

Energy, tech, and finance sectors feel comms pressure in Africa

Strategic communications is under pressure. Regulation is accelerating. Investors are scrutinising more closely. And public backlash now lands in hours, not days.

By [Laila Bastati](#) 6 Aug 2025



Laila Bastati, chief commercial officer, APO Group. Source: Supplied.

Across industries, communications is no longer just about visibility – it's about viability. For leaders in Africa's most dynamic sectors, comms has become a frontline function for managing regulatory complexity, investor expectations, and social trust. It's no longer optional. It's operational.

In Africa, where younger regulatory systems can be fragmented and enforcement uneven, this shift is sharper. A missed message doesn't just weaken reputation but risks investor confidence, compliance, and public trust – making strategic comms no longer optional. It's operational.

In PRCA Africa and APRA's 2024 report on the state of PR and ethics in Africa, risk preparedness comes out as a leading communications challenge across the continent. It's an insight echoed in APO Group's own client data. In the first half of 2025, demand for reputational crisis support rose significantly. A dipstick poll of our 57,000+ LinkedIn network also flagged energy and sustainability, and tech and digital as sectors in need of attention in Africa. The takeaway: visibility alone is no longer enough. Here are three sectors where the pressure is most acute.

1. Energy and sustainability: ESG expectations without the guardrails

With COP30 approaching and ESG frameworks being reassessed globally, African energy players are under the pump. The EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) has been delayed, while the US SEC has scaled back ESG disclosure rules. Meanwhile, the UN's 2025 SDG Progress Report shows that only 15% of goals are on track.

In this vacuum, the narrative is up for grabs. From Nigeria's diversification strategy to South Africa's unbundling reforms and Namibia's green push, communicators must now translate ambiguity into trust-

building messaging. And sustainability communications must stand up to activist, investor, and local scrutiny without the cushion of global consensus.

2. Tech and digital: AI moves faster than the messaging

In Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana, AI adoption is racing ahead of legislation. This puts PR teams on the front line: managing deepfake risk, public confusion over AI applications, and the reputational implications of algorithmic bias – all before regulatory frameworks are finalised. Without this certainty, legal and compliance voices are prone to shaping communications more conservatively.



PR & COMMUNICATIONS

APO Group integrates WhatsApp for broader reach

24 Jun 2025



The next frontier is electoral interference: with several African nations holding elections in 2025, concerns are mounting that AI-generated misinformation, including deepfakes, could be used to manipulate public sentiment or discredit political figures. Already, the African Union and Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Commission have raised early warnings about AI-driven disinformation campaigns seeded through social media networks. For PR teams, this means that election-year communications strategies must now include real-time fact-checking, media training to counter visual manipulation, and crisis protocol for false attribution.

Meanwhile, Kenya's Data Protection Act and other regional privacy laws are reshaping how companies communicate consent and transparency. Cybersecurity threats are now regular boardroom topics, and PR teams must respond with proactive, trust-driven messaging strategies.

3. Financial services: Rebuilding trust in a high-friction regulatory era

As Africa's fintech sector matures, communications leaders are navigating not just launch PR, but investor confidence issues and consumer trust erosion. The Central Bank of Nigeria's mobile money rules and the East African Community's cross-border payments integration are prompting firms to localise trust messaging in real time.

In Ghana, the Bank of Ghana suspended the operations of several digital lenders in 2024 over breaches of consumer protection rules. This came after a spike in complaints about predatory loan terms and data privacy violations. The fallout damaged public trust and exposed a gap in crisis preparedness: many brands lacked clear communication during enforcement and struggled to rebuild credibility. In 2025, those that recovered best were the ones who treated communications as a regulatory ally, not an afterthought.

What next: Strategy, not sentiment

From image-building to operational discipline, comms leaders across sectors must recalibrate. High-performing teams embed communications into policy forecasts, regulatory roadmaps, and investor dialogues – not just campaigns. And responses must be turned around in hours, not days.

Done well, communications can be an organisation's operating system for trust, alignment, and action – and in 2025, the difference between proactive and reactive comms is reputational survival.

APO Group's work across 54 African markets shows: comms delayed is opportunity lost. The question is longer whether to elevate comms, but whether you've waited too long.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laila Bastati is chief commercial officer at APO Group.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>