

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PRACTICE GROUP

Nigeria's First National IP Policy: What NIPPS Means for Businesses

Nigeria's National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy got the green light from the Federal Executive Council on November 6, 2025, and was officially launched on December 17, 2025, with backing from the World Intellectual Property Organisation. Now, nine months into 2026, NIPPS isn't just a headline, implementation teams are working, legislative bills are in front of the National Assembly, and WIPO's leadership has returned to Abuja to support the partnership. Businesses that still look at IP as something to file and forget are dealing with a policy that's picking up real steam.

A Shift in How IP Is Treated

NIPPS stands out because it treats IP as economic infrastructure instead of a legal task you check off a list. In January 2026, the Federal Government set up an Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee and an Inter-Agency Coordination Group to push execution, coordinate agencies, monitor results and make sure everything fits with Nigeria's obligations under the AfCFTA Intellectual Property Protocol. Right now, the National Assembly is looking at a bill to amend the Trade Marks Act, plus another bill to totally repeal both the Trade Marks Act and the Patents and Designs Act and create a new Industrial Property Commission of Nigeria. Nothing's passed yet, but after years of stalled reforms, progress is finally happening.

What NIPPS Is Delivering in 2026

First, better protection for digital assets, software and platform-based innovation, which is something the current Copyright Act and Trade Marks Act weren't built for. Second, institutional consolidation. NIPPS aims to bring the Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks registries under one Nigerian Industrial Property Office, with a new Nigerian Intellectual Property Commission providing strategic oversight and harmonising the work of Nigeria's existing IP institutions. The bill before the National Assembly on the Industrial Property Commission follows that plan directly. In May and June 2026, WIPO Director General Daren Tang made his first official visit to Nigeria with NIPPS at the centre of discussions, showing this policy has active international backing, not just a one-off endorsement in 2025.

What This Means for Businesses Building Brand or Product Value

If you're developing a brand, launching new products, or running a digital platform in Nigeria, this is the time to sort out your IP instead of leaving it to luck. Check your trademark portfolio for gaps – marks you use but never registered, registrations that expired, or business lines expanding into areas not covered by your filings. Look over your patent and design strategy, especially where software or

platform features haven't been protected because the laws were unclear. With a bill to fully overhaul the trademarks and patents framework in front of lawmakers, having well-structured portfolios makes it easier to adapt once the bill becomes law.

For digital platforms, now's also the moment to look at contracts, license agreements, terms of service, and confidentiality clauses. Make sure they cover the gaps left by current statutes, gaps NIPPS is designed to eventually close.

International Alignment and What It Means for Cross-Border Business

WIPO's ongoing involvement gives NIPPS credibility well beyond Nigeria. For businesses negotiating licensing or franchise deals with international partners, a national policy with active WIPO support and a pending bill is a much stronger position than just having policy on paper. Foreign partners who used to see Nigerian IP enforcement as a risk can now point to concrete, dated actions and legislative progress.

Positioning Ahead of Legislative Change

The Trade Marks Act and Patents and Designs Act haven't been amended yet. Both bills are still with the National Assembly, and the process will take some time. But waiting for final passage means missing out on early mover advantage. If you're investing in brand or product value in Nigeria, now's the time to get your registrations and IP strategy in order.

We advise clients on trademark, patent, and copyright portfolios, help with licensing and franchising deals, and build contracts to work with statutory IP rights.

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