

CASE STUDY

Zimpost – Empowering MSMEs through inclusive e-procurement

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Zimpost, in collaboration with the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (PRAZ), has embarked on an initiative to empower MSMEs by facilitating digitally enabled access to public procurement services through its extensive network of post offices and Digital Centers. By leveraging its widespread physical infrastructure, Zimpost is extending essential procurement services – previously accessible exclusively online – to MSMEs that face significant barriers to digital engagement owing to limited connectivity or digital literacy.

This strategic partnership capitalizes on Zimpost's established network, comprising more than 220 Digital Centers across the country, a majority in rural and underserved communities, offering local entrepreneurs the resources needed to effectively participate in government procurement processes. These services include registration as government suppliers, submission of procurement bids, and access to procurement-related information. Providing these services at accessible community locations like post offices promotes economic inclusion, empowering MSMEs to engage competitively and inclusively in the national economy. This model builds on the success of Zimpost's Digital Center initiative (see box 26 in section 6.2), which has already demonstrated the value of digitally upgrading postal networks in bridging the digital divide. This partnership also highlights the potential for post offices to act as a digital building block or digital public infrastructure facilitating inclusivity. Thanks to the efforts made to connect post offices in recent years through the Digital Center initiative, Zimpost is now able to unlock new partnerships and deliver a broader range of inclusive services than originally envisioned, proving that early investments in digitalizing postal infrastructure can generate future value for governments, citizens, and businesses.

By partnering with Zimpost, PRAZ benefits from a trusted, nationwide delivery platform that ensures even the most remote communities can access public procurement opportunities. This initiative aligns with the Zimbabwean government's broader goals articulated in the National Development Strategy, which prioritizes inclusive digital transformation and economic empowerment of marginalized groups.

Sources: (Kazunga and Chidakwa, 2022; Mirror, 2022; Vladimir Dube, 2024)