



**Music Technology and Innovation as Catalysts for Economic Development in Developing Countries: A Positional Analysis of Nigeria's Creative Economy.**

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**Keywords:**

Music Technology,  
Innovation,  
Creative Economy,  
Nigeria,  
Economic Development,  
Digital Platforms,  
Afrobeats,  
Music Entrepreneurship.

**ABSTRACT**

*The impact of music technology on the culture production, creative entrepreneurship and economic participation in the developing countries has become a major factor shaping the process of cultural production. This position paper proposes that music technology and innovation cease to be seen as accessory tools of entertainment and become proactive agents of economic change. The article explores the impact of digital production tools, streaming platforms, social media, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and digital distribution systems on the music value chain, with a particular focus on the Nigerian context. It also contends that the Nigeria's notoriety in the world of music in general and Afrobeats and other popular musical genres in particular is a huge opportunity for jobs creation, cultural export, intellectual property development, youth entrepreneurship, tourism and national branding. This potential is held back by inadequate infrastructure, digital differences, poor copyright protection, insufficient funding, lack of coherent policy and reliance on foreign platforms. The article introduces a Music Technology-Innovation-Development Framework, and advocates for policy, local platform development, creative education, rights management and inclusive investment.*

## Introduction

Music has become an economic field, more than a cultural and entertainment activity, that is managed through technology. Digital tools are now influencing music composition, recording, distribution, marketing, monetisation, archival and consumption throughout the globe. Digital audio workstations, mobile phones, streaming services, artificial intelligence, social media, mobile collaboration over the cloud and data analytics have altered the nature of the music economy—sometimes lowering barriers to entry, sometimes increasing market dependence (Murphy & Hume, 2023; Oliver, 2024; Ortiz-Ospino et al., 2025). This transformation is significant for developing countries, as music technology can help to foster youth employment, entrepreneurship, cultural exports, digital inclusion, tourism and creative-sector diversification.

Nigeria is a good illustration of this discussion. Its music industry is one of the most prominent aspects of the creative economy in African countries, with Afrobeats and other Nigerian sounds now being streamed across the world, shared on social media, and featured in festivals, diaspora communities and international partnerships (Adedeji & Röschenhaler, 2024; Serres, 2025a; Yusif, 2024). The creative economy in the country, however, also exhibits some of the typical paradoxes of many developing societies, characterized by high cultural productivity, yet low institutional support; high global visibility, but low local value retention; high scale of youth talent, but low levels of infrastructure; and high digital market, but low access to finance, data, rights protection, and professional training (Ogedi-Alakwe, 2024; Ogbonna, 2023; Olanrewaju, 2024).

This article's core tenet is that music technology and innovation must be nurtured by intentional policy, support infrastructure, education, investment, copyright enforcement and local control if they are going to drive economic growth. Technology does not necessarily mean growth. Streaming platforms can broaden visibility while maintaining dependency if data, revenue structures and algorithms are controlled from outside. (Adedeji & Röschenhaler, 2024; Daramola & Etim, 2022; Peukert & Röschenhaler, 2023). Digital production tools can have a democratizing effect on creativity, but they do not ensure sustainable livelihoods without the necessary business knowledge, legal protection,

and monetization capacity (Ruiz-Resto 2023; Arthur et al., 2023).

Thus, this article looks at music technology and innovation as tools of development in the creative economy of Nigeria. It speaks to the debates surrounding creative industries, digital entrepreneurship, platform economy, cultural policy and economic development by positing that Nigeria's music industry should be repositioned as a key part of the nation's economic development infrastructure and not just an informal entertainment industry.

## Conceptual Clarification

Music technology is the term applied to the tools, technologies, software, electronic hardware, and platforms employed to create, produce, distribute, promote, monetise, and preserve music. It encompasses recording software, digital audio workstations, streaming platforms, social media, AI tools, mobile applications, digital payment systems, music analytics, ticketing systems, and online collaboration platforms (Gorgoglione et al., 2023; Ortiz-Ospino et al., 2025; Wammanda, 2026). In the current music economy, technology is not just a means of production, but a way of circulation, visibility, market intelligence and value capture.

Innovation involves the creation and use of new ideas, practices, products, etc., and new business models with cultural, social or economic value. In the music industry, innovation involves new sounds, new production technologies, new distribution models, digital branding, fan engagement strategies, music-tech startups, data-driven music promotion, virtual performance, and new types of collaboration (Dote-Pardo et al., 2025; Snowball et al., 2021).

Economic development is defined in a general way. It is not just the increase of income or gross domestic product. It encompasses the creation of employment, entrepreneurship, exporting ability, industrial diversification, youth empowerment, technological capability, cultural sustainability, and inclusive market (Hmyria, 2023; Yerima et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2024).

Creative economy is an economy that is built on creativity, culture, knowledge, symbolism and intellectual property. Music plays a significant role in this economy because it is related to performance, media, fashion, tourism, film, advertising, digital

platforms, and cultural diplomacy (Dellyana et al., 2023; Mammadova & Abdullayev, 2025). The creative economy in developing countries, however, tends to develop under conditions of informality, lack of regulation, lack of infrastructure and inequality in access to global markets.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations**

The article is informed by five related perspectives: creative economy theory, innovation systems theory, digital economy perspectives, platform capitalism, and human capital theory. The theory of the creative economy provides an explanation for how symbolic and cultural production can serve as a source of employment and trade, national identity and industrial diversification (Hmyria, 2023; Mammadova & Abdullayev, 2025; Syafri et al., 2023). From this perspective music is an art form that is not only creative but productive, connected to markets, tourism, media and intellectual property.

The use of innovation systems theory is helpful because innovation in music is not just the result of individual creativity. It rests on a network of artists, producers, studios, streaming services, managers, copyright agencies, investors, universities, regulators, technology companies and consumers. The music industry in Nigeria can thus be regarded as a nascent innovation ecosystem but is plagued by the absence of adequate policy coordination, financing, training, and infrastructural challenges (Leo, 2022; Kiryakov et al., 2023; Ogedi-Alakwe, 2024).

Digital economy perspectives seek to understand the relevance of platform, data, mobile, online payments, and algorithmic visibility for creating value in music. While digital platforms offer potential to enhance entrepreneurship and market access in African economies, they also present new dependency risks as platform owners hold sway over access to data, platform rules and regulations, monetisation mechanisms, and discoverability (Ajah, 2025; Daramola & Etim, 2022; Hadizadeh et al., 2024; Mhlongo et al., 2024). This is reflected in the strength of music streaming platforms, recommendation algorithms and the virality of social media.

The platform capitalism viewpoint provides a crucial perspective. It proposes that digital platforms can generate visibility for creators as well as value from their work, their audiences, and their culture. Streaming and digital distribution have created new

markets in Nigeria, but also pose questions of brokerage, copyright institutions, revenue sharing and local value retention (Adedeji, 2023; Adedeji & Röschenthaler, 2024; Peukert & Röschenthaler, 2023).

Lastly, theories of human capital focus on skills, education and professional skills. The use of music technology for developmental purposes must be preceded by the skills of the creators and/or workers in production, sound engineering, intellectual property, data analytics, digital marketing, entrepreneurship, and contract negotiation (Arthur et al., 2023; Ruiz-Resto, 2023; Swartz et al., 2022). In the absence of these features, technology can exacerbate disparities and benefit only already connected artists, while marginalizing rural artists, women, low-income earners, young people and informal practitioners.

### **A Strategic Case on Nigeria's Creative Economy.**

Nigeria's creative economy is one of the most vibrant in Africa, boasting high levels of activity in music, film, comedy, fashion, dance, digital content, festivals, advertising, broadcasting and social media entertainment. Music is a strategic asset in this landscape, for its cultural embeddedness and global mobility. The music of Nigeria is rooted in local rhythms, urban youth culture, religious sounds, Afro-diasporic ties, and international pop influences. This leads to a music economy that has local significance and international marketability (Ayodele, 2024; Serres, 2025b; Yusif, 2024).

Afrobeats is bringing Nigeria's culture to the world, making the nation more visible. But Afrobeats are not the only things that make Nigeria's music economy. Older and ongoing genres like highlife, juju, fuji, gospel, Islamic music, Apala, Sakara, Indigenous folk performance and community-based orchestras also play a role in cultural memory, local economies and creative labour (Akpodiete, 2025; Mapaya, 2025; Tekena & Ochuba, 2022). This diversity is conducive for the study of Nigeria and the interaction between traditional and contemporary music with digital innovation.

A large part of this is Nigeria's young population. Youths are at the heart of music listening, social media sharing, dancing, experimentation and entrepreneurship. In today's time, digital technologies have given a lot of young producers a chance to make their way into the music economy by producing beats,

creating content, performing as DJ, editing videos, curating playlists, organizing events and so on at home. This further confirms the notion that music technology can play a role in human capacity development and youth entrepreneurship (Arthur et al., 2023; Onalaja&Otokiti, 2025; Ugochukwu et al., 2025). Nigeria is also an example of the issue of uneven value capture. A significant number of artists and music workers are informal, lacking stable contracts, insurance, royalties, pensions, law, or even reliable income. The sector generates cultural impact, and a significant portion of its economic returns is dispersed in informal networks and platforms that are beyond its control (Adedeji, 2023; Obi, 2024). Nigeria is thus a strategic case as it shows the potential and precariousness of music-led creative development in developing countries.

### **Economic Development with Music Technology**

Music technology provides a way of reducing entry barriers, increasing markets, and new forms of creative labour, thus contributing to economic development. Thanks to the availability of digital audio workstations, inexpensive microphones, mobile recording devices and online production tools, artists and producers are able to produce music outside of expensive studio systems. This has fostered individual creativity and enabled young producers to establish careers out of bedrooms, campus studios, community studios, and small creative hubs (Oliver, 2024; Wammanda, 2026).

Also, the scale of music circulation has been shifted by streaming platforms and digital distribution services. Today, Nigerian artists can now get their music to listeners across Africa, Europe, North America, the Caribbean and other parts of the world without having to depend solely on physical distribution and the traditional record companies. Streaming, however, is not a neutral channel. They create visibility via playlists, algorithms, brokerage deals, and revenue models (Adedeji & Rösenthaller, 2024; Murphy & Hume, 2023). Thus, streaming allows for internationalisation but also requires enhanced rights management and data literacy.

Another big factor is social media. Social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and X can help artists cultivate fan bases, experiment with music, share dance challenges, promote visual aesthetics, and directly interact with fans. Today, the digital music marketing landscape is

more rewarding for artists who are able to blend sound, image, personality, analytics, and community engagement (Murphy & Hume, 2023; Ruiz-Resto, 2023). This helps not just the musicians but also the dancers, influencers, video directors, photographers, stylists, content editor and digital marketers.

The music economy is even getting a boost from artificial intelligence and big data analytics. AI tools can assist in mastering, beat generation, recommendation, metadata tagging, audience segmentation, and promotional targeting. Big data can provide insights for artists into listening patterns, market locations, playlist performance, and fan behaviour (Gorgoglione et al., 2023; Ortiz-Ospino et al., 2025). These technologies can augment market intelligence for Nigeria but are also problematic with regards to issues of authorship, cultural appropriation, labour displacement, and algorithmic inequality. So, it is not only economic growth through easier music making, but by growing the entire value chain of music making, distribution, marketing, data, rights, audience monetisation.

### **The Nigerian Music Economy and Rights Collecting Societies (RCS)**

The sonic, technological, entrepreneurial and cultural innovation is the name of the game in the music economy of Nigeria. On the level of sound, Nigerian producers have produced musical forms which are recognisable all over the world, mixing indigenous rhythms, street language, electronic beats, Afro-diasporic influences, and aesthetics of global pop. This has facilitated the spread of Nigerian music in the market while maintaining its local essence (Ayodele, 2024; Allotey-Pappoe, 2024; Yusif, 2024).

The second path is in distribution. Independent artists are more likely to be circumventing traditional gatekeepers by making use of digital aggregators, social media campaigns, playlists, YouTube releases and direct-to-fan communication. This has shifted the power dynamics in the sector, but the big labels, platform brokers and global distributors remain dominant in terms of visibility and monetisation (Adedeji & Rösenthaller, 2024; Murphy & Hume, 2023; Oliver, 2024).

The third is a brand and visual innovation. Nigerian artists sell more than just sound. They sell fashion, dance, language, lifestyle, identity and aspiration. The marketing positioning of products has been dominated by music videos, choreography, album art, street aesthetics, and storytelling on social media

(Tekena & Ochuba, 2022; Wammanda, 2026). This boosts the links between music, fashion, film, advertising, tourism and youth culture.

The fourth pathway is collaborative innovation. There is a growing trend of Nigerian artists collaborating with international musicians, producers, DJs and brands. While these partnerships can broaden market access and foster cultural exchange, they can also spark concerns regarding ownership, cultural appropriation, and imbalanced negotiations (Sofola & Wanyama, 2025; Serres, 2025a).

Lastly, live events and festivals continue to be significant innovation areas. Concerts, religious music events, cultural festivals, campus shows, dance clubs, and diaspora events provide a source of income for artists, vendors, transport workers, media teams, designers, and hospitality providers. As such, music innovation is not restricted to the digital: music innovation happens locally too, by performing, meeting, and experiencing music culture.

### **Music Technology and Innovation's Economic Contributions**

Music technology and innovation's economic impact can be seen in jobs, self-employment, exports, tourism, IP and growth of the digital economy. Music directly hires artists, producers, composers, instrumentalists, DJs, sound engineers, songwriters, managers and performers. It also generates indirect jobs for photographers, videographers, dancers, stylists, marketers/technicians, lawyers, accountants, stage technicians, transport services, security personnel and event vendors (Ife, 2023; Kafaru et al., 2023; Yerima et al., 2022).

Secondly, music technology will aid youth entrepreneurship. Young people can take part in the creative industries as beat makers, promoters, content makers, studio owners, playlist curators, and event organisers with basic devices, production equipment, internet access and digital marketing skills. This is particularly important in developing countries where formal employment opportunities are limited (Juliana et al., 2021; Onalaja & Otokiti, 2025; Ugochukwu et al., 2025).

Thirdly, Nigerian music is an aid to cultural export. Music can generate foreign income and boost Nigeria's visibility in international music markets through streaming, licensing, publications, international concerts, brand collaborations, and diaspora markets (Serres, 2025a; Sofola & Wanyama, 2025). But export potential hinges on whether

Nigerians have ownership of catalogues, publishing rights and data and distribution systems.

Fourthly, tourism and urban economies are underpinned by music. Festivals, concerts, awards shows, nightlife and cultural events drive hotel, food, transport, fashion, security, media and event production spending. This is connected with music and place branding, city economies and cultural diplomacy (Akpodiete, 2025; Yerima et al., 2022).

Fifthly is that music creates intellectual property assets. It is possible to generate a long-term income from songs, recordings, samples, publishing rights, performance rights, catalogues and digital content when protected and monetised well (Adedeji, 2023; Bappa, 2026; Peukert & Rösenthaller, 2023). Hence, copyright reform is a key element of the development of the creative economy.

Lastly, music technology boosts the overall demand for data, streaming services, payment structures, software, mobile apps, internet marketing and inventive analytics (Agbeyangi et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). Music is thus an economic product and also a cultural product.

### **Political and Economic Institutions of the EU and beyond**

Even though Nigeria's music tech economy has a great deal of promise, it is badly constrained. Infrastructure is still a big constrain. Creators and creative firms are impacted by unreliability of electricity, cost of internet, limited internet broadband coverage, inadequate performance venues, poor transport systems and high production costs. The difficulties affect productivity and constrain involvement outside of big cities (Agbeyangi et al., 2024; Ejedafiru & Urhiewhu, 2025).

Digital inequality is another problem. Not all creators have access to the best devices, software, internet connection, training or platform visibility. Rural dwellers, low-income earners, and those living in smaller cities might be missing out on the opportunities of digital music growth due to the lack of talented musicians in these areas.

Value capture is still stymied by weak copyright enforcement. Poor royalty payouts, lack of legal enforcement, unauthorised use, piracy, and limited to weak contract literacy hinders creator maximisation of their work (Adedeji, 2023; Bappa, 2026). These are not issues that have been solved by streaming – just shifted into new areas of digital rights

management, metadata correctness and platform management.

Platform dependence is also very significant. Nigerian artists are more prone to using foreign owned streaming and social media platforms that are in control of data, algorithms, monetisation rules and visibility. This leads to Nigerian music going viral worldwide with critical infrastructures of value remaining outside Nigeria (Adedeji & Röschenhaler, 2024; Hadizadeh et al., 2024; Ajah, 2025).

Other obstacles are lack of access to financing, disjointed policy, poor industry statistics, gender inequality, and lack of music business education. Women are still underrepresented in production, sound engineering, management and technology intensive jobs (Adepegba, 2025; Ojong et al., 2021). Music technology as a tool can potentially exacerbate inequality if it is not intentionally used to overcome it.

### **Positional Argument**

This article adopts the stance that music technology can be viewed as a development infrastructure. In most of the developing world, music remains primarily regarded as a source of entertainment for the masses, a form of celebrity worship, or a way in which young people express themselves outside official channels. This is a limited perspective. Today, music is playing a role in technology, intellectual property, tourism, digital markets, education, employment and cultural diplomacy. Failing to do so, governments will not be able to develop policies that can transform creative visibility into sustainable development, because it will be treated as a marginal sector.

No longer is it a question whether Nigeria's music has an impact on the world or not. This influence is already being seen in streaming, diaspora consumption, international collaborations, social media circulation, and global cultural recognition (Serres, 2025a; Yusuf, 2024). A more significant issue is whether Nigeria can keep and spread the economic benefit that influence generates. When platforms and data systems, publishing rights and distribution infrastructures are managed elsewhere, global visibility does not guarantee a broad-based development.

The call to action in this article is thus towards a paradigm change from talent export to value retention. Nigeria must not only be able to churn out globally successful artists, it should also be able to grow local talent in music technology, rights management, platform building, data analytics, creative finance and music business education. This involves shifting from the informal creativity to the structured creative industry without extinguishing the flexibility that makes the creative industry vibrant.

Inclusion needs to be connected to music technology as well. If only the elite artists, big labels, and urban creators can reap rewards from the digital markets, then the developmental value will remain limited. Women, rural creators, indigenous musicians, young producers, informal workers and creators outside Lagos must be supported in a development-oriented music technology agenda. To sum up, music technology can only act as a force for development when it is integrated into systems of ownership, access, protection and opportunity.

## Proposed Conceptual Framework

## Music Technology–Innovation–Development Framework for Creative Economy Development in Developing Countries

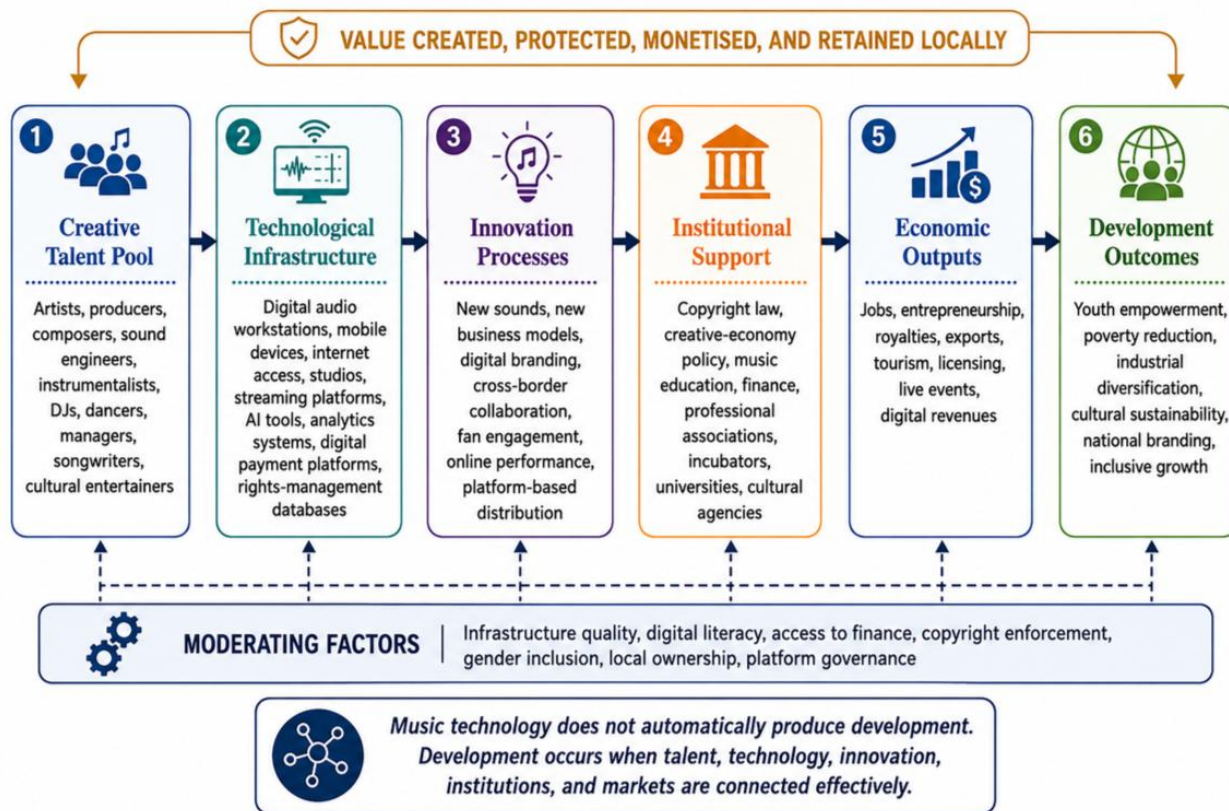


Figure 1: The Music Technology – Innovation – Development Framework

This article suggests a Music Technology – Innovation – Development Framework (Figure 1) that can be used as the backbone for creative economy development in developing countries. The framework outlines how music technology can benefit economic development by focusing on how six elements intertwine: creative talent, technological infrastructure, innovation processes, institutional support, economic outcomes, and development outcomes.

First is the creative talent pool. This can encompass artists, producers, composers, sound engineers, instrumentalists, DJs, dancers, managers, songwriters, and cultural entertainers. While talent is the base of the music economy, talent is inadequate. Talent can still be informal, underpaid without technology, markets and finance.

The second part is the technological infrastructure. This encompasses digital audio workstations, mobile devices, internet access, studios, streaming platforms, AI tools, analytic systems, digital payment platforms,

as well as rights-management databases. These tools facilitate production, circulation, monetisation and market intelligence (Gorgoglione et al., 2023; Ortiz-Ospino et al., 2025).

The third part is innovation processes. These involve new sounds, new business models, digital branding, cross-border collaboration, fan engagement, online performance and platform-based distribution. Innovation turns music into cultural goods, which are goods that can be sold (Dote-Pardo et al., 2025; Snowball et al., 2021).

The fourth is institutional support. The sector requires the support of Copyright law, creative-economy policy, music education, finance, professional associations, incubators, universities, and cultural agencies to stabilise the sector (Ogedi-Alakwe, 2024; Ogbonna, 2023).

The fifth component is economic output (jobs, entrepreneurship, royalties, exports, tourism, licensing, live events and digital revenues).

Development outcome – youth empowerment, poverty reduction, industrial diversification, cultural sustainability, national branding and inclusive growth, is the sixth component.

Moderating factors are also identified in the framework: infrastructure quality, digital literacy, access to finance, copyright enforcement, gender inclusion, local ownership and platform governance. At the core of its message is that music technology doesn't necessarily equal development. It only becomes developmentally useful if creative talent, technological access, innovation, institutions, and markets are put in touch in such a way that value can be created, protected, monetised, and retained locally.

### **Policy and Practical Implications.**

The article has important implications for policy and practice. The first thing Nigeria requires is a music and creative-economy policy, which should link the planning of culture, technology, education, trade, tourism, youth development, intellectual property and digital economy. A creative sector that can compete needs to be formed from a range of interventions that are not disjointed (Ogedi-Alakwe, 2024; Olanrewaju, 2024).

Secondly, the copyright and royalty systems should be enhanced. This encompasses transparent royalty collection, digital rights management, education about copyright, contract literacy, metadata management, and enforcement against unauthorised use (Adedeji, 2023; Bappa, 2026).

Thirdly, music education needs to be different. Digital production, sound engineering, music industry, copyright, entrepreneurship, data analytics and digital marketing should be taught in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and private academies. This would help to shift creative talent into sustainable professional capacity.

Fourthly, Nigeria must encourage the growth of indigenous music-tech start-ups. There are opportunities in streaming, ticketing, fan engagement, licensing, royalty tracking, artist analytics, online learning, and digital archiving (Ajah, 2025; Noutchie, 2025).

Lastly, there is need for a coordinated action by the practical players. Government needs to create an enabling policy, investors need to invest in scalable creative businesses, artists need to develop business thinking, universities need to revise their curricula, technology companies need to create tools that are relevant to the local context, and development agencies need to think about coordinating its youth

employment, digital inclusion, and culture sustainability policies with the music technology sector.

### **Limitations, Contribution and Future Research**

This piece makes its contribution by offering to move music technology from a tool of creativity to a driver of development. It also suggests a conceptual framework for the understanding of the interaction between music technology, innovation, institutions and markets in the creative economies of developing countries.

The problem is that the article is in a position and conceptual. Does not provide primary empirical data (interviews, surveys, ethnography or econometric modelling). The proposed framework should be tested in the future using empirical means. Directions that are useful include studies on Nigerian streaming revenue, music technology and youth employment, gender inequality in sound production, AI and copyright in Nigeria's music, festival economies, diaspora markets, local platform development and collection of royalties.

### **Conclusion**

Music technology and innovation is now at the heart of the future of economic development for creative economies. Nigeria is a case study of both the promise and contradiction of the transformation. Its music is now seen around the world and its young creators are creating new sounds, markets, identities and enterprises using digital tools. However, the developmental potential of the sector is constrained by lack of infrastructure, rights management, platform dependency, and financial and skill gaps, among others.

The main theme of this article is to suggest that Nigeria should stop celebrating musical visibility to embrace systems of music value retention. The use of Music technology for employment, entrepreneurship, exports, tourism, IP and national branding can only occur in the context of robust institutions, inclusive access, local ownership, and strategic investment. Talent is not enough to ensure the future of music-led development for developing countries; they also need technology, innovation, governance, and economic justice.

### **Recommendations**

1. Government should establish a national music technology and innovation fund to support artists, producers, startups, studios, training centers, and creative hubs.
2. Government, copyright agencies, and industry associations should strengthen copyright reform through transparent royalty systems, contract education, digital rights databases, and stronger enforcement mechanisms.
3. Federal and state governments should develop regional creative technology hubs beyond Lagos to support music creators across different parts of Nigeria.
4. Universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and music institutes should integrate music technology into their curricula, with emphasis on production, entrepreneurship, copyright, data analytics, and digital marketing.
5. Government, private investors, and technology companies should encourage Nigerian- and African-owned platforms for streaming, ticketing, rights management, fan engagement, and music analytics.
6. Government, NGOs, development agencies, and creative-sector organizations should create targeted support programmes for women, rural creators, indigenous musicians, and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
7. Tourism boards, cultural agencies, event organizers, and Diaspora organizations should link music more strategically with tourism, festivals, diaspora engagement, and cultural diplomacy to expand its contribution to the wider economy.

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