

# Chapter 6

## Resilience in Africa's Transition to a Sustainable Digital and Blue Economy: Policy and Regulatory Framework in Nigeria

**Enameguono Ekpemuaka**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2739-9180>

*Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University, Nigeria*

**Oluwasegun R. Odunlade**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8351-8707>

*Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University, Nigeria*

**Sheneni Felix Maiyaki**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1955-0637>

*Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University, Nigeria*

### ABSTRACT

*Africa's transition to a digital and blue economy presents immense sustainable economic growth and development opportunities. This chapter examines the current state of these emerging sectors, focusing on Nigeria's early-stage efforts to harness their potential. The Blue Economy contributes significantly to Africa's GDP, while the digital economy has similarly transformative effects linked to increased mobile broadband penetration in sub-Saharan Africa. However, Nigeria's regulatory frameworks for both the blue and digital economies need to be translated into actionable strategies. This chapter explores existing policies and initiatives, such as the establishment of Nigeria's Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy in 2023 and the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa. It identifies key gaps in policy and regulation. It proposes strategies for creating a more robust and cohesive framework that supports sustainable development, economic resilience, and innovation across the blue and digital economies.*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-7893-9.ch006

## INTRODUCTION

Africa's economic potential is immense, offering substantial opportunities for transformation across all sectors. With the right regulatory framework, these changes can lead to significant social benefits. As Africa transforms, the necessity for African economies to transition to both a digital and blue economy has never been more urgent. The African Union estimates that the Blue Economy currently generates nearly US\$300 billion for the continent, creating 49 million jobs in the process (World Bank, 2022). Moreover, the International Telecommunication Union's 2018 study highlights that a 10% increase in mobile broadband penetration in low-income economies results in a 2% increase in GDP, while in sub-Saharan Africa, the impact is even more pronounced at 2.5% (ITU, 2019). These figures underscore the critical role of digital connectivity in driving economic growth and development.

Countries like South Africa, Seychelles, and Mauritius are already benefiting from a well-managed blue economy. For instance, Seychelles leveraging on its Blue Economy saw its tourism sector contribute approximately 16.5% of the GDP (Agbetiloye 2023). From the Digital Economy perspective, The European Investment Bank (EIB) in a 2021 report observed that the number of broadband connections in Africa reached 526 million by year-end 2019, representing over a 120% increase from 2017. These advances in the continent's digital and blue economy illustrate the substantial economic gains that can be achieved through strategic investments and policies in the blue economy (European Investment Bank, 2021).

For Nigeria, with its vast coastline and significant digital potential, the journey toward harnessing the blue and digital economy is still in its early stages. Despite the potential for significant contributions to GDP, job creation, and sustainable development, the current trajectory needs evaluation and repositioning to achieve maximum impact. In 2023, the Nigerian government created the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy as well as a Ministry overseeing the digital economy (Agbetiloye, 2023) While these moves demonstrate a commitment to unlocking economic potential, there is a pressing need for a robust policy framework to guide actions in these sectors. It is within this gap that this proposal finds its thrust. It attempts to provide information that could guide policy formulation for a resilient and sustainable blue and digital economy in Nigeria and by extension the African sub-region.

Nigeria's regulatory framework for the blue economy is currently fragmented and outdated. Existing laws such as the Sea Fisheries Act of 1992 and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency Act of 2007 do not adequately address contemporary issues and opportunities within the blue economy. For example, the Sea Fisheries Act lacks provisions for tackling Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUUF), leading to significant economic losses. In 2022, Nigeria established the Expanded Committee on Sustainable Blue Economy in Nigeria (ECSBEN) to align strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2052 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy, and the United Nations 2030 Agenda (Anammah & Ezeminyulu, 2024) However, translating these visions into actionable policies requires a comprehensive regulatory framework that addresses both traditional and emerging maritime activities.

Similarly, the digital transformation in Africa is being shaped by various initiatives. The EU-Africa Digital Economy Task Force (DETF) established in 2019 aims to foster cooperation and develop policy recommendations to address the challenges of digitalization in Africa. The African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) sets specific objectives, including universal and affordable access to broadband, e-skills development, cybersecurity, and digital legal identity. These objectives align with the goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Smart Africa Alliance, which seek to harness digital opportunities for industrialization and economic resilience

22 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/resilience-in-africas-transition-to-a-sustainable-digital-and-blue-economy/369772](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/resilience-in-africas-transition-to-a-sustainable-digital-and-blue-economy/369772)

## Related Content

---

### Among Sustainable Vineyards: The Case of Bodegas Castiblanque

Mariangeles García-Haro, Jorge Linuesa-Langreo, Ricardo Martínez-Cañas and Pablo Ruiz-Palomino (2024). *Economics and Environmental Responsibility in the Global Beverage Industry* (pp. 20-37).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/among-sustainable-vineyards/347926](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/among-sustainable-vineyards/347926)

### A Selection of Shipping Business Strategy for Containership using an Evidential Reasoning Method

N.S.F. Abdul Rahman (2014). *Marine Technology and Sustainable Development: Green Innovations* (pp. 226-243).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-selection-of-shipping-business-strategy-for-containership-using-an-evidential-reasoning-method/84527](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-selection-of-shipping-business-strategy-for-containership-using-an-evidential-reasoning-method/84527)

### Analyzing the Impacts of Credit Development on Exporting Probability of Companies Listed in Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)

Hadi Salehi and Maryam Fahmideh (2018). *International Journal of Sustainable Economies Management* (pp. 1-12).

[www.irma-international.org/article/analyzing-the-impacts-of-credit-development-on-exporting-probability-of-companies-listed-in-tehran-stock-exchange-tse/202436](http://www.irma-international.org/article/analyzing-the-impacts-of-credit-development-on-exporting-probability-of-companies-listed-in-tehran-stock-exchange-tse/202436)

### The Corporate Social Responsibility of the Family SMEs: A Descriptive Analysis in the Context of Tunisia

Zouhayer Mighri, Sana Ben Ghodbane, Mohamed Soufeljil and Adel Redouane (2023). *Examining the Vital Financial Role of SMEs in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 110-129).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-corporate-social-responsibility-of-the-family-smes/316681](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-corporate-social-responsibility-of-the-family-smes/316681)

### Avoid Isolation Between the "Two Cultures"—Keep It Complex and Open, A View from Science and Technology Studies (STS): Interview with Andy Stirling, Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex, UK

Eleonore Pauwels (2012). *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development* (pp. 39-44).

[www.irma-international.org/article/avoid-isolation-between-two-cultures/67355](http://www.irma-international.org/article/avoid-isolation-between-two-cultures/67355)