

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT NETWORK (APPN)

VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE, NOVEMBER 11 TO 14, 2025

THEME: TRANSFORMING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN AFRICA THROUGH INNOVATION, INCLUSION, SUSTAINABILITY, AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

A Background

Public procurement accounts for approximately 17% of GDP in African countries and plays a pivotal role in delivering public services and driving economic growth. Recognizing its importance, 43 African countries came together in Lomé, Togo, in October 2018 to establish the African Public Procurement Network (APPN) - a platform designed to foster collaboration, peer learning, and regional cooperation among policymakers, regulators, and practitioners.

Today, the APPN comprises 53 African countries organized into five sub-regional networks: North, East, West, Central, and Southern Africa. Its governance structure includes the General Assembly, Executive Committee, President, Vice President, and the Technical Secretariat based in Lomé. The General Assembly, composed of heads of national public procurement authorities, is the highest decision-making body, setting strategic direction, electing leadership, and guiding key decisions. The General Assembly convenes on an annual basis.

As part of its ongoing efforts to promote innovation, inclusion, and sustainability in public procurement across the continent, the APPN will convene its Fifth General Assembly (FiGA) in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from November 11 to 14, 2025. This event marks a significant milestone in advancing the APPN's mission of transforming public procurement in Africa.

Objectives of the Fifth General Assembly

The Fifth General Assembly aims to further the APPN's core mission by offering a platform for the heads of procurement agencies, experts, and stakeholders to:

- Exchange lessons learned and best practices
- Strengthen procurement institutions and systems
- Promote innovative solutions to procurement challenges
- Address governance and strategic planning issues for the network.

Theme and Timeline

The theme “**Transforming Public Procurement in Africa through Innovation, Inclusion, Sustainability, and Regional Collaboration**” is both timely and essential for advancing good governance, economic resilience, and equitable development across the continent.

Public procurement accounts for a significant portion of national budgets, and transforming it through innovation, including digital technologies, AI, and data analytics, can greatly enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability. Inclusion ensures that procurement systems benefit all segments of society, particularly marginalized groups such as women, youth, and small enterprises, thereby fostering equitable economic participation.

Integrating sustainability into procurement decisions supports environmental protection and long-term development goals, aligning public spending with climate and social commitments. Finally, regional collaboration promotes harmonized standards, shared knowledge, and collective bargaining power, reducing fragmentation and boosting Africa's integration agenda under frameworks like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Together, these pillars offer a powerful, strategic approach to reposition public procurement as a transformative tool for sustainable development in Africa.

Host, Co-sponsors, and Participants

The Government of Zimbabwe, as the current President of the Network will host the Fifth General Assembly in coordination with the APPN Technical Secretariat. Expected co-sponsors include the World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the host country, and the APPN.

Participants will include heads of procurement regulatory bodies, audit and oversight institutions, regional and international experts, civil society organizations, private sector representatives, and academic institutions. The APPN and its sponsors will cover the cost of participation for one delegate per member country. Additional participants may attend at their own expense. Virtual participation will also be available.

Main Activities

The Fifth General Assembly will feature a variety of sessions and events, including:

- Opening and closing ceremonies
- Technical panels and expert presentations
- Breakout group discussions
- Deliberations on APPN governance matters, including elections and regulatory updates.

Expected Outputs

- Enhanced knowledge sharing on innovative procurement practices
- Strengthened regional collaboration and peer learning
- A revised regional action plan based on Assembly recommendations
- Updated internal regulations and strategic decisions for the network.

Host Country Responsibilities

The host country will coordinate with the Technical Secretariat to manage logistics, promote the event, and facilitate stakeholder engagement. Zimbabwe will also support the development of a detailed logistics note to guide participant preparations.

Coordination Team

The FGA coordination team will comprise the current APPN President and host and the host country's designated team members, Vice President, Executive Committee members, Technical Secretary, and representatives from the World Bank, AfDB, IsDB, AIIB, and the host country. This team will be responsible for overall planning and delivery of the event.

Conclusion

The Fifth General Assembly of the APPN presents a strategic opportunity to accelerate the transformation of public procurement in Africa through innovation, inclusion, sustainability, and regional collaboration. By fostering a dynamic and inclusive platform for peer learning and partnership, the APPN reaffirms its commitment to building resilient, transparent, and future-ready procurement systems that advance sustainable development and regional integration across the continent.