ARRIVES

IS THE POULTRY SECTOR FOR YOU?

Business and job opportunities in Nigeria

A project by

SOCIAL IMPACT

International Trade Centre

IRARA

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RETURN

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ABOUT THE PAPER

This poultry sector brief was developed within the framework of the ARRIVES project.

The Assisting the Reintegration of Returnees through Integrated Vocational and Entrepreneurship Support (ARRIVES) project aims to support the reintegration of voluntary returnees into the Nigerian economy. Targeting Nigerians who have returned from abroad, particularly Germany, the project focuses on sustainable livelihoods through entrepreneurship, skills development and economic empowerment. It offers tailored support such as capacity building, psychosocial coaching and business development services.

Recognizing the need for voluntary returnees to understand Nigeria’s evolving economic sectors, ARRIVES also develops economic sector briefs to highlight opportunities, challenges, and support mechanisms for successful entrepreneurial ventures.

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ACRONYMS

Unless otherwise specified, all references to dollars ($) are to United States dollars. As of 2 January 2025, ₦100,000 was worth about $65.

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMARD	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
ITC	International Trade Centre
kg	Kilogram
LSETF	Lagos State Employment Trust Fund
NAFDAC	National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control
NAQS	Nigeria Agriculture Quarantine Service
NCS	Nigerian Customs Service
NERC	Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission
NESREA	National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIAS	National Institute of Animal Science
NVRI	National Veterinary Research Institute
SON	Standards Organisation of Nigeria
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The poultry sector is recognized as a vital driver of economic growth and a source of sustainable business opportunities in Nigeria. With a population topping 229 million, demand in Nigeria for affordable protein sources such as poultry and eggs is rising. The poultry industry offers diverse businesses opportunities to meet this growing demand, offering voluntary returnees a strategic pathway to start or expand their ventures.

This poultry sector brief is an essential resource for voluntary returnees interested in entering this sector. It provides detailed information on the following:

1. **Overview of the sector:** This section presents an overview of the Nigerian poultry market, covering trends, growth drivers and demand for poultry products. It highlights key players and discusses the regulatory environment, focusing on the rapid growth in poultry meat and egg production. It also maps the poultry value chain to show critical stages and players, helping voluntary returnees understand market dynamics and entry points.

2. **Opportunities for entrepreneurs:** The sector offers business opportunities in areas such as farming broilers and layers, feed production, hatchery services, veterinary support and egg distribution. Central areas include small- to large-scale poultry farming, organic production and developing distribution networks.

3. **Key stakeholders in the sector:** This section identifies the main stakeholders in Nigeria's poultry sector, including local farmers, feed producers, government agencies and cooperatives. It summarizes key policies and regulations affecting the sector to help voluntary returnees understand legal requirements and benefits.

4. **Challenges and barriers:** The poultry sector has potential but faces challenges such as disease management, high feed costs and market fluctuations. This section outlines these barriers and suggests strategies to overcome them, such as best practices for biosecurity and available support programmes.

5. **Labour market insights:** This chapter examines job opportunities in the sector and the skills needed for roles such as farm management, veterinary support and feed production. It provide insights into job growth, expected income levels and top training providers, helping voluntary returnees enhance their skills and employability.

6. **Financial aspects:** This section outlines the investment needed to start a poultry business, detailing initial costs, funding options and potential returns. It serves as a guide for returnees seeking financial insights for their ventures.

With a population topping 229 million, demand in Nigeria for affordable protein sources such as poultry and eggs is rising. The poultry industry offers diverse businesses opportunities to meet this growing demand.

CHAPTER 1

Nigeria's poultry sector

The strategic role of poultry farming in Nigeria

Poultry farming is a critical component of Nigeria's agricultural economy, contributing about 25% of agricultural gross domestic product and addressing the country's growing need for affordable and accessible animal protein. This subsector, which includes the farming of chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese, plays a pivotal role in meeting the nutritional needs of the population – particularly through the production of eggs and poultry meat.

Demand for poultry products in Nigeria has risen steadily due to population growth, urbanization and increasing incomes. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) predicts that poultry meat consumption will grow by 266% between 2012 and 2050, reaching around 602,000 tons annually. This highlights the subsector's immense potential to address protein deficiencies while offering robust entrepreneurial opportunities.
The increasing preference for poultry as a protein source, driven by its lower price compared to beef, fish or mutton, further supports its market expansion. This demand has positioned the poultry sector as one of the fastest-growing agricultural subsectors in the country.

The poultry sector presents numerous advantages for entrepreneurs:

- Broilers reach market weight within 6–8 weeks, while layers start producing eggs by 18–20 weeks and can remain productive for more than a year. These quick production cycles enable rapid returns on investment and financial flexibility.
- The capital required to establish a poultry farm is lower than other agricultural activities such as cattle farming or cash-crop cultivation. Entrepreneurs benefit from simplified

infrastructure needs and accessible inputs.

Policies such as the Anchor Borrowers' Programme and the ban on frozen poultry imports protect local producers, reduce risks and encourage investment in the sector. This favourable regulatory environment has boosted domestic production and narrowed the demand–supply gap for poultry products. Beyond farming, opportunities exist in the processing and transformation of poultry products, including the production of ready-to-cook meat, egg derivatives (e.g. powders) and packaged products tailored to urban markets. Such diversification increases profit margins and captures emerging market segments. Poultry farming also offers resilience against some of the key challenges faced by other agricultural subsectors. Unlike crops or cattle farming, poultry farming requires minimal land and can thrive in urban and peri-urban areas, reducing costs and logistical challenges. Controlled farming environments for poultry make the sector less vulnerable to climatic changes – an essential factor given Nigeria's growing exposure to climate variability. While the potential for growth is significant, challenges such as high feed costs, disease management and limited access to infrastructure persist.

Market trends and growth drivers

The poultry sector is one of the most organized sectors in Nigeria, with relatively high levels of commercialization (World Economic Forum, 2023). The FAO estimates that it is worth $4.2 billion (THISDAY, 2023). Chicken and eggs are staple foods across income groups in Nigeria, providing essential nutrition, particularly in urban areas. In addition, the sector is facing fluctuating feed prices, which account for about 70% of total production costs (Okojie, 2023).

Key market segments

Feed production

Feed remains the largest expense in poultry production, accounting for 60-70% of total costs, with maize and soybean meal as critical components.

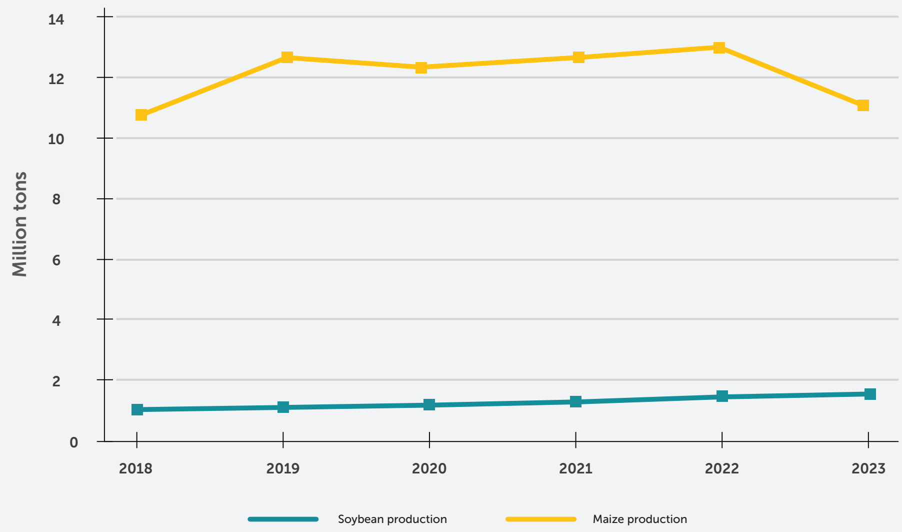
From 2019 to 2023, Nigeria's soybean production increased from 1.1 million to 1.35 million tons, reflecting rising demand for feed and export markets. Maize production, while more variable, peaked at 12.95 million tons in 2022 before slightly declining to 11.05 million tons in 2023, underscoring its resilience despite external challenges. (Figure 1). These trends highlight the growing capacity of Nigeria's agricultural base to support the poultry, aquaculture, and livestock sectors by ensuring a steady supply of critical feed components. This sustained production growth presents opportunities for investments in feed manufacturing and value-added processing, driving both domestic and export-oriented economic activities.

From 2019 to 2023, Nigeria's soybean production increased from 1.1 million to 1.35 million tons, reflecting rising demand for feed and export markets.

In terms of trade, soybean exports surged by over 500% from 2019 to 2023, reflecting strong global demand and Nigeria's competitive production capacity. Meanwhile, soybean imports dramatically dropped from $23.39 million in 2019 to $2.34 million in 2023, and maize imports were nearly eliminated, decreasing from $87.08 thousand in 2020 to just $1.10 thousand in 2023 (Figure 2). These trends highlight a reduced dependency on foreign supplies and growing prospects for domestic value addition.

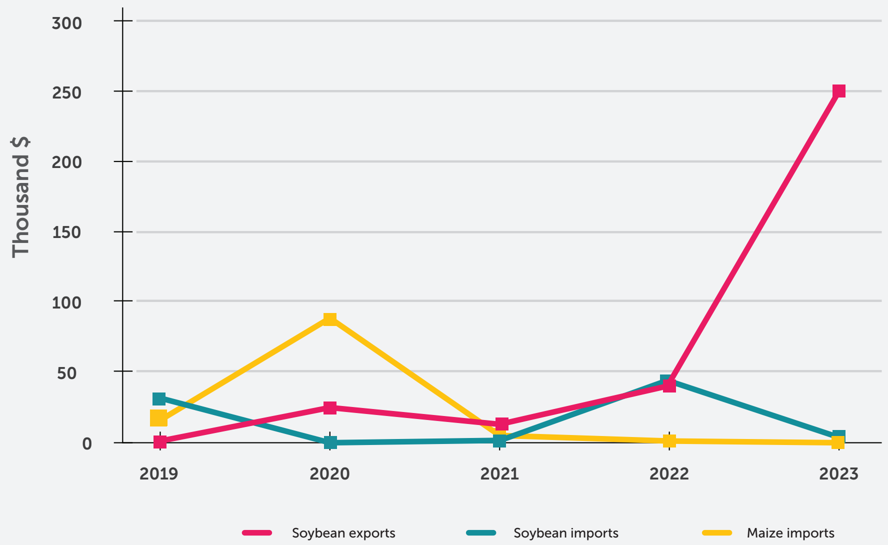
With Nigeria's growing production of soybean and maize, along with changing trade dynamics, there is a strong case for investment in the feed production industry. The increased availability of maize and soybean presents a significant opportunity for local feed manufacturing, enabling the production of cost-effective animal feed and reducing reliance on imports. Additionally, investments in processing facilities for soybean meal, maize-based feeds, and soybean oil can enhance profitability and drive export growth.

Figure 1: Nigeria's soybean and maize production (2018–2023)



Source: FAOSTAT, 2025

Figure 2: Trends in soybean and maize trade in Nigeria (2019–2023)



Source: ITC, 2025

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Broiler and egg production

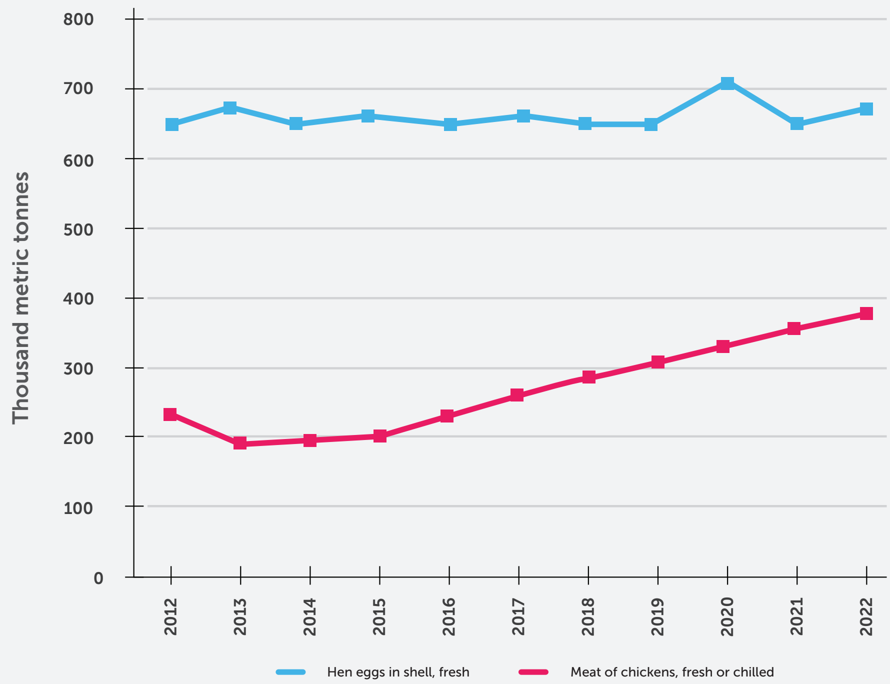
The Nigerian poultry market is characterized by important distinctions between broiler meat and egg production. As shown in Figure 3, broiler meat production has grown substantially, from less than 250,000 metric tons in 2012 to about 350,000 metric tons by 2022. This trend reflects shifting consumer preferences towards chicken meat, driven by its affordability and nutritional value.

Large integrated producers focus on urban markets, while smaller farmers cater to local and regional customers, often involving live bird transactions. Revenue in the broiler segment surged from around $500 million in 2012 to nearly $900 million by 2022, indicating a dynamic market (Figure 4).

Egg production, on the other hand, largely falls to smallholder farmers for both rural and urban markets. Annual production levels consistently range from 650,000–700,000 metric tons (Figure 3), indicating steady demand, although the segment faces challenges due to high feed costs that limit growth. While revenue from egg production has fluctuated around $700 million, it lacks the dynamism of the broiler market (Figure 4).

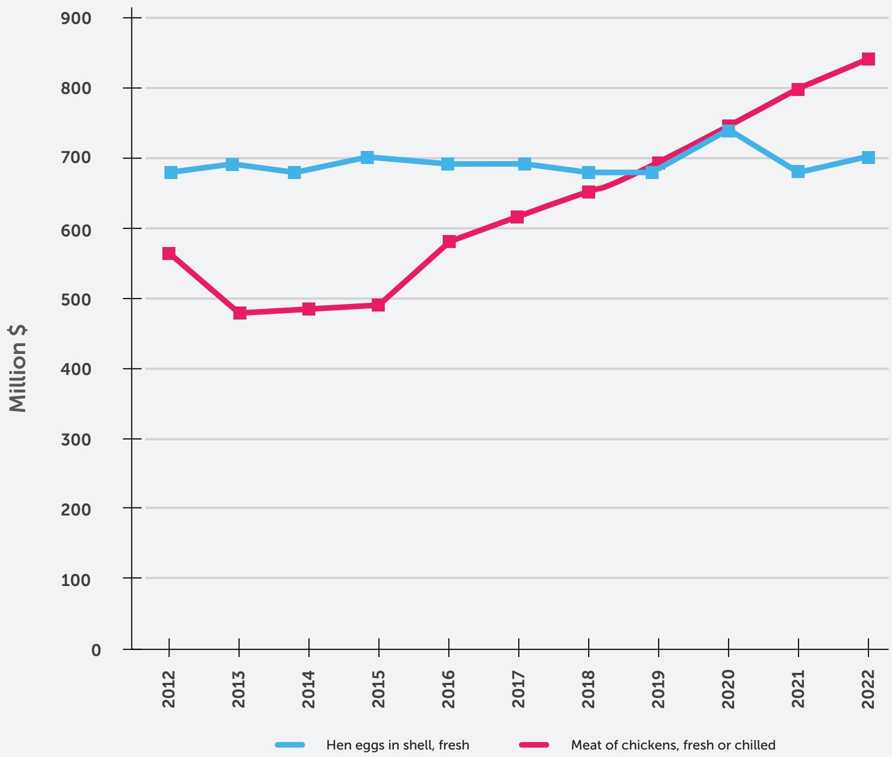
These segments illustrate the complexities of Nigeria's poultry industry, reflecting changes in consumer preferences and production challenges.

Figure 3: Poultry meat and egg production (quantity)



Source: FAOSTAT, 2024.

Figure 4: Poultry meat and egg production (value)



Source: FAOSTAT, 2024.

Processed and value-added poultry products

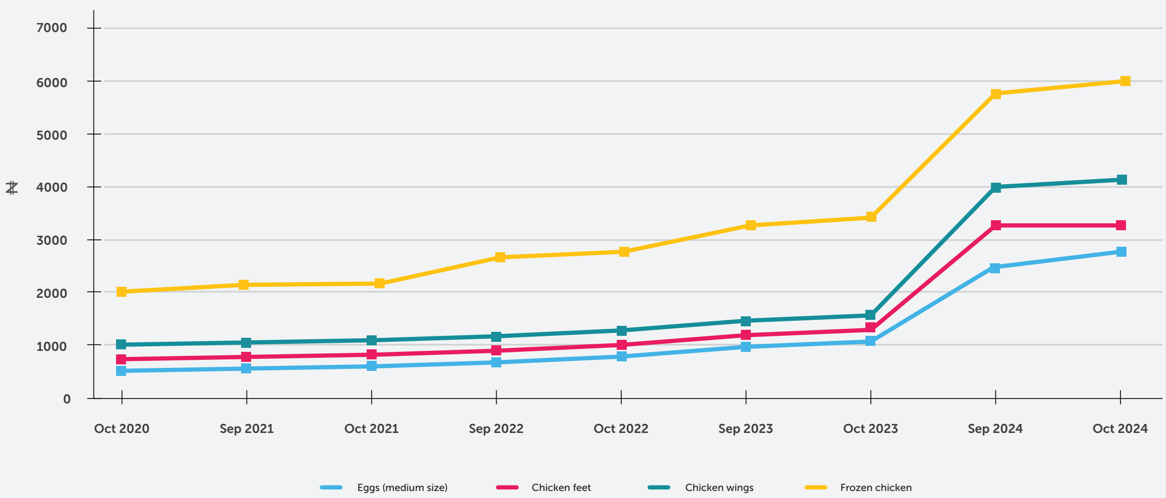
Demand for processed poultry, including frozen parts, sausages, and marinated items, is rising due to urbanization and consumer preference for convenience. Supermarkets and online retailers are major sales channels for these products, catering primarily to middle- and upper-income households in cities such as Lagos and Abuja.

Poultry product price trends in 2020–2024

The poultry market has experienced significant price growth from 2020 to 2024, largely attributed to rising production costs. Key inputs like maize and soybeans have seen price increases. A dozen medium-sized eggs rose from ₦487.81 ($0.32) in October 2020 to ₦775.14 ($0.50) in October 2022, a 59% increase. This steady upward trend in prices continued in subsequent years. The price climbed 140% from ₦1,112.22 in 2023 to ₦2,671.60 in 2024. This trend indicates strong demand and a supply gap, making egg production an attractive option for start-ups, despite high inflation (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Prices have risen steadily in the chicken market as well. Frozen chicken increased from ₦1,932.96 per kilogram (kg) in October 2020 to ₦2,601 in October 2022 (+35%) and then surged to ₦5,971.98 in 2024, marking a 209% increase since 2020. The price of chicken wings grew from ₦972.26 per kg in 2020 to ₦4,194 in 2024 – a 331% increase. Chicken feet rose 353% from ₦720.50 per kg in 2020 to ₦3,268 in 2024 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Figure 5: Price trends of poultry products (in ₦)



Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2024.

Regional price disparities also present opportunities. Egg prices range from ₦2,050 for 12 pieces in Adamawa to ₦3,450 in Bauchi, while frozen chicken prices are highest in Gombe at ₦7,824.50 and lowest in Ondo at ₦4,800. Chicken wings vary from ₦6,000 in Ondo to ₦2,100 in Adamawa, and chicken feet range from ₦5,707.25 in Niger to ₦1,175 in Taraba. These differences highlight opportunities for better distribution and supply-chain improvements (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). It is important to note that the recent price increase is closely linked to the rising costs of feed, which presents a business opportunity worth exploring.

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The sustained price growth signals a vibrant market. To meet the growing need for affordable protein sources, entrepreneurs should aim to adopt scalable production systems, invest in value-added processing, and target high-demand regions.

Value-chain mapping

The poultry value chain in Nigeria is an interconnected network of stakeholders involved in the production, processing, distribution and resale of poultry products. Key stages and essential support services of the value chain are described below.

Input supply

The value chain begins with providing essential support services and materials, including breeding stock, feed and veterinary services.

- Breeding stock includes day-old chicks, pullets and broilers sourced from specialized hatcheries such as Zartech and CHI Farms, which produce high-quality poultry breeds. This breeding stock forms the foundation of poultry production and influences productivity and quality.

- Feed represents a major portion of production costs and is essential for poultry growth and health. Suppliers offer formulated feeds tailored to the specific nutritional requirements of different poultry species, such as layers for egg production and broilers for meat. Reliable feed quality is crucial, as poor feed can lead to low productivity and higher mortality.

Access to veterinary care, including vaccinations, medications and regular health monitoring, is critical for disease prevention and productivity. Veterinary services are essential to the sustainability of poultry farming, especially given the sector's vulnerability to disease outbreaks.

Production

Poultry production in Nigeria is diverse and includes various species such as broilers, layers, turkeys, ducks and indigenous birds that adapt well to local conditions. It primarily focuses on rearing chickens for either the production of eggs or meat.

Production occurs in three main systems:

- **Extensive systems:** Common in northern Nigeria, these systems involve free-range farming of indigenous chickens, primarily for subsistence. Farmers rely on natural foraging and minimal input, which keeps costs low but limits productivity.

- **Semi-intensive systems:** Found mainly in southern Nigeria, this system involves a moderate number of birds (50 to 2,000) and combines local and improved breeds. Farmers often mix family and commercial farming, balancing cost and efficiency.

- **Intensive systems:** Predominantly in southern Nigeria, these systems involve commercial-scale operations with flocks exceeding 2,000 birds in controlled environments. These farms use advanced breeding, feeding, housing, and health management practices and are characterized by high levels of investment.

The poultry sector is composed of various producer types, each with unique operational focuses and integration levels.

Table 1: Producer types in the poultry sector

Producer category	Bird population	Main activities	Integration level
Homestead/backyard farming	Fewer than 1,000 birds	Raising diverse birds: cockerels, starter broilers, layers	Not vertically integrated
Small commercial producers	1,000–10,000 birds	Focus on broilers and layers	Not vertically integrated
Medium-scale producers	10,000–50,000 birds	Broiler or layer production	Not vertically integrated
Medium-scale integrated producers	10,000–50,000 birds	Hatchery, feed production, processing	Partially integrated
Large integrated producers	50,000–250,000 birds	Comprehensive operations from grandparent stock importation to processing	Fully integrated

Source: International Trade Centre (ITC) compilation based on desk research.

Meat and egg processing

Meat processing typically involves one or two stages, which may occur in separate facilities. In general, once the birds reach market weight, they are transported to processing plants for handling, slaughtering and initial processing. Some companies opt for further processing to create value-added products such as sausages, marinated items and nuggets. At this stage, maintaining food safety is of utmost importance, necessitating strict compliance with health regulations and hygiene standards to avoid contamination. Eggs require minimal processing.

Distribution and marketing

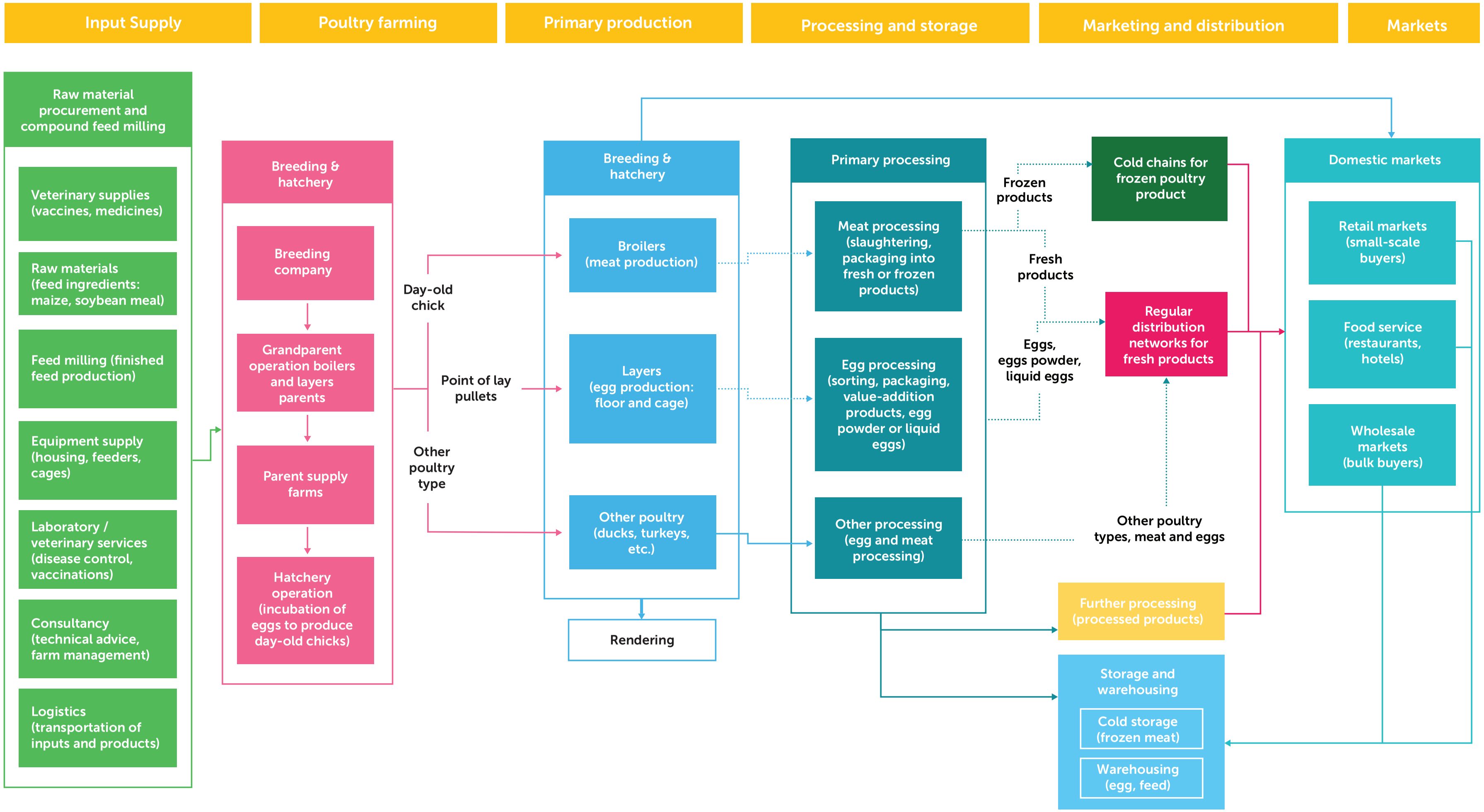
Efficient logistics are essential for transporting poultry products to markets, wholesalers and retailers, ensuring that products reach consumers in optimal condition. Poultry products are sold through various channels:

- Local markets, where consumers can purchase live birds or fresh products
- Supermarkets, such as Shoprite and Spar, provide processed and packaged poultry products
- Producers increasingly use e-commerce platforms such as Principally to reach consumers directly, facilitating home delivery and expanding market access

Consumption

Consumption patterns vary by region, with factors including culture, income level and food preferences influencing demand. Eggs are especially valued for their affordability and nutritional content, making them a crucial food source in low-income households. Figure 6 illustrates the value-chain map from essential inputs to end consumers, highlighting interconnected stages such as production, processing, distribution and marketing.

Figure 6: Nigeria's poultry sector value chain



Source: ITC.

CHAPTER 2

Exploring business opportunities

Plentiful opportunities for entrepreneurs

The poultry sector in Nigeria offers significant opportunities for voluntary returnees looking to establish themselves in agribusiness. These business opportunities across the poultry value chain range from quick-turnaround ventures like broiler farming to higher-value options such as hatchery operations, feed production and poultry processing. Entrepreneurs can choose specific businesses, as presented in Table 2, based on their capital, expertise, and risk tolerance.

Table 2: Opportunities in the poultry sector by value-chain segment

Value-chain segment/business opportunity	Knowledge required
Production	
Parent stock farms	Poultry breeding and genetics
Day-old chick production (hatchery)	Chick production and hatchery operations
Broiler farming (meat production)	Poultry farming management and feed optimization
Layer farming (egg production)	Egg production management
Organic poultry farming	Organic farming techniques and certifications
Input supply	
Feed production and distribution	Feed production and formulation knowledge
Veterinary supplies and pharmaceuticals	Understanding of animal health and pharmaceuticals
Poultry equipment supply	Knowledge of poultry farming equipment
Poultry equipment leasing	Finance and equipment leasing models
Veterinary services	Veterinary services knowledge for poultry
Support services	
Poultry farm consultancy	Farm management consultancy skills
Retail and wholesale distribution	Poultry product market dynamics
Online poultry sales	E-commerce platform management
Egg and feed warehousing	Warehousing operations
Processing and distribution	
Meat processing	Poultry meat processing and regulations
Egg processing	Egg-processing technology and market demand
Cold storage and packaging	Cold-chain logistics and storage knowledge

Source: ITC based on field research.

The opportunities presented in Table 2 indicate the capital investment and knowledge required for each option. Below, the main opportunities that are accessible to voluntary returnees will be discussed. These 'low-hanging fruit' options offer practical pathways for success and are detailed in the following sections.

Broiler farming

Nigeria's growing population and increasing protein consumption have made broiler farming – focusing on raising chickens for meat production – a high-demand business opportunity. This involves purchasing day-old chicks and providing proper housing, nutrition and healthcare until the birds reach market weight, typically at 5–8 weeks. The short production cycle makes broiler farming appealing to entrepreneurs looking for quick returns on their investment. This venture suits those seeking a fast turnover business with moderate capital and a basic understanding of poultry farm management.

Business model: Buying day-old chicks and providing appropriate housing, food and healthcare until they reach market weight, typically 5–8 weeks. The birds are then sold to markets, restaurants or consumers.

Table 3: Pros and cons of entering broiler market

Pros	Cons
Broilers have a short production cycle, leading to faster returns on investment.	High feed costs constitute a significant portion of production expenses.
High demand for poultry meat ensures a ready market.	Risk of disease outbreaks, such as avian influenza, can cause large losses.
Moderate initial capital requirement makes it accessible to small- and medium-scale investors.	Market price instability can affect profitability.

Source: ITC based on field research.

Layer farming

Layer farming focuses on egg production and involves the rearing of pullets until they start laying eggs, usually at 18–20 weeks. These hens remain productive for 72–100 weeks, providing a stable revenue stream for investors willing to commit to a longer production cycle. Layer farming suits investors with moderate capital who are patient and focused on long-term profitability. Challenges include managing feed and medication costs, ensuring proper healthcare for the hens and building relationships with egg buyers to ensure consistent market demand.

Business model: Entails raising pullets (young hens) until they begin laying eggs, usually around 18–20 weeks of age. Eggs are collected daily and sold to wholesalers, retailers or directly to consumers.

Table 4: Pros and cons of entering layer market

Pros	Cons
Continuous income from egg sales supports cash flow.	High feed and medication costs can strain profitability.
Long production lifespan ensures sustained revenue.	Prolonged production cycles delay returns on investment.
High demand for eggs in wholesale and retail markets.	Requires specialized knowledge in egg production management.

Source: ITC based on field research.

Broilers and layers are the main entry points of the poultry sector. The table below shows the costs of setting up these farms. These costs are estimates and must be adjusted according to the latest market prices.

Table 5: Breakdown of fixed costs for setting up layer and broiler farms

Fixed cost	Quantity	Price (naira)	Total
Pen house construction/renting is also an option	1	4,500,000	4,500,000
Cages and installation (units) (not required for broiler)	10	300,000	3,000,000
Nipple drinkers (units)	500	650	325,000
Knapsack sprayer	1	150,000	150,000
Borehole	2	1,500,000	3,000,000
Generator (7.5 kilo-volt-amperes)	1	2,500,000	2,500,000
Total for layer			13,475,000
Total for broiler			10,475,000
Depreciation for 10 years	1,347,500		

Source: ITC based on field research and company sources.

Tables 19 and 21 in the appendix provide detailed information on the economic costs associated with broiler and layer production, including expenses for day-old chicks, feed, drugs, transportation and finance charges. The tables also outline revenues generated from processed chicken and related products, which are essential for calculating the gross profit per bird. Additionally, they highlight income sources from egg sales, spent layers and used feed bag sales. This data is crucial to assess profitability and make financial plans for these businesses.

Hatchery operations

Hatchery operations focus on producing day-old chicks for broiler and layer farms. Entrepreneurs acquire fertilized eggs, incubate them under controlled conditions and sell the hatched chicks. This business addresses the growing need for quality day-old chicks as poultry farming expands. It is best suited for large-scale investors with considerable capital and technical expertise, requiring specialized incubation equipment, biosecurity measures and strict quality control.

Business model: Acquire fertilized eggs, incubate them under controlled conditions and sell the hatched chicks to poultry farmers.

Table 6: Pros and cons of entering the hatchery market

Pros	Cons
The growing number of poultry farms boosts the need for day-old chicks.	High initial investment in incubation equipment and facilities.
Specialization in chick production enhances operational efficiency.	Requires knowledge of incubation processes and biosecurity measures.
Chance to target commercial poultry farms for bulk sales.	Vulnerable to disease risks that can disrupt production.

Feed production

Feed quality directly affects poultry health and productivity. Given the strong demand from poultry farmers, producing high-quality, affordable feed can be a profitable venture. Feed production focuses on converting raw materials like maize and soybeans into balanced feed formulations. Feed production is an excellent opportunity for experienced agribusiness professionals with access to raw materials and substantial capital.

Business model: Procure raw materials such as maize, soybeans and additives, process them into balanced feed formulations and sell to poultry farmers.

Table 7: Pros and cons of entering the feed production market

Pros	Cons
Poultry farmers require a steady feed supply, ensuring a continuous market.	Volatile raw material prices can affect profit margins.
Processing of raw materials adds value and, hence more profits	Rigorous quality control efforts are required to ensure product quality.
Opportunity to scale operations and dominate the feed supply market.	Challenges for new entrants that can come with competing against established providers.

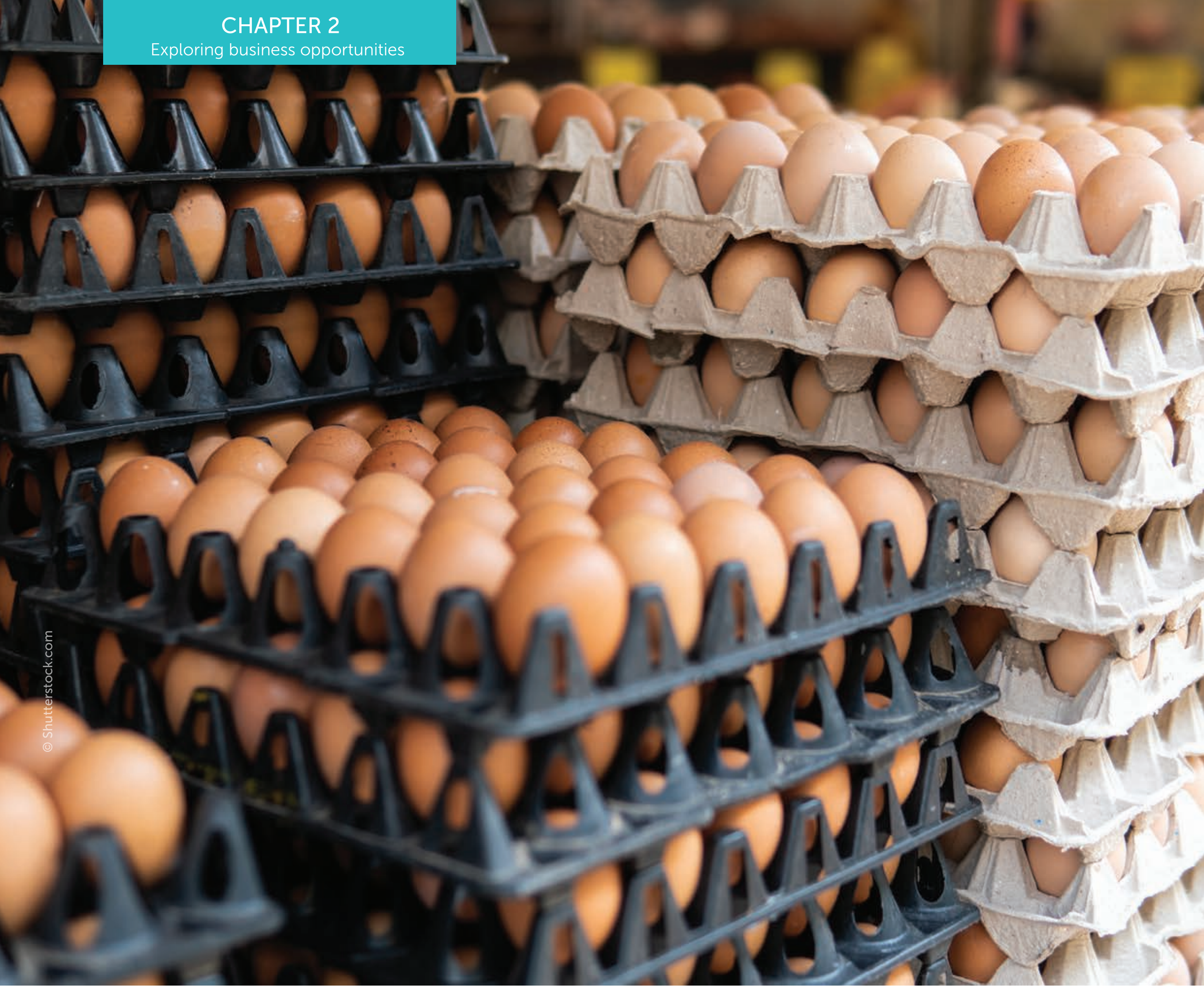
Poultry processing and distribution

Processing poultry meat and eggs adds value and meets consumer demand for ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products. Distribution networks ensure these goods reach end consumers efficiently. Poultry processing involves slaughtering, packaging, and distributing ready-to-cook or processed items such as sausages and nuggets.
This segment caters to the growing urban demand for convenient, processed poultry products. This opportunity is well-suited for entrepreneurs targeting urban markets with high capital and a focus on value addition. Processing adds value to raw poultry, increasing profit margins, but requires substantial investment in processing facilities and cold-storage infrastructure.

Business model: Set up facilities to slaughter, process, package and possibly further process poultry products into items such as sausages or nuggets.

Table 8: Pros and cons of entering the poultry processing and distribution business

Pros	Cons
Processed products can sell at higher prices than raw poultry.	Requires large investment to build processing facilities and cold-storage infrastructure.
Premium urban and supermarket markets are accessible for processed goods.	Food safety regulations are demanding and require expertise and resources.
Opportunity to diversify income with processed products.	Spoilage risk due to poor cold storage or logistics.



Egg distribution

Egg distribution is a low-capital, easy-entry business that involves purchasing eggs from layer farms and supplying them to wholesalers, retailers or end consumers. The simplicity and scalability of this business make it ideal for small-scale entrepreneurs. This is an excellent entry point for those with limited capital and a strong local market presence, although managing transportation and storage for such fragile items can be challenging. Egg distribution can be done without refrigerated transportation which makes it ideal for investors with little capital.

Business model: Develop transportation and storage solutions to maintain product quality from processing plants to retailers.

Table 9: Pros and cons of entering poultry egg distribution business

Pros	Cons
The low start-up costs make it accessible to small-scale investors.	Transporting and storing fragile products adds to logistical complexity.
Eggs enjoy great demand, ensuring steady revenue.	Market demand can change, influencing profitability.
Only basic technical skills are needed to start the business.	Small margins would necessitate scaling for sizable profits.

Cold-chain logistics

Cold-chain logistics focuses on refrigerated transportation and storage of poultry products to maintain quality and extend shelf life. This segment is critical for processed products and exports. It is an advanced opportunity for investors with logistics expertise and high financial capacity. Cold-chain logistics plays a key role in preserving product quality but comes with high operational costs and logistical challenges, especially in regions with limited infrastructure.

Table 10: Pros and cons of entering poultry cold chain logistic business

Pros	Cons
Essential for preserving product quality in processing and export markets.	High operational costs, including fuel and infrastructure maintenance.
Growing demand due to urbanization and the expansion of processed poultry products.	Limited infrastructure in many regions creates logistical challenges.
Opportunities to collaborate with processing plants and supermarkets.	Products are perishable, increasing risks of spoilage.

Source: ITC based on field research.

Box 1: Recommendations for new businesses entering the sector

Investment and financial planning

- Assess the level of investment that can be committed, considering that segments such as processing and hatchery operations may require more capital than others.
- Explore financial programmes from agencies including the African Development Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to support infrastructure or operational improvements, especially when establishing medium- or large-scale operations.

Training and capacity building

- Consider investing in training and capacity building, particularly for technical operations such as hatcheries and feed production.

Market research

- Conduct thorough market research to identify demand trends, competition and potential challenges in the chosen segment.

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Disease prevention and control

- Focus on disease prevention and control strategies to safeguard the investment, especially in farming operations.

Collaboration and partnerships

- Explore collaboration opportunities with other players, cooperatives or government programmes to leverage resources and gain market access.
- Consider partnering with industry leaders, such as established poultry farms and feed suppliers including Zartech or CHI Farms, to gain insights and access resources.

Compliance and regulations

- Ensure compliance with national and state regulations, particularly in relation to the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) for feed and vaccine standards.

Networking and industry involvement

- Join industry associations, such as the Poultry Association of Nigeria, to benefit from networking, advocacy and access to the latest industry practices, which can support growth and market development.

CHAPTER 3

Key players and regulatory environment

Establishing a poultry business in Nigeria requires a thorough understanding of the complex regulatory landscape that governs the industry. Various agencies oversee the sector, each responsible for ensuring compliance with quality standards, import regulations, animal welfare and environmental practices. Engaging with these regulatory bodies is crucial for operating legally, accessing government support and adhering to industry standards.

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the regulatory requirements and relevant agencies that poultry businesses must navigate to succeed in the market.

Relevant institutions supporting returnee entrepreneurs

Policy network (regulatory and policy institutions)

Nigeria's public sector plays a key role in regulating and incentivizing the poultry market. Government agencies create policies, set quality standards, provide licences and monitor compliance to ensure sustainable industry operations. Any new poultry venture must engage with these agencies to navigate regulatory requirements, access government programmes and participate in industry support initiatives.

Table 11: Public-sector and government agencies in the poultry sector

Organization	Role and engagement strategy	Relevance to new entrants
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD)	FMARD oversees the poultry industry and implements animal husbandry, biosecurity and food safety regulations. These include guidelines for poultry production, disease control measures and standards for feed and veterinary products.	Provides guidelines, for instance, on poultry production best practices and disease control measures, and is a primary source of industry information and technical assistance.
National Institute of Animal Science (NIAS)	NIAS regulates the livestock industry, including setting educational standards in animal science, advocating for industry interests and coordinating policy initiatives.	Assist in validating the expertise of would-be farm manager/supervisor as there is a law stating that farm managers must be registered members of NIAS.
National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC)	NAFDAC regulates the safety and quality of food and drugs, including vaccines, medications and feed additives. Obtaining a NAFDAC registration certification is necessary to import and sell veterinary drugs and vaccines. Firms must secure trademark registration and submit samples for testing.	Essential for compliance with health and safety standards, especially for feed producers and processors.
Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)	SON sets quality and safety standards for poultry products, including feed, housing and processing equipment. Importation of equipment, such as cages, requires SON permits, which are essential for compliance and are processed through SON's official portal.	Important for producers who need to meet quality standards, especially in processing and export-focused businesses.

Central Bank of Nigeria – Agribusiness Support Program	The Central Bank of Nigeria offers agricultural funding programmes, loans and subsidies targeting poultry farmers.	Provides financial support options for small- and medium-scale farmers to expand operations.
National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA)	NESREA regulates waste management and pollution control, ensuring that large poultry operations adhere to environmentally sustainable practices. This includes proper disposal of poultry waste, wastewater management and ensuring facilities minimize environmental impacts.	NESREA can provide guidance on environmentally sustainable practices, including waste management, which are vital for large-scale operations.
National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI)	NVRI supports farmers with research, vaccines and disease prevention strategies to improve poultry health.	NVRI offers new entrants access to vaccines, research and expert advice to mitigate risks of disease outbreaks.
Nigerian Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS)	Oversees the importation of live birds and enforces quarantine measures to prevent disease transmission. Importation is allowed for grandparent or parent stock only and must comply with NAQS standards and licensing requirements.	NAQS ensures compliance with importation and quarantine regulations, vital to avoid penalties or biosecurity breaches.
Local state agricultural agencies	Local branches that implement state-level agricultural programmes and support farmers directly.	Provides localized support, permits and grants that may benefit smaller poultry operations and rural farmers.

Private-sector players

Private-sector companies – including major producers, feed manufacturers, veterinary suppliers and processing plants – largely drive Nigeria's poultry industry. Collaborating with these entities can provide new entrants with essential resources, from feed and breeding stock to processing services and market access. Private companies offer business opportunities, such as becoming distributors, franchisees or suppliers of feed and poultry products.

Table 12: Private sector and industry stakeholders by market segment

Company/ organization	Short description	Relevance to new entrants
Zartech	A major integrated poultry producer involved in breeding, feed milling and processing.	Partnering with Zartech can help smaller producers with distribution and processing needs.
CHI Farms	Operates across the poultry value chain, from breeding stock to retail products.	CHI Farms offers partnership opportunities in breeding and distribution of day-old chicks.
Livestock Feeds Plc	Produces and distributes poultry feed, with a wide reach across Nigeria.	New entrants can purchase quality feed directly or become distributors in underserved regions.
Grand Cereals	Focuses on the production of poultry and animal feeds, supplying major farms across Nigeria.	Provides reliable feed options, critical for managing production costs in broiler and layer farming.
Animal Care	Supplies veterinary products, vaccines, and animal healthcare solutions essential for poultry health.	Offers quality veterinary products and training, important for new farmers aiming to manage poultry health.
Poultry processing companies (e.g. Zartech, CHI Farms, Amo Byng,)	Specialize in processing poultry for retail and wholesale markets.	Provide partnership opportunities in processing, packaging and distribution for smaller poultry farms.

Non-governmental organizations and industry associations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and industry associations are pivotal in supporting Nigeria’s poultry sector through advocacy, funding and training initiatives. Many organizations provide resources and training, helping farmers improve productivity, access funding and meet regulatory standards. Collaborating with these organizations can be valuable for new entrants seeking guidance on best practices, policy changes and market opportunities.

Table 13: NGOs and industry associations supporting the poultry sector

Organization	Description	Relevance to new entrants
Poultry Association of Nigeria	The primary trade association representing Nigeria's poultry sector, advocating for farmer interests.	Provides networking, advocacy and access to industry insights and best practices for new entrants.
USAID Feed the Future programme	Offers funding and training to poultry farmers to improve productivity and food security.	Offers financial and technical support, particularly beneficial for small and medium-scale farmers.
Nigerian Agricultural Enterprise Curriculum	A programme supporting poultry agribusiness with training in best practices and business management.	It offers training in agribusiness management, which is beneficial for new farmers aiming to scale operations sustainably.
International Livestock Research Institute	Engages in research and development for sustainable livestock and poultry farming practices.	Provides access to research and innovations in poultry health and productivity.
FATE Foundation Agribusiness Program	A non-profit focused on supporting entrepreneurs in agribusiness through training and mentorship.	Ideal for new entrants seeking entrepreneurial training and access to agribusiness mentors.
Heifer International – Nigeria	Provides support for sustainable livestock development, including poultry, in rural communities.	Offers funding and technical support, targeting rural poultry farming projects for income generation.

International development agencies and funding bodies

Many international development agencies and funding organizations have programmes supporting Nigeria's poultry sector. These agencies provide grants, concessional loans and technical assistance to promote sustainable growth, improve food security and enhance market access.

Table 14: International agencies and funding bodies

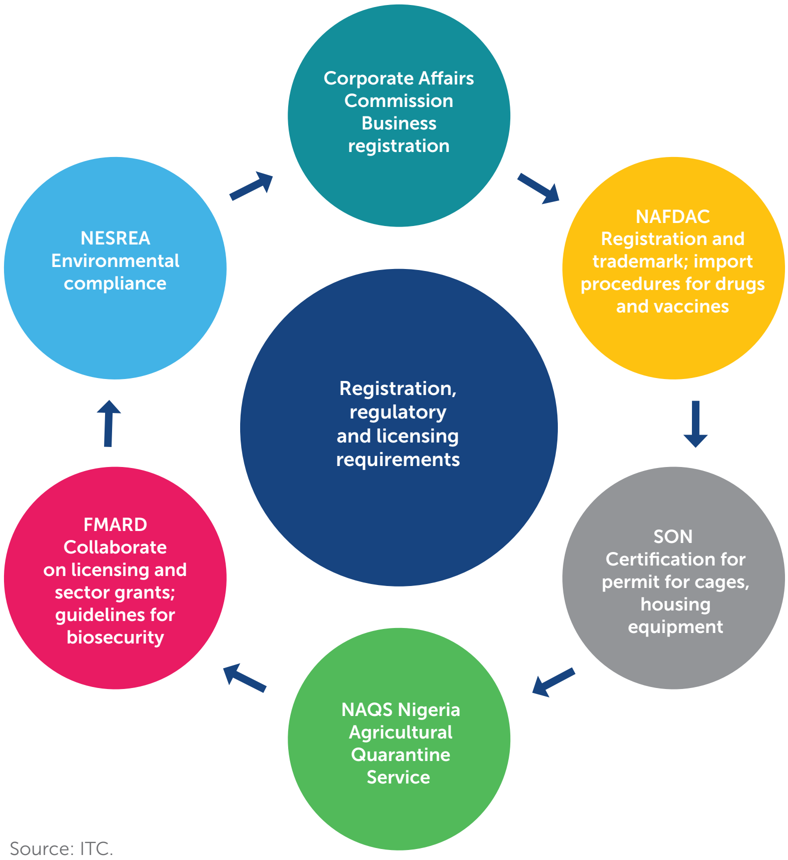
Organization	Role in poultry sector	Relevance to new entrants
World Bank – Livestock Productivity and Resilience Program	Provides funding and technical assistance to enhance poultry productivity and resilience in Nigeria.	Ideal for obtaining grants for infrastructure development and disease control initiatives.
African Development Bank	Funds agricultural projects, including poultry, to improve food security and boost rural incomes.	Offers funding opportunities and partnerships for large-scale projects in the poultry sector.
Food and Agriculture Organization	Supports sustainable poultry practices and provides guidelines for biosecurity and disease control.	Provides best practices, disease management resources, and access to international poultry farming knowledge.
USAID Agribusiness Investment Activity	Focuses on providing technical and financial support to agribusiness ventures in Nigeria, including poultry.	Offers funding and market access programmes tailored to small and medium-scale poultry farmers.
Gates Foundation – Agricultural Development	Supports innovative agricultural practices, including poultry, to improve productivity and food security.	Ideal for new entrants seeking funding for innovative poultry practices and technologies.

Regulatory environment

The Nigerian Government has recognized the importance of the poultry sector as outlined in its Agricultural Promotion Policy (2016–2020). The policy aims to boost agricultural productivity and ensure food security by focusing sector challenges and bolstering its contribution to the national economy (FMARD, 2016).

Several regulatory bodies oversee and support the poultry sector. The figure below presents an overview of these bodies.

Figure 7: Regulatory bodies in the poultry sector



Source: ITC.

Imports of poultry meat and table eggs have been banned for more than two decades (Global Trade Alert, 2015) to shield local producers from international competition and stimulate domestic production. The Government has also adopted other policies – such as subsidies for feed, veterinary services and infrastructure development – to improve productivity and competitiveness. Regulatory bodies oversee compliance with health and safety standards, which are crucial for market access and exports. Biosecurity measures have been implemented to mitigate disease outbreaks on poultry farms. These measures encompass guidelines for farm management, vaccination protocols and controls on the movement of birds and equipment to reduce disease transmission risks.

Environmental regulations have been introduced to address waste management, pollution control and land use, aiming to minimize poultry farming's ecological footprint while ensuring sustainability. Consumer protection is another goal, with regulations mandating labelling requirements, quality standards and market monitoring to guarantee the safety of poultry products.
Efforts to enhance education and training in the sector are also underway,

with practical programmes tailored for farmers and farm workers to improve their skills in modern poultry management.

Compliance requirements

For returnees planning to enter the poultry business, understanding regulatory requirements is essential for establishing a compliant and successful operation (Netherlands-African Business Council, 2020). Below is an overview of the key areas to consider:
Business registration, licensing and financial compliance.
Before beginning operations, all poultry businesses must register with the Corporate Affairs Commission, which provides legal status and access to formal contracts, grants, and business financing. This step is mandatory for credibility and regulatory compliance. In addition, registration with the Federal Inland Revenue Service is necessary to obtain a tax identification number and fulfil tax obligations.

Import regulations

- The duty-free importation of poultry cages and housing equipment is allowed, though authorization from SON is required to ensure compliance with quality standards. It is advisable to consult the SON website for detailed information.
- Drugs and vaccines are subject to duties and require adherence to strict procedures set by NAFDAC. Importers must secure trademark registration, submit product samples for testing and obtain a certificate of free sale from the manufacturer. The NAFDAC website provides comprehensive guidance on this process.
- Imports of live birds are restricted to grandparent or parent stock, and NAQS enforces quarantine measures upon arrival. Additionally, licensing from FMARD is necessary for import permissions.
- The import of feed, concentrates and supplements requires a permit managed by NIAS, which provides essential information about necessary procedures and associated fees.

Product quality, standards of animal health and welfare, and environmental compliance

Poultry products must meet the quality guidelines established by SON. These guidelines apply to both domestically produced and imported goods, ensuring that all feed, medications and processing equipment comply with safety and quality standards. Compliance with the vaccination schedules and biosecurity protocols mandated by NIAS is vital to prevent disease outbreaks and maintain the health of poultry populations.

For returnees planning to enter the poultry business, understanding regulatory requirements is essential for establishing a compliant and successful operation.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CHAPTER 4

Challenges and barriers for entrepreneurs

Challenges affecting the sector

The poultry market faces challenges that have restricted private-sector investment and investors from operating efficiently. These include inflationary pressures, climate change, rising production and transportation costs, insecurity, disease outbreaks, high feed costs, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to veterinary services. The scarcity of essential feed at the competitive price such as maize, wheat and soybean used in chicken production, has crimped supply capacity (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Rising inflation and input costs harm both productivity and profitability.

Inflation and rising input costs weaken productivity and profitability. The food inflation rate in September 2024 was 37.77%. On a year-on-year basis, it was 7.13 percentage points higher than the rate recorded in September 2023 (30.64%) (Trading Economics, 2024). This has greatly increased the cost of poultry inputs.

This escalation is partly due to economic policies – such as higher borrowing costs and fewer government subsidies for agricultural inputs – that have compounded the financial strain on farmers. Additionally, rising global commodity prices driven by geopolitical conflicts such as the Russian-Ukrainian war have worsened the situation.

The cost of essential feed ingredients such as maize and soybeans has soared, placing additional burdens on poultry producers. Feed prices constitute 70% of farm operating costs. These cost pressures force farmers to reduce flock sizes or compromise feed quality, deterring potential investors and new entrants into the sector and limiting growth prospects. Rising costs have forced more than half of Nigeria's poultry farms to close in recent years, according to the Poultry Association of Nigeria (Nairametrics, 2024).

Inadequate infrastructure boosts operational costs and limits market accessibility for farmers.

Nigeria suffers from poor road networks and a lack of centralized processing facilities, presenting major obstacles to the efficient operation of poultry farms. Farmers in northern states including Kano and Katsina say deteriorating road conditions often delay the transportation of poultry products to urban markets, causing spoilage of perishable goods like eggs and live birds. In the southeastern regions, the absence of cold storage facilities adds to post-harvest losses during peak production periods.

These infrastructure challenges increase operational costs and restrict market access, particularly for smallholder farmers who lack the resources to mitigate such logistical hurdles.

Limited disease management capacity means higher mortality and less production.

Outbreaks of diseases such as avian influenza threaten the poultry industry, devastating flocks and creating market instability. For example, the 2021 avian influenza outbreak resulted in the culling of millions of birds across Nigeria, greatly decreasing the supply of poultry products and driving prices up (Adesola et al., 2024). This not only affected farmers' revenues, but also eroded consumer confidence in poultry safety, resulting in a shift towards alternative protein sources during and after the outbreak.

These disruptions underline the need for improved disease prevention and response mechanisms to stabilize the market. Limited access to affordable veterinary services and vaccines leaves smallholder farmers particularly vulnerable. This includes inadequate vaccination practices, as only a small percentage of farmers report vaccinating their birds.

High energy costs boost operational expenses, while climate change has harmed birds' health and cut productivity.

High electricity costs and an unreliable power supply force farmers to rely on expensive alternatives, such as diesel generators, to maintain climate-controlled environments for their birds. Farmers in rural and remote areas face these challenges more acutely.

Climate change intensifies environmental stressors that directly affect bird health and productivity. Rising temperatures and erratic weather patterns disrupt poultry operations, creating conditions that foster heat stress and reducing egg production and weight gain in birds (Wasti, Sah and Mishra, 2020). High temperatures can lead to decreased feed intake in poultry, curbing growth rates and egg yield.

Additionally, flooding – a consequence of changing climate conditions – damages transportation routes and disrupts feed deliveries. Greater rainfall variability makes it more difficult to obtain essential feed ingredients such as maize and soybeans, which are

sensitive to climate conditions. These compounded effects not only raise operational costs but also push many small-scale farmers out of the sector, exacerbating financial and market pressures.

Smallholder farmers often face limited market access and financial barriers.

Smallholder farmers are often unable to access formal markets due to complex pricing structures that favour larger operations and logistical challenges that hinder their ability to transport products efficiently. For instance, farmers in rural areas face high transportation costs and delays, making it difficult to compete with larger producers who benefit from economies of scale and direct supply-chain access.

Financial barriers, including high interest rates and stringent collateral requirements, impede small-scale farmers' access to capital, preventing them from expanding or modernizing their operations.

In addition, smallholders lack the necessary certifications or quality assurance systems to enter formal markets, further limiting their options and reducing profitability. The absence of efficient market linkages and low consumer awareness about local poultry products also restrict their ability to scale. Financial barriers, including high interest rates and stringent collateral requirements, impede small-scale farmers' access to capital, preventing them from expanding or modernizing their operations.

Barriers to entry for entrepreneurs and tips to overcome them

Entrepreneurs face various barriers when starting their businesses. The following analysis identifies some common challenges and tips to overcome them:

- **Setting up a poultry farm requires a large investment in various areas.** Returnees will need to invest heavily in land, housing (poultry pens), equipment (such as feeders, drinkers, cages) as well as basic amenities including water and electricity. Also, they would need to buy day-old chicks or point-of-lay hens. This major financial burden could be a hurdle for new entrants into the industry. As a solution, voluntary returnees could raise funds from relatives and friends or find capital by collaborating with an established poultry farm.

- **Small-scale or start-up farmers may struggle to secure loans or grants, especially when they lack collateral.** This can make it difficult for them to start or expand operations. It is best to begin with a small operation and gradually expand to qualify for collateral-free loans or grants from NGOs, government programmes or international donor initiatives to support smallholder farmers. As your business grows, you can position yourself to secure loans from commercial banks.

- **Successful poultry farming requires a solid understanding of animal husbandry, disease management and biosecurity measures.** Without adequate training or experience, new farmers may face high mortality rates, inefficient operations and low productivity. Engaging in training programmes offered by institutions such as the Leventis Foundation or the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) can be beneficial. Additionally, volunteering or interning at an established poultry


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farm can help aspiring farmers gain vital hands-on experience, which is crucial for navigating the daily operations and challenges of poultry farming.

- **Feed expenses account for a large portion of the operating costs in poultry production, and fluctuating prices can make it challenging for new farmers to maintain profitability, especially when they have limited economies of scale.** Joining agricultural cooperatives that purchase feed in bulk can help reduce costs, or you might consider participating in out-grower (contract farming) schemes that provide feed as part of their support packages.

- **New entrants may struggle to establish a reliable customer base or integrate into supply chains, making it difficult to compete with established players.** Out-grower schemes or broiler hubs, such as the Lagos State Broiler Hub or the IITA Agro Park, can offer buyback systems and ensure a steady market for your products. Additionally, securing advance contracts with buyers can guarantee a reliable offtake for your birds or poultry products.

Box 2 Practical tips to overcome entry barriers including cost

Financial support

- Explore government and private sponsorships, like those from Osun and Oyo states, to help with costs for feed and chicks
- Use microfinance institutions and agricultural loans for initial capital
- Join or form cooperatives to pool resources and enhance bargaining power for loans or subsidies

Land and operations

- Use family-owned land to reduce start-up costs, especially for returnees
- Consider leasing a poultry pen if buying land is not viable
- Adopt automation in larger operations to reduce labour costs and improve efficiency

Training and experience

- Attend vocational training and workshops, such as those by Transform G&H, for hands-on poultry farming knowledge
- Gain experience through internships with successful poultry farmers
- Leverage government and NGO training programmes for modern management techniques

Market connections

- Connect with buyers (processors, wholesalers, retailers) before production starts
- Join poultry associations for market information and collective bargaining opportunities

Product diversification

- Produce value-added goods, such as processed poultry or eggs, to diversify income
- Diversify income by exploring related ventures, such as selling poultry manure or offering consulting service

Cost management

- Manage feed costs through bulk purchasing and collaborations
- Follow biosecurity measures to prevent disease and safeguard finances
- Consider agricultural insurance to protect against unexpected losses

CHAPTER 5

Labour market insights

Nigeria's poultry sector directly and indirectly engages 85 million Nigerians – many of whom are small-scale producers – in various aspects of production (Lawal, 2023). Alongside small-scale farmers, large commercial and integrated poultry farms represent about 21% of the country's bird population and are important employers in the sector (Lawal, 2023).

These large operations provide jobs for tens of thousands of Nigerians, covering activities such as hatcheries, feed production, transportation and processing. Major companies including Zartech, CHI Farms, Obasanjo Farms and Agrited have substantial workforces, underscoring the poultry sector's importance as a source of employment.

Job opportunities and skill requirements

The Nigerian poultry value chain presents a range of job possibilities, from production to retail, with a framework encompassing various roles and responsibilities. Opportunities exist for both entry-level positions and specialized roles that require technical knowledge. Table 15 presents an overview of common job positions in the value chain, their hierarchical structure and areas that signal strong hiring needs.

Table 15: Potential jobs in the poultry sector

Job role	Role description	Hiring need
Farm-level roles (production)		
Poultry farm manager	Manages daily operations, biosecurity, feeding schedules, budgeting and staff coordination.	High demand in large-scale farms
Poultry supervisor	Supports the manager, overseeing breeding, feeding and worker supervision.	Steady demand in medium/large farms
Veterinarian/poultry health specialist	Diagnoses diseases, provides treatments and ensures biosecurity measures.	High demand due to disease prevention
Poultry worker/farm attendant	Entry-level, responsible for feeding, cleaning and basic health tasks.	Consistent demand across farms
Nutrition roles		
Animal nutritionist	Develops specialized feed formulas for poultry growth and productivity.	High demand across farms and feed mills
Nutritionist/feed specialist	Ensures proper feed formulations for different growth stages.	High demand in feed mills and large farms
Processing and supply chain		
Slaughterhouse manager	Oversees poultry processing, ensuring hygiene, quality and regulatory compliance.	High demand in processing plants
Processing worker	Performs tasks such as slaughtering, defeathering and packaging of poultry.	High demand in processing facilities
Cold-chain and logistics manager	Manages transport/storage of poultry products, maintaining temperature control.	High demand to prevent losses
Feed production and input supply		
Feed mill manager	Oversees feed production, ensuring quality and efficiency.	High demand due to feed importance
Feed mill operator	Operates machinery for grinding, mixing and pelletizing feed.	High demand in feed mills and farms
Feed mill supervisor	Manages operators, quality control and production processes.	High demand in large feed facilities

Sales/marketing representative (feed/ equipment)	Expand markets for feed/equipment, building relationships with farms.	High demand in a competitive market
Distribution and retail roles		
Poultry sales/marketing manager	Manages sales/distribution of poultry products to retailers and export markets.	High demand in urban areas
Egg grader/packaging worker	Sorts, grades, and packages eggs for distribution to markets.	Moderate demand in commercial farms
Poultry breeding		
Poultry breeding specialist	Improves breeds for productivity and disease resistance, employed in hatcheries or research.	Increasing demand in hatcheries
Poultry extension officer	Provides technical support to farmers on productivity and best practices.	Strong demand in rural smallholder areas
Entrepreneurship and consultancy		
Poultry farm consultant	Advises farms on layout, management and business strategies.	Moderate to high demand in urban areas
Poultry farm owner/ entrepreneur	Establishes and manages poultry farms, creating jobs across the value chain.	High demand drives sector growth
Food safety		
Food safety inspector	Ensures food safety compliance in farms and processing facilities.	Growing demand due to stricter regulations
Food safety expert	Oversees food safety protocols, risk assessments and regulatory compliance.	High demand with increased focus on food safety

Expected income

Table 16 summarizes the salary ranges of different jobs in the poultry sector, ranging from top-level executives to entry-level roles. This is a useful data source to help returnee entrepreneurs estimate their labour expenses budget, optimize the workforce structure, and attract talent with salary. The list is also helpful for jobseekers as it shows in which industries they can expect to earn the most, guiding them to invest in skills that provide high-paying jobs.

Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of specialized positions, such as veterinary technicians and agribusiness consultants, which offer considerable earning potential. This information equips returnees to make informed decisions regarding their careers or business ventures within the poultry sector.

Table 16: Potential earnings based on job

Category	Position	Monthly salary range
Entry-level	Poultry attendant	₦30,000–₦50,000
	Feed processor assistant	₦35,000–₦55,000
	Poultry cleaner	₦25,000–₦40,000
	Hatchery assistant	₦40,000–₦60,000
	Entry-level veterinary assistant	₦50,000–₦70,000
Mid-level	Poultry supervisor	₦70,000–₦100,000
	Feed processor	₦65,000–₦90,000
	Hatchery technician	₦80,000–₦120,000
	Veterinary technician	₦100,000–₦150,000
	Poultry farm operations manager	₦120,000–₦180,000
High-level/ executive	Senior poultry consultant	₦300,000–₦600,000+
	Veterinarian	₦250,000–₦500,000
	Poultry farm manager	₦200,000–₦350,000
	Agrwibusiness development consultant	₦400,000–₦700,000

Note: Without an official reference, the range was organized based on job advertisement websites, including MyJobMag and Mywage.ng

Source: ITC

Training and education providers

The Nigerian Government actively promotes entrepreneurship among its youth, especially in the poultry sector. It emphasizes vocational education and skills acquisition as essential components to enable young entrepreneurs to thrive. Many credit agencies in the agricultural sector mandate training in specific vocations, such as poultry farming, before providing financial assistance (Netherlands-African Business Council, 2020).

Training opportunities range from practical hands-on (informal) training to formal education at different levels, including vocational training, higher agricultural education and postgraduate studies. Unfortunately, major educational deficits persist, notably in training for poultry farm attendants and the expertise of senior consultants. Many farm workers enter the field with little more than a secondary school education, leading to steep learning curves that can be costly for farm owners.

Moreover, individuals with national diplomas often prefer supervisory roles, but may lack the expertise to effectively address complex farm challenges (Netherlands-African Business Council, 2020).

Certification and career advancement rely on experience, formal education and professional qualifications. Individuals can enhance their expertise by obtaining industry-recognized certifications in important fields such as poultry health, feed production, logistics and food safety, which can prepare them for leadership and consultancy positions. There are many opportunities for professionals to develop and excel in this sector, whether through local training programmes or international online platforms.

Table 17 lists relevant training institutes that could support returnees' journey in this sector.

Table 17: Educational providers and civil society

Category	Company/organization	Short description
Poultry farm manager and supervisor	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	Provides degrees and short courses in animal science and farm management for poultry managers and supervisors.
Veterinarian/ poultry health specialist	University of Ibadan Ahmadu Bello University National Veterinary Research Institute	Offers veterinary programmes with postgraduate certifications in poultry health management and disease control.
Poultry worker/ farm attendant	Poultry Association of Nigeria Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute Premier Agribusiness Academy Leventis Foundation Obafemi Awolowo University – Institute of Agricultural Research and Training	Provides basic and practical training in poultry handling, biosecurity and farm operations for workers and attendants.
Nutritionist/ feed specialist	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Ahmadu Bello University	Offers degrees in animal nutrition, feed formulation and poultry science, with specialization in poultry feed production.
Slaughterhouse manager and processing worker	Nigerian Institute of Animal Science National Institute for Food Science and Technology	Provides training in poultry processing, quality control and hygiene standards for slaughterhouse managers and processing workers.
Cold-chain and logistics manager	Lagos Business School Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport	Offers courses in cold-chain logistics, transportation and supply-chain management for poultry products.
Feed mill manager, operator, and supervisor	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Institute of Agricultural Research and Training	Provides technical training in feed milling, formulation and operations for feed mill managers and operators.
Sales and marketing representative	Nigerian Institute of Marketing Pan-Atlantic University	Offers professional certifications in marketing and sales with a focus on agricultural products.

Poultry breeding specialist	Ahmadu Bello University, University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Offers programmes in poultry breeding, genetic selection and animal science for breeding specialists.
Poultry extension officer	University of Ibadan Ahmadu Bello University, Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute	Provides advisory training and extension services for poultry farmers.
Food safety inspector and expert	National Institute for Food Science and Technology University of Ibadan	Provides food safety training, quality-control programmes and certifications for food safety inspectors and experts.

Source: ITC compilation

Career progression

Career progression in the poultry industry frequently begins with entry-level roles such as supervisors or processing workers. People pursuing further certifications can advance to management positions, including roles such as poultry farm manager or operations manager. Veterinarians specializing in poultry can transition to jobs including poultry health consultant or research scientist, while nutritionists may move into roles such as feed mill manager or poultry nutrition consultant.

Employees in slaughterhouses and processing facilities can advance to positions such as quality-control supervisor or slaughterhouse manager by completing advanced certifications in food safety. Likewise, logistics professionals can transition from entry-level cold-chain logistics roles to higher positions such as supply-chain manager or cold-storage operations director in larger agribusiness companies, particularly when they obtain certifications in cold-chain management and supply-chain logistics.

CHAPTER 6

Financial aspects

Investment requirements

The financial requirements for different opportunities in the poultry sector differ widely. The initial capital needed and the time it takes to achieve profitability also vary across segments. Each segment presents unique challenges that directly influence the business's financial needs.

Table 18 presents an overview of investment opportunities in the poultry industry, detailing capital needs, challenges and major expenses. It serves as a guide for returnees to select ventures based on financial capacity, expertise and market demands, ranging from low-capital options such as egg distribution to higher-investment ventures including hatcheries and processing. This helps returnees assess entry options while considering challenges such as disease risks and regulatory compliance.

Table 18: Investment required by business type

Opportunity	Initial capital (₦)	Challenges	Main expenses
Broiler production Time to market: 5–8 weeks (about 2 months) per cycle	500,000–5,000,000	Moderate ease of entry and high feed prices, outbreaks of disease and instability of market prices	Pen houses, day-old chicks, feed, feeding systems, veterinary services, basic amenities (water and energy), labour
Layer production 72–100 weeks (about 2 years) per cycle	1,000,000–10,000,000	Moderate ease of entry and high feed prices and medication costs, production cycles are prolonged	Pen houses, day-old chicks, feed, feeding systems, veterinary services, basic amenities (water and energy), labour
Pullet production 16–18 weeks (about 4 months)	500,000–10,000,000	Moderate ease of entry	Pen houses, day-old chicks, feed, feeding systems, veterinary services, basic amenities (water and energy), labour
Feed production	10,000,000–30,000,000	Raw material prices fluctuate, quality-control challenges and competition from existing players	Raw materials, feed milling equipment (hammer mill, mixer, conveyor), feed mill structure, energy source and certification, compliance and regulatory costs
Hatchery	10,000,000–50,000,000	Costly incubation equipment, technical know-how, risk of diseases	Grandparent stock and parent stock, certifications, pen houses and serene environment, compliance and regulatory costs
Egg distribution	100,000–500,000	Easy of entry with challenges related to cost of transportation, fragility of the eggs, unstable market demand	Storage facilities, egg crates, eggs

Chicken processing and packaging 1–3 days	5,000,000–20,000,000	Intermediate cold-storage costs, market accessibility, compliance with food safety regulations, risk of spoilage	Processing facilities, cooling systems, cutters, packaging materials, chicken, egg, compliance and regulatory costs
Chicken slaughterhouse (abattoir)	10,000,000–50,000,000	High initial capital requirement, regulatory compliance, waste control and environmental impact issues	Slaughtering and evisceration facility, defeathering machines, slaughterhouse, live birds, compliance and regulatory costs
Poultry consultancy and training	100,000–500,000	Intermediate industry experience is a prerequisite, with a small client base and competition from government/NGO bodies	Certifications, degrees, training centres
Veterinary services	500,000–5,000,000	Tough professional qualifications (degree required), high costs of medication, market penetration difficulty	Certifications, degrees, test kits, compliance and regulatory costs
Sales of vaccines and drugs	1,000,000–10,000,000	Intermediate strict regulatory protocols, risk of purchasing fake products, constraints to logistics	Physical stores, certifications, degrees, compliance and regulatory costs

Note: These figures are indicative and are for returnees who want to start very small and grow organically. Returnees must carry out their business plan and market analysis on the location or market where they wish to operate to get a more precise investment figure.

Source: Estimates based on field research and stakeholder discussions.

Available financing models for poultry farmers

Nigeria's poultry industry offers a variety of financing options aimed at empowering farmers and fostering sustainable business practices. These models range from government initiatives to private-sector collaborations, ensuring that new poultry farmers have access to essential capital, resources and markets.

Funding opportunities for farmers without collateral

1. **Government-sponsored programmes**

Some state governments have collaborated with hatcheries to create out-grower schemes to support smallholder poultry farmers. Out-grower schemes allow participants to partner with sponsors who provide essential resources, including birds, feed, vaccines and medication.
In Osun State, partnerships with Tuns Farm and G&S Farm provide farmers with day-old chicks, feed and technical assistance, as well as a buyback system for mature birds. This model ensures that farmers receive the necessary resources and have a guaranteed market for their products.

- Several hatcheries, such as Amo Byng and Happy Chicken, offer similar support through privately operated out-grower schemes by collaborating with individual farmers and farmer cooperatives.

- The Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) works with private hatcheries in Lagos to establish broiler hubs, such as the Ikorodu Broiler Hub, providing resources including chicks, feed and technical expertise. The LSETF Loan Programme also creates affordable access to funding for small businesses, helping them grow, expand, create wealth and generate employment opportunities. This loan scheme, which offers an attractive 9% interest rate per annum, is available to business owners who are registered residents of Lagos State (LSETF, 2024).

This model effectively reduces start-up costs and allows new farmers to concentrate on developing necessary infrastructure, such as poultry pens, water supply systems, feeding troughs and labour management. This model helps lower financial barriers for people who lack substantial initial capital and facilitates practical engagement in agribusiness.

2. Non-governmental organizations

In collaboration with the Mastercard Foundation, NGOs including the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture have launched programmes to support youth employment in the poultry sector. These initiatives provide training, resources and financial support for youth and women, helping them establish their own poultry businesses without the need for collateral (IITA, 2020).

3. Grants

International organizations such as the Gates Foundation and USAID's Feed the Future Initiative offer grants to poultry farmers, focusing on capacity building and sustainable farming practices. These grants are designed to help farmers adopt modern techniques and expand their businesses without requiring collateral.

4. Leventis Foundation agricultural training programme

This foundation offers financial and practical support to young farmers between 18 and 40 years of age, especially those with basic literacy and experience in farming. The programme provides training, helping farmers enhance their operations and business efficiency without requiring collateral.

Funding opportunities for farmers to scale operations

- Commercial banks such as Sterling Bank and First City Monument Bank offer tailored agricultural loans for poultry farmers seeking to expand their operations. These loans be used to buy equipment or infrastructure or as working capital (i.e. feed, day-old chicks and other inputs). However, the loans typically require collateral, essential for businesses seeking substantial funding to scale operations.

- By joining agricultural cooperatives, poultry farmers can pool their resources and access collective financing options. Cooperatives often offer lower interest rates and more flexible repayment plans, making them ideal for farmers aiming to scale up their production capacity.

- The Bank of Industry offers loans to businesses that want to scale their operations. Poultry firms must be registered, demonstrate profitability and have a bankable business plan to qualify. Although collateral is typically required for large-scale loans, the bank provides substantial financial support to help businesses grow and improve their production capacity.

Box 3: Practical tips for returnees interested in entering the poultry sector

- The initial step involves identifying suitable land for establishing a poultry pen. Access to family land or leasing opportunities serves as a foundation to set up operations. Returnees should actively seek out sponsorship programmes offered by state governments, such as those in Osun and Oyo states, as well as private enterprises. Participation in these programmes may provide essential funding and resources to mitigate financial challenges associated with start-up costs.

- Acquiring relevant poultry farming knowledge is critical. Returnees may benefit from enrolling in local vocational schools, training centres or internship programmes focusing on poultry care, disease management and business operations. Engaging with experienced farmers or attending workshops will improve practical skills and minimize the likelihood of costly errors.

- A reliable market is essential for the success of poultry farming endeavours. Returnees should initiate connections with processors, wholesalers and local markets while fostering relationships with cold-storage facilities. Awareness of market demand cycles will assist in avoiding financial losses due to overproduction.

- State governments and private firms increasingly prioritize support for young entrepreneurs, especially returnees.

Success story

Box 4: Emmanuel's poultry success story

Five years ago, Emmanuel, a 25-year-old entrepreneur in Nigeria, set out on a mission to change his life and his community through broiler farming. Starting with just 50 birds, he dreamed of creating a sustainable business that would not only provide for him, but also contribute to local development.

Achievements: Today, Emmanuel's vision has become a reality. His business has expanded to house 2,000 broilers! This incredible growth is a testament to his hard work and innovative strategies. By focusing on better feeding solutions and efficient resource management, Emmanuel improved his operations and distinguished himself in a competitive market. Despite economic challenges, such as high inflation and supply shortages, he remained focused on success rather than obstacles, showing remarkable resilience.

Challenges: Emmanuel's journey wasn't easy. He faced major hurdles, including unreliable electricity and water supply, which are vital for his birds' health. The economic crisis in Nigeria added to these difficulties, putting his farm under immense pressure.

Nevertheless, Emmanuel learned to optimize resources and cut costs to keep his business running smoothly.

Lessons learned: Through his experiences, Emmanuel emphasizes the importance of continuous learning. He believes that teaching others while learning himself is essential for growth. This mindset has not only helped him refine his strategies, but has also inspired those in his community. He highlights the need to maintain a positive attitude, especially during tough times – his unwavering hope and determination have helped him overcome challenges and emerge stronger.

Opportunities and advice: Emmanuel's business has created jobs in his community, empowering others and encouraging shared progress. He advises aspiring entrepreneurs to stay focused on goals, even when faced with adversity. 'Challenges will come,' he says, 'but each one is an opportunity for growth.' He stresses the importance of improving processes and striving for excellence in a competitive market.

Emmanuel's journey is a powerful reminder that with vision, dedication and creativity, challenges can turn into opportunities, inspiring others.

Source: Stakeholder interview.

Appendix: Cost of setting up different poultry businesses

Table 19 presents the estimated start-up cost for 2,000 broilers, breaking down the costs associated with broiler production and detailing the expenses incurred across various categories such as day-old chick procurement, feed, drugs, vaccines, transportation, operating costs and finance charges. It also outlines the revenue from processed chicken and other chicken products, leading to a calculation of the gross profit per bird. This data is vital to understand the profitability and financial planning necessary for broiler production.

Table 19: Broiler economics of production

Broiler production costing				
Expenses		**Quantity**	**Price (₦)**	**Total (₦)**
Day-old chick costs		2,000	1,700	3,400,000
Feed cost				
(a) Cost of feed – broiler starter	2,000	1,220	960	2,342,400
(b) Cost of finisher feed	2,000	2,300	940	4,324,000
Drugs and vaccines				
(a) Drugs (4% of feed cost)				266,656
(b) Vaccines		2,000	70	140,000
(c) Disinfectant		2,000	1.35	2,700
Transportation cost				
(a) Day-old chick transportation		2,000	10	20,000
(b) Feed transportation	Bags	280	80	22,400
Operating expenses				
(a) Charcoal (purchase and transportation)	Bags	6	7,000	42,000
(b) Wood shavings (purchase and transportation)	Bags	50	500	25,000
(c) Petrol	4 litres per day	160	1,250	200,000
(d) Vet charges	₦5 per kg			19,400
(e) Salaries (3 attendants for 3 months)		3	80,000	240,000
Finance cost				
(a) Economics of production insurance (2.5% per batch)				48,500.00

(b) Cost of fund (6% per batch)				70,757.56
Net total cost				**11,163,814**
Buy-back	2kg	1,940	3,000	11,640,000
Transportation of mature birds		30	1,940	58,200
Cost of processing		100	1,940	194,000
Total processing cost				11,892,200.00
Total income				
Income – processed chicken	1.4	1,940	4,500	12,222,000
Income – other chicken products		1,940	500	970,000
Total revenue – processed chicken				13,192,000
Gross profit per bird				**1,299,800**
Note: Profit margin for out-grower/ farmer			476,186	
Gross profit by out-grower scheme owner/meat production			1,299,800	

Source: Field research.

Table 20 summarizes key performance indicators for broiler production, offering insights into feed conversion ratios, average body weight achieved within six weeks, total feed consumption, mortality rates and the resulting live bird count. It provides benchmark figures that producers can use to assess their broiler performance efficiency and evaluate production outcomes against industry standards.

Table 20: Broiler performance indicator

Feed conversion ratio	1.75
Average body weight	2
Total feed consumed	3.5kg
Mortality rate/chance? (%)	3
Live birds	1,940
Undiscounted feed prices	Price/kilogram
Starter	960
Finisher	940
Discount	0%

Source: Field research and company sources.

Table 21 shows the cost and revenue analysis for layer poultry production. It includes the expenses for point-of-lay birds, feed, drugs, vaccines, transportation and operational costs. It also highlights income streams from egg sales, spent layers, used feed bag sales and poultry dung. The data are critical for assessing the profitability of layer farming over a production cycle, with details on gross profit and market price references.

Table 21: Economics of layer production

Layer production costing				
Expenses		**Quantity**	**Price (₦)**	**Total (₦)**
Point of lay costs		1,000	5,400	5,400,000
Feed cost				
Layer feed (kg of feed at 120g/day *548 days) = 2,630.4 bags of feed	1	65,760	950	62,472,000
Drugs and vaccines				
(a) Drugs (4% of feed cost)				2,498,880
(b) Vaccines and dewormers		1,000	84	84,000
(c) Disinfectant		1,000	40	40,000
Transportation cost				
(a) Point of lay transportation		1,000	100	100,000
(b) Feed transportation	Bags	2,630	80	210,400
Operating expenses				-
(a) Marketing	2	18	70,000	1,260,000
(b) Administrative	1	18	50,000	900,000
(c) Security	1	18	80,000	1,440,000
(d) Vet charges	1	18	70,000	1,260,000
(e) Attendants	2	18	60,000	2,160,000
(f) Diesel		1,000	1,200	1,200,000
Finance cost				80,372,780
(a) Economics of production insurance (2.5%/ cycle)				2,381,060
Poultry facility and equipment cost (depreciated)				134,750
Income				
Egg/life cycle (31.6 crates/day *548 days)	1	17,316.80	5,500	95,242,400
Gross income on egg sales				95,242,400
Income – Spent layers	1	800	5,500	4,400,000
Income – Used feed bag sales (200 dozen)		200	500	100,000
Income – Poultry dung (kg)		2,000	500	1,000,000
Total income				**100,642,400**
Gross profit				**17,888,560**

Note: Market price October 2024.
Source: ITC calculation based on data collected through stakeholder interviews and field survey.

Table 22 outlines the fixed operating costs associated with frozen chicken production. It includes the cost of equipment, insurance, depreciation, transportation and labour and presents estimated revenue and profit calculations per production cycle. This table serves as a financial guide for businesses in the frozen chicken processing sector, detailing potential costs and profit margins

Table 22: Cost of production for frozen chicken

S/N	Particulars	Description	Units	Quantity	Rate per pcs (₦)	Total cost (₦)	Monthly cost (₦)
	Fixed cost						
1	**Input cost**	Band saw blade	Pcs	1	500,000	500,000	
		Stainless table	Pcs	2	300,000	600,000	
		Weighing scale	Pcs	2	150,000	300,000	
		Chest freezer	Pcs	2	950,000	1,900,000	
		Vacuum sealer	Pcs	2	500,000	1,000,000	
		Knives	Pcs	4	60,000	240,000	
		Formaldehyde tray	Pcs	2	150,000	300,000	
	Total fixed cost					**4,840,000**	
	Insurance	3.5% Insurance				169,400	14,117
	Depreciation	10% fixed cost				484,000	40,333
	Operating cost						
2	**Product**	**Frozen chicken**	**Kg**	**1,000**	**4,500**	**4,840,000**	
		Transportation	Kg	1,000	80	80,000	
3	**Labour cost**	**Cashier**	**Person**	**1**	**50,000**	**50,000**	
		Attendants	Person	2	40,000	80,000	
		Contingency		1	50,000	50,000	
	Total operating cost					**5,100,000**	
	Production cost per cycle, per month					**5,154,450**	
	Estimated revenue per cycle		**Estimated quantity**	**Price per kg (₦)**	**Total revenue (₦)**		
			Kg	1,000	5,500	5,500,000	
	Estimated profit					345,550	
	Estimated at 6% monthly profit						

Source: Field research and company sources.

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