DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

FOR

THE 18TH EAST AFRICA PROCUREMENT FORUM

OCTOBER 2026

1. Introduction

The East Africa Procurement Forum (EAPF) is a convergence of public procurement regulatory bodies from across East Africa, which has been held annually since 2008. The forum brings together stakeholders from the East African Community (EAC) partner states and beyond, including representatives from government institutions, the private sector, civil society, and the media. The current EAC partner states are Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The inaugural EAPF was held at the Commonwealth Resort in Munyonyo, Uganda, from 10th to 12th June 2008. It was organized by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) of Uganda in collaboration with the World Bank. During this forum, participants agreed that hosting responsibilities would rotate annually among EAC member states.

The most recent forum, the 17th EAPF, was held in Juba, South Sudan from 11th to 14th May 2026. During this convention, the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) of Kenya was selected to organize and host the 18th EAPF, scheduled for November 2026.

2. Objective of the Forum

The objective of the forum is to create a platform for member countries to share experiences, benchmark public procurement systems, and exchange best practices with the goal of promoting continuous improvement and mutual benefit. It also serves as a space for interaction among the various actors involved in public procurement across the East African Community. Through this engagement, stakeholders are able to articulate their concerns, showcase their efforts, and contribute to shaping a more harmonized and efficient public procurement landscape in the region.

3. Participants of the Forum

The EAPF brings together approximately 500 participants from across the East African region, including Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, South

Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to deliberate on key public procurement issues. Participants are drawn from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including the public sector, private sector, professional bodies, civil society organizations, and training institutions, among others.

4. Rationale for Holding the Forum

The Forum offers opportunities which include among others:

a) A platform for strengthening interfaces and enhancing knowledge transfer between procurement regulatory bodies and other oversight institutions such as the Office of the Auditor General, Commission on Administrative Justice, Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, among others;

b) Promotion of accountability and transparency in government operations by improving institutional frameworks and capacity building of procurement staff to effectively conduct their mandates and functions according to best practices and standards;

c) Equips participants from EAC partner states with requisite knowledge and skills that are vital for enhancing transparency and achieving value for money in public contracting for procurement regulatory bodies and other stakeholders in the region;

d) It guides procurement regulatory bodies and key stakeholders on general policy issues for the enhancement of open contracting and citizens' engagement in public contracting within the EAC;

e) An avenue for demonstrating the roles of various stakeholders in promoting transparency and accountability in public procurement;

f) It provides regional delegates an opportunity to share best practices on emerging issues like how technology is being harnessed to fight corruption while promoting transparency in public procurement; and

g) A vehicle for harmonization of public procurement systems in the East Africa region.

5. Resolutions of the 17th EAPF

At the 17th forum held in Juba, South Sudan, participants deliberated and agreed on areas where Forum resolutions would be drawn and shared to member states. The following areas were adopted at the Forum:

Table 1: Resolutions of the 17th East Africa Procurement Forum

Issue	Resolution	Responsible
Anchoring of the East Africa Procurement Forum (EAPF) within the East African Community (EAC) remains pending despite repeated resolutions.	Establish a Technical Committee comprising one representative from each Member Country, chaired by Kenya as host of the 18th EAPF, to prepare and submit a Concept Note and formal proposal to the relevant EAC Organs before the 18th EAPF.	Member Countries / Technical Committee
Most Member Countries have provisions for promotion of local firms but lack specific reservation schemes for regional/EAC firms.	Review public procurement laws and regulations to incorporate preferential treatment and reservation schemes for East African regional firms, drawing lessons from Uganda's model.	Member Countries
Member Countries are still at early stages of implementing Beneficial Ownership Disclosure (BOD) in public procurement.	Undertake performance audits and implementation assessments of Beneficial Ownership Disclosure frameworks and share findings during the 18th EAPF.	Member Countries / Procurement Regulatory Authorities
Ethics, integrity, and professionalism in public procurement remain uneven across the region.	Strengthen collaboration between Procurement Regulatory Authorities and Professional Bodies towards harmonization and mutual recognition of procurement professional qualifications within the East African region.	Procurement Regulatory Authorities / Professional Bodies
Member Countries remain at varied stages of implementation of e-Government Procurement (e-GP) systems and E-Waste Management in supply	Accelerate implementation of e-GP systems and integrate sustainable E-Waste Management practices into public procurement and supply chain systems.	Member Countries

Issue	Resolution	Responsible
chains.		
Hosting of the 18th East Africa Procurement Forum.	Kenya to host the 18th East Africa Procurement Forum in 24th – 27th November 2026.	Kenya

6. Themes of Previous Forums

The theme of each Forum is prepared by the host country and discussed by CEOs of the Procurement Regulatory Authorities of all partner states during the preparatory meeting. These meetings are organized by the host and conducted through video conferencing.

Themes for the previous EAPF are illustrated in the Table below:

Table 2: Themes for Previous Forums

Forum No.	Theme	Date	Venue	Host Institution
1st	Improve the Efficiency of the Public Procurement Systems	10th to 12th June 2008	Kampala, Uganda	PPDA Uganda
2nd	Transforming Public Procurement in East Africa	19th to 21st August 2009	Nairobi, Kenya	PPOA Kenya
3rd	Looking Beyond Compliance – Promoting Better Procurement Outcomes	29th Sept. to 1st October 2010	Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania	PPRA Tanzania
4th	Improving the Efficiency of Public Procurement in the East African Community for Economic Growth	14th to 16th November 2011	Kigali, Rwanda	RPPA Rwanda
5th	Ethics and Integrity in Procurement Management	5th to 7th December 2012	Bujumbura, Burundi	ARMP Burundi
6th	Achieving Value for Money in Public Procurement	November 2013	Kampala, Uganda	PPDA Uganda
7th	Promoting Sustainable Socio-economic Development through Public Procurement	November 2014	Nairobi, Kenya	PPOA Kenya
8th	Harmonizing Public Procurement Frameworks in the Context of EAC Monetary Union	2015	Arusha, Tanzania	PPRA Tanzania

Forum No.	Theme	Date	Venue	Host Institution
9th	Promoting Procurement Practices that Deliver Better Results	2nd to 4th Nov. 2016	Kigali, Rwanda	RPPA Rwanda
10th	Leveraging Technology for Improved Procurement Outcomes	1st to 3rd Dec. 2017	Kampala, Uganda	PPDAA Uganda
11th	Strengthening Integrity and Accountability in Public Procurement	28th to 30th Nov. 2018	Nairobi, Kenya	PPRA Kenya
12th	Adopt Modern Procurement Practices for Sustainable Economic Development	2019	Arusha, Tanzania	PPRA Tanzania
13th	Strengthening Integrity and Accountability in Public Procurement for Effective Emergency Response	2020	Kigali, Rwanda	RPPA Rwanda
14th	Open Contracting as a Vehicle for Social Accountability and Sustainable Development	2021 (took place in March, 2023 due to the Covid 19 Pandemic)	Kampala, Uganda	PPDA Uganda
15th	Improving Public Procurement by Measuring Performance	4th to 6th Dec. 2023	Bujumbura, Burundi	ARMP Burundi
16th	Digitalization for Sustainable Public Procurement	9th to 12th September 2024	Arusha, Tanzania	PPRA Tanzania
17th	Enhancing Beneficial Ownership Disclosure in East African Countries Procurement Systems	2025	Juba, South Sudan	PPDAA South Sudan

7. Theme for 18th East Africa Procurement Forum

The proposed theme for the 18th East Africa Procurement Forum, to be hosted in Kenya in November 2026, is **"Harnessing Artificial Intelligence and Inclusive Public Procurement for Regional Integration, Youth Empowerment and Shared Prosperity"**.

This theme aligns with the current global focus on exploring opportunities of reducing youth unemployment as part of efforts to ensure that the youth are fully engaged in productive economic activities.

The theme also supports realizat4ion of SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10 and 12 on Quality Education, Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Reduced Inequalities, and responsible production and consumption, respectively. In the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region, the youth Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) rate stood at **21.9%**, surpassing the global average of **20.4%**. this rate varies highly amongst the EAC member states.

Given that public procurement accounts for 15–20% of global GDP and about 50% of annual fiscal year budgets, it represents one of the most influential mechanisms through which governments can shape the direction of the economy and spur inclusive growth. While much focus has been placed on the education system, there hasn't been equal focus on creating opportunities to be taken up by the graduates, leading to year-on-year increase in the NEET. Public procurement and supply chain network is a powerful avenue for driving sustainable creation of opportunities for the youth and the marginalized groups.

The theme also focuses on adoption and exploitation of emerging technologies towards enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of public procurement and asset disposal systems. With the emergence of artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, cybersecurity and related technologies, there is need to harness the same through continuous capacity development and realignment of e-procurement systems and regulatory operations.

Sub-Themes will include:

a. **AI and the Future of Public Procurement**
   Using AI for demand forecasting, market intelligence, bid evaluation support, fraud-risk detection, contract management, spend analytics and procurement decision-making, while addressing algorithmic bias, accountability, data governance and human oversight.
b. **Youth as Drivers of Procurement Innovation**

Creating opportunities for young entrepreneurs, technology innovators, procurement professionals and start-ups to participate in public procurement and develop solutions for public-sector challenges.

c. **Inclusive Procurement for Marginalised and Underserved Communities**

   Examining how procurement systems can increase participation by women, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged communities, micro and small enterprises, and other historically underserved groups.

d. **Digitalisation and Regional Procurement Integration**

   Exploring interoperability of e-GP systems, cross-border procurement, shared procurement data, digital identity, regional supplier databases and AI-enabled procurement intelligence.

e. **Climate smart procurement for Sustainable Development**

   Using public purchasing power to promote climate action, circular economy principles, sustainable infrastructure, local production and environmentally responsible supply chains.

f. **Compliance and Responsible AI in Procurement**

   Addressing non-compliance & corruption risks, conflicts of interest, beneficial ownership, open contracting, cybersecurity, data protection and ethical use of AI.

g. **Building the Next Generation of Procurement Professionals**

   Professionalisation, digital skills, AI literacy, innovation, leadership and continuous learning for young procurement practitioners across East Africa.

8. Programme

Generally, the highlights of the programme on **Day 1** will entail the opening ceremony, presenting on the implementation status of the resolutions of the 17th Forum as well as sharing each country's experience in a chosen thematic area. **Day 2 and 3** will continue with country and thematic presentations on the various topics before winding up with **Day 4** where the delegates shall adopt the resolutions of the Forum as well as agree on the host for the 19th Forum. A provisional programme for the Forum will be prepared and submitted in the forthcoming meetings after the approval of the theme for the Forum.

9. Venue

The Forum will be held in Mombasa, Kenya. The venue will be communicated in due course.

10. Forum Date

The 18th East Africa Procurement Forum is scheduled to be held from **24th to 27th November 2026**. Delegates are expected to arrive a day earlier.

11. Organizing Committees

The Forum will be organized by PPRA Kenya with support of other Government Agencies. A Steering Committee and a Technical Committee comprising officials from the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority and other relevant government agencies have been established to coordinate the preparations for the hosting of the Forum. Sub-committees will be constituted as and when need arises for the successful organization of the forum.

12. Participation in the Forum

Based on historical data, each event is attended by an average of three hundred (300) participants annually on a feeless basis. Each country, except for the host, is typically allocated between twenty (20) and thirty (30) slots for their delegation, but the host country usually has more delegates. As the host, Kenya is expected to have a higher number of delegates. Table 2 presents the average breakdown of participants expected per country for the upcoming Forum in Mombasa, Kenya. Invitation letters calling for participation will be sent to the Partner States on or before the end of September 2026.

Table 3: Expected number of Delegates per Country during the 18th EAPF

No.	Country	No. of Delegates
1.	Tanzania	25
2.	Burundi	25
3.	**Kenya**	**310**
4.	Rwanda	25

5.	South Sudan	25
6.	Uganda	25
7.	DRC	10
8.	Zanzibar	10
9.	Somalia	10
10.	Other Guests from: Zambia, Ethiopia, Swaziland, Malawi, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, EAC, COMESA, ECOWAS, and development partners etc.	35
	Total	**500**

13. Guidelines for Presenters/Discussants

PPRA, Kenya will draft the guidelines on each topic which will be shared with the CEOs to help the presenters and discussants prepare accordingly. These guidelines will be shared after the topics have been agreed upon by the CEOs, by latest mid-September 2026.

14. Forum Opening Ceremony

The Forum will be officiated by H.E. the President of the Republic of Kenya as the Chief Guest.

Other participants will be government Ministers, Accounting Officers of procuring entities, procurement practitioners from both the public and private sectors, and civil society organizations.

15. Forum Closing Ceremony

The Forum will be officially closed by the Cabinet Secretary, The National Treasury, FCPA Hon. John Mbadi Ng'ongo.

16. Strategy for Publicity of the Event

To ensure that the event garners widespread public attention and effectively conveys its message, strategic publicity methods will be implemented. The publicity strategy will encompass, but is not limited to, the following:

a) Participation in TV and radio programs to raise awareness about the upcoming event;

b) Creation and airing of TV and radio adverts;

c) Feature the event in print media for broader visibility in newspapers, journals, and magazines;

d) Launching a focused social media campaign across various platforms;

e) Dissemination of bulk messages to stakeholders (push messages);

f) Branding of the event;

g) Hosting of press conferences;

h) Video documentation for further airing and references;

i) Effective media coverage throughout the event; and

j) Development of promotional materials for the event.

17. Sponsors for the Forum

Various public and private sector organizations will be requested to sponsor the 18th East Africa Procurement Forum. Sponsorship packages will vary based on the category of sponsorship.