria got no medal to show for its participation, Nigerian women's basketball team made history by becoming the first African basketball team (male or female) to reach the Olympic quarterfinals, but that was as far as they went.

Also, the Nigerian UFC fighter Israel Adesanya was defeated by South Africa's Dricus du Plessis to retain the UFC middleweight title. Likewise, Anthony Joshua was knocked out in September 2024 by Daniel Dubois in the fifth round of their IBF heavyweight bout.

The Nigeria football scene was relatively quiet for the better part of the year, However, worthy of note is the emergence of Nigeria's Ademola Lookman as the CAF African Player of the Year 2024, taking over from a fellow Nigerian Victor Osimhen who won the prestigious award in 2023. Until now, the country has not had two different back-to-back winners of the coveted award.

In October 2024, the President and Federal Executive Council scrapped the Ministry of Sports Development and replaced it with the National Sports Commission.

Another interesting development in the Nigerian Sports sector is the return of the Nigerian military to national sports consciousness. The African Military Games hosted by Nigeria in October 2024 revived the tradition where the military played a significant role in the development of sports in the country.

In 2025, Nigeria must invest more in sports infrastructure and grassroot programmes to nurture young talents and strengthen domestic leagues. There should be improved athlete support, including better coaching, the country must most importantly prioritise performing in key international events like the 2026 World Cup.

## END NOTE



As the pages of 2024 close, we are reminded of the enduring truth that progress is both a journey and a destination. The advancements we have seen this year; in various sectors like technology, energy, finance, taxation, politics, sport and entertainment, are not endpoints but milestones;, they signify the ongoing evolution of our profession and the broader industries within which we operate.

The challenges we faced have been met with ingenuity and resilience, demonstrating that the spirit of innovation thrives in the face of adversity.

As we move forward into 2025, the lessons of 2024 must serve as a beacon, guiding us to harness technology responsibly and ethically. Let us remain stewards of this transformation, committed to a future where the law not only adapts to change but also shapes it for the greater good.

To my esteemed colleagues, clients, and stakeholders, I extend my gratitude for your unwavering dedication and trust. The journey ahead is filled with great promise, and I am confident that we will rise to meet it with the same tenacity that has brought us this far.

Wishing you a blissful 2025.



