

Innovation Week
Tanzania - IWTz2025

INNOVATION WEEK TANZANIA

2025 REPORT

Innovation Week Tanzania and Future Ready Summit

The **development space** is changing pretty fast, and innovation is becoming the central ingredient in any development intervention and business activities. We are witnessing the emergence of new business models that are fueling business growth, creating more jobs and helping us respond to emerging challenges such as climate change. Business as usual no longer has a place in today's **fast-paced** and **tech-driven development environment**.

Innovation Week Tanzania is a dynamic platform that hosts a series of collaborative events and exhibitions, providing a space for **innovators, entrepreneurs, policymakers, researchers, corporates, non-profits**, and other key players in the **innovation ecosystem**. It serves as a hub for showcasing groundbreaking ideas, fostering cross-sector collaboration, addressing policy challenges and opportunities, and driving the scaling of innovation to transform Tanzania. Since its inception in 2015, Innovation Week Tanzania has become a flagship platform in the country's innovation landscape, bringing together diverse stakeholders committed to accelerating innovation-driven economic and social development.

The Future Ready Summit, Vodacom's flagship event, brings together industry leaders and experts to share knowledge and insights that empower stakeholders to thrive in an increasingly technology-driven world. **Launched in 2024**, it quickly gained traction among digital innovation stakeholders. Now, as an anchor event of Innovation Week Tanzania, the Future Ready Summit strengthens the platform, making it even bigger, better, and more impactful.





IWTz & FRS 2025

The 11th edition —Innovation Week Tanzania 2025 (IWTz2025) anchored by **Vodacom's Future Ready Summit (FRS2025)** was held from **12–16 May at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre in Dar es Salaam**, with nationwide satellite activities.

Under the theme ***"Innovation for a Resilient and Inclusive Future"***, the Week brought together innovators, policymakers, investors, corporates, academia, and development partners to explore pathways for shaping smart, sustainable, and inclusive futures.

With events spanning **AI, financial inclusion, sustainable mobility, forestry innovation, and youth leadership,** IWTz2025 and FRS2025 demonstrated that innovation is no longer optional — it is central to building Tanzania's future-ready economy and society.

"Innovation for a Resilient and Inclusive Future."

Resilience against climate change, economic shocks, and digital disruption.

Inclusion to ensure women, youth, rural communities, and persons with disabilities actively shape innovation.

Future readiness by aligning today's policies, skills, and infrastructure with tomorrow's opportunities.







Conversations that took centre stage



High-Level Policy Dialogue

Ministerial Roundtable on Innovation & Entrepreneurship united Tanzanian ministers across key sectors to align policy, capital access, and skills development.

Emphasis on creating a future-ready national framework for startups, youth employment, and digital transformation.

Global Inspiration

H.E. Alexander Stubb, President of Finland, brought a global lens on sustainability, climate innovation, and Europe–Africa collaboration.



Mo Gawdat (Former Chief Business Officer, Google[X]) delivered a powerful keynote on responsible AI, urging Africa to embrace human-centered innovation.



Shaping the Narrative

Media Symposium hosted by COSTECH, UNDP, Vodacom, Mwananchi Communications and Azam Media, highlighted how media can fuel investment, amplify startup stories, and inspire youth participation.





Ecosystem Strengthening

The ESO Roundtable unveiled a new scoping study report on Enterprise Support Organizations, spotlighting their role in de-risking startups and attracting investors.

Youth Empowerment

Youth Ignite Student Founders Fellowship showcased innovative solutions from Higher Learning Institutions, proving universities can be springboards for entrepreneurship.

Career Speed Dating connected graduates with top employers, bridging the gap between education and job opportunities.

VYB Session (Vodacom Youth Base) demonstrated how digital inclusion and tailored services empower young people with financial tools, connectivity, and opportunities.



Private Sector Catalysts

Vodacom Digital Accelerator (VDA) reinforced the role of corporates in scaling promising startups through mentorship, networks, and investment pathways.



#IWTz2025 In Numbers

Participation & Demographics

Total Registrations	Gender Split		Sessions Held
4,760	57.5%	42.5%	41

Participating Organizations	Event Days
622	5







How #IWTz2025 Moved the Needle



Policy Momentum: Sparked new dialogues on AI governance, digital inclusion, and startup ecosystem regulation.



Network Building: Over 4,000 in-person and countless online interactions between startups, investors, government, corporates, and media.



Youth Engagement: Over half of attendees were aged 18–35, affirming the week's role in empowering Tanzania's next generation of innovators.



Resource Mobilization: The GreenCatalyst Fund and capital-raising tracks positioned innovators for new funding and growth opportunities.

Stewards of a Future-Ready Tanzania



Dr Athman Mgumia
Director CDTT, COSTECH





COSTECH is dedicated to connecting stakeholders across the ecosystem to accelerate Research, Technology, and Innovation that aligns with Tanzania's development priorities and Vision 2050. IWTz2025 will serve as a unique platform for the public and private sectors to jointly explore and drive solutions for sustainable growth



Shigeki Komatsubara
UNDP Resident Representative in Tanzania

"At UNDP, we believe that innovation is central to tackling the challenges of sustainable development and creating inclusive growth opportunities, that's why UNDP has set up the FUNGUO Innovation Programme, with invaluable support from the European Union and FCDO.

Through this partnership, we aim to unlock the potential of Tanzanians, particularly youth and women, to become drivers of transformative change. IWTz2025 will showcase Tanzania's innovative spirit on a global stage, drawing inspiration and partnerships from successful ecosystems around the world."



Philip Besiimire
Managing Director, Vodacom Tanzania

"The partnership marks a pivotal moment in redefining Tanzania's innovation landscape, transcending national borders to unite global thought leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs from Africa and beyond.

By bringing international perspectives and expertise into these discussions, we aim to establish Tanzania as a vibrant hub for digital transformation, and a youth-led and youth-driven innovation ecosystem in the region.

Vodacom's commitment to harnessing technology to improve lives forms the foundation of this partnership, driven by a shared vision to empower Tanzanians to thrive in an inclusive and sustainable digital economy."

Word from Development Partners



H.E. Christine Grau
EU Ambassador to Tanzania



"Innovation Week Tanzania 2025 has truly become a melting pot of creativity, showcasing how digital innovation, youth ideas, and inclusive policies can transform society. The European Union is proud to support this movement through the FUNGUO programme, and remains committed to advancing Tanzania's journey toward smart, resilient, and inclusive development."



Getrude Mapunda
British High Commission



"Through our long-standing support from HDIF to FUNGUO, the UK remains dedicated to empowering Tanzanian innovators, particularly youth and women. We see in Innovation Week not just an event, but a catalyst for building an innovation economy that is inclusive, sustainable, and grounded in local leadership."



Elke Wische
UNICEF Representative in Tanzania

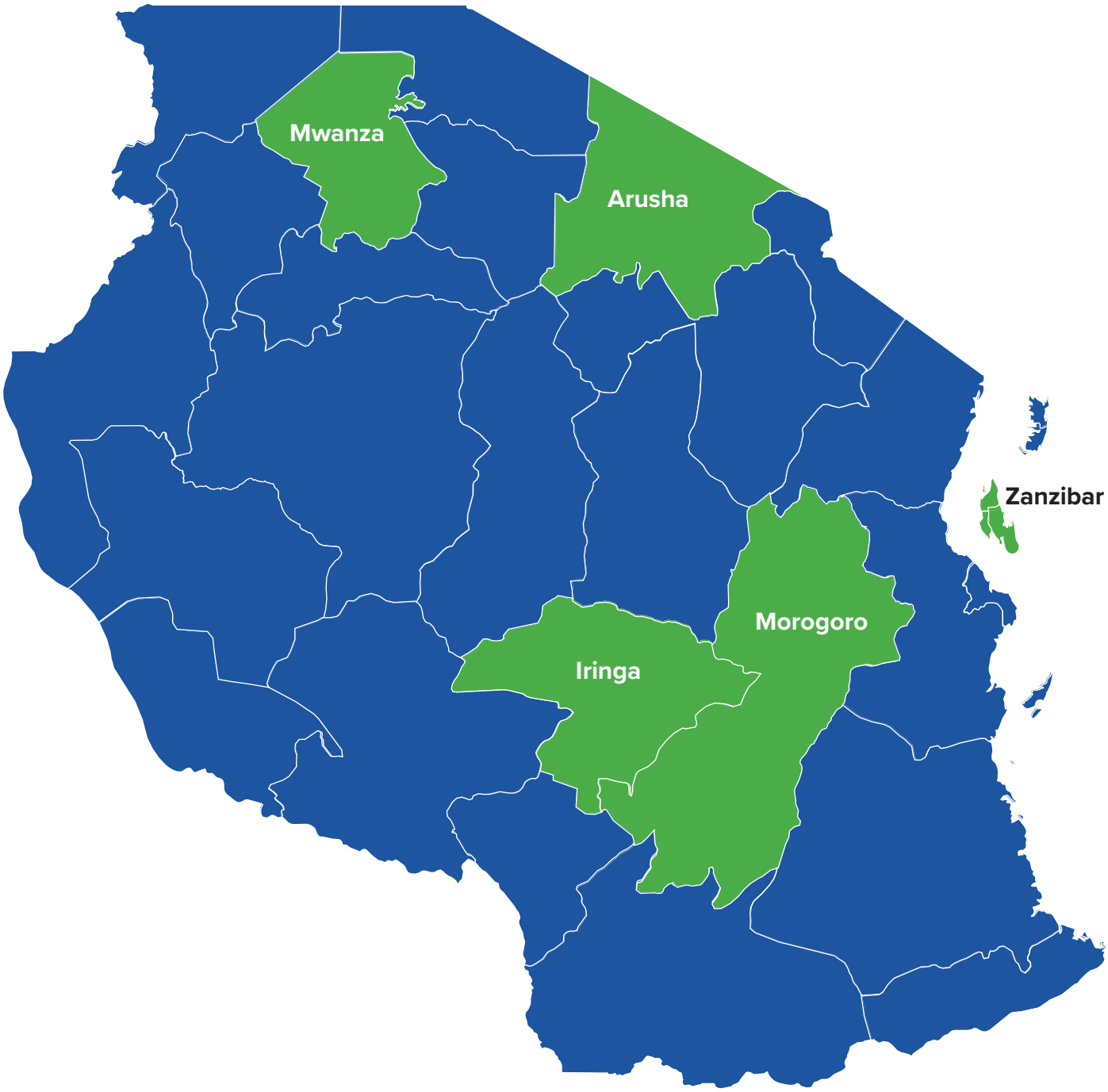


"Innovation must be integrated into education, employment and entrepreneurship, not as an add-on, but as a comprehensive and complementary strategy to transform the Tanzanian economy"

Setting the Stage: The Road to#IWTz2025

In the weeks leading up to Innovation Week Tanzania 2025, the spirit of innovation hit the road with five university roadshows across Arusha, Morogoro, Iringa, Mwanza, and Zanzibar. Each stop was alive with energy as young innovators pitched bold ideas, met seasoned mentors, and refined their concepts in buzzing, interactive sessions.

Beyond showcasing student-led creativity, the roadshows ensured that innovation was not confined to Dar es Salaam, they brought visibility to regional talent, strengthened local ecosystems, and built pathways for inclusion in the national platform.
















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A Week that Shaped Tomorrow

Innovation in Motion: Stories of IWTz2025 & FRS2025

Innovation Week Tanzania 2025 anchored by the Future Ready Summit was a celebration of ideas and action. For five days, the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre became a crossroads for policymakers, investors, corporates, researchers, and students to showcase solutions and spark collaborations.

From headline sessions with global leaders to youth-driven hackathons and debates, the week reflected one central truth: innovation is now Tanzania's engine for resilience, inclusion, and growth.



Foundations of Innovation: Ecosystem & Collaboration

At the heart of Tanzania's innovation journey lies collaboration. Innovation Week 2025 anchored by the Future Ready Summit brought together government leaders, corporates, investors, universities, and startup enablers, proving that no single player can drive transformation alone. These sessions underscored the importance of collective action in shaping a future-ready ecosystem.

Spotlight on

- Ministerial Roundtable on Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship Support Organizations (ESO) Roundtable
- Powering Progress Through Partnership – Ekima Company Story
- Media Symposium: Shaping the Narrative of Innovation



> "We are developing a youth-driven startup policy to build a future-ready Tanzania. Access to capital remains a major hurdle for innovators, and the government is actively working with the private sector to make financing more accessible."
>
> **Hon. Prof. Kitila A. Mkumbo, Minister of State – President's Office, Planning and Investment**

Ministerial Roundtable on Innovation and Entrepreneurship

In one of the week's most high-profile gatherings, senior government leaders, development partners, and private sector executives came together to address how Tanzania can build a "future-ready" economy.

The dialogue highlighted policy gaps, financing bottlenecks, and the importance of coordinated action across ministries.

From youth employment to digital transformation, ministers emphasized that innovation must be embedded in education, investment, industrial strategies, and not treated as an afterthought.

Commitments to a youth-driven startup policy and cross-ministerial collaboration signaled that Tanzania is serious about creating an enabling environment for innovation-driven growth



Entrepreneurship Support Organizations (ESO) Roundtable



> De-risking startups is not about removing challenges, but about equipping founders with tools to face them.
>
> **Daniel Materu, Deloitte Tanzania**

Convened under the FUNGUO Innovation Programme, this roundtable launched a scoping study on Tanzania's ESO landscape. Incubators, accelerators, and innovation hubs shared lessons on strengthening startup support across different growth stages. The study provided evidence that **ESOs are critical de-riskers** — ensuring early-stage entrepreneurs gain mentorship, capacity-building, and structured access to capital.

By placing ESOs at the center of Tanzania's innovation economy, this session reassured both donors and investors that the ecosystem is building reliable pipelines for sustainable startups. A stronger ESO network directly translates to higher survival rates for early-stage ventures and greater investor confidence.

Powering Progress Through Partnership – Ekima Company Story

This session showcased the inspiring story of how two rival EdTech startups, Smartdarasa & Smartcore, came together to build Ekima, one of the fastest-growing digital education platforms in Africa. Ekima Company's journey is an example of how partnerships fuel scale. Ekima leveraged linkages with corporates, universities, and investors to refine its model and expand into new markets. The story served as a case study for how strategic collaborations can turn promising startups into nationally relevant enterprises.

> This merger signals a powerful shift for our startup ecosystem. Far too often, we see competition instead of collaboration. Ekima is proof that partnerships can create something bigger than the sum of their parts and that mindset is what we need to grow.
>
> **Mercy Ndunguru, Investment Analyst and Team Lead at MTI Investment AB**



Media Symposium: Shaping the Narrative of Innovation

At IWTz2025 anchored by FRS2025, the Media Symposium convened thought leaders from newsrooms, digital platforms, development agencies, and the private sector to unpack how media can serve as both a mirror and a catalyst for Tanzania's innovation journey. The conversation highlighted the press as more than a reporting channel—it is an amplifier of solutions, a watchdog of accountability, and a connector between innovators and the public.

The symposium reinforced the media's strategic role in shaping public perception and policy priorities around innovation. By investing in media capacity, Tanzania can accelerate the visibility of startups, attract investor interest, and inspire communities to embrace new solutions.

> "The media is not just an observer, it's an enabler of change. But to play this role effectively, innovation must be at its core. If we are going to play this role effectively, we must rethink how we integrate into the entire ecosystem."
>
> **Rosalynn Mworia - Managing Director, Mwananchi Communications**

Innovation thrives on collaboration. By aligning government policy, private capital, and entrepreneurial support structures, Tanzania is laying the foundations of an inclusive and investable innovation ecosystem.



Fueling Growth: Investment, Funding & Commercialization

Innovation cannot thrive on ideas alone; it requires capital, supportive policies, and commercialization pathways that turn concepts into market-ready solutions.
At Innovation Week Tanzania 2025 anchored by the Future Ready Summit, several sessions focused on how Tanzania can unlock financing, measure impact, and support entrepreneurs to build businesses that attract investment and drive national growth.

Spotlight on

- Keynote Address
- Catalyzing Innovation in the Forestry Value Chain
- Capital Raising Masterclass for Startups
- Measuring What Matters
- Research and Innovation Commercialization – COSTECH & CRDB Foundation

Keynote Address

Global Trends in Innovation and Its Impact in Africa and Europe



Keynote by H.E. Alexander Stubb, President of the Republic of Finland

President Stubb delivered a forward-looking keynote highlighting the Fourth Industrial Revolution as both a challenge and an opportunity, with **AI, robotics,** and **green technologies** reshaping industries worldwide.

He urged Tanzania to embrace innovation as the engine for inclusive growth, while warning that failing to adapt could leave societies behind.

By stressing the role of **innovation as the decisive factor in solving the climate crisis and driving prosperity,** President Stubb signaled to policymakers and investors alike that innovation policy is not just an economic strategy but a survival strategy. His call for youth-driven entrepreneurship, local innovation, and cross-border collaboration framed Tanzania as a future hub for sustainable and inclusive innovation.

> We are living in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution — where responsibly guided technology stands as our most powerful tool for driving prosperity and peace.
>
> **H.E. Alexander Stubb, President of the Republic of Finland**



Catalyzing Innovation in the Forestry Value Chain

Innovating Across the Forestry Value Chain (Panel Discussion)

This panel brought together leaders from **Dark Earth Carbon, Africa Urban Lab, Ubora Forestry Solutions, and FITI** to unpack opportunities across Tanzania's forestry sector. Speakers highlighted potential in carbon finance, biochar production, sustainable timber, and value-added processing, while underscoring the need for enabling regulation, entrepreneurship, and youth engagement.

The discussion demonstrated how forestry can be both a conservation strategy and an economic engine. By aligning skills training, market access, and financial incentives, the sector can deliver jobs, attract investment, and drive sustainable growth.



At FITI, our focus goes beyond conservation. We equip students with hands-on skills, entrepreneurial mindsets, and direct links to employers.

Zacharia Lupala, Principal, Forestry Industry Training Institute



Tanzania has an inherent advantage in biochar production due to abundant waste biomass. With the right policies, this sector can take off.

Arno Rohwedder, Director, Dark Earth Carbon & Upendo Honey



Ubora Forestry Solutions proves forestry can be both profitable and sustainable. The opportunity is real for youth and investors.

Daudi Kilonzo, Co-founder & Managing Director, Ubora Forestry Solutions



Forests that pay are forests that stay.

To conserve, we must make forestry economically viable.

Naomi Rouse, Africa Urban Lab

Capital Raising Masterclass for Startups

Led by **FUNGUO Innovation Programme** in partnership with **Anza Entrepreneurs,** this masterclass gave startups hands-on insights into attracting capital. Investment professionals, including **Tindwa Gidibo (Head of Investments, Warioba Ventures)** and **Doxa Mbapila (Partner, Endoxa Group),** guided entrepreneurs on navigating compliance, contracts, and investor expectations.

Startups left with practical tools to raise investment more confidently, bridging the knowledge gap that often blocks access to funding. By simulating negotiations and walking through real-world case studies, the session directly boosted investment readiness in Tanzania's startup ecosystem.

The session brought investment strategies to life, leaving everyone informed, confident, and ready to navigate the capital-raising journey.

Tindwa Gidibo, Head of Investments, Warioba Ventures



Measuring What Matters

Hosted by Kipimo Solutions, this session tackled a question many investors ask: **how do we know innovation is delivering real impact?** Participants explored AI-assisted frameworks for impact measurement and management, ensuring that funding decisions are based not just on profit, but on **social and environmental returns as well.**

By equipping innovators and investors with smarter tools, this session demonstrated how **data-driven impact** measurement can unlock more capital, as investors gain confidence in both financial and societal returns. It strengthened Tanzania's position as a country where investment can deliver both growth and purpose.



Ideas and rhetoric mean very little without access to finance. For all those ecosystem builders, the flow of investment to viable businesses must be the key metric.

Richard Hacking, Managing Partner, Kipimo Solutions

Research and Innovation Commercialization – COSTECH & CRDB Foundation

COSTECH, together with the **CRDB Bank Foundation,** showcased the **National Fund for Advancement of Science and Technology (NFAST)** call for applications, targeting innovators with minimum viable products or market-ready solutions. By offering loans instead of grants, **the program directly addresses the funding gap that prevents Tanzanian research outputs from scaling into commercial products.**

This initiative signals a major step in **bridging research with the private sector.** By aligning innovation financing with market-readiness, Tanzania is building a stronger pipeline of investable startups. For investors, NFAST de-risks early ventures and creates pathways for scalable, bankable innovations that generate jobs and revenue.

> This fund is not just about supporting research; it's about turning Tanzanian ingenuity into viable businesses that create jobs, drive tax revenue, and compete globally.
>
> **Dr. Amos Nungu, Director General, COSTECH**



Ideas need capital to scale. By combining global insights, practical training, smart measurement, and financing mechanisms, Tanzania's ecosystem is maturing into a fertile ground for investment and commercialization.



The New Frontier: AI & Emerging Tech for Good

Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies are no longer futuristic concepts; they are shaping education, healthcare, finance, and governance today. At Innovation Week Tanzania 2025 anchored by the Future Ready Summit, multiple sessions explored how AI can be harnessed as **a force for inclusion, growth, and resilience,** while also addressing ethical concerns and policy readiness

Spotlight on

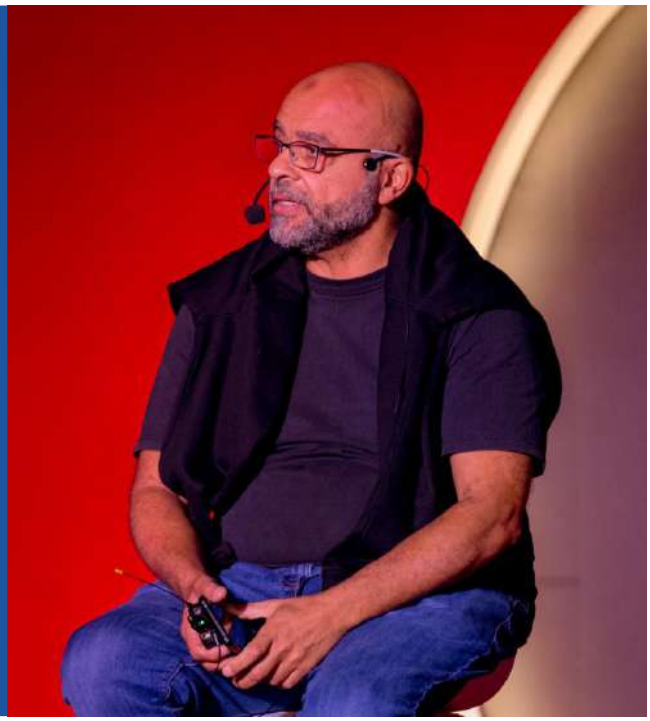
- Rewriting Tomorrow: AI for Good, Growth & Global Change
- Bridging Policy and Practice: Building Tanzania's National AI Strategy
- Balancing Innovation and Regulation: Crafting Inclusive Policies for AI Governance
- AI for Business Transformation
- Accelerating Research Commercialization Through AI Tools
- Transforming Education: AI Sign Language & Inclusive EdTech
- Leveraging AI for Learning and Career Growth

Rewriting Tomorrow: AI for Good, Growth & Global Change

One of the week's most anticipated sessions, featuring global AI visionary **Mo Gawdat (Former Chief Business Officer, Google [X]),** alongside Vodacom Tanzania, COSTECH, and UNDP. The dialogue explored how AI can be a game-changer in sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and financial inclusion.

The session energized participants to view AI as a catalyst for equitable growth, not just automation. Vodacom showcased how AI already powers financial inclusion (via M-Pesa analytics) and agriculture (through M-Kulima tools for smallholder farmers). COSTECH emphasized digital sovereignty, ensuring data and AI benefits remain within Tanzania.

> The beauty of AI technology and especially generative AI is learning to recognize patterns in massive amount of data and to offer solutions to problems that we face. As the technology evolves, these solutions become more and more accurate because it continues to learn.
>
> **Mo Gawdat, Former Chief Business Officer, Google [X]**





> Any technology that is not human centered and solving real human challenges is futile. So, we need to ask whether the technology we are putting in place is usable by the average person, we should be aiming for human centered technology.
>
> **Philip Besiimire, Managing Director of Vodacom Tanzania**

Bridging Policy and Practice: Building Tanzania's National AI Strategy

This session brought together government leaders, partners, and innovators to co-create Tanzania's roadmap for responsible AI adoption. Policymakers stressed the need to balance innovation with ethics, governance, and inclusion.

By connecting regulators, developers, and the private sector, it laid the groundwork for a National AI Strategy that builds trust and drives economic opportunity — rooted in Tanzania's context, empowering local solutions over one-size-fits-all imports.



> **The Tanzania National Strategy for Responsible AI is structured around six strategic pillars: Enabling Infrastructure, Governance, Regulatory Framework, Standards & Collaboration, Skills Development, Innovation & Research, Inclusion & Accessibility, and Data Governance. These pillars represent the core areas of focus for the national strategy."**

Dr. George Mulamula, Chair of the Tanzania National Strategy for Responsible AI Technical Team



Balancing Innovation and Regulation: Crafting Inclusive Policies for AI Governance



"AI is a powerful emerging technology with the potential to transform Tanzania but unlocking its full value requires aligning innovation with trust, ethical standards, and responsible governance."

Eng. Bahat Zuberi, Principal Engineer, Ministry of Communication and ICT

Hosted by **UNDP Tanzania, Vodacom, COSTECH, and Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)**, this high-level session tackled one of the most pressing questions of the digital age: **how can Tanzania harness the power of artificial intelligence (AI) while ensuring ethical, inclusive, and context-driven governance?**

Panelists from academia, government, and the private sector explored the structural gaps that hinder startups from scaling AI solutions, the need for regulatory agility, and the importance of embedding ethics into technology design from the start.

The dialogue emphasized that regulation should not stifle innovation but rather create trust, enable responsible growth, and safeguard vulnerable groups such as youth, women, and children.



Ethics start within. If we do not yet have clear policies, then our internal culture must guide how we innovate.

Edward Mpangile, Product Research & Development Manager, Selcom

Today over 77% of Tanzania's startups are youth-led. But while the energy is there, what's often missing is mentorship, infrastructure, and funding.

Larry Ayo, Director of Business, SmartLab



AI for Business Transformation

Hosted by **LogAI** with contributions from PlateAI, Niajiri Platform, and Nelson Mandela Institute of Science & Technology, this session focused on practical adoption of AI in Tanzanian businesses. Participants worked through AI strategy frameworks, ROI assessment, and real case studies.

By demystifying AI for SMEs and corporates, this workshop-built **investor and corporate confidence** that AI is not an abstract concept but a **tool for efficiency, cost savings, and market growth.**



> **AI adoption in Tanzania must be business-driven, not hype-driven. When firms see clear ROI, digital transformation accelerates.**

Zephania Reuben, Lead AI Educator, LogAI

Accelerating Research Commercialization Through AI Tools

Led by **Black Swan (formerly Tausi Africa)**, this workshop demonstrated how AI can shorten the journey from research to market. From market analysis to prototype development, AI tools were showcased as accelerators of commercialization.

For Tanzania's researchers and universities, this session provided practical pathways to turn discoveries into startups faster, bridging the long-standing commercialization gap.

> **Our goal is to see Tanzanian research breakthroughs get to market fast, iterate quickly, and find product-market fit.**

Black Swan Team Statement



Transforming Education: AI Sign Language & Inclusive EdTech

ShuleYetu Innovations demonstrated **AI-powered sign language** tools alongside a panel on **inclusive EdTech**. By integrating assistive technology, education in Tanzania can become more accessible for learners with disabilities.

This session reinforced the principle that **AI** must be **human-centered,** ensuring that marginalized groups benefit from technological progress. It also positioned Tanzania as a pioneer in inclusive educational innovation.



Leveraging AI for Learning and Career Growth

Hosted by **UNDP Tanzania,** this session focused on equipping youth with **AI-driven tools** for lifelong **learning** and **employability**. It highlighted how AI can personalize learning journeys, offer **career guidance**, and open **global opportunities.**

By empowering young Tanzanians to use AI for self-development and job readiness, this session bridged the gap between digital transformation and employment.





Tanzania is proactively embracing AI not as a buzzword but as a transformative force for social inclusion, economic growth, and efficient governance. The conversations and commitments from IWTz2025 anchored by FRS2025 positioned AI as a national priority, with the potential to make Tanzania a leader in responsible AI adoption in Africa

The Digital Backbone: Infrastructure & FinTech

Connectivity and finance are the foundations of innovation. At IWTz2025, discussions on 5G, broadband, satellite technology, fintech, and digital governance highlighted that without strong infrastructure and forward-thinking regulation, innovation cannot scale. With them, Tanzania has the tools to drive inclusion, competitiveness, and global relevance.

Spotlight on

- Engineering Tomorrow – Resilience, Security, and Inclusive Growth through 5G and Broadband.
- Regulate to Accelerate – Positioning Tanzania as Africa's Next FinTech Destination.
- Tap into Tomorrow – M-Pesa's Open API and the Rise of Mini-Apps.
- Smart Governance Unplugged: Citizen-Driven Urban Innovation.

Engineering Tomorrow – Resilience, Security, and Inclusive Growth through 5G and Broadband

This flagship session brought together leaders from **Vodacom, Huawei, Eutelsat OneWeb, SEACOM, TTCL,** and **Binary Labs** to discuss how cutting-edge connectivity—5G, broadband, and satellite—can shape Tanzania's inclusive growth. From **telemedicine** to **e-learning,** speakers emphasized that connectivity is now a basic enabler for **health, education, commerce**, and **community development.**

Digital infrastructure is no longer just about speed—it's about equity. From rural classrooms gaining access to AI-powered learning, to farmers accessing new markets through satellite links, the dialogue positioned broadband as the lifeline of Tanzania's innovation



> Satellite technology enables rural communities to sell their harvests, learn new skills, and participate in the gig economy.
>
> **Obafemi Agbanrin, Regional Sales Director, Eutelsat ONEWEB**



> Connecting Tanzania remains a key goal for Vodacom Tanzania. From city centres to rural communities, broadband connectivity continues to transform lives, unlocking access to education, healthcare, government services, and expanding financial inclusion and economic opportunity.
>
> **Andrew Lupembe, Network Director, Vodacom Tanzania**



> Accessibility, sustainable power, and digital literacy remain key challenges in rural broadband deployment."
>
> **Vedastust Mwita, Commercial Director, TTCL**

Regulate to Accelerate – Positioning Tanzania as Africa's Next FinTech Destination

UNCDF convened regulators, investors, and fintech entrepreneurs to examine how Tanzania can balance **innovation** with **consumer protection.** With fintech adoption accelerating, the call was for adaptive regulatory frameworks—sandbox models, tiered licensing, and digital ID integration—to unlock capital while safeguarding trust.

Clarity in regulation is fueling investor confidence and giving startups the tools to scale responsibly. By bridging policy with innovation, Tanzania is emerging as a credible fintech hub for Africa.

Hashtech is proud to contribute to building a tech-driven future that is inclusive, adaptive, and investment-ready for Tanzania and Africa at large.

The Tanzania Fintech Association (TAFINA) continues to advocate for policies that unlock innovation and provide clarity for fintech startups

Tap into Tomorrow – M-Pesa's Open API and the Rise of Mini-Apps

Vodacom unveiled how its open API platform is democratizing access to its vast mobile financial ecosystem. Developers now have the ability to build mini-apps that integrate seamlessly with M-Pesa, unlocking new use cases in e-commerce, health payments, agriculture, and beyond.

For startups, this creates an unprecedented distribution channel. For Tanzania, it's a leap toward super-app ecosystems that enrich everyday lives while expanding financial inclusion.

> We are in the age of Super Apps, where convenience meets connection. By integrating your product with the M-PESA Super App, you tap into one of Tanzania's largest digital ecosystems, giving your business the power to reach customers at every stage of their financial journey with relevant products and services."
>
> **Ronald Ndibalema, M-PESA Product Development Specialist**



Smart Governance Unplugged: Citizen-Driven Urban Innovation.

Inspired by Finland's success, this session explored how Tanzania can embed digital public infrastructure—national IDs, interoperable registries, and e-government platforms into its development strategy. Speakers from Vodacom, FSDT, and Onafriq emphasized public-private partnerships as the linchpin.

Linking digital IDs with financial services and government systems will reduce inefficiencies, expand financial access, and build citizen trust in digital platforms.



> The move by the government to have national identification registration at birth will give everyone a unique identifier that will enhance the base which becomes a building block for financing service providers

Epimack Mbeteni, M-Commerce Director Vodacom Tanzania



> Public-private cooperation is imperative. Only then can digital infrastructure scale to empower both governments and citizens.

Jani Ruuskanen, Resident Twinning Adviser, EU Digital for Tanzania Project

Robust and inclusive digital infrastructure, coupled with forward-thinking regulation, is the foundation for a modern, competitive economy. Tanzania's innovation ecosystem is rapidly building this backbone, ensuring connectivity, financial access, and trust in digital systems.



Empowering the Future: Youth, Inclusion & Skills

At the heart of Innovation Week Tanzania 2025 anchored by the Future Ready Summit was a recognition that the country's most valuable resource is its people especially the youth who make up the majority of the population.

Across multiple sessions, young Tanzanians were not just participants but protagonists, shaping conversations on inclusion, skills, and the future of work. The sessions under this theme demonstrated how innovation is being used to build pathways for opportunity, equity, and empowerment.

Spotlight on

- Youth Ignite Student Founders Fellowship
- Youth Debate on Future Ready Skills
- Vodacom Youth Base (VYB): Youth-Centric Digital Inclusion
- Skills Sprint Lab – Accelerating Future-Ready Talent
- Accessible by Design: Building Tanzania's Inclusive Future
- Financial Inclusion for the Future: Youth, Access & Innovation
- Influencing & Leading (with LUMEN EA)
- Creator's Zone: Content Creation as a Career
- Career Speed Dating

Youth Debate on Future Ready Skills

The debate gathered students, graduates, and youth leaders to explore whether enablers are doing enough to prepare young people for the future of work. Discussions centered on digital literacy, entrepreneurial mindsets, and the barriers of favoritism and access that often limit opportunities.

By giving young people a platform to challenge enablers directly, the debate highlighted both progress and persistent gaps in preparing youth for a fast-changing economy. It underscored that Tanzania's young population is not just a beneficiary of innovation, but an active driver of its future.

Voices from the Debate:



As a coalition, we're actively working with young people not just for them. We're opening up real opportunities where they can up-skill and grow in just 3 months."

Lenin Kazoba, Director and Founder, Tanzania Youth Coalition (TYC)



Too often, when a training is announced, youth come mainly to ask if there's a financial benefit. If we truly made the most of these opportunities, there's so much we could gain.

Tony Edward Mgimba, Coordinator, UN Chapter (YUNA)



Many opportunities are still shaped by favoritism. Without connections, it often feels like you don't stand a real chance.

Aulea Michael, AIESEC Representative



Instead of thinking 'I need help,' we should be asking 'How can I help others?' True progress begins when we move from dependency to leadership.

Idris Njelu, Co-Founder, itravel_tz

Youth Ignite Student Founders Fellowship

The Youth Ignite Student Founders Fellowship was one of the week's flagship youth-focused programmes, spotlighting how higher learning institutions (HLIs) can serve as incubators of entrepreneurship.

Fellows presented startups tackling health, agribusiness, and digital services, while panelists highlighted the need for financing, mentorship, and supportive policies.

> A mindset shift is needed at all levels among regulators, institutions, academics, students, and communities. If we embrace entrepreneurship and innovation as key drivers of progress, we can collectively support students and build thriving local businesses.

Pamela Chogo, Lecturer & Hub Manager – Institute of Accountancy Arusha.



Vodacom Youth Base (VYB): Youth-Centric Digital Inclusion

The VYB session showcased how **Vodacom**, in partnership with M-Wekeza, is rethinking youth engagement through access to digital tools, education, and financial services. Young participants shared how the initiative has given them access to online learning, savings **platforms**, and even music bundles, turning connectivity into a lifestyle and an **economic opportunity.**

VYB is more than a product, it is **reshaping** youth engagement by embedding education and financial literacy into **digital** lifestyles. It has already unlocked pathways for thousands of Tanzanian youth to save, learn, and build sustainable futures.



> We discovered that the youth's biggest needs are education and savings. That's why we partnered with AWS for free courses and bundled affordable M-Pesa services within VYB.

Gemma Kamara, Head of Department Pricing & Consumer Segment, Vodacom Tanzania

> Investing has never been this easy or convenient. With M-Wekeza, youth can save or invest anytime, anywhere.

Sylvester Martine, Product Development Specialist, Vodacom Tanzania



Skills Sprint Lab – Accelerating Future-Ready Talent

The Skills Sprint Lab created an energetic, hands-on environment where young Tanzanians were exposed to **practical problem-solving, teamwork,** and **digital adaptability exercises.** Industry professionals guided participants through short, intensive challenges designed to **build confidence, sharpen workplace skills,** and bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world demands.

By immersing participants in fast-paced learning, the session delivered more than just knowledge—it cultivated a mindset of adaptability that is vital in today's innovation-driven economy. The Lab left young attendees better prepared for employment and entrepreneurship, while also demonstrating to employers and investors that Tanzania's youth can quickly evolve into the resilient, future-ready talent needed to drive sustainable growth.

Accessible by Design: Building Tanzania's Inclusive Future

This session explored how inclusive design can create equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities and marginalized groups. Experts from **Vodacom, UNDP, CCBRT,** and civil society emphasized that accessibility must be part of the design process from the start — not an afterthought.

The session shifted thinking from retrofitting to proactive inclusion. By embedding universal design, Tanzania can build an economy where persons with disabilities and women participate fully in innovation and entrepreneurship.

> Inclusion doesn't begin with special schools or special gadgets; it begins with designing systems where everyone, including persons with disabilities, can start, thrive, and finish. True inclusion means no one is left out from the start."

Rhoda Ndakwe, Chief Community Development & Research Officer, CCBRT





> With 204 million women still offline, we must ask: Are our products and services inclusive from end to end? Through purpose-driven financing, we're making smartphones more accessible and ensuring no one is left behind in the digital revolution."

Harriet Lwakatare, Customer Operations Director, Vodacom Tanzania

Financial Inclusion for the Future: Youth, Access & Innovation

This powerful panel, hosted by **Stanbic Bank,** brought together bold voices to rethink what true **inclusion** means in Tanzania's financial landscape. The discussion moved beyond access to emphasize **meaningful use** of **financial services, equity in design**, and **shared responsibility among banks, innovators,** and **policymakers.**

Panelists explored how youth, women, and marginalized groups can be better served through intentional innovation — from digital products designed with users at the center to incubation programs that move beyond charity into strategy. The session highlighted how inclusive finance is not simply about apps or accounts, but about trust, visibility, and empowerment.

By challenging banks, policymakers, and innovators to build with communities, not just for them, the session set the stage for deeper, more equitable financial participation.

Startups and young entrepreneurs left with **a clearer understanding** of how **inclusive financial systems** can **unlock growth,** while investors and corporates saw how intentional design creates resilience, equity, and stronger markets.

> At Stanbic, inclusion isn't an add-on — it's embedded in how we innovate, lend, and grow. Through initiatives like the Biashara Incubator, we are moving from charity to strategy, unlocking economic potential where it matters most."
>
> **Kai Mollel, Head of Business Incubator, Stanbic Bank**



> "This platform allows us to amplify youth-led and women-led voices and technologies that create sustainable impact."
>
> **Nelson Swai, Head of Information Technology, Stanbic Bank**



Innovating for Inclusion – Women-Led Tech Solutions

Hosted by **Launchpad**, this session spotlighted women innovators from the **SheTech** Incubation and **Acceleration Program**. Their solutions addressed pressing challenges in education, health, GBV prevention, and climate action, underscoring the **transformative power of women-led innovation.**

The session proved that women-led innovation is a strategic investment. These solutions demonstrated both commercial viability and high social impact, making them prime candidates for scale-up support.

> Innovation led by women isn't just about inclusion; it's about unlocking solutions that transform societies at their core.
>
> **Carol Ndosi, Executive Director, Launchpad Tanzania**



Influencing & Leading (with LUMEN EA)

Hosted by **LUMEN EA,** this workshop introduced young Tanzanian innovators to practical leadership tools rooted in self-awareness and collaboration. Coaches **Judith Rovers** and **Alex Shayo** used the globally recognized **Insights Discovery model** to demonstrate how diverse personalities and working styles can become strengths when harnessed intentionally. The session emphasized that successful innovation is rarely the result of solo effort, it flourishes when teams embrace inclusion, empathy, and shared purpose.



> Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team.
>
> **Judith Rovers, LUMEN Associate**



> When collaboration flows, the magic of innovation truly begins.
>
> **Alex Shayo, LUMEN Coach**

Participants left with a deeper appreciation of inclusive teamwork, equipped with tools to strengthen their entrepreneurial leadership and foster environments where innovation can thrive.

Creator's Zone: Content Creation as a Career

In this high-energy session, creators turned the spotlight on content as currency. Discussions highlighted the opportunities for Tanzanian youth to turn creativity into a profession, with authenticity and originality as the pillars of success.

The session shifted perceptions of content creation from "hobby" to "career." It highlighted how Tanzania's creators are driving culture and commerce, turning digital platforms into income streams and social influence.



> **Authenticity is everything. Speak in your own voice, embrace Swahili, and stay true to your style — that's how you build real connection.**
>
> **Benedict Anthony (Temidayo), Content Creator**

Career Speed Dating

A first for many participants, this event created a fast-paced but meaningful space where students and graduates met HR managers from leading organizations.
The interactive "speed networking" approach gave youth real-time feedback, clarity, and confidence.

The Youth left with actionable career insights and newfound confidence. This model proved that with the right facilitation, mentorship and recruitment can be democratized for young job-seekers.



Financial Literacy & Resilience for Micro-Entrepreneurs

Stanbic Bank led this session to strengthen financial literacy and resilience, particularly among micro-entrepreneurs, women, and youth. Discussions emphasized shifting from charity models to sustainable financial inclusion strategies.

The discussion reinforced that financial literacy is a cornerstone of resilience.
By supporting micro-entrepreneurs with knowledge and tools, financial institutions can unlock grassroots business growth.

> By changing mindsets early and embracing consistent saving habits, micro-entrepreneurs can take control of their financial future. Small, regular investments can grow into powerful assets over time, providing a cushion against economic shocks, business downturns, or unexpected life events"



Oswald Martin Urassa, Senior partner - Diamond Financial Services



> Inclusion isn't an add-on. It's embedded in how we innovate, lend, and grow.

Kai Mollel, Head of Business Incubator, Stanbic Bank

This theme made clear that Tanzania's innovation economy will rise or fall on the ability to empower its people. From women-led solutions and disability-inclusive design to financial literacy and digital creativity, every session underlined the same truth: a future-ready nation is one that invests in its youth, women, and marginalized groups as equal drivers of growth.

Tanzania's economic future depends on equipping all its citizens—especially youth, women, and marginalized groups—with the skills, tools, and opportunities to participate and lead.

Building a Sustainable Nation:
Climate, Mobility & Infrastructure

Climate resilience, sustainable urbanization, and green growth are not just policy priorities — they are survival imperatives for Tanzania. This theme brought together leaders from government, development partners, private sector, and youth innovators to showcase solutions for financing infrastructure, designing inclusive cities, and reimagining transport. From high-level PPP strategies to grassroots hackathons, the sessions underscored how innovation can drive a greener, more inclusive future.

Spotlight on

- Financing Sustainable Infrastructure
- The Future of Smart Mobility
- The Role of PPPs in Advancing Smart and Sustainable Urbanization
- Code the City: Youth Hackathon on Urban Resilience
- Inclusive Urban Design

Financing Sustainable Infrastructure

This flagship panel convened experts from the **Ministry of Finance, Stanbic Bank, Minara Tanzania,** and the **PPP Centre** to explore blended finance, green bonds, and sustainability-linked loans. The session highlighted both opportunities and bottlenecks in mobilizing capital for infrastructure projects that balance profitability with social and environmental impact.

> Green Power Telecoms Financing is the future. But for investors, the critical factor remains stability — both regulatory and operational.
>
> **Joe Hanna, Country Manager, Minara Tanzania**





> At Stanbic, ESG is not just a policy, it's a principle. Sustainable finance is smart finance.
>
> **Ester Manase, Head of Corporate & Investment Banking, Stanbic Bank**

> Sustainability is built into every stage of PPPs — from climate-smart assessments to capacity building.
>
> **Dr. Suleiman Kiula, Head of Project Appraisal, PPP Centre**



The discussion reinforced investor confidence and positioned Tanzania as a hub for sustainable finance, while also surfacing the need for regulatory reforms to attract more private capital into infrastructure.

The Future of Smart Mobility

With urban congestion and climate change pressing harder, this session explored **electric vehicles (EVs), CNG,** and **people-centered transport.** Panelists urged a shift from car-centric policies to inclusive mobility that prioritizes pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport.

> Tanzania is richly endowed with Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), sourced directly from our own natural gas pipeline, not imported. As a cleaner, more affordable fuel, CNG holds immense potential to transform the transportation sector and serve as a more efficient energy alternative to imported fuels.
>
> **Amr Aboushady, MD, TAQA Tanzania**





> Public transport is not a profit-making venture; PPPs in this sector must reflect that reality.
>
> **Chris Kost, Independent Consultant, Advanced Urban**

> Mainstreaming EVs means reimagining all modes of transport, from private cars to boda bodas and bajajis. For Tanzania to lead in smart mobility, we need the right policies, infrastructure and skills in place.
>
> **Gibson Kawago, Founder, Waga Motion**



The session sparked dialogue on regulatory incentives and infrastructure needs, setting the stage for Tanzania to lead East Africa in eMobility adoption.

The Role of PPPs in Advancing Smart and Sustainable Urbanization

This session explored **how public–private partnerships (PPPs)** can accelerate Tanzania's transition toward **smart, sustainable cities.** With rapid urbanization placing pressure on infrastructure, housing, and services, PPPs emerged as a critical tool for mobilizing investment, sharing risks, and delivering innovation-driven solutions at scale.

Speakers highlighted successful examples of PPPs in areas such as affordable housing, digital public infrastructure, transport systems, and renewable energy. They stressed that **PPPs are not just about financing**, but about blending the strengths of government policy, private sector efficiency, and community engagement. The discussions also touched on governance mechanisms—ensuring **accountability, inclusivity,** and **long-term sustainability** of urban development projects.

> **There are many projects we're working on through partnerships because we understand we can't do it alone. At the very top, we prioritize collaboration. As the leading telco. we have access to over 20 million subscribers. But what can we do with that subscriber base beyond connectivity, beyond data, beyond voice? This is where partnership comes in"**

Zuweina Farah, External Affairs and Vodacom Tanzania Foundation Director





Code the City: Youth Hackathon on Urban Resilience

Co-hosted by **UNICEF,** this hackathon showcased youth-led digital solutions for climate-smart cities. Using **AI, IoT, and XR,** students pitched prototypes ranging from flood-mapping tools to smart waste systems.

The event proved that youth are not passive beneficiaries but active co-creators of urban resilience, with several prototypes flagged for mentorship and incubation.

Inclusive Urban Design

How can Tanzania build cities that are both smart and human-centered? Urban planners, architects, and policymakers tackled this question by drawing lessons from The City of Shenzhen's rapid transformation while grounding solutions in local realities.

> **Smart cities must serve people first — especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities.**
>
> **Eunice Likotiko, Lecturer and Head of Technology - Transfer Ardhi University**

> **Shenzhen shows what's possible: green parks, electric transport, human-centered design.**
>
> **Haris Memic, Architect & Designer**





The session positioned inclusive planning not as an option, but as a necessity to ensure equitable urban futures, inspiring cross-sector collaboration on sustainable city design.

Innovation is critical for solving Tanzania's pressing challenges in climate change, urbanization, and sustainable development.

Thank You

Innovation Week Tanzania anchored by the Future Ready Summit, was made possible through the collective commitment, collaboration, and shared vision of an extraordinary community of partners, sponsors, and participants.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the convening partners - **The Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), UNDP Tanzania through the FUNGUO Innovation Programme (funded by the European Union and the British Government), and Vodacom Tanzania** whose leadership and stewardship ensured the successful delivery of this 11th edition of Innovation Week Tanzania.

We gratefully acknowledge our **sponsors and private sector partners**, whose financial support, technical expertise, and active engagement were instrumental in bringing Innovation Week Tanzania to life. Your investment in this platform reflects a strong belief in innovation as a driver of economic growth, digital transformation, and inclusive development in Tanzania.

Our appreciation also goes to **development partners, government institutions, investors, academia, ecosystem builders, and international partners** whose insights, resources, and participation enriched the discussions and strengthened cross-sector collaboration throughout the week.

We thank the **innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, researchers, youth leaders, and creatives** who shared bold ideas, challenged assumptions, and showcased the ingenuity shaping Tanzania's future. Your ambition and resilience remain the heartbeat of this platform.

Special recognition is extended to the **media partners, moderators, facilitators, volunteers, and organizing teams**, whose dedication ensured that Innovation Week Tanzania was impactful, inclusive, and widely accessible.

As Innovation Week continues to evolve, we are inspired by the partnerships forged, the conversations sparked, and the solutions advanced during this week. Together, we are not only imagining the future we are actively building it.

Thank you for being part of Innovation Week Tanzania.

Thank You!

Innovation Week Tanzania-IWTz2025

Innovation for Resilience and Inclusive Future

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