

DRIVING CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PUBLIC PROCUREMENT



The Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) recorded significant progress towards the issuance of Preferential Procurement (PP) in 2025. The Commission issued 1,119 Preferential Procurement Certificates to targeted businesses across the country. During the same period, 463 tenders valued at approximately K12.34 billion were recorded under the programme, highlighting the growing opportunities available to citizen-owned enterprises and the important role public procurement is playing in advancing citizen economic empowerment.

Preferential Procurement Certification continues to create opportunities for businesses to secure public tenders, build productive capacity, create jobs and accumulate capital.

By increasing access to procurement opportunities, Preferential Procurement is helping local enterprises grow while ensuring that public and private expenditure contributes more directly to Zambia's economic development.

Of the certificates issued in 2025, 926 were awarded to Citizen-Owned Companies, 140 to Citizen-Empowered Companies, and 53 to Citizen-Influenced Companies. The programme attracted participation from a broad range of sectors, with the construction sector recording the highest number of applications, followed by the trading and services sectors. The strong uptake demonstrates growing confidence in the programme as an effective mechanism for supporting local businesses and enhancing their competitiveness.

Preferential Treatment is one of CEEC's nine pillars of economic empowerment and is designed to increase the participation of citizen-owned businesses in public procurement. Through the programme, qualifying businesses receive a competitive advantage during tender evaluations through bid preference adjustments linked to citizen ownership levels.

Under the framework, companies with 5% to 25% citizen ownership receive a 4% bid adjustment; those with 25.1% to 50% ownership receive an 8% adjustment; and businesses with 50.1% to 100% citizen ownership receive a 12% adjustment. These incentives are intended to strengthen the competitiveness of citizen-owned enterprises and promote greater participation in public procurement.

As one of CEEC's flagship empowerment initiatives, Preferential Procurement continues to support the growth of local enterprises, expand citizen participation in economic activity and ensure that government procurement contributes meaningfully to inclusive and sustainable economic development.

CEEC DEEPENS SUPPORT FOR LOCAL CONTENT PARTICIPATION IN MINING SECTOR



Figure 1 CEEC Director Operations, Beenzu Simuyambala, speaking at the Mid-Year Private Sector Day under the Public-Private Dialogue platform, contributing to discussions on SMEs, Women and Youth Entrepreneurship, and Local Content.

Speaking on the implementation of Government's 20% local content policy at the Private Sector Day in Lusaka, CEEC Director Operations, Beenzu Simuyambala, addressed concerns about whether local businesses have the capacity and skills to meet the demands of large mining companies.

Ms. Simuyambala said the Commission is already working directly with mining houses to close these gaps through structured supplier development programs. "As CEEC, we have started working with the mines for supplier development programmes, where we have an MOU already with Kalumbila Mine. We are looking at their suppliers to see how, as CEEC, we can come in to ensure that we train the suppliers to be able to meet the requirements of the mines, as well as provide finances," she said.

Acknowledging that CEEC cannot single-handedly meet the full financing needs of local suppliers, the Commission has partnered with commercial banks to improve access to affordable credit. "We may not have all the money to support the suppliers that have come through, so we are also working in partnership. We have a partnership with the banks to come up with reduced interest rates for the suppliers to the mines," Ms. Simuyambala explained.

The Commission has also rolled out specialised loan products targeting sectors prioritised for Zambian participation under the local content policy. "The government has come up to say transport should be prioritised to Zambians. So, we have also come up with a loan product where we are supporting Zambians to own haulage transport," she said.



Figure 2 CEEC (centre) at the PPDF mid-year review where government leaders, regulators and business executives evaluate economic reforms, tackle business hurdles and boost job creation for Zambia's socio-economic development.

Championing Zambian Ownership in Emerging Sectors

Beyond mining, CEEC is also promoting Zambian ownership in small-scale but lucrative industries such as block making and borehole drilling. "These are small things that we are trying to work on — advocating that, in the future, block making businesses should be owned by Zambians. You find that Zambians are the ones doing all the work in this business, but they do not own it," she said.

She added that a new loan product has been introduced for borehole drilling, an industry currently dominated by foreign ownership, to help bring more Zambians into the space.

Ms. Simuyambala also highlighted CEEC's role in issuing preferential procurement certificates, which give local businesses a competitive edge when bidding for contracts.

BUILDING COMPETITIVE ZAMBIAN BUSINESSES THROUGH THE SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Figure 3 Some enterprises under SDP being highlighted at the 2026 Agricultural and Commercial Show.

As Zambia seeks to maximise the benefits of its mineral wealth, increasing the participation of citizen-owned businesses in mining supply chains remains a national priority. Through the establishment of Statutory Instrument No. 68 of 25 that establishes mandatory local content obligations for mining companies including progressive procurement thresholds and a requirement to build a structured Supplier Development Program covering skills development, mentorship, technology transfer, access to finance and market linkages, the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) is helping local enterprises build the capacity needed to compete for opportunities in the mining sector and other strategic industries.

Many businesses have the potential to supply goods and services to large corporations but face challenges such as limited access to finance, inadequate business systems and difficulties meeting industry standards. To address these gaps, CEEC provides targeted support through business assessments, skills training, mentorship, governance and compliance support, and access to finance linkages.



Figure 3 Business Incubation offices housing CEEC and Prospero enterprise development personnel for the actualisation of SDP in Kalumbila.

Working closely with mining companies and strategic partners, CEEC also helps businesses identify procurement opportunities and understand supplier requirements. The programme promotes technology adoption, improved business practices and continuous performance improvement to ensure enterprises remain competitive and sustainable.

In addition, CEEC continues to issue Preferential Procurement Certificates, giving qualifying citizen-owned businesses a competitive advantage in eligible procurement processes and increasing their participation in public and private-sector supply chains.

By developing resilient and capable local suppliers, the programme is contributing to job creation, industrialisation and economic diversification while advancing CEEC's mandate of broad-based citizens' economic empowerment

HOW THE CEEC HORTICULTURE LOAN PRODUCT IS STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic growth begins with productive investment, and agriculture remains one of Zambia's greatest opportunities for creating jobs and expanding local industries. CEEC, through its Horticulture Loan Product, is investing in farmers and cooperatives to strengthen the agricultural value chain while promoting food security and sustainable economic empowerment.

Targeting farmers, SMEs and cooperatives in Lusaka Province (Kafue, Chilanga, Chongwe and Lusaka districts) and Copperbelt Province (Ndola, Masaiti, Kalulushi and Luanshya districts), the loan product provides financing for crop production, aggregation, cold storage and value addition. The initiative is designed to reduce post-harvest losses, improve market access and create sustainable income opportunities for Zambian producers.

The product supports individual small-scale farmers with financing of up to K500,000 to produce fruits and crops, while cooperatives engaged in aggregation and processing can access funding of up to K2.5 million. By supporting the entire agricultural value chain - from production to storage, processing and marketing - the product promotes a more efficient and competitive horticulture sector.

Food security remains one of Zambia's national priorities. Every year, significant quantities of fresh produce are lost due to inadequate storage and limited processing facilities. Through investment in cold-chain infrastructure, aggregation centres and value addition, the CEEC Horticulture Loan Product helps preserve produce for longer periods, minimise waste and ensure a more reliable supply of nutritious food to local markets.

Beyond improving food availability, the product is expected to stimulate local economic growth. Increased agricultural production creates demand for transport, packaging, processing, retail and other supporting industries, generating employment opportunities and strengthening local economies. As farmers and cooperatives expand their operations, household incomes improve, businesses grow and communities become more economically resilient.

The Horticulture Loan Product also promotes cooperative participation, encouraging farmers to work collectively to improve productivity, access larger markets and achieve economies of scale. This collaborative approach enhances competitiveness while ensuring that more citizens benefit from economic opportunities. As part of its mandate to promote broad-based citizens' economic empowerment, CEEC continues to invest in productive sectors that have the potential to transform lives and contribute to national development. The Horticulture Loan Product is a practical demonstration of this commitment, supporting agricultural enterprise while advancing Zambia's food security and economic diversification agenda.



GROW YOUR HORTICULTURE ENTERPRISE.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: ZAMBIAN ENTERPRISES

TARGET DISTRICTS



Lusaka Province:

Chilanga,
Chongwe,
Kafue

Copperbelt Province:

Kalulushi,
Luanshya,
Masaiti

FOCUS AREAS (Strengthening Urban Food Systems)



Aggregation &
Cold Storage



Processing
Facilities



Backward Linkage
Support for Primary
Producers

ELIGIBILITY:

- Zambian Enterprises
- Located in Target Districts
- Focused on Horticulture and Value Addition



SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TODAY!

Credits

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