Technology, Entertainment, Media and Sports Sector: Quarterly Insights for Q2 2025

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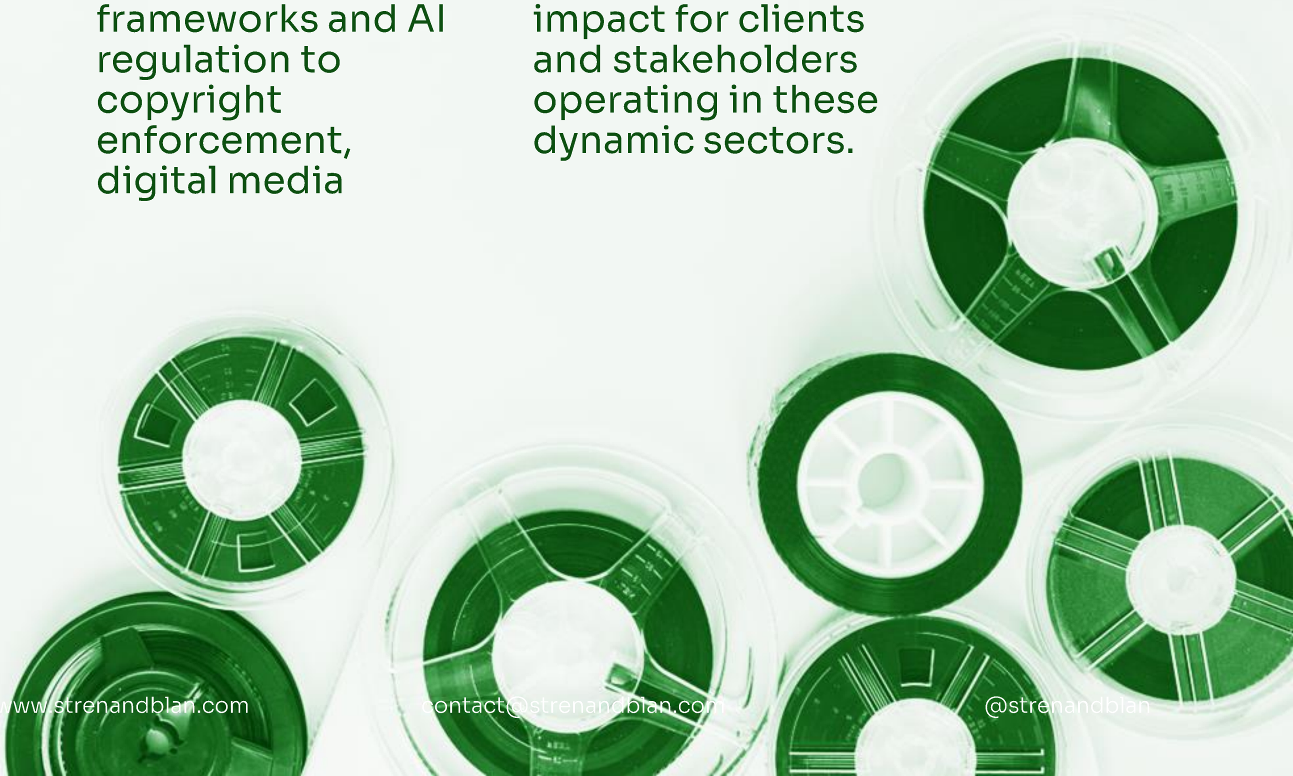
Introduction

This edition of our Quarterly TEMS Sector Insight provides a curated overview of key legal, regulatory, and industry developments across the Technology, Entertainment, Media, and Sports sectors in Nigeria and beyond, covering the period from April to June 2025. From evolving data governance frameworks and AI regulation to copyright enforcement, digital media compliance, and sports governance, this quarter has witnessed significant shifts with implications for businesses, rights holders, and regulators alike. This publication highlights updates, emerging trends, and anticipated developments shaping the TEMS landscape, while offering brief commentary on their practical impact for clients and stakeholders operating in these dynamic sectors.



TEMS Sector: Quarterly Insights for Q2 2025

Overview of the Quarterly Insights

Technology Sector

a) Nigeria Launches Space Sector Licensing Framework

Nigeria's National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) introduced a new regulation for licensing space activities; satellite launches and space tourism. This framework is aimed at monetizing the Space Sector with a projected revenue of $200 billion. Also, the framework outlines strict compliance, environmental safety, and technical expertise criteria aimed at protecting Nigeria's space assets from misuse and encourages private investment. The development aligns Nigeria with global space governance trends.

b) MTN Partners with Synamedia for Local Streaming Service

MTN and tech firm Synamedia launched a new African streaming platform focusing on local content, piloting in Nigeria. The platform will collaborate with indigenous creators to deliver culturally resonant content rather than produce original material. MTN emphasized its non-competitive approach to Netflix, offering an alternative local flavour. The move strengthens Nigeria's creative economy and highlights IP licensing, distribution rights, and digital compliance issues.

c) U.S. Deepfake Legislation Offers Global Blueprint

The U.S. NO FAKES Act, reintroduced in Congress, aims to grant individuals control over their voice and likeness in AI-generated media. Supported by major tech and media firms, it balances creative freedom with identity protection. With exemptions for satire and journalism, the Act could guide similar laws in Nigeria. As synthetic media use rises, this global model presents regulatory, commercial, and ethical benchmarks for Nigeria's evolving digital content space.

d) NCC Launches National Cybersecurity Strategy

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) unveiled a cybersecurity plan to protect telecom infrastructure, now deemed Critical National Information Infrastructure. Through this plan, NCC has stressed that telecom Operators must set up incident response teams and report breaches. The strategy bolsters investor confidence and aligns Nigeria's digital ecosystem with international standards. Legal implications include compliance obligations, criminal liability for sabotage, and national data security protocols. The reform marks a significant shift in Nigeria's tech regulatory landscape.

e) FG, Meta, Google Back ₦100M Artificial Intelligence (AI) Accelerator

The Federal Government launched an AI Accelerator Programme in collaboration with Meta and Google, aimed at funding startups to tackle local challenges with AI. Nigerian-led startups with market-ready AI solutions are eligible for funding, mentorship, and global investor access. This update highlights Nigeria's emerging AI governance framework and reflects a strong policy shift toward AI commercialization.

f) NCC Reviews Telecom Regulations for Emerging Tech

In response to the rapid advancement of modern technology such as AI, 5G, and Internet of Things (IoT), the NCC launched a Regulatory Impact Assessment to update Nigeria's telecom laws. Key areas under review include licensing, spectrum trading, and SIM regulation. The reform process involves stakeholder consultations and aims to support innovation, fair competition, and consumer protection. Legal practitioners should monitor changes that affect telecom contracts, compliance policies, and infrastructure investment.

g) Lagos to Publish Nigeria's First AI Guidelines

The Lagos State Government will soon release guidelines for the ethical development and deployment of AI systems. Though not binding law, the guidelines aim to ensure safety, fairness, and accountability in AI use across industries. The state urges businesses to adhere voluntarily while broader national regulation is developed. Legal focus areas include data protection, IP licensing for AI models, and developer responsibility. Lagos positions itself as Nigeria's AI governance frontrunner.

h) INEC Establishes AI Division for Electoral Integrity

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) launched an Artificial Intelligence Division to counter misinformation, enhance logistics, and modernize election operations. The move reflects global trends in electoral tech and aims to centralize AI governance in Nigeria's voting processes. Legal implications include the need for data protection laws and AI accountability mechanisms. The reform aligns election technology with global standards and presents opportunities for legal advisory in civic tech.

Entertainment Sector

a) NCC Issues Copyright Advisory to Nigerian DJs

On June 2, 2025, the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) released Copyright Advisory No. 4, warning that DJs who play music publicly without proper licensing are infringing on the Copyright Act 2022. The Advisory highlights that such unauthorized use of copyrighted music now attracts civil and criminal liability, including fines of at least ₦1,000,000 and up to five years' imprisonment. To support compliance, the NCC referenced a licensing arrangement between the Deejays Association of Nigeria (DJAN) and the Musical Copyright Society Nigeria (MCSN), which simplifies royalty payments for DJs. DJs are encouraged to register with DJAN or obtain licenses directly from MCSN, ensure legal music sourcing, and work only with compliant venues. The move signals a renewed push for copyright enforcement and fair compensation in Nigeria's entertainment sector.

b) FG Launches $200M Creative Economy Fund

The Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, and Tourism unveiled a $200 million Creative Fund, managed by AfreximBank. The fund targets film, fashion, and tourism, and includes projects like Abuja Creative City and a Global Event Arena. Reforms underway include IP incentives and policy reviews. The initiative promotes public-private investment in Nigeria's creative economy. Legal support will be essential for fund structuring, IP protection, and licensing.

c) Kano Censorship Board Halts 22 Hausa Films for Regulatory Violations

The Kano Censorship Board suspended 22 Hausa-language series, including Labarina and Dadin Kowa, for bypassing censorship procedures. Filmmakers were given one week to comply or face legal penalties. This enforcement affirms the state regulatory authority over film distribution.

d) Epic Games Wins Virtual Concert Patent Suit

On May 19, 2025, a U.S. federal jury ruled in favour of Epic Games, the developers of Fortnite, finding no infringement of Utherverse Gaming LLC's patent claims over virtual concerts hosted within the game. Utherverse had sued Epic for allegedly violating its patent on technology for replaying recorded experiences in virtual worlds, arguing that Fortnite's concerts; featuring stars like Travis Scott and Ariana Grande, used similar methods to host large-scale, repeatable digital events. However, Epic successfully argued that its concerts were pre-scripted, live interactive experiences powered by its proprietary Unreal Engine, not replays of recorded events, and that Utherverse's patent was overly broad and covered conventional technology. The jury found that Utherverse failed to prove infringement or establish that Epic's concert technology fell within the scope of its patent claims. Although one claim in Utherverse's patent was found invalid for being routine and conventional, the broader patent itself was not fully invalidated. Still, Epic was awarded no liability, and Utherverse received no damages. The verdict underscores the difficulty of applying traditional patent laws to emerging metaverse technologies, reaffirming the distinction between live virtual experiences and static content replays.

e) Warner Music Sues Crumbl Over TikTok Music Use

Warner Music Group (WMG) filed a lawsuit against Crumbl Cookies for allegedly using 159 copyrighted tracks in promotional TikTok videos without obtaining licenses, including songs by Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Ariana Grande, Bruno Mars, and Coldplay. WMG seeks a jury trial, a permanent injunction, and statutory damages that could total up to $150,000 per violation. Also, the Company seeks over $23 million in damages and a permanent injunction. The case underscores the importance of music licensing in brand marketing. Legal risks are significant for businesses relying on social media to drive engagement.

Media Sector

a) National IP Policy Set to Launch July 2025

Nigeria will formally unveil its National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy in this July. The policy aims to combat piracy, strengthen IP enforcement, and promote licensing and commercialization. Further, it reflects a whole-of-government approach involving multiple ministries. Stakeholders in digital content and innovation sectors are expected to benefit from the framework. The policy positions Nigeria for increased global IP recognition and compliance.

b) FCCPC Launches Anti-Counterfeit Traceability Portal

The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) has initiated a digital traceability system that assigns QR codes to products for end-to-end supply chain verification. This portal will enhance transparency, protect consumers, and deter fake goods in Nigeria's market. The tool allows manufacturers, retailers, and regulators to track products from source to shelf. Legal advisory will be needed to develop compliance strategies and navigate data usage concerns. The move also supports broader e-commerce regulation.

c) The Nigeria Copyright Commission Empowered Under the Proceeds of Crime Act (PoCA)

The Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) was designated as a Relevant Organisation by the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022, by the Proceeds of Crime (Designation of Nigerian Copyright Commission as a Relevant Organisation) Order 2025 (Order). The NCC can now trace and seize assets linked to copyright violations, even without criminal conviction. Through this order rights holders may also receive compensation for major financial losses. This boosts enforcement tools and strengthens IP restitution mechanisms.

d) Collective Management Organisation Regulations 2025 Overhaul Rights Management

NCC has issued new Collective Management Organisation Regulations. Highlights include mandatory reapplication for licenses, trust-based holding accounts, annual royalty reports, administrative deductions are capped at 30%, and distribution timelines have been shortened. The reforms aim to boost transparency, accountability, and member confidence. They align Nigeria's copyright system with international standards.

Sports Sector

a) Court Finds Football Authorities Liable in Player's Death

In a landmark judgment, the National Industrial Court ruled that Nasarawa United FC, NPFL, and NFF were negligent in the death of Chineme Martins. The player collapsed during a 2020 match with no proper medical support on site. The court cited lack of emergency checks and non-compliance with safety standards. Compensation was awarded to the family, and regulators were faulted for inaction. The ruling may reshape medical protocols in the Nigerian Sports Sector.

b) Steve Madden Sues Adidas to Protect Its Own Use of Stripes

Steve Madden has filed a lawsuit against Adidas in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, seeking a declaratory judgment that its Viento and Janos sneaker designs do not infringe upon Adidas' iconic three stripe trademark. The dispute centers on Adidas' claim that these designs, featuring two non-parallel bands, could confuse consumers into associating them with Adidas products. Steve Madden argues that the use of banded designs is common in the fashion industry and that Adidas does not hold exclusive rights over all stripe-like features on footwear. The lawsuit highlights a history of similar disputes between the two companies, including a 2002 case that was settled confidentially.

c) US Judge Approves Settlement Allowing NCAA Schools to Pay Athletes

On June 6, 2025, a U.S. judge approved a $2.8 billion settlement in House v. National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), allowing Division I schools to directly pay athletes for use of their Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL). From 2025–26, schools may allocate up to $20.5 million annually for athlete payments. A College Sports Commission and NIL reporting tools will ensure oversight. Though the NCAA admits no wrongdoing, appeals may follow. The case redefines college sports compensation and may spark broader legal reform.

d) Mbappé Sues Paris Saint-Germain Alleging Extortion Over Wage Dispute

Kylian Mbappé filed a criminal complaint against Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) in May 2025, alleging extortion and moral harassment during contract negotiations in 2023. The complaint, now under criminal investigation, concerns unpaid wages and coercive treatment. Mbappé's legal team secured a freeze on PSG funds and may escalate to the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). PSG denies wrongdoing and has filed a counterclaim. The case blends labour, criminal, and sports governance issues.

e) World Anti-Doping Agency Revokes Africa's Only Anti-Doping Lab Accreditation

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has permanently revoked the accreditation of Africa's only anti-doping laboratory, located in Bloemfontein, South Africa, due to continued failures in steroid detection. African nations now rely on labs in Qatar, India, and Spain, increasing cost and delays. Nigeria, for example, faces upfront payment demands for doping analysis. The revocation underscores the need for compliant, well-funded anti-doping infrastructure across Africa. Legal, operational, and health risks have now intensified.

f) The New Code of Sports-related Arbitration 2025

The Code of Sports-related Arbitration has been revised and took effect from 1st July 2025. The amendment to the code is aimed at the improvement of the services rendered by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). The key amendments include clearer rules on expedited procedures, preliminary issue resolution, and the formal role of CAS in-house clerks. The use of facsimile has been removed, and the value in dispute will now influence the number of arbitrators appointed. Emphasis is placed on speed and efficiency, and existing cases will follow the old code unless parties agree otherwise. Also, special arbitration rules for UEFA European Women's Championship 2025 are also incorporated.

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Outlook for the Next Quarter

Technology Sector

a) AI Regulation Accelerates:

Following Lagos State's upcoming AI guidelines and the Federal AI Accelerator launch, it is expected for regulatory frameworks to be issued at the national level. Businesses should prepare for rules on algorithmic transparency, data ethics, and liability.

b) Telecom and Cybersecurity Reform:

The NCC's review of telecom regulations and its new cybersecurity strategy signal imminent legal reforms in licensing, and breach response. Operators and service providers will face tighter compliance obligations.

c) Space Sector Commercialization:

Legal advisory demand is expected to grow in licensing, IP protection, and environmental compliance as Nigeria begins implementing its space regulation framework and encourages private investment.

Entertainment Sector

a) Censorship Enforcement Intensifies:

After the suspension of Hausa films in Kano, more states may crack down on non-compliant content. Content creators and distributors will require legal guidance on censorship laws, distribution permits, and IP clearance.

b) Creative Fund Disbursement Begins:

With the $200M Creative Economy Fund now active, expect activity in public-private creative infrastructure projects. Legal support will be vital for fund structuring, licensing deals, and IP management.

c) IP Litigation Watch:

Foreign judgments (for instance the Epic Games and the Steve Madden cases) may influence Nigerian legal interpretations around design elements, digital concerts, and fair use. Nigerian creatives will likely push for stronger local enforcement.

Media Sector

a) New IP Policy Launches:

Nigeria's National IP Policy takes effect in July. This will likely trigger amendments to copyright, patent, and trademark laws, with stronger enforcement tools and a streamlined licensing regime.

b) CMO Reform Implementation:

With new CMO regulations in place, the next quarter will see collective societies reapplying for licenses and adjusting to transparency standards. This creates opportunities for advisory on compliance and royalty structuring.

c) Brand Compliance Pressure

The FCCPC's traceability portal and stricter counterfeit regulations will compel e-commerce and FMCG businesses to align with digital compliance requirements. Expect greater scrutiny on brand use, QR tech, and supply chain transparency

Sports Sector

a) Player Welfare Standards Under Review:

Following the Nasarawa United ruling, expect regulatory audits and new safety protocols across NPFL and grassroots sports. Clubs and governing bodies will require legal input on duty of care, insurance, and risk compliance.

b) Athlete Compensation Models Emerging:

The NCAA settlement may influence Nigerian institutions to consider structured Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) frameworks. Universities and federations may seek legal advice on athlete agreements and endorsements.

c) International Disputes on the Rise:

Cases like Mbappé v. PSG and CAS Code of Sports Arbitration 2025 reforms reflect growth of international dispute resolution in sports. Cross-border representation and arbitration advisory will be in demand, especially around contract rights and player mobility.

d) Anti-Doping Crisis Looms:

WADA's revocation of the only African lab raises concerns about test credibility and cost burdens. African federations, including Nigeria's, may face legal pressure to invest in compliant anti-doping infrastructure or navigate liability for delayed testing.

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Firm Highlights

Firm Highlights

- Our Managing Partner, Christian Aniukwu, was recognised as a Recommended Individual in the 2025 edition of the IAM Patent 1000, alongside our Senior Associate, Omonefe Irabor-Benson; and Associates Emmanuel Ughanze and Oluchukwu Nwakor.

- Our Senior Associate, Omonefe Irabor-Benson; and Associates, Rebecca Sojinu, and Emmanuella Edevbaro attended the 2025 SMC Music Business Conference, themed Empowering Creatives: AI for Growth, Opportunities, and Capacity Building. At the event, Rebecca Sojinu presented a paper titled Legal and Ethical Considerations in Artificial Intelligence Adoption for the Creative Industries.

- Our Managing Partner, Christian Aniukwu; Senior Associate, Omonefe Irabor-Benson; and Associates, Stanley Umezuruike and Rebecca Sojinu, co-authored a research paper titled "Comparative Analysis of Digital Music Protection in Other Jurisdictions and Recommendations for Nigeria", which was featured in a published academic book by the School of Media and Communication, Pan-Atlantic University.

- Our Team Lead, Francisca Igboanugo; and Associates, Emmanuel Ughanze and Rebecca Sojinu, represented the Firm at the 8th Edition of the NADPA-RAPDP Conference hosted by the Nigerian Data Protection Commission.

- Stren & Blan Partners has been nominated in the "Innovation in ESG" category at the 2025 African Legal Technology & Innovation Awards, in recognition of the Firm's work in advancing ESG standards through legal advisory and policy engagement, particularly in the energy and finance sectors.

- Our Managing Partner, Christian Aniukwu, represented the Firm at the INTA 2025 Annual Meeting held in San Diego, where he engaged with global IP leaders and contributed to conversations shaping the future of trademark law.

- Our Managing Partner, Christian Aniukwu, alongside Adewale Akande, Amobi Ezeaku, Daniel Damola, and Chizoba Anyaeji, spoke at the Firm's Sport's webinar themed Unlocking Economic Potential Through Football, moderated by our Associate, Stanley Umezuruike.

- In celebration of World IP Day 2025, the Firm hosted a clinic themed IP Tune-Up: A Law Clinic for Artists & Producers. The clinic featured a panel discussion with our Senior Associate, Omonefe Irabor-Benson, alongside Lynda Alphaeus (Nigerian Copyright Commission), Amanda Uzoagba (Mdundo), and Joseph-Dike Abiagom (Aristokrat Records).

About SBP

Stren and Blan Partners is a world-class ingenious law firm with a beautiful blend of the brightest minds and well-rounded individuals championed with sole responsibilities of providing solutions to business problems and equally finding answers to the questions of our clients. We are a team always guided by our professional ethics. Also, honesty and transparency have been our watchwords in practice.

Stren & Blan Partners is a full-service commercial Law Firm that provides legal services to diverse local and multinational corporations. We have developed a clear vision for anticipating our clients' business needs and surpassing their expectations, and we do this with an uncompromising commitment to Client service and legal excellence.

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