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2026

Integrated Cyber Threat Assessment for Nigeria - Strategic Priorities for 2026.

Unified and Actionable Outlook for Executive Leadership.

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Foreword

Unified and Actionable Outlook for Executive Leadership.

The cybersecurity landscape in Nigeria is no longer an echo of global trends but a uniquely complex and rapidly evolving domain. This report, **Integrated Cyber Threat Assessment - Strategic Priorities for 2026,** synthesises the intelligence from leading industry voices, creating a unified and actionable outlook for executive leadership in private and public organisations in Nigeria.

This collective analysis serves a crucial purpose: to transition from a reactive defense posture to a proactive, integrated security strategy.

Crucially, this document is an assertion of **our own perspective**. While global reports provide invaluable context, a robust defence strategy must be grounded in the granular reality of the Nigerian digital ecosystem.

Only by prioritising intelligence derived from our local operational experience - identifying indigenous threat groups, charting the specific vulnerabilities of our local digital platforms, and understanding the unique regulatory trajectory - can we build resilience that is truly fit for purpose.

This is more than a security document; it is a mandate. It represents our commitment to leading the narrative on our own digital future, ensuring that every strategic decision is informed by the most relevant, homegrown, and technical expertise available.

The time to act on these integrated insights is now.

Executive Summary

Unified and Actionable Outlook for Executive Leadership.

The converging threat intelligence from leading industry reports indicates that **2026 will be a turning point**, marked by a fundamental shift in adversary tactics and a rapid increase in attack sophistication. The primary battleground is **identity**, with most major breaches starting with valid credentials, necessitating an urgent move to a zero-tust architecture.

This is compounded by the escalation of **AI-enabled cybercrime**, which is predicted to intensify by up to 70%, creating hyper-personalised phishing and deepfakes.

Furthermore, **ransomware** is expected to prioritise maximum disruption, and **local financially-motivated groups** are aggressively targeting banking channels.

Systemic weaknesses, including the **cyber talent gap** (brain drain) and high-impact **API vulnerabilities** like Broken Object Level Authorisation (BOLA), also pose severe risks.

Our strategic focus must therefore be on identity-centric defense, integrating AI in security operations, and rigorously **hardening our digital supply chain and application layer.**

Immediate priorities include accelerating zero-trust implementation by deploying Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), enforcing security-by-design principles for applications and APIs, and addressing resilience gaps such as cloud concentration risk and the cyber talent shortage.

Cybersecurity must be fully integrated into business strategy and workforce planning.

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Key Similarities and Combined Outlook

Reports from Cybersecurity Expert Association of Nigeria (CSEAN), CyberPlural MSSP, Deloitte, and Esentry, analysing the Nigerian cybersecurity landscape and stating outlook for 2026, converge on several critical and intensifying themes for 2026. The key similarities and combined outlook are

01 Identity as the Primary Attack Vector

- **Zero Trust and Identity-Focused Defense** -There is a consensus that identity is becoming the main target. CyberPlural MSSP , Deloitte and Esentry predict that identity infrastructure will become the single point of failure, with most major breaches starting with valid credentials. The zero-trust approach, where no user or system is automatically trusted, is moving from a strategic idea to an operational necessity.
- **High-Frequency Attacks -** CSEAN forecasts the continued dominance of **identity-centric attacks**, including the persistence of **infostealer malware** and high-frequency **password attacks** enabled by low Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) adoption.

02 The Escalation of AI-Enabled Cybercrime

- **Amplified Sophistication** - All reports highlight that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now central to the threat landscape. Deloitte calls Agentic AI an "Ambivalent Tool," capable of both defense and malice.
- **Hyper-Personalisation and Scale** - CSEAN predicts AI-enabled threats will intensify by up to 70%, with Generative AI creating hyper-personalised phishing, deepfake impersonations, and polymorphic malware that increase the scale and precision of attacks.

Key Similarities and Combined Outlook

03 Intensifying Ransomware and Organised Financial Crime

- **Increased Disruption** - CyberPlural MSSP, Deloitte and CSEAN expect Ransomware and targeted phishing to escalate as more services move online. Esentry predicts a shift to a more disruptive ransomware model that prioritises chaos over clean recovery.
- **Local Financial Groups** - CyberPlural MSSP notes that locally based financially motivated threat groups, such as HK-FIN-10 and HK-FIN-25, continue to target digital banking channels and payment platforms aggressively.

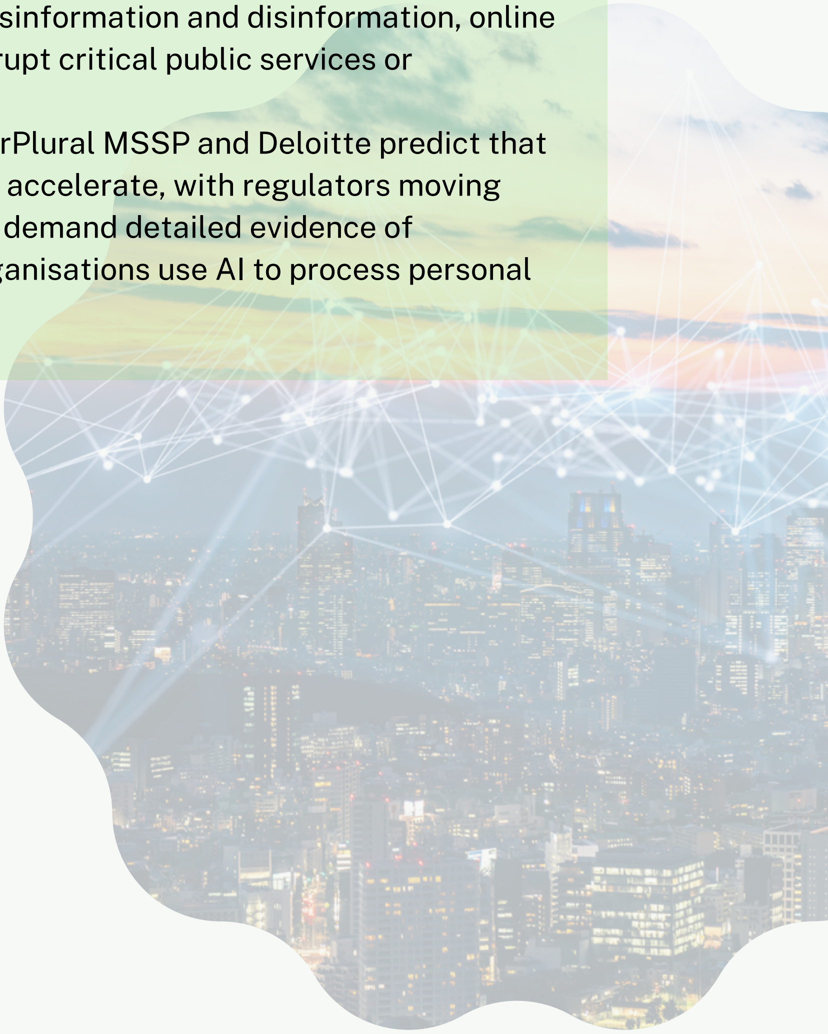
04 Systemic Risks and Gaps in Defense

- **Cyber Talent Gap** - Both Deloitte and CSEAN identify the migration of skilledcCybersecurity professionals (brain drain) as a national security concern that weakens resilience. The solution requires new strategies for talent development and leveraging AI for routine tasks.
- **Vulnerable Software and APIs** -Deloitte stresses that insecure software will face greater exposure, exacerbated by the rush to deploy applications. CyberPlural MSSP reinforces this by identifying API vulnerabilities (e.g., absence of rate-limiting, Broken Object Level Authorization) as a primary cause of major platform breaches.
- **Cloud Concentration Risk** - CSEAN highlights the cloud concentration risk, where reliance on a small number of foreign hyperscale providers exposes critical digital functions to widespread disruption from outages.

Key Similarities and Combined Outlook

05 Heightened Political and Regulatory Scrutiny

- **Election-Related Risk**: CSEAN and Deloitte both anticipate increased risk to government systems as the 2027 election cycle approaches, which will amplify threats like misinformation and disinformation, online harassment, and attempts to disrupt critical public services or databases.
- **Accelerated Enforcement**: CyberPlural MSSP and Deloitte predict that data protection enforcement will accelerate, with regulators moving beyond awareness campaigns to demand detailed evidence of compliance, especially where organisations use AI to process personal data.



CISO Advisory - Critical Threat Landscape Highlights

The Converging Threat Intelligence from leading Industry Reports

The converging threat intelligence from leading industry reports (CyberPlural MSSP, Deloitte, CSEAN, and Esentry) indicates that 2026 will be a turning point, characterised by a fundamental shift in adversary tactics and a rapid increase in attack sophistication.

01

Identity-Centric Attacks

- Identity is the primary battleground. Most major breaches are predicted to start with valid credentials. Attackers are shifting from system exploitation to abusing trusted access.

Implication - Our existing perimeter defense model is obsolete; a zero-trust architecture is mandatory

Our strategic focus must be on identity-centric defense, integrating AI in security operations, and rigorously hardening our digital supply chain and application layers.

Endemic risks, particularly the cyber talent gap and cloud concentration, demand immediate and sustained executive attention.

Cybersecurity must be fully integrated into business strategy and workforce planning.

02

AI-Enabled Cybercrime

- AI is lowering the bar for attackers and amplifying the scale and precision of attacks (e.g., hyper-personalised phishing, deepfakes). CSEAN predicts an up to 70% intensification of AI-enabled threats.

Implication - We must accelerate the deployment of AI-powered defensive capabilities to meet the speed of the adversary.

03

Ransomware & Financial Crime

- Ransomware operations are expected to prioritise maximum disruption and chaos over clean recovery. Localised, organised threat groups are actively targeting digital banking channels and payment platforms

Implication - Our incident response and business continuity plans must be tested against a "maximum disruption" scenario, and we must harden backups and network segmentation.

04

Insecure Software & APIs

- Rapid application deployment is expanding the attack surface. API vulnerabilities (e.g., lack of rate-limiting, Broken Object Level Authorisation) are a primary cause of major data breaches.

Implication - We must enforce security-by-design principles, mandate security testing (SAST/DAST) early in the SDLC, and prioritize API security across the organisation.

05

Political/Regulatory Risk

- Regulatory bodies are moving to intensified data protection enforcement, especially around the use of AI to process personal data. The approach to the 2027 election cycle also heightens the risk of attacks on critical digital infrastructure.

Implication - We require demonstrable evidence of compliance and transparency in our data handling practices and AI governance.

Mandatory Strategic Priorities (H1 2026)

Based on the integrated outlook, the following strategic priorities are mandated:

01

Accelerate Zero Trust Implementation

Immediately deploy Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) and continuous authentication across all critical systems. Move to a disciplined, identity-centric defense model with least-privilege principles.

02

Integrate AI into Security Operations

Deploy AI-powered defenses for real-time monitoring and alert prioritisation to reduce attack timelines, which are currently compressed to under 15 days from initial access to impact.

03

Address Systemic Resilience Gaps

- Cloud Concentration - Map critical dependencies on hyperscale providers and develop clear diversification and outage runbooks to mitigate widespread disruption risk.
- Cyber Talent - Invest in internal skills development, accelerated training, and strategic outsourcing partnerships to mitigate the "brain drain" risk.

04

Supply Chain and Infrastructure Hardening

Conduct rigorous assessments of third-party dependencies. Harden critical systems using network segmentation, decommission of older and vulnerable applications and hardware from the network and proactive patching, with a zero-tolerance policy for misconfigured services.

Technical Advisory for SOC /CERT Ops

This operational advisory distils specific, actionable technical insights from the collective report to enhance your Security Operations Center (SOC) and Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) effectiveness in 2026.

01

Operational Focus Area

Identity & Access Control

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

Mandate Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) - Implement phishing-resistant Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) across all users to counter credential theft and session token attacks.

Source

CyberPlural MSSP, CSEAN, Esentry

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

Implement Rate-Limiting - Immediately audit and enforce rate-limiting on all critical APIs and authentication endpoints to mitigate automated password attacks and prevent large-scale data exfiltration (PII dumping).

Source

CyberPlural MSSP, CSEAN.

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

Zero Trust Segmentation - Harden critical systems by implementing network segmentation and a micro-segmented Zero Trust architecture to contain lateral movement once an initial identity is compromised.

Source

Esentry, Deloitte

02

Operational Focus Area

Application & API Security

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

BOLA & Insecure Design - Prioritize API security audits for common, high-impact flaws, specifically Broken Object Level Authorization (BOLA), which has been cited as a primary cause of PII leaks.

Source

CyberPlural MSSP.

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

Shift Left Security - Enforce security integration at the design stage and mandate rigorous, proper security testing before deployment to counter the risk of Insecure Software exposure.

Source

Deloitte

03

Operational Focus Area

Threat Hunting & Detection

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

Infostealer & Ransomware Hunt - Proactively hunt for evidence of infostealer malware families like Rhamadanthys and Acreed on endpoints and dark market forums.

Source

CyberPlural MSSP, Esentry

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

Ransomware Targets - Harden storage platforms like VMware ESXi, Nutanix, and Hyper-V against new targeted ransomware strains. Create detection rules for files with known new extensions (e.g., .enc, .iv, .salt).

Source

CyberPlural MSSP.

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

FinTech TTPs - Develop specific detection logic for financially motivated threat group tactics, such as the API flaw exploitation (HK-FIN-10) and fraudulent payment application replicas (HK-FIN-25).

Source

CyberPlural MSSP

04

Operational Focus Area

AI Integration & Automation

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

Hybrid Defense Model - Re-task human analysts to focus on complex judgment and decision-making, leveraging AI to handle continuous monitoring and high-volume alert prioritisation.

Source

Deloitte

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

SOAR Playbooks - Accelerate the development and deployment of Security Orchestration, Automation, and Response (SOAR) playbooks to reduce response time for low-complexity incidents.

Source

Esentry

Key Technical Insights & Mandates

Structured Threat Hunting - Implement a routine, structured threat hunting process to proactively find evasive malicious activity that bypasses automated SIEM/XDR detections.

Source

Esentry

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