



ACOEDI 2026

African Conference on Economic Development & Innovation

Advancing African Prosperity

Bridging Research, Policy, and Industry for Sustainable Economic Innovation

26 – 29 OCTOBER 2026

EMPERORS PALACE CONVENTION CENTRE · JOHANNESBURG · SOUTH AFRICA

CONVENED BY

Institute for Economic Development and Innovation (IfEDI)

in partnership with the

International Conference on Business and Management Dynamics (ICBMD)

PREPARED FOR

Governance Council · Board · Dignitaries · Sponsors · Selected Stakeholders

MASTER PROGRAMME FOR CONFIRMATION

Programme with Indicative Presenter, Dignitary and Sponsor Allocation

Board and Stakeholder Circulation Draft · Subject to Governance Approval

Programme Foreword: Governance and Purpose

The African Conference on Economic Development and Innovation (ACOEDI 2026) is convened by the Institute for Economic Development and Innovation (IfEDI) in partnership with the International Conference on Business and Management Dynamics (ICBMD). The conference is hosted at Emperors Palace Convention Centre, Johannesburg, in the economic heartland of the Republic of South Africa, and is positioned as a continental platform that links research, policy and industry in service of African prosperity.

This Master Programme for Confirmation has been prepared for circulation to the Conference Governance Council, Board, dignitaries, sponsors and selected stakeholders for comment and input. It serves three purposes: first, to confirm the structure, timing and intent of every conference segment; second, to clarify the strategic roles of government, academia, industry, development finance institutions, chambers of commerce and continental bodies across the four days; and third, to provide a transparent view of presenter capacity, proposed sponsor platforms and indicative dignitary engagement so that all stakeholders can plan their participation with confidence.

ACOEDI 2026 is governed by an independent Conference Governance Council supported by a Scientific and Technical Committee and the Conference Secretariat. Sponsors are positioned as enabling platforms whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged through visibility, hosting and partnership rights. Sponsors do not direct content, awards, peer review or programme decisions. Dignitaries are positioned for legitimacy, strategic direction and continental endorsement. This separation of roles ensures that ACOEDI 2026 retains the institutional credibility expected by government, universities, development finance institutions, corporates, chambers of commerce and continental partners.

The substantive output of the conference will be captured in the African Economic Development and Innovation Atlas 2026, drawing on rapporteur synthesis from every breakaway lab and room. Delegates and presenters are accordingly invited to view their contributions not only as conference inputs, but as part of a permanent continental knowledge record.

CONSULTATION DISCLAIMER

Institutional, dignitary, chairperson and sponsor allocations in this programme are indicative planning placeholders and remain subject to formal invitation, confirmation, governance approval, protocol clearance and partnership approval. This document is circulated for comment and should not be treated as a final public programme.

Issued by the Conference Secretariat on behalf of the Conference Governance Council, IfEDI and ICBMD. This document is a circulation draft for comment and confirmation.

How to Read This Programme

This Programme uses a small set of consistent structural elements. The guide below explains each element so that dignitaries, sponsors, delegates and the design and production team can navigate the document with confidence.

PROGRAMME ELEMENT	WHAT IT MEANS
Plenaries	Plenaries are open, high-level sessions for all delegates. They are designed to set strategic direction and provide continental and national framing. Plenaries are chaired by senior conference leadership and feature keynote and high-level panel contributions.
Breakaway Labs (Day 1)	Practical implementation sessions structured around five thematic labs. Each 60-minute block accommodates three presenters, a chair and a rapporteur. Labs are presentation and showcase platforms — not panel discussions by default.
Breakaway Rooms (Day 2)	Knowledge, research and practice sessions running in parallel rooms aligned to the five sub-themes. Each 60-minute block follows the same three-presenter structure, with academic, policy and practice papers represented.
Presenter Slots	Presenter 1, Presenter 2 and Presenter 3 placeholders denote confirmed speaking slots awaiting allocation by the Scientific and Technical Committee following peer review and acceptance.
Dignitary Roles	Dignitary placements indicate the institutional level and seniority required for legitimacy and strategic endorsement. All dignitary allocations are indicative and subject to formal invitation, protocol clearance and governance approval. Named individuals will be confirmed by the Conference Governance Council closer to the event.
Sponsor Platforms	Proposed sponsor platforms identify where sponsor visibility, hosting and partnership rights may be extended. Sponsors are platform enablers; they do not direct content, awards, peer review or programme decisions. All sponsor allocations in this document are indicative and subject to confirmation.
Rapporteurs & Atlas Capture	A dedicated rapporteur is assigned to every breakaway lab and room. Their consolidated outputs feed directly into the African Economic Development and Innovation Atlas 2026.
Standard Session Format	Each 60-minute breakaway block is structured as follows: Chair framing (3 min) → Presenter 1 (12 min) → Presenter 2 (12 min) → Presenter 3 (12 min) → Combined Q&A and synthesis (15 min) → Transition (6 min).

Symbolic Markers

◆ Plenary □ Breakaway Lab / Room ♦ Gala / Dinner ● Networking ► Technical Tour ★ Sponsor Platform ● Dignitary Address

These markers may be applied during graphic design layout to assist visual navigation in the printed and digital editions of the Programme.

Standard Breakaway Session Format

Breakaway labs and rooms are structured as parallel presentation and showcase platforms, not as panel discussions by default. Each 60-minute block accommodates three presenters followed by a moderated Q&A and an Atlas-capture synthesis. Panels may be used selectively for high-level synthesis where required.

SESSION COMPONENT	ALLOCATION	CUMULATIVE
Chair / session framing	3 minutes	<i>3 minutes</i>
Presenter 1	12 minutes	<i>15 minutes</i>
Presenter 2	12 minutes	<i>27 minutes</i>
Presenter 3	12 minutes	<i>39 minutes</i>
Combined Q&A and rapporteur synthesis	15 minutes	<i>54 minutes</i>
Transition / buffer	6 minutes	<i>60 minutes</i>

DAY 0 · WELCOME DINNER

Monday, 26 October 2026

Arrival, Reception and Opening Engagement

✦ *The Welcome Dinner sets the institutional tone for ACOEDI 2026, opens the official conference calendar and recognises the Host Province and principal partners.*

TIME	PROGRAMME SEGMENT	DIGNITARY / STRATEGIC ROLE	PROPOSED SPONSOR PLATFORM / TBC
18:00 – 18:30	Arrival and Registration <i>Delegate registration, protocol orientation and venue ingress.</i>	Protocol team, Conference Secretariat and Host Province representatives	<i>Proposed Welcome Function Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>
18:30 – 19:00	Welcome Reception and Networking <i>Curated networking with provincial leadership, conveners and African country delegations.</i>	Premier's Office (Gauteng Provincial Government), IfEDI, ICBMD and African country representatives	<i>Proposed Welcome Reception Sponsor — To Be Confirmed</i>
19:00 – 19:10	Opening and Welcome <i>Formal opening of the conference and acknowledgement of principal partners.</i>	Conference Chair / IfEDI representative	<i>Proposed Principal Partner acknowledgement — To Be Confirmed</i>
19:10 – 19:30	Keynote Address <i>Strategic address from the Host Province on Gauteng's positioning within the African economic development agenda.</i>	Premier of Gauteng or designated senior representative	<i>Proposed Host Province / Welcome Dinner Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>
19:30 – 21:00	Welcome Dinner and Networking <i>High-level dinner with curated table groupings across government, academia, industry, DFIs and continental representatives.</i>	Premier, MECs, Executive Mayors, Vice-Chancellors, chamber leaders, DFIs and African diplomatic and regional representatives	<i>Proposed Welcome Dinner Partner · VIP Table Partners — To Be Confirmed</i>

DAY 1 · INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT & DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Tuesday, 27 October 2026

Strategic Framing and Continental Direction

◆ *Day 1 establishes the continental framing of ACOEDI 2026 and convenes government, industry, academia, development finance institutions and African regional bodies in a single high-level platform.*

Morning Plenary Sessions

TIME	PROGRAMME SEGMENT	DIGNITARY / STRATEGIC ROLE	PROPOSED SPONSOR PLATFORM / TBC
07:30 – 09:00	Registration, Tea and Coffee, Networking <i>Delegate registration, exhibition activation and structured networking.</i>	Conference Secretariat, sponsors, exhibitors and chamber representatives	<i>Proposed Registration / Coffee Sponsor — To Be Confirmed</i>
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome and Purpose Address <i>Formal welcome, acknowledgement of principal partners and framing of the conference purpose.</i>	IfEDI / ICBMD Representative	<i>Proposed Principal Partner acknowledgement — To Be Confirmed</i>
09:30 – 10:00	Opening Keynote — Re-Architecting African Economies <i>Continental keynote setting the strategic agenda for African economic re-architecture and innovation-led growth.</i>	Continental keynote by a recognised African economic development or international leader	<i>Proposed Opening Plenary Supporting Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>
10:00 – 11:15	Regional Strategic Responses — Professionalisation as a Catalyst: Redefining Economic Development and Innovation Metrics in Africa <i>Four 15-minute regional strategic responses examining the professionalisation of economic development and innovation across Africa, drawing on business, government, academic and community perspectives from across the continent.</i>	IfEDI · Senior institutional, government, academic and industry representatives from across Africa	<i>Proposed Knowledge and Data Partner · Atlas Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>

Regional Strategic Responses — Detail

TIME	PROGRAMME SEGMENT	DIGNITARY / STRATEGIC ROLE	PROPOSED SPONSOR PLATFORM / TBC
10:00 – 10:15	Regional Strategic Response 1: North Africa — Business Perspective <i>Senior business or institutional representative from North Africa.</i>	Senior North Africa business or industry representative	
10:15 – 10:30	Regional Strategic Response 2: West Africa — Government Perspective <i>Senior government representative from West Africa.</i>	Senior West Africa government representative	
10:30 – 10:45	Regional Strategic Response 3: Central Africa — Academic Perspective <i>Senior academic or university representative from Central Africa.</i>	Senior Central Africa academic representative	
10:45 – 11:00	Regional Strategic Response 4: East / Southern Africa — Community or Practice Perspective <i>Senior community, LED or practice representative from East or Southern Africa.</i>	Senior East / Southern Africa community or practice representative	
11:00 – 11:15	Moderated Synthesis and Audience Engagement <i>Chair-led synthesis connecting regional perspectives to the conference theme.</i>	IfEDI / ICBMD Representative	

TIME	PROGRAMME SEGMENT	DIGNITARY / STRATEGIC ROLE	PROPOSED SPONSOR PLATFORM / TBC
11:15 – 11:45	Networking Break and Exhibition <i>Curated VIP walkthrough of the exhibition zone.</i>	Government, industry and VIP delegations	<i>Proposed Exhibition Zone Partner · Coffee Break Sponsor — To Be Confirmed</i>

DAY 1 · BREAKAWAY LABS · PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION SESSIONS

Breakaway Labs run in five parallel rooms. Each 60-minute block accommodates three presenters, a chair and a rapporteur. Sessions are designed as presentation and showcase platforms.

TIME	STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION LAB	INNOVATION & VENTURE LAB	ENTERPRISE & INFORMAL ECONOMY LAB	DIGITAL & INDUSTRIAL LAB	SUSTAINABILITY & ESG LAB
11:45 – 12:45	Industrial Policy & Investment Pipelines Chair: Senior Industrial Policy and Investment Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Structural Lab Partner — To Be Confirmed	Innovation Hubs & Venture Builders Chair: Senior Innovation Ecosystem Representative Presenter 1: Industry showcase Presenter 2: Innovation / demo case Presenter 3: Implementation case Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Innovation Lab Partner — To Be Confirmed	SME Growth & Market Access Chair: Senior Enterprise Development and Organised Business Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Enterprise Lab Partner — To Be Confirmed	AI, Data & Digital Platforms Chair: Senior Digital Economy and Data Systems Representative Presenter 1: Industry showcase Presenter 2: Innovation / demo case Presenter 3: Implementation case Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Digital Lab Partner — To Be Confirmed	Green Economy & ESG Implementation Chair: Senior Sustainability, Climate and ESG Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Sustainability Lab Partner — To Be Confirmed
13:45 – 14:45	AfCFTA & Trade Corridors Chair: Senior Trade, Regional Integration and Corridor Development Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Trade Corridor Partner — To Be Confirmed	Venture Capital & Financing Innovation Chair: Senior Investment, Capital Markets and Development Finance Representative Presenter 1: Industry showcase Presenter 2: Innovation / demo case Presenter 3: Implementation case Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Venture Finance Partner — To Be Confirmed	Informal Economy Formalisation Chair: Senior Local Economic Development and Informal Economy Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Inclusive Enterprise Partner — To Be Confirmed	Future of Work & Skills Systems Chair: Senior Skills, Workforce and Human Capital Development Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Skills Partner — To Be Confirmed	Climate Policy & Business Adaptation Chair: Senior Climate Policy and Sustainability Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Climate Partner — To Be Confirmed

TIME	STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION LAB	INNOVATION & VENTURE LAB	ENTERPRISE & INFORMAL ECONOMY LAB	DIGITAL & INDUSTRIAL LAB	SUSTAINABILITY & ESG LAB
12:45 – 13:45 · Lunch and Networking (All Delegates) · Proposed Sponsor: Lunch Partner — To Be Confirmed · VIP networking with CEOs, HODs, Vice-Chancellors, African delegates and investors					
14:45 – 15:45	Institutional Architecture & Coordination Chair: Senior Governance, Planning and Institutional Coordination Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Institutional Architecture Partner — To Be Confirmed	Entrepreneurial Universities & Talent Pipelines Chair: Senior Higher Education and Innovation Leadership Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed University Innovation Partner — To Be Confirmed	Incubation & Enterprise Development Models Chair: Senior Incubation and Enterprise Support Representative Presenter 1: Industry showcase Presenter 2: Innovation / demo Presenter 3: Implementation case Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Incubation Partner — To Be Confirmed	Industry 4.0 & Smart Manufacturing Chair: Senior Manufacturing and Industrial Technology Representative Presenter 1: Industry showcase Presenter 2: Innovation / demo Presenter 3: Implementation case Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Industry 4.0 Partner — To Be Confirmed	Circular Economy & Green Innovation Chair: Senior Green Economy and ESG Representative Presenter 1: Industry showcase Presenter 2: Innovation / demo Presenter 3: Implementation case Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Circular Economy Partner — To Be Confirmed
15:45 – 16:45	Financing Structural Transformation Chair: Senior Development Finance and Structural Investment Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed DFI / Bank Partner — To Be Confirmed	Corporate – Startup Collaboration Chair: Senior Corporate Innovation and Venture Capital Representative Presenter 1: Industry showcase Presenter 2: Innovation / demo Presenter 3: Implementation case Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Corporate Innovation Partner — To Be Confirmed	Local Economic Development Systems Chair: Senior Municipal, Chamber or Territorial Development Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed LED Systems Partner — To Be Confirmed	Digital Infrastructure & Blockchain Chair: Senior Digital Infrastructure and Technology Representative Presenter 1: Industry showcase Presenter 2: Innovation / demo Presenter 3: Implementation case Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Digital Infrastructure Partner — To Be Confirmed	Inclusive Development & Social Impact Chair: Senior Social Impact and Inclusive Development Representative Presenter 1: Institutional case Presenter 2: Industry / development case Presenter 3: Innovation / showcase Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Social Impact Partner — To Be Confirmed
16:45 – 17:15	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition

DAY 1 EVENING · CEO / HOD PLENARY & GALA

Tuesday, 27 October 2026 · Evening Programme

From Strategy to Action

✦ *A curated executive plenary and gala dinner. The Inner Circle Debate brings together CEOs, HODs, Vice-Chancellors and DFI leaders to interrogate the most consequential challenges raised during Day 1.*

TIME	SEGMENT	FOCUS	DIGNITARY / SPONSOR ROLE
18:30 – 19:15	Executive Reception	Arrival drinks and curated executive networking	<i>Proposed Gala Partner / Platinum Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>
19:15 – 19:30	Welcome and Call to Order	MC introduces CEOs / HODs and the Inner Circle	<i>MC · Conference Chair · sponsor acknowledgement</i>
19:30 – 20:00	Starter Course and Opening Provocation	Opening economic question to frame the debate	<i>Moderator · economic commentator · IfEDI</i>
20:00 – 20:25	Guest of Honour Address	Address by Head of State, Ambassador or designated Guest of Honour	<i>Head of State / Ambassador / Guest of Honour — To Be Confirmed</i>
20:25 – 21:20	Main Course · Inner Circle Plenary Debate	Executive debate on the key challenges surfaced during Day 1	<i>CEOs, DGs / HODs, Vice-Chancellors, JSE / DFI, chamber leaders, African representatives · Proposed Platinum Partner executive seat — To Be Confirmed</i>
21:20 – 21:45	Dessert and Audience Reflection	Interactive Q&A and digital audience poll	<i>Audience engagement supported by Proposed Technology Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>
21:45 – 22:00	Closing Remarks and Commitments	Summary, commitments and next steps	<i>Minister / Premier / Conference Chair / Governance Council</i>
22:00 onwards	Networking and Digestifs	High-level networking	<i>Proposed VIP Table Partners — To Be Confirmed</i>

DAY 2 · KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH & PRACTICE SESSIONS

Wednesday, 28 October 2026

Bridging Research, Policy and Practice

◆ Day 2 opens with a morning plenary focused on bridging the industry–academia gap, followed by Regional Strategic Responses. Four 60-minute breakaway blocks then run across five parallel rooms.

Morning Plenary Sessions

TIME	PROGRAMME SEGMENT	DIGNITARY / STRATEGIC ROLE	PROPOSED SPONSOR PLATFORM / TBC
07:30 – 09:00	Registration, Tea and Coffee, Networking <i>Delegate registration, exhibition activation and structured networking.</i>	Conference Secretariat, sponsors, exhibitors and chamber representatives	<i>Proposed Registration / Coffee Sponsor — To Be Confirmed</i>
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome and Purpose Address <i>Formal welcome, Day 2 framing and acknowledgement of conference principal partners.</i>	IfEDI / ICBMD Representative	<i>Proposed Principal Partner acknowledgement — To Be Confirmed</i>
09:30 – 10:00	Opening Keynote — Bridging the Industry–Academia Gap <i>Continental keynote on closing the divide between academic research, policy and industry practice in Africa.</i>	Continental keynote by a recognised African academic, industry or policy leader	<i>Proposed Opening Plenary Supporting Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>
10:00 – 11:15	Regional Strategic Responses — Bridging Research, Policy and Practice <i>Four 15-minute regional strategic responses examining the research–policy–practice nexus across Africa, with moderated synthesis.</i>	Senior institutional, government, academic and industry representatives from across Africa	<i>Proposed Knowledge and Data Partner · Atlas Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>

Regional Strategic Responses — Detail

TIME	PROGRAMME SEGMENT	DIGNITARY / STRATEGIC ROLE	PROPOSED SPONSOR PLATFORM / TBC
10:00 – 10:15	Regional Strategic Response 1: North Africa — Business Perspective <i>Senior business or institutional representative from North Africa.</i>	Senior North Africa business or industry representative	

TIME	PROGRAMME SEGMENT	DIGNITARY / STRATEGIC ROLE	PROPOSED SPONSOR PLATFORM / TBC
10:15 – 10:30	Regional Strategic Response 2: West Africa — Government Perspective <i>Senior government representative from West Africa.</i>	Senior West Africa government representative	
10:30 – 10:45	Regional Strategic Response 3: Central Africa — Academic Perspective <i>Senior academic or university representative from Central Africa.</i>	Senior Central Africa academic representative	
10:45 – 11:00	Regional Strategic Response 4: East / Southern Africa — Community or Practice Perspective <i>Senior community, LED or practice representative from East or Southern Africa.</i>	Senior East / Southern Africa community or practice representative	
11:00 – 11:15	Moderated Synthesis and Audience Engagement <i>Chair-led synthesis connecting regional perspectives to the conference theme.</i>	IfEDI / ICBMD Representative	

TIME	PROGRAMME SEGMENT	DIGNITARY / STRATEGIC ROLE	PROPOSED SPONSOR PLATFORM / TBC
11:15 – 11:45	Networking Break and Exhibition <i>Curated VIP walkthrough of the exhibition zone.</i>	Government, industry and VIP delegations	<i>Proposed Exhibition Zone Partner · Coffee Break Sponsor — To Be Confirmed</i>

TIME	STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION ROOM	INNOVATION & VENTURE ROOM	ENTERPRISE & INFORMAL ECONOMY ROOM	DIGITAL & INDUSTRIAL ROOM	SUSTAINABILITY & ESG ROOM
11:45 – 12:45	Economic Diversification and Industrial Policy Chair: Senior Industrial Policy Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Structural Room Partner — To Be Confirmed	Innovation Hubs and Venture Builders Chair: Senior Innovation Ecosystem Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Innovation Room Partner — To Be Confirmed	SME Development Ecosystems and Market Access Chair: Senior SME and Enterprise Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Enterprise Room Partner — To Be Confirmed	AI, Data Economies, Digital Sovereignty and Economic Data Systems Chair: Senior Digital Economy and Data Systems Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Digital Room Partner — To Be Confirmed	Green Innovation, Circular Economy and Sustainable Business Models Chair: Senior ESG and Green Economy Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Sustainability Room Partner — To Be Confirmed
12:45 – 13:45 · Lunch and Networking (All Delegates) · Proposed Sponsor: Lunch Partner — To Be Confirmed · Cross-sector networking and speaker exchange					
13:45 – 14:45	Regional Value Chains, AfCFTA, Infrastructure, Trade and Logistics Chair: Senior Trade and Regional Integration Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Trade and Infrastructure Partner — To Be Confirmed	Entrepreneurial Universities, Open Innovation and Talent Pipelines Chair: Senior Higher Education and Innovation Leadership Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed University and Innovation Partner — To Be Confirmed	Informal Economy, Incubation and Enterprise Support Systems Chair: Senior Local Economic Development Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Enterprise and Incubation Partner — To Be Confirmed	Future of Work, Skills Systems and Industry 4.0 Chair: Senior Skills and Human Capital Development Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Skills and Industry Partner — To Be Confirmed	ESG Governance and Climate Policy Chair: Senior ESG Governance and Regulatory Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed ESG and Climate Partner — To Be Confirmed

TIME	STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION ROOM	INNOVATION & VENTURE ROOM	ENTERPRISE & INFORMAL ECONOMY ROOM	DIGITAL & INDUSTRIAL ROOM	SUSTAINABILITY & ESG ROOM
14:45 – 15:45	Institutional Architecture and Financing Structural Transformation Chair: Senior Governance, Planning and Development Finance Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Governance and DFI Partner — To Be Confirmed	Venture Capital Ecosystems and Corporate–Startup Collaboration Chair: Senior Investment, Capital Markets and Corporate Innovation Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Venture and Corporate Partner — To Be Confirmed	Territorial LED Systems and Local Economic Development Chair: Senior Municipal, Chamber or Territorial Development Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed LED Partner — To Be Confirmed	Digital Platforms, Blockchain and Digital Infrastructure Chair: Senior Digital Platform and Technology Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Digital Platform Partner — To Be Confirmed	Inclusive Development and Social Impact Chair: Senior Social Impact and Inclusive Development Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Social Impact Partner — To Be Confirmed
15:45 – 16:45	Financing Structural Transformation and Investment Corridors Chair: Senior Development Finance and Structural Investment Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed DFI / Bank Partner — To Be Confirmed	Innovation Ecosystems, Knowledge Transfer and Commercialisation Chair: Senior Innovation and Commercialisation Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Innovation Ecosystems Partner — To Be Confirmed	Enterprise Development, Formalisation and Support Systems Chair: Senior Enterprise Development and Organised Business Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Enterprise Development Partner — To Be Confirmed	Smart Manufacturing, Industry 4.0 and Economic Data Systems Chair: Senior Manufacturing and Industrial Technology Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Industry 4.0 and Data Partner — To Be Confirmed	Climate Adaptation, Circular Economy and Sustainable Business Models Chair: Senior Climate Policy and Sustainability Representative Presenter 1: Academic paper Presenter 2: Policy / research paper Presenter 3: Practice or innovation paper Rapporteur: Atlas capture Sponsor: Proposed Climate and Sustainability Partner — To Be Confirmed
16:45 – 17:15	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition	Lab Synthesis and CEO / Investor Transition

DAY 2 EVENING · THE SYNERGY GALA

Wednesday, 28 October 2026 · Closing Dinner

Recognition, Awards and Continental Commitments

✦ *The Synergy Gala is the official closing dinner of ACOEDI 2026. It recognises outstanding institutional, industry and academic contributions through the Innovation Awards and issues a continental Call to Action.*

TIME	SEGMENT	FOCUS	DIGNITARY / SPONSOR ROLE
18:30 – 19:15	Grand Finale Reception	Networking and the ACOEDI 2026 highlights reel	<i>Proposed Closing Dinner / Awards Partner — To Be Confirmed</i>
19:15 – 19:30	State of Industry and Academia Address	A joint industry and academic keynote	<i>One industry leader · one Vice-Chancellor / academic lead</i>
19:30 – 19:55	Guest of Honour Address	Address by Head of State, Ambassador or designated Guest of Honour	<i>Head of State / Ambassador / Guest of Honour — To Be Confirmed</i>
19:55 – 20:15	Cross-Table Reflection	Curated cross-table discussions synthesising industry, academia and government insights	<i>Mixed seating: industry, academia, government, DFIs and African delegates</i>
20:15 – 21:00	Main Course and Innovation Awards	Recognition of institutional, academic and industry excellence	<i>Proposed Awards Partner — To Be Confirmed · government, industry and academic presenters</i>
21:00 – 21:15	Continental Call to Action	Conference closing and forward agenda	<i>Conference Chair · IfEDI · Governance Council representative</i>
21:15 – 22:00	Dessert and Celebration	Music and high-level networking	<i>All delegates · sponsor acknowledgement</i>

POST-CONFERENCE TECHNICAL TOUR & FIELD ENGAGEMENT

Thursday, 29 October 2026

From Conference Floor to Implementation Sites

► *The Technical Tour translates conference dialogue into field experience. Delegates visit industrial and local economic development sites in Gauteng and link field lessons to the EDIAI, DICF and Atlas frameworks.*

TIME	SEGMENT	DETAILS	HOST / SPONSOR ROLE
07:30 – 08:30	Departure and Briefing	Transport departs from host hotel. Overview of sites, objectives and protocol.	<i>Proposed Technical Tour Partner — To Be Confirmed · IfEDI · host agency</i>
08:30 – 10:30	Site Visit 1: Industrial / Innovation Hub	Industrial park, SEZ or innovation hub — focus on enterprise development, clustering and infrastructure.	<i>Senior SEZ / innovation hub representative · Gauteng host agency</i>
10:30 – 11:00	Transit and Refreshments	Travel to next site with light refreshments en route.	<i>Proposed Tour Sponsor — To Be Confirmed</i>
11:00 – 13:00	Site Visit 2: Local Economic Development Project	Municipality or agency engagement on implementation, challenges and partnerships.	<i>Senior municipal, LED or chamber representative</i>
13:00 – 13:45	Closing Networking Lunch	Informal engagement with local stakeholders and practitioners.	<i>Host municipality · project partner</i>
13:45 – 14:15	Field Reflection and Atlas Capture	Participants link field lessons to the EDIAI, DICF and Atlas frameworks.	<i>IfEDI · Scientific and Technical Committee · rapporteurs</i>
14:15	Delegates Depart	End of the official conference programme.	<i>Conference Secretariat · Technical Tour Coordinator</i>

Presenter Capacity

ACOEDI 2026 provides total oral presenter capacity of 120 confirmed speaking slots across the two days of breakaway sessions, supplemented by overflow channels through posters, innovation showcases and exhibition demonstrations. Both days feature four standard 60-minute blocks (three presenters per room). This capacity is distributed proportionally across the five sub-themes to support balanced thematic representation.

PROGRAMME AREA	SESSION BLOCKS	PRESENTERS / BLOCK	TOTAL SLOTS
Day 1 Breakaway Labs	5 rooms × 4 blocks = 20 blocks	3 presenters	60 presenters
Day 2 Breakaway Rooms	5 rooms × 4 blocks = 20 blocks	3 presenters	60 presenters
Total Oral Presenter Capacity	40 blocks	3 presenters	120 presenters
Overflow Option	Posters, innovation showcases and exhibition demonstrations	Flexible	Additional capacity

PROGRAMME SUMMARY · STATUS, CAPACITY AND CONTINENTAL BALANCE

For Confirmation by the Conference Governance Council

Open dignitary roles, sponsor platforms, presenter capacity and institutional balance

Dignitary and Sponsor Status

The placements below indicate the institutional level required for each role. Sponsor platforms are extended through the Conference Secretariat and Sponsorship Lead, and are positioned as enabling platforms rather than as substitutes for dignitary engagement.

MAJOR DIGNITARY ROLES — TO CONFIRM	SPONSOR ROLES — OPEN PLATFORMS
▶ Premier of Gauteng (or designated senior representative) — Welcome Dinner keynote, Day 0 ▶ Continental Opening Keynote — AfCFTA, AUDA-NEPAD, UNECA or AfDB principal — Day 1 ▶ Minister / National Executive Representative — Day 1 evening closing commitments ▶ Vice-Chancellors and DVCs — Plenary panel, university lab chairs, gala address ▶ CEOs, HODs and Directors-General — Inner Circle Plenary Debate, Day 1 evening ▶ Executive Mayors and Municipal Managers — LED labs and Technical Tour hosts ▶ JSE / DFI Principals (DBSA, AfDB etc) — Plenary and financing labs ▶ African Diplomatic and Regional Representatives — Welcome Dinner and continental sessions	▶ Principal / Platinum Partner — Cross-conference visibility and gala hosting ▶ Welcome Dinner Partner — Day 0 hosting platform ▶ Gala / Awards Partner — Synergy Gala and Innovation Awards ▶ Five Lab Partners — Structural, Innovation, Enterprise, Digital, Sustainability ▶ Knowledge & Data / Atlas Partner — Plenary and Atlas 2026 production ▶ B2B Deal Room / Investment Platform Partner — CEO and Investors Roundtable ▶ Technical Tour Partner — Post-Conference field programme ▶ Coffee Break, Lunch and Exhibition Zone Partners — Hospitality and exhibition activation

Presenter Capacity Snapshot

PRESENTER CAPACITY SNAPSHOT

60 Day 1 Lab slots · **60** Day 2 Room slots · **120** Total oral presenter slots

Supplemented by an open overflow channel through posters, innovation showcases and exhibition demonstrations.

Institutional Balance · South Africa and the Wider Continent

ACOEDI 2026 visibly positions South Africa as the Host Country while ensuring strong continental representation through African Union structures, regional economic communities, continental DFIs and a curated set of African country delegations. This balance protects the conference's continental legitimacy.

SOUTH AFRICA · HOST COUNTRY

- Presidency / National Executive — through Ministerial representation
- The Tade, Stats, Treasury, Traditional
- Premier of Gauteng and Gauteng Provincial Government (host)
- Executive Mayors and municipalities across Gauteng
- Agencies and departmenets
- **Capital** Markets, Chambers and corporate sector representation
- Vice-Chancellors of South African universities
- SETAs, chambers, professional councils and innovation agencies

WIDER AFRICAN CONTINENT

- African Union Commission and AUDA-NEPAD
- AfCFTA Secretariat
- UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- SADC, ECOWAS, EAC and COMESA regional bodies
- Selected country representation: to be selected from each region
- African Vice-Chancellors and continental universities
- African DFIs, innovation agencies and chambers of commerce

FINAL PROGRAMME LOCK

All placeholders will be replaced with confirmed names, institutions, countries and sponsors before publication by the Conference Secretariat.

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