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The Reforms

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Budget Extension Puts Nigeria's Capital Spending System In Focus

The Senate's fourth extension of the 2025 capital budget gives government more time to complete on-going projects and settle outstanding obligations. But the repeated adjustment also draws attention to the institutional and administrative challenges separating budgetary allocations from completed public projects. **Enam Obiosio** writes...

The Senate's decision to extend the implementation of the capital component of the 2025 Appropriation Act to December 31, 2026 has again placed Nigeria's budget execution system under scrutiny.

For the fourth time, lawmakers have adjusted the implementation deadline, moving it from September 30 to December 31. The immediate justification is that several capital projects remain at different stages of execution, while contractors are yet to complete some projects or receive full payment.

The extension gives ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) additional time to complete eligible projects, process outstanding payments and utilise funds already appropriated and released.

But the decision raises a broader question: why does Nigeria repeatedly need additional time to execute capital projects within an approved budget cycle?

Presenting the amendment bill, Senate Leader Opeyemi Bamidele explained that capital budget implementation involves procurement, contract execution, mobilisation, certification and payment.

"The essence of this proposed extension is to provide the necessary legal and administrative window for ministries, departments and agencies of the federal government to fully implement capital projects for which appropriations have been made and funds released," he said.

His explanation highlights an important distinction. An appropriation creates legal authority to spend, but it does not automatically translate into completed projects. Funds must be released, pro-



Nigerian Senate Chamber

curement concluded, contracts executed and completed work certified before payment can be made.

The argument for the extension is therefore also an argument for protecting public investment already committed to ongoing projects.

Senate President Godswill Akpabio warned against allowing projects to become stranded because of the expired deadline.

"It is not good for us to have abandoned projects littered across the nation since most contractors have not either completed their jobs or have been

fully paid in respect of the 2025 Appropriations Act," Sen. Akpabio said.

He also said that allowing the September 30 deadline to pass without an extension would have been counterproductive because the federal government still had outstanding contractual obligations to settle.

There is a practical case for this position. Abandoning a road that is substantially complete, a health

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Addressing the housing sector challenges with long -term, low- cost mortgage financing for Nigerians at scale

facility awaiting final payment or another infrastructure project held back by administrative delays can diminish the value of money already spent.

Yet the fourth extension also exposes a recurring weakness in the budget system.

A budget year is intended to provide a framework for planning and expenditure. When implementation repeatedly spills beyond the original deadline, questions arise about the timing of releases, procurement efficiency, project planning and payment processes.

The issue is not that every infrastructure project should be completed within 12 months. Major projects naturally require multi-year execution. The concern is whether such projects are properly structured as multi-year commitments or whether annual

practical ability to execute a project. Where releases are delayed, the effective implementation period becomes considerably shorter than the formal budget window.

This can create a cycle in which agencies struggle to execute projects, seek extensions and then carry unfinished obligations into another fiscal period.

The implications extend beyond government accounting. For contractors and businesses, predictable public expenditure affects cash flow, project planning and demand across construction, engineering, manufacturing and logistics. For citizens, the consequences are more tangible. A road allocation does not improve transportation until the road is completed. A health allocation does not improve healthcare until facilities are functional.

tive if unfinished commitments continue to move from one fiscal period into another.

President Bola Tinubu's submission of the 2026 statutory budget proposal of the Niger Delta Development Commission provides another dimension to the debate. The proposed budget prioritises youth empowerment, energy and power, education, enterprise development, healthcare, security and agricultural productivity.

These are significant development priorities, but their impact will depend on implementation capacity. The challenge facing Nigeria is therefore not simply identifying what should be funded. It is creating systems capable of converting approved expenditure into timely and measurable outcomes.

The fourth extension should consequently serve two purposes.

First, it should prevent viable projects from becoming abandoned and protect the value of funds already committed. Second, it should expose and address the bottlenecks that made another extension necessary.

These objectives are not contradictory. Protecting ongoing projects is fiscally sensible. Making repeated extensions unnecessary is equally important for budget credibility.

The December 31 deadline should therefore become a clear accountability point for both the Executive and the legislature.

Government needs to demonstrate what additional time delivered. The National Assembly needs to scrutinise whether funds were properly utilised and whether implementation complied with procurement and financial regulations.

Ultimately, Nigeria's capital spending challenge is not simply about extending deadlines. It is about strengthening the systems that operate before, during and after appropriation.

A more effective framework would align project timelines with realistic funding schedules, improve procurement planning, reduce payment bottlenecks and strengthen monitoring from appropriation to completion.

The latest extension may protect projects from being stranded. Its wider significance, however, lies in what it reveals about the country's budget execution architecture.

The measure of success by December 31 should not be whether another deadline is avoided. It should be whether more roads, schools, hospitals, power facilities and other public projects move from budget documents into completed assets that Nigerians can actually use.



Senator Godswill Akpabio, Senate President

extensions are increasingly being used to accommodate delays.

Senator Tahir Monguno's intervention brings the payment process into sharper focus.

The Senate Chief Whip identified the centralised payment system domiciled in the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation as one factor contributing to delays.

"So long as that system is not consigned to the dustbin of history, so shall we continue to have this ugly scenario of non-implementation of the budget, necessitating the National Assembly to extend the lifespan of the budget," Sen. Monguno argued.

He said the Executive needed to review the policy because it had "continued to constitute a cork in the wheel of implementation of the budget."

If payment architecture is contributing significantly to delays, then extending the deadline addresses the immediate consequence without resolving the underlying bottleneck.

However, the payment system is only one part of the problem. Procurement procedures, project design, contractor capacity, funding availability, certification and administrative coordination can all affect implementation.

The timing of releases is equally important. An appropriation on paper does not give an agency the

Budget credibility must therefore be judged by outcomes as well as allocations.

Sen. Bamidele acknowledged the accountability dimension of the extension, stressing that the additional period should not weaken existing controls.

"I wish to emphasise that the extension should not be interpreted as a relaxation of the principles of accountability, fiscal responsibility or legislative oversight," he said.

That principle should now guide the implementation of the additional three months.

The National Assembly has created the legal window. It should also monitor what happens within it. By December 31, there should be clearer evidence of how much of the released capital was utilised, which projects were completed, which contractor obligations were settled and which projects remained unfinished.

Such reporting would help distinguish genuine implementation challenges from institutional inefficiencies.

The issue also intersects with the federal government's broader effort to improve budget discipline. The administration has emphasised a move away from overlapping budget cycles and greater focus on completing existing projects.

Repeated extensions could complicate that objec-

So long as that system is not consigned to the dustbin of history, so shall we continue to have this ugly scenario of non-implementation of the budget, necessitating the National Assembly to extend the lifespan of the budget

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Dakwo, Abuja.**EDITORIAL****FG Must Make TVET Certification Count In Nigeria's Labour Market**

The federal government's decision to train about 260 Training Service Providers as Quality Assurance Assessors under the IDEAS Project deserves attention beyond the immediate exercise. We believe the quality of Nigeria's Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) and Training system will depend not only on how many people are trained, but on whether the country can reliably establish what those trainees are capable of doing.

This is particularly important as more than 85,000 trainees are reportedly undergoing training under the IDEAS Project, while other federal government programmes are reaching considerably larger numbers. With thousands of young Nigerians entering vocational programmes, assessment cannot remain a secondary administrative function.

National Project Coordinator of the IDEAS Project, Mrs Blessing Ogwu, captured the issue clearly when she said, "What we are doing now is not just about training. The government also believes strongly in continuous assessment."

We think this distinction matters. Training provides knowledge and practical exposure, but credible assessment provides evidence of competence. Without that evidence, certificates can become little more than documents that do not adequately communicate a worker's actual capabilities to employers, customers or financial institutions.

Nigeria's labour market needs precisely the opposite. Employers need to know whether a carpenter can execute quality work, whether a fashion designer can meet production standards, whether a hospitality worker possesses the required competencies or whether a technician can safely perform a particular task.

The competency-based approach described by Ven. Ighodoro Timothy offers a useful direction. Unlike conventional examinations that can place significant emphasis on theoretical knowledge, competency-based assessment requires trainees to demonstrate their ability to perform specific tasks.

We argue that this practical orientation should become central to Nigeria's skills development strategy. The purpose of vocational education should ultimately be production, productivity and employability.

However, producing assessors is only the beginning. The federal government must ensure that assessment standards are consistent across training centres and that certification has credibility with employers and industry bodies. A qualification that is recognised in one centre but poorly understood in another will do little to improve labour mobility.

The National Skills Qualification framework, with progression from Level One to higher levels of competency, can provide the structure for this. But we urge the relevant institutions to make the qualifications genuinely meaningful by linking them more closely to occupational standards and actual industry requirements.

There is also a broader issue of access. Government is renovating technical colleges and providing tuition-free education in federal technical colleges, while using the National MSME Clinics, traditional media, social media and community institutions to increase awareness of skills programmes. These efforts can expand participation, but participation should not become the principal measure of success.

The real question is what happens after certification.

Can the graduate secure employment? Can the certified artisan obtain

finance or equipment to establish a business? Can an employer confidently recruit based on the qualification? Can the worker use the certification to pursue higher levels of competence or opportunities beyond Nigeria?

We believe these outcomes should become part of how TVET programmes are evaluated.

The training of assessors is therefore a necessary investment in the credibility of the wider system. Director of the South-East Zonal Office of the National Board for Technical Education, Engr Dr Ngozi Magret Okelekwé, noted that World Bank-assisted centres had identified a shortage of qualified personnel capable of assessing and certifying learners.

That gap must be addressed systematically. Assessment requires trained personnel, standardised documentation, credible quality assurance and regular monitoring. It also requires industry participation so that what is being assessed remains relevant to changing production methods and workplace demands.

Nigeria cannot afford a TVET system that produces certificates faster than it produces competence. We think the federal government should therefore position certification as the bridge between training and economic opportunity. If the country can build a system in which a vocational qualification is trusted, portable and directly connected to workplace competence, TVET can become a stronger route into employment, entrepreneurship and industrial productivity.

We urge the government to measure this initiative not simply by the number of assessors trained or certificates issued, but by the quality of skills certified and the opportunities those skills subsequently unlock.

DID YOU KNOW?

That President Tinubu's reforms are part of the Renewed Hope Agenda, designed to reposition Nigeria across critical sectors including education, energy, infrastructure, and innovation.

Stay tuned for more updates on reform milestones, policy impact, and opportunities for Nigerian citizens. Have feedback or questions? Send us an email at: editor@thereforms.ng

Time to Tell Nigeria's Story — The Position of The Reforms Newspaper

For far too long, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has been misunderstood, misrepresented, and misquoted — not for a lack of achievements, but for a tragic deficit in communication. Today, *The Reforms*, a National Newspaper, rises not as a mouthpiece, but as a credible national platform to correct the narrative and restore public confidence in Nigeria's reform-driven trajectory.

Let us be blunt: in the past, government's communication structures had been lethargic, inconsistent, and often reactive. Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), despite overseeing groundbreaking reforms across agriculture, power, finance, education, digital innovation, energy, and infrastructure, had largely failed to communicate their successes with clarity and consistency. In their silence, distortions flourished. In their delays, misinformation had taken root.

This was not just a national communication failure — it was a vacuum of narrative power.

It is precisely in this void that *The Reforms* has emerged as a strategic imperative. Our mandate is not to whitewash governments' actions or spread propaganda. We are not beholden to spin doctors or political handlers. We are beholden only to the truth — the verifiable, policy-driven, people-impacting truth of Nigeria's reform journey.

The FGN has rightly endorsed *The Reforms* as the non-partisan channel through which MDAs and private sector partners can boldly articulate the ongoing transformation of the Nigerian economy and society. From economic diversification and tax reforms to housing delivery, digital governance, energy transition, and ease of doing business, among others, — we are committed to amplifying facts, not fiction.

Nigeria is not standing still. The country is moving — and moving fast. But without strategic story-

telling rooted in fact and transparency, that movement may be missed or, worse, maligned.

To the MDAs: You are implementing reforms. But reforms do not speak for themselves. You must. And *The Reforms* is here to help you do just that — professionally, objectively, and impactfully.

To the private sector: You are stakeholders in the reform process. Let your voice be heard. Let your innovations and contributions to national development be documented in a newspaper founded on the principle of national interest above noise.

It is time we tell our own story — the Nigerian story — not through borrowed voices or external media filters, but through a deliberate, intelligent platform that understands the nation and its nuances.

This is not a plea. This is a national call to action.

Partner with *The Reforms*. Let the story of Nigeria's rebirth be told by those who live it, lead it, and believe in it.



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NEXIM Bank Uses Abuja Trade Fair To Deepen Export Finance, Market Access

By Jennete Ugo Anya

As businesses, exporters, investors and other stakeholders gather at the 2026 Abuja International Trade Fair, the Nigeria Export-Import Bank (NEXIM Bank) is using the platform to deepen engagement around export financing, market access and the development of Nigeria's non-oil export sector.

The trade fair, which runs from September 25 to October 6, 2026, at the Trade Fair Complex in Abuja, is being held under the theme, 'Resilience: Trade, Taxation and the Economy.' The theme places trade and enterprise development within the wider conversation about how businesses can navigate changing economic conditions while strengthening their capacity to compete.

For NEXIM Bank, participation in the fair provides an opportunity to take its export development mandate directly to businesses and other economic actors. The Bank is engaging exporters, small and medium-sized enterprises, investors, industry stakeholders and members of the public on financing solutions designed to support businesses seeking to participate more actively in international trade.

The focus is particularly relevant to Nigeria's efforts to expand its non-oil export base. While oil and gas remain significant to the economy, greater participation in global markets by manufacturers, agricultural producers, processors and other export-oriented businesses is central to diversifying sources of foreign exchange and expanding the country's trade capacity.

Through its presence at the fair, NEXIM Bank is also creating a channel for businesses to better understand the financial and institutional support available to them as they pursue new markets.

For many SMEs and emerging exporters, access to finance remains an important part of the export equation. However, financing alone does not determine whether a business can successfully enter and sustain its presence in international markets. Product quality, production capacity, compliance, market intelligence, logistics and the ability to meet international standards are equally important.

This makes platforms such as the Abuja International Trade Fair significant beyond their exhibition value. They provide opportunities for businesses to interact directly with financial institutions, government agencies, investors and potential commercial partners while gaining a clearer understanding of the requirements for scaling beyond the domestic market.

NEXIM Bank's participation therefore places export finance within a broader conversation about enterprise competitiveness and sustainable growth. By engaging businesses directly, the Bank can connect its financing mandate with the practical challenges facing exporters and businesses with ambitions to expand internationally.

The timing also gives the fair relevance to the



Mr. Abba Bello, MD/CEO of NEXIM

ongoing discussion about resilience in Nigeria's economy. Businesses are increasingly required to manage currency pressures, changing input costs, taxation, access to capital and evolving market conditions while maintaining competitiveness.

For export-oriented enterprises, building resilience also means developing the capacity to earn from markets beyond Nigeria. Expanding exports

can create new revenue channels for businesses while contributing to foreign exchange earnings and strengthening the country's position in regional and international trade.

The Abuja International Trade Fair brings these issues into one marketplace, connecting policy, finance, enterprise and investment. NEXIM Bank's presence adds a financial dimension to those discussions, particularly for businesses looking to understand how export finance can support expansion and market entry.

As the fair continues until October 6, businesses visiting the NEXIM Bank stand have an opportunity to engage with the institution on its export financing solutions and strategic initiatives for non-oil export development.

The broader message from the engagement is that Nigeria's export ambitions will depend not only on identifying international markets, but also on ensuring that businesses have the financing, capacity and market support required to compete effectively in them.

For SMEs, exporters and prospective exporters, the trade fair consequently offers more than an exhibition space. It provides a point of contact for understanding the pathways through which Nigerian businesses can position their products for wider markets and pursue sustainable growth through international trade.

NEXIM Bank is also creating a channel for businesses to better understand the financial and institutional support available to them as they pursue new markets



Funding Nigeria's Agriculture, Growing Prosperity

NCC, Telecom Operators Open New Digital Learning Channel For Students



Dr Aminu Maida, Executive Vice Chairman of NCC

By Anita Dennis

Access to educational resources is increasingly tied to access to the internet, yet the cost of data remains a barrier for many Nigerian students. A new partnership between the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the Association of Licensed Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria (ALTON) is seeking to reduce that barrier through a free daily data programme for learners.

Under the initiative, eligible senior secondary and tertiary students will receive up to 100 megabytes of free data each day to access approved educational platforms. The service will be zero-rated, allowing participating learners to use the designated platforms without consuming their regular data allowance.

The programme is expected to reach up to 5 million learners and provide access to research materials, online courses and other academic resources.

For the NCC, the initiative forms part of a wider effort to use telecommunications infrastructure to support education, digital skills and human capital development.

Executive Vice Chairman of NCC, Dr Aminu Maida, said the value of the programme should be considered cumulatively rather than by the daily allocation alone.

“100 megabytes of data might sound a little, but when you look at it over a month and over a year,

and cumulatively over the millions of learners and students that are going to access it, it’s really a significant investment by the industry towards the future of this country,” Dr. Maida said.

The intervention comes at a time when digital access is becoming increasingly important to education. Students can use online platforms to supplement classroom teaching, access research materials, take courses and develop skills that may not be readily available within their immediate communities.

Dr. Maida said better connectivity could also reduce geographical disparities in access to educational resources by connecting learners with teachers, learning materials and knowledge irrespective of where they live.

The initiative, however, also highlights an important distinction between being connected and being digitally equipped to learn.

ALTON Chairman, Gbenga Adebayo, said the telecommunications and technology industry had committed almost N200 billion in financial and in-kind contributions towards the initial pilot involving 5,000 learners.

The commitment covers the data allocation as well as network resources, devices, terminals and other support provided by participating industry players.

“This is a partnership in the truest sense: Government provides the policy and educational framework; the regulator provides coordination and oversight; telecommunications operators provide

connectivity and network resources; while OEMs, TowerCos and other technology partners contribute devices, terminals and other critical resources,” Adebayo said.

The inclusion of devices and other infrastructure is significant because data access alone cannot guarantee meaningful participation in digital education. A learner without a suitable smartphone, tablet or computer may still be unable to take full advantage of online resources, even when the data cost is removed.

The same applies to educational content. Zero-rated access has greater value when students have access to platforms that are relevant to their curriculum, easy to navigate and capable of supporting sustained learning.

Adebayo therefore called for continued investment in devices, relevant educational content, reliable telecommunications infrastructure and digital literacy.

His position points to the wider requirements for digital education to deliver measurable outcomes. Connectivity can open the door to learning, but the quality of the resources behind that connection, the reliability of the network and the ability of students to use digital tools effectively will determine what happens afterwards.

The programme also represents a different form of collaboration between government and the private sector. Rather than placing the entire cost of expanding digital learning access on public finances, the initiative brings together the regulator, telecommunications operators, equipment manufacturers, tower companies and other technology partners.

That structure could provide a model for addressing other aspects of Nigeria’s digital divide if the partnership can be sustained beyond the initial pilot.

For students, the immediate benefit is practical. Regular access to approved educational platforms could support examination preparation, research, online courses and digital skills development.

For the telecommunications industry, the initiative places existing infrastructure within a broader human-capital development agenda.

The central challenge will be scale and sustainability. Moving from an initial pilot of 5,000 learners to potentially 5 million will require coordination, monitoring and continued investment. It will also require clear criteria for eligible users and approved educational platforms, alongside mechanisms to assess whether learners are actually benefiting from the service.

The initiative nevertheless marks a shift in the way digital connectivity is being positioned within Nigeria’s education system. Data is no longer being treated solely as a telecommunications service. It is increasingly becoming part of the infrastructure through which students access knowledge, develop skills and participate in the digital economy.

Nigeria Must Turn \$50bn Investment Pledges Into Real Economic Value

By Kingsley Benson

Nigeria's reported \$50 billion investment figure may sound substantial, but the federal government has clarified that the amount represents investment announcements and commitments rather than capital already deployed into the economy.

Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole, made the clarification during an interview with ARISE NEWS, saying the government's immediate task is to move investment commitments from paper to implementation.

"As of January 2025, Mr President's international visits and really investment promotion had yielded about \$50 billion in investment announcements," Dr. Oduwole said. She linked the figure to more than 80 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) signed by government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) across countries including Brazil, France and the United Kingdom.

The distinction is important. Investment announcements can create expectations around capital inflows, production and employment, but their economic value ultimately depends on whether projects reach financial close, construction, production and commercial operation.

Dr. Oduwole acknowledged that some commitments had already moved into implementation. She cited Indorama's \$8 billion investment in fertiliser and petrochemicals and Coca-Cola's \$1.5 billion commitment as examples.

"Now, what our job is, is to make sure that those announcements are translated into real-time investments," she said.

She also cited Vestagard, a healthcare manufacturing company, whose engagement with the government has resulted in operations beginning in Lagos free zones. According to Dr. Oduwole, the company could produce about 10 million malaria-treated nets at full capacity for domestic use and export across Africa.

For Nigeria, however, converting commitments into productive investment will require patience, particularly where long-term capital is involved. Dr. Oduwole noted that while portfolio investors can move quickly in response to market conditions, patient capital takes longer to materialise.

"It's a slow process, especially slow capital," she said.

The same principle is emerging in Nigeria's critical minerals strategy. As global demand for lithium, rare earth elements and other minerals grows, the government says it does not intend to repeat the traditional model of exporting raw materials without developing domestic processing capacity.

On the critical minerals' framework with the United States (US), Dr. Oduwole stressed that the agreements should not be interpreted as Nigeria surrendering ownership of its resources.

"For the Critical Minerals Framework, when you sign MOUs, first of all, they are intentions. They're not legally binding," she said.

More importantly, she said Nigeria wants partnerships capable of building complete value chains within the country.

"We've said that we want countries and not just the US that will develop our minerals value chain, for instance, from lithium all the way to batteries right here in Nigeria."

Her position reflects a broader question confronting mineral-rich economies. The value of a mineral resource is not limited to extraction. Processing,



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

refining, component manufacturing and associated services can generate additional investment, skills and employment.

"We're not giving anything. We're not letting go of anything," Dr. Oduwole said, stating that Nigeria must negotiate from a position that protects domestic interests. "There's nothing anybody's going to take away from us without it being on our own terms. It's up to us to negotiate."

The minister also argued that leaving valuable minerals underground or allowing informal mining to continue indefinitely would not serve the economy. She called for formalisation of the sector and the development of factories capable of creating jobs in mineral-producing states.

The government is engaging states including Nasarawa, Zamfara, Niger and Kaduna on opportunities in critical minerals. Oduwole said World Bank-supported de-risking efforts had also improved the investment case for Nigerian mining assets, including brownfield projects.

Manufacturing remains another part of the government's strategy to translate investment into economic activity. Dr. Oduwole said the ministry maintained direct engagement with manufacturers and had used initiatives such as the Domestic Investors Summit and Platinum Business Champions programme to address business constraints.

"With the Domestic Investors Summit, on the spot, 75% of issues were solved. 25% of the rest were solved within five days," she said.

Beyond industry and mining, Dr. Oduwole pointed to services, digital skills, remote employment and expanding exports as other pillars of Nigeria's economic ambition. She said exports to China had increased by 80 per cent within a year, while major infrastructure projects were creating wider trade corridors.

"The major infrastructure projects by this ad-

ministration, from the Lagos Calabar to the Sokoto-Badagry, they're opening not just roads, they're opening corridors of trade, corridors of enterprise, delivering jobs, even in construction," she said.

Dr. Oduwole acknowledged that achieving a \$1 trillion economy would not happen through a single intervention. "There's no magic wand. We all have to do the hard work. It takes some time. But we're focused. And you can see that we're on track."

For investors and businesses, the more consequential measure of the \$50 billion figure will therefore be what follows the announcement. Capital actually deployed, factories completed, minerals processed locally, exports expanded and jobs created will determine whether Nigeria's investment promotion drive produces durable economic value.

...Nigeria must negotiate from a position that protects domestic interests. "There's nothing anybody is going to take away from us without it being on our own terms. It's up to us to negotiate"

BoI Moves To Cut Credit Delays With MyBOI Digital Lending Portal

By Jennete Ugo Anya

For businesses seeking finance to expand production, purchase equipment or strengthen working capital, the challenge is often not simply whether credit exists. The time, documentation and uncertainty involved in accessing it can determine whether an investment proceeds or is delayed.

The Bank of Industry (BoI) is seeking to address part of this challenge with the launch of MyBOI, a fully digital lending portal designed to simplify the financing process and give businesses greater visibility from application to credit decision.

The platform represents a shift away from a predominantly manual and branch-dependent financing journey towards automated workflows, digital authentication and real-time application tracking.

Managing Director/ Chief Executive of BoI, Dr. Olasupo Olusi, said access to finance should be assessed not only by the amount of funding available but also by how efficiently businesses can navigate the process.

“Access to finance is not only about the availability of funding; it is also about making the jour-

nance institution.

“Through MyBOI Portal, we are using technology to reduce unnecessary friction, improve visibility and give our customers a more seamless way to engage with BoI, while maintaining the security, rigour and developmental purpose for which the Bank is known,” he said.

The portal allows micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), large businesses, cooperatives, associations and other eligible customers to initiate financing applications digitally. Applicants can complete onboarding, undertake impact and sustainability assessments, submit supporting documents and monitor their applications throughout the credit lifecycle.

The significance of the platform therefore goes beyond putting an existing lending process online. BoI says the system is designed to remove bottlenecks that can prevent financing from translating into actual investment, production and employment.

For the bank, digitisation also offers operational benefits. Automated processes can improve data accuracy, reduce unnecessary human intervention, strengthen compliance and support faster decision-making. Enhanced reporting and an-

for determining whether the digital platform is actually improving access to finance rather than simply changing the channel through which applications are submitted.

The launch followed cybersecurity certification, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) validation, pilot execution and a successful go-live readiness assessment. BoI has also established a digital help desk across its 36 state offices to support customers who may require assistance using the platform.

The move comes as businesses continue to contend with financing pressures and the wider challenge of converting available capital into productive economic activity. For smaller businesses in particular, the efficiency of the financing process can matter almost as much as the availability of the loan itself.

A faster application process, however, does not automatically translate into faster credit approval or greater lending. The ultimate impact of MyBOI will depend on how efficiently applications move through assessment, approval and disbursement, as well as the bank's ability to maintain credit quality while increasing digital access.

This makes implementation the critical measure for the initiative. If the platform reduces administrative delays while preserving appropriate risk controls, it could improve the experience of businesses seeking development finance and allow BoI to process applications more efficiently.

The bank said the broader objective is to enable businesses to spend less time navigating financing procedures and more time deploying capital towards productive activity.

“With MyBOI Portal, the Bank of Industry is taking a significant step towards a more accessible and digitally enabled financing experience, helping businesses spend less time navigating processes and more time pursuing growth,” the bank said.

The broader economic question is whether improvements in the financing journey can translate into more investment, stronger productive capacity and additional jobs. For MyBOI, its value will ultimately be measured not by the launch of the portal itself, but by the businesses that are able to secure financing, deploy it and expand as a result.



Dr. Olasupo Olusi, MD/ CEO of BoI

ney to that funding simpler and more efficient,” Olusi said.

That distinction is particularly relevant for enterprises whose investment decisions depend on timely access to working capital or long-term financing. A viable business can still lose an opportunity if the process of securing finance takes too long or involves uncertainty around the status of an application.

According to Dr. Olusi, MyBOI is intended to address these friction points without compromising the safeguards expected of a development fi-

analytics could further give the institution better visibility into its lending pipeline and customer behaviour.

The bank has attached specific performance objectives to the platform. It aims to increase qualified digital financing application intake by 30 percent within 12 months, reduce front-end application initiation turnaround time by at least 40 per cent within nine months and achieve at least 60 percent self-service adoption for new applications within 12 months.

These targets provide measurable benchmarks

Through MyBOI Portal, we are using technology to reduce unnecessary friction, improve visibility and give our customers a more seamless way to engage with BoI, while maintaining the security, rigour and developmental purpose for which the Bank is known

NGX Takes Nigeria’s Investment Case To Global Capital At UNGA 81

By Majeed Salaam

Nigeria’s effort to attract global capital is increasingly shifting from promoting its economic potential to demonstrating why international investors should consider its markets and productive sectors.

That message was central to the Nigeria Investment Forum held on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York, where Chairman of Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) , Dr. Umaru Kwairanga, presented the country’s capital market as a channel through which international investors can participate in its economic expansion.

Dr. Kwairanga argued that Nigeria’s investment proposition has changed significantly over the past three years, pointing to what he described as a lower country risk profile and comparatively attractive returns.

“In considering where to invest, investors must weigh risk and return. Nigeria’s country risk profile is considerably lower than it was three years ago while the returns available remain some of the highest in the world and they are sustainable,” he said.

The statement represents an assessment from the NGX chairman rather than a standalone measure of investment risk. Nevertheless, it captures the broader argument being presented to international capital: that Nigeria’s recent economic reforms are beginning to reshape the environment in which businesses and investors operate.

Dr. Kwairanga cited the removal of fuel subsidies, the move away from multiple exchange-rate regimes, changes in monetary policy and tax reforms as developments that have affected the macroeconomic and business environment.

He said the changes had also been reflected in the capital market.

“That has had a knock-on effect on the Nigerian capital market which has seen double digit growth every year since 2023,” he said.

For the NGX, the objective is not simply to increase trading activity. The exchange sees its role within a broader capital-formation system in which savings are channelled towards businesses and productive sectors while companies gain access to long-term financing.

Dr. Kwairanga said this depends fundamentally on investor confidence.

“Capital moves towards opportunity, but it remains where investors have confidence in the institutions and systems supporting their investments,” he said.

That confidence, he stated, depends on credible regulation, governance, transparency, market integrity and infrastructure capable of supporting efficient transactions.

The emphasis on institutional confidence is important for Nigeria because attracting foreign capital involves more than presenting large opportunities. Investors also need mechanisms through which they can enter and exit markets, assess companies, protect their interests and repatriate returns.

Dr. Kwairanga pointed to Nigeria’s natural resources, including crude oil and solid minerals, as well as its agricultural potential and large population, as areas capable of supporting long-term economic growth.

But the investment case being presented at the forum also extends beyond natural resources. He identified infrastructure, solid minerals, large-scale agriculture, fintech and tourism as areas where venture capital, private equity and institutional investors could participate.



Dr. Umaru Kwairanga, Chairman of NGX

tors could participate.

The capital market itself is another part of that proposition. Dr. Kwairanga said the NGX had recorded growth in market capitalisation, trading volumes and values in recent years, while millions of new investors had been onboarded through trading licence holders and digital initiatives such as NGX Invest.

Capital moves towards opportunity, but it remains where investors have confidence in the institutions and systems supporting their investments

He also pointed to the growing number of companies accessing the exchange for capital raising, citing the ongoing Dangote Refinery Initial Public Offering (IPO) as a major recent development.

According to him, the offering is setting records for capital raised and subscriber numbers on the African continent. Such claims relate to the current offering and should ultimately be assessed against final transaction and market data.

The broader objective is to make the Nigerian capital market more accessible to both institutional and individual investors. Dr. Kwairanga said more than 300 securities are listed across the exchange’s premium and main boards, while more than 150 investment firms operate as trading licence holders.

For foreign investors, the presence of local intermediaries could help bridge some of the information and market-access gaps that often affect investment decisions in emerging markets.

The NGX chairman also argued that foreign capital brings benefits beyond financing.

“Foreign capital brings more than financing; it can also bring expertise, technology, global networks, institutional discipline and access to international markets,” he said.

That makes the quality of capital as important as its volume. Investment that supports productive enterprises, infrastructure and export capacity can potentially deepen the economy’s capacity to generate future growth, while capital-market participation can broaden ownership of businesses and financial assets.

Kwairanga acknowledged that Nigeria still has work to do in strengthening the institutions and partnerships needed to convert its resources and economic opportunities into scalable investments.

His appeal to international investors therefore rests on a proposition that goes beyond Nigeria’s familiar narrative of untapped potential. The argument is that reforms, capital-market development and a large domestic economy can increasingly provide channels through which that potential becomes investable.



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Nigeria's 75% Smartphone Penetration Deepens Shift To A Mobile-First Economy



By Kingsley Benson

Nigeria's digital economy is becoming increasingly dependent on the smartphone, with smartphone penetration rising to 75 percent in 2025 from 64 percent in 2023, according to a study by KPMG Nigeria and Orange Group.

The increase represents more than a change in device preference. It points to a wider shift in how Nigerians communicate, access financial services and interact with businesses, as mobile devices become the primary gateway to an expanding digital economy.

The study, which surveyed 13,251 respondents, found that the growing adoption of smartphones has coincided with a decline in the use of feature phones. Their market share fell from 36 percent in 2023 to 28 percent in 2025.

The development places greater importance on how businesses design products and services for mobile users, particularly in a market where affordability continues to influence technology choices.

Android dominates that landscape. According to the report, 88 percent of smartphone users have Android apps, making the operating system the dominant platform for Nigeria's mobile economy.

The dominance of Android is closely linked to the availability of lower-cost devices from a wide range of manufacturers. While Apple's iOS maintains a smaller market share, the report noted that iPhones continue to attract consumers seeking premium devices and integrated digital ecosystems.

The difference reflects a broader characteristic of Nigeria's technology market. Consumers are increasingly connected, but price remains a major determinant of the devices through which they access that connectivity.

That dynamic is reflected in the dominance of Tecno, Infinix and Itel, which account for 25 percent, 24 percent and 10 percent of the device market respectively, according to the report.

The three brands have gained ground by combining relatively affordable pricing with features suited to emerging-market consumers. Their position illustrates how functionality and affordability continue to shape Nigeria's smartphone market.

"Overall, the smartphone brand landscape in Nigeria reflects a market driven largely by affordability and functionality," KPMG and Orange Group said.

The implications extend beyond the handset market. The study found that social media and communication applications remain among the most widely used digital services in Nigeria.

WhatsApp, Facebook and Xender recorded adoption levels of 95 percent, 87 percent and 77 percent respectively. Their widespread use reflects the role of smartphones as everyday communication and infor-

mation-sharing tools.

The report noted that almost every respondent had at least one social media application on their device. This creates an increasingly important channel for businesses seeking to reach consumers, distribute information and provide customer services.

Financial services are another major part of the shift. Banking and fintech applications recorded adoption levels of up to 88 per cent among respondents.

The finding reflects Nigeria's rapid movement towards digital payments, transfers and mobile financial management. Smartphones are increasingly serving as substitutes for physical banking interactions, particularly where digital platforms can provide faster and more convenient access.

According to the report, mobile banking applications, digital wallets and fintech platforms have also contributed to financial inclusion by providing alternatives to conventional banking infrastructure.

"For financial institutions and technology companies, this trend signals continued opportunities for innovation within Nigeria's fintech ecosystem," the report said.

The opportunity, however, comes with a corresponding need for security and reliability. As more financial transactions move to smartphones, users become increasingly dependent on digital platforms for access to their money and financial information.

The expansion of smartphone use also creates opportunities beyond fintech. Businesses in retail, entertainment, logistics, education and professional services can increasingly design customer journeys around mobile platforms rather than treating smartphones as an additional channel.

For developers, the dominance of Android has a similar implication. Products designed for Nigeria's mass market need to work effectively across a wide range of devices, including lower-cost smartphones with different specifications and network capabilities.

This makes affordability an important consideration not only for device manufacturers but also for companies developing digital services.

Premium brands such as Apple and Samsung retain strong recognition, particularly among consumers seeking advanced cameras, performance and ecosystem integration. However, their comparatively higher prices limit their penetration relative to Android manufacturers.

The market therefore presents a dual opportunity. Premium consumers continue to support higher-end devices, while the much larger mass market is expanding through affordable smartphones.

The more consequential change is that both groups are increasingly operating within the same mobile-first economy.

Quotes of the Week

Daniel Krull, German Consul General

I think the starting point is that the wine consumption in Europe is stagnating, and so our winemakers are reaching out to new markets, and West Africa is looking as a very promising market, considering the important consumption of sparkling wine, for example in Lagos in particular.

Dr. Umaru Kwairanga, NGX Chairman

In considering where to invest, investors must weigh risk and return. Nigeria's country risk profile is considerably lower than it was three years ago while the returns available remain some of the highest in the world and they are sustainable. Nigeria's abundance of natural resources whether in crude oil, solid minerals and fertile land and climate suitable for large scale agriculture combined with its large, young hardworking population make it one of the twenty first century's economic growth engines.

Dr. Jumoke Oduwale, Minister of Industry, Trade & Investment

As of January 2025, Mr. President's international visits and really investment promotion had yielded about \$50 billion in investment announcements. That's from over 80 MOUs signed by different ministries, departments, and agencies across various countries, from Brazil to France to UK, different things.

FG’s \$410bn Green Transition Hinges On Investable Projects

By Anita Dennis

Nigeria will require about \$410 billion in additional investment by 2060 to achieve its net-zero pathway, putting pressure on government and private-sector stakeholders to turn climate ambitions and infrastructure plans into projects capable of attracting long-term capital.

Vice President Kashim Shettima made the case for greater private investment last Tuesday at the second edition of the Decarbonising Infrastructure in Nigeria (DIN) Summit in Abuja, where policymakers, development finance institutions, investors, climate experts and members of the diplomatic corps examined ways to close the financing gap facing the country’s green transition.

Represented by his Deputy Chief of Staff, Senator Ibrahim Hadejia, Shettima said the scale of financing required should be viewed not only as a challenge but also as a substantial investment opportunity.

“Our Energy Transition Plan estimates that Nigeria will require about \$410 billion in additional investment above business-as-usual through 2060 to achieve its net-zero pathway,” he said.

“That is a significant financing requirement. But it also tells us something else: there is a very large investment opportunity ahead of us.”

The scale of the requirement, however, means government funding alone cannot deliver the infrastructure needed for the transition. Vice President Shettima said Nigeria would need capital from domestic and international investors, development finance institutions, financial institutions and institutional investors.

“We need the private sector. We need development finance institutions. We need domestic financial institutions and institutional investors. And, perhaps most importantly, we need projects that are properly prepared and capable of attracting that capital,” he said.

That emphasis on project preparation emerged as

We need the private sector. We need development finance institutions. We need domestic financial institutions and institutional investors. And, perhaps most importantly, we need projects that are properly prepared and capable of attracting that capital

one of the central themes of the summit, held at the United Nations House in Abuja and organised by the Office of the Vice President with support from the National Council on Climate Change and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

With the theme, ‘De-risking Green Infrastructure Investment in Nigeria: Enabling Policy, Project Readiness and Risk-Sharing Solutions,’ the summit focused on a practical constraint facing green infrastructure: investors need more than ambitious targets before committing capital.

The Vice President said investors would want



Vice President Kashim Shettima

clarity on the policy environment, the credibility of revenue models, the quality of technical preparation and how risks would be distributed among project stakeholders.

“These are practical questions. And I believe that is where DIN Summit 2.0 can make a useful contribution,” he said.

The financing challenge was further illustrated by UNIDO’s Sub-Regional Representative in Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ambassador Philbert Abaka Johnson. He said Nigeria’s physical infrastructure investment requirements were estimated at about \$3 trillion by 2050, while tracked climate finance flows averaged only \$2.5 billion annually in 2021 and 2022.

Against estimated annual requirements of \$29.7 billion, he put the annual financing gap at about \$27.2 billion.

Johnson identified policy and regulatory uncertainty, fragmented approval processes, unclear institutional responsibilities and inadequate revenue or offtake arrangements as factors limiting the ability of otherwise credible projects to secure financing.

“These projects sit at very different stages of maturity, from concepts which require feasibility work to projects ready to seek finance,” he said.

The implication is that closing the green financing gap will require a stronger project-development pipeline, rather than simply greater commitments of capital.

The DIN initiative is already seeking to build that pipeline. Musaddiq Adamu, Personal Assistant to

the President on Subnational Infrastructure, said pre-summit workshops had been conducted across energy, transport, urban development and agriculture.

He cited the outcome of discussions following last year’s summit, when APM Terminals presented plans around port electrification. According to Adamu, the engagement subsequently contributed to a \$60 million agreement with the Nigerian Ports Authority to advance port electrification, with Onne Port positioned to become Nigeria’s first green port.

“For me, that is an important lesson. The objective is not simply to have a good conversation. The goal is

to create real investment opportunity,” Adamu said.

He said Nigeria had “no shortage of ambition”, but the greater challenge was turning policies, plans and ideas into projects that investors could understand, finance and deliver.

That challenge has implications for how climate projects are developed and presented to the market. Nigeria’s NDC 3.0 recognises the need for a stronger pipeline of viable projects, increased private-sector participation and improved access to climate finance.

Across the continent, blended finance and early-stage project preparation are also being used to reduce barriers to private investment. The African Development Bank’s Alliance for Green Infrastructure in Africa, for instance, is seeking to mobilise \$500 million in early-stage blended finance to develop projects capable of attracting substantially larger investments.

The summit also heard that green infrastructure could create more than 300,000 jobs, while participants called for standardised public-private partnership agreements and dedicated early-stage funding for projects in areas such as mini-grids, clean transportation and green buildings.

For investors, the message emerging from the summit was therefore not simply about the size of Nigeria’s green opportunity. It was about whether projects can be developed to a point where risks, revenues, contracts and technical requirements are sufficiently clear to support investment decisions.



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President Tinubu Puts Shared Production Hubs At Centre Of MSME Growth Strategy



By Ahmed Ahmed

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu says shared production facilities are being used to address one of the structural barriers confronting Nigeria’s micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, access to affordable equipment and reliable production infrastructure.

The President said the federal government was investing in shared MSME hubs under the National MSME Clinics, allowing entrepreneurs to use modern machinery, power and production facilities without having to bear the full cost of establishing their own infrastructure.

The President explained the rationale in a post on his official X account, using the examples of a tailor and a food processor to illustrate how the cost of production equipment can constrain businesses that have the skills and market opportunities to grow.

“A tailor should not need millions of naira to buy industrial machinery before she can grow her business. A food processor should not have to build a factory before producing at scale,” President Tinubu said.

“That is why the federal government, under our Renewed Hope administration, is investing in shared MSME hubs through our National MSME Clinics, giving entrepreneurs access to modern equipment, reliable power and production facilities without carrying the full cost alone,” he added.

According to the President, 21 shared facilities are currently operating across 19 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), supporting businesses and an estimated 650,000 jobs.

The approach reflects a practical challenge within Nigeria’s MSME ecosystem. For many small businesses, the barrier to expansion is not necessarily a lack of entrepreneurial capacity, but the cost of acquiring machinery, securing adequate power and establishing suitable production space.

Tinubu said Nigerian entrepreneurs already possess many of the capabilities required to build successful businesses, but that access to productive infrastructure remains a constraint.

“Nigerians do not lack ideas, skill or ambition. Too often, they lack access to the tools and infrastructure needed to turn them into successful businesses,” he said.

“Our job is to remove those barriers,” he stated.

Shared facilities therefore provide an alternative

to requiring individual businesses to make large upfront investments in equipment before they can increase production. For businesses operating with limited capital, the model could allow scarce resources to be directed towards raw materials, workers, distribution and market expansion rather than expensive fixed assets.

The President also linked access to production infrastructure with competitiveness. He said businesses able to increase output while controlling production costs would be better positioned to expand and employ more people.

“When small businesses can produce more, at lower cost, they become more competitive. They grow. They employ more people. They create income and opportunity for Nigerian families,” President Tinubu said.

The emphasis on shared facilities also places infrastructure access alongside finance as part of the broader challenge facing MSMEs. Access to credit may not translate into sustained business growth if entrepreneurs still face high costs for equipment, electricity and production space.

For the model to deliver its intended effect, however, the availability of shared facilities will need to be matched by effective management, equipment maintenance, reliable power and transparent access for businesses. The ability of entrepreneurs to use the facilities consistently and translate access into higher productivity will also determine the wider economic impact.

The 21 facilities cited by the President provide an existing base from which the initiative can potentially expand. Their reported support for an estimated 650,000 jobs also places emphasis on the employment potential of MSMEs, although the scale and sustainability of those jobs will depend on the performance and continued viability of the businesses using the facilities.

President Tinubu said the ultimate objective was to enable Nigerian enterprises to become more productive and create broader economic opportunities.

The policy direction places shared productive infrastructure at the centre of efforts to help smaller businesses move from survival towards scale. Its significance will ultimately be measured by whether entrepreneurs can consistently access the facilities, lower their operating constraints, increase production and convert that capacity into sustainable businesses and employment.

Reforms Nuggets

BOA, AFAN Target 400,000 Farmers With Dry-Season Financing

- The Bank of Agriculture (BOA) has partnered with the All-Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) to expand financing access to 400,000 farmers preparing for the 2026 dry-season farming cycle
- The initiative is being implemented under BOA’s Renewed Hope Smallholder Support and Value Chain Fund (RH-SSVCF) to support year-round food production and strengthen farmers’ livelihoods
- Financing will cover agricultural inputs as well as irrigation toolkits and related equipment, allowing farmers to sustain production beyond the main rainy season.
- Under the partnership, AFAN will identify credible farmers within its national network and provide information on their locations, commodities, farm sizes and proposed dry-season acreage.
- AFAN will also identify suitable Farmer Aggregation Companies (FACs) with verifiable farmer networks and the capacity to coordinate participating farmers.
- Through the Farmer Allocation Model, approved financing will be channelled to eligible farmers through suitable FACs, which will coordinate the allocation and deployment of approved inputs and other production requirements.
- BOA Managing Director, Ayo Sotinrin, said the initiative was designed to ensure farmers ready to produce had access to the financing, inputs and irrigation equipment required to maintain production.
- “Dry season farming allows us to keep production going beyond the main farming season. Our responsibility is to ensure that farmers who are ready and able to produce have access to the financing, inputs and irrigation equipment they need to do so,” Sotinrin said.
- He said year-round production could improve farmers’ livelihoods and contribute to a more reliable food supply, while the AFAN partnership would help BOA reach credible farmers at scale..
- Following submission of farmer and FAC information, BOA will conduct verification, due diligence and credit assessments before approving financing. Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

Nigeria Should Treat Agricultural Extension As Critical Food Infrastructure



Nigeria's food security challenge is often discussed in terms of farmland, fertiliser, finance, irrigation and insecurity. These are important constraints, but I believe there is another piece of the agricultural productivity puzzle that deserves far greater attention: the ability to get the right knowledge to farmers at the right time.

That is why the federal government's call for an overhaul of the agricultural extension system should not be treated as another administrative adjustment within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. I think it should be understood as an investment in productive infrastructure.

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari, made the case at the Africa Agribusiness Extension Summit 2026 in Abuja, arguing that Nigeria cannot continue to depend on expanding farmland to meet the food requirements of a growing population. Productivity has to rise.

I agree with that direction. Nigeria cannot indefinitely solve its food challenge by putting more land under cultivation. There are limits to available arable land, water, infrastructure and the environmental sustainability of expanding agricultural production. The more durable route is to help farmers produce more, with better methods, better information and better access to technology.

This is where agricultural extension becomes critical.

There was a time when extension officers maintained close relationships with farming communities and were trusted sources of practical agricultural knowledge. Kyari recalled that during the period when Agricultural Development Projects operated on a large scale with World Bank support, one extension agent served between 1,000 and 1,500 farm families.

Today, he said, an extension officer may be expected to serve between 5,000 and 10,000 farmers.

"No field officer, however committed, can meaningfully serve that number through physical visits alone," the minister said.

That statement captures the structural problem. It is unrealistic to expect a conventional, field-based extension system to cope with the scale of Nigeria's farming population when the ratio between extension personnel and farmers has deteriorated so sharply.

I think the government must therefore resist the temptation to see digital technology as a substitute for extension officers. Technology should extend their reach, not eliminate the human expertise that farmers still need for complex decisions.

The emerging digital initiatives are therefore important. More than 100,000 farmers in six states are reportedly receiving weekly text messages on expected rainfall and measures for protecting crops through collaboration involving the Federal Department of Agricultural Extension, the Nigerian Meteorological Agency and private-sector partners.

The planned digital agricultural extension platform, which is expected to provide advisory services through text and voice in Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and Pidgin, is another useful development. So is the deployment of tablets to more than 1,000 digital extension agents with support from the National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF).

But I would argue that the real value of these initiatives will depend on whether they become part of a coherent national system rather than remaining isolated projects.

This is where farmer data becomes important. Kyari's proposal to connect farmer registries with extension systems deserves serious attention because agricultural advice is most useful when it reflects the circumstances of the individual farmer.

"A registry tells us who the farmer is, where the farm lies and what grows on it. Extension tells the farmer what to do next," he said.

That distinction is important. A farmer registry is useful for identifying beneficiaries, but its greater economic value emerges when the information enables tailored advice. A farmer growing maize in one ecological zone should not necessarily receive the same advisory information as a rice farmer operating somewhere else. Weather, soil conditions, crop cycles, pests, market conditions and available inputs all matter.

I believe Nigeria should therefore move towards a data-driven extension architecture in which farmer identification, location, crop information, weather intelligence, research findings and advisory services are connected.

This is particularly relevant in Nigeria because digital agriculture cannot be designed around smartphones alone. A system that excludes farmers because they lack sophisticated devices will reproduce the very access problem it is supposed to solve. Basic phones, voice services, local languages and human escalation mechanisms therefore remain important.

At the same time, I think the government must address the institutional fragmentation that has weakened agricultural support programmes. Extension Africa's Chief

... agricultural extension can become an important employment pathway for graduates in agriculture, data science, meteorology, engineering, business and related disciplines

Operating Officer and Co-Founder, Isa Abdulsamad, identified the proliferation of siloed solutions as one of the major challenges confronting agricultural advisory systems across Africa.

Nigeria has experienced versions of this problem across several sectors. Different programmes can have

different databases, beneficiaries, platforms and implementation structures, even when they are addressing closely related problems.

Kyari's approval of a steering committee to harmonise the Ministry's extension programmes is therefore potentially significant. But coordination should produce more than another committee. It should establish clear responsibilities, common standards, interoperable data systems and measurable outcomes.

The human capital question also requires attention. The government has 774 agricultural desk officers serving across local government areas, but the effectiveness of such structures depends on their capacity, resources and connection to farmers. Extension must also become more attractive to young professionals, as Kyari suggested.

I believe agricultural extension can become an important employment pathway for graduates in agriculture, data science, meteorology, engineering, business and related disciplines. The modern extension officer should increasingly be part agronomist, part technology user, part data interpreter and part business adviser.

I think agricultural extension sits directly at that intersection.

Research cited by Kyari indicates that access to extension services is associated with reduced food insecurity and improved household assets among Nigerian farming households. Studies of mobile agricultural advisory services in sub-Saharan Africa and India have also found that digital advice can improve yields and encourage adoption of recommended inputs.

These findings reinforce an important principle. Extension should not be funded as a short-term intervention that disappears when a particular project ends. It should be maintained as permanent agricultural infrastructure, just like roads, irrigation systems, storage facilities and market infrastructure.

I urge the federal government to therefore build a national extension architecture around four connected pillars: qualified people, reliable technology, usable farmer data and strong partnerships.

Government should also establish clear indicators for measuring whether the system is working. The number of farmers registered or messages sent is not enough. The more meaningful measures are changes in yields, adoption of improved practices, reductions in crop losses, access to markets, farm incomes and the sustainability of farming enterprises.

We cannot afford an agricultural system in which farmers are expected to increase production while operating without timely and relevant information.

Nigeria's food security challenge will require more than distributing inputs or expanding cultivated land. Farmers need knowledge that reaches them before the pest arrives, before the weather changes, before planting decisions are made and before market opportunities disappear.

I believe rebuilding agricultural extension is therefore not a peripheral agricultural reform. It is part of the infrastructure required to make Nigerian agriculture more productive, more resilient and more commercially viable.

The government has identified the problem. The next task is to build an extension system capable of matching the scale of the country's agricultural challenge.