



POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS OF A RICE MILL IN DAURA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

¹MAMUDA SHEHU

²Maryam Kasim

³Sani Bello Goma

^{1, 2&3}Centre for Democracy Peace and Conflict Resolution,

Federal University Dutsin-Ma

ABSTRACT

This study examines the political risks associated with establishing and operating a rice mill in Daura Local Government Area (LGA), Katsina State, Nigeria. It evaluates the political environment at national, state, and local levels, identifying major risk factors including insecurity, political instability, policy inconsistency, corruption, bureaucratic bottlenecks, infrastructure deficits, and ethnic or religious tensions. The research proposes mitigation strategies such as security investment, stakeholder engagement, legal compliance, corporate social responsibility, infrastructure partnerships, and political risk insurance. A simplified risk rating system indicates that Daura presents a moderate political risk level, with infrastructure and security concerns being the most significant vulnerabilities. The study concludes that despite existing challenges, Daura's agricultural potential and political visibility make it a viable investment destination when robust risk management frameworks are adopted. Strategic engagement with local stakeholders and adaptive governance approaches are essential for successful rice mill operations in the region.

Keywords: Political risk, rice mill, agribusiness investment, insecurity, policy inconsistency, stakeholder engagement, Daura LGA, Katsina State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Political risk has emerged as a critical determinant of investment viability and sustainability, particularly in emerging economies where governance structures, institutional effectiveness, and security conditions remain fragile. Political risk encompasses the probability that political decisions, instability, or adverse events within a country may negatively affect business operations, asset values, and investment returns (Frynas & Mellahi, 2011; Howell, 2014). For investors and development planners operating in developing states such as Nigeria, political risk manifests through multiple interrelated dimensions, including insecurity, corruption, weak regulatory enforcement, policy inconsistency, bureaucratic inefficiency, and socio-political instability. These

factors collectively shape the investment climate and influence capital allocation decisions across critical sectors.

Nigeria, as Africa's largest economy and most populous nation, presents a complex political risk landscape characterized by federal governance complexities, regional disparities, and evolving security challenges. The agricultural sector remains a fundamental pillar of the Nigerian economy, contributing approximately 24% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employing over 35% of the working population (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2024). Beyond its economic significance, agriculture serves as a primary source of rural livelihoods, food security, and poverty alleviation, particularly in northern regions where alternative employment opportunities remain limited.

Rice production occupies a strategic position within Nigeria's agricultural transformation agenda, having received sustained government attention through policies such as the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) and various import substitution initiatives. The federal government's commitment to rice self-sufficiency has stimulated domestic processing capacity, with rice mills emerging as critical infrastructure for value addition, employment generation, and import reduction (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2023). Consequently, agro-processing investments, particularly rice milling facilities, are increasingly promoted as viable pathways for industrialization, rural development, and economic diversification.

Political Risk Vulnerabilities in Agro-Industrial Development

However, the sustainability and profitability of agro-industrial projects remain heavily contingent upon the stability and predictability of the political environment. According to Hill (2013) and subsequent political risk scholarship, agricultural investments in emerging markets face unique vulnerabilities arising from regulatory uncertainty, infrastructural deficits, land tenure complications, and exposure to social conflict. These vulnerabilities are amplified in regions experiencing governance challenges or security deterioration, where business operations may be disrupted by extra-legal demands, supply chain interruptions, or direct threats to personnel and assets.

Northern Nigeria, where Katsina State is situated, has experienced heightened insecurity over the past decade, with banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, and rural criminality posing serious threats to economic activity and community stability (World Bank, 2024; International Crisis Group, 2023). These security challenges interact with existing governance weaknesses, including limited institutional capacity, corruption perceptions, and inconsistent policy implementation, creating a complex risk environment for prospective investors.

Daura Local Government Area, located in northern Katsina State, presents a distinctive case for political risk analysis due to its unique convergence of agricultural potential, cultural significance, and political visibility. Historically, Daura holds profound cultural importance as one of the ancient Hausa city-states and, more recently, as the ancestral homeland of Nigeria's former president, Muhammadu Buhari. This political connection has attracted increased government attention, infrastructure initiatives, and development discourse to the area, potentially moderating certain investment risks while creating new complexities.

Agriculturally, Daura benefits from favorable conditions for rice cultivation, including accessible irrigation potential, established farming communities, and proximity to regional markets. The local economy remains predominantly agrarian, with rice farming representing a significant livelihood activity for numerous households. These factors position Daura as a potentially attractive location for rice milling investment, offering opportunities for backward integration, community engagement, and value chain development.

Nevertheless, investment prospects in Daura must be evaluated against persistent governance challenges and security vulnerabilities characteristic of the region. Infrastructure deficits, particularly in electricity supply, road networks, and water availability, constrain industrial operations and increase production costs (African Development Bank, 2023). Bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption perceptions at local government levels may complicate permit acquisition, regulatory compliance, and operational continuity (Transparency International, 2024). Periodic security incidents, including banditry and communal tensions, threaten rural stability and may disrupt agricultural supply chains essential for mill operations.

This study therefore undertakes a comprehensive political risk analysis of establishing and operating a rice mill in Daura LGA, Katsina State, Nigeria. By systematically identifying key risk factors across national, state, and local governance levels, and by evaluating their potential implications for rice mill viability, the research contributes to investment decision-making and policy planning for agro-industrial development in politically sensitive regions. The study further proposes contextually appropriate mitigation strategies, drawing on political risk management frameworks and stakeholder engagement approaches adapted to the Nigerian environment.

Understanding the political risk dynamics specific to Daura holds significance beyond individual investment decisions. As Nigeria pursues agricultural transformation and economic diversification objectives, insights from localized risk assessments can inform broader policy approaches to promoting private investment in regions characterized by governance challenges and security concerns. The findings aim to support investors, development partners, and government agencies in designing interventions that balance commercial viability with developmental impact, while navigating the complex political landscape of northern Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Political Risk

Political risk constitutes a multifaceted concept within international business, investment analysis, and development studies, referring fundamentally to the probability that political decisions, events, or conditions within a host country will adversely affect the business environment and result in financial, operational, or strategic losses for investors (Howell, 2014). This conceptualization encompasses both the actions of governments and the broader political, social, and security dynamics that shape the investment climate. Political risk analysis has evolved significantly from its origins in cold war geopolitics to contemporary frameworks that address complex interactions between formal governance institutions, informal power structures, and socio-economic vulnerabilities.

POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS OF A RICE MILL IN DAURA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

Frynas and Mellahi (2011) provide a comprehensive conceptualization of political risk as a major challenge confronting both multinational corporations and domestic investors in developing economies, where governance systems frequently exhibit instability, institutional weaknesses, and susceptibility to disruptive change. Their analysis emphasizes that political risk in such contexts extends beyond expropriation or nationalization concerns to encompass the everyday uncertainties arising from inconsistent policy implementation, regulatory unpredictability, and the blurred boundaries between public and private interests. This perspective is particularly relevant to the Nigerian context, where governance challenges operate at multiple levels and affect investment outcomes through diverse mechanisms.

Political Risk and Agricultural Investment

Agricultural investments demonstrate particular sensitivity to political conditions due to their structural dependence on land access, rural security, government support mechanisms, and functional infrastructure. Unlike manufacturing or service sector investments that may relocate in response to adverse conditions, agricultural processing facilities such as rice mills involve location-specific assets, established supply chain relationships, and deep integration with local farming communities that limit mobility and increase exposure to political risks (Hill, 2013). This inherent vulnerability makes agricultural investments especially susceptible to disruptions arising from political instability, policy shifts, and governance failures.

Hill (2013) argues that inconsistent trade regulations and weak institutional frameworks frequently discourage agro-industrial development in emerging markets, creating uncertainty that undermines long-term investment planning. Agricultural processing investments require predictable policy environments to justify capital expenditures, secure financing, and develop sustainable supply relationships. When governments frequently alter import duties, export restrictions, subsidy programs, or quality standards, investors face heightened difficulty in projecting revenues, managing costs, and maintaining competitiveness. Such policy unpredictability proves particularly damaging in sectors like rice milling, where profit margins depend significantly on the balance between domestic procurement costs and competition from imported alternatives.

In Nigeria, agro-processing industries confront multiple political risk dimensions that collectively constrain investment and operational viability. The rice milling sector exemplifies these challenges, facing exposure to insecurity that disrupts farming activities and raw material supply, weak transportation networks that increase logistics costs and post-harvest losses, and unpredictable government interventions that alter market dynamics (World Bank, 2024). Security threats in northern Nigeria, including banditry and farmer-herder conflicts, directly undermine agricultural production by displacing farming communities and disrupting supply chains essential for mill operations. Infrastructure deficits, particularly in road networks serving rural areas, compound these challenges by impeding the movement of paddy rice from farms to processing facilities and finished products to markets.

Government interventions in Nigeria's rice sector have included import bans, currency restrictions, credit programs, and input subsidy schemes, each subject to modification with limited consultation or transitional planning. While intended to stimulate domestic production, such policy volatility creates uncertainty that complicates investment decisions and operational planning for rice mill

investors (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2023). The cumulative effect of these political risks is elevated operational costs, reduced investor confidence, and constrained agro-industrial development in regions like Katsina State that possess significant agricultural potential but face governance and security challenges.

Security and Investment Sustainability in Northern Nigeria

Security challenges have emerged as perhaps the most formidable threat to investment sustainability across northern Nigeria, fundamentally altering the risk landscape for agricultural and agro-industrial development. Banditry, kidnapping for ransom, and farmer-herder conflicts have escalated dramatically over the past decade, creating an environment of chronic uncertainty that permeates rural economies and disrupts productive activities (International Crisis Group, 2023). These security threats operate through multiple mechanisms that collectively undermine investment viability and deter capital allocation to the region.

The World Bank (2024) documents how insecurity systematically reduces agricultural productivity by limiting farmers' access to farmland, disrupting planting and harvesting schedules, and causing displacement of rural communities. When farmers abandon their fields due to safety concerns, supply chains for agro-processing industries face critical disruptions that compromise operational continuity. Additionally, transportation networks become hazardous, increasing logistics costs and post-harvest losses as produce awaits safe movement to markets or processing facilities. The cumulative effect is diminished investor confidence and reduced private sector participation in agriculture, perpetuating rural poverty and underdevelopment.

For Daura Local Government Area, proximity to particularly volatile regions amplifies exposure to these security threats. Daura's location near banditry-prone areas and conflict zones means that rice mill operations would face heightened risks requiring substantial security investments, comprehensive contingency planning, and ongoing stakeholder engagement with security forces and local communities to ensure operational sustainability.

Corruption, Bureaucracy and Business Performance

Corruption represents one of the most persistent and pervasive governance challenges confronting investors in Nigeria, creating systemic obstacles that permeate business operations from initial entry through ongoing compliance and expansion. Transparency International (2024) consistently ranks Nigeria among countries with high corruption perceptions, reflecting deep-seated institutional weaknesses that manifest through bribery demands, extortionate practices, and protracted administrative delays across regulatory processes. For investors seeking to establish and operate rice mills in locations like Daura Local Government Area, these corruption risks materialize at multiple interaction points with government officials and agencies.

The financial impact of corruption extends beyond direct bribe payments to encompass increased transaction costs, wasted management time, and distorted investment decisions. When investors must navigate opaque approval processes, negotiate with officials exercising discretionary authority, or respond to unexpected demands, operational efficiency suffers and business planning becomes inherently uncertain. Particularly at local government levels, where institutional capacity

POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS OF A RICE MILL IN DAURA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

is often weakest and oversight most limited, corruption can become embedded in routine administrative procedures, creating a predictable but damaging tax on business activity (African Development Bank, 2023).

Bureaucratic bottlenecks, closely related to corruption, further undermine business performance through delays in permit issuance, land registration, tax assessment, and regulatory compliance. These procedural obstacles increase the time and resources required to establish and maintain operations, potentially derailing investment timelines and eroding profitability. The cumulative effect of corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency is diminished investor confidence in regulatory institutions, reduced willingness to commit capital to long-term projects, and impaired sustainability of agro-industrial investments that require consistent, predictable government interactions. Effective risk mitigation requires comprehensive due diligence, transparent engagement strategies, and where possible, collective action initiatives that strengthen institutional accountability.

Overview of the Political Environment in Daura

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Key Political Risk Factors Identified

The major political risks affecting rice mill investment in Daura include:

- Banditry and kidnapping
- Electoral unrest and leadership changes
- Agricultural policy uncertainty
- Corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks
- Poor electricity, roads, and water supply
- Ethnic and religious tensions

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a **qualitative descriptive research design**, focusing on political risk assessment for agro-industrial investment. The approach is suitable because political risks are best understood through environmental scanning, governance evaluation, and contextual interpretation rather than experimental methods.

The study relies on political risk indicators relevant to business sustainability in Daura

Local Government Area, Katsina State.

The research is based on **secondary data sources**, including:

- Government and institutional reports on Nigeria's political and economic climate
- Publications from the World Bank and Transparency International
- Agricultural and investment data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)
- Existing academic literature on political risk and international business
- Local contextual information on Katsina State and Daura LGA

These sources provide credible insights into the political and security challenges affecting rice mill operations.

Method of Political Risk Assessment

Political risk was assessed through thematic analysis of key risk categories affecting rice mill investment, including:

POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS OF A RICE MILL IN DAURA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

- Security threats
- Political instability
- Policy uncertainty
- Corruption and bureaucratic barriers
- Infrastructure deficits
- Ethnic and religious tensions

A simplified **risk rating model** was applied by assigning likelihood and impact scores to each risk factor, producing an overall political risk score for Daura.

Study Area Description

Daura Local Government Area is situated in the northern senatorial district of Katsina State, Nigeria, sharing a border with the Republic of Niger. The area holds profound political and cultural significance as one of the ancient Hausa city-states and the ancestral homeland of Nigeria's former president, Muhammadu Buhari. This political visibility has attracted increased government attention and development initiatives to the region. Agriculturally, Daura possesses considerable potential for rice cultivation, with accessible irrigation opportunities and established farming communities. However, the area confronts persistent governance challenges, including institutional capacity limitations and bureaucratic inefficiencies, alongside security threats such as banditry that periodically disrupt rural activities (International Crisis Group, 2023). These interconnected factors create a complex operating environment requiring careful risk assessment for prospective agro-industrial investments.

Analysis of Identified Political Risks

Security Risk

Security threats constitute the most severe political risk category affecting potential rice mill investment in Daura Local Government Area. Banditry, kidnapping for ransom, and farmer-herder conflicts have escalated across northern Nigeria, creating an environment of chronic uncertainty that directly undermines agro-industrial operations (International Crisis Group, 2023). For a rice milling facility, these security challenges disrupt supply chains by limiting farmers' access to farmlands and impeding the transportation of paddy rice from rural areas to processing centers. Personnel safety concerns may complicate workforce recruitment and retention, particularly if employees fear traveling to or from the facility during periods of heightened insecurity. Additionally, investors must allocate substantial resources to security measures, including perimeter fortification, security personnel, surveillance systems, and potentially armed escorts for product distribution. These expenditures increase operational costs and reduce profit margins, potentially undermining the financial viability of the investment. The unpredictable nature of security incidents further complicates business planning, as disruptions may occur without warning, causing production stoppages, contract defaults, and reputational damage. Effective

mitigation requires comprehensive security assessments, collaboration with local security forces, community engagement strategies, and contingency planning for supply chain alternatives during periods of heightened risk.

Political Instability

Political instability in Nigeria manifests through multiple channels that collectively create uncertainty for long-term investors in regions like Daura. The country's electoral cycles, occurring every four years at national and state levels, are frequently accompanied by political tensions, localized unrest, and occasionally violent confrontations that disrupt economic activities (Howell, 2014). During election periods, business operations may face interruptions due to movement restrictions, curfews, or civil disturbances that affect supply chains and personnel access. More significantly for investment sustainability, leadership changes following elections often precipitate shifts in policy priorities, economic development strategies, and attitudes toward private investment. Newly elected governors or local government chairpersons may alter incentive packages, revise agricultural development programs, or replace officials responsible for investment facilitation, creating discontinuity in government relationships. In Daura's case, the area's political visibility as the president's ancestral homeland introduced both advantages and vulnerabilities, as investment attention fluctuated with national political dynamics. Changes in state-level administration may also affect resource allocation for infrastructure projects, security provision, and agricultural support services essential for rice mill operations. Investors must therefore maintain flexible engagement strategies that accommodate political transitions while building relationships across party lines and administrative levels to ensure continuity of support regardless of electoral outcomes.

Policy Uncertainty

Policy uncertainty represents a fundamental challenge for agro-industrial investors in Nigeria's rice sector, where regulatory frameworks demonstrate considerable volatility with significant implications for business viability. Agricultural policies governing import restrictions, tariff regimes, subsidy programs, and local content requirements have shifted repeatedly over recent decades, reflecting competing pressures from domestic producers, consumers, and international trade obligations (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2023). For rice mill investors, policy changes can dramatically alter competitive dynamics and profitability calculations. Sudden adjustments to rice import duties or import bans affect the price competitiveness of domestic processing against foreign alternatives, while modifications to fertilizer or seed subsidy programs influence farm-level production costs and paddy supply availability. Licensing procedures for food processing facilities may change without adequate transition periods, creating compliance challenges and potential operational interruptions. Currency policy interventions, including exchange rate restrictions and central bank lending programs, further complicate financial planning and access to imported equipment or inputs. This policy unpredictability undermines investor confidence by complicating revenue projections, cost estimations, and return-on-investment calculations essential for capital allocation decisions. For Daura rice mill investment, comprehensive policy risk management requires continuous monitoring of policy developments, diversification of supply and market channels to reduce

POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS OF A RICE MILL IN DAURA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

exposure to specific policy changes, and proactive engagement with policymakers through industry associations to advocate for stable, predictable regulatory frameworks.

Corruption and Bureaucracy

Corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency constitute pervasive obstacles confronting investors attempting to establish and operate businesses in Nigeria, with particularly acute manifestations at local government levels where oversight mechanisms remain weakest. Transparency International (2024) consistently documents Nigeria's corruption challenges, which manifest through bribery demands during permit applications, license renewals, tax assessments, and regulatory inspections. For a rice mill investment in Daura, corruption risks emerge at multiple interaction points with government officials, including land acquisition proceedings, environmental impact assessments, construction approvals, water extraction permits, and ongoing compliance monitoring. These corrupt practices increase direct costs through payments extracted and indirect costs through management time diverted to negotiating opaque administrative processes. Bureaucratic bottlenecks compound these challenges through procedural delays, overlapping jurisdictional claims, and discretionary enforcement of regulations that create opportunities for rent-seeking behavior. Investors may find permit approvals extending for months or years beyond published timelines, requiring repeated follow-up and relationship management with multiple officials. The unpredictability of these processes complicates project planning, escalates development costs, and may delay market entry, undermining competitive positioning. Furthermore, corruption erodes confidence in regulatory institutions, creating uncertainty about whether approved permits will remain valid or whether new demands will emerge following personnel changes. Effective mitigation strategies include comprehensive due diligence on partners and officials, transparent documentation of all transactions, engagement of reputable local advisors familiar with administrative procedures, and where possible, participation in collective industry initiatives promoting institutional accountability and anti-corruption reforms.

Infrastructure Deficits

Infrastructure deficits in Daura Local Government Area present significant operational challenges that materially affect the feasibility and competitiveness of rice mill investments. Electricity supply remains chronically unreliable across much of northern Nigeria, with the national grid experiencing frequent outages and voltage fluctuations that disrupt continuous processing operations essential for maintaining rice quality and production efficiency (Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, 2023). Rice mills require consistent power for cleaning, de-husking, polishing, and packaging operations, making dependence on grid electricity commercially untenable. Investors must therefore invest in substantial backup generation capacity, significantly increasing capital expenditure and ongoing fuel costs that erode profit margins. Road infrastructure serving Daura and connecting to major distribution networks suffers from inadequate maintenance, with many rural access roads becoming impassable during rainy seasons and deteriorating progressively throughout the year. Poor road conditions increase transportation costs, vehicle maintenance expenses, and transit times for both raw material procurement and finished product distribution. Post-harvest losses may accumulate as paddy rice awaits transport from farming areas to processing facilities, while finished rice reaching consumers may bear higher prices reflecting logistics challenges. Water availability for processing operations presents additional concerns,

particularly during dry seasons when competition among agricultural, industrial, and domestic users intensifies. These infrastructure deficits, rooted in governance failures and inadequate public investment, collectively increase production and logistics costs, reducing the competitiveness of Daura-based rice milling operations relative to facilities in better-served locations. Comprehensive mitigation requires infrastructure partnerships with government agencies, exploration of renewable energy alternatives, and supply chain strategies that buffer against transportation uncertainties.

Ethnic and Religious Tensions

Ethnic and religious tensions, while less severe than immediate security threats in Daura's current environment, represent underlying social dynamics that could affect the acceptance and sustainability of externally owned rice mill investments. Northern Nigeria's complex social fabric encompasses diverse ethnic groups and religious communities with historically variable relationships, occasionally manifesting in communal tensions or grievances that external investors may inadvertently activate (International Crisis Group, 2023). For a rice milling facility, these tensions could affect multiple dimensions of operations, including community acceptance of land acquisition arrangements, workforce relations among employees from different backgrounds, and stakeholder perceptions of benefit distribution from the investment. Local grievances, whether rooted in perceived marginalization, resource competition, or historical disputes, may become directed at externally owned projects viewed as extracting value without adequate community benefit. Religious sensitivities could affect marketing strategies, employment practices, or community engagement approaches requiring cultural awareness and appropriate adaptation. While Daura's specific ethnic composition and historical patterns suggest relatively stable inter-group relations compared to some neighboring areas, investors must recognize that economic development initiatives can inadvertently exacerbate underlying tensions if implemented without adequate community consultation and inclusive benefit-sharing mechanisms. Effective management requires comprehensive stakeholder mapping, engagement with traditional and religious leadership structures, transparent communication about employment opportunities and community benefits, and ongoing monitoring of social dynamics that might affect the investment's social license to operate. Proactive community relations programs demonstrating commitment to local development, employment, and partnership can transform potential sources of tension into foundations for sustainable community support.

Risk Rating Results

A simplified weighted scoring model was applied:

Risk Category	Likelihood	Impact (1–5) Score (L×I)	
	(1–5)		
Security Risk	4	5	20

POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS OF A RICE MILL IN DAURA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

Political Instability	3	4	12
Policy Uncertainty	3	3	9
Corruption	4	3	12
Infrastructure Deficit	5	4	20
Ethnic/Religious			
	2	3	6

Tension Total Score = **79**

Interpretation: Daura's political risk level is classified as **Moderate**, with the most critical vulnerabilities being security and infrastructure deficits.

Discussion

The findings suggest that Daura LGA presents both investment opportunities and political uncertainties.

Firstly, the area benefits from strong agricultural potential and increased political visibility due to federal presence. These factors can encourage development projects and improve investor confidence.

However, insecurity remains the dominant risk, reflecting the broader challenges in northern Nigeria. The presence of banditry and kidnapping significantly threatens agro industrial operations and may discourage external investors.

Secondly, infrastructure deficits compound the risks by increasing operational expenses. Rice milling is energy-intensive, and unreliable electricity supply forces investors to rely on costly alternatives such as generators or solar solutions.

Corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies further reduce ease of doing business. Investors must navigate administrative bottlenecks, which may delay project implementation.

Despite these challenges, the moderate-risk rating indicates that investment is still viable when appropriate mitigation strategies are adopted, including strong community engagement, CSR initiatives, and political risk insurance.

CONCLUSION

Establishing a rice mill in Daura Local Government Area presents promising agro-industrial opportunities alongside moderate political risks that require careful navigation. The region benefits from considerable agricultural resources, including suitable conditions for rice cultivation

and established farming communities, while its political relevance as a historically significant area with national leadership connections potentially facilitates government engagement and support. However, serious concerns persist regarding insecurity from banditry and farmer-herder conflicts, infrastructure gaps in electricity and transportation networks, corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies at local governance levels, and policy inconsistency affecting agricultural investments. These interconnected challenges necessitate comprehensive mitigation strategies encompassing enhanced security arrangements, meaningful stakeholder engagement with communities and traditional institutions, strict regulatory compliance, corporate social responsibility initiatives demonstrating local commitment, and adaptive risk management frameworks responsive to changing conditions. With effective implementation of these measures, investors can substantially reduce risk exposure while ensuring operational sustainability. The overall moderate-risk assessment suggests Daura remains a feasible destination for agro-industrial development capable of generating employment, income diversification, and economic transformation benefits for surrounding communities.

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POLITICAL RISK ANALYSIS OF A RICE MILL IN DAURA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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