



POLICY BRIEF

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NAFDAC 24-Hour Call Centre Initiative – Strengthening Consumer Protection and the Need for Legislative Oversight

Authors:

Dr. Ganiyu Ejalonibu, Dr. Etimbuk Obot, & Dr. Livinus Nandi

Department of Democracy and Governance

Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS)

Executive Summary

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has inaugurated a 24-hour call centre in Abuja in partnership with Interra Networks Ltd to enhance regulatory responsiveness and consumer engagement. The platform is designed to receive complaints, enquiries, and reports relating to food, drugs, vaccines, medical devices, cosmetics, and other regulated products, while also supporting NAFDAC's broader digital transformation efforts in product registration and compliance. According to the Director General, Mojisola Adeyeye, the initiative aims to improve service delivery, facilitate trade, and strengthen surveillance against substandard and falsified products.

While the initiative represents a positive step toward improving consumer protection and regulatory efficiency, several policy concerns arise. The long-term sustainability of the call centre remains uncertain, particularly in light of funding constraints that could affect service continuity and quality. The outsourcing of call centre operations to a private firm raises additional concerns regarding data privacy, service standards, and accountability in handling sensitive consumer information. Furthermore, there is limited clarity on complaint resolution timelines, service-level agreements, and mechanisms for tracking outcomes, raising the risk that complaints may not translate into timely regulatory action.

The effectiveness of the call centre will also depend on its integration with NAFDAC's enforcement and surveillance systems. Weak coordination could delay responses to reported cases and limit the agency's ability to curb the circulation of unsafe or counterfeit products. In addition, the absence of a clearly defined public awareness strategy and accessibility framework may limit the reach of the platform, particularly among rural populations, low-literacy groups, and persons with disabilities.

Given its constitutional oversight responsibilities, the National Assembly has a critical role in ensuring that the initiative delivers value, protects consumer rights, and strengthens public health regulation. Legislative engagement is necessary to ensure transparency in the public-private partnership, safeguard data protection, and guarantee measurable service outcomes.

Accordingly, the National Assembly, through its Committees on Health, Commerce, Industry, and Communications/ICT, may consider the following actions:

1. Invite NAFDAC to provide details on the funding model and sustainability plan for the call centre, including long-term financial commitments.
2. Request disclosure of the partnership agreement with Interra Networks Ltd, including data protection safeguards, performance benchmarks, and accountability mechanisms.



3. Mandate the development and publication of clear complaint resolution frameworks, including timelines, response rates, and periodic performance reports.
4. Require NAFDAC to demonstrate integration with enforcement systems, ensuring that complaints lead to inspections, regulatory actions, and prosecution where necessary.
5. Encourage nationwide awareness and accessibility measures, including multilingual outreach, rural engagement strategies, and inclusive access for persons with disabilities.
6. Support broader regulatory digitisation efforts by leveraging the call centre to strengthen digital systems for product registration, tracking, and consumer feedback.

Background:

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has inaugurated a 24-hour call centre in Abuja, in partnership with Interra Networks Ltd, to improve regulatory responsiveness and consumer engagement¹.

The initiative is designed to handle complaints, enquiries, and reports related to food, drugs, vaccines, medical devices, cosmetics, and other regulated products. It also aims to support NAFDAC's ongoing digitisation of regulatory processes, particularly in product registration and compliance procedures.

According to the Director General of NAFDAC, Mojisola Adeyeye, the platform will enhance service delivery, facilitate trade through improved registration processes, and strengthen surveillance against substandard and falsified products².

Policy Issue:

While the establishment of a 24-hour call centre is a positive step toward improving consumer protection and regulatory

efficiency, several gaps and concerns emerge that warrant legislative attention:

1. Sustainability and Funding Risks:

NAFDAC leadership has acknowledged that the long-term sustainability of the call centre depends on consistent funding and financial discipline³. Given past financial constraints (including inherited debt)⁴, there is a risk that the facility may become underfunded over time, service quality may decline, or operations may be disrupted.

2. Accountability in Outsourcing Public Functions:

The management of the call centre by a private firm raises important questions regarding data protection

¹ George, A. (2026, March 28). NAFDAC inaugurates 24-hour call centre. *News Express*. <https://newsexpressngr.com/news/301039/nafdac-inaugurates-24-hour-call-centre>

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ Ajisafe, O. (2024, August 9). I inherited N3.2bn debt upon assuming office – NAFDAC DG. *Punch*. <https://punchng.com/i-inherited-n3-2bn-debt-upon-assuming-office-nafdac-dg/>



and privacy. It also raises concerns regarding service quality standards and accountability mechanisms for handling sensitive consumer complaints. Without clear oversight, outsourcing core regulatory support functions could weaken institutional control.

3. Effectiveness of Complaint Resolution Mechanisms:

While the call centre will receive and escalate complaints, it is unclear how quickly complaints will be resolved; whether there are defined service-level agreements (SLAs), and how outcomes will be tracked and reported. A call centre without strong backend enforcement may create expectations without delivering real regulatory action.

4. Integration with Enforcement and Surveillance Systems:

The success of the initiative depends on how well it is integrated into NAFDAC's inspection, enforcement, and intelligence systems. Weak integration could result in delayed response to reported cases, poor coordination across departments, and missed opportunities to curb counterfeit or substandard products.

5. Public Awareness and Accessibility:

For the initiative to be impactful, Nigerians must be aware of and able to access the platform. However, awareness campaigns have not been clearly outlined, accessibility for rural and low-literacy populations remains uncertain including how language barriers will be mitigated.

Rationale for Legislative Action:

The National Assembly has a responsibility to ensure that regulatory agencies operate

efficiently, transparently, and in the public interest. Legislative oversight is necessary to:

- ensure value for public-private partnerships,
- protect consumer data and rights,
- guarantee service effectiveness and accountability, and
- strengthen Nigeria's fight against substandard and falsified products, which pose serious public health risks.

Recommendations to the National Assembly:

The National Assembly, through its Committees on Health, Commerce, Industry, and Communications/ICT, is respectfully urged to:

1. Invite NAFDAC to present the cost structure and funding model for the call centre, sustainability plans, and projected long-term financial commitments.
2. Call for disclosure of the agreement between NAFDAC and Interra Networks Ltd, including data protection safeguards, performance benchmarks, and accountability mechanisms for service delivery.
3. Mandate NAFDAC to develop and publish complaint resolution timelines, response rates and escalation procedures, and periodic public reports on call centre performance.
4. Require NAFDAC to demonstrate how call centre reports will translate into inspections, enforcement actions, and prosecution of offenders where necessary.



5. Encourage NAFDAC to implement multi-channel awareness campaigns, including radio and local language outreach, integration with existing health systems, and accessibility features for persons with disabilities.
6. Support broader regulatory digitisation efforts by leveraging this initiative to push for comprehensive digital transformation of regulatory processes, such as product registration, tracking, and consumer feedback systems.

The establishment of a 24-hour call centre by NAFDAC represents a significant step toward improving consumer engagement, regulatory transparency, and public health protection in Nigeria. However, without strong oversight, clear accountability frameworks, and sustainable funding, the initiative risks falling short of its potential.

Proactive engagement by the National Assembly will be essential to ensure that the call centre becomes a functional, reliable, and impactful tool in safeguarding Nigerians from unsafe and substandard products.

Conclusion:

Contact

National Institute for Legislative and
Democratic Studies
National Assembly
Plot 307 Cadastral Zone
Umaru Musa Yar'adua Expressway, Airport
Road

Abuja Nigeria

E-mail: info@nils.gov.ng

Website: <http://nils.gov.ng>

NILDS Liaison Office

Suite 214 Senate Wing
National Assembly Complex
Mobile: +234 806 694 5075