

CALL FOR: PAPERS, INNOVATIONS & POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS

Annual African Conference on Economic Development and Innovation (ACOEDI 2026)

2-3 September 2026

(pre-conference welcome dinner on 1 September and optional
post-conference technical tour on 4 September)

CONFERENCE AIM:

The African Conference on Economic Development and Innovation (ACOEDI 2026) provides a high-level interdisciplinary platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaborative problem-solving focused on the transformation of African economies. The conference is convened by the Institute for Economic Development and Innovation (IfEDI) in collaboration with the International Conference on Business and Management Dynamics (ICBMD). This event brings together a diverse range of stakeholders, including academic researchers and scholars, policymakers and government institutions, economic development practitioners, private sector actors, entrepreneurs and industry leaders, development finance institutions, innovation ecosystem actors, as well as postgraduate students and emerging researchers, to translate knowledge into coordinated action for professionalised and measurable economic transformation and innovation.

Who Should Attend or Submit Contributions:

We invite submissions ranging from full academic papers, policy frameworks, case studies, innovation showcases, venture models, and implementation methodologies. Submissions can be made by researchers, lecturers, and postgraduate scholars; public sector managers, LED practitioners, and policy specialists; private sector executives, industry leaders, and industry association representatives; entrepreneurs and enterprise leaders; development finance professionals, including investment managers, credit and risk specialists, deal makers, and fund managers; innovation and enterprise development professionals, including incubator managers, accelerator leads, technology transfer officers, and ecosystem builders; NGO leaders, project managers, and implementation specialists in economic and community development; and international development professionals, including programme directors, advisors, and representatives of multilateral and regional institutions.

CONFERENCE OUTCOMES:

ACOEDI 2026 is designed as a practice-oriented, implementation-driven forum. Contributions extend beyond academic discourse to inform real-world economic systems, institutional design, and development practice. Accordingly, ACOEDI 2026 will deliver three primary knowledge outputs:

1. African Economic Development & Innovation Atlas 2026

A flagship continental annual publication structured as a practitioner-oriented implementation framework. The Atlas integrates economic intelligence, strategic planning, investment pathways, and governance systems into a coherent model for application at national, regional, and local levels.

2. ACOEDI 2026 Conference Proceedings

All accepted academic papers will undergo double-blind peer review and be published as book chapters in the official conference proceedings. Selected high- quality papers may be considered for extended publication in affiliated journals or special issues.

3. African Economic Development and Innovation Excellence Framework

A structured competitiveness and benchmarking tool designed to recognise and promote excellence in economic development and innovation. The Framework establishes clear criteria for assessing institutional performance across key areas such as policy implementation, innovation ecosystem development, enterprise support, and sustainable growth. ACOEDI 2026 will serve as the launch platform for this Framework, with the inaugural recognition cycle scheduled to commence following the conference.

CONFERENCE THEME:

Advancing African Prosperity: Bridging Research, Policy, and Industry for Sustainable Economic Innovation.

SUB-THEMES AND FOCUS AREAS

Submissions should align with one or more of the following focus areas under each sub-themes:

1

Re-Architecting African Economies for Structural Transformation:

- * Economic Diversification and Industrial Policy
- * Regional Value Chains and AfCFTA Integration
- * Institutional Architecture for Development
- * Financing Structural Transformation
- * Infrastructure Systems, Trade Corridors and Logistics

2

Innovation Ecosystems and Venture Creation

- * Innovation Hubs, Incubators and Venture Builders
- * Entrepreneurial Universities and Venture Education
- * Financing Innovation and Venture Capital Ecosystems
- * Corporate–Startup Collaboration and Open Innovation

3

Enterprise Development & Informal Economy Transformation

- * SME Development and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems
- * Productivity and Formalisation of Informal Enterprises
- * Enterprise Development Programmes and Incubation Models
- * Local Economic Development and Territorial Enterprise Systems

4

Digital and Industrial Transformation

- * Artificial Intelligence, Data Economies & Digital Sovereignty
- * Future of Work and Workforce Transformation
- * Industry 4.0 and Smart Manufacturing
- * Digital Platforms, Blockchain & Emerging Business Models
- * Economic Data Systems and Development Intelligence

5

Sustainable and Inclusive Development

- * Green Innovation and the Circular Economy
- * ESG Governance and Responsible Business
- * Inclusive Development and Social Impact
- * Climate Policy and Business Adaptation

TRACKS:

The conference is structured around five tracks, each designed to accommodate specific stakeholder groups:

TRACK 1 TRACK TITLE: Academic Research Papers TARGET CONTRIBUTORS: Researchers, scholars, postgraduate students TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION: Peer-reviewed research papers presenting theoretical or empirical studies	TRACK 2 TRACK TITLE: Industry Innovation Showcases TARGET CONTRIBUTORS: Companies, entrepreneurs, technology developers TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION: Innovation demonstrations, technology solutions, business model innovations	TRACK 3 TRACK TITLE: Policy & Governance Innovations TARGET CONTRIBUTORS: Government institutions, policymakers, regulatory agencies TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION: Policy frameworks, institutional reforms, governance innovations	TRACK 4 TRACK TITLE: Development Practice Cases TARGET CONTRIBUTORS: Development finance institutions, NGOs, development practitioners TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION: Programme case studies, intervention models, lessons from implementation	TRACK 5 TRACK TITLE: Venture, Grassroots and Indigenous Innovations TARGET CONTRIBUTORS: Startups, grassroots innovators, community enterprises TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION: Venture innovations, grassroots solutions, indigenous technologies
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Conference Programme Structure

1 September 2026

Arrival &
Welcome Dinner

2-3 September 2026

Main Conference
Programme &
Dinner each Night

4 September 2026

Technical Tour &
Site Visits (Optional,
additional fee applies)

IMPORTANT DATES:

Academic Submissions (Track 1: Research Papers)

- Abstract Submission Deadline: **21 July 2026 - Extended**
- Notification of Acceptance: **30 July 2026**
- Final Full Paper Submission Cut-off: **10 August 2026**

Practice, Policy & Innovation Submissions (Tracks 2–5)

- Concept / Proposal Submission Deadline: **21 July 2026 - Extended**
- Notification of Acceptance: **30 July 2026**
- Final Materials Submission: **10 August 2026**

General Conference Milestones

- Early Bird Registration Deadline: **15 June 2026**
- Regular Registration Deadline: **31 July 2026**
- Final Programme Announcement: **15 August 2026**
- Conference Dates: **2–3 September 2026**

REVIEW PROCESS

All full papers will undergo a double-blind peer-review process. After the full paper has been reviewed by two reviewers, anonymous feedback will be provided to the corresponding authors, including a final decision on acceptance or rejection, along with relevant comments and/or suggestions.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Comprehensive submission guidelines, including requirements for abstracts, full papers, policy contributions, case studies, and innovation showcases, are provided on the official conference website. All submissions must strictly adhere to these guidelines to be considered for review.

Submission Guidelines and Submission Portal: www.ifedi.org/acoedi



COST:

Early Bird Registration Fee

- **R6 500: Presenting Author**
- **R4 000: Second Paper**
- **R7 000: Delegate**

Regular Registration Fee

- **R7 200: Presenting Author**
- **R5 000: Second Paper**
- **R9 500: Delegate**

The registration fee covers conference lunches, tea/coffee breaks with refreshments, venue hire, and administrative costs. The fee does not include accommodation or transportation.

Optional Technical Tour (4 September 2026)

Fee: **R1,950 per delegate** – Includes transport, site visits to selected economic and innovation locations, guided insights, lunch, and refreshments.

For submission details, registration, and further information, please visit the official conference website: www.ifedi.org/acoedi

For inquiries, send an email to: conference@ifedi.org CC theifedi@gmail.com

We look forward to receiving your submissions and to welcoming you to the **African Conference on Economic Development and Innovation (ACOEDI 2026)**.

CONFERENCE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

A) CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT AND ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Responsible for the end-to-end planning, coordination, and delivery of ACOEDI 2026, including programme management, stakeholder engagement, logistics, and communications.

1. Dr Glenda Maluleke (UNISA) – Conference Chair
2. Prof Michael Twum-Darko (ICBMD) – Deputy Chair
3. Dr Albert Jeleni (IfEDI) – Conference Organiser
4. Dr Mpho Tshikororo (UNIVEN) – Deputy Organiser
5. Mr Vusi Mokoena (IfEDI) – Stakeholder Engagement
6. Ms Bezaliel Mamobolo (IfEDI) – Logistics

B) CONFERENCE GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

Comprised of institutional top management, the Council provides strategic guidance, intellectual leadership, and institutional oversight for ACOEDI 2026, ensuring alignment with continental economic development priorities. It oversees the development, validation, and strategic positioning of the African Economic Development & Innovation Atlas 2026.

C) SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Responsible for ensuring the quality, relevance, and integrity of all conference contributions, including academic papers, industry submissions, policy inputs, and development practice cases. Provides peer review, technical validation, and content alignment to ensure that all contributions meaningfully inform the African Economic Development & Innovation Atlas 2026. Further details of the Committee members are available on the conference website.