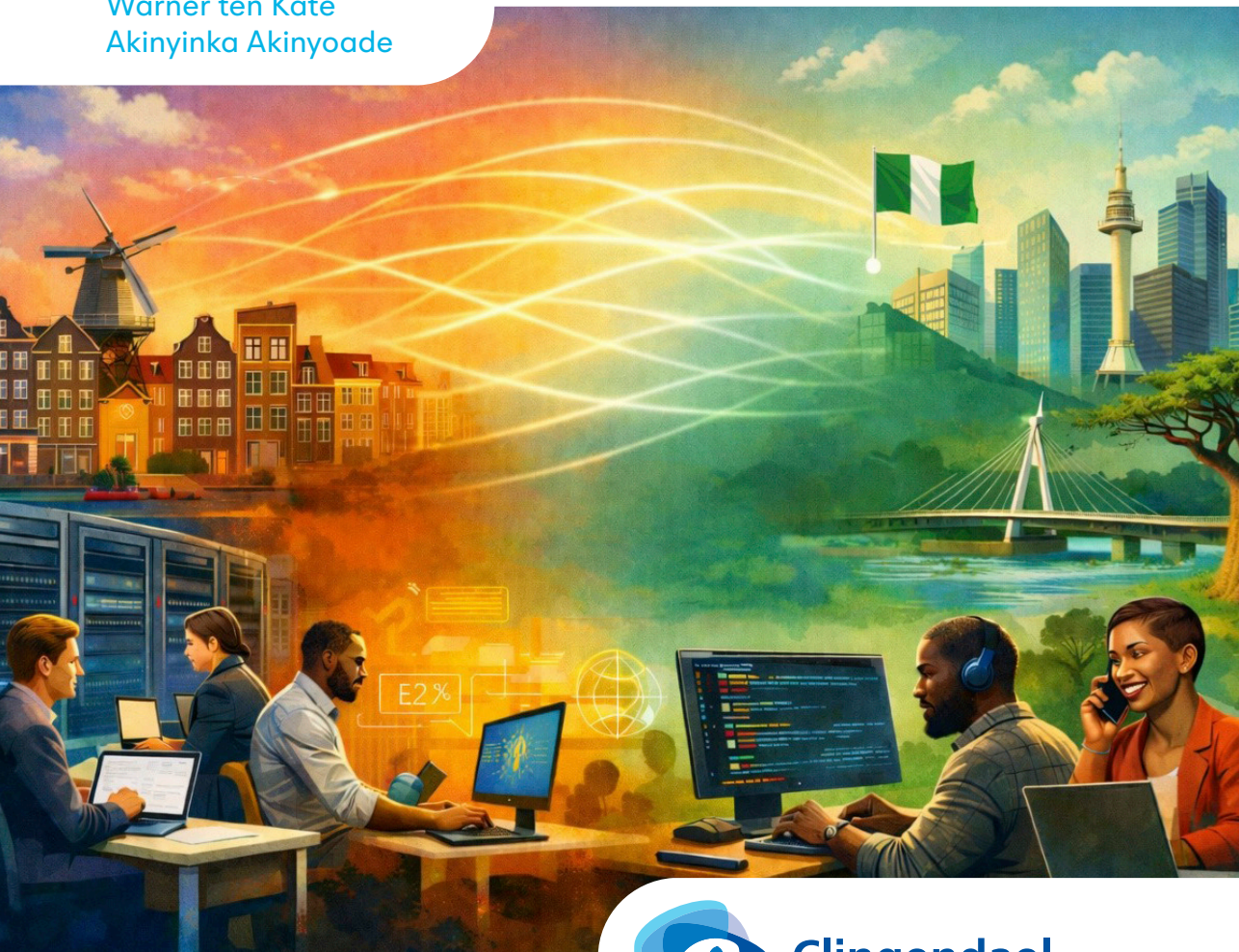


Nigeria, Netherlands, Nearshoring: assessing Nigeria's remote ICT potential

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Clingendael Report



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Abstract

This report examines whether and how Nigeria can serve as a credible source of digital talent for Dutch Information and Communications Technology (ICT) firms, a positive element that can be integrated into broader migration partnership frameworks. Situating Nigeria in the wider Dutch policy debate on labour shortages and international talent, it combines ecosystem analysis, insights from interviews with public and private actors, and survey data from Nigerian ICT students to move beyond generic claims about opportunity. The study maps the structure and maturity of Nigeria's digital economy, identifies where market ready talent actually emerges, and analyses the role of government programmes, private intermediaries, and diaspora actors in building capability and signalling reliability. It then assesses structural advantages such as demographic scale, time zone alignment, English language use, and cost competitiveness, alongside barriers related to senior talent depth, infrastructure, payment systems, institutional fragmentation, security and trust in compliance and data protection. Drawing on comparative European mobility initiatives, this report presents feasibility conditions and outlines design options for a Nigeria-Netherlands ICT nearshoring corridor. Here 'corridor' refers to a practical, repeatable enabling framework that connects Nigerian ICT talent with Dutch firms through remote work, supported by targeted public measures, but largely driven by market demand and private intermediaries. The report offers evidence to help Dutch stakeholders assess the opportunities and limits of ICT nearshoring, and recommendations for support that can lead to operationalisation.

Executive summary

Nigeria is emerging as a credible, yet still underutilised source of digital talent for Dutch companies facing structural ICT labour shortages. This report examines the feasibility conditions, constraints, and design considerations for a bilateral nearshoring framework focused on remote digital work between the Netherlands and Nigeria. It situates Nigeria within growing Dutch attention to labour shortages and international talent, shaped by demographic realities and limited political space for expanded physical mobility. In this context, nearshoring is examined as a complementary instrument within migration partnerships that allows employment opportunities to be created without physical migration to the Netherlands. The analysis draws on desk research, interviews with Dutch and Nigerian public officials, intermediaries and firms, as well as survey data from Nigerian ICT students.

The evidence shows that Nigeria combines several structural advantages that matter for a Dutch ICT talent corridor. These include demographic scale and a very young population, a growing digital economy, an English-speaking labour force in the ICT space, time zone alignment with continental Europe, and cost competitiveness relative to other established outsourcing locations. Nigeria has already produced a visible group of export capable ICT firms and professionals who deliver to North American and United Kingdom markets. Nigerian government agencies have begun to treat ICT and digital services as export assets and are investing in large scale skills programmes and certification-based reforms. At the same time, strong political interest in youth employment and talent export creates a window for positioning nearshoring within existing Dutch Nigerian cooperation frameworks.

However, the report also shows that ICT nearshoring to Nigeria is not straightforward. The digital ecosystem is layered and uneven. A small group of export-ready teams and intermediaries exists alongside a much larger pool of early-stage digital actors. Universities and training institutions curricula continue to lag in employer demands, while the strongest export ready talent emerges from private academies, bootcamps, community learning spaces, and international certification tracks. Nigeria can supply junior and mid-level talent at scale, but senior talent is scarcer and globally competed for, often already absorbed by United States and United Kingdom remote markets. Infrastructure

constraints around power, connectivity and devices are real, but the decisive issue is not their existence as such but rather how they are mitigated in practice through controlled workspaces, backup systems and intermediated models, which are to be factored into the costs of running business.

Interviewees suggested that, in the Dutch context, trust and compliance are the binding constraints rather than absolute capability. Employers fear security issues, data protection breaches, unclear labour standards, payment risk and quality variability. They also lack a clear signal that Nigeria sits in the same competitive pool as more familiar locations such as Eastern Europe and India. Comparative lessons from European mobility and ICT partnership programmes confirm that trust is built through exposure and structured onboarding, not through promotional narratives alone. Small, carefully supported pilots, direct technical collaboration and the use of strong intermediaries were essential in moving employers from curiosity to sustained engagement.

In sum, the evidence suggests that Nigeria can play a meaningful role in Dutch ICT talent strategies, but only within clearly defined feasibility conditions. Recognising both the opportunities and constraints can help avoid two unhelpful extremes: unrealistic optimism that assumes an easy short-term outsourcing solution, and scepticism that dismisses Nigeria based on incomplete information. The report presents Nigeria's nearshoring potential as a promising but unproven market proposition that requires deliberate design and enabling measures. This points to the value of a corridor-based approach: a practical, repeatable framework that combines light public coordination and facilitation within existing partnership structures with targeted support for firms to test, learn, and scale collaboration through pilots, trusted intermediaries, and shared standards. Under these conditions, ICT nearshoring can move from isolated experiments toward sustained engagement, contributing to Dutch ICT capacity while supporting skills-based employment and ecosystem development in Nigeria.

Introduction

As a migration partner country of the Netherlands, Nigeria is the next focus country¹ in the series “*Remote hires, stronger ties: nearshoring embedded within migration partnerships.*”² This series explores how nearshoring³ can serve as a strategic element in migration partnerships by addressing Dutch ICT labour shortages through remote hire that creates sustainable employment opportunities abroad.

If pursued incrementally and pragmatically, nearshoring can be explored as a positive element within migration partnerships, with the potential to support more mutually beneficial cooperation, shift focus from prevention and exclusion toward collaboration and mutual interest. ICT nearshoring can help strengthen Dutch competitiveness while creating durable, skills-based employment for young Nigerians. When embedded within broader migration partnerships, nearshoring functions could complement existing legal migration pathways. By allowing some jobs to move to people instead of requiring people to move to jobs, it has the potential to expand access to quality work at home in partner countries. While not a solution to migration pressures on its own, ICT nearshoring can be considered a promising component of a broader, balanced migration and labour strategy that supports Dutch ICT capacity and generates employment opportunities in Nigeria.

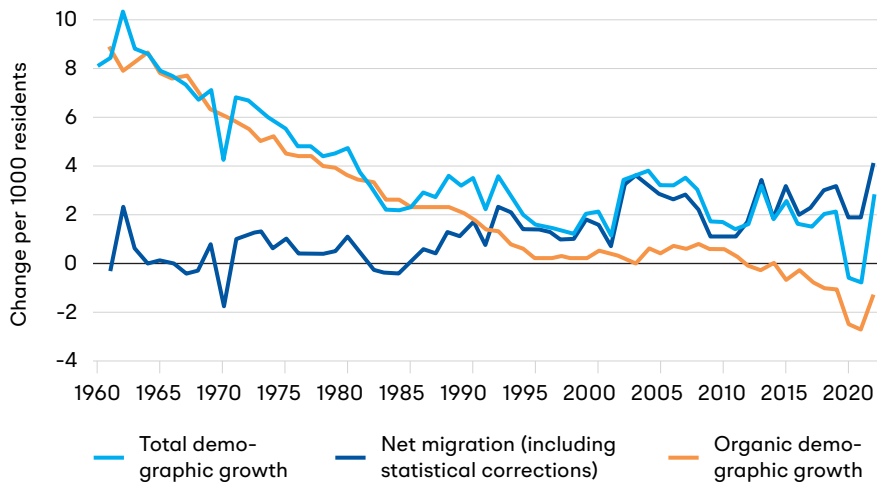
The Nigerian case study builds on earlier reports like “*Connecting Shores*;⁴ which examined Egypt’s ICT nearshoring potential and diplomatic positioning, and “*Egypt: ICT as a driver for growth*;⁵ which analysed practical implementation

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- 1 After the first case-study Egypt. See, Matteo Colombo, Anouk Pronk, and Monika Sie Dhian Ho, “[Connecting Shores: Assessing Egypt’s ICT nearshoring potential – A case study on opportunities for Dutch companies](#),” Clingendael report, 18 February 2025.
 - 2 Robin Neumann, Anouk Pronk, Eilyaa Abdin, and Monika Sie Dhian Ho, “[Remote hires, stronger ties: ICT nearshoring in bilateral migration partnerships](#),” Clingendael policy brief, 26 November 2025.
 - 3 Nearshoring “refers to a company meeting its staffing needs by hiring and integrating personnel in another country through remote work arrangements.”; Neumann et al., “[Remote hires, stronger ties](#),” p.1
 - 4 Colombo et al., “[Connecting Shores: Assessing Egypt’s ICT nearshoring potential](#).”
 - 5 Matteo Colombo, Anouk Pronk, Robin Neumann, Eilyaa Abdin, and Monika Sie Dhian Ho, “[Egypt: ICT as a Driver for Growth](#),” Clingendael policy brief, 26 November 2025.

and scale-up measures. This case study on Nigeria combines both perspectives. This report brings together public and private sector insights to give readers a clear understanding of Nigeria's ICT landscape and its nearshoring potential. It first situates Nigeria within the broader framework of Dutch migration partnerships, then examines the structure, dynamics and maturity of the Nigerian ICT ecosystem, before turning to the opportunities and barriers shaping ICT nearshoring feasibility, as well as lessons learned from comparable EU initiatives in this field. Finally, it outlines evidence-based options for operationalising such an initiative.

With the recent publication of reports by two prominent advisory bodies of the Dutch government,⁶ political attention has increased on how to structurally address demographic labour shortages in the Netherlands. These shortages are expected to intensify in the coming decades as natural population growth turns negative in the absence of migration.⁷

Figure 1 Gematigde Groei, pg. 54



Source: Eurostat (2023)

6 Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (WRR), "[Met de mondiale demografie mee.. Anticiperen op krimpend arbeidsaanbod in het buitenland](#)," WRR-rapport nr. 114, November 2025; Sociaal-Economische Raad, "[Advies Arbeidsmigratie](#)," October 2025.

7 State Committee Demographic Developments 2050, "[Gematigde groei](#)," January 2024.

Although Figure 1. presents EU-wide data, the Netherlands exhibits a comparable demographic pattern of declining natural population growth, underscoring the increasing role of migration in sustaining the labour force. Taken together, these reports point to a necessary reorientation: from reactive approaches toward proactive thinking. Rather than viewing migration and international talent solely as a short-term labour fix, they frame it as a structural and strategic response to national demographic realities.

The nearshoring agenda directly operationalises these recommendations, without physical migration to the Netherlands. By focusing on remote digital work and a corridor model, the Netherlands can tap into Nigeria's demographic dividend⁸ and digital potential, while strengthening more future-oriented and mutually beneficial migration partnerships. In the study, "corridor" model refers to a practical, repeatable enabling framework that connects Nigerian ICT talent with Dutch firms through remote work, supported by targeted public measures, but largely driven by market demand and private intermediaries.

By focusing on remote digital work and a corridor model, the Netherlands can tap into Nigeria's demographic dividend and digital potential, while strengthening more future-oriented and mutually beneficial migration partnerships.

Methodology

To explore whether and how nearshoring models can be deliberately designed, supported and embedded in bilateral migration partnerships, this study adopts a qualitative and exploratory case study design. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with stakeholders with public- and private-sector stakeholders in the Netherlands and Nigeria. In the Netherlands, this was complemented by a roundtable discussion involving Dutch policymakers working on Nigeria, researchers and early European practitioners engaged in nearshoring initiatives.

8 This refers to "the accelerated economic growth that can result from a shift in a country's age structure. This typically occurs when fertility and mortality rates fall, leading to a larger working-age population (aged 15 to 64) relative to dependents (children and the elderly)."; Jakkie Cilliers, "[Harnessing and Advancing Africa's Future Demographic Dividend](#)," WRR, July 2025, p.11.

A research mission was subsequently conducted to Nigeria in November 2025, with fieldwork in Abuja and Lagos. This included semi-structured interviews with Nigerian government representatives, European embassies, international organisations, intermediary firms, and other ecosystem actors involved in ICT skills development, outsourcing, and labour mobility.

In addition, an exploratory qualitative survey was conducted among 58 final-year ICT students enrolled at Nigerian universities. The respondents were students nearing entry into the labour market upon completion of their ICT degree programmes. Participants were drawn from three types of universities in Southwest Nigeria: a federal university, a state university, and a private university.⁹ The survey aimed to capture the perspectives of prospective job seekers on participation on ICT nearshoring opportunities, migration intentions and job-market expectations.

This report first explains why Nigeria and the ICT sector are strategically relevant for a nearshoring corridor, then provides an overview of Nigeria's digital ecosystem and market ready talent base. It goes on to analyse the opportunities and constraints for a Nigeria–Netherlands ICT corridor and draws lessons from relevant EU programmes. It concludes with practical tracks for policy alignment and implementation.

⁹ These universities include Lagos State University, Ladoko Akintola University of Technology, University of Ibadan, and Bowen University, and Yaba College of Technology.

Country and Sector Selection: Nigeria's ICT Ecosystem

Why Nigeria as a case study country?

Nigeria was selected as one of the case studies for the research 'nearshoring embedded within migration partnerships' because it is a migration cooperation partner for the Netherlands. The bilateral relationship is characterised by a strong multi-levelled relationship, anchored in structured bilateral consultations across migration, trade, politics and diplomatic engagement formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).¹⁰ These existing consultations structures provide practical entry points within which nearshoring can be embedded. As one interviewee noted, "what happens in one domain of the partnership with Nigeria influences the other," underscoring the integrated nature of this relationship.¹¹ Other structural considerations shaping Nigeria's suitability for nearshoring, as well as key constraints and barriers requiring mitigation, are analysed later on in the report.

At the same time, in the context of migration partnerships, requests concerning legal labour mobility pathways are often expressed, but face political and housing-related constraints on the Dutch side. These constraints limit the scope for large-scale labour mobility schemes, even where labour shortages are acute. In this context, nearshoring offers a pragmatic alternative and complementary instrument: it creates employment opportunities locally while contributing to Dutch labour market needs, without triggering domestic sensitivities around visas or integration.¹²

Within this framework, political willingness on the Nigerian side becomes a critical enabling factor. Across interviews, Nigerian policy officers indicated

10 Roundtable with policy makers, entrepreneurs, and research organisation organised by Clingendael, 2 July 2025.

11 Interview with government official Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands, 19 May 2025.

12 Neumann et al., "[Remote hires, stronger ties.](#)"

openness to embedding remote work and nearshoring into these bilateral partnerships, framing it as an economic strategy, mechanisms for job creation and skills upgrading, and generation that keeps talent-in country.¹³ While levels of institutional readiness vary there was notable interest. In particular, the Ministry of Labour and Employment expressed immediate interest in advancing the concept of nearshoring through a pilot initiative, signalling early ownership from the employment policy domain.¹⁴

Why ICT as the chosen sector?

Nigeria is a federal republic composed of thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory, operating under a constitutionally established system of democratic governance.¹⁵ Federalism in Nigeria has been shaped by efforts to manage extensive regional, ethnic, and religious diversity by distributing political and fiscal authority across federal, state, and local levels.¹⁶ Intergovernmental revenue allocation has long been a central focus of political negotiation and contestation, reflecting the distributive nature of the Nigerian fiscal federal system.¹⁷

In economic and social practice, formal regulatory frameworks coexist with extensive informal networks and selective enforcement. Although formal institutions provide the basis for governance and market activity, informal practices influence outcomes across sectors, including trade, labour, and service delivery. This dual institutional structure helps explain Nigeria's vibrant entrepreneurial activity alongside persistent structural constraints, including inequality, infrastructure deficits, corruption, and region-specific insecurity.¹⁸

13 Session with government officials Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria, 28 October 2025; Session with Nigerian government officials Nigerian State Ministry of Labour, 30 October 2025.

14 Session with government officials Nigerian State Ministry of Labour, 30 October 2025.

15 Oxford Business Group, "[The Report – Nigeria 2019](#)."

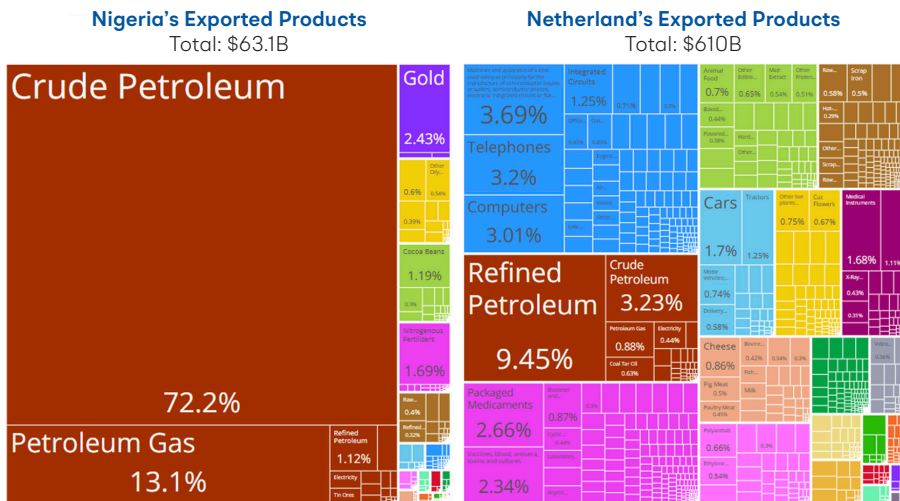
16 Forum of Federations, "[Federal Republic of Nigeria](#)."

17 Abayomi Mumuni Nurain, Abdulrasheed Abdulyakeen, "[Dynamic and Challenges of Revenue Sharing and Its Impact on Political Stability in Nigeria \(2015-2020\)](#)," *University of Jos Journal of Political Science*, 31 March 2024.

18 Coface for Trade, "[Nigeria summary](#)."

Nigeria's political economy is strongly shaped by oil. Crude oil and petroleum product exports have accounted for the vast majority of Nigeria's export earnings. These estimates are round 90% according and form a large share of federal revenue (see figure below; Nigeria and Netherlands export comparison).¹⁹ The concentration of export earnings and public revenue in oil has contributed to characteristics associated with a rent-dependent economy, where access to oil rents significantly influences political and economic power.²⁰ This has produced substantial variation in governance performance and public service delivery across states and localities, driven by differences in institutional capacity, resource dependence, and political incentives

Figure 2 These treemap graphs show the main exports of Nigeria and the Netherlands, where each colour represents a different export category, each rectangle represents a specific product, and the size of each rectangle shows how much it contributes to total exports, highlighting Nigeria's heavy reliance on oil compared with the Netherlands' more diversified exports.²¹



19 Adeoye O. Akinola, "The Nigerian Oil Economy and the Rentier State," *The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian History*, 18 March 2022.

20 Emmanuel Aiyede, "The Political Economy of Fiscal Federalism and the Dilemma of Constructing a Developmental State in Nigeria," *International Political Science Review*, 2009.

21 The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 'Nigeria (NGA) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners,' 2023; The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 'Netherlands (NLD) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners,' 2023.

Nigeria is currently making a concerted effort to diversify its economy²² by focussing on growth in other sectors, including the ICT sector. Nigeria's ICT ecosystem has grown into a strategic economic arena²³ and is one of the few sectors able to generate global grade skills, exportable services, and foreign exchange without physical migration.²⁴ In 2024, the sector contributed more than 16% to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and has quietly produced a cluster of technology companies with valuations in excess of one billion dollars.²⁵ These companies did not emerge as offshore extensions of foreign teams; rather, their core engineering and product development functions were largely developed by Nigerian professionals. This points to the existence of functional capability at the upper end of the skills distribution within the domestic labour market.²⁶

While agriculture or manufacturing may appear to be relevant for nearshoring initiatives due to Nigeria's strong interest and significant foreign investment already underway, these sectors remain largely oriented toward local and regional markets rather than intercontinental ones. Persistent infrastructure constraints, including logistics and industrial capacity, continue to limit their scalability for nearshoring initiatives targeting the European market.²⁷ As a result, their integration into transnational production networks remains capital-intensive and geographically constrained.

By contrast, Nigeria's ICT sector is both internationally facing and strategically expanding. Digital services can be exported without physical goods, industrial capacity, or worker relocation. This international orientation is reinforced by the concentration of local engineering capacity in Lagos, the emergence of globally

22 Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, "[National Development Plan \(NDP\) 2021-2025 Volume I](#)," 2021.

23 The World Bank Group, "[Nigeria – Digital Economic Diagnostic Report](#)", 2019.

24 Bayomi Agbeyangi, Ayodeji Makinde, and Isaac Odun-Ayo, "[Nigeria's ICT and Economic Sustainability in the Digital Age](#)," Arxiv, January 2024; Agarwal, P., Mba-Kalu, S., Tayo, T., and Oladapo, A., "[Developing a digital trade strategy in Nigeria](#)," ODI Global Report, 2025.

25 Department of Commerce United States, "[Nigeria Country Commercial Guide](#)," accessed October 2025; Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, "[National Gross Domestic Product Q3 2024](#)."; Stephen Agwaibor, "[State of African Tech in 2024: Key Trends and 2025 Outlook](#)," *TechCabal*; Interview with Nigeria's National Talent Export Agency (NATEP), 28 October 2025.

26 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025.

27 Interview with government official Dutch embassy Abuja, 1 May 2025.

competitive firms and unicorns²⁸ built by Nigerian teams,²⁹ and an emerging set of national policy reforms that signal growing government and a series of increasing national reforms that reflect the government's increasing strategic prioritisation of the digital ICT sector, including certification frameworks, fibre rollout, and ICT curriculum development.³⁰ These policy developments are discussed in greater detail in a later chapter. Taken together, these developments indicated an ecosystem increasingly moving toward international competitiveness.

The focus on ICT is further informed by the structural labour market pressures in the Netherlands, where ICT remains one of the tightest domestic sectors.³¹ Moreover, ICT nearshoring is already occurring in practice in Nigeria, to the US and UK for example.³² This existing pattern demonstrates both feasibility and export-ready capacity, while recent European initiatives in digital skills partnerships provide relevant lessons that can inform the design of a Dutch-Nigeria nearshoring corridor.

28 A 'unicorn' refers to "a privately held start-up company that has achieved a valuation of \$1 billion or more"; EBSCO, '[Unicorn \(finance\)](#),' accessed January 2026.

29 Five out of the nine unicorns that come from African countries originate from Nigeria; Emeka Ajene, '[The complete list of African unicorns today](#),' *Afridigest*, accessed November 2025.

30 Nigeria has undertaken a series of national reforms including NBTE led adoption of internationally recognised ICT certifications, large scale fibre and broadband rollout under the National Broadband Plan, and the restructuring of ICT curricula and mass skilling initiatives such as 3MTT and NATEP to align training with global market demand.

31 For more information see the chapter, 'the Race for Talent in ICT' in Neumann et al., "[Remote hires, stronger ties](#)."

32 Nigerian interviewees attributed Europe's lower uptake of Nigerian remote talent, compared to the UK and US, to differences in familiarity and network density. The visibility of success stories in levels of education (according to the Washington-based [Migration Policy Institute](#) (MPI), Nigerians in the United States are the most educated immigrant group, with 61% holding at least a bachelor's degree, "compared with 31 percent of the total foreign-born population and 32 percent of the US-born population.") technology and entrepreneurship was described as having increased trust, normalised labour market linkages, and reinforced stronger ties between Nigeria and these countries. This dynamic is reflected in Nigerian BPO employer expectations that Nigerian hires play an implicit 'ambassadorial role,' noting that early hires shape broader perceptions of Nigeria, and African, talent within international firms (Sources: Interview with Zer consulting, 17 September 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal, 29 October 2025; Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025).

Crucially, ICT nearshoring is not a standard outsourcing story.³³ Unlike traditional outsourcing arrangements, which typically prioritise short-term cost efficiencies through transactional contracts, this corridor model is conceived as a longer-term policy instrument that combines market-based dynamics with public policy objectives. Its core operation remains market-driven, shaped by firm demand for ICT skills, yet its design allows for strategic public intervention and support.³⁴

Specifically, the corridor model seeks the structured integration of remote Nigerian ICT talent into Dutch firms, simultaneously contributing to skills and development and employment creation in Nigeria while addressing structural ICT labour shortages in the Netherlands. In doing so, ICT nearshoring aligns private sector incentives with broader development and migration objectives, functioning as a mutually beneficial mechanism rather than a purely transactional outsourcing strategy.

The corridor model seeks the structured integration of remote Nigerian ICT talent into Dutch firms, simultaneously contributing to skills and development and employment creation in Nigeria while addressing structural ICT labour shortages in the Netherlands.

This design is further supported by the preferences of prospective Nigerian talent. Evidence from the conducted ICT student survey indicates that a clear majority (67.2%) prefer remote staff positions over freelance arrangements (32.8%) for nearshoring work.³⁵ For ICT students approaching graduation, formal employment with international firms is associated with professional identity formation, social status, and long-term career progression. These preferences reinforce the corridor model's emphasis on stable employment relationships, supporting its positioning as a sustained partnership rather than a short-term outsourcing strategy.

33 In this context, 'outsourcing' is understood as when "specific functions are delegated to a third-party provider or individual who operates independently from the company's internal structure....In these models, the external team is not integrated into the company's own staff and operates with greater autonomy from the core business."; Neumann et al., "[Remote hires, stronger ties.](#)"

34 To be further discussed in 'paths forward and next steps.'

35 See appendix for the full findings of the survey.

Nigeria's digital ecosystem

Structural composition of Nigeria's ICT sector

Structurally, Nigeria's ICT ecosystem is shaped by three visible layers. The first is a compact but highly capable frontier of specialised ICT companies, outsourcing providers, data engineering teams, cybersecurity firms and independent professionals who already deliver to clients in North America, the United Kingdom, and a few parts of Europe.³⁶ This private-sector segment anchors much of the sector's export orientation and represents its most mature export capability. With appropriate assessment, supervision, and onboarding, it is able to meet international expectations and deliver globally competitive digital work from Nigeria.³⁷

These export-capable firms and professionals are embedded within dense learning and production environments concentrated in specific urban hubs.³⁸ Private actors have built coworking spaces, enterprise training centres, private academies, and structured Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) facilities that impose quality controls, provide secure infrastructure, and support standardised work routines. Many operate with direct input from employers or with intermediation firms that match graduates to roles abroad.³⁹ The presence of public-private sector-led free zones⁴⁰ specifically designed for digital production, remote company incorporation, and foreign ownership shows that parts of the state machinery have begun to mobilise in support of this private export frontier, reinforcing ICT's positioning as a competitive services export sector.⁴¹

36 Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with Outcess, 3 November 2025; Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025.

37 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025.

38 These include dozens of hubs and academies in Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, and other cities that train various specialities such as software developers, product designers, cybersecurity analysts, cloud engineers, entertainment technologists, and data specialists; Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025; Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal, 29 October 2025.

39 Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025.

40 In this context, free zones are government-designated regulatory spaces with a distinct legal and administrative regime that allows for 100% foreign ownership, simplified business registration and licensing, and rules tailored to export-oriented activities.

41 Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025; Nigerian Federal Ministry of Environment, '[Nigerian Export Processing Zones Authority Digital Free Zone Framework 2023](#).'

The second layer is a much larger and fast-expanding body of digitally active firms within Nigeria's micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) base. While Nigeria has more than fourteen million MSMEs, only a fraction currently operate with any form of advanced ICT.⁴² Many use digital tools for payments, marketing, sales, and record management but remain outside professional coding, data work, cloud services, and product development.⁴³ Although this segment is not yet an outsourcing or nearshoring base, it represents an important growing skills foundation and may become an entry point in the longer-term.⁴⁴

The third layer is the public skills architecture. Over the past three years, Nigerian authorities have deliberately reoriented ICT education away from generalised computer science towards specialised fields such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, networking, and cybersecurity.⁴⁵ Nigeria's technical education regulator (National Board for Technical Education (NBTE))⁴⁶ has mandated internationally recognised certifications, negotiated blended cost arrangements with global vendors⁴⁷, trained lecturers abroad, and introduced national competency frameworks based on demonstrable task performance.⁴⁸ Furthermore, data infrastructure is being increasingly upgraded with large scale broadband provision, cloud access, and national fibre backbone expansion.⁴⁹ These reforms indicate a movement towards traceable qualifications, internationally comparable standards, and technology readiness, conditions that are essential for cross border digital work.⁵⁰

42 Interview with Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), 28 October 2025.

43 Interview with SMEDAN, 28 October 2025.

44 Interview with Outcess, 3 November 2025; Interview with GIZ Nigeria, 29 October 2025.

45 Interview with the Nigerian National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), 30 October 2025; Session with government officials Nigerian State Ministry of Labour, 30 October 2025; Interview with SMEDAN, 28 October 2025

46 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025.

47 Global vendors means the government agreed with global technology companies to share or reduce the cost of certifications and training so that students and institutions do not pay the full market price on their own.

48 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; Department of Commerce United States, '[Nigeria Country Commercial Guide](#),' accessed October 2025; Mbadiwe University, '[Mbadiwe University becomes certified ICT trainer](#),' accessed December 2025.

49 Broadcast Media Africa, '[Project Bridge: NITDA's Ambitious Initiative to Expand Nigeria's Fibre-Optic Network by 2026](#),' 26 November 2025, accessed December 2025.

50 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; Interview with special advisor to the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, 30 October 2025.

In sum, Nigeria's ICT sector is layered, uneven and dynamic. It combines high end specialists with a large, advancing base of digitally qualified human capital.⁵¹ The country now carries a wide spectrum that ranges from specialised product engineering to first exposure digital literacy.⁵² Understanding this unevenness is the analytical key to realistic nearshoring design.⁵³

Nigeria's ICT sector is layered, uneven and dynamic. It combines high end specialists with a large, advancing base of digitally qualified human capital.

(Digital) Infrastructure

Nigeria is one of Africa's most internationally connected countries, hosting eight undersea cable landings and functioning as a regional connectivity hub.⁵⁴ However, internet access is unevenly distributed inland with broadband access remaining highly variable across the country, and networking fragility continuing to impose economic costs. In 2024, cable cuts led to major internet disruptions, resulting in estimated losses of over \$590 million within a four-day period.⁵⁵ Earlier estimates by the World Bank suggested that power shortages alone impose an economic cost equivalent to approximately 2% of its GDP.⁵⁶ These disruptions interact with persistent power instability, uneven broadband availability, high device cost, and local banking frictions that shape and influence daily operations for Nigeria based ICT workers.⁵⁷

51 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with SMEDAN, 28 October 2025.

52 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; Interview with GIZ Nigeria, 29 October 2025.

53 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with the Nigerian National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), 31 October 2025.

54 Jane Munga, "[Beneath Waves : Addressing Vulnerabilities in Africa's Undersea Digital Infrastructure](#)," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2025, p3.

55 Abdullah Ajibade, "[Nigeria loses over \\$593.6 million amid undersea cable repair](#)," *Techpoint Africa*, 6 January 2025.

56 World Bank Group, "[Nigeria to keep the lights on and power its economy](#)," 23 June 2020.

57 Interview with GIZ, 29 October 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025; Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025; World Bank Group, "[Nigeria Digital Economy Diagnostic 2019](#)," 2019.

At the same time, public investment in digital infrastructure is accelerating. National initiatives such as the Nigerian National Broadband Plan 2020-2025,⁵⁸ Project Bridge,⁵⁹ and the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy⁶⁰ have set ambitious fibre rollout targets, such as aiming for broadband penetration of 70% by the end of 2025. As of October 2025, this stood at an average of 49.89%,⁶¹ with significantly higher coverage in urban areas.⁶² Alongside expanding broadband coverage, increased cloud access within public institutions and growing investment in solar electrification are gradually increasing baseline infrastructure capacity.⁶³

Export-grade ICT talent in Nigeria is concentrated in Lagos, Abuja, and other major cities where infrastructure and delivery environments meet international standards.⁶⁴ Outside these hubs, talent exists but often depends on facility-based rather than home-based work,⁶⁵ leading the market to distinguish between export-grade developers⁶⁶ in controlled environments and generic digital workers operating through improvised systems.⁶⁷

These constraints shape the way delivery of services should be designed. Interviews show that export-grade ICT work relies on infrastructure mitigation measures. Nigerian professionals typically hold backup internet lines, battery systems, generators, or inverter capacity to ensure continuous uptime.⁶⁸ At the organisational level, outsourcing facilities and coworking hubs provide monitored

58 Nigerian Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, "[Nigerian National Broadband Plan 2020-2025](#)," March 2020.

59 Broadcast Media Africa, "[Project Bridge: NITDA's ambitious initiative to expand Nigeria's fibre-optic network by 2026](#)," accessed December 2025.

60 Nigerian Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, "[National Digital Economy and Policy Strategy \(2020-2030\)](#)," June 2020.

61 Nigerian Communications Commission, "[Industry Statistics](#)," accessed December 2025.

62 World Bank Group, "[Access to electricity, urban \(% of urban population\) – Nigeria](#)," accessed December 2025.

63 Solar Power Naija, "[Welcome to Solar Power Naija](#)," accessed December 2025.

64 Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), "[2024 Subscriber/Network Performance Report](#)," 2024; Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025.

65 Interview with GIZ, 29 October 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025.

66 Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025.

67 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025; Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025.

68 Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal, 29 October 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025.

workspaces with stable power, fibre internet, remote access controls, and structured device rules.⁶⁹ While baseline capacity is gradually improving, at present most foreign projects that run through Nigeria continue to incorporate infrastructure assurance as part of their employment or contracting model.⁷⁰

Public Policy and Institutional Reform in Nigeria's ICT Sector

Nigeria's government has become increasingly visible and active in shaping the ICT and outsourcing landscape, using a mix of national skilling programmes, regulatory reforms, and digital infrastructure investments to reposition the country for talent driven economic growth. This collectively reflects a broader state effort to diversify from oil by promoting human capital as an export asset and building the institutional credibility required for foreign hiring.

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A central pillar of this policy orientation is digital skills development. The *Three Million Technical Talent (3MTT)* programme⁷¹ is the clearest expression of this shift, designed to create both foundational and advanced digital capability through community-based learning and employer linked upskilling.⁷² In parallel, the NBTE has restructured ICT education by unbundling outdated programmes, mandating global certifications from partners such as Cisco and Huawei, and upgrading national ICT infrastructure across polytechnics with support from TETFund and the Nigerian National Communications Commission (NCC).⁷³

69 Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025; Interview with GIZ, 29 October 2025; Interview with Ventures Park, 30 October 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal, 29 October 2025.

70 NCC, "[2024 Subscriber/Network Performance Report](#)," 2024.

71 Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, '[Shaping the future of Nigeria's Digital Workforce – 3MTT](#),' accessed October 2025.

72 Interview with special advisor to the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, 30 October 2025; Interview with International Organization for Migration (IOM) Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

73 The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) supports digital skills and ICT infrastructure development in tertiary institutions mainly through the [Digital Bridge Institute \(DBI\)](#), which delivers specialised training in ICT, cybersecurity, data analysis and emerging technologies for university and polytechnic staff; Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025.

These supply-side initiatives are complemented by interventions in labour governance. The Ministry of Labour has introduced labour mobility frameworks, inspired by the MATCH project,⁷⁴ and is advocating bilateral agreements that protect Nigerian remote workers through enforceable decent work, compliance, and monitoring mechanisms.⁷⁵ These efforts indicate growing recognition of remote work as a distinct segment of the labour market, though implementation remains uneven and largely dependent on intermediaries and employers. In line with this, the government has also taken steps to extend fiscal oversight to remote and freelance work. On 1 January 2026, the new Nigeria Tax Act took effect, among which explicitly brings freelancers and remote workers earning foreign income within the personal income tax system.⁷⁶ This reform reflects increasing state attention to remote work as a growing and previously weakly regulated source of income, and an effort to improve traceability and revenue collection as cross-border digital labour expands.⁷⁷ While primarily fiscally motivated, the reform also contributes to the gradual formalisation of remote work within Nigeria's regulatory framework.

Beyond regulation, the government is pursuing a more deliberate strategy to position Nigeria as an (ICT) outsourcing and digital services destination. Efforts such as the 'National Outsourcing Strategy',⁷⁸ the Association of Outsourcing Professionals of Nigeria (AOPN),⁷⁹ and the rise of digital free zones like 'Itana'⁸⁰ demonstrate an attempt to reduce bureaucratic friction, attract foreign firms, simplify business incorporation, and strengthen confidence in Nigeria as a

74 See the chapter "Comparative Insights from EU ICT mobility and nearshoring programmes" for more information.

75 Session with government officials Nigerian State Ministry of Labour, 30 October 2025; Interview with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) Nigeria, 29 October 2025.

76 Cynthia Orji, '[What Nigeria's New Tax Law Means for Freelancers and Remote Workers](#),' Raenest, 10 October 2025; Federal Republic of Nigerian, '[Nigeria Tax Act, 2025](#),' June 2025.

77 Interview with NATEP, 28 October 2025; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal, 29 October 2025; Public sector multistakeholder session at the Dutch Embassy in Abuja, 28 October 2025.

78 Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, "[Draft National Outsourcing Strategy, 2023-2027](#)," January 2023.

79 The Association of Outsourcing Professionals of Nigeria established in 2009 is a not-for-profit national industry body that institutionalizes professional standards, ethics, capacity building and policy engagement in Nigeria's outsourcing sector and serves as the country's recognized representative within the African outsourcing ecosystem.

80 Itana is a Nigeria-based company building the first Digital Free Zone in Africa. It enables businesses to operate and function in Nigeria, and Africa without being physically present in the country.

delivery base.⁸¹ The Nigerian outsourcing ecosystem is not yet tightly regulated. As noted by an official from the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the current policy focus is on establishing market conditions and ecosystem maturity prior to the introduction of more formal regulatory frameworks for outsourcing.⁸²

The National Talent Export Programme (NATEP) sits at the intersection of these agendas. Operating under the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, NATEP is designed to integrate Nigeria's youth into the global outsourcing market by positioning them as a competitive, world-class talent pool for digital and professional services. More specifically, the programme seeks to establish legal and ethical pathways for talent export aligned with global labour market needs.⁸³ To support this objective, NATEP is working to align domestic training providers with export-relevant standards, emphasising traceability, certification, and employer readiness.⁸⁴

Despite this growing policy momentum, fragmentation and coordination challenges across ministries and agencies continues to slow progress. Various institutions⁸⁵ have overlapping mandates and therefore often run parallel programmes that expand access to training but do not consistently produce market ready specialists.⁸⁶ In response to this fragmentation, private-sector actors have initiated efforts to establish a unified Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) association, aimed at improving coordination and representation across the sector.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the strategic direction of the Nigerian government is becoming clearer. Nigerian senior officials increasingly frame remote work and outsourcing as a foreign exchange and job creation pathway that retain talent domestically while integrating Nigeria into global digital value chains.⁸⁸

81 Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025; Interview with NATEP, 28 October 2025.

82 Interview with NITDA, 31 October 2025.

83 Tobi Awodipe, 'FG relaunches NATEP, to unlock 1 dollar trillion global outsourcing market opportunities,' *The Guardian Nigeria*, 6 June 2025.

84 Interview with NATEP, 28 October 2025.

85 The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA - which is Nigeria's federal ICT regulator and development agency), as well as the Nigerian Ministries of Labour, Education, and Communications and Digital Economy Agencies.

86 Interview with The Nest interview, 3 November 2025; Interview with Tech Cabal, 1 November 2025.

87 Interview with Semicolon, 4 November 2025.

88 Interview with NATEP, 28 October 2025; Session with government officials Nigerian State Ministry of Labour, 30 October 2025.

Taken together, these dynamics suggest a state that is not yet fully coordinated but is actively constructing the institutional scaffolding needed to support a national outsourcing and ICT nearshoring ecosystem grounded in youth talent, global certifications, and digital infrastructure, with operational delivery largely driven by the private sector.

Talent development pathways

Building on the ecosystem and political policy context outlined above, this section examines how individual workers move through that ecosystem to become 'market ready' for both national and international work. Rather than emerging from a single formal pipeline, Nigeria's deployable talent develops through several overlapping pathways that help individuals build skills, gain experience and demonstrate readiness to international employers.⁸⁹

Universities continue to play an important foundational role by producing large volumes of graduates in technology fields and related disciplines. These programmes provide theoretical grounding and foundational understanding of computing, mathematics, and engineering.⁹⁰ However, interview cycles reveal that employers find the public university curricula lagging behind real market requirements by several years.⁹¹ Graduates who only rely on their institutional journey often lack the depth demanded by foreign clients.⁹²

89 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025.

90 Interview with NATEP, 28 October 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

91 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025.

92 Such as specialisations in data, cloud architecture, cybersecurity standards, distributed systems, DevOps deployment, or enterprise scale development workflows; Interview with Aldelia, 04 November 2025; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

Therefore, the strongest market-ready talent comes from private academies, structured bootcamps, stackable diploma and certificate tracks, online academies and challenge-based finishing schools.^{93, 94} These institutions shape learners through intensive project work and role aligned technical drills. In addition to technical capability, they emphasise work flow discipline, documentation practices, coding standards, interview readiness, problem solving techniques, and business communication norms aligned to global best practices.⁹⁵ Their curricula shift rapidly because they mirror employer skill requests and sector changes.⁹⁶ Importantly, these providers also maintain screening data, qualification records and performance histories that foreign clients treat as important trust anchors.⁹⁷

In addition, informal and community learning are important factors in the emergence of ICT talent in Nigeria. The country has developed a dense network of peer training spaces, developer groups, hackathons, product problem labs, and collaborative programming sessions.⁹⁸ These environments facilitate rapid skills upgrading and produce self-taught professionals,⁹⁹ who later appear in remote employment markets, entrepreneurial product teams, or foreign contracting arrangements.¹⁰⁰ Within these spaces, professionals compete on capability, not degree status, with portfolios and delivered work serving as primary signals of competence that can be recognised and validated by intermediaries when matching candidates to foreign clients.¹⁰¹

93 Challenge-based finishing schools are programmes that prepare graduates for real-world roles through employer-style challenges, time-bound projects, and simulated work environments rather than classroom instruction alone; Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session 3 November 2025; Interview with GIZ 29 October 2025; Interview with Osmos, 30 April 2025.

94 These include programmes such as [Tunga Academy](#) (partnered with Lepaya in the Netherlands), [AltSchool Africa's online school](#), [ALX](#), or [Decagon's tech training institute](#).

95 Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025; Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

96 Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025.

97 Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025.

98 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025; Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025.

99 Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025; Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025.

100 Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025.

101 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025.

Another pathway is international certification. Certification issued by global technology vendors and professional bodies¹⁰² provide standardised test-based verification or role-aligned competence. Across interviews, intermediaries consistently referenced such certifications as the most reliable competence signal of market readiness,¹⁰³ as they provide test based verification, role aligned technical standards, and traceable records that can be used by foreign employers.¹⁰⁴ Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) regulators similarly describe certification records as a high quality supply map for large scale recruitment.¹⁰⁵

Overall, these four channels generate a supply base of talent characterised by strong foundational knowledge, practical project exposure and rising levels of professionalism.¹⁰⁶ However, market-ready talent is not randomly distributed, rather it is concentrated around hubs, academies, targeted certification programmes and companies that engage directly in talent development through bootcamps, hackathons, and similar initiatives.¹⁰⁷ National volume exists, but nearshoring feasibility depends on careful selection, targeted upskilling, and structured onboarding.¹⁰⁸

Market-ready talent is not randomly distributed, rather it is concentrated around hubs, academies, targeted certification programmes and companies that engage directly in talent development through bootcamps, hackathons, and similar initiatives.

102 Such as through through Cisco, Huawei, international cloud providers, cybersecurity institutions, and data engineering bodies.

103 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; Interview with FMCIDE, 30 October 2025; Session with government officials Nigerian State Ministry of Labour, 30 October 2025.

104 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; Department of Commerce United States, '[Nigeria Country Commercial Guide](#).'

105 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

106 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

107 Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025.

108 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with NITDA, 31 October 2025; Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025.

Depth and capability patterns

Across interviews, a critical pattern emerges regarding the depth of Nigeria's ICT talent pool. Nigeria produces large volumes of junior and mid-level talent, but the pool becomes significantly smaller at higher levels of specialisation and delivery experience. Though national statistic agencies do not publish national statistics on the annual number of ICT graduates in Nigeria, several data points allow for reasonable approximation. Nigeria produces an estimated 600,000 tertiary graduates each year across universities and polytechnics.¹⁰⁹ In 2019, approximately 99,000 students were enrolled in computer science programmes alone.¹¹⁰ Gender disparities further shape the ICT talent pipeline, with women representing roughly 22% of engineering and technology graduates.¹¹¹

Labour market conditions play a significant role in shaping how talent develops. Acute labour competition for employment and limited availability of stable, high-quality roles push many professionals into a 'hustle' mentality. This environment fosters rapid skill acquisition¹¹², adaptability under pressure, and familiarity with multiple development tools.¹¹³ According to interviewees, the strength of Nigerian talent lies in speed of learning, and willingness to take on complex tasks.¹¹⁴ They are motivated by exposure, foreign income, structured work, and remote roles that expand their professional horizon while allowing them to remain in the country.¹¹⁵

109 Temitope Owolabi and Oluyemi Adeosun, "[Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria: An Interrogation into the Survival Strategies of Lagos Youths](#)," *Journal of Economics and Management*, September 2023, pp.187 to 206.

110 Biodun Busari, '[Data reveals Computer Science as most sought-after course in Nigerian varsities](#),' 12 July 2022, *Vanguard*, accessed December 2025.

111 *Neusroom*, '[IWD 2023: MTN Celebrates 27 Leading Nigerian Women in ICT](#),' accessed November 2025.

112 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Interview with FMCIDE, 30 October 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

113 Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025; Interview with The Nest interview, 3 November 2025.

114 Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal, 29 October 2025; Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025.

115 Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025; Interview with NITDA, 31 October 2025; Interview with GIZ, 29 October 2025

Scarcity is most pronounced at the senior end of the skills distribution. Nigerian senior professionals, especially those with long delivery histories, complex systems experience, or deep specialisation advanced ICT engineering specialisations¹¹⁶ are fewer and globally competed for.¹¹⁷ International companies recruit them directly into remote roles denominated in dollars, and they often exit the domestic market unless retained through high incentives.¹¹⁸

Depth also reflects workplace readiness. Junior and mid-level talent may have strong theoretical ability and good code writing skills but still require guided onboarding in documentation, communication norms, workflow discipline, version control systems, shared code repository usage,¹¹⁹ structured testing, and European expectations around clarity, punctuality, transparency of task breakdown, and progress reporting.¹²⁰ Successful nearshoring examples consistently added approximately one to two months of structured onboarding before live project deployment. In the case of Nigerian talent, successful upskilling and onboarding initiatives typically combine targeted training to align existing theoretical knowledge and technical skills with employer-specific requirements, alongside the development of soft skills related to communication, work practices and skills, and organisational culture aligned with European employer standards. Interviewees from intermediary firms emphasised that employers value soft skills and familiarity with European working norms at least as highly as technical competencies.¹²¹

116 In data engineering, machine learning, embedded systems, cloud architecture, security governance, Ethereum based protocols, or advanced backend optimisation.

117 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

118 Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025; Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025.

119 'Repository usage' means knowing how to work with shared code that a whole team uses. It includes saving your code in the right place, updating it without causing problems, following version rules, and working smoothly with other people's code. It shows whether someone is ready to work in a real company setting, not just write code on their own.

120 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025.

121 Private sector multistakeholder session at the Dutch Consulate in Lagos, 4 November 2025; Interview with Seefar foundation, 29 October 2025; Interview with Osmos, 30 April 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with Zer Consulting, 17 September 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025.

Thus, interviews repeatedly show that depth is built through finishing systems, the set of mechanisms that bridge the gap between training and productive work. These include employer-led training, technical screening, supervised real projects, apprenticeships, and intensive upgrading in specific stacks.¹²² Where and when these are present, interviewees noted that Nigerian talent has proven equivalent to peers in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and India within similar cost ranges.¹²³ Where they are not present, early stage performance can be uneven and can lead to false conclusions about capability.¹²⁴

Given the abundance of junior talent and the limited availability of senior professionals, organisations need to adopt a mixed approach. Rather than relying on senior hires, firms can work with specialised sourcing partners while deliberately treating junior and mid-level talent as a pipeline, investing in structured upskilling and progression into more advanced specialist roles over time.¹²⁵

122 Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Interview with GIZ, 29 October 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal interview, 29 October 2025.

123 Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025; Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025.

124 Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025.

125 Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal interview, 29 October 2025; Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025.

Opportunities, barriers and lessons learned for a Nigeria-Netherlands ICT corridor

This chapter sets out the enabling and constraining conditions shaping Nigeria’s role within a potential ICT nearshoring corridor with the Netherlands. The first part sets out the structural advantages that position Nigeria as a viable partner while the second part turns towards the barriers that shape implementation in practice.

Table 1 Opportunities and barriers for a Nigeria-Netherlands ICT corridor, compiled by authors.

Opportunities	Barriers requiring mitigation
Time zone and language alignment	Limited senior depth and retention risks
Scalable talent pipeline	Compliance, FX and payment frictions
Cost competitive and mature remote ICT workforce	Infrastructure and operational risks
Agile private-sector ecosystem	Corruption, security, and perception barriers
Strong diaspora engagement	Trust and market familiarity gaps

Structural advantages that position Nigeria as a feasible nearshoring partner

Time zone and language alignment

Nigeria’s GMT time zone mirrors much of continental Europe, enabling real time collaboration, faster feedback loops, and seamless agile workflows. This critical factor of time zone alignment was repeatedly emphasised by practitioners working with Nigerian teams who described daily stand ups, pair programming, and supervision as operationally smooth.¹²⁶

126 Interview Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview Tunga, 1 November 2025.

Additionally, Nigeria's English language proficiency and long-established integration into global tech platforms reduces onboarding and communication friction. Outsourcing firms, training providers, and BPOs noted that most ICT trainees learn, work, and collaborate in English by default.¹²⁷ Independent global datasets show similar patterns, with Nigeria ranking among the largest English-speaking labour pools globally.¹²⁸

Scalable talent pipeline

Nigeria's demographic size, youth profile, and large human capital and DigiTech workforce position it as a market with genuine volume potential and the prospect of a future demographic dividend. The country's demographic structure, with a median age of 18.1 years¹²⁹ and a fertility rate of 4.3 children per woman, results in a youthful population. With youth unemployment officially pegged at 6.5 percent in 2024 and earlier estimates putting it at 53.4 percent in 2020 using an older methodology,¹³⁰ creating sustainable jobs is both a political and economic imperative. Although international demographic projections suggest that Nigeria's full demographic dividend may only materialise from around 2040 onwards, the current scale and growth of its youth population already shape labour market dynamics today.¹³¹

127 Interview with AltSchool, 3 November 2025; Interview with Outcess, 3 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025.

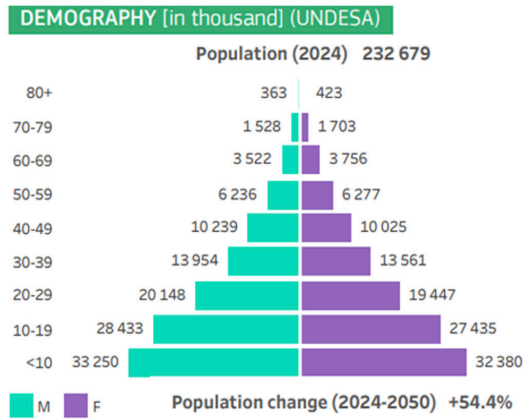
128 Nigeria is ranked 29 out of 123 (1 being the best); *Education First*, '[EF English Proficiency Index](#),' 2025.

129 *Worldometer*, '[Countries in the world by population \(2025\)](#),' assessed November 2025.

130 The official numbers for youth unemployment in Nigeria are very different depending on how they are calculated. In 2024, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said that the unemployment rate for people aged 15 to 24 was 6.5 percent. This was based on a new way of measuring that follows recent ILO guidelines, which say that people who work as little as one hour a week are considered employed. Many people have criticised this change in methodology because it gives figures that are too low and don't reflect the realities of the labour market, especially when there is so much informal, precarious, and poor-productivity work. In 2020, the previous NBS methodology showed that 53.4% of people aged 15 to 24 and 37.2% of people aged 25 to 34 were unemployed. Analysts say that these numbers are still more in line with what people have actually experienced and with other signs of labour market exclusion. As a result, even if the overall unemployment rate seems to have dropped drastically, most expert evaluations indicate that actual youth unemployment, taking into account underemployment, discouraged workers, and NEET rates—remains significantly higher than the updated official statistics suggest. (Sources: Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, '[Labour Force Statistics: Unemployment and Underemployment Report \(Q4 2020\)](#)'; Dalue Mbachu, '[Nigeria's revamp of economic indicators sparks debate](#),' *African Business*, 13 February 2025; Raphael Mbaegbu, "[Facing lack of economic opportunity, Nigerian youth want government action on jobs and cost of living](#)," *Afrobarometer* dispatch No. 988, 16 June 2025.

131 WRR, "[Met de mondiale demografie mee](#)," p.183.

Figure 3 Population pyramid Nigeria



Source: The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, “Met de mondiale demografie mee,” p.183.

Consequently, youth employment has become a recurring theme in the Dutch-Nigerian migration cooperation.¹³² Dutch involvement already reflects this priority through initiatives such as the *Challenge Fund for Youth Employment* (CFYE), which supports private-sector led projects that generate jobs in Nigeria.¹³³ Similarly, *Orange Corners*, funded by the Netherlands, fosters youth-led businesses as well as female entrepreneurship.¹³⁴ Nearshoring can build on these existing Dutch efforts by targeting high-value employment, aligning with Nigeria’s own policy priorities to leverage ICT as an engine for growth.

Moreover, NBTE and NATEP officials noted the rapid growth in the number of young people entering ICT and technical training pathways is occurring alongside an expansion of firms that depend on technically trained labour in Nigeria.¹³⁵ This indicates a sustained and increasing emphasis on digital skills development among Nigeria’s youth.

132 Roundtable with policy makers, entrepreneurs, and research organisation organised by Clingendael, 2 July 2025.

133 Interview with Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE), 3 November 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025.

134 Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025.

135 Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; Interview with NATEP, 28 October 2025.

Cost competitive and mature remote ICT workforce

Nigeria's talent is cost competitive without undermining quality. Several interviewed actors described Nigerian remote workers as delivering high performance at lower total labour costs relative to Europe.¹³⁶ Comparative analyses from international digital labour platforms place Nigeria within the cluster of cost competitive emerging tech talent markets.¹³⁷

As shown in the table below, hourly rates across multiple digital roles, typically price Nigerians in the same band as other cost competitive emerging markets. These indicators confirm that Nigeria sits firmly in the global cost competitive tier for mid- to senior-level digital talent. Interviewed employers further noted that, with proper onboarding and support, Nigerian developers often deliver value that exceeds their cost, particularly at the junior and mid-level.¹³⁸

Table 2 Comparative hourly rates of ICT-related roles across selected regions

Role	North America (U.S.)	Western Europe (e.g. UK)	Eastern Europe (e.g. Ukraine)	Asia (e.g. India)	Latin America (e.g. Brazil)	Africa (e.g. Nigeria)
Software Developer (hourly)	\$60–\$100/hr (highest)	\$40–\$80/hr	\$25–\$50/hr	\$20–\$40/hr	\$30–\$60/hr	\$20–\$40/hr
Graphic Designer (hourly)	\$50–\$120/hr (senior up to \$200)	\$30–\$60/hr	\$10–\$30/hr	\$5–\$20/hr	\$5–\$30/hr	\$5–\$50/hr (wide range)
Digital Marketer (hourly)	\$40–\$80/hr (avg ~\$50)	\$30–\$60/hr	\$15–\$30/hr	\$10–\$25/hr	\$15–\$35/hr	\$10–\$25/hr
Virtual Assistant (hourly)	\$20–\$30/hr (avg ~\$25)	\$15–\$25/hr	\$5–\$15/hr	\$3–\$10/hr	\$5–\$15/hr	\$4–\$10/hr
Data Analyst (hourly)	\$50–\$70/hr	\$40–\$60/hr	\$20–\$40/hr	\$20–\$30/hr	\$20–\$40/hr	\$15–\$30/hr

Source: Global Contractor Rate Snapshot 2025¹³⁹

136 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with Outcess, 3 November 2025; Interview with Assistants Hive, 3 November 2025.

137 Alpha Global, '[Why Nigerian Tech Talent is Europe's Best-Kept Secret](#),' 26 May 2025; African Leadership, '[Africa's Remote Workforce Growth: Talent, Tech, Jobs, Skills, Digital Economy](#),' 18 November 2025; The World Bank Group, '[Nigeria – Digital Economic Diagnostic Report](#)', 2019.

138 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

139 Rates converted to USD; Jeremiah Ajayi, '[Global Contractor Rates in 2025: Country-by-country comparison](#),' RemotePass, 6 October 2025.

On top of this, Nigeria boasts a mature and scalable remote work market. Estimates suggest that Nigeria alone has about three million registered freelancers across around ninety digital platforms, representing one of the largest concentrations of platform-mediated labour on the African continent.¹⁴⁰ This points to both the scale and high degree of familiarity with remote work.

From an employer perspective, this familiarity with remote work translates into operational advantages. Interviewees reported high levels of motivation, adaptability, and learning speed among Nigerian remote workers, which enable comparatively rapid onboarding.¹⁴¹ One employer noted that onboarding a Nigerian engineer typically took approximately three weeks, compared to around four months in India.¹⁴²

Survey evidence suggests that this established remote work ecosystem aligns closely with the preferences of Nigerian youth. An overwhelming 82.8% of respondents expressed interest in working remotely for a Dutch company from within Nigeria.

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At the same time, it is important to consider the high migration intentions among Nigerian youth. Nearly three-quarters (72.4%) of the survey respondents stated they initially planned to migrate abroad after completing their university education. Interestingly, however, this proportion dropped significantly, to less than half (46.6%), if they could secure a job in Nigeria that matched their training. This suggests that the availability of competitive digital roles can meaningfully reduce the desire for physical migration, though a substantial share would still consider moving abroad. Interviews with training providers supported this behavioural shift, noting that many Nigerian workers prefer to stay close to family

140 Desmond Ayentimi, Albert Amankwaa and John Burgess, "[The Emerging Gig Economy and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)," *Societies*, 2025, p 274.

141 Interview with Zer consulting, 17 September 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal, 29 October 2025; Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025.

142 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

networks and would migrate if better opportunities are locally unavailable.¹⁴³ This aligns with migration intention reports, showing growing interest in hybrid and remote work models.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, several noted that migration intentions may increase later in life after starting a family, as considerations around security, healthcare, and family wellbeing become more prominent. This dynamic points to a growing interest in hybrid mobility models and underscores the importance of designing nearshoring pathways that are responsive to both professional aspirations and evolving personal priorities.

Agile private-sector ecosystem

Nigeria's ICT ecosystem is agile, reflecting its predominantly private sector driven structure. While the government is increasingly rolling out reforms and training initiatives, ICT nearshoring remains largely shaped by private-sector actors. Private training providers and organizations are able to rapidly update curricula in upskilling and onboarding programmes in response to specific employer demands. This flexibility enables Nigerian ICT talent to quickly align with evolving international standards and market needs. Secondary research confirms that these informal and private-sector pathways are the primary source of globally competitive Nigerian ICT professionals.¹⁴⁵

Strong diaspora engagement

(Informal) diaspora networks and return pathways function as credibility anchors.¹⁴⁶ The strength of Nigeria's tech diaspora constitutes a unique asset for the country's ICT ecosystem, as many leading figures in Nigerian BPOs and tech firms¹⁴⁷ have accumulated professional experience in European, UK, or US markets and are now actively reinvesting that expertise in Nigeria through a

143 Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025.

144 IOM, "[World Migration Report](#)," 2024; Victor Ejechi, '[Living Here, Earning There: The Rise of Nigeria's Digital Migrants](#),' *Diaspora Africa*, 10 April 2025.

145 The ITU/ILO/AU assessment of digital skills in Nigeria identifies numerous private and non-formal ICT training providers playing a significant role in preparing youth for digital economy work, indicating that pathways beyond formal tertiary education contribute substantially to ICT competency development; International Telecommunications Union, "[Assessment of skills supply and demand in the digital economy in Nigeria, including digital skills](#)," 2024.

146 Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025; Interview with Ventures Platform, 30 October 2025.

147 Interview with Telesoftas/Get Global, 29 October 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025.

growing 'Ja-pada'¹⁴⁸ movement of Nigerians with ICT experience returning back from the US or Europe. This return flow not only enriches the local ecosystem with international best practices but also creates a cohort of professionals who are deeply familiar with both European and Nigerian business environments.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, interviewees noted that some European or North American employers were first introduced to Nigerian talent through diaspora colleagues who vouched for capability and work standards.¹⁵⁰ As such, these networks can be relevant for bridging cultural and operational gaps, helping international clients navigate the local market with greater confidence.¹⁵¹

Barriers requiring mitigation

While there are opportunities, some systemic barriers exist. These constraints do not negate feasibility, but they define the conditions under which a corridor could function effectively.

Labour Market and Retention

As previously discussed, Nigeria's labour market tends to be junior heavy with relative scarcity of senior depth. Interviewees across the ecosystem confirmed that while Nigeria can supply junior and mid-level talent at scale, Nigerian senior developers are globally competed for and often already absorbed by remote markets, such as in the US or UK.¹⁵² This creates a mismatch between Dutch demand and Nigerian supply, unless Dutch firms adjust their expectations and use intermediary companies who provide structured upskilling and onboarding, rather than assuming immediate availability of senior hires who can operate independently from the outset.

148 The term 'Japa' means migration from Nigeria, while 'Japada' means returning to Nigeria, "where individuals who previously emigrated choose to return to Nigeria."; Olusegun Odunlami, Joseph Odigie and Abimbola Oluyemi, "['Japa' and 'Japada': The Social Media Representations of Migration and Return in Nigerian Context](#)," *Jalingo Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, 23 April 2025, p32.

149 Interview with Zer consulting, 17 September 2025.

150 Private sector multistakeholder session at the Dutch Consulate in Lagos, 4 November 2025; Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025.

151 Interview with Telesoftas/Get Global, 29 October 2025; Interview with Osmos, 30 April 2025; Interview with Dutch Enterprise Agency (RVO), 15 May 2025.

152 Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/Get Global, 29 October 2025.

Another issue that arises is talent leakage after training. Some interviewees noted that free or lightly subsidised government training programmes often experience high dropout rates, partly due to limited participant ownership and weak incentives to complete programmes. Where training is not linked to employment opportunities post-training, participants frequently noted a high degree of mobility toward US and UK (remote) platforms.¹⁵³ In the absence of clear career development pathways, competitive compensation, or credible long-term prospects, there is a higher chance that trained workers move on to more attractive opportunities elsewhere.¹⁵⁴

Institutional and Governance Gaps

Ecosystem splintering and lack of coordination arises as another constraint. As previously outlined, Nigeria's digital economy is large and dynamic, but institutionally dispersed across ministries, agencies, hubs, polytechnics, outsourcing firms, and private academies.¹⁵⁵ Interviewees frequently pointed to siloed coordination, overlapping mandates and duplicative training initiatives.¹⁵⁶ For example, actors within the Nigerian Ministry of Labour emphasised that digital labour export should be covered within bilateral frameworks addressing job quality, protection, certification, and dispute mechanisms,¹⁵⁷ while many existing nearshoring activities continue to be driven primarily through business-to-business (B2B) arrangements, often with varying degrees of government (Nigerian and partner-country) support. The result is a landscape in which roles, responsibilities, and expectations are not always fully aligned.

In parallel, while the Nigerian government is increasingly positioning itself as a global ICT talent hub, it lacks an articulated narrative for presenting its digital talent internationally and does not actively market it. Interviewees noted that efforts to market Nigerian ICT capability to European employers remain fragmented, limiting visibility and confidence among potential partners. As one interviewee observed, "storytelling is not culturally embedded in Nigeria's tech

153 Interview with NITDA, 31 October 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

154 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025; Interview with Assistants Hive, 3 November 2025.

155 Interview with NATEP, 28 October 2025; Interview with NBTE, 30 October 2025; World Bank Group, "[Nigeria Digital Economy Diagnostic](#)," 2019.

156 Nigerian private sector session at the Dutch Consulate in Lagos, 04 November 2025; Interview with Itana 28 October 2025.

157 Session with government officials Nigerian State Ministry of Labour, 30 October 2025.

ecosystem,” yet such narrative coherence lays an important role in attracting nearshoring interest and building trust in Nigeria as a viable nearshoring destination.¹⁵⁸

Operational and Financial Frictions

Foreign currency (FX) exchange rate instability and payment friction remain a major operational barrier. ICT talent sometimes struggles to access salaries due to FX rationing and bank delays.¹⁵⁹ SMEs in Europe avoid invoicing Nigerian entities for compliance considerations.¹⁶⁰ These frictions shape business model choices and reinforce dependence on intermediaries that handle currency routing, invoicing, and financial compliance.¹⁶¹

In parallel, decisive compliance gaps persist. While Nigeria has a Data Protection Act and a National Cybersecurity Policy, implementation and enforcement remains uneven.¹⁶² Data gaps, fragmented cybersecurity standards, weak intellectual property enforcement and slow judicial persist.¹⁶³ Although regulatory frameworks are evolving to address some of these issues, including planned updates to cybersecurity legislation expected by mid-2026, current conditions point to a continued reliance on structured intermediaries to manage compliance, code governance, and the translation of operational and legal risks.¹⁶⁴

Infrastructure inconsistency in Nigeria is also often cited as a constraint on ICT nearshoring reliability. As noted earlier, electricity instability, uneven broadband coverage, and limited device access can introduce operational friction.¹⁶⁵ In practice, however, these risks are largely managed within market-capable delivery models operated through intermediaries and BPOs. Such firms routinely mitigate infrastructure volatility through controlled working

158 Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025.

159 Interview with InsiderPR, 28 October 2025.

160 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

161 Interview with NITDA, 31 October 2025.

162 [Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023; National Cybersecurity Policy & Strategy 2021.](#)

163 Interview with NITDA, 31 October 2025.

164 Many intermediary companies also include GDPR training into their onboarding of talent; Interview with NITDA, 31 October 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with Outcess, 3 November 2025; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with AltSchool 3 November 2025.

165 Interview with GIZ, 29 October 2025; Interview with Outcess, 3 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025

environments, redundant internet connections, backup power systems, monitored workspaces, and minimum work-from-home requirements.¹⁶⁶ As a result, when Dutch firms engage through established intermediaries, they are typically not exposed to direct infrastructure disruptions or required to make additional upfront investments as infrastructure assurance costs are often bundled into intermediaries' commercial pricing rather than treated as separate investment requirements, except in cases where clients specify particular hardware or device standards.¹⁶⁷ The bottleneck therefore appears to not only solely be infrastructural but also perceptual, with interviewees suggesting that potential nearshoring clients tend to overestimate infrastructure risk due to limited familiarity with how Nigerian delivery environments operate and manage these conditions.

Corruption and Security Perception and Trust Barriers

Corruption and insecurity constitute constraints on doing business in Nigeria and directly shape commercial risk assessments. Nigeria ranks 140 out of 180 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI),¹⁶⁸ a position that reflects persistent governance challenges and heightens employers' concerns around integrity risks, such as documentation fraud, 'moonlighting',¹⁶⁹ and limited enforceability through the judicial system. Where firms do not work with trusted intermediaries capable of mitigating these risks, much as they do for infrastructure constraints, transaction costs increase and additional risk-management measures become necessary, particularly for companies with limited on-the-ground presence.

Security conditions in Nigeria introduce a similar set of structural risks. As of December 2025, Dutch government travel advice assigns a red code to large parts of northern Nigeria and some areas in the southeast, while most other regions – including major urban and technology hubs – are classified under an orange code.¹⁷⁰ Across the country, there is a risk of terrorist attacks, most

166 Interview with Eryk 1 November 2025; Interview with Itana, 28 October 2025.

167 Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with FMCIDE, 29 October 2025; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

168 1 means the least perceived corruption with 180 meaning the most perceived corruption; Transparency International, '[Corruption Perceptions Index](#),' accessed December 2025.

169 'Moonlighting' refers to a situation where a remote worker undertakes additional paid work for other clients or employers, often concurrently and without disclosure.

170 Red means do not travel, and orange means only for necessary travels; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, '[Travel Advice Nigeria](#),' accessed October 2025.

frequently linked to armed groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). In parallel, Nigeria faces high levels of criminal violence, including armed robberies and kidnappings for ransom, particularly in northern states. A recent United States bombing operation in north-western Nigeria further illustrates the country's security challenges and the degree of international attention they attract; however, this bombing occurred in a remote rural area far from Nigeria's primary economic and ICT centres.¹⁷¹ Taken together, these conditions reflect real and persistent security risks in specific regions and can affect insurance costs, compliance requirements, and overall risk perceptions among potential Dutch firms.

At the same time, the areas most affected by terrorism and severe insecurity are not the primary centres of where ICT nearshoring is concentrated. Moreover, ICT nearshoring typically requires limited physical presence.¹⁷² As a result, while insecurity remains a genuine national-level constraint, its operational relevance for ICT nearshoring depends largely on the delivery model, geographic focus, and the extent to which risks are mitigated through careful location selection and intermediated or remote arrangements.

Trust barriers

Trust emerges as another determinant of whether Dutch companies will engage Nigerian ICT talent.¹⁷³ Interviews with outsourcing firms, foreign employers, diplomatic staff, implementing partners, and Nigerian intermediaries all converge on the same conclusion: European hesitation towards nearshoring is not necessarily driven by absence of skills, but by lack of trust and uncertainty around context, data protection, compliance culture, payroll execution, and

171 Dionne Searcey, Eric Schmitt, ['After U.S. Strikes on Christmas, Fear Grips Muslims in Rural Nigeria,'](#) *New York Times*, 5 January 2026.

172 Where needed, limited and targeted physical mobility may be beneficial, enabling face-to-face engagement between employers and employees to familiarise firms with the Nigerian operating context and support trust building; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Interview with Semicolon, 4 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025.

173 Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025; Public sector multistakeholder session at the Dutch Embassy in Abuja, 28 October 2025; Interview with The Nest, 3 November 2025; Interview with Dutch Enterprise Agency (RVO), 15 May 2025; Interview with Assistants Hive, 3 November 2025; Interview with NABC, 15 May 2025.

clarity on how expectations will be met at scale.¹⁷⁴ These findings align with global SME reports showing that trust and verifiability remain the core barrier to Africa EU digital outsourcing.¹⁷⁵

European hesitation towards nearshoring is not necessarily driven by absence of skills, but by lack of trust and uncertainty around context, data protection, compliance culture, payroll execution, and clarity on how expectations will be met at scale.

European companies' risk assessments are further shaped by distance from the Nigerian ecosystem and by the absence of Nigeria as a known outsourcing or nearshoring destinations alongside India, Eastern Europe or the Philippines.¹⁷⁶ Dutch firms lack visible proof points, market intelligence, or reference cases that would allow them to situate Nigeria within a familiarly delivery framework.¹⁷⁷ In this context, trust does not emerge from assurances, but from making an unfamiliar ecosystem legible and comparable to known markets.

Taken together, these constraints suggest that alignment between Dutch demand and Nigerian supply is feasible but conditional. It requires intermediated models, demand aligned skilling, risk sharing between states and firms, and early demonstration cases to build trust.

174 Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025; Interview with Tunga, 1 November 2025; Interview with NITDA, 31 October 2025; Session with government officials Nigerian State Ministry of Labour, 30 October 2025.

175 International Telecommunications Union, "[Assessment of skills supply and demand in the digital economy in Nigeria, including digital skills](#)," 2024.

176 Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025; Public sector multistakeholder session at the Dutch Embassy in Abuja, 28 October 2025; Interview with TechCabal, 1 November 2025.

177 Orange Corners multistakeholder session, 3 November 2025; Interview with The Nest interview, 3 November 2025; Interview with GIZ, 29 October 2025; Interview with Tunga, 30 July 2025.

Comparative Insights from EU ICT mobility and nearshoring programmes

This chapter draws on insights from relevant European ICT mobility and nearshoring initiatives. As highlighted in the general paper of this series “*Remote hires, stronger ties*,” bilateral nearshoring initiatives should be considered in the context both EU partnerships and existing bilateral programmes.¹⁷⁸ While many current initiatives in Nigeria focus on skills partnerships with a (labour) mobility component to the EU,¹⁷⁹ they offer valuable lessons for designing a remote nearshoring corridor with Nigeria.¹⁸⁰

Trust through exposure

As noted above, limited trust in Nigeria as a nearshoring destination among European companies remain significant constraints, complicating the development of demand for Nigerian ICT services.¹⁸¹ As one interviewee noted “shortages alone do not create demand for Nigerian talent.”¹⁸² Across multiple European programmes, despite experiencing shortages, European employers remained hesitant. However, once various de-risking mechanisms were put into place and direct exposure occurred with Nigerian talent, they moved from curiosity to commitment.

Small-scale pilots and structured interactions proved critical in this regard. *Digital Explorers* (see Box 1), for example, brought European employers into direct contact with Nigerian developers through hackathons or joint bootcamps in Nigeria, or short secondments, rapidly breaking down stereotypes and scepticism. Noted by Eryk, a Danish-Polish engineering company which was part of the *Tech4ProEurope* programme (see Box 2), Danish-government support for trade missions and branding, proved critical in positioning Nigeria as a viable nearshoring destination.¹⁸³

178 Neumann et al., “[Remote hires, stronger ties](#).”

179 Either short- or long-term placement or circular migration component.

180 The relevant programmes with an EU-tie that were analysed more in depth are MATCH, Sustain, Digital Explorers and Tech4Pro.

181 Interview with Seefar Foundation, 29 October 2025.

182 Interview with Seefar Foundation, 29 October 2025.

183 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

Box 1 Digital Explorers¹⁸⁴

Digital Explorers is an EU-funded initiative under the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) that pilots new models of ICT talent cooperation between Nigeria and Europe. The project began as a pioneering effort to connect Nigerian ICT talent with Lithuanian companies, combining technical training, softskills preparation, and deliberate trustbuilding to challenge outdated perceptions of Nigeria as a digital talent hub. Unlike traditional circular migration schemes, the project deliberately focused on trustbuilding—bringing Lithuanian firms closer to Nigeria's tech ecosystem, breaking stereotypes, and preparing candidates through tailored bootcamps. The aim was not only to fill skill shortages in the EU, but also to position Nigeria as a credible talent hub and foster long-term collaboration between European companies and Nigerian digital actors.

The programme has two phases.

- Phase I (2019–2021) focused on Nigeria–Lithuania mobility, offering structured training and 6–12-month placements for young Nigerian ICT specialists, alongside reintegration support and ecosystem cooperation.¹⁸⁵
- Phase II (2023–2026) expands the model to a multicountry partnership involving Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and additional talent countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Armenia), adding new tracks, larger cohorts, and more options for remote work and local track participation.¹⁸⁶

184 Interview with Osmos, 30 April 2025; Interview with Telesoftas/GetGlobal, 29 October 2025.

185 MPF, '[Project implemented in the framework of the EU Pilot Projects on Legal Migration](#),' accessed October 2025.

186 MPF, '[Digital Explorers II](#),' accessed October 2025.

Box 2 Tech4ProEurope¹⁸⁷

TechPro4Europe was an EU-funded project under the MPF, with implementation supported by ICMPD Nigeria. It was designed to address the practical challenges of implementing private-sector-driven labour-mobility schemes for Nigerian technical professionals. Focused on the construction and manufacturing sectors, the initiative built a comprehensive model covering talent identification, certification, migration, placement, and return support for Nigerian technicians aiming to work with European firms.

At its core, the project responded to real employer needs, working closely with companies such as Eryk to develop an end-to-end process: technical and safety testing, European-standard certification, cultural and pre-departure preparation, visa and documentation facilitation, and structured apprenticeships abroad.

In both cases, the potential of the Nigerian market was recognised and translated into deeper, more structural engagement. Within *Digital Explorers*, a small pilot triggered further market entry: the Lithuanian company TeleSoftas (now Helmes) a software development and digital product engine outsourcing company, established its own branch in Nigeria, signalling clear market confidence. Today, Helmes serves a Ukrainian client from its Nigerian base. Similarly, Eryk established Eryk Limited in Nigeria in 2024 to deliver remote IT services, offering full Employer of Record (EOR) solutions as well as recruiting and onboarding, signalling a long-term commitment to the Nigerian market. Eryk further noted the importance of the support from the Danish embassy and government, in which government branding and support in trade missions, helped position Nigeria as a viable nearshoring destination for European companies.¹⁸⁸

These interactions transformed Nigeria from an unfamiliar and high-risk labour market into a credible nearshoring destination, unlocking employer engagement. In the context of remote or hybrid ICT collaboration, where physical co-location is absent, such trust-building becomes even more essential, as remote delivery

187 Interview with ICMPD Nigeria, 29 October 2025; Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

188 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

requires a higher baseline of confidence in team reliability and capability. A relevant implication for Dutch companies, even when working through intermediaries, is to begin with controlled, small-scale engagements that allow Dutch companies to personally gauge Nigerian talent.¹⁸⁹ Early wins build confidence, trust and word-of-mouth credibility.

Invest in structured upskilling & onboarding

While there is labour supply in Nigeria, a consistent insight is the mismatch between Nigerian talent breadth and the specialised depth expected by European employers. European firms tend to seek workers with highly specific skills. European initiatives (e.g. the *SUSTAIN* project with German and Irish involvement (see Box 3), or the EU-funded *MATCH* scheme (see Box 4)) demonstrate that simply matching available candidates to vacancies may be insufficient: companies often found that candidates, especially juniors, needed additional training to meet specific technical and soft-skill expectations.

Box 3 SUSTAIN¹⁹⁰

SUSTAIN is an EUfunded initiative under the MPF, implemented in Nigeria by the Seefar Foundation that started in September 2024. It is designed to create a structured, longterm mobility corridor for STEM professionals between Nigeria and Europe. The project responds to a clear labourmarket mismatch: Germany and Ireland face acute shortages of STEM workers, while Nigeria has a large surplus of qualified but underemployed STEM talent.

SUSTAIN aims to place 240 Nigerian STEM professionals into jobs in Germany and Ireland, but its ambition goes beyond individual placements. The project works to build a durable, scalable talent pipeline, using a digital matching model that connects Nigerian candidates with European talentmanagement agencies. Participants undergo skills vetting, industryaligned technical assessments, softskills and intercultural preparation, as well as language training (e.g., via GoetheInstitut for Germany) to ensure readiness for European workplaces.¹⁹¹

189 Such as apprenticeship programmes or internships.

190 Interview with Seefar foundation, 29 October 2025.

191 MPF, '[SUSTAIN Europe: Scaling Up STEM Talent from Africa in Europe](#),' accessed November 2025.

Box 4 MATCH¹⁹²

The MATCH project was an EU-funded initiative under the MPF designed to connect highly skilled Nigerian and Senegalese professionals with companies facing labour shortages in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and supported by national partners including the Netherlands African Business Council (NABC), the programme promoted a structured form of circular migration: candidates gain temporary work experience in Europe while helping employers fill immediate skill gaps and later return with enhanced skills to contribute to their home labour markets.

The programme aimed to create a coordinated recruitment and matching system: European companies submitted their vacancy profiles to IOM; candidates were sourced in Nigeria and Senegal through the recruitment firm Aldelia; and final shortlists were jointly validated by IOM, local employment agencies, and employers. Beyond mobility, MATCH also invested in skills development, capacity building, and knowledge sharing between African and European partners.

When firms instead treated hires as trainees or interns with growth pathways and invested in upskilling upfront, outcomes improved. As noted during interviews, evidence of theoretical knowledge is a must, soft-skills and more specialised required practical skills can be taught.¹⁹³ For ICT nearshoring, this means firms should approach Nigeria not as a source of immediately deployable senior specialists, but as a talent pipeline in which remote teams are supported to develop into increasingly advanced specialist roles over time. Upskilling arrangements vary across delivery models. In some cases, companies invest directly in training, while in some intermediary-led models' costs may be shared between firms and service providers. In other arrangements, intermediary firms facilitate loan-based training schemes in which individual workers finance their own upskilling.¹⁹⁴

192 Interview with NABC, 15 May 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025; Interview with Aldelia, 4 November 2025.

193 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

194 Private sector multistakeholder session at the Dutch Consulate in Lagos, 4 November 2025.

Mobility Frictions, Nearshoring Advantage

European experiences show that full relocation programmes face numerous challenges. As seen in the first phase of the *Digital Explorers* project and the *MATCH* programme, there was a structural misalignment between the mobility programme, and company and employee incentives. Employers hesitated to heavily invest in training employees who were obligated to return home after a certain time, while employees preferred long-term stability and career advancement, which did not align with temporary stays abroad.

Bureaucratically these programmes also incurred significant visa and relocation costs: resources that did little to build lasting capacity. However, when local tracks were introduced, the model became more sustainable and coherent with firm incentives.¹⁹⁵ This demonstrates that while a circular migration model is attractive to policy makers, nearshoring arrangements align better with firm and talent incentives of stability and long-term development.

Adopt a long-term talent pipeline mindset

These constraints point to a deeper lesson: successful engagement with Nigerian ICT talent requires a long-term development approach rather than a short-term labour fix. Pilot projects like *MATCH* show that if European employers see engagement simply as an immediate solution to skills shortages, they are reluctant to invest in necessary training, upskilling or integration, leading to disappointing results.¹⁹⁶

In contrast, companies that view African talent sourcing as a strategic, long-term investment are more willing to mentor and develop junior/mid-level hires, knowing this builds a loyal talent base over time. As the CEO from Eryk emphasised, while European firms often seek quick solutions, such options are becoming increasingly scarce within Europe itself; building sustainable pipelines of talent therefore requires a level of patience and initial investment, but ultimately it is about “survival and competitiveness.”¹⁹⁷

195 For example, the Digital explorers local track (phase II) and the establishment of the Eryk Lagos office.

196 Interview with NABC, 15 May 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

197 Interview with Eryk, 1 November 2025.

Highly experienced (senior) professionals from places like Nigeria are often already working remotely for global companies or unwilling to relocate.¹⁹⁸ At the same time, Dutch companies face persistent shortages mostly of mid- and senior-level tech professionals.¹⁹⁹ In the Nigerian context, this means that firms should take a forward-looking approach by anticipating the hiring of mainly junior and mid-level developers and investing in their upskilling over time to meet their specific standards. Policy makers could, co-fund trainings or offer tax breaks for companies that mentor overseas juniors; or emphasise success stories of competitors who invested early in Nigerian talent and now reap the benefits. This can help shift the mindset from “contracting cheap labour” to “cultivating future staff.”

Leverage local partnerships and work with intermediaries

Evidence from European initiatives also underscores the importance of working with partners that have a strong local presence and investing in local partnerships. Crucially, intermediaries do not replace the need for long-term investment in talent; rather they make such investment more feasible. In the *Tech4Dev/PRO* (Eryk) programme between Nigeria and Denmark, for example, Eryk partnered with Nigeria's technical education board (NBTE) to jointly screen and recruit candidates.²⁰⁰ Companies such as Eryk and TeleSoftas (now Helmes) opened local branches in Nigeria, shifting from being a distant employer to becoming integrated nodes within their operational networks. This transition reduced managerial uncertainty and enabled deeper engagement with local talent. In this more extensive model, firms typically began by working through intermediaries, who then supported the establishment of a local branch and continued to play a central bridging role between headquarters and Nigerian operations, ensuring contextual knowledge and operational continuity.²⁰¹

198 This emerged during the MATCH project, in which Nigerians with more senior experience were not as keen to relocate to the EU, as they were already doing remote work with good salaries; Interview with the Netherlands Africa Business Council, 15 May 2025; Interview with IOM Nigeria, 30 October 2025.

199 Colombo et al., “[Egypt: ICT as a driver for growth](#),” p5.

200 Eryk, ‘[Eryk signs MoU with the Nigerian Partner – The National Board for Technical Education](#),’ March 2023.

201 This is in line with the third approach of the report “[Connecting Shores](#),” p24.

For European companies that are not positioned to establish or manage a local operation, a process that is often time-intensive and requires upfront investment, intermediaries equally play a critical enabling role. Interviewees described collaborations with international organisations, such as the Nigerian country offices of ICMPD, IOM and GIZ, as well as with private intermediaries. These intermediaries help firms navigate local laws and regulations, manage a fragmented ecosystem, and provide quality assurance. They can also act as Employers of Record, handling contracts, compliance, payroll, and data protection requirements and infrastructure support, while supporting upskilling and integration of Nigerian talent into European teams. Effective engagement therefore highly depends on collaboration with partners that possess deep knowledge of the local ecosystem and maintain trusted relationships with key stakeholders.²⁰² European intermediaries with established local networks can enhance trust among Dutch and other European companies due to their familiarity with EU clients, standards and ways of working.²⁰³

202 Interview with Seefar Foundation, 29 October 2025; Interview with Dutch Desk, 16 July 2025.

203 This includes companies such as Tunga (Dutch) and Eryk (Danish).

Paths forward and next steps

Building on the constraints identified in the previous chapter and the lessons learned from prior EU programmes, this analysis identifies two complementary trajectories through which the Dutch government can more effectively support ICT nearshoring initiatives in Nigeria. These tracks are not blueprints but sets of policy options, each relying on different institutional and commercial levers.

The first operates at the public sector level and focuses on strengthening Dutch-Nigerian coordination, governance, and alignment. The second operates at the private sector level and aims to address the practical concerns of Dutch firms by reducing information gaps, managing risk, and lowering barriers to market entry.

Track A: Dutch government to Nigerian government

Formal alignment, governance, and ecosystem coherence

A1. Embedding nearshoring into the Dutch Nigerian migration partnership

Objective: Create practical entry points and reduce fragmentation through light government coordination.

- Use the existing consultation channels to align expectations across ministries, intermediaries, and employers, reducing ecosystem fragmentation.
- Where physical mobility supports trust and implementation, enable short, reciprocal business visits through existing facilitation routes (e.g., using ‘Orange Carpet’²⁰⁴ style pathways), such as Dutch employers visiting Nigeria to meet teams and understand delivery environments, or Nigerian team leads visiting Dutch headquarters for onboarding or relationship-building.

204 The ‘Orange Carpet’ visa facility is a Dutch programme that lets eligible companies register so their employees can apply for a Schengen business visa to the Netherlands more easily and quickly, with fewer documents and priority processing (Sources: Government of the Netherlands, [‘Can I register my company or organisation for the Orange Carpet Visa Facility?’](#) accessed January 2026). Another interesting initiative that can be looked at as an example was the ‘Service Desk for Labour Mobility’, which was established under the *TechPro4Europe* project. This was a proposed “one-stop shop, providing information, guidance, and facilitation to European employers interested in recruiting talent from Nigeria for export.” (Sources: MPF, [‘Enabling European Private Sector–Driven Labour Mobility Schemes for Nigerian Technical Professionals.’](#); Interview with ICMPD Nigeria, 29 October 2025.)

A2. Training, Accreditation and Measurement Frameworks

Objective: Improve signalling and comparability of Nigerian ICT talent, and demand alignment in ICT training and hiring.

- Establish a shared accreditation mechanism that aligns Nigerian training and delivery standards with Dutch (and EU-recognised) accreditation systems to ensure quality and allows for better talent translation and signalling to Dutch employers.
- Clarify baseline Dutch workflow, communication, and documentation expectations so intermediaries and training providers can prepare Nigerian ICT talent accordingly.
- Map Dutch ICT skills demand (roles, seniority levels certification) to define clear target profiles and skills needed for a long-term talent pipeline.²⁰⁵
- Support long-term talent development through existing frameworks and infrastructure, including on-going initiatives like GIZ job centres,²⁰⁶ as well as actors active in the Nigerian private sector.

Track B: Dutch government to Dutch private sector

Lowering entry barriers and enabling firm-level engagement

B1. Trust building and Market Awareness

Objective: Increase familiarity, confidence and trust among Dutch firms to hire remotely from Nigeria.

- Showcase the possibilities of nearshoring through Nigeria with targeted marketing and awareness activities.
- Use real case examples and practitioner experience to counter perception-driven hesitation.
- Organise trade missions, business delegations, and matchmaking events to enable direct interaction between Dutch firms and local partners.²⁰⁷

205 Clingendael, together with RVO, is currently surveying Dutch companies hiring for ICT roles on their needs and will be publishing a report on the results.

206 In these centres GIZ conducts ICT training for example; GIZ, '[Building pathways to decent work: a new job centre in Ogun State](#),' 13 October 2025, accessed November 2025.

207 These types of interactions events can help reduce Dutch client uncertainty related to market entry and cultural alignment by offering greater understanding of local work environments and customs, developer expectations and motivations, and the contextual dynamics that influence effective communication and talent retention; Interview with Tunga, 30 June 2025.

B2. Information Tools

Objective: reduce information asymmetry and compliance uncertainty for Dutch firms.

- Provide clear, accessible guidance for Dutch firms on how to nearshore to Nigeria, focussing on practical decision-making rather than formal regulation.²⁰⁸
- Develop practical tools such as how-to guides for nearshoring that explain outline what firms should expect when working with Nigerian intermediaries. This could include compliance checklists that helps firms evaluate potential partners, such as:
 - Experience with European clients and familiarity with EU business practices
 - Testing methodology for recruitment and talent vetting
 - Onboarding processes, upskilling support, and cultural transition training.
 - Data protection, IP ownership, security practices, including how intermediaries manage access controls, device policies, and compliance
 - Payment, invoicing, and Employer of Record (EOR) models
 - Infrastructure assurances, such as backup power, redundant connectivity and monitored work environments
 - Transparency of pricing, contract terms, and employer obligations.
- Performance management, attrition management, and talent replacement guarantees
- Clarify risks and common pitfalls upfront to support informed decision-making.

B3. Early-stage Risk Sharing

Objective: Support Dutch private sector first movers while maintaining private-sector commitment.

- Support partially funded pilot programs and proof of concept projects.
- Co-fund internships, traineeships, and early-stage onboarding arrangements.
- Share early-stage costs related to soft skill trainings and cultural alignment upskilling.
 - Ensure that risk is shared rather than fully absorbed by the government, preserving firm-level incentives and ownership of the process.

²⁰⁸ The Clingendael Institute is working on a 'Business Paper' that will outline different nearshoring models and opportunities for companies, illustrated through case studies from the countries under study.

B4. Nigerian Nearshoring network

Objective: Provide a single, cross-cutting interface that lowers entry barriers, embeds information tools, and builds trust through peer learning.

- Establish a Dutch-Nigeria Nearshoring Desk as a central meeting and information point for Dutch firms active in, or exploring, nearshoring in Nigeria.²⁰⁹
 - This could be done in collaboration with the Dutch Enterprise Agency (RVO) and Invest International, building on existing structures like the Dutch Desk Nigeria,²¹⁰ and extending the scope to include nearshoring networks.
- Embed previously described informational tools within the desk, including:
 - Practical guidance and “how-to” materials
 - Overviews of delivery models and intermediary roles
 - Compliance-relevant standards and conditions
- Enable peer-to-peer learning and informal verification, allowing Dutch firms to share lessons learned, contacts, and practical insights.
- Maintain an evolving overview of accredited providers, tested intermediaries, and commonly used delivery approaches, based on shared experience rather than formal endorsement.

Conclusion

This report shows that ICT nearshoring between the Netherlands and Nigeria is neither a quick fix nor a speculative bet, but an opportunity under clearly defined conditions. Nigeria offers scale, youth, language alignment, and growing digital capability, while Dutch firms bring demand and long-term market access. The central challenge is not one of technical feasibility, but of coordination, trust, and design. Addressing these challenges requires moving

209 While broader in scope and primarily focused on supporting the global expansion of French start-ups, the '[International French Tech Network](#)' provides a useful reference model for how structured, locally embedded networks can lower entry barriers, act as trusted entry points into foreign markets, and facilitate connections between international ecosystems; Public sector multistakeholder session at the Dutch Embassy in Abuja, 28 October 2025.

210 The focus of the Dutch Desk is mostly on access to financing opportunities, this could be expanded; Lianne de Vries, '[How the Dutch Desk in Nigeria helps Dutch entrepreneurs move forward](#),' *Invest International*, 3 June 2025, accessed September 2025; Interview with Dutch Desk, 16 July 2025.

beyond ad hoc initiatives toward a corridor-based approach. Built around light public coordination within existing partnership structures, clearer accreditation and signalling of skills, strong reliance on trusted intermediaries, and targeted pilot support for firms, such a corridor can lower barriers to entry and support early experimentation. A dedicated Dutch–Nigeria nearshoring desk can then facilitate information sharing, networking, and peer learning, enabling gradual scaling and sustained engagement. In this way, nearshoring can evolve from isolated transactions into a practical instrument within broader Dutch–Nigerian cooperation, supporting both labour market needs in the Netherlands and quality employment outcomes in Nigeria.

Annex

Survey results

Table 3 Percentage distribution of respondents by academic and ICT skills background

Background	Gender distribution		Total
	Male %	Female %	
Gender distribution	62	38	100.0 (58)
Cumulative GPA (CGPA)			
First class	25.0	36.4	29.3
Second Upper	58.3	45.5	53.4
Second Lower	13.9	13.9	15.5
Missing	2.8	0.0	1.7
How would you rate your current ICT skill level?			
Beginner	0.0	27.3	10.3
Intermediate	50.0	59.1	53.4
Advanced	41.7	13.6	31.0
Expert	8.3	0.0	5.2
Do you feel your ICT skills are in high demand?			
International & Local	88.9	90.9	89.7
Local (only)	5.6	9.1	6.9
International (only)	5.6	0,0	3.4

Table 4 Percentage distribution of respondents by work aspirations in ICT nearshoring

Variable	Gender distribution		Total
	Male %	Female %	
Do you plan to migrate abroad after graduation?			
Yes	72.2	72.2	72.4
No	2.8	0.0	1.7
Not sure	25.9	27.3	25.9
Would you consider migrating abroad if a nearshoring opportunity would lead to employment in Nigeria?			
Yes	50.0	40.9	46.6
No	33.3	36.4	34.5
Not sure	16.7	22.7	19.0
How would you feel about working remotely for Dutch or other European companies?			
Very negative	2.8	0.0	1.7
Neutral	13.9	13.6	13.8
Positive	30.6	45.5	36.2
Very Positive	52.8	36.4	46.6
Missing	-	4.5	1.7
What is your preferred employment status within nearshoring?			
Freelance	41.7	18.2	32.8
Remote staff member	58.3	81.8	67.2
What is your preferred work location?			
At home	52.8	68.2	58.6
ICT Hub	38.9	18.2	31.0
Physical address	8.3	13.6	10.3

Table 5 Post-tertiary Skills Training Support Needed

Q: What kind of support is most useful in developing your ICT career?				
ICT support	Prioritisation by respondents (%)			
	#1	#2	#3	Not ranked
Technical training	55.2	22.4	5.2	17.2
Professional certification	13.8	32.8	10.3	43.1
Soft skills	10.3	13.8	17.2	58.6
Career guidance/mentorship programmes	8.6	10.3	10.3	70.7
Job placement	5.2	12.1	27.6	55.2
Resources for remote working	6.9	8.6	25.9	58.6