



PROFILE OF ECONOMIC **IRU** INFRASTRUCTURE RESEARCH UNIT

1. BRANCH ECONOMIC RESEARCH, STRATEGY AND PLANNING

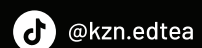
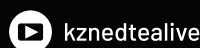
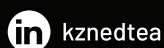
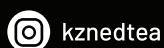
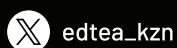
The Economic Infrastructure Research Unit falls under the Economic Research, Strategy and Planning branch, whose mandate is to serve as the department's cornerstone of economic intelligence by providing strategic leadership in research, policy formulation, and economic analysis.

2. CHIEF DIRECTORATE: RESEARCH AND MODELLING

The Economic Infrastructure Research Unit reports through the Chief Directorate: Research and Modelling, which is responsible for conducting rigorous research and developing innovative strategies.

3. SUB-PROGRAMME: INFRASTRUCTURE RESEARCH UNIT OVERVIEW

The Economic Infrastructure Research Unit is a specialised research unit within the department responsible for generating rigorous evidence-based analysis on infrastructure systems to support economic growth, job creation, service delivery improvement, and climate-resilient development. The Unit positions infrastructure as a strategic enabler of inclusive economic development, industrial expansion, tourism growth, environmental sustainability, and spatial transformation by informing policy, planning, and investment decisions through data-driven research and modelling aligned to EDTEA's mandate.





4. MANDATE

To conduct rigorous, data-driven infrastructure research and modelling that informs policy, planning, investment prioritisation, and resilience-building across provincial sectors, in support of the department's quest to drive inclusive economic growth, industrial development, tourism expansion, environmental sustainability, and job creation.

5. PURPOSE

The unit has a two-fold purpose, that is, to conduct rigorous, data-driven economic infrastructure research and modelling, and to support infrastructure investment and funding analysis. It provides evidence-based insights that inform policy, planning, project prioritisation, and resilience-building across provincial sectors. By assessing investment needs, conducting preliminary feasibility analyses, exploring funding models such as PPPs, and ensuring alignment with national and provincial policies, the unit enables projects that unlock economic opportunities, promote inclusive growth, industrial development, tourism expansion, environmental sustainability, and job creation.

6. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

i. Drive Evidence-Based Infrastructure research and Planning

- a. Conduct rigorous economic infrastructure research, spatial and social analysis, and preliminary feasibility assessments to identify investment gaps and bottlenecks.
- b. Inform policy, planning, and project prioritisation across transport, energy, water, digital, and economic infrastructure to support inclusive growth, industrial development, and job creation.

ii. Enable Strategic, Sustainable, and Equitable Infrastructure Development

- a. Support infrastructure investment and funding analysis through innovative financing models, PPPs, and alignment with national and provincial policies.
- b. Promote social, spatial, and environmental equity, climate resilience, and smart infrastructure solutions to maximise economic and social returns.

7. CORE FOCUS AREAS

7.1 Economic Infrastructure Research

Infrastructure research focuses on modelling the economic impact of infrastructure, using spatial needs assessments, benchmarking, funding analysis and smart infrastructure planning to identify bottlenecks and investment gaps that drive inclusive growth, competitiveness, and job creation in line with EDTEA's mandate. The focus areas include the following:

- Economic infrastructure to support industrial development.
- Transport infrastructure (roads, rail, ports, harbours).
- Energy infrastructure (generation, transmission, distribution).
- Water and sanitation systems.
- Digital Infrastructure and Smart Systems.
- Social and Spatial Equity Analysis.
- Climate Resilience and Disaster Risk Research

7.2 Infrastructure Investment and Funding Analysis

The unit supports evidence-based prioritisation of projects, including preparing proposals for submission to DFIs and national departments, exploring funding models such as public-private partnerships (PPPs), and fostering joint planning and partnerships to maximise economic and social returns. This includes conducting preliminary feasibility analyses to ensure projects are financially and technically viable, and aligning proposed investments with relevant national and provincial policies to support strategic objectives.

The unit therefore supports EDTEA's mandate through the following:

- Assessing infrastructure investment needs and funding gaps.
- Joint spatial planning for infrastructure prioritisation.
- Analysing public infrastructure investments through public entities.
- Supporting prioritisation of projects that unlock economic opportunities in communities.
- Conducting preliminary feasibility assessments to determine project viability.
- Ensuring policy alignment with national and provincial infrastructure, spatial, and development frameworks.

8. STRATEGIC OUTPUTS / DELIVERABLES OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE UNIT

- Research reports- Sector-Specific Infrastructure reports to guide implementation and policy
- Infrastructure Prioritisation Framework- A tool for evidence-based project prioritisation across sectors.
- Funding Proposals and Business Cases- Submission-ready proposals for DFIs, national departments.
- PPP arrangements funded projects- Successful implementation of projects through PPPs
- Infrastructure Forums and Stakeholder Engagement Platforms- Events and workshops to foster collaboration, joint planning, and knowledge sharing.
- Feasibility and Investment Gap Analyses- Preliminary financial, technical, and economic assessments to guide project decisions.
- Climate Resilience and Risk Assessment Tools- Analyses and guidelines for climate-smart and disaster-resilient infrastructure.
- Policy Alignment Briefs- Guidance to ensure projects align with national and provincial development frameworks.
- Smart Infrastructure and Digital Systems Recommendations/reports- Insights on integrating technology and innovation into infrastructure planning.
- Joint planning infrastructure reports- project planning reports on catalytic infrastructure projects.

9. RISKS AND MITIGATION

Risk	Mitigation
Stakeholder buy-in	Strengthen partnerships and joint planning
Limited funding	Prioritise high-impact research areas
Red Tape	Proactive planning and efficient stakeholder engagement

10. STAKEHOLDERS

- EDTEA business units
- EDTEA entities
- DOPW
- Provincial Treasury
- KZNDOT
- National Departments (DTIC, DT, DST, National Treasury)
- State Owned Entities (DBSA, IDC, NEF)

11. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Number of sector-specific infrastructure research reports produced annually.
- Completion and approval of an evidence-based prioritisation framework.
- Number of submission-ready funding proposals developed per year.
- Total value of funding secured through submitted proposals.
- Number of PPP projects successfully initiated and/or completed.
- Number of jobs created through facilitated infrastructure projects.
- Number of infrastructure forums, workshops, or stakeholder engagement sessions held annually.
- Number of feasibility studies and investment gap analyses completed.
- Number of policy alignment briefs produced per year.
- Number of reports or recommendations developed for smart infrastructure or digital systems.
- Number of catalytic joint planning reports completed.



CONTACT







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