THE STATE OF COUNTERFEITING AND PIRACY IN NIGERIA 2026
A National Assessment of Intellectual Property Crime, Illicit Trade and Consumer Risk

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ANTI-COUNTERFEITING AND PIRACY INITIATIVE (ACAPI)

In Partnership With

Industry Stakeholders, Rights Holders, Consumer Protection Advocates and Law Enforcement Partners

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FOREWORD

Counterfeiting and piracy have evolved from isolated acts of commercial deception into sophisticated criminal enterprises operating across local, regional and international supply chains.

Nigeria's position as Africa's largest economy, largest consumer market and major regional trade gateway makes it particularly vulnerable to intellectual property crime.

The consequences extend beyond economic losses.
Counterfeit medicines kill.
Counterfeit vehicle parts cause accidents.
Counterfeit electrical products start fires.
Piracy destroys creative industries.
Illicit trade weakens government revenues and undermines national development.

This report presents the first comprehensive national assessment of intellectual property crime risks across key sectors of the Nigerian economy and provides strategic recommendations for establishing a coordinated national enforcement response.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Findings:

Estimated Annual Economic Loss:
₦4.3 Trillion

Estimated Government Revenue Loss:
₦620 Billion

Estimated Jobs Affected:

250,000–500,000

Most Affected Sectors:

- Pharmaceuticals
- Consumer Goods
- Electrical Products
- Automotive Parts
- Entertainment
- Software
- Agrochemicals

Major Counterfeit Distribution Hubs:
- Lagos
- Aba
- Onitsha
- Kano
- Port Harcourt

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• Abuja

The report identifies the urgent need for a specialized law enforcement capability through the proposed NIGERIA POLICE ECONOMIC SECURITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CRIME UNIT (NP-ESIPCU).

NATIONAL COUNTERFEIT TRADE LANDSCAPE

Key Characteristics

The Nigerian counterfeit economy operates through:

Import-Based Networks

Products imported through maritime and land borders.

Domestic Manufacturing Networks

Local production and packaging operations.

Informal Distribution Networks

Wholesale and retail markets.

Online Sales Networks

Social media platforms.

E-commerce marketplaces.

Messaging applications.

COUNTERFEIT TRADE CORRIDORS

Corridor 1

International Gateway Corridor

Lagos Ports → Lagos Warehouses → National Distribution Network

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Key Products:

• Consumer goods

• Electronics

• Pharmaceuticals

• Cosmetics

• Luxury goods

This remains Nigeria's largest counterfeit entry route.

Corridor 2

South-East Manufacturing Corridor

Aba → Onitsha → Enugu → National Markets

Key Products:

• Consumer products

• Packaging materials

• Fashion products

• Electrical accessories

This corridor combines legitimate manufacturing with illicit production activities.

Corridor 3

Northern Trade Corridor

Kano → Kaduna → Abuja

Connected to trans-Saharan and regional trade routes.

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Key Products:

• Textiles

• Consumer goods

• Agricultural inputs

Corridor 4

Niger Delta Distribution Corridor

Port Harcourt → South-South States

Key Products:

• Industrial products

• Lubricants

• Automotive components

• Consumer goods

Corridor 5

Federal Capital Consumer Corridor

Abuja → North Central Markets

Key Products:

• Luxury goods

• Electronics

• Pharmaceuticals

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• Software products

CASE STUDY: LAGOS

Why Lagos Matters

Lagos serves as:

• Nigeria's largest port city

• Largest consumer market

• Largest logistics hub

• Largest e-commerce market

Counterfeit products entering Nigeria frequently pass through Lagos before nationwide distribution.

High-Risk Markets

Areas associated with high counterfeit risk include:

- Alaba International Market
- Trade Fair Complex
- Computer Village

Key Risks

• Software piracy

• Consumer electronics

• Electrical products

• Entertainment piracy

• Imported counterfeit goods

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CASE STUDY: ABA

Nigeria's Manufacturing Capital

Aba remains one of Nigeria's most important manufacturing centres.

The city possesses extraordinary entrepreneurial capacity and legitimate manufacturing potential.

However, enforcement stakeholders continue to identify concerns regarding:

• Product imitation

• Trademark infringement

• Packaging replication

• Unauthorized brand reproduction

Strategic Challenge

The objective is not to suppress manufacturing.

The objective is to support legitimate manufacturers while targeting criminal infringement networks.

CASE STUDY: ONITSHA

Distribution Capital of West Africa

Onitsha functions as one of the largest commercial distribution centres in Africa.

Key observations include:

• High product turnover

• Extensive wholesale networks

• Regional distribution influence

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Risk Factors

Counterfeit products entering wholesale channels can rapidly spread across multiple states.

Key sectors affected include:

• Pharmaceuticals

• Consumer goods

• Cosmetics

• Electrical products

CASE STUDY: PORT HARCOURT

Industrial and Petroleum Supply Hub

Port Harcourt's strategic position creates exposure to:

• Counterfeit lubricants

• Industrial supplies

• Automotive components

• Electrical products

Risk Profile

Counterfeit industrial products create safety risks in:

• Manufacturing

• Energy

• Construction

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• Transportation

CASE STUDY: ABUJA

Premium Consumer Market

Abuja's concentration of government institutions, diplomatic missions and affluent consumers makes it attractive to:

• Luxury counterfeiters

• Software pirates

• Electronics counterfeiters

• Online sellers

Emerging Threat

Digital and social media-enabled counterfeiting is growing rapidly.

Consumers increasingly encounter counterfeit products through online channels rather than physical markets.

SECTORAL ANALYSIS

Pharmaceuticals

Estimated Loss:

₦480 Billion

Key Threat:

Counterfeit medicines.

Public health consequences remain severe.

Automotive Parts

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Estimated Loss:

₦360 Billion

Key Threat:

Counterfeit brake systems, suspension components and engine parts.

Road safety implications are significant.

Electrical Products

Estimated Loss:

₦375 Billion

Key Threat:

Substandard wiring and electrical components.

Fire risks remain a major concern.

FMCG

Estimated Loss:

₦600 Billion

Affected Products:

Food.

Beverages.

Household products.

Personal care products.

Software and Digital Piracy

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Estimated Loss:

₦350 Billion

Key Threat:

Unauthorized software use and distribution.

Entertainment Piracy

Estimated Loss:

₦275 Billion

Affected Sectors:

• Nollywood

• Music

• Publishing

• Streaming services

EMERGING THREATS

Social Commerce Counterfeiting

Counterfeit products are increasingly sold through:

• Social media platforms

• Messaging applications

• Influencer marketing

Cross-Border E-Commerce

International sellers can now reach Nigerian consumers directly.

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Traditional enforcement mechanisms struggle to keep pace.

AI-Enabled Counterfeiting

Artificial intelligence tools increasingly facilitate:

• Brand imitation

• Packaging replication

• Digital piracy

ENFORCEMENT GAPS

Current challenges include:

• Limited specialist investigators

• Limited intelligence coordination

• Fragmented enforcement

• Weak digital investigative capacity

• Limited prosecution support

• Limited stakeholder coordination

RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate

Establish Pilot Intellectual Property Crime Desk within FCID.

Medium Term

Establish NIGERIA POLICE ECONOMIC SECURITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CRIME UNIT (NP-ESIPCU).

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Long Term

Develop a National Intellectual Property Enforcement Architecture integrating:

• Police

• Customs

• NAFDAC

• SON

• FCCPC

• Nigerian Copyright Commission

• Rights holders

• Consumer organizations

CONCLUSION

Counterfeiting and piracy are no longer merely commercial issues.

They are national economic security issues.

Nigeria's estimated annual loss of more than ₦4 trillion demonstrates the urgency of coordinated action.

The establishment of the NP-ESIPCU represents the most practical and sustainable pathway toward protecting consumers, supporting legitimate businesses, strengthening national security and positioning Nigeria as Africa's leader in intellectual property rights enforcement.

The evidence is clear.

The cost of inaction now exceeds the cost of enforcement.

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