



Procurement Integrity – The importance of not deferring accountability to digital systems and instilling ethical conduct in procurement officials and decision makers

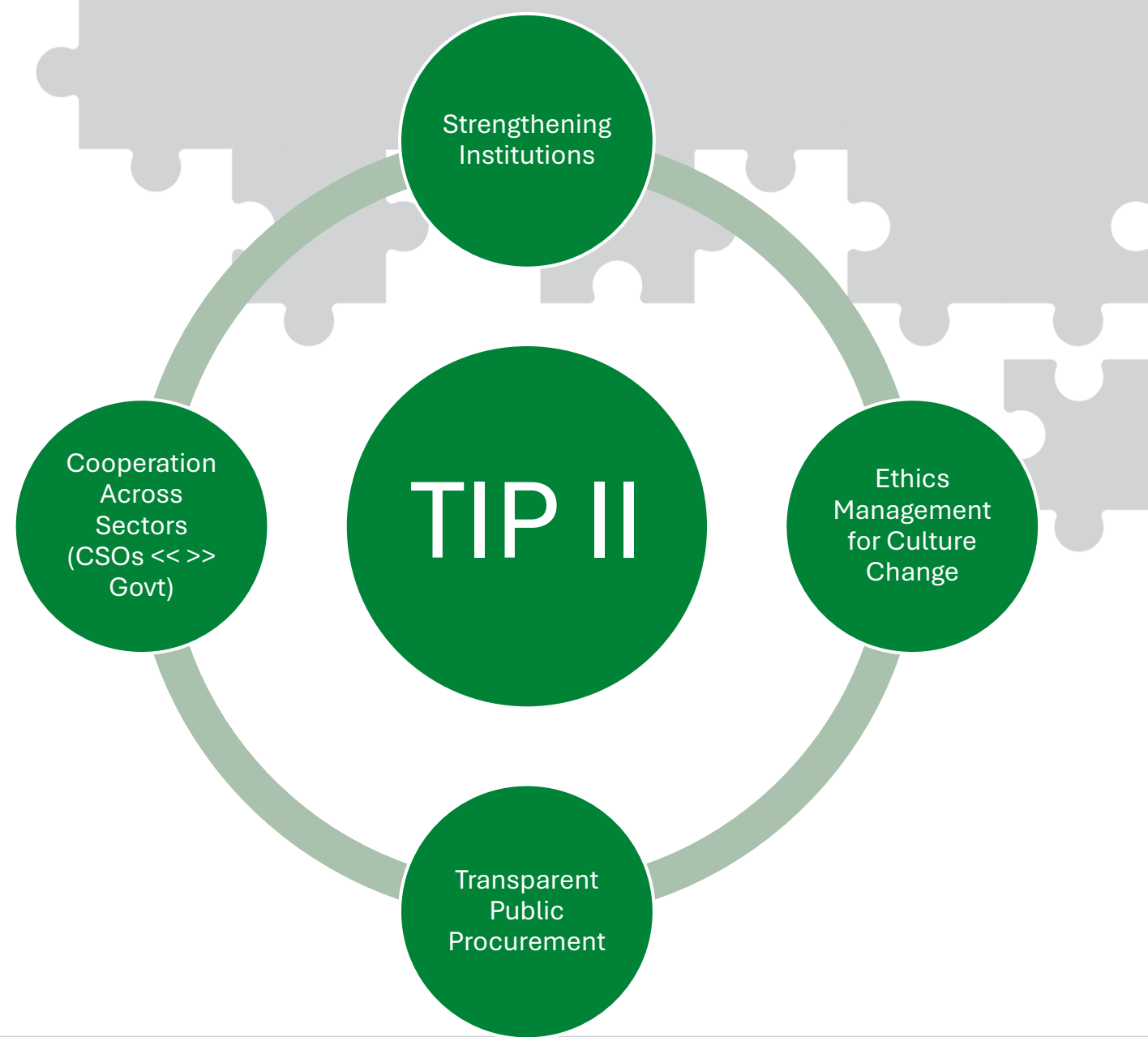
Date: 3 September 2026

Time: 10:15

Presenter: GIZ TIP II

Project Description

- Strengthens South Africa's ability to prevent corruption in a whole-of-government and societal manner.
- Integrates digitalization, a human rights-based approach, and social norms and behaviour change.
- Four output areas.
- Works in partner-driven approach both with government and civil society partners



Transparency, Integrity and Accountability Project Procurement Focus Areas

Data Transparency
and Quality of OCDS
implementation

Core Partner -OCPO

Professionalisation
of Procurement
Officials including
Code of Ethics,
Social Norms
Behaviour Change

**Core Partners -
OCPO and DPSA**

Oversight and
Accountability

Core Partners:
Corruption Watch,
Public Affairs
Research Institute
and Asivikelane

Social Norm: the unwritten rule

These are the mutual expectations of a group about the appropriate way to behave in a given situation. They are made up of descriptive and injunctive norms.

Behavior: what people actually do

Behavior is the action driven by the expectations inherent in the social norm.

Example

Reference groups:

A Procurement Specialist's departmental colleagues may be one type of reference group. Reference groups create and sustain the mutual expectations that make up a social norm. However, all Procurement Specialists belong to multiple groups simultaneously; which groups' expectations influence behavior depends on the issue and situation.

A Procurement Specialist may solicit kick backs from a network applying for a tender because they believe that this is what others within the dept/office believe they ought to do (injunctive norm) and it is what they believe others do (descriptive norm). The implicit pressure to charge a 'fee for service' is amplified by the knowledge that not doing so is likely to result in gossip and mockery from colleagues (a social punishment). This could affect the officer's standing in this reference group, something that may be key for access to resources or job opportunities. Continued noncompliance with the social norm could result in being 'written up' by a supervisor on a fabricated violation of official rules.

The impact of this action could be that this procurement specialist goes to great lengths to bypass the digital system or to put through information that looks legitimate to anyone looking at the data

Social norms are a group's expectations about how a member of that group should behave in a given situation.¹⁵ Groups are made up of people whose opinions or expectations are important enough for someone to 'refer' to them to determine which behavior is appropriate.



The expectations that make up social norms are based on two beliefs:

- What we believe others think we should do (**injunctive norm**); and
- What we believe others do in the same scenario (**descriptive norm**).

Social norms are enforced primarily through:



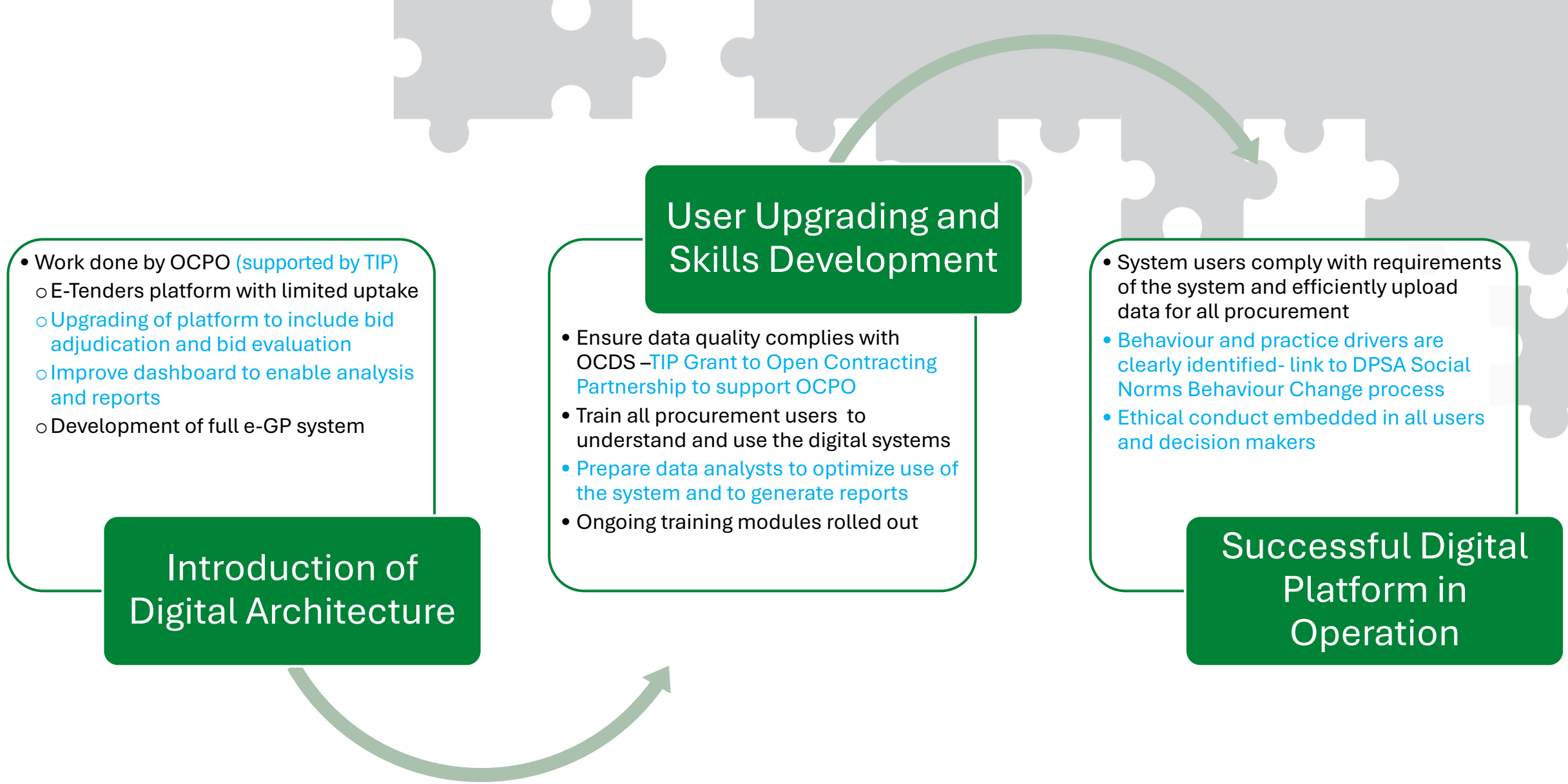
Social rewards
(e.g. trust, praise)



Social punishment
(e.g. ostracism or shame)

How are social norms different from attitudes, behaviors, and morals?

	What is it?	How is it different from a social norm?
Attitudes	A person's beliefs or judgments (e.g., favor/disfavor) about something or someone	Attitudes are personal judgments or evaluations; they may be influenced by, but do not depend on, expectations about others. Attitudes may or may not align with social expectations.
Morals	Deeply held inner convictions that help people decide what is right or wrong	Morals exist and are potentially relevant in all situations at all times, while social norms depend on the context or who else is present.
Behaviors	What people actually do	Behaviors are actions, not beliefs, and are influenced by a variety of factors, including social norms, but also attitudes, circumstances, values, abilities, etc.
Customs	Common patterns of behavior people engage in; normal behavior	People conform to a behavior because it meets their needs, or because it is convenient. It is not because of social expectations, nor solely because they see others doing it.
Culture	Behavior patterns, social institutions, attitudes, norms, values, language, etc., that are characteristic of a given group or community and are socially transmitted	Culture encompasses much more than social norms. Social norms are a dimension of culture, but not equivalent to it.



From Digital Procurement to Oversight & Investigations

Better procurement data strengthens SIU and other investigation bodies — while keeping people accountable.

Digital procurement should create a usable evidence trail — not only process transactions.



Key design test

Could an investigator reconstruct the transaction five years later?

Who did what • when • why • with which documents • what changed

Takeaway: build “investigability by design” into eProcurement so oversight moves from reactive casework to earlier detection and prevention.



Thank you

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