

STATE OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY · STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT & OUTLOOK

Digital Ecosystem: Anambra

A strategic review of Anambra State's digital infrastructure, project execution, and startup ecosystem — prepared for investors, founders, and ecosystem partners.

\$12.73B

State GDP (2024)

610KM

Fibre-optic laid

80

Startups funded (2026)

₦1.08BN

2026 digital package

Digital Ecosystem: Anambra

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October 2026

This report was conducted by the Native Insight research team, led by Amam Okafor. We acknowledge the contributions of Zikora Chukwuka (Founder, Anambra Techies) and John Onuigbo (Founder, Foris Labs).

A structured view of Anambra's digital transformation journey.

Overview

- 1 Economy
- 2 Digital Development
- 3 Policy Initiatives

Anambra Digital Economy

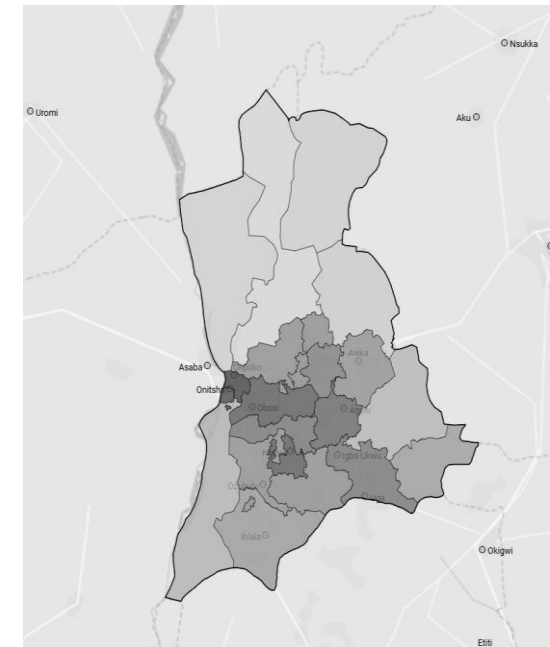
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Anambra has moved from digital ambition to visible execution — the next test is depth, not announcement.

Anambra enters the second half of 2026 as one of Nigeria's clearest examples of a state government treating digital transformation as core infrastructure, not a side initiative. Under Governor Soludo's second term — inaugurated in mid-2026 — the “Everything Tech” agenda has moved from framework to delivery: over 610km of a targeted 2,000km fibre backbone is live, and SmartGov and Anambra e-GP have digitised government services and procurement.

Momentum has accelerated through 2026. A ₦1.08 billion digital-investment package — combining startup financing, a ₦1 billion Connekt broadband commitment, and the graduation of 400 technology professionals — was unveiled in June, where 80 startups received ₦1 million each as seed capital. The ICT Agency has since set out an explicitly AI-native roadmap, including a locally trained, open-source AI system positioned as a step toward digital sovereignty.

The Governor's August 2026 engagements with NVIDIA in Silicon Valley and innovation hubs in Toronto and Brampton signal an explicit ambition to plug Anambra's talent pipeline into world-class AI infrastructure and academic partnerships — extending the state's ADTS (Africa, Dubai, Taiwan, Silicon Valley) governance philosophy into its digital strategy.

WHAT'S WORKING

- Sustained political commitment across two terms;
- Real capital disbursed to founders, not just pledged;
- International partnerships translating into concrete MoUs;
- Institutional clarity: ICT Agency (infrastructure) and SID (ecosystem);

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO CLOSE

- Zero institutional VC funding raised by an Anambra startup to date
- Platforms still in beta years after launch; data portal needs refreshing
- 5G and last-mile fibre coverage remain limited outside three cities – Awka, Nnewi, Onitsha.
- No confirmed, published urban development masterplan

01

Overview

Anambra's macroeconomic position and the policy foundations underpinning its digital transformation agenda.

Anambra is a regional economic contender and the commercial heart of Nigeria's Southeast

One of Nigeria's most compact states by landmass (4,865 sq. km, second only to Lagos), Anambra has an estimated population of 5.95 million and an economy of \$12.73 billion, anchored by trade, light manufacturing, and agriculture.

Awka anchors political administration, Onitsha drives commercial trade, and Nnewi hosts a concentrated auto-parts manufacturing cluster — giving the state three distinct, complementary economic engines.

Internally generated revenue rose 18.7% year-on-year to ₦43 billion in 2025, yet FAAC transfers still account for roughly 87% of total state revenue — underscoring both fiscal dependency and headroom for revenue diversification.

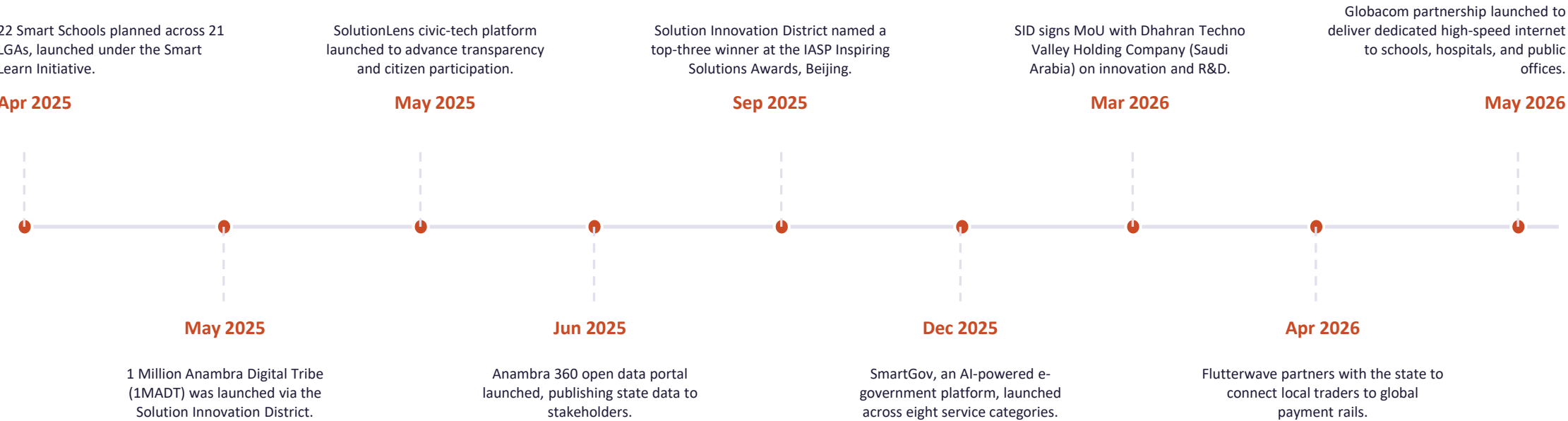
A historically informal, trade-driven economy is being deliberately re-platformed through the administration's digital-first agenda — most visibly the Anambra ICT Agency's infrastructure build-out and the Solution Innovation District's ecosystem-development mandate.

The 1 Million Anambra Digital Tribe (1MADT) initiative anchors the state's talent strategy, aiming to build a critical mass of digitally skilled residents to sustain the transformation beyond infrastructure alone.

Macro Indicators	
Population	5.95 million (2022 est.)
Landmass	4,865.0 sq.km
GDP	\$12.73 billion (2024 est.)
2026 Budget	(₦766.37 billion (₦606.9 billion in 2025)
Economic advantage	Trade (Onitsha, Nnewi, Awka); automotive parts industry
Internally generated revenue in 2025	₦47 billion (₦43 billion in2024)
Ministry of Information budget	₦6.6 billion (2025)
State institutions	Anambra ICT Agency; Solution Innovation District, ANSIPPA

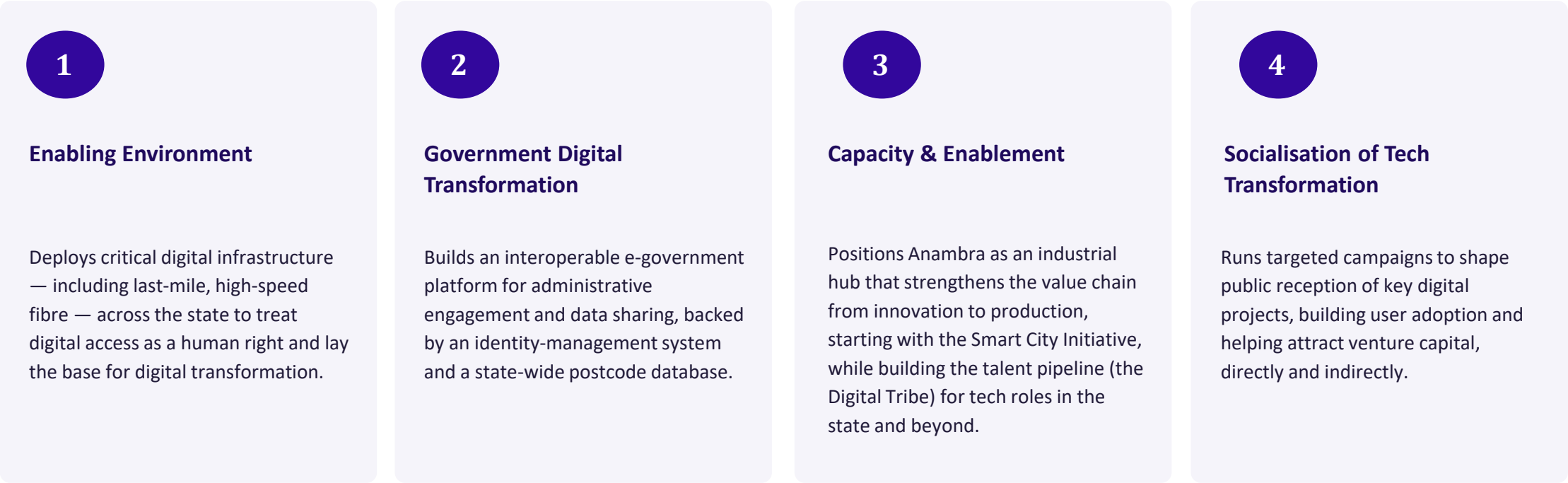
Sources: citypopulation.de; BusinessDay NG (GDP rankings, 2024)

The state is systematically building the infrastructure layer for a digital take-off



Also in motion: construction of the permanent Solution Innovation District campus is underway, and 25 startups have been selected for incubation and acceleration through the \$50M Southeast Development Commission VC programme.

Under the “Everything Tech” mandate, the state is positioning Anambra as the region's leading digital hub



KEY PROJECT DELIVERABLES



02

Anambra's Digital Economy

The institutions, digital-public infrastructure, and startup ecosystem carrying the state's transformation agenda forward.

A compact leadership structure coordinates the state's digital economy agenda



Prof. Chukwuma Soludo

Executive Governor



Barr. Paulinus Metu

Commissioner for Information



Chukwuemeka F. Agbata

MD/CEO, Anambra State ICT Agency



Chinwe Okoli

CEO, Solution Innovation District

Anambra ICT Agency

Executes the state's "Everything Technology, Technology Everywhere" mandate.

- 2,000km state fibre-optic rollout for high-speed internet
- e-Government platforms consolidating digital transition
- Smart City initiative
- Public readiness & adoption campaigns

Solution Innovation District

The physical and institutional link between the state and its innovation ecosystem stakeholders.

- 1 Million Anambra Digital Tribe
- Code Anambra
- Anambra Innovation Week
- Business incubation & acceleration

610km of fibre-optic cable has been laid, forming the backbone for statewide high-speed connectivity

DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Fibre-optic build-out

Of a 2,000km target, over 610km has been laid statewide; the first 200km phase was prioritised to reach government MDAs, schools, and other institutional clusters.

Right-of-Way (RoW) waiver

The government waived RoW charges per linear metre to fast-track fibre-optic deployment across the state.

Smart City Initiative

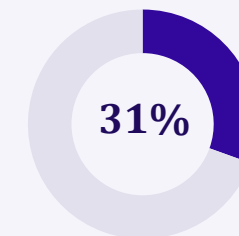
Smart Schools, housing, and commercial infrastructure are being built to transform and integrate the state's digital economy.

DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

Smart Anambra: Digitises government services, including a citizen tool for connectivity and safety.

Anambra e-GP: Digitises government procurement processes for all suppliers of goods and services.

Anambra360 Open Data Portal: A data repository that engenders transparency and civic engagement as a commitment to Open Government and inclusive development.



FIBRE-OPTIC ROLLOUT

610km laid of a **2,000km** state-wide target — the base layer for e-government, smart schools, and last-mile connectivity.

A budding ecosystem: most founders are bootstrapping, a few have secured grants, and institutional capital is only beginning to arrive

Anambra's startup ecosystem is coordinated principally through the Solution Innovation District (SID), alongside a growing set of independent hubs and entrepreneur-support communities concentrated in Awka, Onitsha, and Nnewi. Growth rests on three pillars: talent, startups, and investors, to build a pipeline of digital talent, support founders, and rally investor interest.

Many startups in the state are bootstrapping, building Web3 platforms, Edtech, inventory management apps, and operating dev shops, with most tech talent providing digital solutions to firms globally. **The SID supported over 111 startups, 278 founders, and awarded over N364 million in seed funding.** However, no Anambra-based startup has raised institutional VC funding in the past five to ten years. John Onuigbo of Foris Labs cited predatory VC terms and cultural issues as part of the reasons.

According to Zikora Chukwuka, Anambra Techies, while the state is doing a lot in talent development initiatives, it can rally more support for startups by building a strong investor ecosystem. The state government has stepped in with direct capital: it disbursed N80 million in seed funding to 80 startups (N1 million each), and the Southeast Development Commission launched a \$50 million VC programme for regional tech startups.

Strategic capital — beyond grants and seed funding — is needed to catalyse the next stage of growth.

“

As a secondary city, the Anambra startup ecosystem is evolving, anchored on three pillars: talent, startups, and investors... Reaching a critical mass of talent requires building a professional community that supports career growth, especially given the shortage of senior professionals and the need to make a strong case for state investment... While the state is doing a lot in talent development initiatives, there is room to rally more support for startups and build a strong investor ecosystem.



Zikora Chukwuka
Founder,
Anambra Techies

₦364M+

Total seed funding by SID

\$50M

SEDC regional VC programme

0

startups with VC funding

A budding ecosystem: startups are building Web3 solutions, operating dev studios, and serving global clients

Some active startups in Anambra

ForisLabs

LightEd

E-Noble Vital

Parkers

Bouwnce

Speedaf

CloseDoc

StockedUp

FreshBul

Trarrk

9ja Edu Games

Sflow

CaroJon

Eduzone

StockedUp Africa

Fluk

JetPad

Ventilo

Selnode

Rent24

Trarrk

Bremwave

CloseDoc

Ventilo

CloudAudit

Igrow Afrika

Swacore

Institutional players



Hubs & Support communities



Tech Events

- Anambra Battle for Solution
- Anambra Web3 conference
- Onitsha Business Hangout
- Download Tech
- SM Fest Awka
- Anambra Innovation Week
- SID Techstars Startup Weekend
- Southeast Blockchain and Games Week

Onuigbo: “In 2020, founders were alone and isolated; now we have thriving tech communities supported by the government programs.”



Q: What is your experience as one of the early founders building in Anambra over the years?

A: I have been active in the ecosystem since 2019, when I founded STEM Novate (a nonprofit reaching over 17,000 secondary school students in Anambra State with coding, robotics, and entrepreneurship education) and Foris Labs in 2020. At the time, the founders were isolated and

alone, and tech talent was hard to find. Founders travelled to Lagos to pitch to investors and recruit talent. There were no tech communities or real government support until this administration came with the “Everything tech” mandate. Today, the local ecosystem has transformed under Governor Chukwuma Soludo's administration and the Solution Innovation District, fostering active networks like the Anambra Startup Network and Anambra Techies. One of the earliest supports I received was funding to attend the TechCrunch Startup Battlefield in the US. The state has continued to support founders with grants/seed capital and talent development programs to build a solid talent pipeline. Regional coordination in the VC space led to the creation of the SEDC VC program, where 25 startups have received between \$5,000 and \$20,000. Sincerely, a lot has changed over the last 5 years.

Q: What are the challenges and frictions that startup founders experience today in Anambra?

A: Some of the earlier challenges still exist, albeit in different forms. For instance, startups still face a shortage of tech talent, mainly due to brain drain and offshoring – even as the state continues to build talent pipelines. This is not peculiar to Anambra: developers leave the country for Europe and America; those who stay work for international companies. Also, commercialising solutions such as edtech platforms is challenging. People want to learn about platforms but will not pay for them. Infrastructure constraints include limited 5G coverage in some areas, limited co-working spaces in places like Onitsha, and limited access to VC funding for founders.

“Despite government efforts to expand the talent pipelines, founders still experience skills shortages due to brain drain and talent offshoring.”

John Onuigbo
Co-founder, Foris Labs

Onuigbo: “Though funding has been an issue, the outlook is still optimistic over the next five years.”

Q: How would you describe the VC Ecosystem in Anambra currently?

A: The VC ecosystem is fast-evolving, especially with the launch of the \$50 million SEDC VC program managed by Cardinal Stone. There are also talks about building a local angel network in Anambra. Anambra is home to some of the wealthiest people on the continent; it should be easy to leverage diaspora communities and indigenes in the VC space to build something active in Anambra – this is what Mark Okoye is trying to do at SEDC.

However, I am not aware of any startups that have raised VC rounds in the state since 2019, but some startups have received term sheets; others deliberately avoid predatory VC terms. There is also some measure of cultural aversion to dilution. So, grants are more common for most startups. The ecosystem is evolving, with more to come.

Q: What is your outlook for the ecosystem looking at the trajectory so far?

A: Looking back from 2019 to date, it has been an appreciable leap. The state governor has been very supportive. The SID seems to be doing the right things in talent development, startup support, infrastructure, and sourcing investors and partnerships. My outlook for the next 4-5 years is optimistic. The SID Silicon Valley building will be completed, and the ecosystem will thrive as the administration courts international partners to set up offices in the building; the SEDC VC program will continue to expand opportunities for founders in the region; and the administration plans a second edition of the Anambra Battle for Solutions.



John Onuigbo
Co-founder, Foris Labs

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Structural Issues

A candid assessment of the strengths, gaps, and risks shaping Anambra's digital-economy trajectory.

A progressive momentum in digital development is tempered by regional insecurity and ecosystem gaps.

Strengths

Thriving commercial hubs: Awka, Nnewi, and Onitsha are established business centres near other cities like Asaba, Enugu, and Owerri.

Preponderance of HNIs: Tagged as the country's billionaire capital, this wealth can seed legacy businesses and support funds.

Universities: Federal, state, and reputable private institutions provide a strong innovation backbone.

Stable political environment: Two decades of progressive administration and consistent growth.

Opportunities

Developing-city advantage: Substantial headroom for growth and potential to expand reach across the Southeast.

Young, tech-savvy population: A large university-driven youth population represents a ready market for tech products.

Growing state support: ₦80M in seed funding and the SEDC VC programme signal deepening government commitment to talent and ecosystem development.

Lower operating costs: Cheaper office rentals than Lagos or Abuja make Anambra attractive for startups expanding into the Southeast.

Weaknesses

Small population: A trader-dominated market with fewer white-collar roles implies a relatively small market and may not excite many tech entrepreneurs and investors.

Uneven digital infrastructure: Fibre roll-out is on track, but 5G remains limited outside the three main commercial cities. This slows productive, innovative work.

Weak VC ecosystem: Despite hosting successful entrepreneurs and family businesses, weak fund mobilisation leaves startups struggling to reach investors. Startups look beyond the State to places like Lagos and Abuja for investors.

Threats

Insecurity: Persistent pockets of insecurity discourage capital consolidation across the Southeast region.

Early stage of development: Hard, soft, and tech infrastructure remain inadequate relative to Lagos or Abuja.

Investment culture gap: A strong apprenticeship culture exists, but the practice of opening growth-stage ventures to external capital (fear of dilution) and high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) investing in startups is still evolving.

Institutional partnerships and hard infrastructure are the levers most likely to move the ecosystem forward.

Gaps	Challenges	Action
Infrastructure (hard, soft, tech)	No confirmed urban master plan to guide development trajectory; weak transport and logistics networks, and inconsistent street naming/numbering constrain tech-enabled logistics and delivery services — a likely factor behind Uber's absence from the state since 2012.	→ Link cities with efficient transport and digital infrastructure under a strategic, durable urban master plan — not one subject to the whims of each administration. Anambra can still learn from the mistakes of larger city-states like Lagos.
Absence of a strong VC ecosystem	No Anambra-based startup has raised venture funding; family finance, bootstrapping, and state grants remain the dominant capital sources, with no local angel network in place.	→ Mobilise HNIs in-state and in the diaspora to build an Anambra Angels network; incentivise investment firms to open local offices; and deepen collaboration with ANSIPPA.
Institutional partnerships	The Solution Innovation District currently lacks strong ties to DFIs, VCs, impact investors, and large corporations — limiting its ability to attract startup funding at scale.	→ SID should pursue institutional partnerships — e.g. with the Gates Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, JICA, and IFC — to build and redirect investor interest toward the state's opportunities.
Ecosystem mapping	Insufficient visibility into the ecosystem's size and players — startups, innovation hubs, unipods, accelerators, incubators, and ESOs — makes investment assessment difficult.	→ Conduct a formal scoping exercise of the digital-economy ecosystem and raise the visibility of startups building scalable solutions.

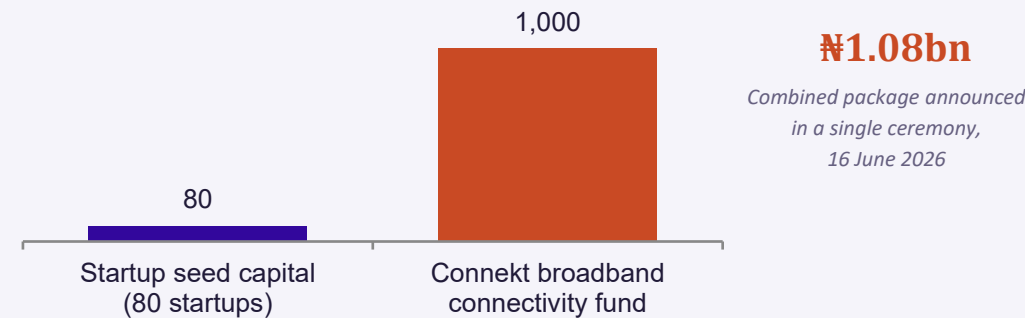
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Conclusion

Priorities for execution, a synthesis of the state's position, and Native Insight's outlook on what comes next.

Capital commitment is accelerating; ecosystem maturity remains uneven across dimensions.

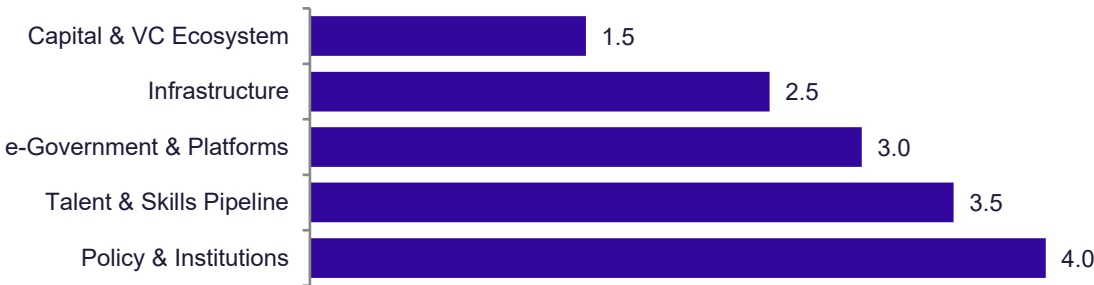
₦1.08BN DIGITAL INVESTMENT PACKAGE (JUNE 2026)



WHERE THE MOMENTUM IS CONCENTRATED

- Infrastructure:** 610km of 2,000km fibre target laid (31%); RoW waiver accelerating rollout.
- Platforms:** SmartGov, e-GP, Anambra 360, and Smart Anambra all live — though several remain in beta.
- Capital:** ₦1.08bn 2026 package + \$50M regional SEDC fund; still zero institutional VC raised locally.
- Partnerships:** MoUs with Dhahran Techno Valley, Flutterwave, Globacom, and engagement with NVIDIA (Aug 2026).

DIGITAL ECONOMY MATURITY SCORECARD — NATIVE INSIGHT ASSESSMENT (1–5 SCALE)



- Policy & Institutions (4.0)** — Sustained two-term commitment; clear ICT Agency / SID mandate split.
- Talent & Skills (3.5)** — 1MADT, Code Anambra, and 400 recent graduates show real pipeline building.
- e-Gov & Platforms (3.0)** — Multiple platforms live, but several still in beta years after launch.
- Infrastructure (2.5)** — Fibre rollout underway (31%); 5G and last-mile coverage still limited.
- Capital & VC Ecosystem (1.5)** — Zero institutional VC raised locally; no angel network yet in place.

Build. Deploy. Collaborate. Execution now matters more than announcement.

Startups

SCALABLE VENTURES

Founders need structured mentoring to build ventures that can scale beyond state and national borders — the profiles VCs actually fund.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Establish credible incubator and accelerator programmes spanning ideation, design, and development.

KPI

Anambra-based startups raising institutional VC funding

Solution Innovation District

SUSTAINED PARTNERSHIPS

Programming to date has focused heavily on startups and talent, with comparatively little emphasis on bringing investors into the state.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

A thriving VC ecosystem supporting ventures from seed through growth stage.

KPI

Presence of active angel and impact-investor networks; rising investor activity in-state

ICT Agency

INFRASTRUCTURE & PLATFORMS

Digital transition of government services and core infrastructure deployment must move from pilot to completion.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Efficient government service delivery through full deployment of e-GP, SmartGov, Anambra 360, and related platforms.

KPI

Full e-government platform deployment; expanded open Wi-Fi, fibre, and 5G coverage

Lagging concerns

- The expected completion date of the SID is largely unknown. It is important to communicate the project timeline to stakeholders and enthusiasts to rally buy-in.
- The platforms are mostly still in the beta stage years after launch. Significant work is necessary for deployment and utilisation.
- The Anambra360 data portal is quite dated. Significant work is needed to synchronise services, units, agencies, and departments to produce up-to-date data for decision-making.
- It is yet unclear* whether a comprehensive Urban Development Masterplan exists that guides development and transformation in the state.

*Information from Promise Tracker reports conflicting narratives through the years. However, we were unable to access any urban development master plan guiding Awka 2.0, Next Onitsha, the Mixed-use Industrial City (AMIC), or any other urban development initiative implemented by the administration.

Strategic outlook: from infrastructure to institutions.

Anambra has proven it can build and fund; its next test is whether it can convert that activity into an ecosystem capable of attracting capital on its own terms.

Near term (6–12 months)

- Complete platform deployments still in beta (SmartGov, Anambra 360, e-GP);
- Publish a costed urban development master plan;
- Convert the recent Silicon Valley and Canada engagements into signed, trackable partnership agreements.

Medium term (1–2 years)

- Complete construction of the permanent site for the SID;
- Support the establishment of a formal Anambra Angels network;
- Pursue anchor DFI/VC partnerships (e.g. IFC, Mastercard Foundation) so SID can broker capital, not only train founders.

Structural watch items

- Regional insecurity remains the single largest swing factor for investor confidence in the Southeast;
- The state's sovereign, open-source AI initiative is an early differentiator worth tracking as it moves from pilot to production use in government services.

METHODOLOGY & NOTES

This review synthesises the baseline research with publicly available reporting current to August 2026. Figures in Naira and US Dollars are presented as originally reported, without currency conversion.

The Digital Economy Maturity Scorecard (page 16) is Native Insight's qualitative assessment, scored on a 1–5 scale using the evidence assembled in this report. It is directional and intended to prioritise attention, not a certified index.

This document is prepared for informational and strategic-planning purposes and does not constitute investment advice.

Digital platforms in the state

ICT Agency	https://ict.anambrastate.gov.ng/
Solution Innovation District	https://innovation.anambrastate.gov.ng/
Anambra360	https://anambra360.ng/
Smart Anambra	https://smart.anambrastate.gov.ng/
E-procurement	https://www.eprocure.bpp.an.gov.ng/index.php

SOURCES

Baseline research: Original knowledge of the ecosystem and tracking of events, media reports and other published resources available in digital media.

Population & landmass: citypopulation.de, Anambra State administrative data (2022 est.)

GDP & state rankings: BusinessDay, “Top 10 richest states in Nigeria ranked by GDP” (2024)

2026 developments: TechEconomy, Vanguard, Technology Times, PM Express, and TechBuild Africa reporting, June–August 2026

Urban planning: Nigerian Institute of Town Planners; ongoing CPCS rail masterplan discussions

Programme announcements: Official Anambra State, Anambra ICT Agency, and Solution Innovation District channels

Links

- <https://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/apps/atlas/Anambra>
- <https://businessday.ng/news/article/top-10-richest-states-in-nigeria-ranked-by-gdp/>
- <https://von.gov.ng/anambra-seeks-partnership-with-globacom-on-digital-economy/>
- <https://nairametrics.com/2026/03/13/anambra-govt-signs-mou-with-saudi-arabian-firm-to-boost-innovation/>
- <https://flutterwave.com/gb/blog/flutterwave-anambra-state-government-partner-to-boost-state-economy>
- <https://solutiongovernment.ng/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/THE-SOLUTION-BULLETIN-VOL-1-no-18.pdf>
- <https://nitpng.org/2025/07/07/nitp-urges-anambra-to-develop-comprehensive-urban-master-plans/>
- <https://guardian.ng/news/anambra-implements-zero-row-charges-for-broadband-deployment/>
- <https://cpcs.ca/projects/cpcs-to-deliver-anambra-rail-master-plan/>
- <https://www.promisetracker.ng/blog/00bb23d1-3534-4825-b0c7-8eaae7f1691e>

THANK YOU

Anambra's digital foundations are built. Execution decides what happens next.

This report was prepared by Native Insight to guide investors, policymakers, and ecosystem partners charting the next phase of Anambra's digital economy. It does NOT constitute any form of investment advice.

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