



BEYOND DIGITAL PROCUREMENT: PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE, USER-CENTRED SYSTEMS & ECONOMIC IMPACT

From compliance to development-oriented public value

21 October 2026 | Limpopo Provincial eProcurement Dialogue

Dr Albert Jeleni | IfEDI Africa & Limpopo Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The reform paradox

We have improved policies, platforms and controls; critical challenges recur.

2004

SCM framework

Public-sector
procurement reform

2015

eTender + CSD

Digital access and
supplier verification

2024

MAPS assessment

Professionalisation gaps
remain

2026

**GTAC–OCPO–EU
Renewed reform**

Automation + SCM
professionalisation

OUR POSITION

The GTAC–OCPO–EU initiative aligns with this international reform direction. From fragmented processes to integrated, data-driven and integrity-focused procurement.

KEY QUESTION

Why do weaknesses diagnosed in one reform cycle reappear in the next?

Procurement is an economic instrument

Spending is not the outcome. Development value depends on what expenditure enables.

$$\text{GDP} = C + I + G + (X - M)$$

12.7%

OECD public procurement as a share of GDP (2023).

29.9%

OECD public procurement as a share of total government expenditure (2023).

THE POINT

Catalytic procurement can enable investment, jobs, productivity and trade.

South Africa's capital-to-investment challenge

Large financial resources exist; the bottleneck is investable opportunities, confidence and delivery.

R1.8 trillion

Bank deposits of non-financial companies • July 2025

R5.84 trillion

Aggregate retirement-fund assets • 2023 (invested assets, not idle cash)

R2.67 trillion

Consolidated public expenditure • 2026/27 (not all procurement)

Strategic public purchasing and infrastructure can help create bankable demand and crowd in PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

The optimal procurement sequence

Begin with outcomes, not a shopping list. Design for public value and lawful market participation.

01

WHY

Development or service outcome



02

WHAT

Highest-value intervention



03

MARKET

Demand and investability

04

HOW

Proportionate, lawful method



05

WHOM

Open, capable competition



06

IMPACT

Measure benefits and learn

DELIVERY: contract management, timely payment, professional judgement and user feedback sit across the entire cycle.

The people behind the system

A standards-based digital system still depends on the competence and judgement of its professionals.

97%

OECD countries offer procurement training / methodological support

31%

Have public procurement certification frameworks (2024; 35 countries)

IfEDI Africa: relevant complementary competence pathways

CrEGIR

Economic governance & reform

CrRPM&E

Research, analytics & M&E

CrTTDT

Digital transformation

CrBACS

Business advisory & strategy

About IfEDI Africa

Institute for Economic Development and Innovation | A continental professional body

WHO WE ARE

IfEDI Africa is a professional body advancing ethical, evidence-based and impact-driven economic development practice across Africa.

VISION

Africa's leading professional body for ethical and evidence-based economic development and innovation.

MISSION

Strengthen development outcomes through professional standards, assessed competence, certification, continuous learning and ethical practice.

WHAT WE DO — FIVE PILLARS

a

Professional Membership & Recognition

Professional identity and recognition against relevant standards

b

Certification & Accreditation

19 fields; assessment-based pathways, RPL and institutional certification

c

Learning, Formation & CPD

Masterclasses, professional formation and continuous development

d

Research, Policy & Advisory

Applied research, policy engagement and institutional advisory work

e

Ecosystem Building & Excellence

Forums, networks, publications, awards and knowledge-to-impact

From IEDC's century-old roots in the USA to iED (UK), EDAC (Canada) and EDA (Australia), economic development has long benefited from professional institutions globally.

IfEDI Africa: Certification & Accreditation

Multi-disciplinary professional designations spanning economic governance, investment and development practice.

FIELDS 01–10

01	Certified Local Economic Development (CrLED) Practitioners
02	Certified Enterprise & Supplier Development (CrESD) Practitioners
03	Certified Incubation, Acceleration & Venture Building (CrIAV) Practitioners
04	Certified Public–Private Partnership (CrPPP) Practitioners
05	Certified Innovation, Technology Transfer & Digital Transformation (CrTTDT) Practitioners
06	Certified Business Advisors, Consultants & Strategists (CrBACS) Practitioners
07	Certified Trainers, Facilitators, Curriculum Designers & Coaches (CrTFCC) Practitioners
08	Certified Assessors, Moderators & Quality Assurance (CrMQA) Practitioners
09	Certified SEZ, Cluster & Industrial Park (CrSCIP) Practitioners
10	Certified Development Finance & Impact Investment (CrDFI) Practitioners

FIELDS 11–19

11	Certified Research, Policy, Analytics & Monitoring and Evaluation (CrRPM&E) Practitioners
12	Certified Youth Development & Grassroots Innovation (CrYDGI) Practitioners
13	Certified Green Economy & Climate Resilience (CrGECR) Practitioners
14	Certified Spatial Development, Infrastructure & Township/Rural Economy (CrSITE) Practitioners
15	Certified Economic Governance & Institutional Reform (CrEGIR) Practitioners
16	Certified Data Science, GIS & Economic Intelligence (CrDGEI) Practitioners
17	Certified Economic Development Ethical Leaders (CrCEDEL) — Apex Designation
18	Certified Productivity & Competitiveness (CrP&C) Practitioners
19	Certified Transport, Mobility & Logistics Economics (CrTMLE) Practitioners

Beyond individual certification, IfEDI Africa provides institutional capability assessments and standards-based accreditation for qualifying organisations.

The Chamber: close the procurement–SMME readiness gap

Government plans what to procure, while enterprise programmes may prepare SMMEs to supply something else.

Forward demand

What government plans to procure

Supplier capability

What SMMEs are equipped to supply

Market mismatch

Where demand and readiness diverge

Digital accessibility

Can suppliers compete without friction?

Participation data

Bids, failures, drop-offs and feedback

Market outcomes

Did support enable fair market access?

“Market before product: align supplier development with real demand, then measure access to markets.”

The Chamber: monitor the system, not just the supplier

An electronic platform can be technically “up” while its users face costly and unfair friction.

Access

Mobile / low bandwidth

Time

Bid completion time

Errors

Repeat uploads / failures

Drop-off

Where suppliers abandon

Decisions

Clear reasons / feedback

Resolve

Complaint resolution

**“Do not only test whether businesses comply with the system.
Test whether the system enables businesses to comply.”**

Three forms of assurance • one development objective

Procurement intelligence links compliant transactions to measurable investment and public value.

1 PROFESSIONAL

Can officials demonstrate role-specific competence, ethics and CPD?

IfEDI + established SCM bodies

2 USER

Does the process work for business and reveal avoidable barriers?

LCCI + diverse suppliers

3 ECONOMIC

What public value and additional productive investment were enabled?

GTAC / Treasury + evaluators

Measure the full procurement lifecycle — not only tender publication and the award.

Three recommendations to GTAC, OCPO and Treasury

A practical addition to the existing digital governance, integrity and automation workstreams.

- 1. PROFESSIONALISE** Integrate role-specific competence assessment, credible certification / RPL, ethics and CPD into digital procurement reform.
- 2. LISTEN TO USERS** Embed supplier-journey analytics and structured, independent business feedback in prototype testing and rollout.
- 3. MEASURE IMPACT** Pilot procurement decisions that test development objectives, market readiness, additional investment and service results.



Thank you

Dr Albert Jeleni | IfEDI Africa & LCCI | 21 October 2026