



TEMS Sector 2024 Round-up and 2025 Forecast

The State of the TEMS Sector in
2024 and a 2025 Forecast

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Introduction

The TEMS sector in 2024 saw major regulatory shifts, global treaties, and industry reforms, including Nigeria's Supreme Court ruling on gaming, a global AI treaty, and FIFA's transfer rule changes, shaping trends for 2025.

The Technology, Entertainment, Media, and Sports (TEMS) sector in 2024 stood at the crossroad of innovation, regulation, and industry evolution. Across the globe and within Nigeria, significant developments defined the year, including the adoption of landmark international treaties, transformative court rulings, and the strategic restructuring of key institutions. Regulatory bodies and corporate players alike embraced the challenge of navigating complex landscapes and addressing issues such as data protection, intellectual property, competition, and governance. From the Supreme Court of Nigeria's decision to reshape the gaming industry in Nigeria to the global AI treaty and FIFA's transfer rule reform, the year was marked by a convergence of local and international efforts to foster accountability, inclusivity, and sustainability within the sector. This roundup captures the year's pivotal moments, reflecting the dynamic interplay of innovation and regulation while setting the stage for emerging trends in 2025.

Key Highlights – Technology and Telecommunications

NCC Orders Telcos to Bar Subscribers Not Linked to NIN

In February 2024, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) mandated telecom operators to disconnect subscribers who failed to link their SIM cards to their National Identification Numbers (NIN). This policy aimed to strengthen national security, curb identity theft, and enhance the integrity of Nigeria's digital ecosystem. By enforcing the NIN-SIM linkage, NCC sought to reduce fraudulent activities and align telecom regulations with global digital identity trends. This directive was a significant step toward creating a harmonized digital economy, ensuring robust data protection, and safeguarding the integrity of telecommunications networks.

Key Publications of NDPC: Strategic Roadmap, Guidance Notices and Implementation Directive

Notable regulatory advancements in the technology sector include Nigeria Data Protection Commission's (the "NDPC") publication of its strategic roadmap and

action plan in February 2024, the Guidance Notice on the Registration of Data Controllers and Data Processors of Major Importance (DCPMIs) and the draft Nigeria Data Protection Act General Application and Implementation Directive (GAID) 2024. The strategic roadmap and action plan provides a structured approach to implementing the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA), while the Guidance Notice on DCPMIs ensures that major data controllers and processors are properly registered and monitored. GAID clarifies the application of the NDPA, addressing ambiguities and ensuring consistent implementation. These measures were introduced to cure defects such as regulatory uncertainty, weak enforcement mechanisms, and inadequate oversight of entities handling large volumes of personal data. Another significant development was the launch of NDPC's registration portal, marking a significant step toward streamlining compliance processes. These initiatives further emphasize NDPC's commitment to the effective implementation of the NDPA and its ongoing efforts to enhance awareness and ensure compliance within the industry.

NCC Suspends Licensing of Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs)

In May 2024, NCC announced an indefinite suspension of MVNO licensing, citing the need to assess market saturation and competition dynamics. MVNOs, introduced in 2022, were expected to expand telecom penetration, particularly in underserved regions. However, after issuing over 43 licenses, NCC halted new approvals to prevent an unsustainable industry landscape. The decision reflects broader concerns about market stability and fair competition, as existing telecom giants dominate the sector. While the review may lead to stricter regulatory frameworks, the pause could also slow digital inclusion efforts, particularly in rural areas where MVNOs were positioned to bridge connectivity gaps. During the course of the year, our team analysed the move by NCC and our thoughts can be found in this article – [NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION SUSPENDS LICENSING OF MOBILE VIRTUAL NETWORK OPERATORS \(MVNOS\)](#)

EU, US, UK Sign the First Legally Binding AI Convention

In May 2024, the European Union, United States, and United Kingdom signed the world's first legally binding international Artificial Intelligence (AI) treaty, setting a precedent for global AI regulation.

The convention focuses on balancing innovation with accountability, ensuring AI aligns with human rights principles and ethical standards. This development signals a major shift in global AI governance, with significant implications for Nigerian AI startups, financial services, and cybersecurity. As AI-driven automation expands in sectors like fintech, healthcare, and entertainment, local regulatory bodies are likely to introduce compliance frameworks mirroring international AI policies in the near future. The treaty also increases the likelihood of global tech firms adjusting their AI operations to align with stricter ethical standards, impacting businesses leveraging AI-generated content, predictive analytics, and data-driven marketing.

NDPC and FCCPC Fine Fidelity Bank and Meta for Data Privacy Violations

In August 2024, Nigerian regulators made bold moves in data privacy enforcement, with NDPC fining Fidelity Bank for violating data protection laws, and the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) imposing a \$220 million penalty on Meta for breaching Nigerian users' privacy rights. The sanctions reflect Nigeria's growing regulatory stance on consumer data rights and the government's commitment to holding corporations accountable for data misuse. It also highlights the rising legal risks for companies that fail to secure consumer data and sets a new benchmark for enforcement actions in Nigeria's data privacy landscape.

Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc.) (Amendment) Act 2024

The Maiden Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc.) Act 2015 (the “Act”) was amended within the year, introducing key updates within the sector. Highlights of the Act include but not limited to, the imposition of a 0.5% cybersecurity levy on electronic transactions to fund cybersecurity initiatives; compulsory reporting of cyber threats within a 72-hour timeline and the imposition of penalties for non-compliance; and broadening of the category of members of staff of companies who can be held liable for identity theft and impersonation, beyond financial institutions to include individuals engaged in public and private sector services.

Significantly, the Act explicitly recognized the new data protection regime under the NDPA, and aligned with the provisions of the Act, requiring data retention and protection systems in line with the Act. This Act is indeed a welcome development as it signifies Nigeria’s attempt to strengthening its cybersecurity framework while fostering a more secure digital economy.

UN Adopts Landmark Cybercrime Convention

In December 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a cybercrime treaty, marking a global effort to combat digital threats. The convention aims to enhance international cooperation, assist developing countries in cybersecurity enforcement, and address cyber-related financial crimes such as fraud, hacking, and online money laundering. For Nigeria, where cybercrime remains a pressing issue, the treaty is expected to drive stricter national policies, encourage cross-border law enforcement partnerships, and boost corporate investment in cybersecurity infrastructure.

Key Highlights – Entertainment and Media

National Film and Video Censors Board Implements Stricter Content Regulations

In July 2024, the National Film and Video Censors Board (the “NFVCB”) strengthened its regulatory oversight by expanding its censorship and classification policies to include a wider range of audiovisual content, including skits, short films, and online streaming content. The Board aimed to curb the portrayal of drug use, offensive language, nudity, harmful rituals, sexual violence, and discriminatory content, aligning with global efforts to promote responsible media consumption. To modernize its enforcement mechanisms, NFVCB announced plans to transition to a digital platform, allowing filmmakers to register and submit films online for classification and approval within 6 to 48 hours. While this initiative is yet to be fully implemented, it reflects the growing influence of digital compliance frameworks in Nigeria’s entertainment industry.

Federal Government Approves Creative Economy Development Fund

The Federal Executive Council approved the Creative Economy Development Fund (the “CEDF”), designed to support the creative sector through financial instruments such as debt and equity funding. Backed by the African Development Bank through the Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises program, the initiative includes an Intellectual Property Monetisation Framework, allowing creatives to leverage intellectual property as collateral. This innovative approach aims to enhance access to funding, drive growth, and professionalize Nigeria’s creative economy, positioning it for global competitiveness.

Federal Government to Launch a National Intellectual Property Policy for the Creative Industry

In August 2024, the Ministry of Art, Culture, and the Creative Economy announced plans to launch Nigeria's first comprehensive Intellectual Property (IP) Policy. This initiative, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment, aims to establish a structured framework for protecting intellectual property rights in Nigeria's creative industry. With the creative economy being one of Nigeria's fastest-growing sectors, this policy is expected to address copyright enforcement, content monetization, licensing regulations, and anti-piracy measures. The move aligns with global trends, as regulators worldwide are strengthening IP protections to safeguard creators and attract foreign investment in their entertainment industries. By October 2024, the Federal Government reaffirmed its commitment to IP protection through the revalidation of the National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy Paper, a document aimed at harmonizing existing IP laws with international best practices. If effectively implemented, the policy will encourage innovation and enhance Nigeria's positioning as a hub for digital and creative content.

Alcon Entertainment Sues Elon Musk Over Unauthorized Use of Blade Runner 2049 Imagery

In October 2024, Alcon Entertainment filed a lawsuit against Tesla, Elon Musk, and Warner Bros., alleging unauthorized use of imagery from Blade Runner 2049 in Tesla's robotaxi launch campaign. The lawsuit claimed that Tesla's use of Blade Runner's visuals misled the public into associating the film with its product, causing financial losses and potential reputational harm. This legal battle highlighted the increasing scrutiny around unauthorized commercial use of copyrighted materials and the importance of upholding intellectual property in digital marketing and branding. Given the rapid expansion of AI-generated content and brand collaborations, this case serves as a cautionary tale for businesses leveraging pop culture references in advertising without obtaining proper licensing rights.

Key Highlights – Sports

Court of Arbitration for Sport Upholds IOC's Decision to Derecognize the International Boxing Association (IBA)

In April 2024, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) upheld the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) decision to revoke the recognition of the International Boxing Association (IBA) due to persistent financial irregularities and governance failures. The ruling signaled the IOC's increasing intolerance for mismanagement within global sports federations and raised concerns about boxing's future in the Olympic Games. This decision may influence Nigerian sports regulatory bodies to tighten compliance measures for national sports federations, ensuring greater financial transparency and governance accountability.

President Bola Tinubu Scraps Sports Development Ministry

In October 2024, President Bola Tinubu dissolved the Sports Development Ministry, transferring its responsibilities to the National Sports Commission (NSC). The move was part of a broader government restructuring strategy aimed at reducing administrative redundancies and enhancing sectoral efficiency. The initiative reflects the government's broader strategy to consolidate overlapping functions across ministries.

European Court Ruling in Lassana Diarra Case Prompts FIFA Transfer Rule Reforms

In a landmark decision, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled in favour of former French footballer Lassana Diarra, declaring FIFA's Article 17 of the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP) incompatible with EU law. The ruling prompted FIFA to suspend all transfer-related cases under Article 17, forcing the organization to revise its transfer rules to align with European legal standards. This decision reflects the growing legal challenges faced by sports governing bodies and may influence Nigerian football authorities to adopt stronger regulatory frameworks for player contracts and transfer disputes.

Supreme Court Voids National Lottery Act, Grants States Control Over Gaming Regulations

In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court of Nigeria declared the National Lottery Act unconstitutional, stating that gaming and lotteries fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of state governments. This decision effectively removes federal oversight of lotteries and betting operations, granting states autonomy in gaming regulation. The ruling is expected to reshape Nigeria's gaming industry, allowing state governments to enact tailored regulatory frameworks and potentially attract more gaming investments.

What to Expect in 2025 Emerging Trends Across the TEMS Sector

As the TEMS industries evolve, 2025 is expected to be a defining year of regulatory changes, AI expansion, digital transformation, and market disruptions. Industry leaders, policymakers, and innovators will have to navigate emerging trends in AI, data protection, content creation, digital finance, and sports governance. Here are the key trends to watch in 2025 across these industries:

AI Regulation and Ethical AI Development Will Take Centre Stage

AI governance will be a major focus in 2025 as countries around the world introduce regulatory frameworks to balance innovation with ethical concerns. With the EU, US, and UK signing the first legally binding AI treaty in 2024, this is mounting pressure for governments, including Nigeria, to establish clear AI governance policies. AI-driven automation, machine learning, and generative AI tools are rapidly transforming industries such as finance, healthcare, legal services, and entertainment, raising questions about transparency, accountability, and data privacy. In Nigeria, regulators may begin formulating policies through the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and other agencies to monitor AI deployment in key industries. Furthermore, AI ethics will become a critical concern as organizations explore automation in areas such as customer service, content creation, and fraud detection. Additionally, intellectual property disputes related to AI-generated content are expected to emerge, forcing policymakers to define legal ownership rights for AI-generated music, art, and written works. Lastly, companies that rely on AI-driven solutions must prepare for potential compliance requirements and align their AI strategies with global best practices.

Digital Identity and Data Protection Becoming Business Imperatives

Following major data protection rulings in 2024 discussed above, regulators are expected to increase enforcement actions on data privacy violations in 2025. NDPC is likely to introduce stricter compliance audits and higher penalties for companies failing to secure consumer data. This shift will drive businesses across banking, telecommunications, e-commerce, and fintech to prioritize cybersecurity investments, digital identity verification, and consumer data protection policies. As more Nigerians embrace digital financial services, the demand for secure digital identity verification systems will rise. Banks and fintech companies will be under pressure to enhance fraud prevention mechanisms through biometric authentication, AI-powered risk analysis, and blockchain-based digital identity solutions. Additionally, the rise in consumer awareness of data rights may lead to more legal battles over data privacy violations, forcing organizations to adopt stronger consent-based marketing models and robust data governance strategies to maintain compliance.

Nigeria's Creator Economy and Intellectual Property Monetization Will Expand

With the CEDF approved in 2024, 2025 will see a significant push toward monetizing IP assets in Nigeria's entertainment industry. The fund's introduction marked a turning point for Nigerian musicians, filmmakers, digital artists, and content creators, providing them with access to financing through IP-backed loans and investment frameworks. This shift is expected to redefine creative ownership models, allowing artists to monetize their works more efficiently and reduce financial dependence on traditional record labels and media studios.

Telecom Sectors Will Face Regulatory Disruptions

The NCC's MVNO licensing in 2024 is likely to be revisited in 2025. If the review process is completed, we may see a more structured licensing framework that encourages digital inclusion in underserved regions while preventing market saturation. Furthermore, new mobile money regulations may be introduced to tackle concerns around digital fraud, transaction security, and anti-money laundering compliance.

Global and Local Sports Regulations Will Reshape Nigeria's Sports Industry

With FIFA's transfer rule reforms and the dissolution of Nigeria's Sports Development Ministry, the sports governance in Nigeria is set to undergo major restructuring in 2025. The transition of sports administration responsibilities to NSC raises questions about funding allocations, policy direction, and athlete development programs.

If effectively managed, this shift could streamline operations and create a more professional sports industry, but mismanagement could lead to weakened infrastructure and reduced government support for grassroots sports development. Furthermore, FIFA's 2025 Club World Cup is also expected to bring increased scrutiny over sponsorship deals, illegal sports marketing, and unauthorized brand promotions. With the tournament attracting global attention, sports organizations must implement stricter compliance measures to prevent trademark infringements and unauthorized merchandising. Lastly, Nigerian football clubs participating in international competitions must ensure that their sponsorship and licensing agreements align with FIFA's updated commercial regulations to avoid legal complications.

Nigeria's Gaming and Lottery Industry Will See Increased State Control

The Supreme Court's ruling in 2024 declaring the National Lottery Act unconstitutional has set the stage for a complete restructuring of Nigeria's gaming industry in 2025. With state governments now holding exclusive jurisdiction over lotteries and gaming regulations, operators will need to navigate varying compliance requirements across multiple states. This decentralized approach is expected to attract more private investments, as states compete to offer favourable gaming policies to licensed operators. However, the absence of a uniform national gaming framework could lead to regulatory inconsistencies, tax disputes, and compliance challenges for businesses operating in multiple states. The Nigerian gambling industry may also witness an increase in online gaming platforms, requiring state governments to introduce clearer policies on digital betting, tax collection, and responsible gambling initiatives.

Streaming Platforms and Digital Media Will Drive the Future of Entertainment

The rapid expansion of global and regional streaming platforms in Nigeria will continue shaping the entertainment industry in 2025. With the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) moving toward a digital classification system, streaming services may soon be required to comply with localized content regulations governing film ratings, censorship, and advertising restrictions. Also, independent film production is also expected to grow, with Nigerian filmmakers increasingly bypassing traditional distribution channels in favour of direct-to-consumer platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and independent streaming apps. As the industry evolves, media companies will need to invest in innovative content strategies, while regulatory agencies must find a balance between censorship and creative freedom to ensure sustainable industry growth.

Generative AI and its Expanding Influence

Generative AI is set to experience unprecedented advancements in 2025, driven by breakthroughs from DeepSeek, OpenAI, Google DeepMind and Anthropic. These companies are developing more sophisticated AI models, such as DeepSeek Coder, OpenAI's rumored GPT-5, and Google's Gemini Ultra, which will enhance natural language processing, coding capabilities and autonomous decision-making. AI adoption is expanding beyond traditional tech spaces into healthcare, legal services, finance, and manufacturing, where AI-powered tools are streamlining operations, automating workflows, and enhancing data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, one of the biggest areas of AI transformation in 2025 will be enterprise AI integration, with businesses increasingly relying on custom AI assistants for knowledge management, customer service automation, and predictive analytics. In finance, AI is expected to revolutionize fraud detection and algorithmic trading, while in healthcare, AI-driven models will enhance diagnostic accuracy and drug discovery. Governments and regulatory bodies will likely tighten AI governance, introducing global AI safety frameworks and copyright laws to address issues like AI bias, data privacy and infringement concerns. As AI systems become more autonomous, questions around accountability, security, and ethical concerns will dominate industry discussions, making 2025 an important year for shaping the future of generative AI.

Conclusion:

The TEMS sector in 2024 was marked by rapid technological advancements, evolving regulatory landscapes, and industry-defining developments across technology, entertainment, media and sports. From landmark AI governance treaties to Nigeria's increasing enforcement of data protection laws, the year showcased a growing commitment to balancing innovation with accountability. Looking ahead to 2025, AI governance, data privacy enforcement, IP monetization, digital identity verification, fintech regulations, sports governance, and media transformations will drive industry trends. Thus, as local and global policies continue to shift, businesses and stakeholders must proactively adapt to emerging legal frameworks, leverage digital innovations, and embrace compliance measures to remain competitive.

About Stren & Blan Partners

Stren & Blan Partners is an innovative and dynamic Law Firm with a compelling blend of experienced lawyers and energetic talents. We are focused on providing solutions to our client's business problems and adding value to their businesses and commercial endeavours. This underpins our ethos as everything we do flows from these underlying principles.

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 client's business needs and surpassing their expectations, and we do this with an uncompromising commitment to Client service and legal excellence.

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