



BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT JOURNAL

Impact of Monetary Policy on Capital Market Development in Nigeria
Suffocating Agriculture Sector Growth: Is Nigeria Sitting on a Powder Keg?

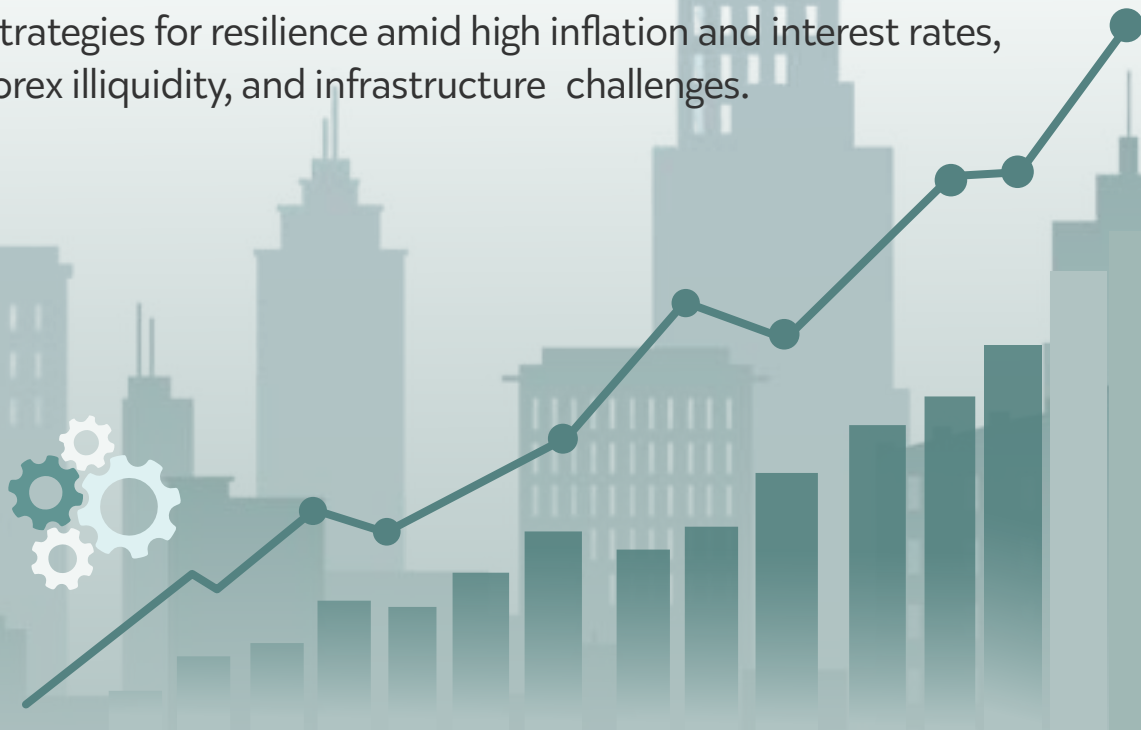
MSME Pulse and Market Brief

Rebased GDP and Sectoral Contributions: Insights into Nigeria's Evolving Economy
INTERVIEWS

Vol.3 Issue 1 :: September 2025

NAVIGATING HEADWINDS: BUILDING RESILIENCE IN NIGERIA'S BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Strategies for resilience amid high inflation and interest rates, forex illiquidity, and infrastructure challenges.



■ Cost of Doing Business Monitor





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Navigating Headwinds: Building Resilience in Nigeria's Business Environment

In recent years, Nigeria's business landscape has been characterized by a mix of formidable challenges and enduring promise. From volatile macroeconomic conditions and foreign exchange constraints to rising operational costs and policy uncertainties, the business environment has tested the resilience and creativity of enterprises across all sectors. Yet, amid these headwinds, Nigerian businesses continue to adapt, innovate, and persevere, reaffirming the remarkable spirit of resilience that defines our private sector.

This edition of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Business Environment Journal examines the evolving dynamics of Nigeria's business climate through the lens of policy uncertainties and rising cost of doing business. It brings together analysis, insights, and perspectives on how companies are navigating economic disruptions, policy shifts, and global trends that shape the domestic operating environment. There is also a dedicated section on the cost of doing business in Lagos State.

The theme, 'Navigating Headwinds: Building Resilience in Nigeria's Business Environment,' captures the central challenge of our time: how businesses can thrive despite structural weaknesses, regulatory bottlenecks, and global uncertainties. It also reflects the Chamber's commitment to policy advocacy that fosters stability, competitiveness, and sustainable growth.

Within these pages, readers will find in-depth features on the cost of doing business and emerging trends shaping Nigeria's competitiveness; policy and regulatory developments affecting trade, manufacturing, and services; the macroeconomic outlook, including inflation, foreign exchange, and interest rate dynamics; private sector perspectives on reforms, infrastructure gaps, and

digital transformation; and resilience stories from Nigerian enterprises that are finding innovative pathways to survive and grow.

At the LCCI, we believe that improving the business environment is not solely a government responsibility; it requires a collaborative effort among policymakers, private sector leaders, investors, and development partners. Our goal with this journal is to inform that conversation with credible evidence, constructive analysis, and forward-looking recommendations.

As we reflect on the state of the Nigerian economy, we are reminded that every challenge presents an opportunity to rethink, reform, and rebuild. The Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry remains steadfast in its advocacy for policies that promote efficiency, transparency, and inclusiveness in the business ecosystem.

We invite readers, policymakers, and partners to engage with the insights shared in this edition and join us in shaping a more enabling environment for enterprise and investment in Nigeria.

Enjoy the read.

Sunnie Omeiza-Michael, Ph.D.



Cost of Doing Business Monitor (CDBM)

Executive Summary

This is the first edition of the Cost of Doing Business Monitor (CDBM) in Lagos. The Monitor measures how business owners across different sectors perceive changes in cost of running Businesses, whether those costs went up, stayed the same, or came down, compared to the previous quarter.

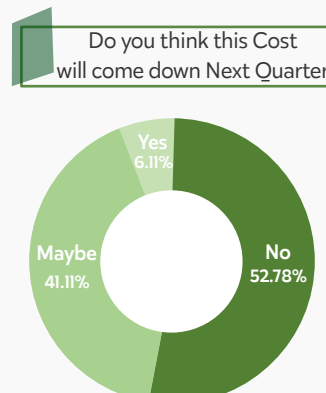
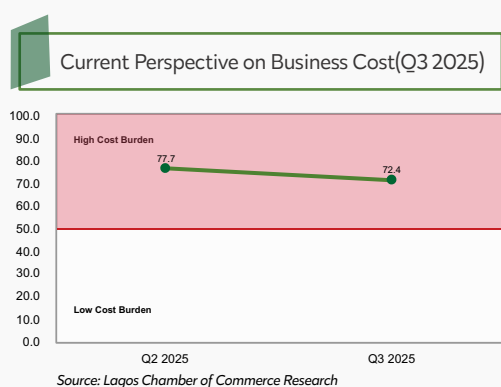
Key findings

Current Perspective on Business Cost (Q3 2025):

- The cost of doing business index for Q3 stands at 72.4, a decline from 77.7 recorded for Q2, which is 6.7% drop from Q2
- In this quarter, Businesses faced high operational cost with almost 70% percent spent on Electricity (including alternative power), Rent and Logistics.

Future Perspective on Business Cost:

Business sentiment is overwhelmingly, with a majority (52.78%) anticipating no relief from high operational costs in the next quarter. This pessimism is primarily driven by three critical external pressures: exorbitant energy costs, crippling logistics inefficiencies, and rising government taxes.



Background of the Study

The cost of doing business in Lagos has remained a persistent concern for both domestic enterprises and foreign investors. Despite various reform efforts aimed at improving the business environment, such as the enactment of the Business Facilitation Act, the creation of one-stop-shops, and automation of regulatory services, businesses continue to face rising operational challenges. These include but are not limited to poor infrastructure, unstable power supply, insecurity, multiple taxation, foreign exchange volatility, and regulatory inefficiencies.

In recent years, anecdotal evidence has suggested that these challenges have intensified, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsidy removal policy, and exchange rate unification. However, empirical data capturing the extent and distribution of these cost pressures across sectors have been lacking.

To bridge this gap, this study introduces the Cost of Doing Business (CDB) Monitor, modeled after the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Purchasing Managers' Monitor (PMI). The Monitor is developed from a perception-based survey targeting private sector operators and industry stakeholders. It aims to offer a more timely, sector-specific, and policy-relevant snapshot of business conditions across Nigeria.

By quantifying and comparing the cost burdens across key economic sectors, the CDB Monitor provides an evidence base to guide policy reforms and public-private dialogue. The goal is to support informed decision-making and targeted interventions that can reduce the structural



cost drivers hindering productivity, employment generation, and inclusive economic growth.

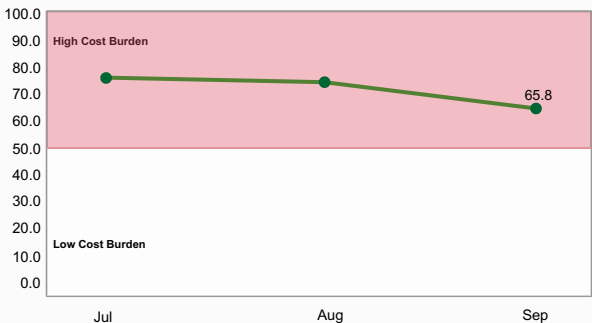
Current Perspective on Business Cost.

In the third quarter of 2025, the cost of running a business remained high, with the index staying in the high-cost burden region for consecutive months. However, data from the LCCI-CBDM Survey shows a Monthly (Q3 2025) decline, falling from 77.3 in July to 65.8 in September.

This significant reduction in costs is attributed to several factors, including lower logistics costs, decreased spending on alternative power, and reduced security expenses. These improvements are likely due to recent fuel price stabilization and increased grid power supply.

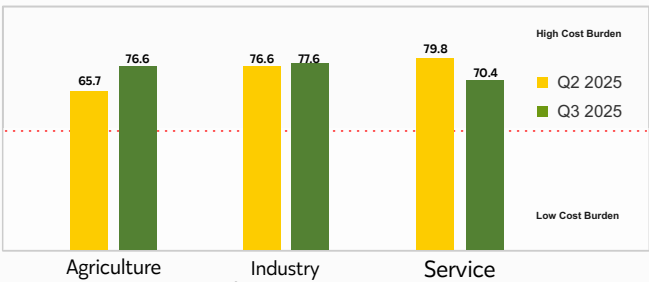
A sectoral analysis reveals varied impacts. The service sector saw the most considerable cost relief. In contrast, the Agricultural sector experienced a significant cost increase of 10.8 points (a 16% rise), while the Manufacturing sector saw a minor increase of 1 point (approximately 1%). Despite these sector-specific pressures, the overall cost of running a business in Q3 2025 decreased compared to the previous quarter with almost 7%.

Cost of doing Business for Q3 2025



Source: Lagos Chamber of Commerce Research

Sectoral CDBM for Q2 and Q3

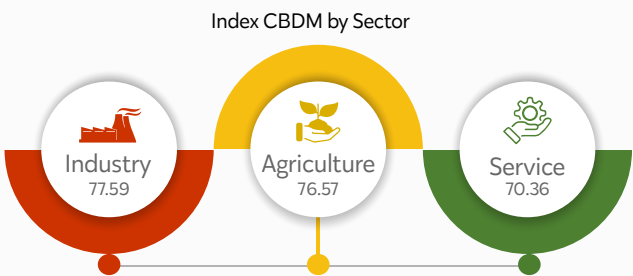


Source: Lagos Chamber of Commerce Research

Sectorial Analysis

This section disaggregates the Cost of Doing Business (CDB) Monitor by sector to provide a clearer view of how cost pressures vary across the Nigerian economy. The Monitor, which ranges from 0 (minimal cost burden) to 100 (severe cost burden) with a mid-point at 50, serves as a diagnostic tool for identifying structural constraints impeding sectoral productivity and private investment.

These findings aim to inform policymakers on where reforms are most urgently needed, whether in reducing regulatory bottlenecks, improving infrastructure, or addressing sector-specific risks. High Monitor scores across multiple sectors reinforce the need for coordinated interventions to lower the operational burden and enhance competitiveness.



Source: Lagos Chamber of Commerce Research

LCCI- CBDM Agricultural Performance

The Agriculture sector recorded an upward trend in costs, rising from 65.7 in Q2 2025 to an average of 76.4 in Q3 2025.

A detailed look at the quarterly performance reveals a notable development: despite remaining in the high-cost burden region, the sector experienced a significant monthly decline from 85.3 in July to 70.4 in September.

SECTOR	Month July	Aug.	Sept.	CDB Index
Agriculture	85.3	85.5	70.4	76.6

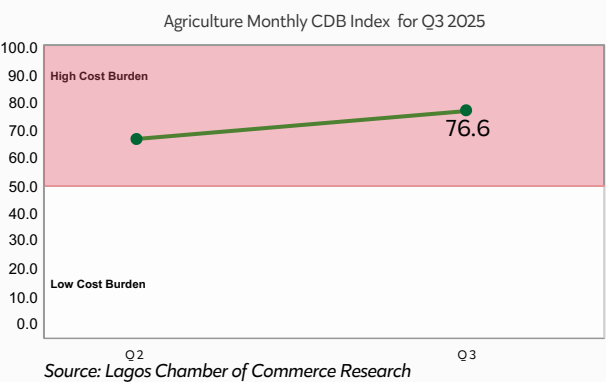
Source: Lagos Chamber of Commerce Research

This cost relief is largely attributable to a reduction in regulatory fees paid by farmers. While the average number of regulatory fees paid remained at three per month, the direct cost of these fees decreased by September.

However, overarching challenges persisted

throughout the quarter. Costs related to electricity, logistics, and acquiring land or premises remained a significant burden. A promising development is that a small percentage of farmers have transitioned to fully powering their operations with solar panels.

To build on this momentum, we recommend a strategic focus on providing affordable, independent energy sources for large-scale farmlands. Most critically, we propose the establishment of land reserves dedicated solely to agricultural purposes. These lands could be leased to farmers at affordable rates and be equipped with shared renewable energy infrastructure and security systems. This would ensure the safety of our farmers and safeguard the future of our food production.



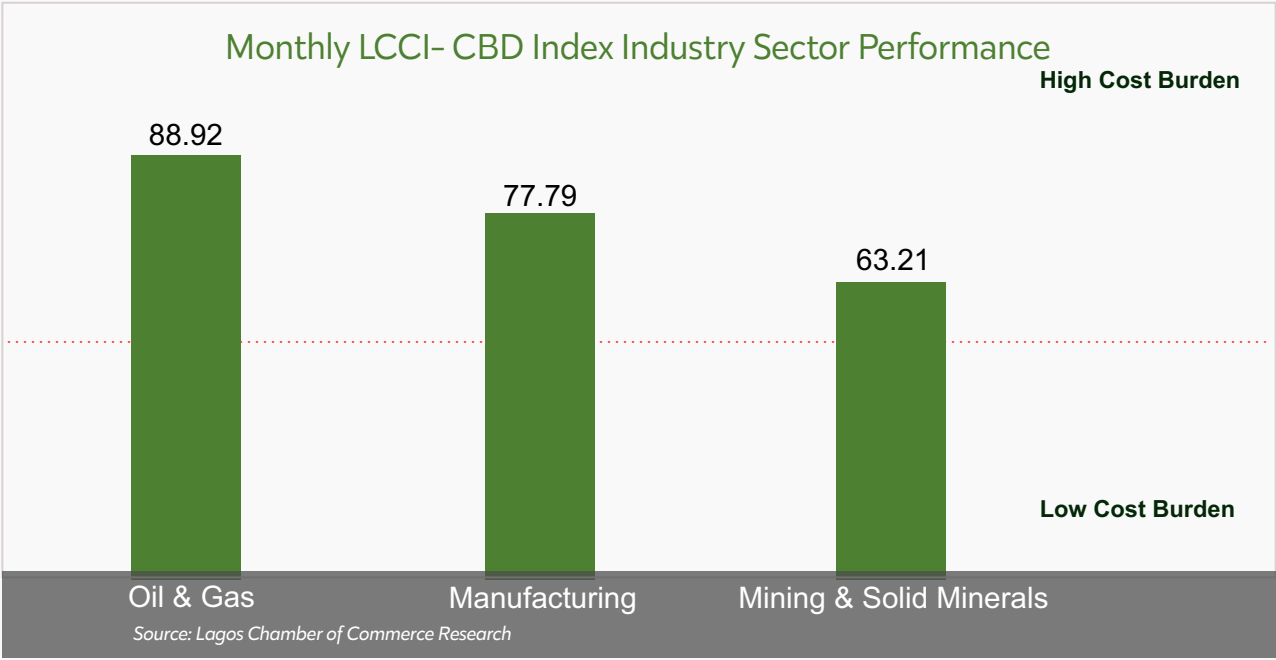
LCCI- CBDM Industry Sector Performance

The LCCI-CDB Index for the Manufacturing sector showed a slight increase, rising from 76.57 in Q2 2025 to 77.59 in Q3 2025, a more than 1% increase in cost. It is important to note that this aggregate "Manufacturing sector" includes Manufacturing, Mining & Solid Minerals, and Oil & Gas.

A deeper analysis reveals significant variation in cost performance among these sub-sectors in Q3 2025. While costs rose in the Oil & Gas and core Manufacturing industries, the Mining & Solid Minerals sub-sector saw a substantial 22% drop in costs.

This reduction in Mining & Solid Minerals is attributed to two key factors: lower spending on alternative power and reduced regulatory fees. This sub-sector paid an average of 3 regulatory fees, significantly less than the Oil & Gas sub-sector, which paid an average of 7 fees.

In contrast, the Oil & Gas industry remained under intense cost pressure, with over 54% of its expenses attributed to alternative power, security, regulatory costs, and logistics.



Overall, companies within the broader Manufacturing sector spend nearly 40% of their expenses on electricity, raw materials, and office consumables and repairs. The rising costs in these key areas explain the overall slight increase in the sector's index for the quarter.

LCCI- CBDM Service Sector Performance

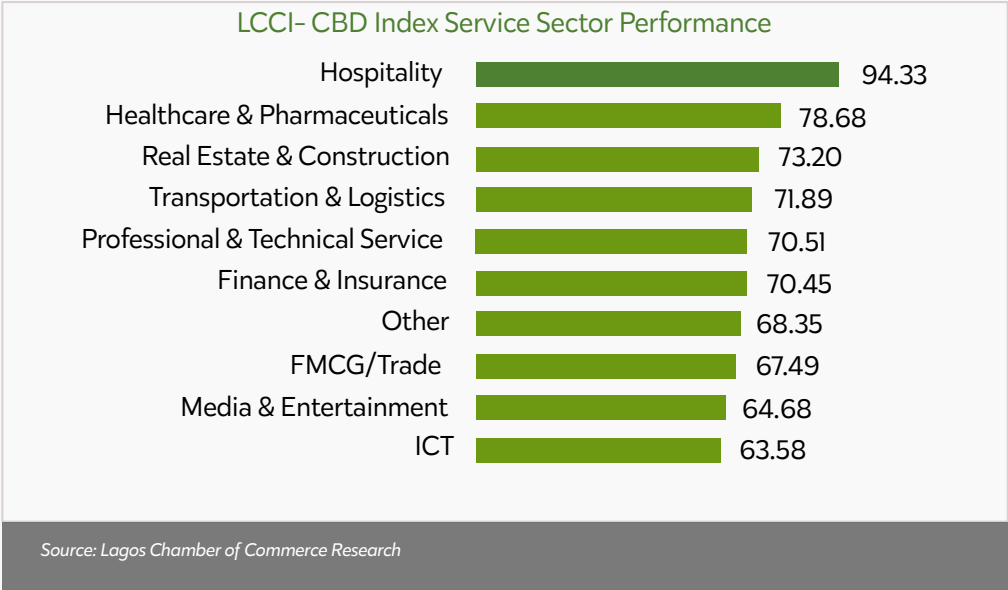
Nigeria's Services sector recorded its lowest business costs in Q3 2025, despite persistent economic headwinds. The LCCI-CDB Index for the sector fell to

70.27, down from 79.75 in Q2 2025.

This improvement was driven by relative gains in key sub-sectors and a more favourable macroeconomic environment, characterized by moderating inflation and exchange rate stability.

Although most service sub-sectors remained in the high-cost burden region, only four fell below the 70-index point threshold, indicating a modest drop in costs compared to Q2. Notably, ICT, Media & Entertainment, and FMCG/Trade experienced cost reductions, though they remain in the high-burden zone.

Overall, the sector continues to allocate over 30% of its expenditure to three primary cost drivers: electricity, premise costs, and employee remuneration.

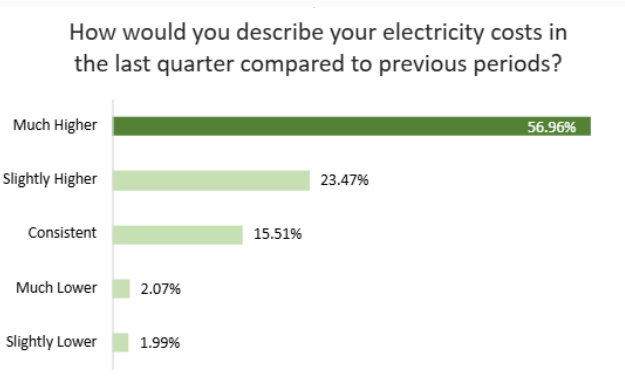


Implication of cost on Businesses

The persistently high Cost of Doing Business in Lagos, as reflected in the CDBM, poses significant challenges for enterprises across all sectors. These cost pressures undermine business viability, weaken competitiveness, and limit growth potential. This section captures insights from over 200 businesses, providing a perception-based view of the key expenses and operational hurdles involved in running a business in Lagos.

Electricity Costs Surge (80.43% Report Increase)

Survey data reveals a troubling escalation in Nigeria(Lagos) energy affordability crisis, with over 57% of Businesses reporting higher electricity costs compared to previous quarters. Only 4% experienced cost reductions, while about 15% saw no change, painting a bleak picture of mounting financial pressure on households and businesses. This sustained upward trend in power expenses threatens to erode Nigeria's economic competitiveness and exacerbate inflationary pressures across sectors.



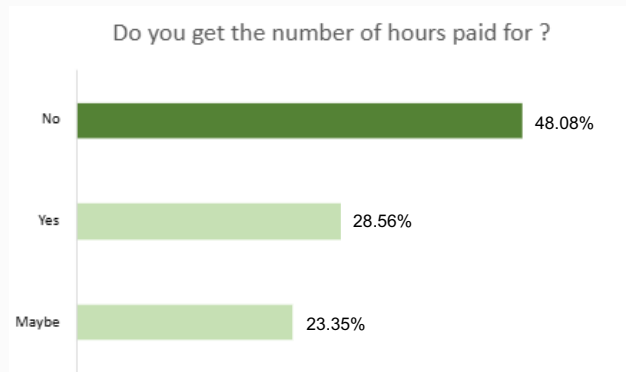
Source: Lagos Chamber of Commerce Research

Power Supply Reliability Crisis (71% Experience Issues)

A startling assessment of Lagos power sector reveals only 28.56% of consumers consistently receive the electricity they pay for, while 48.08% report outright service denial and 23.35% remain uncertain about their supply.

This 71.43% reliability failure rate exposes fundamental flaws in service delivery and accountability

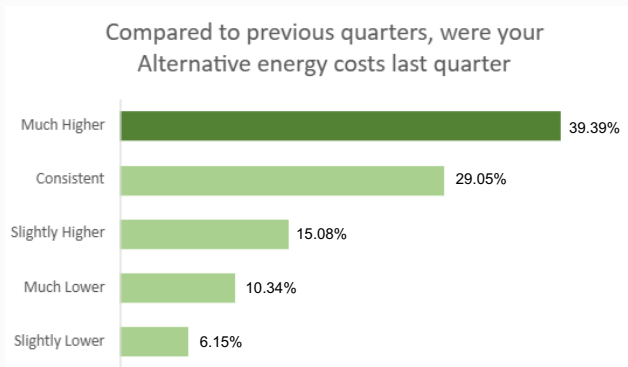
mechanisms, undermining confidence in the sector's ability to support economic growth and development objectives.



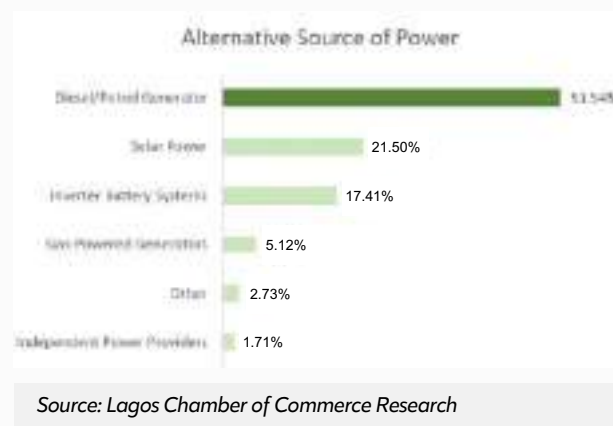
Source: Lagos Chamber of Commerce Research

Alternative Energy Costs Rise (54% Report Increase)

New findings highlight a concerning paradox in Lagos energy transition, where almost 50% of consumers face increasing costs for alternative power solutions. With just 29.05% reporting Consistent, this is largely due to above 50% still relying on Diesel/Petrol, with businesses relying on an average of two alternative power sources. the data suggests 38.9% of business owner are adopting cleaner/more sustainable alternative source energy, which suggest a promising market for clean energy in Lagos.

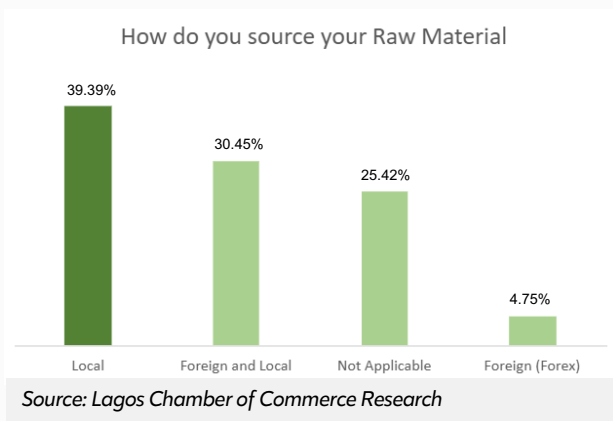


Source: Lagos Chamber of Commerce Research

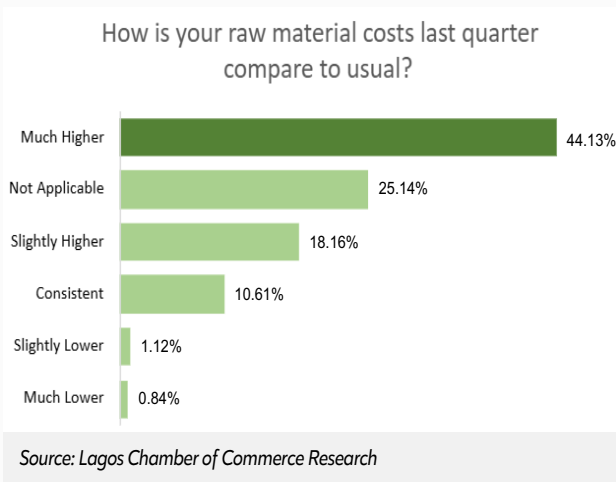


62% of Businesses Reports Increase in cost of Raw Material

Businesses in Lagos faces compounding input cost pressures: 62% of firms report significant raw material price increases, exacerbated by dual sourcing vulnerabilities, over 30% rely on imports (exposed to forex volatility) while almost 40% dependent on local supplies face logistics-driven markups, creating systemic inflation risks for productive sectors.

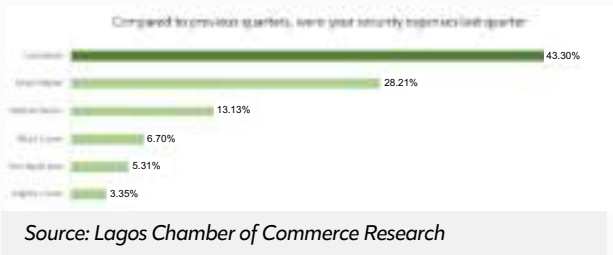


In this quarter, Businesses faced high operational cost with almost 70% percent spent on Electricity (including alternative power), Rent and Logistics



41% of Firms Face Rising Expenditures on security

41.37% of businesses in Lagos faced higher security costs last quarter, with Hospitality, Oil and Gas and Mining & Solid Minerals experiencing the highest cost.



Summary

Overall, the CDBM findings reveal that while the intensity and structure of costs vary across sectors, businesses in Lagos face a consistently high cost environment. Energy, rent, logistics, regulatory compliance, and administrative expenses emerge as dominant cost drivers, often consuming well over half of operating budgets. Sectors such as Hospitality, Oil and Gas, Health & Pharmaceuticals and Manufacturing contend with steep

financial and regulatory burdens, while Manufacturing, Agriculture ,Hospitality and Oil and Gas are heavily affected by input, power, and infrastructure-related costs. Even sectors with relatively lower CDBI scores, such as Media & Entertainment and Mining & solid Mineral and Other, grapple with significant compliance and maintenance expenses.

Recommendations

1. Encourage investment in alternative and renewable energy solutions through targeted tax incentives.
2. Streamline licensing and fee structures to reduce compliance burdens, especially in sectors where regulatory costs exceed 30% of total expenses.
3. Establish a unified digital platform for business registrations, renewals, and reporting.
4. Implement measures to curb volatility in raw material prices, including fostering local sourcing and supporting supply chain development.
5. Provide targeted subsidies or financing for critical sector inputs, particularly for agriculture and manufacturing.

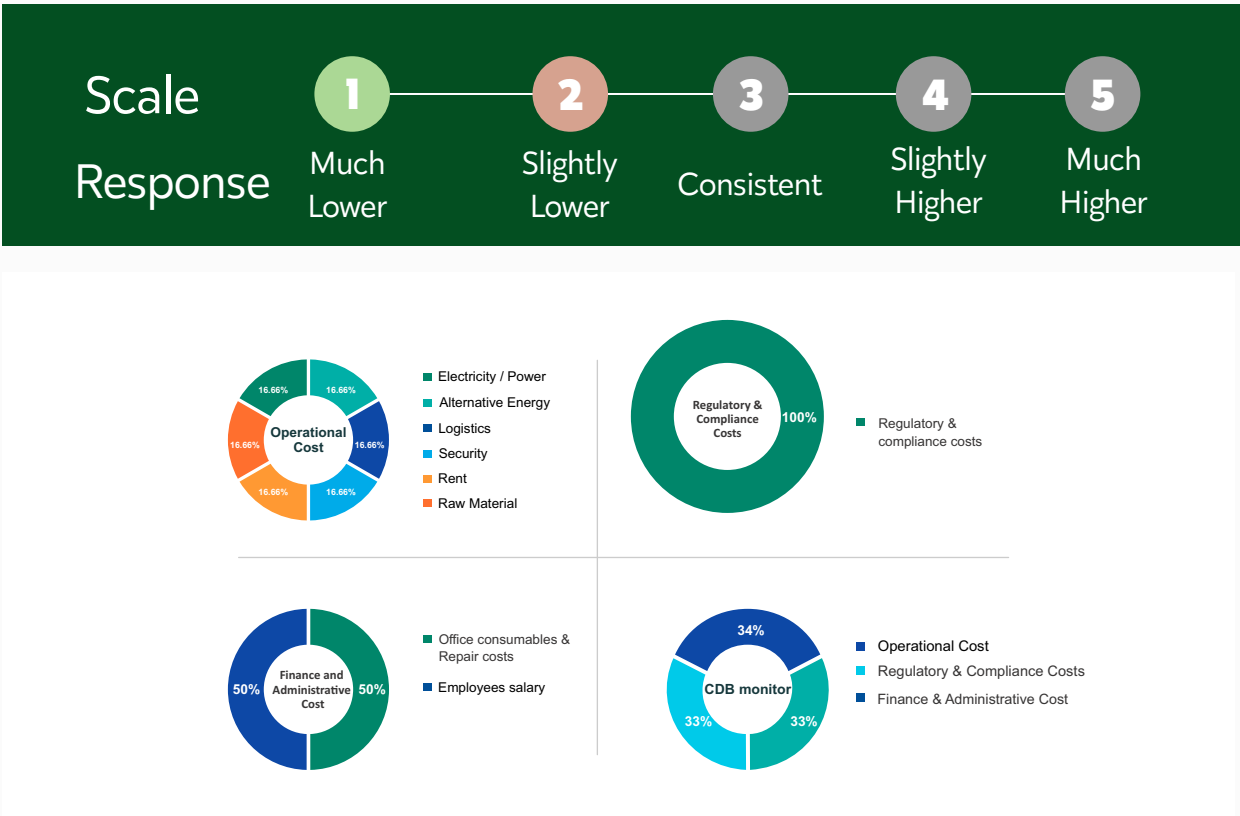


Survey Methodology

The Cost of Doing Business monitor (CDBI) is a survey-based measure designed to track how businesses in Lagos experience changes in costs of running a business over time. This edition serves as the baseline report, covering the second and third quarter of 2025. This survey was carried out in the month of June to September with over 200 businesses response to the survey. The sample covers key Sectors of the economy and was selected from Micro, small, medium and large firms in Lagos to reflect the diversity of cost experiences.

Businesses were asked to compare their cost of doing business in Q3 2025 with Q2 2025, across three key cost categories: Operational Cost (e.g. electricity, rent etc.), Regulatory & Compliance Costs (e.g., licenses, levies, taxes, government fees etc.) and Finance and Administrative Cost. The weighted average technique used in this study to construct the CDBM was adapted from the Global Competitiveness monitor (WEF, 2019), which applies weighted aggregation of normalized indicators across survey questions to arrive at a scores.

The Weight of each monitor was calculated by getting the average of operating cost, other cost across several firms and sector from Yahoo finance. a Likert scale questionnaires was created on the monitor below with responses





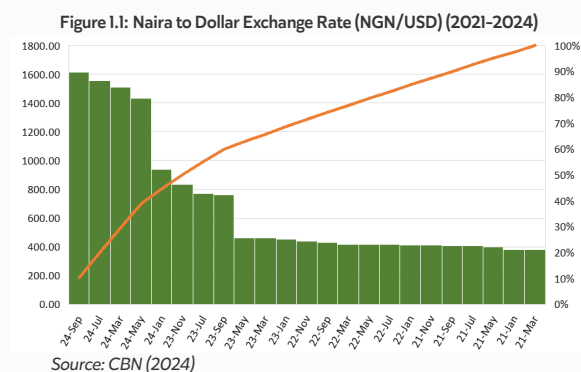
Impact of Monetary Policy on Capital Market Development in Nigeria

By Oreitan Adigun, Ph.D, HCIB

1.0 Monetary Policy Framework in Nigeria

The current monetary policy framework of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is primarily aimed at achieving price stability and supporting economic growth. The CBN operates under a flexible inflation-targeting regime, where controlling inflation remains a core priority, while also taking into account the broader macroeconomic objectives such as full employment and financial stability (Sanusi, 2022). Over the years, the CBN has employed a combination of monetary tools, including open market operations (OMO), cash reserve requirements (CRR), and the monetary policy rate (MPR), to influence liquidity and manage inflationary pressures. Recent adjustments to the MPR is currently set at 27.25% (CBN, 2024), reflecting the bank's response to rising inflationary trends, particularly driven by food and energy price shocks, as well as supply chain disruptions post-COVID-19. Despite these efforts, inflation in Nigeria has remained stubbornly high, reaching 24.08% in mid-2024, thus raising concerns about the adequacy of the current monetary policy measures (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

One critical issue that undermines the CBN's monetary policy is Nigeria's significant dependence on imports, which exacerbates exchange rate volatility and complicates efforts to stabilize the foreign exchange market. The high level of import dependency has put persistent pressure on the demand for foreign currency, leading to substantial depreciation of the naira. For instance, the exchange rate of the naira to the U.S. dollar has deteriorated significantly from about ₦415 per dollar in early 2022 to nearly ₦1680 per dollar by mid-2024 in the official market, while the parallel market has seen even steeper depreciation (CBN, 2024). This exchange rate instability is further compounded by structural constraints, including limited domestic production capacity and a narrow export base, which weaken the country's ability to earn foreign currency and thereby stabilize the naira. Although the CBN has intervened in the foreign exchange market to support the naira, such measures have not yielded lasting results due to the persistent underlying structural challenges.



Moreover, government policies during this period have aimed at controlling the rising exchange rate through various measures, including forex restrictions on certain imports and efforts to boost local production. However, these policies have had limited success, as they do not address the root causes of Nigeria's forex challenges, such as the high demand for dollars driven by import dependency and speculative activities in the foreign exchange market. The lack of complementary structural reforms to enhance industrial output, diversify the economy, and improve export capacity continues to undermine the effectiveness of monetary and exchange rate policies (Subair, 2023; Botta et al., 2023). Therefore, while the monetary policy framework demonstrates the CBN's commitment to managing inflation and exchange rate stability, addressing the structural constraints is crucial for achieving sustainable economic stability in Nigeria.

2.0 Effects of Interest Rates and Inflation on Capital Market Performance

Changes in interest rates have a profound impact on capital market performance and investor behaviour, as they influence the cost of borrowing, the return on savings, and overall liquidity in the economy. When country's apex banks such as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) raises interest rates, borrowing becomes more expensive for businesses and consumers, which can lead to a slowdown in economic activities and reduced corporate profits. This typically results in lower stock prices as investors anticipate weaker future earnings (Ugwu et al., 2024). For instance, following the CBN's decision to raise the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) to 27.25% in 2024 in response to rising inflation (CBN,

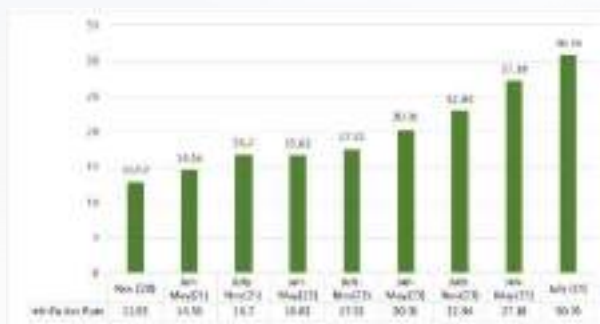
2024), the Nigerian Stock Exchange All-Share Index recorded a decline in performance, reflecting the adverse impact of higher interest rates on investor sentiment and market valuation (see figures 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 respectively). Higher rates also encourage investors to shift from equities to fixed-income securities, such as bonds and treasury bills that offer more attractive, lower-risk returns during periods of tightening monetary policy.



Conversely, lower interest rates tend to stimulate capital market activity by reducing the cost of borrowing, which boosts corporate profitability and drives investment in riskier assets like stocks. A case in point is the interest rate cuts made by central banks globally during the COVID-19 pandemic to support economic recovery. In the United States, the Federal Reserve lowered the federal funds rate to near zero, fuelling a strong rebound in stock market performance, with indices like the S&P 500 reaching record highs in 2021 and early 2022 (Federal Reserve, 2022; Grey, 2024). In contrast, Nigeria's capital market was slower to recover due to structural challenges in the economy and persistent high inflation, even as the CBN maintained relatively accommodative policies during the pandemic period (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This underscores the varying degrees of market sensitivity to interest rate changes across economies, depending on their underlying economic conditions.



Figure 1.3: Inflation Growth Rate in Nigeria (2021-2024)



Source: CBN (2024)

From the available dataset, we observe that the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) index showed notable fluctuations in response to shifts in the MPR (see Fig. 1.2). For instance, when the MPR was held constant at 14% throughout 2017 and early 2018, the market index saw a steady rise, peaking at ₦44,343.65 in January 2018. However, subsequent rate cuts, such as the reduction to 13.5% in March 2019, correlated with a decline in the index, which dropped to ₦26,216.46 by February 2020. This suggests that lower interest rates can lead to reduced capital market performance, potentially driven by diminished investor confidence in the economic outlook (CBN, 2020; Ghumro et al., 2022).

Figure 1.4: Nigerian Exchange Index (2017-2024)



Source: Investing.com (2024)

Comparing this with other periods of significant rate changes, we see that interest rate hikes have a mixed effect on market performance. From 2022 to 2024, Nigeria's MPR was progressively increased in response to rising inflation, reaching as high as 27.25% by September 2024. During this period, the capital market experienced both sharp rises and corrections. The index surged to ₦101,154.46 by January 2024 when the MPR was 22.75%, but subsequently corrected to ₦97,606.63 by October 2024 as rates rose further. Such trends illustrate that while higher interest rates initially attract investment due to higher returns on fixed-income securities, they can also lead to market corrections as borrowing costs increase, impacting corporate profits and economic activity (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Investor behaviour is closely linked to interest rate expectations, with risk appetite fluctuating based on perceived returns and economic outlook. When interest rates rise, investors tend to become more risk-averse, favouring safe-haven assets such as government bonds, which offer higher yields with minimal risk (Chiang, 2024). In contrast, lower interest rates often encourage greater risk-taking as investors seek higher returns in equities and other riskier asset classes. The 2024 MPR hike in Nigeria prompted a significant shift in investor preference toward fixed-income securities, as reflected in the increased demand for government bonds and treasury bills (CBN, 2024). This behavioural shift highlights the importance of interest rate policies in shaping capital allocation decisions and market dynamics, influencing not only corporate financing but also broader investor sentiment.

3.0 The Role of Liquidity Management in Capital Market Stability

Liquidity management has been crucial in stabilizing Nigeria's capital market amidst economic fluctuations, particularly from 2017 to 2024. Data from this period reflects a steady increase in money supply (M2) as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) sought to balance liquidity to support economic recovery post-pandemic while mitigating inflation. For instance, there is an increase in money supply from ₦45.08 trillion in January 2022 to over ₦107.18 trillion by August 2024 (CBN, 2024). The increase in liquidity initially supported stock market growth, with the Nigerian Stock Exchange All-Share Index (NSE ASI) rising from ₦46,624.67 in



Source: CBN (2024)

January 2022 to a peak of ₦107,182.21 in August 2024. However, as inflationary pressures intensified, the CBN had to adjust its monetary policy, including tightening measures such as increasing the monetary policy rate (MPR) to 26.75%, to curb excess liquidity and maintain price stability (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Comparatively, other emerging economies such as South Africa and Brazil adopted similar liquidity management strategies, but with varying degrees of success. South Africa's Reserve Bank, for instance, maintained tighter liquidity controls, which saw its money supply (M3) grow more modestly, alongside a repo rate increase to 8.25% by mid-2024 (South African Reserve Bank, 2024). This tighter liquidity control helped stabilize South Africa's inflation at around 5.5%, a stark contrast to Nigeria's double-digit inflation rate of 34.19% (YoY) in mid-2024 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Brazil, on the other hand, raised its benchmark rate to 13.75% in response to rising inflation, effectively managing liquidity and driving inflation down to 4.3% by 2024 (Banco Central do Brasil, 2024). These cases highlight the challenges Nigeria faces, where despite aggressive liquidity expansion, structural issues such as import dependency and currency volatility continue to hinder inflation control.

In Nigeria's case, the growing money supply appears to have contributed to the capital market's initial boom, but the lack of supporting macroeconomic reforms has constrained the sustainability of these gains. While liquidity management tools like open market operations (OMO) and cash reserve ratio (CRR) adjustments helped cushion the capital market against external shocks, they have not been enough to tackle the underlying economic challenges. Scholars argue that without addressing structural constraints like exchange rate volatility and infrastructural deficits, liquidity management alone will struggle to stabilize both inflation and the capital market in the long term (Pape, 2021; Fischer and Storm, 2023). Therefore, Nigeria's experience from 2022 to 2024 suggests that liquidity management must be accompanied by deeper economic reforms to ensure sustainable capital market stability amidst ongoing economic fluctuations.

4.0 Monetary Policy and Financial Inclusion

Monetary policy plays a vital role in promoting financial inclusion and enhancing participation in the capital market by shaping the accessibility and affordability of financial services. In Nigeria, the Central Bank's monetary policies have aimed at broadening access to financial services through measures such as interest rate adjustments and targeted interventions to increase credit availability for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). For instance, the reduction of the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) for banks that meet specific lending thresholds to SMEs has facilitated an increase in credit access, indirectly stimulating capital market participation by enhancing the financial capabilities of small investors (CBN, 2023). Additionally, the CBN's efforts to drive down inflation and stabilize the currency are intended to create a more conducive environment



for investment, allowing more people to engage in capital market activities. However, the persistence of high inflation, which reached 34.19% in mid-2024 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024), has limited the impact of these policies, particularly for low-income earners who still face barriers to accessing financial services.

In comparison, other emerging economies such as India and Kenya have demonstrated how monetary policy can be leveraged to promote financial inclusion more effectively. India's Reserve Bank, for example, implemented priority sector lending requirements that mandate banks to allocate a significant portion of their credit to underserved sectors, contributing to a financial inclusion rate of over 80% as of 2024 (Reserve Bank of India, 2024). This policy has also had spillover effects on capital market participation, as greater access to finance has enabled more individuals to invest in equity and debt markets. Similarly, in Kenya, the use of mobile banking services such as M-Pesa, supported by a monetary policy framework that encourages digital financial services, has

led to increased financial inclusion, with over 83% of the adult population having access to financial services by 2024 (Central Bank of Kenya, 2024). These cases illustrate that while monetary policy can drive financial inclusion and capital market participation, complementary structural reforms and technological innovations are crucial in addressing the persistent challenges faced by low-income populations in accessing financial services.

5.0 Future Outlook for Monetary Policy and Capital Market Development

The future of monetary policy in supporting capital market development in Nigeria faces several potential challenges, primarily driven by structural economic issues and external uncertainties. As monetary policy has focused on controlling inflation and stabilizing the exchange rate, the capital market has encountered volatility, partly due to global economic shocks and domestic structural constraints such as limited industrial output and infrastructure deficits (Adam, 2024). Despite efforts by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to tighten monetary policy by raising the Monetary Policy Rate

(MPR) to 27.25% in 2024 to combat inflation, which stood at 32.15% in August 2024 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024), the capital market remains vulnerable to high borrowing costs that may discourage investment. Additionally, the depreciation of the naira and the dual exchange rate system continue to pose challenges, potentially deterring foreign investment in the capital market due to concerns about currency stability and repatriation of profits.

In comparison, other emerging economies like Indonesia and Turkey have employed various approaches to mitigate such challenges and support capital market growth. Indonesia, for example, has implemented a more flexible exchange rate policy while coordinating monetary policy with macroprudential measures to enhance market stability and attract foreign investment, despite facing inflationary pressures (Bank Indonesia, 2024). Meanwhile, Turkey has employed unconventional monetary policies such as selective credit programs, aimed at channelling funds to productive sectors that can stimulate capital market growth while managing inflation (Central Bank of Turkey, 2024). These strategies highlight that while Nigeria's monetary policy has made some progress in addressing macroeconomic stability, the potential future challenges will require a more integrated approach that includes exchange rate liberalization, structural reforms, and macroprudential policies to foster a resilient and attractive capital market. Such measures could help mitigate risks associated with economic fluctuations and external shocks, ensuring sustainable market development.



Liquidity management has been crucial in stabilizing Nigeria's capital market amidst economic fluctuations, particularly from 2017 to 2024.





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SUFFOCATING AGRICULTURE SECTOR GROWTH: IS NIGERIA SITTING ON A POWDER KEG?

By Asimiyu Damilare



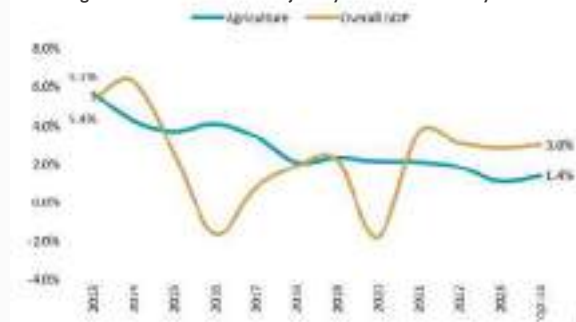
No doubt, a sustained healthy agriculture sector growth is pivotal to any country's economic stability, industrialisation, human capital development, and future existential. In recent years, Nigeria's agriculture sector growth has dwindled significantly, resulting in the rapid increase in food inflation to record levels, and a high number of malnourished children and adults. This article examines the drivers of recent trends in the Nigerian agriculture sector, highlight major drag factors, and recommend notable policy actions to improve the narrative.

To start with, recent statistics reveal that the Nigerian agriculture sector growth is progressing, albeit at a weak rate. The sector registered a y/y growth of 1.1% in 2023, marking a significant decline from the levels seen a decade ago (2013: 5.7%, NBS).

To put context, Nigeria with a population of over 200 million people and an arable land of about 79.0m hectares (sufficient to adequately cultivate food for the entire 458.6m West African population) currently struggles to meet significant proportion of local demand. Historically, the agricultural sector was once the bedrock of the Nigerian economy before the oil boom. The sector accounted for a large portion of the country's GDP, successfully met domestic food demand and was the main driver of the country's exports. However, the discovery of crude oil in the late 1960s shifted the country's focus toward the energy sector with interest in the agriculture sector relegated. This shift is evident in the steady decline in the agriculture sector GDP growth from a CAGR of 9.9% and 5.5% in the decades to 2003 and 2013 respectively, and has further capitulated to 2.6% in the decade to 2023.

At the core of the agriculture sector growth decline lies the problem of low productivity. This is evidenced in the growing supply gap of several food and cash crops. In Nigeria, the agriculture sector landscape is characterised by subsistence farming, with over 70.0% of the farming population reliant on manual labour, outdated farming techniques and rain-fed agriculture. As a result, when compared to other peer African nations, Nigeria's agricultural output paints a troubling picture.

Chart 1: Agriculture Sector Growth Trajectory vs Overall Economy

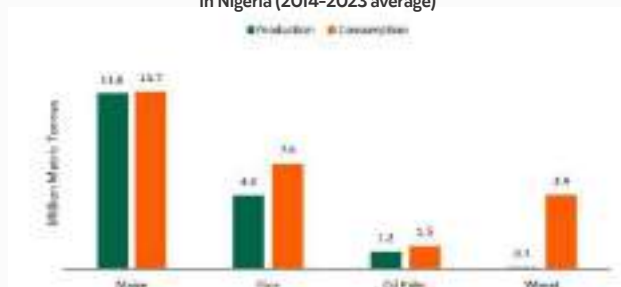


Source: NBS, CBN, Afrinvest Research

Taking Maize crop as a case study, Nigeria achieves an average maize yield of 2.0 tonnes per hectare. However, South Africa with a similar climatic condition, boost of average yield of 5.0 tonnes per hectare. The main pivot behind South Africa's higher average yield (relative to Nigeria) stemmed from its better supportive infrastructure, mechanisation, and significant investment in irrigation to support farming across all seasons. Similarly, Ghana which also relies on rain-fed agriculture, has made great strides by increasing access to fertilizers and improved seeds, resulting in average yield of 2.3 tonnes per hectare for maize, again, outperforming Nigeria. This trend is also evident in most key crops as captured above.

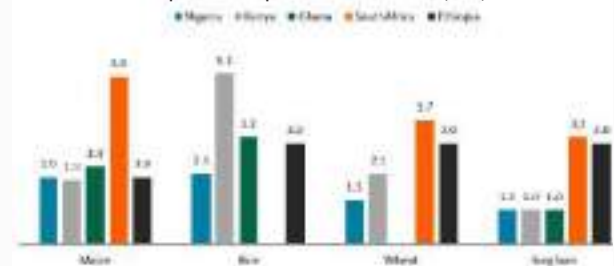
The low productivity in Nigeria's agriculture sector has resulted in a widening gap between food production and demand/consumption. Over the last decade, Nigeria's population has been growing exponentially at an average annual rate of 2.5%, translating to over 5 million additional people every year. However, food production growth (at a CAGR of 2.6% in the decade to 2023), has barely kept pace with population growth. Consequently, the deficit between consumption and production has been met largely by importation, making the country a net importer.

Chart 3: Production vs Consumption Gap of Key Agricultural Products in Nigeria (2014–2023 average)



Source: FAO, Afrinvest Research

Chart 2: Selected Crops Yield Compared to Peer Countries (t/ha)



Source: FAO, IndexMundi, Afrinvest Research

Nigeria, once a net exporter of agricultural products, now spends billions of naira on food imports annually. Agric imports are now growing exponentially while export earnings trailed significantly. For instance, between 2019–2023, Nigeria's food import bill surged to ₦8.2tn (about 3x the agricultural export earnings of ₦2.9tn within the same period).

Chart 4: Nigeria's Agricultural Trade Statistics (₦trillions)



Source: NBS, Afrinvest Research

Against this backdrop, the agriculture sector has reached a critical tipping point, as Nigeria currently ranks second among the list of countries facing food insecurity globally (World Bank, 2024). The rapid population growth, low productivity, and increasing reliance on imports have combined to create a challenging environment, stifling the sector's growth. Several structural, technological, political, and climatic factors have been identified as key contributors to these challenges. Below, we explore these issues and examining their impact as well as the extent to which they have shaped the sector's current fortune:

i. **Structural Challenges: Insecurity and Infrastructure Deficiencies**

Insecurity has been a major structural issue affecting the agriculture sector in Nigeria. The continuous widespread violence and farmer-herder conflicts have forced many farmers to abandon their farmlands, reducing both food production and available arable land. In states

such as Benue, Jigawa, and Taraba, insurgencies have displaced thousands of farmers, leaving millions of hectares of potential farmland uncultivated. Though Nigeria has around 79 million hectares of agricultural land, only 44.0% of this is being actively cultivated due to security concerns.

Compounding the insecurity problem is the nation's inadequate infrastructure. Nigeria's poor transportation networks, particularly the lack of an efficient rail system, have led to significant food wastage post-harvest. This has severely hampered agricultural productivity, with up to 40.0% of food produced being lost between the farm and market.

ii. **Technological Limitations: Mechanization Gap and Export Rejections**

Another critical factor constraining growth is the low level of mechanization in the sector. Despite advancements in agricultural technology globally, Nigerian farmers are still heavily reliant on crude tools and manual labour. Smallholder farmers, who represent the majority of Nigeria's agricultural workforce (estimated to be over 70.0%, FAO), have limited access to the latest equipment and farming technologies, primarily due to financial constraints. This has kept productivity levels low, especially compared to peer countries.

Additionally, Nigerian agricultural exports face significant hurdles in international markets due to quality and safety issues. For example, a substantial portion of Nigeria's agricultural exports – including beans, sesame seeds, and cocoa – were rejected in markets such as the European Union due to the presence of harmful pesticides and contaminants. In 2023, over 76.0% of Nigeria's agricultural exports were rejected, leading to millions of dollars in lost revenue. These export rejections not only limit Nigeria's earning potential but also damage the country's international reputation as a reliable supplier of agricultural products.

iii. **Political factors and climate change**

There is no gain saying the fact that most of the policies deployed by the Nigerian government to boost food production over the last decade has largely fallen short. For instance, the CBN Anchor Borrowers' Program which was launched in 2015 to boost local production of key farm outputs have failed to produce a significant impact due mainly to maladministration. Although acclaimed beneficiaries from the programme was put at over 4.7 million farmers, over ₦450.9bn of the ₦1.1tn disbursed in the eight years of the programme (2015 – 2023) could not be accounted for/recovered.

Similarly, the 2022 National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Plan (NATIP) faces funding and commitment issues. Climate change has worsened conditions, with a \$100.0 bn economic impact, primarily on agriculture. Despite a significant increase in private sector credit to ₦75.5tn in July 2024, compared to ₦17.2tn in the same period in 2014, most funds go to oil, gas, and manufacturing, limiting agriculture's growth and food security.



Key Impact Statistics of Nigeria Worsening Food Production

To have a better understanding of the magnitude of this crisis of the welfare of the Nigerian citizens, we looked at the dynamics of two key impact statistics – food inflation trajectory and malnourishment rate – over the past decade. The figures below clearly show the extent of the problems and highlight the urgency for effective solutions to save Nigeria from a major food crisis in no distance future.

Starting with the former, Nigeria's food inflation rate has witnessed significant spike in the last decade due to demand vs supply mismatch. For context, Nigeria's food inflation rate rose from an average annual rate of 9.5% in 2014 to 37.5% by August 2024. The most notable surges occurred between 2021 to 2024, reflecting worsening food supply crisis as well as knock on effects of other negative adjustment in the macroeconomic environment. One of the major triggers of this higher-for-longer food inflation rate is the inability to match food production with population growth.

Despite having vast arable land, farming remains inefficient as only 6.7 tractors per 10,000 hectares were available in 2020. This situation is worsened by frequent attacks on farmers by bandits and criminal groups, forcing many to flee their farmlands (SB Intelligence reported that farmers in the North-East paid no less than ₦139.0 million as levy to bandit to have access to their farmland in Q1:2024 alone). Even though NBS data suggests that over 40.0% households participates in farming activities, the predominance of subsistence farmers (over 70.0%) has capped the sector's

productivity and contribution to national growth (\$21.3bn) when compared to economy like the US with barely 5.0% farming households with agriculture sector GDP size of \$1.5tn. Insecurity, under-mechanization, and prevalence of subsistence farming have remained a major stumbling block to optimising Nigeria's agriculture sector potential.



Source: NBS, US Bureau of Labour, Afrinvest Research

Also, Nigeria is facing a severe malnutrition crisis. According to UNICEF in 2023, over 2 million Nigerian children are suffering from Severe Acute malnutrition (SAM), while about 12 million children are stunted. This places Nigeria as Africa's top malnourished country by size, and second globally. The national stunting rate for children under five stands at 43.6%, far above the developing-country average of 25.0%. Similarly, the under-five wasting prevalence of 10.8% exceeds the developing-country average of 8.9%. The situation is no better for adults, as nearly half of women of reproductive age (49.8%) suffers from anaemia, while men (6.3%) and women (6.0%) are battling diabetes.

Climate change is only intensifying food crises in Nigeria as unpredictable weather patterns, extreme temperatures, and prolonged droughts are devastating crop yields and reducing food availability. As floods and droughts displace farmers and damage arable land, the food supply continues to shrink, leaving millions even more vulnerable to malnutrition and hunger. This growing climate pressure is placing a heavy strain on both the health and livelihood of Nigeria's population – a development that has further strengthen the case for a timely action by all concerned stakeholders (especially the government) to stem the ugly trend.



According to UNICEF in 2023, over 2 million Nigerian children are suffering from Severe Acute malnutrition (SAM), while about 12 million children are stunted. This places Nigeria as Africa's top malnourished country by size, and second globally.



Concluding Thoughts

While previous and current administration have implemented noteworthy initiatives like the Anchor Borrowers' Programme, NIRSAL, and more recently, a temporary tariff exemption for selected items to stem food price increases, significant challenges persist. These include inadequate infrastructure, limited access to modern farming techniques, climate change impacts, and complex land tenure systems. To overcome these hurdles, a comprehensive approach is essential. This should encompass increased investment in rural infrastructure, enhanced agricultural research and extension services, improved access to finance, optimised adaptive strategies to climate change, and

improved security architecture.

Additionally, encouraging youth participation in agriculture and ensuring policy consistency across administrations would be crucial to attaining a lasting solution. By addressing these issues holistically, Nigeria can foster a more resilient, productive, and sustainable agricultural sector. This transformation is vital not only for achieving food security but also for driving economic growth and improving livelihoods across the nation. The path forward requires sustained commitment, innovative solutions, and collaborative efforts from both public and private sectors to realize the full potential of Nigeria's agricultural landscape while also preventing escalation of food crises as recently experienced in Yemen and South Sudan.



MSME Pulse: Market and Policy Brief

By Madara Essien

Overview

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) remain the backbone of Nigeria's economy. According to the NBS/SMEDAN survey, MSMEs account for 96.9% of all businesses, employ 87.9% of the workforce, and contribute 46.32% to GDP. Their collective economic footprint far exceeds their individual scale, making them indispensable to Nigeria's industrialization and inclusive growth agenda.

The MSME Pulse & Market Brief offers quarterly insights into the performance of Nigerian MSMEs, drawing from reliable data and member feedback. It serves as a vital resource for policymakers, business owners, investors, and development partners, enabling informed decisions and strategic interventions.

In Q2 2025, MSMEs continued to navigate a volatile economic climate marked by high inflation (22.22%), erratic power supply, and forex instability. The naira appreciated slightly from ₦1,585/\$ in May to ₦1,529/\$ in June, but import-dependent MSMEs still face margin pressures. Lending rates remain above 24%, limiting access to formal credit. However, fintech-enabled loan disbursements rose by 18%, signalling a shift toward alternative finance channels.

Sector-Specific Trends

Nigeria's real GDP grew by 4.23% year-on-year in Q2 2025, up from 3.13% in Q1. The non-oil sector remains the primary growth engine, contributing 95–96% of GDP, with trade, agriculture, and services leading the charge.

Agriculture.

The agricultural sector grew by 1.84% year-on-year in nominal terms and 2.82% in real terms in Q2 2025, reflecting improved performance from Q1's 0.07% growth. Crop production remained dominant, accounting for 57.06% of nominal output. Quarter-on-quarter growth stood at 16.40%, with GDP contribution rising to 21.04%. Expansion was supported by favourable weather, increased local sourcing, and agro-processing activities, though overall growth remained below 2024 levels.

Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector grew by 4.51% year-on-year in Q2 2025, down from 7.65% in 2024 and 42.40% in Q1, amid forex scarcity, energy shortages, and high input costs. Real growth stood at 1.60%, with GDP contribution falling to 7.81% from 9.62% in Q1. While some light industries expanded, overall performance was constrained by weak infrastructure and cost pressures.

Construction & Real Estate

The construction sector grew 9.58% nominally and 5.27% in real terms in Q2 2025, down from 23.47% in Q1, supported by infrastructure projects and PPPs despite inflation and high input costs. The real estate sector grew 6.14% nominally and 3.79% in real terms, with GDP contributions of 9.06% (nominal) and 12.80% (real). Both sectors showed stability but slower investment momentum.

Creative & Entertainment

The creative sector grew 5.32% nominally year-on-year in Q2 2025, down from 27.30% in Q1 but up from 1.32% in 2024, with 7.64% real growth. GDP contribution fell to 0.41% nominally and 0.29% in real terms. Growth was supported by Afrobeats' global reach and digital platforms, though piracy and weak IP enforcement persist.

Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

The ICT sector recorded 21.39% nominal and 6.61% real growth in Q2 2025, contributing 10.00% to nominal GDP and 11.18% to real GDP. Valued at \$32.83 billion with 18.3% CAGR projected through 2030, growth is driven by fintech, broadband, and SME digitization. Challenges include cybersecurity risks, power instability, and a digital skills gap.

Trade & Micro-Retailing

Trade grew 43.83% nominally and 1.29% in real terms year-on-year in Q2 2025, contributing 25.93% to nominal GDP and 18.28% to real GDP. Growth was fuelled by FX stability, tariff cuts, and stronger oil exports. Micro-retailing expanded as e-commerce adoption rose to 70%, projected at \$29 billion by year-end, though logistics and regulatory challenges persist.

Government & Policy Support

Several initiatives shaped the MSME landscape in Q2:

- Lagos MSME Support Fund: ₦5 billion fund announced in April to offer single-digit interest loans, capacity building, and documentation support. Rollout is pending but highly anticipated.
- Bol Disbursements: ₦2.25 billion disbursed to 16,696 MSMEs in Gombe State under the ₦200 billion Federal Loan Scheme.
- AU MSME Forum: Focused on digital innovation



and financing; MoU signed with Africa Guarantee Fund to expand credit access.

- SMEDAN Industrial Clusters: Expansion of the Garment & Textile Hub in Idu (Abuja), with plans for solar-powered clusters in other states.
- BDSP Rollout: Nationwide deployment of certified Business Development Service Providers to support MSME formalization and loan readiness.
- Taxation Reforms: FIRS introduced e-filing for VAT and PAYE, creating compliance challenges for MSMEs lacking accounting support.

Challenges & Barriers

- Access to Finance: Despite new initiatives, formal loan uptake remains low (~5%) due to documentation hurdles and lack of bookkeeping.
- High Interest Rates: With the policy rate at 27.50%, financing costs remain prohibitive.
- Infrastructure Gaps: Energy and logistics constraints persist outside urban hubs.
- Macroeconomic Headwinds: Inflation and forex volatility continue to erode margins, especially for import-dependent businesses.

VOICE FROM THE GROUND

"The financial strain on DisCos, exacerbated by debts owed to federal power-generating firms, signals deeper liquidity and structural issues. Without resolving these arrears, the entire value chain, from generation to distribution, remains vulnerable. A debt restructuring mechanism, possibly backed by government guarantees or performance-based bailouts, may be necessary to stabilize operations."

— Mr. Femi Bakare, Fenchurch Group CEO & Chairman, LCCI Power Group.



His comment reflects the urgent need for debt restructuring and financial stabilization in Nigeria's power sector to prevent a systemic collapse across the electricity value chain.

Q3 Outlook: MSME Performance

Reform Tailwinds

- Proposed harmonization of tax laws and enactment of the New Nigeria Tax Act (2025) may boost formalization and revenue.

Demand & Market Positioning

- Consumer demand remains constrained; MSMEs in essential goods and low-cost services (e.g., fintech, e-commerce) may perform better.

Financing & Credit Access

- Credit conditions remain tight, but BoI and DBN disbursements, plus revolving fund models, may ease access for eligible MSMEs.

Sectoral Resilience

- Agri-value chains, creative industries, and tech-driven services show adaptability and export potential.
- Manufacturing and trade firms face continued FX and energy bottlenecks.

Conclusion

As Q2 2025 closes, Nigeria's MSME landscape reflects a complex interplay of resilience, reform, and persistent structural challenges. While macroeconomic headwinds, high inflation, elevated interest rates, and forex volatility, continue to pressure operations, targeted policy interventions and sector-specific momentum offer cautious optimism.

Government-backed initiatives such as the Lagos MSME Support Fund, BoI disbursements, and SMEDAN's industrial cluster expansion signal a growing commitment to formalization, capacity building, and inclusive finance. However, systemic barriers, especially around credit access, infrastructure, and compliance, still limit the full realization of MSME potential.

Looking ahead to Q3, Nigeria's MSMEs will thrive if reforms are swiftly implemented, financing models prove effective, and businesses adapt to evolving consumer trends. Growth will be led by digital innovation, agribusiness, and creative sectors, while manufacturing and trade will need targeted support to navigate energy and FX challenges. Success hinges on embracing formalization, seizing new opportunities, and staying resilient amid volatility.



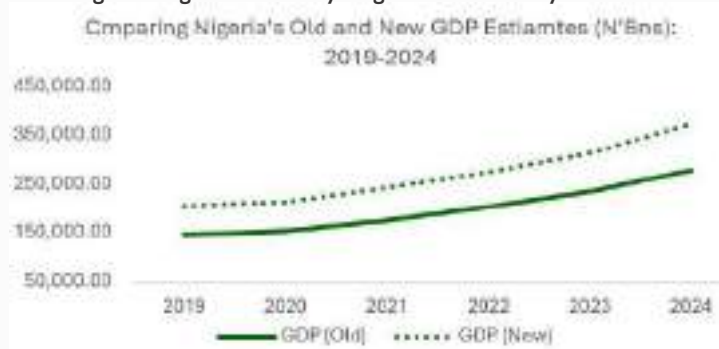
Rebased GDP and Sectoral Contributions: Insights into Nigeria's Evolving Economy

By Kehinde Ayanbadejo

Rebasing reveals that Nigeria's economy is larger than previously estimated but growth remained suboptimal

Nigeria's economy is larger but growing modestly as previously estimated. In June 2025, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) rebased the national accounts (to a base year of 2019). As a result, estimated GDP for 2019 and 2024 were 40.8% and 34.4% larger than previously estimated respectively as shown in the figure below:

Figure 1: Nigeria's Economy Larger than Previously Estimated



Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) & LCCI Research

The rebasing exercise, which spans the period from 2019 to 2024, reflects changes in the structure of the economy, sectoral dynamics, and enhancements in data collection methods. As a result of the rebasing, Nigeria's nominal GDP rose significantly—from ₦205.09 trillion in 2019 to ₦372.82 trillion in 2024. The revised nominal GDP figures now stand at ₦213.63 trillion for 2020, ₦243.30 trillion for 2021, ₦274.23 trillion for 2022, and ₦314.02 trillion for 2023, culminating in ₦372.82 trillion in 2024.

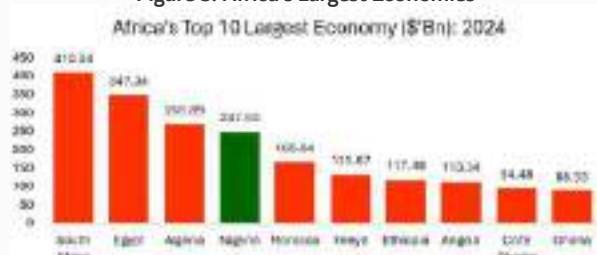
Figure 2: Size of Nigeria's GDP: 2019-2025



Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) & LCCI Research

In U.S. dollar terms, Nigeria's nominal GDP was estimated at \$242.83 billion in 2024, ranking it as the fourth-largest economy in Africa, behind South Africa (\$410.34 billion), Egypt (\$347.34 billion), and Algeria (\$268.89 billion). Within Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), only South African economy is larger than Nigeria.

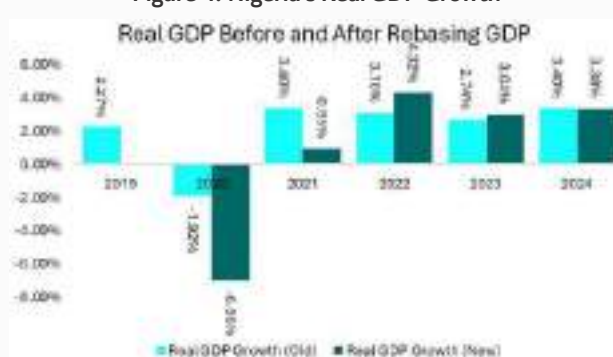
Figure 3: Africa's Largest Economies



Source: World Bank & LCCI Research

In real terms, Nigeria's GDP grew by 3.38% in 2024, up from 3.04% in 2023 and slightly below the previously reported 3.40% for 2024 under the old GDP series. The average annual growth rate for 2020–2025 in the new GDP series is 0.95%, compared to 2.14% in the old series (Figure 4). Furthermore, the rebased GDP figures showed stronger growth than earlier estimates in two out of five years. In 2022, the revised growth was 4.32%, compared to 3.10% in the old series. Similarly, in 2023, the new estimate of 3.04% exceeded the old estimate of 2.74%. However, the economic contraction in 2020 was deeper in the new series, recorded at -6.96%, compared to -1.92% in the old series—highlighting the more severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic than previously captured.

Figure 4: Nigeria's Real GDP Growth

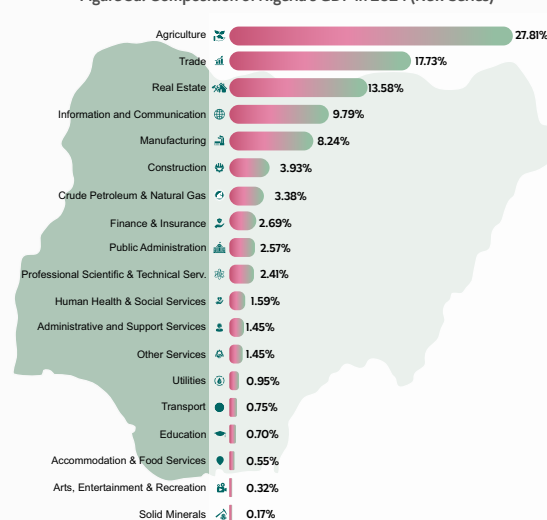


Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) & LCCI Research

The structure of the economy recorded significant changes in the newly rebased GDP, with real estate, agriculture, trade, human health, public administration, and construction accounting for the

most change. The share of agriculture in real gross output increased to 27.8% from 24.6%, reflecting growing contribution of specific subsectors like crop production and livestock. For example, the real output of crop production prior to rebasing was N17.87 trillion which increased to N42.37 trillion after rebasing. Similarly, livestock output increased to N11.95 trillion after rebasing compared to N1.09 trillion before rebasing. Wholesale and retail trade increased to 17.7% in the new series compared to 15.5% in the old series.

Figure 5a: Composition of Nigeria's GDP in 2024 (New Series)

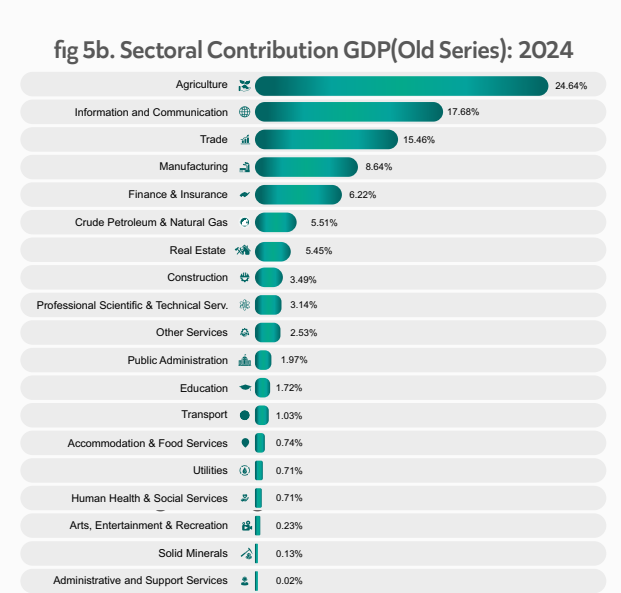


Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) & LCCI Research

The real estate sector recorded the most significant gain, rising to become the third largest contributor to GDP. Real estate's share of GDP increased to 13.6% in the new series from 5.4% in the old series, reflecting more accurate estimates of average rentals, brokerage and land valuation as well as increase in stock of high-quality dwellings. Construction sector increased to 3.9% from 3.5% in the old series while public administration rose to 2.6% in the new series from 2.0% in the old series. Health and Social Services sector saw significant increase to 1.6% of GDP in the new series compared to 0.7% in the old series. Also, administrative and support services sector's share of GDP increased to 1.4% from 0.02%.

Other sectors that recorded increase include utilities (now 0.9% from 0.7%), arts, entertainment and recreation (now 0.3% compared to 0.2%), and solid minerals (now 0.2% compared to 0.1% in the old series). On the other hand, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), manufacturing, oil and gas, and finance and insurance saw significant declines. In particular, ICT

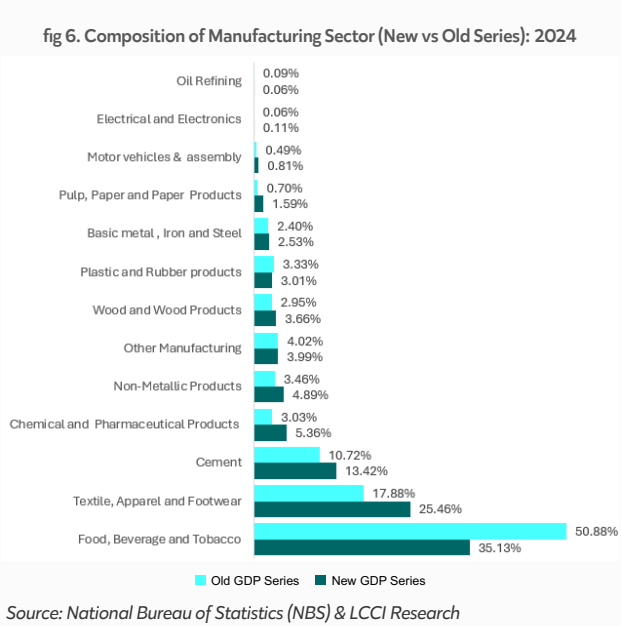
share of GDP declined to 9.8% in the new series compared to 17.7% in the old series. Crude oil and natural gas sector saw a decline to 3.4% from 5.5% while finance and insurance share fell to 2.7% in the new series compared to 6.2% in the old series.



In the manufacturing sector, Food, beverage and tobacco, Textile, apparel and footwear, and Cement remain the three largest activities. However, the share of Food, Beverage and Tobacco declined to 35.1% in the new GDP series from 50.8%. This drop occurred despite a significant increase in real output value—from ₦3.48 trillion to ₦6.12 trillion—indicating that other subsectors have expanded more rapidly. Textile, apparel and footwear's share of manufacturing total increased to 25.5% in the new series from 17.9%, while Cement's share rose to 13.4% from 10.7% in the old series. Chemical and Pharmaceutical Products is currently the fourth largest manufacturing activity, accounting for 5.4% in the new GDP series compared to 3.0% in the old series. The share of Non-metallic products increased to 4.9% from 3.5%, while Wood and wood products rose to 3.7% in the new series from 3.0% in the old series. Other manufacturing activities with increased shares include:

- Basic metal, iron and steel: 2.5% (up from 2.4%);
- Pulp, paper and paper products: 1.6% (up from 0.7%); and
- Electrical and electronics: 0.11% (up from 0.06%).

The manufacturing subsectors that recorded a decline include Other manufacturing, Plastic and rubber products, and Oil refining.



The Impact of Nigeria's GDP on Macroeconomic Indicators

The rebasing of Nigeria's GDP significantly affected key macroeconomic indicators, with far-reaching implications for policy makers. Since many of these indicators are expressed as ratios of GDP, a larger GDP base typically reduces these ratios, creating the impression of improved or declining economic stability. For example, gross public debt as a share of GDP dropped to 39.4% from 52.9% after the rebasing in 2024. While this may appear to ease debt-related pressure and justify increased borrowing, such a conclusion can be misleading. Furthermore, a significant decline in fiscal deficit to GDP ratio might suggest greater fiscal space for development borrowing.



In U.S. dollar terms, Nigeria's nominal GDP was estimated at \$242.83 billion in 2024, ranking it as the fourth-largest economy in Africa.



However, comparing the debt situation to the country's capacity to repay, revenue-to-GDP ratio declined to 6% from 8.1%, and exports-to-GDP ratio also fell to 21.2% from 28.8%, signaling government's weak repayment ability.

Similarly, with increased GDP from the revision exercise, economic indicators such as private sector credit as a share of GDP, which measures bank penetration and financial depth declined to 20.9% after rebasing compared to 28.1% before GDP rebasing. Consequently, there is more space for banks to expand their financial intermediation activities in the real sector for potential growth opportunities. The ratio of government expenditure (including social services such as health and education) to GDP declined to 9.4% after the rebasing from 12.6%, suggesting potential deterioration in social development indicators. On the positive side, the country's per capita income rose by 34.4%, increasing from \$761.10 in 2024 to \$1,022.57 in the new GDP series.

In terms of structural changes, the sharp rise in real estate output appears largely driven by speculative acquisitions and value retention, contributing little to productivity and real growth. The decline in the ICT

sector's share of GDP raises concerns about possible underreporting or a slowdown in sectoral momentum. Likewise, the significant increase in agricultural output in the rebased GDP is questionable, given the sector's continued reliance on subsistence farming, weak industrial linkages, and limited export competitiveness

Conclusion

The rebased GDP figures reveal that Nigeria's economic activity is significantly higher than previously reported, offering a clearer view of the economy's structure. Notably, real estate has emerged as the third-largest sector, alongside growth in manufacturing activities such as chemicals and pharmaceuticals. This shift calls for policies that reflect the new economic landscape—prioritizing these emerging sectors as key drivers of broad-based, inclusive growth and job creation. While businesses can use the updated data to make informed investment decisions, the government should leverage the opportunities presented by the rebasing to finance infrastructure, strengthen education, and invest in human capital as critical steps toward achieving the \$1 trillion GDP target by 2032.



Artificial Intelligence in Nigeria: Navigating Growth Through Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategic Foundations

By Isaiah Omenokpe

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is fast becoming one of the most transformative forces of the 21st century, reshaping industries and redefining the global economy. For Nigeria, Africa's fourth largest economy and home to over 220 million people, AI represents a powerful opportunity to accelerate growth, improve public services, and create new industries, while also posing significant challenges that require strategic planning. According to PwC, AI could contribute up to \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030, and Nigeria, with its large youth population and growing digital adoption, stands to capture a fair share of this transformation if the right pathways are pursued.

Opportunities in AI

The opportunities for AI in Nigeria are wide-ranging. In agriculture, which employs more than one-third of the population (NBS), AI-driven technologies such as predictive analytics, drone surveillance, and automated irrigation systems can increase productivity and reduce post-harvest losses, boosting food security and exports. In the financial sector, Nigerian Fintech firms already deploy AI to strengthen fraud detection, expand credit access through alternative scoring systems, and enhance customer experience, helping to drive financial inclusion in a country where more than 30 percent of adults remain unbanked (CBN). Healthcare, another critical area, could benefit immensely as AI-enabled diagnostic tools, telemedicine platforms, and drug discovery systems offer scalable solutions to bridge the country's high doctor-to-patient ratio, currently far below the World Health Organization's recommended level. Education also presents opportunities, as AI-powered personalized learning platforms can help address overcrowded classrooms and teacher shortages, enabling millions of students to gain access to tailored, high-quality learning experiences. Moreover, AI adoption in governance and public administration could streamline tax collection, traffic management, and e-governance services, reduce inefficiencies and enhance transparency.

Challenges

Despite these opportunities, Nigeria faces major challenges that could hinder AI adoption. A significant obstacle is infrastructural deficit: stable electricity, widespread broadband internet, and access to advanced computing resources remain inadequate, limiting large-scale deployment of AI systems. Data, which fuels AI, also presents a problem, as Nigeria struggles with fragmented databases, poor data quality, and the absence of robust open-data frameworks. Human capital is another concern; although the country boasts a young and tech-savvy population, there is a shortage of AI specialists, data scientists, and machine learning engineers, compounded by the persistent issue of brain drain.



Regulatory and ethical gaps further complicate the landscape, as Nigeria lacks a comprehensive AI policy framework to guide innovation, protect privacy, and prevent misuse, while risks such as algorithmic bias, cybersecurity threats, and potential job displacement loom large. Funding constraints add to the challenge, with limited investment in AI research, innovation hubs, and academia-industry collaboration, leaving Nigeria at risk of falling behind countries that are investing heavily in AI capabilities.

Recommendation

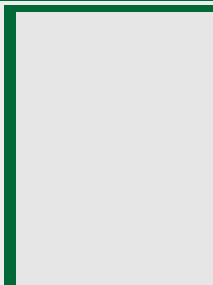
Strategic pathways are therefore essential if Nigeria is to harness AI effectively. First, the development of a National AI Strategy is crucial (though still in the draft phase), as it would provide a policy framework that aligns AI adoption with the country's broader economic and social development goals while ensuring ethical safeguards. Investment in infrastructure must be prioritized, with emphasis on expanding broadband penetration, strengthening electricity supply, and building reliable cloud and data ecosystems. Building human capital is equally critical; universities, technical institutions, and private stakeholders need to integrate AI training into curricula, while government and industry partnerships should support upskilling programs that

prepare the workforce for the jobs of the future. Establishing AI research and innovation centers across the country could foster homegrown solutions tailored to Nigeria's unique challenges, while targeted funding for AI startups would strengthen the local ecosystem. Collaboration between government and the private sector should be deepened, as public-private partnerships can accelerate adoption in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and financial services. Finally, the implementation of clear regulatory frameworks on data protection, cybersecurity, and AI ethics will be necessary to build public trust, attract investment, and ensure responsible deployment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Artificial Intelligence presents Nigeria with a rare opportunity to leapfrog traditional development barriers and position itself as a leader in Africa's digital transformation. However, success will depend on deliberate investment, strategic planning, and inclusive governance that balances innovation with ethics. If Nigeria can overcome its infrastructural, regulatory, and capacity challenges, AI could serve not only as a technological revolution but also as a catalyst for sustainable growth, improved livelihoods, and stronger global competitiveness.

LCCI in the News



Interview With:
Mr. Seleem Adegunwa, Managing Director/CEO, Rite Foods Ltd.



Mr. Seleem Adegunwa
MD, Rite Foods

Overview of Business Environment in Nigeria

How would you describe the current business environment in Nigeria?

Nigeria's business environment is a paradox of promise and pressure, a high-opportunity, high-complexity landscape. On one hand, it offers immense potential, driven by a large, youthful population, rising urbanisation, and a resilient entrepreneurial spirit. On the other hand, doing business here requires navigating a dynamic and often unpredictable operating context shaped by economic volatility, structural inefficiencies, and security concerns.

Inflation remains a major challenge. Persistent increases in headline inflation, particularly in food prices, have eroded consumer purchasing power and increased cost pressures for businesses. These inflationary trends are further exacerbated by the depreciation of the naira, disruptions in domestic supply chains, and constraints in local production capacity.

Monetary tightening has added another layer of complexity. The Central Bank of Nigeria's decision to raise the Monetary Policy Rate to 27.50% has made credit significantly more expensive. For businesses looking to fund operations, scale, or invest in innovation, the cost of borrowing is now a major consideration that impacts growth decisions. Foreign exchange volatility still continues to pose serious difficulties.

Infrastructure and security challenges further increase the cost and difficulty of doing business. Inadequate electricity supply, congested logistics networks, and pockets of insecurity contribute to delays, inefficiencies, and increased risk, particularly for industries like manufacturing which is dependent on mobility and stable energy.

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Mr. Seleem Adegunwa, Managing Director/CEO, Rite Foods Ltd.

Overview of Business Environment in Nigeria



Nonetheless, Nigeria's economy is showing signs of recovery with inflation dropping to 22.22% from 36.5% last year. National debt is down to \$97 billion from \$113 billion inherited from the last administration. The country is currently Africa's fourth largest economy, with GDP growth at 3.8%.

It is important to acknowledge the bold economic reforms being pursued by the current administration, which are beginning to show some wins. Efforts such as the unification of exchange rates, and initiatives to streamline the customs process demonstrate a clear intent to move the country towards long-term macroeconomic stability and a more investor-friendly environment.

As business leaders, we must remain forward-looking. While the current environment requires caution and creativity, it also presents an opportunity to rethink strategies, localise supply chains, and build resilience. With the right policy support, private sector innovation, and sustained stakeholder collaboration, Nigeria can transition from a challenging environment to a globally competitive economy.

What are the major factors influencing the ease or difficulty of doing business in your industry?

Operating within Nigeria's Food and Beverage FMCG sector means contending with a complex mix of high operating costs and significant risks. While the demand potential is strong, several systemic issues continue to impact ease of doing business and overall competitiveness.

One of the most critical challenges is foreign exchange access. The limited and unpredictable availability of USD makes it difficult to plan effectively and significantly raises the cost of imported raw materials, machinery, and spare parts. This volatility

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affects pricing, margins, and ultimately, the ability to meet consumer expectations in a price-sensitive market.

Regulatory bottlenecks also weigh heavily on the industry. Businesses often face overlapping mandates from multiple government agencies, unclear tax regimes, and delays in approvals. This not only slows down operations but also increases the administrative burden, particularly for companies looking to expand or introduce new product lines.

That said, we acknowledge some of the positive reforms being implemented. The digitisation of business registration processes, the introduction of e-customs systems, and efforts to modernise port infrastructure are commendable steps toward improving operational efficiency. While these initiatives are yet to fully materialise in day-to-day ease of doing business, they reflect a government intent on creating a more enabling environment for private sector growth.

I must also commend the great job being done by the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) under Princess Zahrah Mustapha Audu as Director General. There's a move through PEBEC to harmonize regulatory oversight of NAFDAC and SON. This will reduce the frequency of visits by these regulators and allow manufacturers focus on their businesses.

What are the major cost drivers in your operations?

In the Food and Beverage FMCG sector, several key factors significantly impact operational costs and overall efficiency.

Energy remains one of the most substantial cost drivers, largely due to the unreliable power supply from

the national grid. As a result, manufacturers rely heavily on diesel generators to maintain uninterrupted operations, which

significantly increases overheads, especially in the context of volatile fuel prices and limited access to alternative energy sources.

Raw materials also represent a major portion of our costs. A large proportion of inputs, including ingredients and packaging materials, are still imported. This exposes our cost structure to currency depreciation, inflationary pressures, and global supply chain disruptions. The volatility of the naira, in particular, has made sourcing materials more expensive and unpredictable.

Logistics is another key area of cost pressure. Poor road infrastructure, high fuel costs, and congestion at ports all contribute to increased transportation expenses and longer delivery timelines. These inefficiencies affect both inbound supply and outbound distribution, making it more difficult to maintain cost-effective and reliable service.

Finally, regulatory compliance and security measures, though essential, contribute to operational costs. Maintaining quality standards, ensuring workplace safety, and securing our assets in an unpredictable security environment all require sustained investment.

Has the cost of doing business increased or decreased in recent months?

While one would not say that the cost of doing business has decreased in recent months, comparing 2025 versus 2024 shows some level of stability. Costs are still high, driven by a combination of macroeconomic

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Mr. Seleem Adegunwa, Managing Director/CEO, Rite Foods Ltd.



To significantly enhance the business environment and unlock Nigeria's vast potential in manufacturing and FMCG, a set of targeted, high-impact reforms are highly recommended. First,



Overview of Business Environment in Nigeria

pressures and structural challenges. The continued depreciation of the naira pushes up the cost of imported raw materials, packaging, and machinery, making planning and procurement more difficult and expensive.

While we continue to adapt through efficiency measures and innovation, the current climate underscores the urgent need for structural reforms and targeted support to ease the burden on productive sectors like FMCG.

Nonetheless, we acknowledge government measures such as targeted fiscal interventions designed to ease inflationary pressures.

How do high utility costs affect your competitiveness?

While our Company has made significant strides in transitioning to cleaner energy—now powering approximately 90% of our manufacturing operations with more sustainable sources—utility costs still present a major challenge.

High energy costs in Nigeria continue to impact competitiveness. For manufacturers still reliant on diesel or unstable grid power, production and operational overheads remain elevated. These cost pressures limit pricing flexibility, especially in a market where consumers are highly price-sensitive, making it difficult to pass on increases without affecting demand.

Additionally, power-related disruptions outside of our factory, such as those affecting logistics and cold chain distribution, can lead to inefficiencies, delays, and increased operating costs. This becomes a significant barrier when competing under frameworks like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), where competitors in countries with more stable and affordable infrastructure have a distinct advantage.

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Mr. Seleem Adegunwa, Managing Director/CEO, Rite Foods Ltd.



Overview of Business Environment in Nigeria

What reforms are most urgently needed to improve the business environment?

To significantly enhance the business environment and unlock Nigeria's vast potential in manufacturing and FMCG, a set of targeted, high-impact reforms are highly recommended.

First, addressing the power sector remains critical. Stable and affordable electricity is foundational to industrial growth. Accelerated investments in power generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure, especially in support of renewable energy adoption, will directly improve productivity and reduce operational costs.

Second, stabilising the foreign exchange market is vital. Ensuring consistent liquidity and transparent allocation mechanisms, particularly for essential sectors like food manufacturing, will enable better planning and cost management.

Third, improving port and logistics efficiency must be a national priority. Faster cargo clearance, investment in modern port infrastructure, and rehabilitation of key transport corridors will reduce turnaround times and logistics costs, improving competitiveness.

Additionally, streamlining regulatory processes is essential. Harmonising taxes, digitising approvals, and reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks will foster a more enabling environment and lower the cost of compliance.

Finally, coordinated macroeconomic policies to control inflation will be crucial in preserving consumer purchasing power and maintaining business sustainability.

Nigeria has the fundamentals for success, what is needed now is bold and sustained implementation of these reforms.

Has your business benefited from recent government ease of doing business initiatives?

Yes, we have observed some encouraging progress driven by recent government reforms aimed at improving the business climate. The unification of foreign exchange rates has enhanced transparency in currency markets, enabling better planning and market alignment.

Similarly, the introduction of new tax laws, while still being fully understood and implemented, signals a move toward greater clarity and predictability in fiscal policy, both of which are crucial for business confidence. Additionally, recent efforts to position Nigeria as an investment-friendly destination, especially through targeted industry incentives, have created a more encouraging narrative around industrial growth and economic diversification.

We remain optimistic that sustained execution of reforms, especially those addressing power, transportation, and security, will unlock deeper benefits and further enable the private sector to thrive.

As a company, we remain deeply committed to Nigeria's long-term development and prosperity. We are investing in local production capacity and we continue to develop and empower local talent through targeted training and upskilling initiatives, while supporting communities.

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Mr. Seleem Adegunwa, Managing Director/CEO, Rite Foods Ltd.



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Our strategic partnerships with policymakers and stakeholders reflect our belief in building an inclusive, competitive, and resilient FMCG sector that can drive national progress.

We are confident that with sustained reforms, strategic collaboration, and a focus on innovation, Nigeria can not only overcome today's challenges but also emerge as a regional

manufacturing powerhouse. At Rite Foods, we are proud to contribute actively to this transformation and remain fully committed to shaping a brighter, more prosperous future for the country.



Interview With:
Mrs. Gloria Nwabuike, Managing Director, Ace Foods



Mrs. Gloria Nwabuike,
MD, Ace Foods

Overview of Business Environment in Nigeria

How would you describe the current business environment in Nigeria (looking at inflation, interest rate, forex crises etc.)?

Nigeria's business climate has witnessed stable macroeconomic conditions rising from reforms and FX recovery. GDP is expected to grow approximately at 3.6 to 3.7% in 2025, driven by reforms and higher revenues. However, high inflation, costly credit, and security risks continue to constrain growth despite improving investor sentiment. Inflation is easing but still high at 22.2% (June 2025), however food inflation remains elevated, though reforms and better FX stability are helping to slow price growth. Inadequate infrastructure, particularly in the energy sector, increases operational costs and hampers business growth, especially for SMEs.

Generally, I would say that the Nigerian business climate shows cautious optimism. Reforms are boosting investor confidence and stabilising the macro-outlook, but high costs, security issues, and fiscal constraints keep operating conditions tough. With careful planning and strategic investment, businesses can navigate the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities in Nigeria's growing economy.

What are the major factors influencing the ease or difficulty of doing business in your industry?

We play in the Food manufacturing industry in Nigeria. The ease—or difficulty—of doing business in our industry is determined by a complex interplay of infrastructural, economic, regulatory, and market forces. The operating environment is quite challenging.

As food processors in Nigeria, we operate in an environment that is both full of opportunities and fraught with significant challenges. Our ability to remain competitive and sustainable depends on how effectively we navigate these realities.

Infrastructure and Logistics remain a major bottleneck. Unreliable power supply and high energy costs continue to inflate our operating expenses, while poor road networks and limited transportation infrastructure delay the inflow of raw materials and

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Mrs. Gloria Nwabuike, Managing Director, Ace Foods

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distribution of finished products. These inefficiencies disrupt supply chains and reduce overall productivity.

On the Raw Material Supply side, we contend with seasonal fluctuations, low agricultural productivity, and persistent price volatility. This has made input availability inconsistent, creating difficulties in planning and cost management. The heavy reliance on smallholder farmers amplifies these risks, as productivity gaps remain wide.

Financing and Foreign Exchange challenges also weigh heavily on the industry. High interest rates and limited access to affordable credit restrict growth and investment, while the high cost and scarcity of foreign exchange pose major hurdles in acquiring machinery, spare parts, and certain essential raw materials. In addition, the Regulatory Environment remains complex. Multiple levies, overlapping mandates from different agencies, and inconsistent enforcement practices add significant compliance costs and uncertainties to operations.

We are also constrained by Skills and Technology Gaps. The shortage of skilled food technologists and technicians affects our ability to innovate and maintain high standards. At the same time, the cost of automation, advanced processing technologies, and R&D investment is prohibitively high, slowing down modernization and efficiency gains.

Finally, Market and Consumer Dynamics continue to evolve rapidly. Inflation has eroded consumer purchasing power, forcing many households to prioritize cheaper alternatives. Competition from lower-priced imports and shifting consumer taste preferences put additional pressure on us to innovate, differentiate, and remain competitive in a crowded market.

What are the major cost drivers in your operations (e.g., energy, logistics, raw materials, labour)?

Our major cost drivers remain raw materials, energy, logistics, and labour. Raw materials take the largest share due to price volatility and seasonal shortages. Energy costs are high because of unreliable

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Mrs. Gloria Nwabuike, Managing Director, Acee Foods

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Our utilities cost has risen by almost 120%, driven by higher energy expenses. Raw material and packaging prices have gone up by about 38%, reflecting rising inflation and price volatility.

power supply, while poor infrastructure drives up logistics expenses. Labour, though relatively affordable, is pressured by the shortage of skilled talent. Financing costs and regulatory levies also add to the overall burden.

Has the cost of doing business increased or decreased in recent months? What are the main reasons?

Certainly, the cost of doing business has tremendously increased in recent months. Our utilities cost has risen by almost 120%, driven by higher energy expenses. Raw material and packaging prices have gone up by about 38%, reflecting rising inflation and price volatility. Logistics costs have also escalated due to increasing transportation expenses, while staff costs have risen as we adjusted salaries and benefits to keep pace with the higher cost of living and to retain critical talent. Taken together, these factors have placed considerable upward pressure on our operating expenses and highlight the increasingly challenging business environment in which we operate.

In your opinion, what reforms are most urgently needed to improve the business environment?

To improve the business environment, we urgently need reforms in three key areas: infrastructure and energy, to reduce high production and logistics costs; monetary and regulatory policy, to stabilize forex and simplify compliance; and agriculture and skills development, to strengthen local raw material supply and build the technical talent our industry needs. These reforms would ease pressure on businesses and make our sector more competitive.



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