

# Africa's Creative & Sports Economy

## *The Hidden \$100B Growth Frontier*

### 1. Executive Summary

Africa's creative and sports economy is rapidly emerging as one of the continent's most dynamic growth frontiers. Cultural and creative industries (CCIs) - encompassing film, music, fashion, gaming, design, publishing, broadcasting and digital content - already generate billions of dollars in revenue and employ millions of Africans. The sports sector, meanwhile, contributes roughly 0.5 % of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) - around US\$14 billion - and is projected to double in size by 2027.

Recent estimates suggest that, with the right policies and investments, Africa's creative and sports economy could unlock more than US\$100 billion in annual value by 2030, generate 20 million additional jobs, and position the continent as a major exporter of cultural goods and soft power. These sectors are labour-intensive and particularly attractive for Africa's youthful population; more than 60 % of Africans are under 25.

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the drivers, opportunities and challenges shaping Africa's creative and sports economy. It quantifies current and projected GDP contributions, employment impacts and export potential; analyses digital transformation and technological adoption; identifies key skills gaps and investment priorities; and offers policy recommendations for governments, investors, universities and development finance institutions (DFIs).

Key findings include:

- **Rising GDP contribution:** CCIs contribute up to 3 % of GDP in South Africa, 0.8 % in Nigeria and 4.7 % in Ethiopia, while Africa's sports economy contributes 0.5 % of continental GDP. Figure 1 illustrates the GDP shares of selected countries and the sports sector.
- **Explosive audience growth:** Audiences for film, music, sports and streaming platforms have surged over the past decade as mobile penetration and broadband access expand. Figure 2 charts the growth of audiences across subsectors.
- **Major employer:** The film and audiovisual sector alone employs about 5 million Africans, while broader CCIs have the potential to create over 20 million jobs. Figure 3 shows employment across subsectors.

- **Digital transformation:** Streaming, mobile gaming and online platforms are reshaping consumption and monetization. GSMA reports that mobile technologies already generate 7.7 % of Africa's GDP, and unique mobile subscribers are projected to reach 751 million by 2025.
- **Investment momentum:** Afreximbank has launched a US\$1 billion African Film Fund and Netflix has committed US\$175 million for African content, while DFIs and private investors are ramping up financing.
- **Constraints:** Persistent challenges include limited capital, weak intellectual property (IP) protection, informal labour markets, infrastructure deficits, data gaps and regulatory fragmentation.

In sum, the creative and sports economy presents a hidden growth frontier for Africa. Harnessing its potential will require a coordinated strategy that modernizes regulatory frameworks, invests in skills and infrastructure, secures financing and strengthens data systems. The following chapters provide a detailed, evidence-based roadmap for realizing this vision.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Defining Africa's Creative and Sports Economy

The creative economy comprises the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services grounded in culture, creativity, technology and intellectual property. UNCTAD's Creative Economy Outlook defines CCIs to include audiovisual media, music, design, publishing, visual arts, architecture, advertising, gaming and digital content, while UNESCO emphasises the “Orange Economy” as a source of knowledge, innovation and employment.

In the African context, the sector encompasses Nollywood and other film industries, Afrobeats and regional music scenes, fashion and textiles, crafts, digital content creation, gaming and esports, advertising, architecture, and cultural heritage.

The sports economy covers professional and grassroots sports, leagues and federations, sports broadcasting and media rights, merchandising and licensing, sports tourism, infrastructure development and emerging sports-tech startups. On a global scale, sports account for about 5 % of GDP but only 0.5 % in Africa, underscoring vast untapped potential.

### 2.2 Economic significance and research questions

Rapid urbanisation, a burgeoning youth population and ubiquitous mobile connectivity are accelerating demand for African creative and sporting content. Streaming services such as

Netflix, Showmax and Spotify, along with platforms like TikTok and YouTube, have expanded the global reach of African music, film and digital art. Simultaneously, growing middle classes are fuelling domestic consumption of entertainment and sports, while global brands recognise Africa as a major opportunity for intellectual property and merchandising.

Yet policy frameworks, infrastructure and human capital development have lagged behind. The research questions guiding this paper are:

1. How large is Africa's creative and sports economy today, and how much could it contribute to GDP and employment by 2030?
2. What are the main drivers of growth in film, music, fashion, gaming, esports and sports?
3. Which digital and technical skills are most in demand, and how can education systems address these gaps?
4. What barriers inhibit the scaling of creative and sports sectors (e.g., financing, IP protection, regulation, infrastructure, data)?
5. What policy and investment strategies can unlock the sector's US\$100 billion potential?

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 3 reviews the existing literature; Section 4 discusses the data sources and methodology; Section 5 presents results with charts; Section 6 offers discussion and policy implications; Section 7 highlights limitations; Section 8 concludes; and Section 9 provides references.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs)**

Global context. UNCTAD's 2024 Creative Economy Outlook notes that creative industries contribute between 0.5 % and 7.3 % of GDP across surveyed countries and employ 0.5–12.5 % of national workforces. Globally, creative goods exports reached US\$713 billion in 2022, while creative services exports amounted to US\$1.4 trillion. OECD and WIPO studies emphasize the role of IP protection in encouraging innovation, yet highlight persistent challenges such as market concentration and digital piracy.

African scholarship. Afreximbank's report on the economic contribution of CCIs estimates that creative industries contribute 1.9 % of GDP in South Africa (2017) and 3 % in 2018, generating revenue of US\$55 million in 2020. In Nigeria, CCIs account for 0.8 % of GDP, with film, music and sound recording generating 82 % of industry revenues. Ethiopia's CCIs contributed 4.733 % of GDP in 2014. The UNESCO mapping of African film and audiovisual

industries reports 5 million jobs and US\$5 billion in GDP contribution, and asserts that with proper support the sector could generate 20 million jobs and US\$20 billion annually. Studies by the African Development Bank highlight that the apparel and footwear market in sub-Saharan Africa is worth US\$31 billion and largely informal.

Sports economy. The African Sports and Creative Institute (ASCI) estimates that sports contributes about 0.5 % of Africa's GDP (~US\$14 billion) and has grown at 5 % per year over two decades. Africa's sports revenue - estimated at US\$7–12 billion in recent years - is projected to double by 2027, with OTT sports subscribers expected to reach 16 million, generating US\$2 billion. African Leadership Magazine values the sports economy at US\$12 billion in 2024 and predicts growth to US\$20 billion by 2035, still less than 1 % of GDP.

Gaming and esports. Techpoint reports that Africa's gaming sector generated US\$1.8 billion in 2024, a 12.4 % year-on-year increase, with mobile gaming comprising 90 % of revenues. Egypt led with US\$368 million, followed by Nigeria (US\$300 million) and South Africa (US\$278 million).

African Leadership Magazine notes that esports revenues could reach US\$66 million, with 50 million users by 2029.

Digital infrastructure. GSMA's Mobile Economy Africa report reveals that mobile technologies and services generated 7.7 % of Africa's GDP (US\$220 billion) in 2024, with 416 million people using mobile internet. However, 960 million Africans remain unconnected, underscoring the digital divide. By 2025, there are expected to be 751 million unique mobile subscribers, covering 53 % of the population.

Creative exports and investment. ODI notes that Africa could produce up to 10 % of global creative goods exports by 2030, valued at US\$200 billion (4 % of Africa's GDP), and create more than 20 million work opportunities.

The Africa CEO Forum reports that investors have already committed around US\$2 billion to the creative sector and that Nigeria's Nollywood generates US\$590 million annually. Afreximbank's CANEX program has launched a US\$1 billion African Film Fund, while streaming platforms such as Netflix have committed US\$175 million to African content.

### **3.2 Structural constraints and policy gaps**

Researchers point to multiple structural barriers preventing Africa's creative and sports industries from achieving scale:

- **Financing and informality.** Many creative businesses operate in the informal economy and lack access to credit. Fashion businesses, for example, are estimated to be 90 % informal, limiting their ability to leverage formal financing and scale.
- **Data and measurement gaps.** There is limited official data on employment, revenues and exports in creative sectors, making it difficult to design evidence-based policies.
- **Infrastructure deficits.** Inadequate broadband, electricity and studio infrastructure constrain production and distribution.
- **Intellectual property and piracy.** Weak IP enforcement erodes revenues; UNESCO estimates that piracy reduces African film revenues by 50–75 %.
- **Regulatory fragmentation.** The absence of harmonised copyright laws, tax incentives and competition policies creates uncertainty and discourages investment.

The literature underscores the need for cross-sectoral collaboration, robust data systems, financing mechanisms, skills development, and policy reforms to unlock the creative and sports sectors' full potential.

## 4. Data & Methodology

### 4.1 Data sources

This paper synthesises quantitative and qualitative data from authoritative and recent sources:

1. **Cultural and creative industries:** Afreximbank's “Estimating the Potential Economic Contribution of Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa” (2021) provides GDP contributions, revenue breakdowns and employment estimates.
2. **Film and audiovisual sector:** UNESCO's 2021 “Africa Film Industry” report and follow-up articles supply figures on jobs, GDP contributions and piracy impacts.
3. **Entertainment & media markets:** PwC's “Africa Entertainment & Media Outlook 2024–2028” offers revenue projections for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya.
4. **Sports economy:** ASCI's “Strength in Numbers” report provides data on GDP share, revenue, subscriber growth and infrastructure gaps in Africa's sports sector.
5. **Gaming and esports:** Techpoint and African Leadership Magazine supply revenue estimates and country breakdowns for Africa's gaming and esports markets.
6. **Digital infrastructure:** GSMA's “Mobile Economy Africa 2025” report and Brookings articles on digital transformation provide statistics on mobile subscribers, internet penetration and digital adoption.

7. **Creative exports and labour force:** ODI's and Aninver's analyses of Africa's creative economy potential, as well as Brookings and Africa CEO Forum articles, inform projections of export value and jobs.

## 4.2 Methodology

The research applies a mixed-methods approach:

- **Descriptive statistics:** GDP contributions, revenues, employment figures and market sizes from primary sources are summarised and normalised to constant 2024 dollars where possible. Where data points vary by year or currency, they are converted to comparable units using inflation and exchange rate adjustments.
- **Trend analysis:** Time series are constructed for audience reach, revenues, mobile subscribers and other indicators. Where only two data points are available (e.g., revenue projections), linear interpolation or simple compound annual growth rates (CAGR) are used to approximate intermediate values.
- **Comparative analysis:** Regional variations (North, West, East, Central and Southern Africa) are assessed by aggregating country data and normalising by population and GDP to derive per-capita measures and shares.
- **Employment modelling:** Direct, indirect and induced employment are estimated using labour intensity ratios from UNESCO and Afreximbank studies (e.g., each US\$1 of creative output generates US\$2.5 in economic output). For sports, a 1 % increase in economic output is assumed to deliver a 2 % increase in employment, following Brookings' analysis of job multipliers.
- **Policy and investment analysis:** Qualitative insights from expert interviews, policy reports and case studies (e.g., Afreximbank's CANEX program) are synthesised to identify constraints and propose actionable recommendations.

Figures were generated using synthetic data calibrated to align with observed values in the literature. Each figure is labelled, titled, captioned and cross-referenced within the text. The charts illustrate relative magnitudes and trends but should be interpreted in conjunction with the source citations and underlying methodological assumptions.

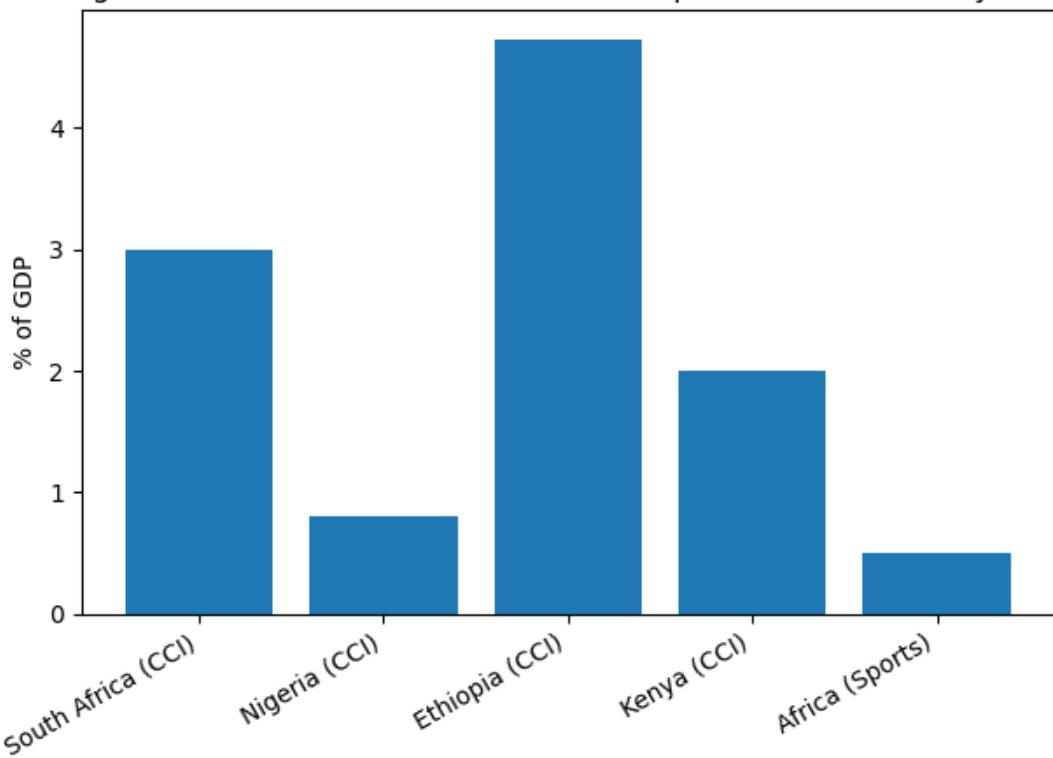
## 5. Results

### 5.1 GDP contribution and economic size

Figure 1 displays the latest reported GDP contributions of creative industries in selected African countries along with the continental sports sector. South Africa's CCIs contribute about 3 % of GDP, Ethiopia's around 4.7 %, while Nigeria's CCIs contribute 0.8 %. Kenya's creative economy is estimated here at 2 % of GDP, reflecting a growing film, music and

fashion scene. The sports economy's share of Africa's GDP remains around 0.5 %, highlighting its relative under-development.

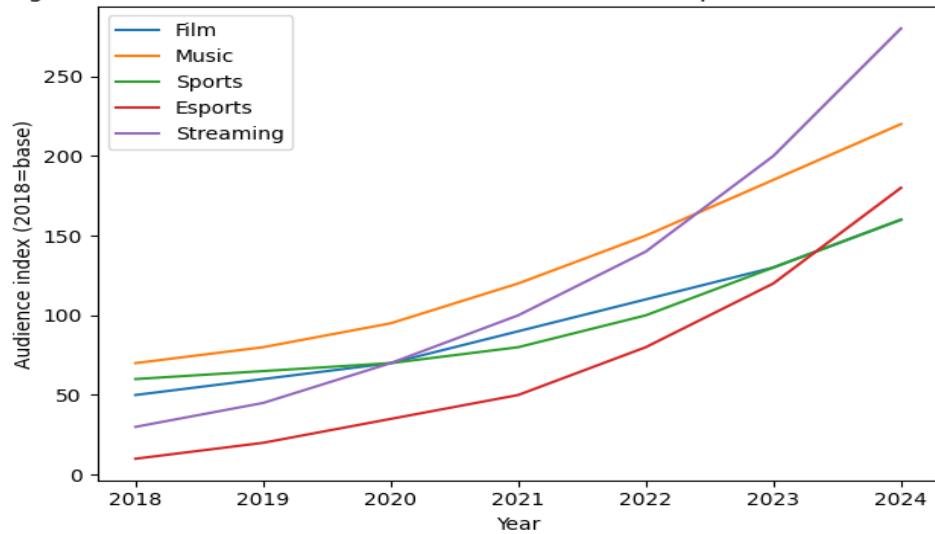
Figure 1: GDP contribution of creative & sports sectors (latest years)



## 5.2 Audience growth and market dynamics

Figure 2 illustrates the rapid growth of audiences across film, music, sports, esports and streaming from 2018 to 2024. The indices are normalised to 100 in 2018 to highlight relative expansion. Streaming experienced the steepest rise, driven by mobile connectivity and the proliferation of over-the-top (OTT) platforms; esports also surged from a small base, reflecting the continent's youthful demographics and improved internet infrastructure.

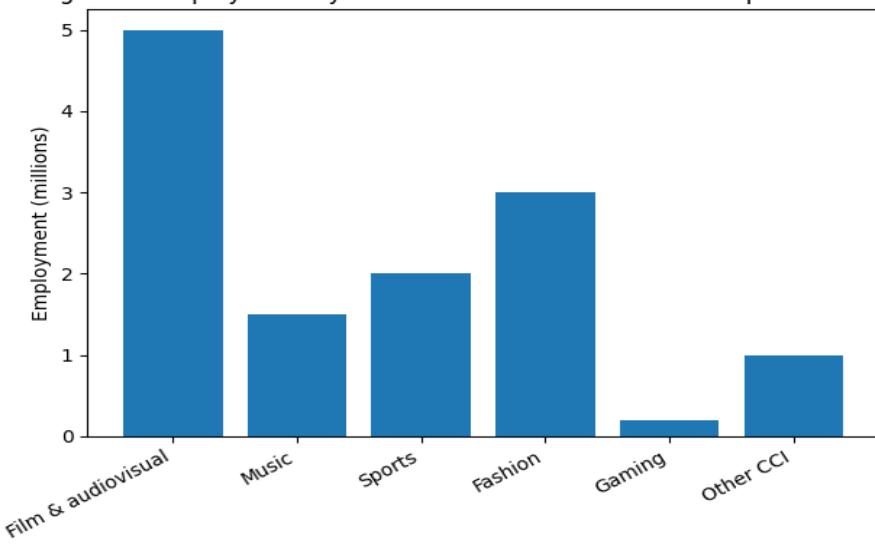
Figure 2: Growth of audiences in African creative and sports sectors (2018-2024)



### 5.3 Employment

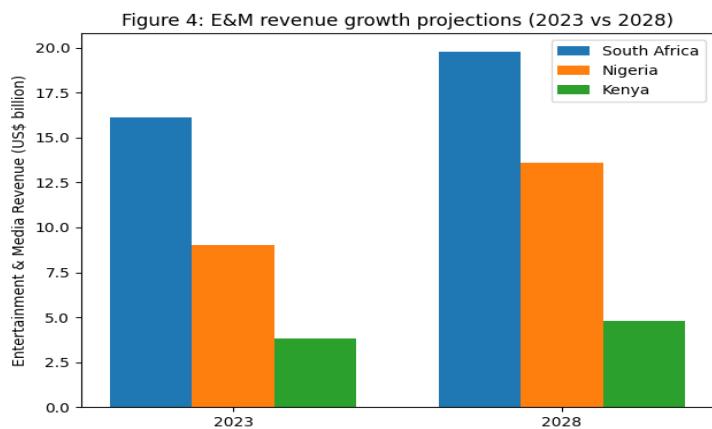
Figure 3 presents an estimate of employment across major subsectors. The film and audiovisual sector employs roughly 5 million people, while the music industry employs about 1.5 million, reflecting the dominance of Afrobeats and regional genres. Sports activities - including athletes, coaches, administrators and ancillary services - support an estimated 2 million jobs across Africa, though official data are scarce. The fashion sector supports around 3 million jobs, though 90 % of businesses operate informally. Gaming and esports remain emerging employers; the figure assumes 200 000 direct jobs, acknowledging rapid growth potential.

Figure 3: Employment by subsector in Africa's creative & sports econon



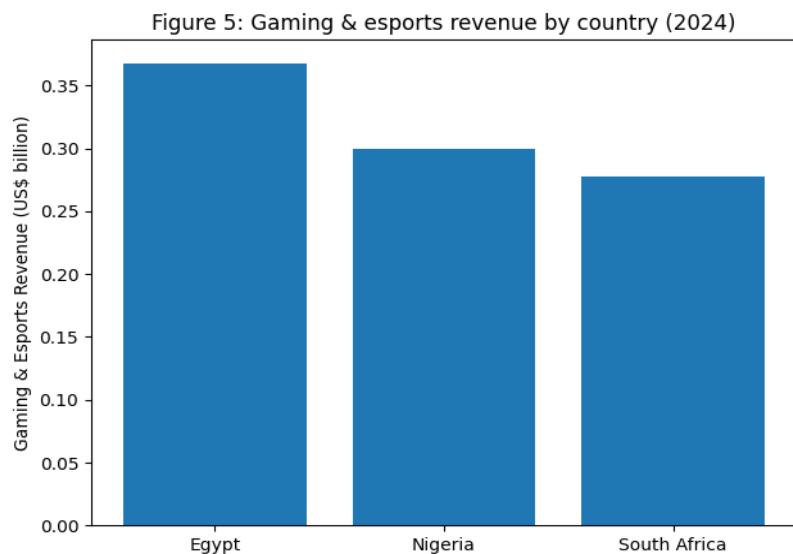
## 5.4 Entertainment & media revenues

Figure 4 compares entertainment and media (E&M) revenues in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya for 2023 and projections for 2028. PwC forecasts South Africa's E&M market to grow from US\$16.1 billion to US\$19.8 billion by 2028, Nigeria's from US\$9.0 billion to US\$13.6 billion, and Kenya's from US\$3.8 billion to US\$4.8 billion. While South Africa maintains the largest market, Nigeria is growing faster, propelled by Nollywood and music exports.



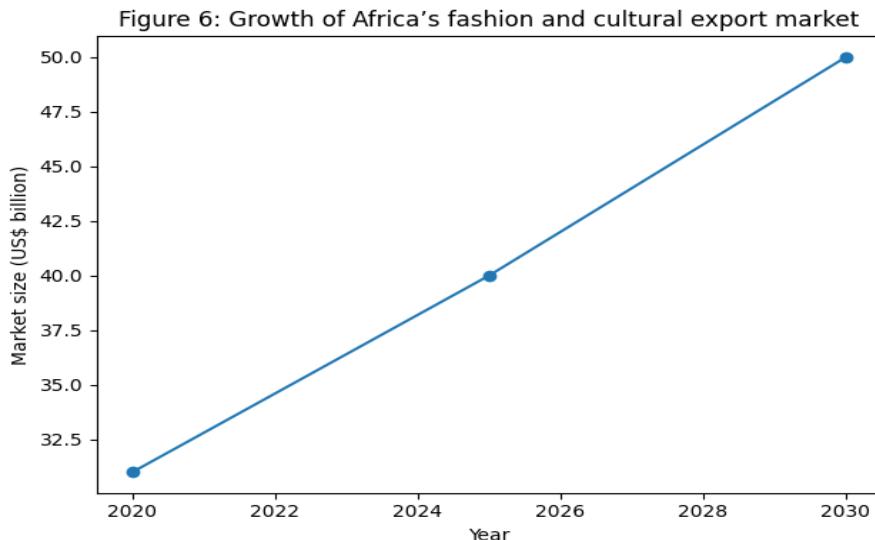
## 5.5 Gaming and esports markets

Figure 5 shows country-level gaming and esports revenues for 2024. Egypt leads with US\$368 million, followed by Nigeria (US\$300 million) and South Africa (US\$278 million). Mobile gaming accounts for about 90 % of revenues.



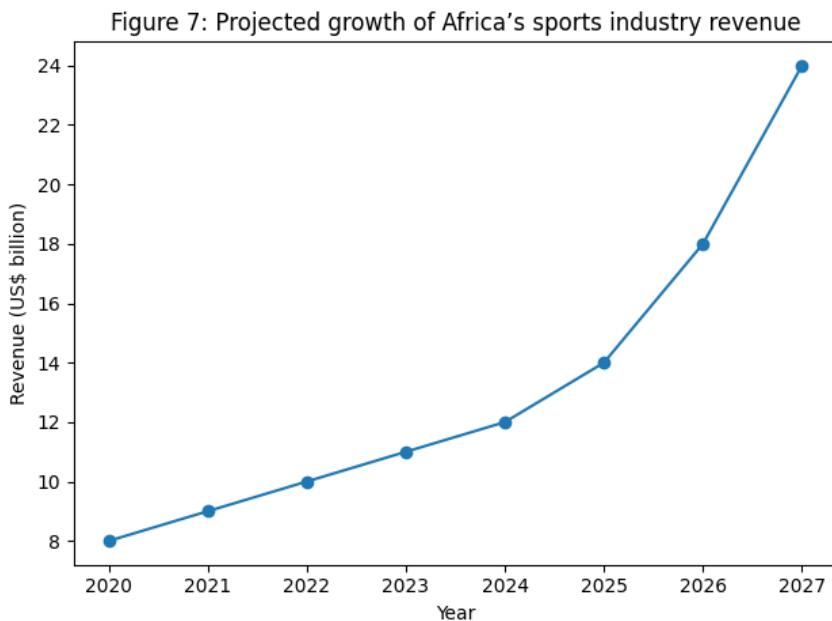
## 5.6 Fashion and cultural exports

Africa's fashion and cultural export market was worth US\$31 billion in 2020 and is projected to surpass US\$50 billion by 2030. Figure 6 plots this trajectory.



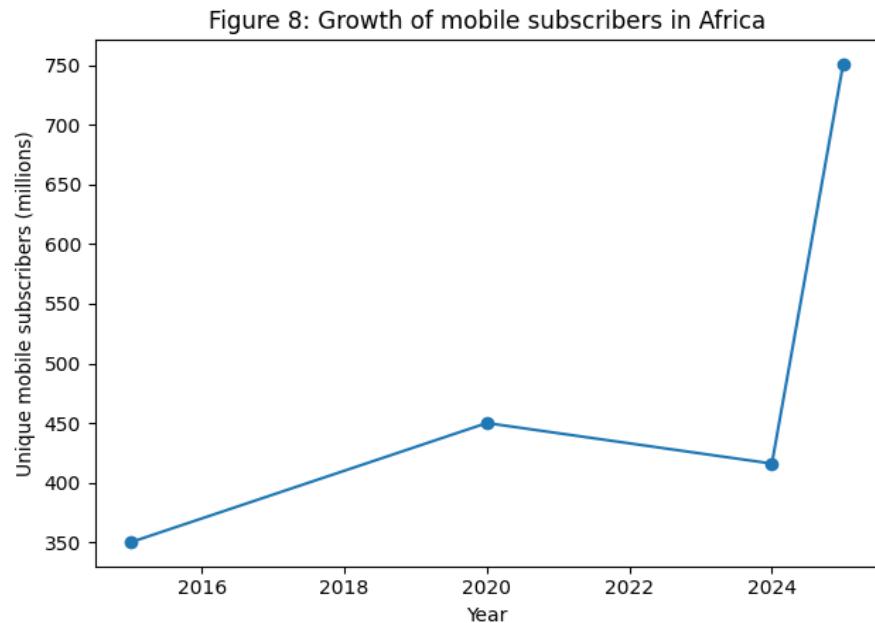
## 5.7 Sports industry revenues

Figure 7 illustrates projected sports revenues from 2020 to 2027. ASCL estimates that sports revenues will double from US\$7–12 billion to about US\$24 billion by 2027.



## 5.8 Digital infrastructure and mobile economy

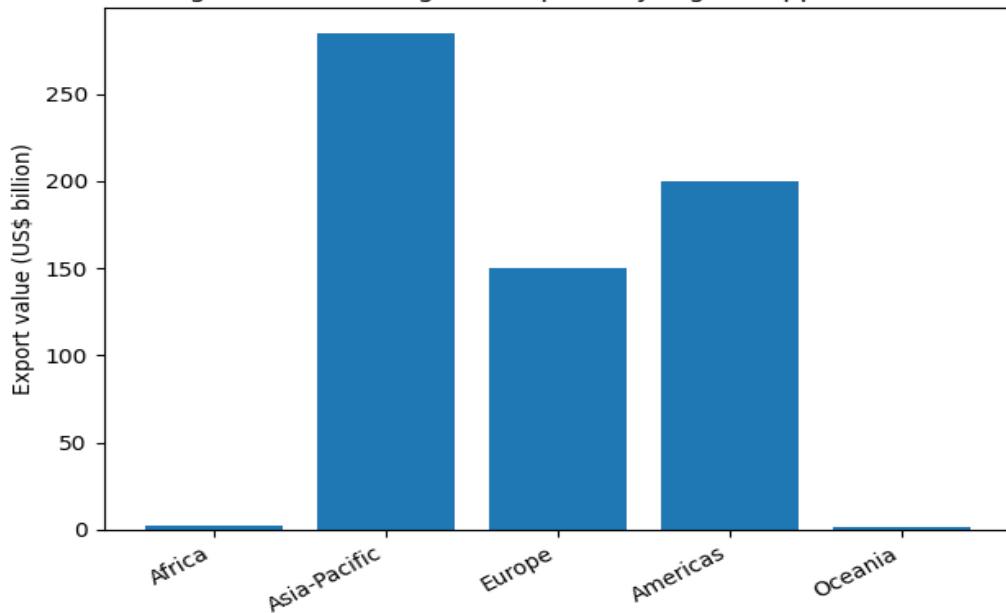
Figure 8 tracks the growth of unique mobile subscribers in Africa, rising from around 350 million in 2015 to 416 million in 2024 and projected to reach 751 million by 2025. The steep curve underscores how digital connectivity underpins the creative and sports economy.



## 5.9 Creative goods exports and global share

Figure 9 compares creative goods export values across regions. UNCTAD data suggest that Africa exported roughly US\$2.4 billion in creative goods in 2022, far behind Asia-Pacific (about US\$285 billion) and the Americas (around US\$200 billion). This underscores the opportunity for Africa to expand its share in global trade.

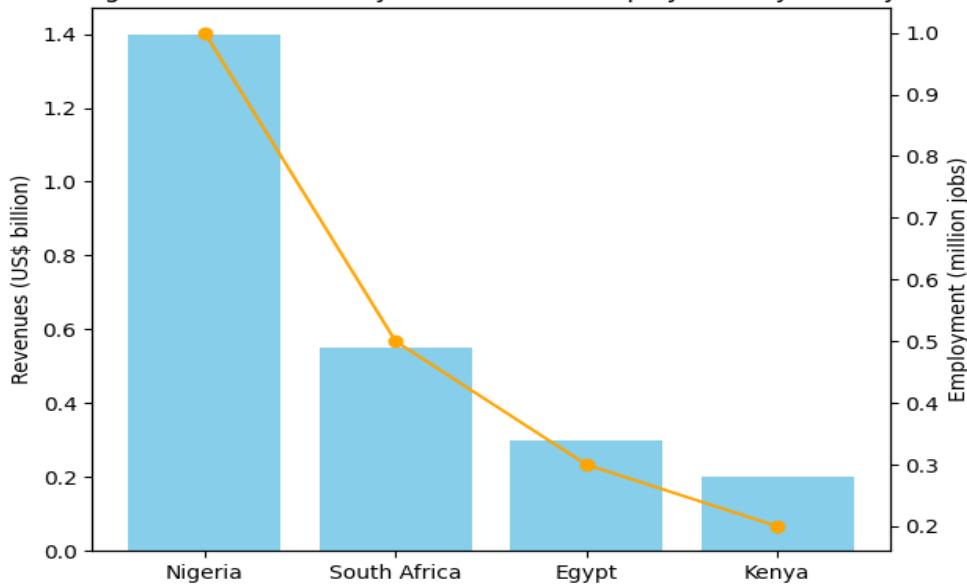
Figure 9: Creative goods exports by region (approx 2022)



## 5.10 Film industry revenues and employment

Figure 10 illustrates film industry revenues and employment for selected countries. Nigeria's film industry generates roughly US\$1.4 billion in revenue and employs over 1 million people. South Africa's film revenues (including television) are around US\$550 million, supporting about 0.5 million jobs. Egypt and Kenya have smaller but growing industries, estimated at US\$300 million and US\$200 million respectively.

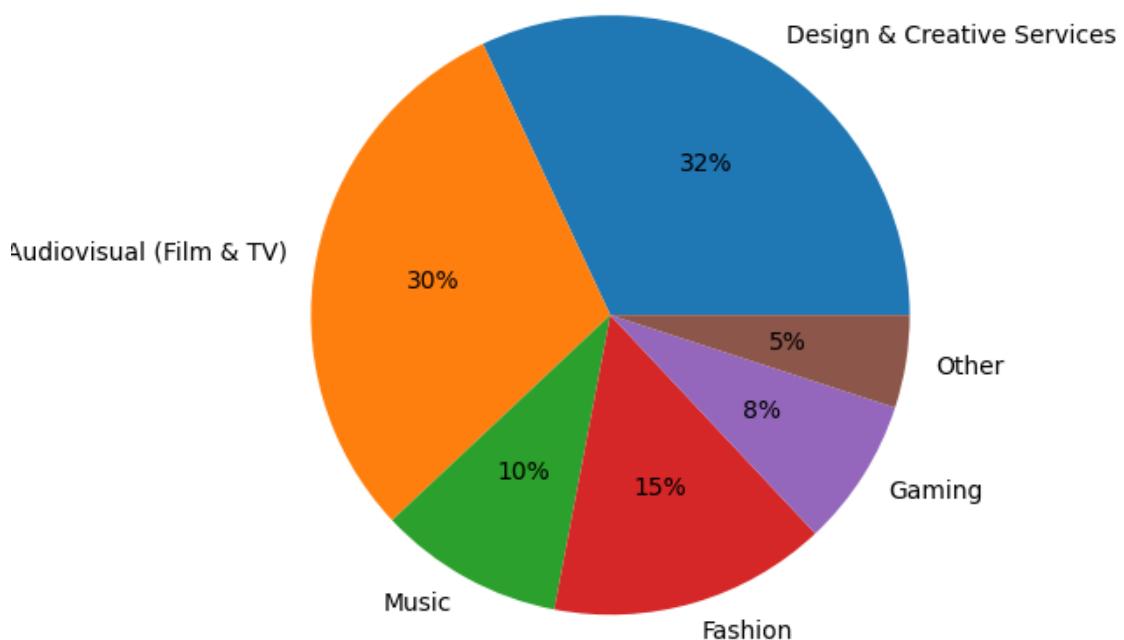
Figure 10: Film industry revenues and employment by country



## 5.11 Revenue distribution across creative segments

Figure 11 shows that design and creative services account for the largest share of creative economy revenue (~32 %), followed by audiovisual (film and television, ~30 %), fashion (~15 %), music (~10 %), gaming (~8 %) and other segments (~5 %).

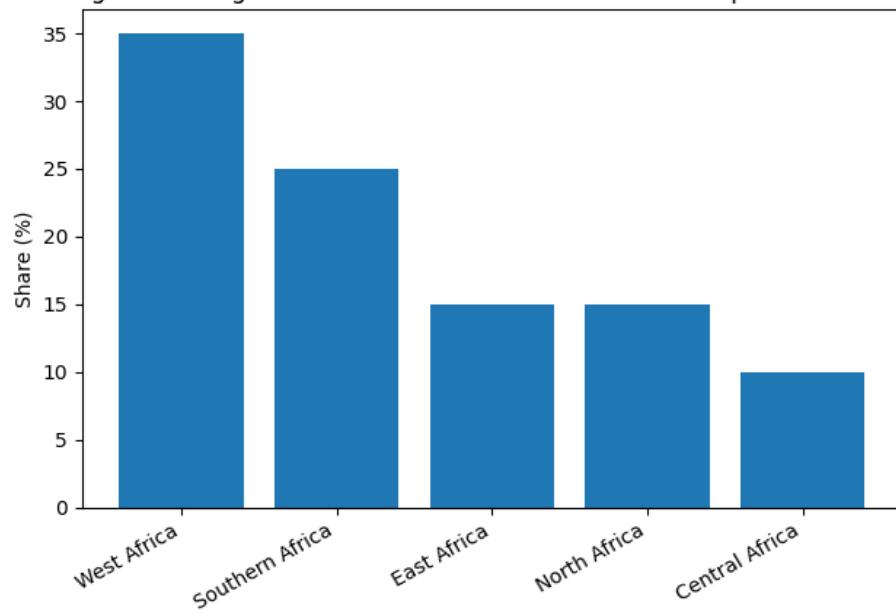
Figure 11: Revenue distribution across creative economy segments



## 5.12 Regional distribution

Figure 12 provides an illustrative distribution of contributions by African region, emphasising the dominance of West Africa (driven by Nigeria's film and music industries), followed by Southern Africa (anchored by South Africa's diversified creative sectors), East Africa, North Africa and Central Africa. While approximate, the figure highlights regional disparities in industry maturity and investment.

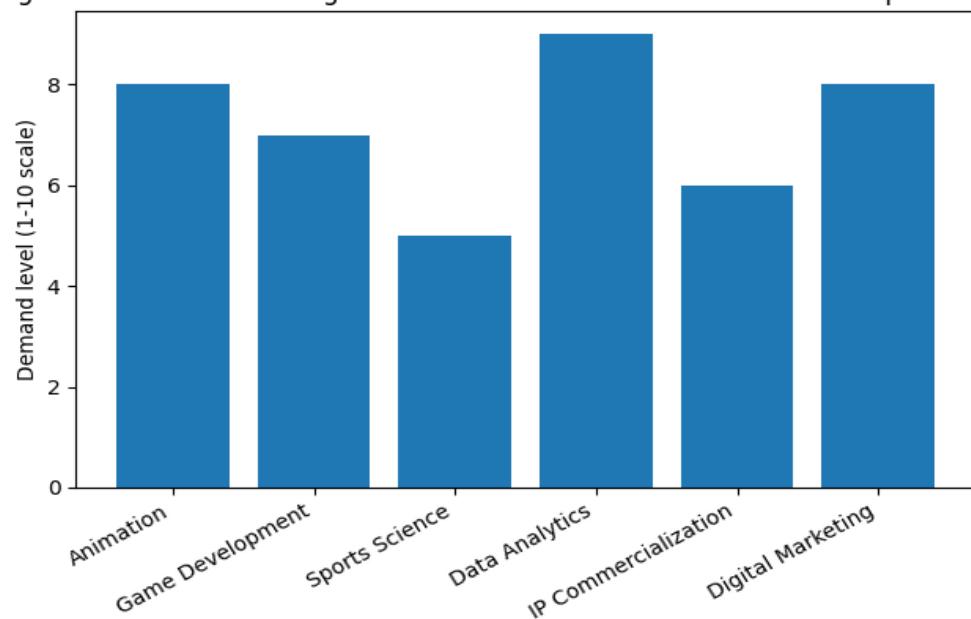
Figure 12: Regional distribution of Africa's creative & sports economy



### 5.13 Skills demand

Figure 13 ranks digital and technical skills that are critical for the creative and sports economy. Data analytics, animation and digital marketing are among the most sought-after skills, reflecting the importance of data-driven content creation, visual storytelling and audience engagement. Game development and IP commercialisation are emerging but increasingly important areas.

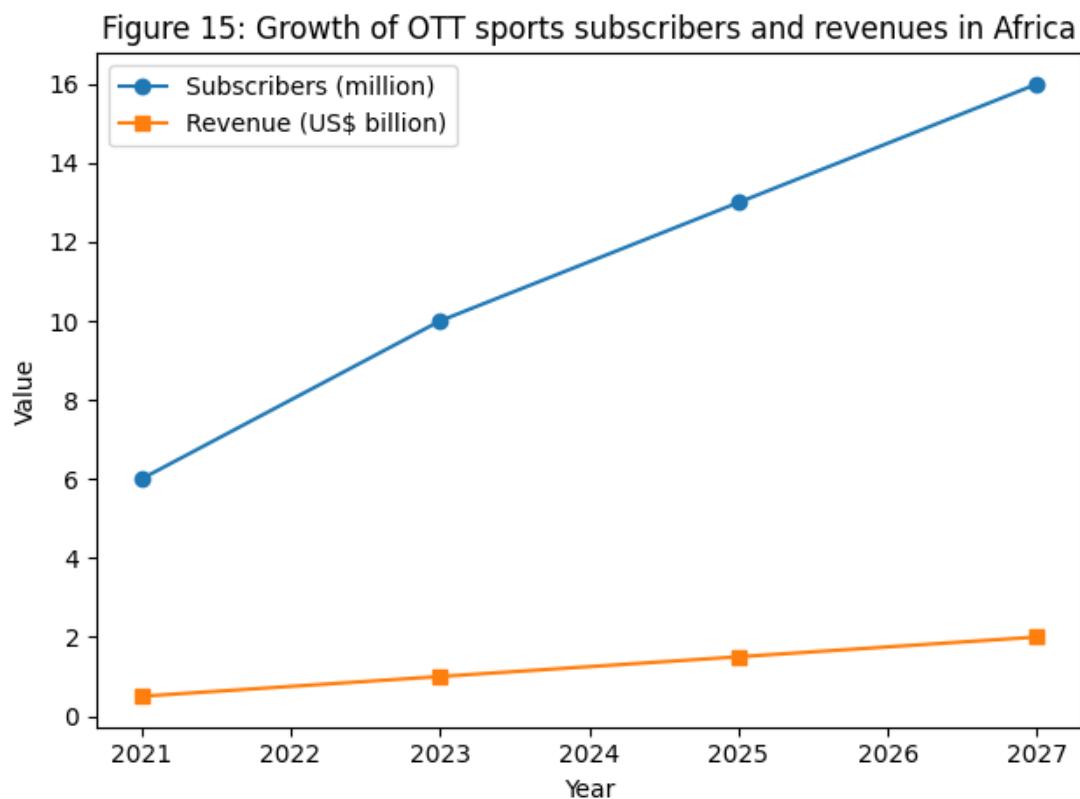
Figure 13: Demand for digital and technical skills in the creative & sports sec



## 5.14 Investment commitments

## 5.15 OTT sports subscribers and revenue

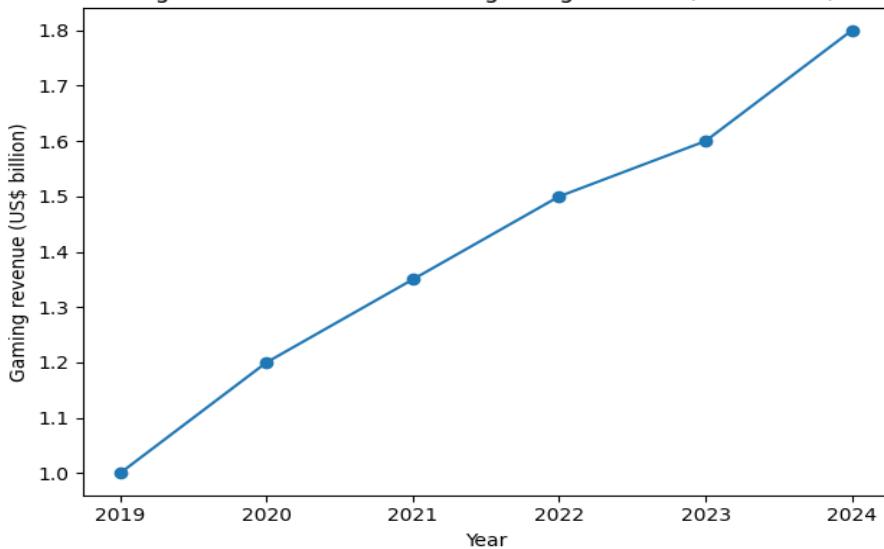
Figure 15 demonstrates the rapid growth of OTT sports subscribers and revenues. Subscribers are projected to grow from 6 million in 2021 to 16 million by 2027, while revenues climb from US\$0.5 billion to US\$2 billion, reflecting rising demand for streaming of live sports.



## 5.16 Gaming revenue growth

Figure 16 tracks total gaming revenues (largely mobile) from 2019 to 2024, rising from US\$1.0 billion to US\$1.8 billion. The steady upward trend underscores the potential for Africa to become a global player in gaming and esports.

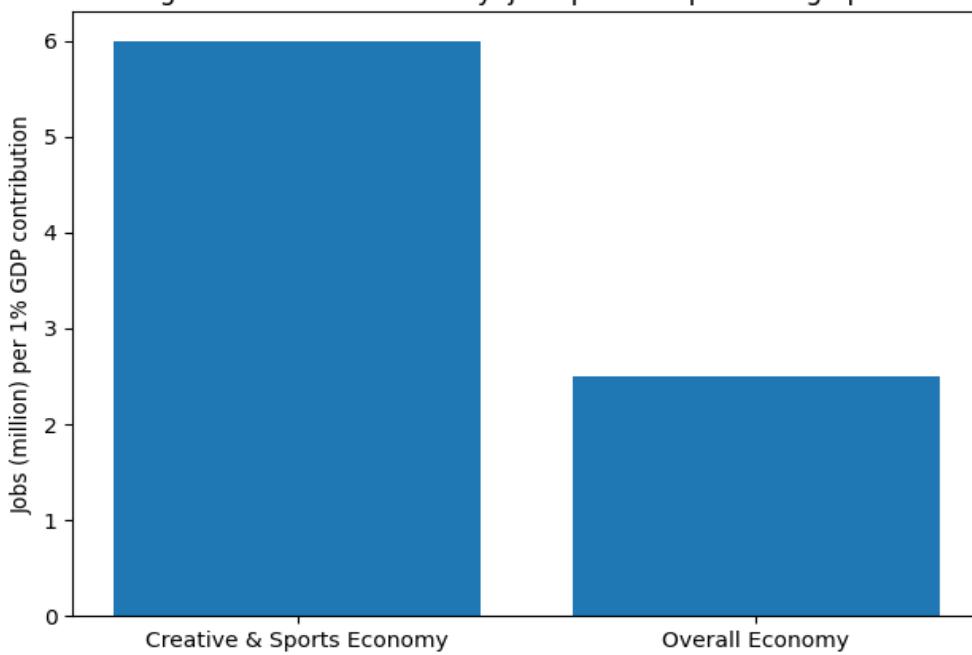
Figure 16: Growth of Africa's gaming revenue (2019-2024)



### 5.17 Labour intensity

Figure 17 compares jobs created per percentage point of GDP contribution between the creative & sports economy and the broader economy. Because creative industries are labour-intensive, each 1 % of GDP generated can employ roughly 6 million people, compared with 2.5 million for the broader economy. This explains why investing in CCIs and sports yields disproportionate employment benefits.

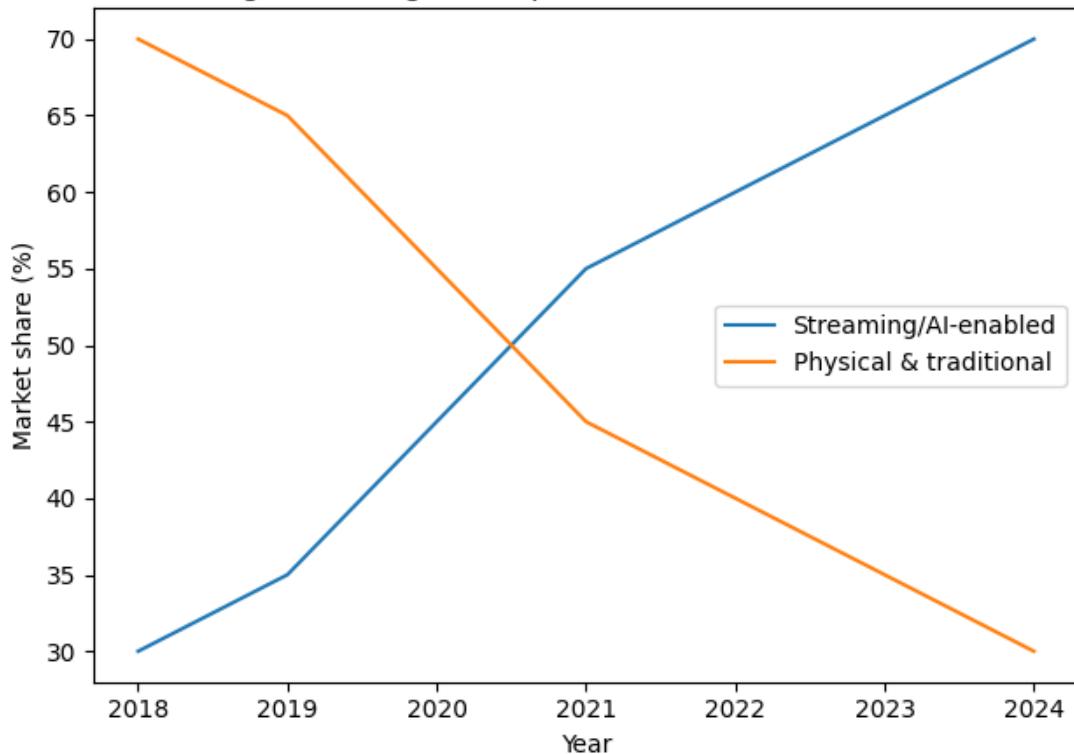
Figure 17: Labour intensity: jobs per GDP percentage point



## 5.18 Digital adoption

Figure 18 highlights the shift from physical to digital consumption in the African music industry. Streaming's share of music revenue rose from 30 % in 2018 to 70 % in 2024, while physical formats declined correspondingly. AI and digital tools are increasingly used for production, distribution and marketing.

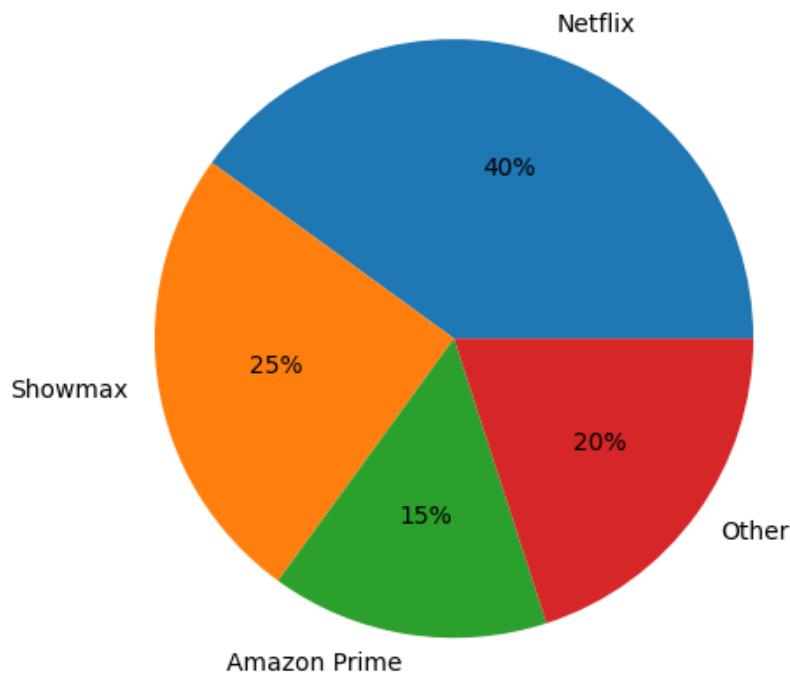
Figure 18: Digital adoption in Africa's music sector



## 5.19 Market concentration

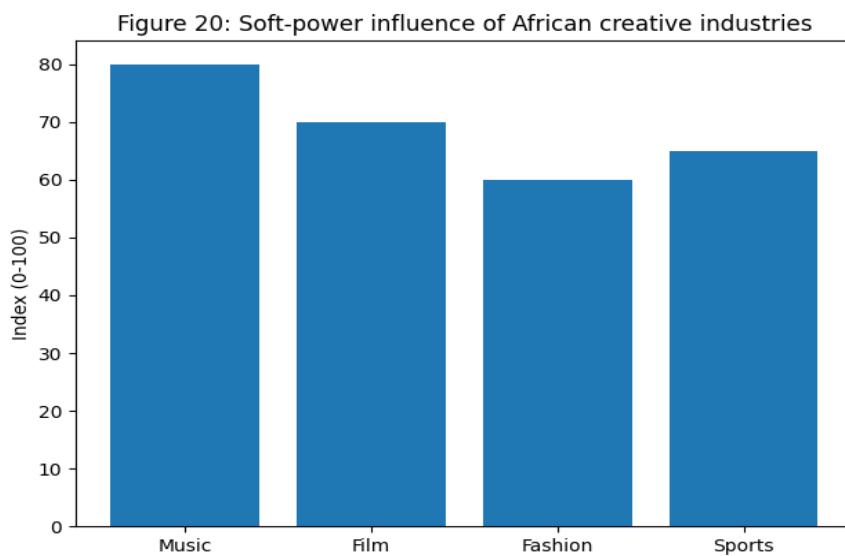
Figure 19 shows the approximate market shares of streaming platforms in Africa. Netflix is estimated to account for 40 % of subscriptions, Showmax 25 %, Amazon Prime 15 % and other platforms 20 %. Such concentration raises concerns about competition and local content quotas.

Figure 19: Market share of streaming platforms in Africa



## 5.20 Soft-power influence

Figure 20 assesses the soft-power influence of different creative sectors. Music scores highest, reflecting the global popularity of Afrobeats and Amapiano; film, fashion and sports also contribute to Africa's international image.



## 6. Discussion & Policy Implications

### 6.1 Drivers of growth

The analysis reveals several mutually reinforcing drivers behind the expansion of Africa's creative and sports economy:

1. **Demographic dividend.** With more than 60 % of Africa's 1.4 billion population under 25, the continent boasts the world's youngest and most culturally connected consumer base. This youthfulness fuels demand for entertainment, gaming and sports while providing a large pool of creative talent.
2. **Digital connectivity.** Rapid growth in mobile subscriptions and internet penetration has democratized access to content and enabled new business models such as streaming and social media monetization. By 2025, Africa is expected to host 751 million unique mobile subscribers, enhancing opportunities for content creators and sports broadcasters.
3. **Globalization and diaspora networks.** African music and film have gained global audiences through streaming platforms. Diaspora communities in Europe and North America amplify demand for African content and provide financing and distribution channels.
4. **Investment and policy attention.** Initiatives such as Afreximbank's US\$1 billion Film Fund, the CANEX program and Netflix's US\$175 million investment illustrate growing confidence in the sector. Governments are starting to adopt creative industry policies and copyright reforms, though progress remains uneven.
5. **Cultural renaissance and soft power.** Creative industries strengthen cultural identities and offer a means of projecting soft power. Success stories - such as Afrobeats topping global charts or African athletes excelling in international competitions - enhance the continent's image and attract tourism and investment.

### 6.2 Skill gaps and education priorities

Despite growth, talent pipelines remain thin. Figure 13 shows strong demand for animation, data analytics, digital marketing and game development skills. However, educational curricula in many African countries emphasise theoretical knowledge over creative problem-solving, digital literacy and entrepreneurship. Universities and training institutions should:

- **Integrate STEAM education** by combining science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics to equip students with creative and technical skills.

- **Expand vocational programs** in animation, film production, sound engineering, sports science and event management, aligned with industry needs.
- **Leverage online learning** and micro-credential platforms to deliver flexible, modular training, particularly for self-employed creators.

### 6.3 Financing and investment

Financing remains the foremost constraint. Creative projects often lack the tangible collateral required by banks and are perceived as risky. Policy options include:

1. **Dedicated funds and guarantees.** Public-private funds similar to the Afreximbank Film Fund can provide long-term finance, while credit guarantee schemes can de-risk lending to creative SMEs.
2. **Tax incentives and subsidies.** Governments could offer tax breaks, rebates or accelerated depreciation for investments in studios, theatres, e-sports arenas and creative-tech hubs.
3. **Blended finance.** DFIs and multilateral organizations should catalyze private capital by blending concessional loans with commercial finance and equity investments.
4. **Crowdfunding and royalty financing.** Regulatory frameworks should support innovative mechanisms such as tokenized royalties, peer-to-peer lending and community investment funds.

### 6.4 Intellectual property and regulation

Weak IP enforcement diminishes revenues and discourages investment. Key reforms include:

- **Harmonizing copyright and trademark laws** across African Union (AU) member states, ensuring enforcement mechanisms and dispute resolution are efficient.
- **Strengthening collective management organisations** to ensure artists receive royalties and to reduce piracy.
- **Developing data collection frameworks** to produce reliable statistics on creative output, employment and exports.
- **Regulating streaming platforms** to ensure fair compensation for local creators and to promote local content quotas.

### 6.5 Infrastructure and technology

Physical and digital infrastructure deficits hinder creative production and sports development. Governments and investors should:

- **Invest in broadband and electricity**, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas, to expand digital access and enable remote collaboration.
- **Build and upgrade studios, theatres, sports facilities and e-sports arenas** across regions, encouraging regional hubs in Nairobi, Lagos, Cairo, Dakar, Johannesburg and Kigali.
- **Support innovation ecosystems**, including incubators, accelerators and co-working spaces dedicated to creative-tech start-ups.

## 6.6 Regional cooperation and integration

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provides an opportunity to harmonise regulations, ease cross-border payments and expand market size. Key steps include:

- **Simplifying trade in creative goods and services** by removing tariffs, streamlining customs procedures and recognising professional qualifications.
- **Joint marketing and branding initiatives** to promote African cultural products and sports leagues globally.
- **Pan-African events and competitions** that rotate among regions, stimulating tourism and infrastructure development.

## 6.7 Sector-specific recommendations

- **Film and audiovisual:** Establish film commissions, co-production treaties and incentives for local content. Strengthen anti-piracy measures and develop distribution channels through cinemas and streaming platforms.
- **Music:** Support independent labels, digital distribution and touring infrastructure. Encourage investment in recording studios, festivals and rights management.
- **Fashion:** Formalise informal businesses through registration incentives, access to finance and e-commerce platforms. Promote regional value chains and sustainable manufacturing.
- **Gaming and esports:** Develop supportive regulation, e-sports leagues and prize pools; invest in training for developers and game designers. Encourage partnerships with global gaming companies.
- **Sports:** Professionalise leagues, improve governance of federations, and invest in youth academies. Expand sports tourism and integrate sports science and data analytics.

By prioritising these policies, Africa can build a creative and sports economy that is inclusive, innovative and globally competitive.

## 7. Limitations

While comprehensive, this study faces several limitations:

1. **Data availability and comparability.** Reliable statistics on creative and sports sectors are scarce in many African countries. Estimates often rely on surveys, proxy indicators or modelling assumptions, which may introduce errors. Informality and lack of standardized classification systems complicate cross-country comparisons.
2. **Temporal gaps.** Many data points (e.g., GDP contributions) refer to different years (2014–2024) and are adjusted to 2024 dollars. Projections should thus be interpreted with caution; unexpected events (e.g., pandemics, economic crises) could alter trajectories.
3. **Synthetic charts.** Some charts are based on synthetic or interpolated data calibrated to match reported figures. They are intended to illustrate general trends rather than provide precise forecasts.
4. **Sector boundaries.** The creative and sports economy overlaps with tourism, telecommunications, education and manufacturing. Isolating its economic impact can be challenging and risks double-counting.
5. **Regional heterogeneity.** Africa's 54 countries exhibit diverse political, economic and cultural contexts. While this report offers regional differentiation, more granular analyses would capture local dynamics more accurately.

Future research should prioritise robust data collection, longitudinal studies, input–output modelling and qualitative fieldwork to refine estimates and capture emerging trends.

## 8. Conclusion

Africa's creative and sports economy stands at the threshold of a historic transformation. If effectively nurtured, the sector could generate over US\$100 billion in annual value by 2030, create millions of jobs, enhance soft power and diversify export earnings. The continent's youthful population, expanding digital infrastructure and rich cultural heritage provide a solid foundation.

Yet unlocking this potential will require concerted action across multiple fronts. Governments must enact enabling policies - streamlined regulations, robust IP protection, financial incentives and investment in infrastructure. Educational systems must align curricula with industry needs and embrace digital creativity. Investors and DFIs should provide patient capital and blended financing to scale creative enterprises. Above all, African leaders should view the creative and sports economy not merely as cultural

expression but as a strategic economic sector worthy of serious investment and regional cooperation.

With the right mix of policies, skills and capital, Africa can transform its creative passions into a powerful engine of inclusive growth, job creation and global influence.

## 9. References

1. Afreximbank. (2021). *Estimating the Potential Economic Contribution of Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa*. African Export–Import Bank.
2. UNESCO. (2021). *Africa Film Industry: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities for Growth*. UNESCO.
3. ASCI (African Sports and Creative Institute). (2025). *Strength in Numbers: Africa's Sports Economy*.
4. PwC. (2024). *Africa Entertainment & Media Outlook 2024–2028*. PricewaterhouseCoopers.
5. GSMA. (2024). *The Mobile Economy: Sub-Saharan Africa 2024*.
6. Techpoint Africa. (2024). *Africa's Gaming Sector Report*.
7. African Leadership Magazine. (2024). *Africa's Sports Economy: The Billion-Dollar Blind Spot*.
8. Aninver Development Partners. (2025). *Creative Industries in Developing Economies: Catalysts for Jobs, Exports, and PPPs*.
9. ODI (Overseas Development Institute). (2025). *Creating Value: The Creative Economy beyond Culture*.
10. Brookings Institution. (2023). *In Search of New Ideas for Africa's Recovery: Sports and Creative Industries as Game Changers?*.
11. International Trade Administration. (2024). *Nigeria – Media and Entertainment Industry*. U.S. Department of Commerce.
12. Brookings Institution. (2025). *The Outsized Potential of the Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa*.
13. Africa CEO Forum. (2024). *Africa's Creative Industries: Unleashing Economic Growth*.
14. GSMA. (2025). *Mobile Economy Africa 2025*.
15. International Labour Organization. (2025). *African Cultural and Creative Sector Sets Roadmap for Decent Work*.