

Roundup on
**Intellectual Property
in Nigeria 2025:**

Forecast for 2026





About Tech Hive™

Tech Hive Advisory Limited ("Tech Hive") is a technology policy advisory and research firm providing services to private and public organisations regarding the intersection between technology, business, and law. While acting as an innovation partner for our clients, we focus on how emerging and disruptive technologies are changing and influencing traditional ways of doing things. We focus on how emerging and disruptive technologies are altering and influencing traditional ways of doing things while acting as an innovation partner to our clients.

Our expertise and experience span Research and Policy Advisory, Privacy and Data Protection, Data Ethics, Cybersecurity, Regulatory Intelligence, Startup and Business Advisory, Emerging Technologies, and Digital Health. We ensure that our advice is useful to our clients by thoroughly understanding their businesses and the markets in which they operate, which we accomplish through accurate policy and legislative development tracking and intelligence.

Contact: contact@techhiveadvisory.africa

Contributors

Deji Sarumi
Ebunoluwa Adefolase
Feranmi Ekundayo
Rodiyyah Bashir
Samuel Akinrinlola

Disclaimer - Usage of Publication

The publication is intended to be general and educational, not legal advice, and should not be relied on as such. The information and materials from the study may not apply to all (or any) situations. As a result, they should not be acted upon without specific legal counsel based on the circumstances.

The absence of a trademark or service mark from this list does not imply that Tech Hive has relinquished its intellectual property rights in relation to that name, mark, or logo.

All rights reserved. 2026 Tech Hive Advisory.

Copyright © Tech Hive Advisory Limited 2026. Tech Hive Advisory holds the exclusive rights to this publication. No portion of this document may be copied, reproduced, scanned into an electronic system, transmitted, forwarded, or distributed without Tech Hive's prior written permission.



Intellectual Property Forecast for 2026, © 2026 by
Tech Hive Advisory, is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)



Image by DC Studio on Freepik

Introduction

Intellectual property (IP) plays an increasingly strategic role in Nigeria's creative, technology, and innovation-driven sectors. As the country continues to position the creative economy and digital innovation as part of the engines of economic growth, the effectiveness of IP regulation, enforcement, and governance has become a key concern for rights holders, investors, regulators, and policymakers.

This report spotlights the key regulatory changes, policy initiatives, judicial decisions, emerging trends, enforcement actions, collaborations, and events that defined Nigeria's IP landscape in 2025 and considers their implications as stakeholders look ahead to further clarification and predictions for 2026.

Executive summary



Nigeria's IP landscape in 2025 was defined less by sweeping statutory reform and more by institutional consolidation, legislative positioning, creative economy financing, digital rights governance, and intensified enforcement activity. Key developments within the Nigerian ecosystem included the introduction of IP reform bills before the National Assembly, signalling renewed legislative attention to Nigeria's outdated IP statutes; the operational rollout of the Creative Economy Development Fund (CEDF); sustained and geographically broad enforcement actions by the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC); and the issuance of new Collective Management Regulations to strengthen copyright governance. In parallel, Nigeria's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, approved in September 2025, clarified the policy position that existing IP laws should apply to AI-related inventions and creative outputs, reinforcing an incremental and continuity-based regulatory approach. At the same time, the courts issued notable decisions that clarified aspects of copyright ownership and the limitations of rights, providing legal certainty for rights holders and users alike.

Overall, 2025 revealed both progress and persistent gaps in Nigeria's IP ecosystem. While enforcement activity and institutional engagement increased, structural and regulatory challenges around commercialisation, digital infringement, and emerging technologies remain. Looking ahead to 2026, this report anticipates a period of consolidation rather than radical change. Regulatory and policy efforts are likely to focus on implementation, enforcement, and incremental reform, particularly in relation to IP rights, Artificial intelligence (AI) governance, online infringement, and pending legislative initiatives.

The IP Regulatory Landscape in 2025

Legislative and Regulatory Updates

Nigeria made notable progress in consolidating its IP framework through a combination of executive action and legislative reform. A key milestone is the Federal Executive Council's [approval](#) of the National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy, which provides a unified direction for IP governance across the country. The policy aims to address long-standing fragmentation in Nigeria's IP regime and reposition intellectual assets as core contributors to economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness. By clarifying institutional roles and regulatory priorities, it is expected to improve certainty for rights holders, encourage local innovation, and enhance Nigeria's attractiveness to foreign investors. Alongside this policy shift, the [strategy](#) also signals an intention to modernise IP administration. Ongoing efforts to digitise registry operations are intended to move IP management away from manual, paper-based processes toward more efficient, technology-driven systems. These reforms are expected to improve processing timelines, data integrity, and public access to IP records, bringing Nigeria's IP infrastructure closer to international standards.

The NCC also [issued](#) the Collective Management Regulations, 2025, replacing the 2007 framework governing Collective Management Organisations (CMOs). The new regulations introduced stricter oversight measures, including a clear, graduated enforcement framework, improved dispute resolution mechanisms, data protection obligations, and strengthened supervisory powers for the Commission. Further, the NCC was [designated](#) as a relevant organisation pursuant to Section 81 of the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022. This designation further strengthens the Commission's mandate to combat online piracy by enabling closer coordination with financial and law enforcement authorities in the tracing, recovery, and management of proceeds derived from copyright infringement, particularly within the digital environment.

Legislative reform has also gained momentum. The Trademarks (Repeal and Enactment) Bill, 2025, currently under consideration by the National Assembly, [proposes](#) a comprehensive update of the existing trademark regime. If enacted, the Bill would replace the Trademarks Act of 1965 and expand the scope of protectable marks to include non-traditional signs such as sound, motion, and hologram marks. It also introduces structural changes to trademark administration, including the creation of the office of the Controller, with broader regulatory oversight powers. These reforms are designed to modernise trademark protection and support the commercial use of brands, including their recognition as valuable business assets.

Further legislative attention is evident in the Copyright Act (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which seeks to refine the Copyright Act, 2022. While still in the first reading, the Bill signals an [intention](#) to address practical and procedural gaps that have emerged since the 2022 Act came into force, particularly in relation to digital use and enforcement.

These domestic reforms are being pursued alongside closer alignment with international IP standards. Proposed legislative measures reflect Nigeria's commitments under the Paris Convention and the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. Taken together, these developments point to a gradual but deliberate strengthening of Nigeria's IP ecosystem. By improving regulatory clarity, modernising administration, and aligning with global norms, Nigeria is laying the groundwork for a more effective IP regime that can support branding, innovation and economic growth.

Notable IP Cases and Enforcement Actions

The Federal High Court on March 2025 delivered a [significant judgment](#) in Citilink Accesscorp Limited vs. MTN Nigeria Communications Limited & Anor. The court ordered MTN Nigeria to pay ₦840 million in general damages for infringing upon Citilink's registered trademark, "WEBPLUS". Despite MTN's defence of "honest concurrent use" and the argument that Citilink's registration had temporarily lapsed, the Court held that a certificate of registration remains irrefutable evidence of ownership and that late renewal does not render a mark illegal. This ruling reinforces the statutory strength of trademark protection in Nigeria, signalling that even high-profile entities must conduct rigorous due diligence before rolling out branded services to avoid brand dilution and costly infringement claims.

Expanding on this judicial trend of protecting interests, the Nigerian Supreme Court delivered a [landmark ruling](#) clarifying the distinction between copyright and an individual's right to control the commercial use of their image. The ruling arose from a case in which Globacom used the appellant's image in advertising without consent, following the appellant's participation in a competition organised by the company. The Court confirmed that while photographers hold copyright over their works, subjects retain independent "image rights" or "personality rights." The Court further affirmed that claims relating to image or personality rights fall within the jurisdiction of State High Courts, rather than the Federal High Court. The [decision](#) reinforces the need for clear consent before commercial use of images and sets an important precedent recognising the separate rights of creators and subjects in Nigeria's creative sector.



Key Actions by the Nigerian Copyright Commission

In 2025, the NCC intensified its regulatory and enforcement activities across the creative ecosystem, combining physical enforcement, digital interventions, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building. The Commission carried out large-scale [anti-piracy operations](#), including the destruction of pirated books valued at ₦141.5million seized from major markets, signalling a strong deterrent stance against physical piracy. On the digital front, the NCC led coordinated efforts to combat online infringement, securing the [suspension of major piracy platforms](#) through collaboration with domain registries, telecom operators, and other intermediaries, while also launching nationwide awareness [campaigns](#) against online piracy and its associated risks, including fraud and data abuse. These enforcement actions were complemented by strengthened inter-agency cooperation, notably with communications regulators, to safeguard Nigeria's digital space. Beyond enforcement, the Commission invested in ecosystem development through IP training [programmes](#) for industry stakeholders, sustained awareness initiatives on [performers' rights](#), and participation in international and multilateral projects aimed at developing long-term strategies to address online copyright piracy.

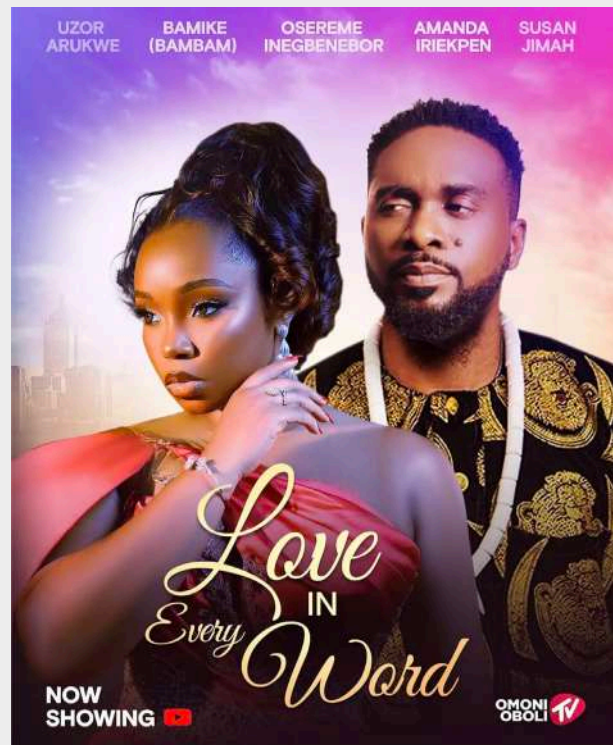
Additionally, the NCC strengthened policy dialogue and inter-agency collaboration during the year. Initiatives such as the [inauguration](#) of the Annual Copyright Dialogue and [partnership](#) with the Office of Nigerian Digital Innovation (ONDI), reflected an effort to embed copyright enforcement within broader policy, innovation, and governance frameworks. In addition, the Commission [instituted](#) the Moses Ekpo Prize for Innovative Copyright Reporting to recognise journalists and media organisations that demonstrate innovation, integrity, and commitment to advancing copyright education and public awareness. Collectively, these activities reflect a more proactive, coordinated, and technology-responsive regulatory approach to protecting creators' rights and sustaining Nigeria's creative economy in 2025.

Collective Pushback Against Piracy and Copyright Infringements

In 2025, Nigeria's creative industry demonstrated a more assertive and coordinated response not only to piracy but to copyright infringements, reflecting a growing intolerance for unauthorised exploitation of creative works across formal and informal digital channels. A notable enforcement [example](#) was FilmOne Entertainment's response to the unauthorised online distribution of its film *Owambe Thieves*. After discovering that excerpts were illegally uploaded to social media and full pirated copies were being sold for profit, FilmOne petitioned law-enforcement authorities, leading to the arrest of the alleged infringer. The action underscored a wider industry recognition of piracy as a systemic threat that undermines investment, fair compensation, and the long-term sustainability of Nigeria's creative economy.



Beyond clear-cut piracy, 2025 also brought increased attention to more complex copyright infringement disputes arising within legitimate digital distribution channels. This was illustrated by the [temporary removal](#) of *Love in Every Word*, a Nollywood film produced and directed by Omoni Oboli, from YouTube following a copyright claim by a third party. The takedown occurred after the film had recorded millions of views within days of release, highlighting the commercial potential of digital platforms and the vulnerability of creators to copyright claims (whether justified or contested) relating to underlying rights such as scripts, music, or other protected elements. The incident sparked widespread industry and public debate, underscoring persistent gaps around rights clearance, ownership verification, and dispute resolution in Nigeria's fast-growing digital content ecosystem.



These developments unfolded alongside broader collective action by industry stakeholders. MultiChoice Nigeria led a widely supported [Walk Against Piracy](#) in Lagos, bringing together creators, regulators, lawyers, students, and the public in a visible show of unity against copyright violations. The campaign combined public education with advocacy, reinforcing that infringement, whether through outright piracy or unauthorised rights claims, erodes livelihoods, discourages investment, and weakens the future of the creative economy. Regulators reiterated that copyright infringement remains a criminal offence under Nigerian law, while industry leaders emphasised the need for stronger enforcement, clearer rights management structures, and greater public awareness.

Creators vs AI: Ownership, Rights, and the Need for Stronger Protections

In 2025, the creative industry faced growing [challenges from generative AI](#), raising urgent questions around ownership and copyright. Globally, proposed reforms in jurisdictions like the United Kingdom sought to grant AI developers broad access to copyrighted works for training purposes, provoking concerns that such measures could erode income streams, weaken copyright protections, and give AI an unfair advantage over human creators. Similar legal disputes unfolded in the United States, highlighting a broader international struggle to balance innovation with creators' rights.

For Nigeria, these developments have significant implications. With Nigerian music, film, and digital content widely consumed internationally, shifts in global copyright norms could affect royalties, revenue streams, and the creative economy, which [contributed](#) over \$5.6 billion to GDP in 2022. The rise of AI intersects with [existing challenges](#) such as digital piracy and emerging technologies that can manipulate creative works without consent.

Experts have stressed that the solution lies in strengthening domestic legal protections. In 2025, they urged lawmakers to [expand](#) and update the 2022 Copyright Act to safeguard performers and creators better. Enhancing and enforcing these protections would not only secure economic returns for creators but also strengthen Nigeria's creative sector. IP experts argue that proactive reform is essential to ensure that Nigerian creators maintain ownership and authenticity over their works while positioning the country to engage with AI-driven innovation responsibly. stronger enforcement, clearer rights management structures, and greater public awareness.



Collaborations and Partnerships

Nigeria recorded significant momentum in its IP landscape in 2025 through partnerships and collaborations aimed at strengthening IP protection. A central moment in the year was the fifth anniversary of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Nigeria Office, [marked](#) by the convening of its annual National Intellectual Property Stakeholders Forum. The Forum brought together regulators, policymakers, creators, private sector actors, academia, and development partners for high-level discussions on the future of IP development in Nigeria.



In April 2025, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), in collaboration with the Nigerian Judiciary, [hosted](#) a Judicial Workshop on Intellectual Property Adjudication for 21 judges drawn from 13 Judicial Divisions of the Federal High Court. The workshop focused on practical aspects of IP case management, dispute resolution, remedies, and criminal infringement proceedings, and provided an opportunity for judicial review and feedback on the draft Benchbook on IP Adjudication in Nigeria being developed by WIPO in collaboration with the National Judicial Institute (NJI).

Furthermore, targeted initiatives continued to strengthen IP awareness and practical adoption at the enterprise level. In 2025, the WIPO Branding Project for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria [officially concluded](#), marking a significant milestone in supporting female and youth-led businesses in the food and beverages, cosmetics, and information and communications technology (ICT) sectors. Launched in September 2024 in partnership with the Nigerian Trademarks Registry, the project focused on equipping SMEs with the knowledge and tools needed to leverage branding and trademark protection as drivers of competitiveness, market expansion, and sustainable business growth.

Collectively, these developments reflect Nigeria's increasing emphasis on coordinated IP governance, inclusive capacity building and sustained collaboration with international and regional organisations.



Contributions of International and Regional Bodies to IP Development in Nigeria

Nigeria **expanded** IP awareness and education through **"Project 1%"**, a joint initiative of the WIPO Academy and the WIPO Nigeria Office. The programme seeks to broaden access to foundational IP education by enrolling over two million Nigerian youths, students, and entrepreneurs in the WIPO Academy's introductory IP training by 2030. Complementing these capacity-building efforts, and with sustained technical assistance from WIPO, Nigeria **achieved** a significant milestone with the approval of the National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy (NIPPS) by the Federal Executive Council on 6 November 2025 thereby contributing to IP development in Nigeria.

Nigeria also **deepened its engagement** with international IP and digital governance frameworks during the year. In 2025, the country was admitted as a member of the Digital Public Goods Alliance (DPGA), a UN-endorsed, multi-stakeholder initiative that promotes the adoption of open source software, open data, open AI systems, and open content collections. Nigeria's participation in the DPGA reflects an emerging policy alignment between IP frameworks and open innovation models, particularly through IP-aware licensing structures that support transparency, interoperability, and the development of digital public infrastructure in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Further reinforcing its commitment to international IP standards, Nigeria **acceded** to the 1991 Act of the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants in March 2025, becoming the 80th member of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). This accession establishes a formal plant variety protection regime in Nigeria, aimed at attracting investment in plant breeding, promoting the development of high-yielding and climate-resilient crop varieties, and supporting food security and agricultural innovation.

These initiatives highlight Nigeria's growing commitment to aligning its IP framework with global standards and strengthening institutional capacity.



Analysis of 2025 Predictions

In 2025, we [published](#) our IP forecast report, setting out projections for how Nigeria’s IP landscape was predicted to evolve over the year. Rather than assessing outcomes by scoring individual predictions, this review examines how developments during 2025 reflected the broader trends identified in the [report](#). We focus on regulatory actions, policy decisions, and enforcement activity to assess whether the overall direction of Nigeria’s IP framework aligned with those expectations, recognising that progress often occurs through incremental policy initiatives, administrative reforms, and enforcement mechanisms, even where formal legislative change remains pending.

2025 Predictions

Category	Predictions	Actual Outcome	Achievement	
Anticipated legislative reforms	Multiple bills to be introduced, including a consolidated Single IP bill	Bills introduced, however, no consolidated IP bill was presented; procedural progress; no enactment	Partial	
Creative Economy Fund Development (CEDF)	Enactment of CEDF Act	No enactment of the CEDF Act, however the CEDF Fund is now operational; phases 1 & 2 launched	Partial	
Progress with pending bills	Progress of pending bills	First readings passed of bills passed	Full	
Enforcement of anti-piracy measures	Intensified anti-piracy measures	NCC undertook multiple enforcement actions, including raids and seizures at ports & shops	Full	
Tackling online infringements	Curb online piracy	Enforcement actions including the suspension of MovieBox.ng amongst others	Full	
Regulatory framework for AI & IP	AI-IP policy development	National AI strategy approved and AI bills introduced	Full	

Summary: While not all forecasts were fully realised, 2025 saw meaningful advancements in Nigeria’s IP framework through policy milestones, enforcement actions, and incremental legislative progress.



Our Past Predictions

Anticipated reforms in existing IP laws

In 2025, Nigeria recorded notable movement toward the reform of its IP framework, particularly at the legislative level. During the year, several bills targeting core IP statutes were introduced before the National Assembly, including the Copyright Act (Amendment), Bill 2025 (HB.2417), Trade Marks Act (Repeal & Enactment) Bill, 2025 (SB.946), the Trademark Act (Amendment) Bill, 2025 (HB.2568), and the Patents Right and Design Act (Repeal & Re-enactment) Bill, 2025 (SB.914).

Alongside these legislative developments, a significant policy milestone was reached on 6 November 2025, when the Federal Executive Council [approved](#) the NIPPS. The NIPPS establishes a unifying policy framework for the protection and commercialisation of Nigeria's IP ecosystem. This proposed institutional reform is intended to address long-standing fragmentation in IP administration and improve coordination, efficiency, and strategic oversight, even as substantive legislative reforms remain in progress.

Anticipated presentation of the Creative Economy Development Fund (CEDF) Act

While the formal enactment of a Creative Economy Development Fund Act did not materialise in 2025, the operational rollout of the CEDF exceeded initial expectations. During the year, the Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Tourism, and Creative Economy officially [launched](#) the Fund and commenced both phase one and phase two of its funding programme. The CEDF now offers loans, equity, and grants to creative and cultural enterprises across a broad range of sectors, with defined funding thresholds and disbursement timelines extending into 2026.

Progress with pending bills

Progress on pending IP-related legislation was evident in 2025, though largely confined to procedural advancement rather than enactment. The Geographical Indication (Registration and Protection) Bill, 2025 (HB.2387) [passed](#) first reading in the House of Representatives. This development reinforces Nigeria's commitment to establishing sui generis protection for products of geographical origin.

Alongside these legislative developments, 2025 also marked a significant regulatory intervention. On 28 January 2025, the Nigerian Copyright Commission issued the Copyright (Collective Management) Regulations, 2025, repealing the 2007 framework governing Collective Management Organisations (CMOs). The new Regulations introduced some reforms with the objective of enhancing operational stability, regulatory certainty, and institutional accountability within Nigeria's collective rights management system.

Enforcement of anti-piracy measures

The prediction of intensified anti-piracy enforcement by the NCC fully materialised in 2025. As stated above, the Commission undertook multiple enforcement actions nationwide, including the interception of containers of suspected pirated books at Tin Can Island Port, coordinated raids on bookshops across Lagos and Enugu States, and broadcast piracy operations targeting illegal signal redistribution. These actions resulted in the seizure of pirated materials valued in the tens of millions of naira and demonstrated a sustained operational commitment to enforcement across both physical and digital markets.

Development of appropriate protocols and regulations to curb online infringements

In 2025, meaningful progress was made in addressing online copyright infringement. The NCC intensified engagement with digital ecosystem stakeholders, culminating in the [suspension](#) of MovieBox.ng in collaboration with the Nigerian Internet Registration Association (NiRA). This action marked one of the most visible interventions against online streaming piracy in Nigeria to date.

Beyond direct enforcement, the Commission also strengthened its regulatory and institutional framework. During the year, the NCC was designated as a relevant organisation pursuant to section 81 of the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022 and thereby empowered to combat online piracy through enhanced coordination with financial and law-enforcement authorities.

Increased discussions on the development of a regulatory framework for IP and AI

As anticipated, 2025 witnessed intensified policy engagement around the intersection of IP and AI. A key development during the year was the [approval](#) of Nigeria's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy in September 2025, which expressly recognised the relevance of existing IP laws to AI-related inventions and creative outputs. The Strategy emphasised the application of Nigeria's current IP framework, including the Copyright Act, the Trademarks Act, and the Patents and Designs Act, to inventions and creative works such as algorithms and AI models, framing IP protection as critical to promoting innovation and safeguarding the rights of developers.

Complementing this policy direction, early-stage legislative activity also emerged in 2025 through the introduction of the Nigerian Artificial Intelligence Bill, 2025 and the National Artificial Intelligence Commission (Establishment) Bill. Although both bills remained at first reading stage during the year, their introduction reflects growing legislative awareness of the need for institutional coordination, oversight, and governance structures to address the legal and economic implications of AI deployment.

While these developments did not result in binding statutory rules on AI-generated authorship, ownership, or data training practices in 2025, they signal a gradual shift toward more structured regulatory engagement with AI.

Increased enforcement actions from the Nigerian Copyright Commission

2025 witnessed heightened enforcement activity by the NCC. In addition to physical raids and digital enforcement, the Commission issued the Collective Management Regulations, 2025, replacing the 2007 framework. The new regulations introduce stricter oversight of Collective Management Organisations, including administrative cost caps, enhanced transparency obligations, and strengthened dispute resolution mechanisms.

The NCC also expanded its enforcement narrative through advisories targeting unauthorised public performances, including [warnings](#) to DJs. These measures reflect a broader regulatory shift toward systemic copyright governance in alignment with the Copyright Act 2022, a trend will likely continue into 2026 as enforcement becomes more compliance-driven and institutionally embedded.

Overall Assessment

Overall, the 2025 predictions largely materialised in the form of institutional activities, policy initiatives, and sustained enforcement actions rather than through major legislative breakthroughs. The year was characterised by consolidation and incremental progress. These outcomes reflect the structural and institutional realities of Nigeria's IP ecosystem and provide important context for the outlook and projections for 2026.

2026 Outlook

Drawing from the events in 2025, this section outlines the key IP trends expected to define Nigeria's IP environment in 2026.



Enforcement and Regulatory Compliance

Building on the enforcement momentum and regulatory reforms of 2025, the NCC will presumably sustain and intensify operational actions targeting commercial-scale piracy, unlicensed public performances, online piracy and organised infringement networks.

The shift toward systemic governance evident in the Collective Management Regulations, 2025 is expected to deepen. CMOs, event venues, broadcasters, digital platforms, and other intermediaries will face heightened scrutiny around licensing, royalty collection and distribution, and compliance reporting obligations.

Crucially, the NCC's expanded mandate under the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act would reshape enforcement strategy in 2026. Enforcement actions are likely to become more punitive and financially disruptive, extending beyond seizures of infringing goods to tracing, freezing, and forfeiture of proceeds derived from copyright infringement.

Policy and Legislative Direction

Nigeria's IP policy trajectory will prioritise progression of existing bills in 2026. The multiple IP-related bills introduced in 2025 covering trademarks, patents and designs, copyright amendments, and geographical indications are likely to advance through further legislative stages, although enactment timelines remain uncertain.

Rather than consolidating reforms into a single omnibus IP statute, lawmakers appear set to continue a sector-by-sector approach to legislative reform. Within this context, the NIPPS approved in late 2025 would assume a more pronounced coordinating role in 2026. The NIPPS will guide regulatory priorities, align institutional mandates, and provide policy coherence across Nigeria's fragmented IP governance landscape.



Policy and Legislative Direction

Nigeria's IP policy trajectory will prioritise progression of existing bills in 2026. The multiple IP-related bills introduced in 2025 covering trademarks, patents and designs, copyright amendments, and geographical indications are likely to advance through further legislative stages, although enactment timelines remain uncertain.

Rather than consolidating reforms into a single omnibus IP statute, lawmakers appear set to continue a sector-by-sector approach to legislative reform. Within this context, the NIPPS approved in late 2025 would assume a more pronounced coordinating role in 2026. The NIPPS will guide regulatory priorities, align institutional mandates, and provide policy coherence across Nigeria's fragmented IP governance landscape.

IP Commercialisation and the Creative Economy

By 2026, the Creative Economy Development Fund would move decisively from rollout to impact. With disbursements scheduled to commence on 1 January 2026, funding recipients will transition into active implementation phases, bringing IP assets to the centre of project execution, financing, and risk assessment.

The commencement of CEDF disbursements will trigger a surge in IP registrations, as creators and businesses seek to formalise trademarks, copyrights, and other protectable assets to meet funding and due diligence requirements. Over the course of 2026, this process is likely to institutionalise IP as a recognised asset class within Nigeria's financial ecosystem.

Anticipated Rise in AI-Related IP Litigation

As AI tools become more deeply embedded in creative and commercial workflows, Nigeria is likely to witness a marked increase in AI-related IP disputes in 2026. While comprehensive AI legislation has not yet crystallised, the re-emergence of AI regulation within legislative and policy discourse particularly through the Nigerian Artificial Intelligence Bill, 2025, the National Artificial Intelligence Commission (Establishment) Bill 2025, and earlier proposals such as the Artificial Intelligence Control and Regulation Bill signals a gradual shift toward more structured regulatory engagement with AI.

As awareness grows among Nigerian creators that their works may have been used to train AI systems without authorisation, the courts might see the first coordinated claims potentially including class actions against AI developers and deployers operating in or targeting the Nigerian market. These disputes are expected to test emerging obligations around disclosure, impact assessments, and data governance contemplated under the proposed regulatory framework.

Beyond training data disputes, 2026 is also likely to produce Nigeria's first significant judicial examination of copyright ownership in AI-generated outputs. As generative AI becomes standard in content creation, courts will be required to interpret the "human author" requirement under the Copyright Act, 2022 in the context of works produced with varying degrees of machine autonomy. These cases will be pivotal in shaping the boundaries of authorship, ownership, and liability in Nigeria's evolving AI-driven creative economy.

IP Opportunities from Nigeria's Mandatory Vehicle Recycling Fee

Starting in 2026, Nigeria will **implement** a mandatory vehicle recycling fee linked to end-of-life vehicle (ELV) management. The policy aims to formalise recycling, reduce unsafe or informal parts trade, and create structured market incentives for compliant recycling and pre-export certification. This shift might stimulate IP creation, protection, and commercialisation within the automotive ecosystem. It will also catalyse IP activity in areas such as automotive parts innovation, recycling technologies, digital compliance platforms, and brand development.

By establishing clear compliance requirements and market incentives, the policy is likely to generate fertile opportunities for IP-driven innovation and commercial activity across multiple sectors.

Strengthening Digital IP and E-Commerce Ecosystems

The National Digital Economy and E-Governance Bill, if passed into law is poised to provide legal recognition for electronic transactions, records, and signatures, establishing a solid foundation for digital IP in Nigeria. By formalising digital commerce and e-governance, the legislation will incentivise the creation, protection, and commercialisation of digital assets such as software, algorithms, online platforms, and databases. Startups and technology providers are expected to prioritise copyrights, patents, and database rights, while investors can leverage IP as collateral or valuation drivers for funding digital ventures. Enhanced consumer protection and legal certainty will further support enforceable licensing, reduce disputes, and encourage the development of export-ready digital solutions.

The bill is also predicted to accelerate the mass digitisation of government services, driving a surge in patent filings and software copyrights for GovTech solutions, automation tools, and digital service platforms. Collectively, the Bill will strengthen Nigeria's digital IP ecosystem, positioning IP as a key driver of innovation, investment, and economic growth in 2026.

Operationalisation of Geographical Indications

Following the anticipated passage of the Geographical Indications (GI) Bill, 2026 is likely to mark the formal operationalisation of Nigeria's GI framework. The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment is predicted to launch the official GI Registry, providing a legal platform for the registration and protection of region-specific products. Iconic Nigerian products such as Adire, Ofada Rice, and Kilishi are likely to be among the first to receive GI certification, establishing them as legally protected and internationally recognisable brands.

This formal recognition will not only safeguard traditional knowledge and local craftsmanship but also provide opportunities for market differentiation, premium pricing, and export growth. Following registration, state-led branding and marketing campaigns are expected to promote certified products to international markets, enhancing Nigeria's non-oil export portfolio. The GI framework will also encourage other regions and producers to pursue registration, gradually expanding the ecosystem of certified products and reinforcing IP as a strategic tool for economic development.

Conclusion

The year 2025 was a consequential one for IP in Nigeria. While comprehensive statutory reform remains pending, the year was marked by meaningful progress across multiple fronts: legislative initiatives signalled renewed attention to outdated IP laws; the Creative Economy Development Fund began to reshape financing and support for creators; enforcement actions and new regulatory frameworks strengthened governance and compliance; and judicial decisions clarified ownership rights and limitations, providing much needed legal certainty. Taken together, these developments point to a transition phase, one that will significantly shape Nigeria's IP landscape in 2026.

Theme for 2026 World IP Day –
"IP and Sports: Ready, Set, Innovate!"



