



Review Article

**Institutional Framework for the Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights in Nigeria:
Challenges, Coordination Gaps and Prospects for Reform**

Moses Daisi Adesoji^{1*} and Mercy Olayinka Femi-Idris²

¹Faculty of Law, National Open University, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria

²Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, City University,
Cambodia. *Corresponding author: mosesadesoji29@gmail.com

Abstract

Intellectual property rights (IPRs) form a vital part of modern creative economies because they offer legal tools for the protection of works of authorship, inventions, brands, designs and other forms of creative output. Notwithstanding the existence of statutory protections, enforcement is a different issue altogether. This article analyses the enforcement machinery for IPRs in Nigeria, with particular focus on the institutional mandates, enforcement agencies, institutional mandates, coordination challenges and reform needs of the Nigerian intellectual property ecosystem. The article adopts a doctrinal research approach. Research materials are essentially legislations, judicial materials, institutional documents, policy instruments, and relevant contemporary scholarship. The analysis takes into account the Nigerian Copyright Commission, the registry for trademarks, patents and designs, the National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion, the National Information Technology Development Agency, the National Film and Video Censors Board, the National Broadcasting Commission, the National Council for Arts and Culture, the Trade Malpractices Investigation Panel, and the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, as well as the courts and other enforcement agencies. It finds that Nigeria is equipped with a fairly extensive enforcement machinery, but problems include overlapping responsibilities, capacity problems, poor coordination, procedural inefficiency, technological incapacity, low public awareness and rampant piracy and counterfeiting. The recently developed National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy offers an opportunity to make up for these deficiencies. The article argues that a whole-of-government coordinated approach which includes law reform, institutional specialization, strengthening judicial capacity, effective border enforcement, stakeholder collaboration and public education is necessary for enforcement.

Keywords: Intellectual property rights; IP enforcement; institutional framework; Nigeria; copyright piracy; intellectual property policy

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1. Introduction

Background

Intellectual property (IP) has gained more prominence for national development as economies move towards knowledge, technology, creativity and innovation (Lakani, 2024; Beltrn-Urvina et al., 2025). In contrast to traditional tangible property, intellectual property seeks to safeguard intangible goods of human invention and ingenuity, such as literary and artistic creations, inventions, trademarks, industrial models and other valuable intangible assets. An effective system of safeguards allows the creators and innovators to exploit the economic fruits of their labour and reward for the later while motivating further investments in R&D, creation and engineering (Lawan et al., 2025) The importance of effective protection extends beyond the benefit of right holders.

An effective IP framework can promote structural development, transfer of technology, entrepreneurship, investment, and expansion of the creative industry. Evidence from Nigeria reveals that weak enforcement and noncompliance can hinder the developmental prospects of intellectual property (Afolayan, 2022; Okunade et al., 2023). Accordingly, the quality of an IP regime may not be measured merely by the presence of a legal system, but also by the capacity of public institutions to translate statutory rights into effective protection. Nigeria has established a reasonably broad institutional platform for the administration and enforcement of various categories of intellectual property. The principal body for the regulation and enforcement of copyright is the Nigerian Copyright Commission (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2023).

Others, such as the registries and other agencies, are involved in the regulation and enforcement of Trademarks, Patents and Industrial designs. Additional institutions play key roles in enforcement across specific sectors, such as technology transfer, broadcasting and film, digital governance, consumer protection, border enforcement and criminal justice. The Nigerian Copyright Act 2022 is one of the most important developments in this institutional setting. The new law has incorporated or enhanced provisions relevant to modern copyright issues, such as digital infringement and the use of technological copyright protection measures.

The Nigerian Copyright Commission, which identifies itself as the main agency of Copyright regulation, advocacy, supervision and enforcement, claims to be responsible for the investigation, seizure, prosecution, anti-piracy and related activities. The policy environment has also experienced significant change; Nigeria's National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy has been duly approved by the Federal Executive Council in November 2025. The policy paper seeks to provide the nation with a cohesive institutional framework, which intends to ensure the overall legal and institutional framework, combat enforcement, combat capacity building, boost awareness of IP, and commercialize IP assets. This development offers an important opportunity for Nigeria to reevaluate its enforcement institutional architecture.

Study Gap

The extant Nigerian scholarship has explored, respectively, the legal, economic and copyright aspects of intellectual property protection. For example, Afolayan (2022) has identified weak enforcement and non-implementation as significant challenges to effective protection. Okunade et al. (2023), on the other hand, demonstrate the association between weak enforcement and industrial advancement. Other studies have concentrated on the regulation of copyright, the distribution of digital content, and the implications of the Copyright Act 2022 (Odion, 2023; Sodipo & Uruakpa, 2021; Aina-Pelemo & Ude, 2025). Nonetheless, the field of study remains somewhat disjointed. While some research has focused exclusively on individual intellectual property rights, such as copyright, other areas of attention have included largely substantive law. Less attention has been given to the linkages between registration, regulation, investigation, prosecution, adjudication, border enforcement, consumer protection and digital monitoring. As such, this essay shifts the analytical focus from Nigeria's legal framework to Nigeria's enforcement agencies and aims to determine whether they operate as an effective enforcement system.

Justification

This study is justified because of the continuing disconnect between formal legal measures and the practical realities of enforcement. The original project identifies a number of challenges, which include the inadequacy of funding, limited expertise, corruption, procedural delay, weak sanctions, public apathy and the inadequacy of digital infrastructure. These challenges are also relevant where infringement occurs in the physical and digital spaces, because counterfeit products may cross boundaries and digital assets can be replicated and distributed in a matter of moments. Enforcement institutions can therefore no longer rely solely on traditional litigation and investigation. The study is also appropriately timed, owing to the fact that Nigeria has introduced the NIPPS. The WIPO explains that objectives of the policy include the strengthening of the legal and institutional framework, enforcement, capacity building, education and dissemination, and commercialization. 1.4 Scope The article considers the Nigerian institutional framework for the enforcement of intellectual property rights and gives particular focus to the involvement of certain agents in the investigation, administrative action, prosecution, adjudication, market enforcement and the solution to the coordination problem. It considers copyright, trademark, patent and industrial design enforcement, including the Nigerian Copyright Commission, the Patent Registry, the NOTAP, the NITDA, the NFVCB, the NBC, the NCAC, the TMIP, the FCCPC, the judiciary. This broad institutional approach reflects that employed in the original project.

Aim

This paper seeks to critically analyze the institution for the enforcement of intellectual property rights Nigeria, and identify institutional, procedural and technological measures to improve enforcement.

Objectives

Specifically, the article aims to:

1. Explore the key categories of intellectual property rights protected in Nigeria;
2. Analyze the main agents of enforcement and administration;
3. Evaluate the interaction of administrative, regulatory, investigation and adjudicative mechanisms of enforcement;

4. Identify key institutional and operational constraints to enforcement; and
5. Make recommendations for an integrated reform framework for Nigerian enforcement.

2. Methodology The paper employs a doctrinal legal approach.

The method is suitable for the study since it raises questions concerning the legislation, institutional values, procedure, enforcement machinery and policy setup. The research utilizes primary and secondary materials. They include the Nigerian legislation, policy, judicial materials and official communications on the institutions, legislation, policies, and enforcement agencies. The methodology adopted in the original project was also doctrinal and it used the sources that include institutions' websites, legal texts, articles, law journals, semester work, and other document-based evidences. The research was conducted using a thematic framework, which is structured around the four key concepts of institutional mandate, the function of enforcement, the issue of institutional coordination, and the object of reform. The thematic approach is useful in ensuring that the analysis moves beyond merely describing what the institutions are doing by recognizing that institutional fragmentation may result in weak enforcement.

3. Intellectual Property Rights and Enforcement in Nigeria

A strong distinction needs to be drawn between copyright and industrial property rights, otherwise known as trademarks and patents. Copyrights consist of any creative work, such as music, film, literature, graphic art, photographs, etc. Patents and trademarks, on the other hand, relate to the ownership of the rights to uniquely identifying what you do and the goods or services that you use to do it. A related category is industrial design. The substantive requirements of each of these categories differ significantly in terms of the protection offered, especially in the digital environment. As a result, the enforcement of copyright involves mechanisms that can be substantially different from those used in addressing patent infringement and trademark counterfeiting. The new Copyright Act 2022 and the existing legal environment are particularly important because they address several issues relevant to digital communication. The copyright protection system today must provide for a blend of legal and technological capacities. The data also suggests that the legal system cannot function effectively without the implementation, which to the books may be incomplete. Despite the legal provisions that the Copyright Act 2022 provides, few copyright owners were aware of the law. This indicates that legislative reform without effective implementation may produce limited results.

4. Institutional framework for IP enforcement in Nigeria

Institutional mapping

Table 1 shows an institutional map of Nigeria's IPR enforcement architecture. It maps out the main institutions mandated with IP management, enforcement, investigation, border management, digital oversight and judicial determination. This institutional map shows that IP protection is not singularly located within one institution. Instead, IP protection across the enforcement chain comprises a network of specialised and complementary institutions whose mandates overlap at various points in the enforcement chain. This institutional set-up is a recognition that IPR protection in the modern world encompasses registration, investigation, detention, seizure, prosecution, border interception, digital monitoring and adjudication.

Table 1: Institutional map of Nigeria's intellectual property rights (IPR) enforcement architecture

Institution	Principal area of responsibility	Enforcement relevance	Major institutional challenge	Reform priority
Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC)	Copyright administration, regulation and enforcement	Investigation, anti-piracy operations, seizures, prosecution and copyright regulation	Resource technological capacity; scale of digital piracy	Strengthen and funding, digital monitoring, of investigation and inter-agency operations
Trademarks Registry	Trademark registration and administration	Supports protection of registered marks and related enforcement processes	Administrative workload and enforcement coordination	Improve digital registration, searchable databases and coordination
Patents and Designs Registries	Patent and industrial design administration	Provides legal registration and documentary foundation for rights enforcement	Technical capacity and administrative efficiency	Strengthen technical examination and digital services
National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP)	Technology acquisition and transfer	Supports technology-transfer regulation and protection of related interests	Coordination between technology policy and enforcement	Integrate technology-transfer IP information with national IP policy
National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)	Digital technology governance and ICT development	Relevant to digital environments in which IP infringement may occur	Rapid technological change	Strengthen digital regulatory cooperation and technical expertise
National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB)	Film and video regulation	Relevant to film distribution and content regulation	Overlapping responsibilities within creative-sector governance	Improve coordination with NCC and creative-industry stakeholders
National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)	Broadcasting regulation	Relevant to unauthorized broadcasting and regulated	Institutional overlap rapidly changing	Develop and coordinated broadcasting/IP

		media environments	digital broadcasting	enforcement protocols
National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC)	Arts and cultural development	Supports cultural-sector interests connected with creative works	Limited direct enforcement role	Strengthen IP awareness among cultural-sector stakeholders
(Trademark, Industrial Property TMIP)	Trade malpractices	Relevant to investigation of deceptive trade practices and counterfeit-related conduct	Limited visibility and coordination	Improve information sharing with customs, FCCPC and IP institutions
(Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission FCCPC)	Competition and consumer protection	Consumer-facing enforcement against harmful or misleading commercial practices	Need for stronger IP-related inter-agency coordination	Integrate counterfeit and consumer-protection intelligence
Nigerian courts	Judicial determination of disputes	Civil and criminal remedies and adjudication of infringement	Delay, cost and procedural complexity	Increase judicial specialization and case-management capacity
Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and other border agencies	Border control	Interception of counterfeit and infringing goods	Porous borders, intelligence and resource limitations	Risk-based border enforcement and information sharing

Source: Author's synthesis based on relevant Nigerian institutional mandates and recent IP policy and enforcement literature.

4. Main Institutional Actors (Enforcement Systems)

The Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) sits at the heart of the copyright enforcement system within the institutional architecture. It covers registration and administration but also investigation, enforcement, public awareness and support for prosecution. The significance of the NCC has increased with the expansion of digital piracy – where physical enforcement measures are increasingly supplemented by online monitoring, detection and intervention.

The Trademarks Registry and Patents and Designs Registry fill a slightly different but equally important role. Their primary function is administration and formal protection of industrial property rights – through registration. This provides a solid legal base for rights owners to defend themselves and seek redress against infringement. Registration should not be confused with enforcement – which depends on linking rights registration with enforcement and evidence collection, dispute settlement and judicial remedies. The distinction is important because an effective registration system does not necessarily mean effective enforcement. The recently enacted Copyright Act 2022 offers a new legal basis to combat infringement in the digital environment.

The National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP) has a complementary role within the institutional network. It is particularly important for technology transfer, innovation and commercialisation. Its diverse functions show that IP governance is about more than just infringement control – creating the right environment for indigenous innovations and know-how to grow and be marketed. Being able to effectively transfer technology, commercialise and create innovative intellectual property can add value to Nigeria's economy.

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) is the digital governance aspect of the governance system. Unlike the specialist IP enforcement agencies, its broad regulatory and technological expertise and capacities become more relevant when infringement switches to online channels. Marketplaces, social media, websites, and other internet-based channels provide new opportunities for the spread of pilfered works or counterfeit products. Effective digital IP governance, in turn, requires cooperation with other specialist IP agencies that understand the legal processes and with internet platforms and other technology companies that understand the digital mechanisms.

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) offers an important border enforcement dimension. Counterfeit products and the like can enter domestic markets through international supply chains – putting border controls as an effective preventative measure. Customs controls work best if law enforcement agencies are able to act on intelligence about suspect shipments, infamous brands and emerging infringement trends. This is why border enforcement needs to be linked with information that is held by the IP registries, rights owners and law enforcement agencies. The Nigeria

Police Force (NPF) contributes primarily through investigation and the regular law enforcement powers of the police. It is most likely to be relevant if the suspected infringement involves criminal acts that require investigation, evidence gathering, arrest and referral to the judiciary. The technical nature of many IP offences means that the police force must also be equipped with specific expertise. This means there needs to be a linking between the police service and the specialized institutions that function in the enforcement chain – such as the NCC or the NCS.

The Federal High Court is the end-point of the enforcement network and its actions go beyond establishing infringement; the court offers access to legal remedies and determines the penalties for proven offences within its jurisdiction. Weaknesses at any earlier point – inadequate investigation, incomplete evidence, poor inter-agency communication or time-consuming case preparation – can have direct consequences for court rulings. Its role in this respect should be seen within the broader institutional environment and not as simply a matter of judicial reform.

5. Institutional Coordination as the Central Enforcement Problem

The study points to dispersed oversight as being one of the enforcement bottlenecks, which the following analysis demonstrates. Infringement investigation might involve the NCC, police, prosecutors, courts, internet service providers, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation and various copyright and trade mark registers, for example. Counterfeiting might involve the NCS, consumer protection agencies, criminal investigators, courts and trademark registers.

Technology transfer might involve the NCS, Nigeria Export Promotion Council, the NIC or university technology parks (NIPC, 2026; NIPC, 2026). As the analysis suggests, the functioning of the entire system depends on how well institutions work with one another, – rather than simply how each does its job individually. Problems with overlapping jurisdictions, duplication of efforts, lack of information sharing and delayed investigations and enforcement actions undermine enforcement overall. Conversely, well-coordinated institutions can benefit from pooled intelligence, reduced duplication, and greater chances of infringing activities being identified and successfully acted upon. One of the policies guiding activities of this nature is the strengthening of the legal and institutional framework for IPR enforcement through NIPPS.

6. Key Challenges in IPR Enforcement

Despite the frameworks for legal protection and the wide range of institutions, the enforcement situation continues to be hampered by a number of key challenges. These challenges are both inter-related at the governance level and operational in the sense that they need to be tackled at the level of individual institutions but also to improve inter-institutional relations.

6.1 Funding and Capacity to Deliver

Effectively Insufficient funding affects enforcement agencies' ability to carry out investigations, inspections, legal proceedings, public outreach and awareness creation over the long term. Operational budgets are usually constrained by limited budgets for logistics, equipment, case preparation and the maintenance of special enforcement capabilities. This is problematic in the case of dispersed infringement activities and rapidly shifting markets. Institutional capacity is also affected when institutional communication and procedures within databases and case files cannot provide the capacity to handle the volume and complexity of enforcement work. Previous reviews of Nigeria's enforcement situation have already flagged as inadequate institutional resources as a key obstacle in delivering effective protection (US Department of State, 2024; Ojo, 2026). Ensuring regular budgets and improving institutional infrastructure should therefore be priority measures.

6.2 Lack of Technically

Adequate Expertise IPR infringement increasingly requires knowledge and skills that combine legal skills with a high level of technical, forensic, investigative and business expertise. Law enforcement staff are likely to come across technical and complex issues related to software and digital files, online platforms, product authentication processes, examination of trademarks, licensing and technology transfer arrangements. The speed with which new technologies emerge introduces a further widening of the skills gap between infringers and law enforcement agencies. As a result, there is a growing demand for continuous specialist training of investigators, prosecutors, customs officers, examiners and judges when it comes to complicated cases. The need for higher technical skills is also reflected in the efforts to strengthen IPR dispute resolution and human resources capacity in Nigeria.

6.3 Corruption and Integrity Risks

Integrity risks may erode IP enforcement by reducing confidence in regulatory institutions and investigative procedures. When enforcement decisions are compromised by personal

vested interests or corrupt practices, rights holders may be treated arbitrarily or afforded diminished remedies. Corruption may also compromise the management of seized goods, confidential information, investigative evidence and decision-making in general. Such behaviour may incentivize repeat infringement because wrongdoers can trade off enforcement authorities' perceived willingness to negotiate rather than act predictably. Institutional integrity will require transparent processes, documented decision-making, internal controls, complaint mechanisms and disciplinary sanctions. Strengthening accountability mechanisms will be essential to translating legal and institutional reform into impartial enforcement outcomes.

6.4 Judicial and Administrative Delays

Prolonged and inefficient legal and procedural processes diminish the effect of otherwise effective legal rights. Frustration with length of proceedings can reduce access to justice for many rights holders who do not have the financial resources to sustain lengthy litigation. Complex disputes can entail demanding documentary, technical and evidentiary requirements, making these procedures prone to lengthy proceedings. Procedural backlogs increase litigation costs and may discourage small rights holders from engaging in proceedings. Inefficiency may also weaken the deterrent impact of sanctions when infringement claims are not resolved quickly. Specializing the judiciary in technology-intensive disputes, strengthening case-management procedures and providing regular training for judges can help reduce delays (WIPO, 2026). The issue for Nigeria is not the presence of courts, but the promptness, consistency and affordability with which appropriate remedies can be delivered.

6.5 Knowledge Gaps and Compliance

Knowledge gaps about intellectual property rights are likely to diminish voluntary compliance among infringing rights holders and consumers. Some rights holders may not understand the minimum information required for registration, licensing or litigation. Others may lack confidence in the effectiveness of the legal system and therefore prefer to negotiate or settle disputes without formal enforcement procedures. Consumers who do not understand the economic and legal consequences of buying counterfeit and pirated goods may be less likely to avoid infringement, so the market suffers harm without the benefit of effective rights protection. Recent data from Nigeria suggest that although copyright awareness appears to be relatively high, knowledge of the law and the effectiveness of enforcement remains uneven (Aina-Pelemo & Ude, 2025). Public information and awareness campaigns should therefore move from general knowledge raising to practical guidance for creators, small firms, consumers, educational institutions and industry organizations. Increasing voluntary compliance will help reduce avoidable infringements and incentivize creative subjects to engage with the formal IP system.

6.6 Digital Technologies

Digital technology has radically altered the nature, duration and distance of intellectual property infringing acts. Pirated creative content can be duplicated and shared through social media, messaging apps, peer-to-peer file-sharing services, websites and other digital platforms without relying on physical infrastructure. This environment has made traditional enforcement tools less effective because infringing content can be quickly changed, relocated or proliferated. Effective law enforcement will require digital investigation, online monitoring, electronic evidence collection and cooperation with digital-service providers.

Nigeria's Copyright Act 2022 has introduced new enforcement powers relevant to this environment, and the Nigerian Copyright Commission has been building its capacity in this regard (NCC, 2023, 2025). The primary challenge is to equip enforcement institutions to respond to the rapid evolution of infringement techniques.

6.7 Border Control and Smuggling

Cross-border infringing acts represent a unique enforcement challenge because infringement may occur at or near the port of entry before infringing goods enter local markets. Typical counterfeited items include pharmaceuticals, spare parts, fast-moving consumer goods, luxury goods and other clearly branded products entering Nigeria through supply chains that make detection and interception difficult. Effective border enforcement depends on conducting targeted seizures based on timely intelligence information about routes, traders, source destinations and specific brands. Infringement can often be prevented if customs agents cooperate with rights holders and enforcement agencies in conducting risk-based inspections, intelligence analysis and post-seizure investigations. Strengthening cooperation, information sharing and risk indicators will be critical to utilizing border controls effectively without reliance on physical inspection of every consignment. Border enforcement should be part of an integrated national IP strategy that links proactive prevention to investigative follow-up.

7. Critical Discussion

This research has identified several major challenges that Nigeria's enforcement systems must overcome. As discussed above, the key challenge is not necessarily a lack of institutional bodies but lack of integrated functions among them. Nigeria has several specialized agencies covering different needs of IP administration and enforcement. When information sharing and operational coordination does not occur efficiently however, institutional specialization can easily degenerate into institutional fragmentation. Efforts should accordingly focus on interoperability, well-defined operational roles, shared responsibilities and indicator-based results. 2nd the question of the relationship between legislation and enforcement. Nigeria's Copyright Act 2022 and the NIPPS demonstrate substantive legal development but the mere presence of legislation cannot guarantee effective enforcement. Previous studies show how weak enforcement impairs the developmental value of IP, and the role of administrative bodies is to implement the law not simply to exist. 3rd is the issue of the fast-changing technological environment. Institutions were predominantly designed against physical objects and registration systems alongside traditional infringement methods, while technological developments have introduced new vectors for infringement that can quickly be misappropriated or duplicated. Institutions must therefore be technologically adaptable. 4th is the matter of justice accessibility. The effectiveness of enforcement ultimately depends on the ability of rights holders to obtain affordable and timely remedies, so the judiciary's component should be seen as an integral piece of the enforcement puzzle.

8. Reform Framework

Nigeria's IPR enforcement needs an integrated reform framework linking the law with institutions, digital technologies, the judicial component, expert practitioners and stakeholders. Reform efforts should consequently transcend the creation of new institutions towards enhancing the flow of information, investigation of infringement and enforcement of penalties within existing institutions. A reform agenda based on these principles corresponds

with the 2022 National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy (NIPPS), which prioritizes institutional efficiency, enforcement, capacity-building, research and awareness activities (World Intellectual Property Organization [WIPO], 2022, 2025). The proposed framework below sets out a comprehensive reform plan based on the following principles.

8.1 Institutional coordination

Nigeria should strengthen and formalise inter-institutional coordination between agencies such as the Nigeria Copyright Commission (NCC), Trademarks Registry, Patents and Designs Registry, Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Police Force and other relevant regulators and enforcers. This should aim to eliminate unnecessary duplication, address institutional gaps and facilitate real-time intelligence-sharing regarding infringement, counterfeiting and piracy. The parties should develop a single operational protocol covering the various steps from intelligence collection to investigation, seizure, prosecution, evidence preservation and referral. This is particularly necessary because enforcement functions are drawn from various authorities rather than a single enforcement agency (U.S. Department of State, 2024; WIPO, 2023). As NIPPS becomes operational, it may serve as a framework for institutionalisation of coordination through their sectoral, time-bound and outcome-based operational programs.

8.2 Digital enforcement

As commercial and creative activities increasingly shift to digital platforms, Nigeria should strengthen its enforcement agencies' technological capacity. Agencies should create interoperable digital registers recording registered rights, complaint mechanisms, seizures, investigations, court cases and enforcement actions. They should also employ digital monitoring tools such as online traceability systems, crawlers and algorithms to scan for online piracy, counterfeit advertising, fraudulent online merchants and unauthorised online copyright uses. While the Copyright Act 2022 offers an enabling legal framework to strengthen digital enforcement, ongoing initiatives are demonstrating a significant focus on technological responses to digital piracy (WIPO, 2023, 2025). Agencies should collaborate with internet service providers, online platforms, rights management bodies and tech companies to strengthen online enforcement to work with legal remedies rather than instead of them. WIPO's recent work on online copyright piracy in Nigeria also underscores the importance of public-private and cross-sectoral efforts (WIPO, 2025).

8.3 Judicial specialization

The Federal High Court should develop a specialized case-management approach to strengthen judicial capacity to determine IP disputes. This could involve dedicated IP departments, specialist case management guidelines and dedicated judges within the relevant court divisions instead of establishing an entirely new IP court system. Judicial education programs should include areas like online copyright infringement, the digital environment, software, trademark, patent and IP valuation, evidence preservation and remedies. This would enhance consistency and timeliness while increasing judicial confidence in handling complex technological issues. Nigeria has already recognized the importance of judicial capacity by running an IP training program with WIPO for 21 Federal High Court judges from 13 divisions in 2025 (WIPO, 2025). This reform should institutionalize such programs rather than make the program an ad hoc activity.

8.4 Human-resource development

For IP enforcement to be sustainable, Nigeria should systematically establish ongoing professional-development programs for investigators, prosecutors, policemen, customs officials, court clerks, registry operators, judges, lawyers and other relevant professionals. Training should address digital evidence, digital investigation methods, online IP enforcement, digital criminal identification, methods of counterfeit detection, IP valuation techniques, online contract arrangements and emerging technology systems. Agencies also need dedicated in-house expertise to link enforcement with the innovation and technology sector. Nigeria should institutionalize such human-resource development programs by making them a strategically designed element of NIPPS' implementation (WIPO, 2022, 2025).

8.5 Industry and public participation

IP enforcement agencies should integrate rights holders, creative industries, manufacturers, technology firms, SMEs, universities, civil-society groups and consumer associations in IP enforcement planning and execution. IP rights awareness programs should increase awareness of registration processes, owners' rights, licensing, remedies and theft reporting mechanisms. Industry associations should partner to design high-visibility, anti-counterfeiting and anti-piracy initiatives within their respective sectors and should share credible infringement intelligence with enforcement agencies. Particular attention should be paid to SMEs and individuals, who may lack resources to pursue enforcement independently. Increased awareness and stakeholder-participation programs can enhance compliance and increase the accuracy of infringement intelligence (Aina-Pelemo & Ude, 2025; WIPO, 2022).

8.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Nigeria should institute a transparent set of indicators to monitor the effectiveness of enforcement and institutional reform. Indicators should include investigations initiated, infringement reports addressed, seizures completed, criminal cases filed, cases concluded and completed within specified timeframes, online infringements identified, number of infringements reported, adverse actions against infringers, rights-holders' awareness levels, institutional collaboration metrics and institutional resources leveraged. They should also focus on outputs like the number of law enforcement officers trained and court cases litigated. Enforcement and institutional reforms should be regularly evaluated through the participation of government officials, rights holders, the private sector, academics and other key stakeholders (WIPO, 2025). **Integrated reform path:** The above six components advance an integrated reform path: through coordination, institutions become connected; by connecting information, digital systems become integrated; by connecting enforcement, judicial specialization strengthens institutional capabilities; human-capacity building strengthens enforcement; industry and public involvement expand the enforcement-net; and accountability is embedded in the institutional monitoring process. Taken together, these components establish a coherent, technology-responsive institutional environment that moves Nigeria's IP enforcement efforts from a focus on activities to a focus on results.

9. Policy and management implications

First, implementation of NIPPS should be focused on the improvement of functional coordination rather than additional formal regulatory frameworks. Second, agencies should be predictable in their funding, with specific operational targets. Third, digital registries

should be made more interoperable so that enforcement agencies can cross-reference infringements easily. Fourth, the judiciary should focus on specialization and digital case management to enhance consistency and timeliness in IP dispute resolution. Fifth, public-awareness programs should be made a permanent feature of the IP environment, particularly for SMEs, creators and consumers. Sixth, enforcement outputs should be evaluated through enforcement outcomes rather than outputs alone. Finally, enforcement success should be ultimately measured through reduced infringement and increased access to remedies.

10. Research gaps and future directions

Future research should move beyond doctrinal delineation and undertake empirical assessment of institutional performance. Such studies could estimate the time and success of IP cases, assess the efficiency of inter-institutional cooperation, measure enforcement expenditure, quantify stakeholder awareness and examine the IP experiences of rights holders. Comparative analysis with other African countries could offer alternative institutional models that promote coordination. Innovative legal frameworks for digital enforcement, cross-border enforcements and online marketplaces could also be compared. The impact of NIPPS on enforcement activities should be monitored to determine whether the institutional reforms translating into improved enforcement outcomes.

Conclusion

Nigeria is well endowed in institutions and mechanisms for the protection of intellectual property rights. These include a specialized copyright administration, intellectual property registration, regulation of technology transfer and technology parks, digital rights, regulation of broadcasting and film, consumer protection, border enforcement and judicial adjudication. The challenge however remains in translating institutional mandates into concerted enforcement outcomes. Insufficient funding, lack of specialized expertise, corruption, bottlenecks of administrative procedures, technological change, lack of awareness among owners, users and enforcers of intellectual property rights and a weak exchange of information between relevant institutions have been identified as factors impeding effectiveness. The National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy offer a way forward for addressing these structural limitations. The forward looking policy focus on institutional development, enforcement, human capital development, commercialization and awareness has the potential of creating a more coherent IP administration framework. The analysis has thus suggested that rather than creating more institutions or making piecemeal legislative amendments, the way forward for Nigeria is to establish a performance-oriented, technology-enabled IP enforcement ecosystem, in which different administrative and law enforcement agencies, the courts, rights holders, industry and the general population work as clearly delineated and interconnected systems of responsibilities. This would enhance protection of intellectual property rights while ensuring wider benefits for Nigeria.

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