

Communique

A Communique Issued At The Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2026, Which Held On Thursday, 10 September 2026, At The Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

The eighth edition of the Nigeria eGovernment Summit was held on Thursday, 10 September 2026 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, with full representation of attendees cutting across government, industry service providers, regulators, the legal profession, civil society and the media.

The summit ran from 8am to 5pm, with the Nigeria eGovernment Excellence Awards following the same evening from 6pm to 10pm.

The summit commenced with registration and a visit to the exhibition stands, the recognition of special guests and speakers, and the recitation of the national anthem. The Executive Chairman, DigiServe Network Services and convener of the eGovernment Summit, Engr. Lanre Ajayi, opened the floor with his welcome address.

This was followed by six goodwill messages, keynote addresses, a special presentation on artificial intelligence in governance, and four panel sessions that discussed sub-themes built around the main theme of the summit: "Mainstreaming Technologies in Nigeria Election Management".

The theme was selected against the background of Nigeria's current electoral cycle, with elections scheduled across multiple states and national attention directed toward the 2027 general elections.

The Nigeria eGovernment Summit is an annual programme designed to bring together government and technology service providers, including the citizens who are the beneficiaries of technology services, to discuss the importance of leveraging emerging technologies that enhance the government services delivered to citizens.

Objectives Of The Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2026

The objectives of the Nigeria eGovernment Summit 2026 are as follows:

1. To provide a high-level, evidence-based platform for examining the current state of technology adoption in Nigeria's electoral process, identifying what is working, what is not, and what must change.
2. To facilitate robust dialogue between government, INEC and state electoral commissions, technology providers, civil society organisations and the international community on the standards, frameworks and investment required to mainstream electoral technology in Nigeria.
3. To identify actionable policy recommendations that can be taken from the summit to the desks of decision makers: recommendations that are practical, achievable and grounded in Nigeria's realities.
4. To celebrate and recognise, through the Nigeria eGovernment Excellence Awards 2026, the ministries, departments and agencies, private sector organisations, state governments and individuals who have distinguished themselves in advancing eGovernment and digital service delivery across Nigeria.
5. To strengthen the community of practice around digital governance in Nigeria, deepening relationships between those who build digital governance, those who regulate it, those who fund it, and those who ultimately benefit from it.

Observations

The speakers and panelists acknowledged that Nigeria has settled the question of whether technology belongs in its elections, and observed that the outstanding question is how to move electoral technology from periodic procurement to permanent national capacity.

They observed that election technology in Nigeria has been treated as a seasonal undertaking, procured and deployed once every four years and left unattended

between cycles, and agreed that mainstreaming requires sustained investment, sustained local capacity building and sustained testing between elections rather than only before them.

They acknowledged the considerable progress already recorded. Accreditation time at polling units has fallen by up to 80 per cent, from between 10 and 15 minutes to under three minutes. Biometric verification has materially reduced voter impersonation, multiple registration, proxy voting and overvoting. Electronic transmission has reduced the interval between voting and the declaration of results, and INEC launched a real-time election data tracker in the week of the summit.

The panelists observed, however, that the decisive constraints on electoral technology are not technological but infrastructural, legal, institutional and behavioural. They noted that election technology fails at the last mile, where power is uncertain, where there is no redundant path out of a ward, and where polling units sit on islands of connectivity.

They observed that BVAS devices without power result in a return to manual result collation, and that presiding officers and supervisors are routinely deployed without a functioning communication link between them.

They noted the contrast between Nigeria's broadband penetration of 58 per cent and mobile network penetration of 90 per cent on the one hand, and the unreliability of electoral infrastructure on the other, and concluded that connectivity exists but is not being brought to bear on electoral operations.

The speakers observed that Nigeria operates one of the most secure banking systems in the world, and asked why public institutions do not achieve comparable resilience. They attributed the gap to the absence of accountability structures and performance obligations in the public sector equivalent to those the private sector accepts.

They observed that the current deployment of BVAS and IReV serves voter verification and the public display of results, and does not constitute electronic voting, which remains a future objective requiring substantial further work by the states.

The panelists observed that the legal framework has not kept pace with the technology. While electronic evidence is admissible in Nigerian courts, the source of such evidence and the question of who may plead it are insufficiently specified, creating the risk that electoral data obtained from official portals will be rejected in election petitions.

They observed that blockchain is frequently mischaracterised as tamper-proof, and clarified that its value lies in creating a tamper-evident record rather than an unalterable one.

The speakers expressed concern about the custody of citizens' personal data, noting reports of Nigerians' data being sold online and a major breach affecting a very large number of records, and observed that the absence of consequences for data theft invites its repetition.

They observed that data protection practice across the electoral chain remains uneven, identifying risks of data breaches, voter profiling, third-party and vendor exposure, and surveillance, and noted that loss of confidence in data handling leads directly to voter apathy.

The panelists commended the Nigeria Data Protection Commission for its engagement with INEC, and noted with approval that INEC now has a team of data protection officers for the first time.

They observed that digital literacy remains a serious constraint, with over 65 per cent of rural communities including citizens who cannot read or write and who do not understand the technology being deployed, and noted that civic awareness of the Electoral Act itself is low even among informed citizens.

The speakers observed that investment in indigenous software capacity is insufficient. Software attracts approximately 0.3 to 0.5 per cent of the federal budget, representing slightly less than 0.1 per cent of GDP, and contributes less than 0.2 per cent of GDP, which constrains the industry's capacity to build and export electoral technology.

They observed that rights of way continue to be treated by many states as a revenue opportunity rather than as enabling infrastructure, and that this delays fibre deployment to the communities that most require it.

The panelists noted allegations of deliberate network degradation around election days arising from collusion rather than technical failure, and observed that such disruptions have contributed to a decline in Nigeria's digital rights standing over the most recent reporting period.

The speakers commended the states that are building the enabling environment, noting Cross River State's 170 kilometres of fibre to all ministries, departments and agencies with right of way granted online within two weeks; Edo State's connection of all 18 local government areas by fibre from the state data centre; Anambra State's training of over 20,000 indigenes in digital technology against a target of 10,000; and Lagos State's facilitation of approximately 30,000 kilometres of shared fibre duct infrastructure and approximately 22 million dollars of private investment under its Dig Once policy.

They observed that technology alone is not a silver bullet, and that human factors, institutional structures and guardrails must accompany any deployment.

Recommendations

Some of the recommendations from the summit include:

1. Testing of electoral technology must begin immediately and continue between electoral cycles. INEC should be formally requested by the industry associations to commence robust testing of all electoral systems now, using off-cycle elections as live test opportunities ahead of 2027.
2. Right of way should be treated as national electoral infrastructure rather than as a source of state revenue. It should be harmonised and priced so that operators can deploy where voters live, rather than only where deployment is commercially attractive.

3. Every state that will host a collation centre should adopt a Dig Once policy, under which ducts are laid once when a road is opened and shared among multiple operators. Repeated excavation in the same season as voter registration and elections produces repeated cable cuts that are then wrongly attributed to technology failure.
4. The physical layer of the network must be protected. Vandalism of fibre and telecommunications towers should be treated as an attack on the electoral process. The implementation of the Critical National Information Infrastructure order is commended, and the NCC, operators and security agencies should extend equivalent support to state governments and state-level regulators.
5. Electoral technology should be designed for the network Nigeria actually has, incorporating offline capability, store-and-forward functionality and redundancy, while the underlying network is improved.
6. A standardised Polling Unit Energy System should be adopted, combining solar photovoltaic generation, battery storage, grid supply and generator capacity. Such installations should be designed as reusable public infrastructure serving health and other government services between elections, and not as electoral equipment alone.
7. The law on electronic electoral evidence should be specified. The framework should define the admissible source of electronic electoral evidence and the parties entitled to plead it in court, so that data obtained from official portals can be relied upon in election petitions.
8. Consideration should be given to distributed custody of results, placing verifiable copies with the courts and political parties as well as with INEC, so that contested results can be checked against a tamper-evident record.
9. Public institutions responsible for electoral and identity systems should be subject to published performance and resilience obligations comparable to those accepted by the financial sector.

10. Data protection must be strengthened across the whole electoral chain. Every data controller at federal, state, local government and ward level should implement appropriate technical and organisational measures, observing data anonymisation, purpose limitation, storage limitation and security. Service level agreements with third-party vendors must bind them to equivalent standards, as the controller remains liable for breaches by its processors.
11. Custodians of national identity and electoral data must be demonstrably non-partisan, and insider threat within data-holding institutions must be addressed, since public confidence in electoral data cannot be separated from confidence in those who hold it.
12. The trust architecture must be built alongside the technology. The deployment of DNSSEC, multi-factor authentication, intrusion prevention, data loss prevention, database activity monitoring and security operations centres should accompany any expansion of electoral technology.
13. Digital literacy and civic awareness should be treated as electoral infrastructure. Sustained programmes are required for rural and non-literate populations, alongside public education on the content of the Electoral Act and on distinguishing authentic electoral information from misinformation.
14. Public investment in indigenous software capacity should be increased, with the explicit objective of building Nigerian electoral technology that can be exported, following the precedent of countries that have successfully commercialised their eGovernment solutions internationally.
15. States should build the enabling environment rather than duplicate federal functions, concentrating on broadband and fibre infrastructure, right-of-way facilitation, power and infrastructure resilience, digital skills and technical capacity, public-private partnerships, and infrastructure mapping and planning.
16. The outcomes of this summit should be formally transmitted without delay to INEC, the relevant federal agencies and state governments, and the industry associations should adopt a common position and pursue it collectively.

The summit concluded that Nigeria has answered the question of whether technology belongs in its elections, and that the task now is to mainstream it: to move electoral technology from pilot projects and contested deployments to an embedded, trusted and comprehensive feature of the nation's electoral architecture, in good time before 2027.