



GREEN CITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY PROGRAMME (GCIEP)

# Strengthening business case capability for green infrastructure in Gauteng: Learning from GCIEP's training to Gauteng Provincial Government

Gauteng is South Africa's smallest province by area yet generates around one-third of national gross domestic product (GDP). However, its major cities – Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg and Tshwane (Pretoria) – face persistent infrastructure and socio-economic challenges that require better planned, more sustainable investment. GCIEP has been working with the Office of the Premier to establish a Programme Management Office (PgMO) and strengthen capacity for Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) officials to develop robust business cases using the UK's Five Case Model (5CM).

The aim of the project was to create a cadre of officials who can prepare structured, evidence-based and inclusive business cases that support greener, more resilient infrastructure across Gauteng. GCIEP placed emphasis on building durable skills, confidence and systems, combining formal training with a live applied exercise to help officials move from theory to practice, as well as connect business case methodology to provincial priorities on climate, inclusion and service delivery. The learning from that process is outlined below.

## Combining accredited training with applied mentoring

GCIEP worked on two linked phases that together addressed both individual capability and organisational practice. The first phase focused on accredited Better Business Case Foundation training to provide a common understanding of 5CM, its key components and its relevance for infrastructure investment decisions. The second phase offered targeted mentoring to a smaller group as they developed a draft Early Business

Case (EBC) for a real provincial project, enabling them to work through each case step-by-step with expert guidance.

The design of both phases was closely aligned with the emerging PgMO operating model and standard operating procedures, ensuring that the information officials learned could be integrated into routine project development processes. This alignment helped to position 5CM not as an external requirement but as the backbone of how GPG prepares and appraises projects. By pairing accredited training

with hands-on mentoring on a live project, the intervention converted abstract guidance into practical capability embedded within GPG systems.

### **Building a core, targeted cohort of trained officials**

The Better Business Case Foundation course was delivered to 35 officials in two cohorts, exceeding the initial target and widening the reach across GPG departments, provincial entities and municipalities. Delegates were identified with input from Heads of Department and the Office of the Premier, with a focus on officials who are directly involved in project design, appraisal and delivery, and who could share their learning with colleagues.

Training took place in person in Johannesburg over four days for each cohort and covered all five cases (Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management) and the three recognised business case stages. Of the 35 officials trained, 31 successfully passed the Better Business Case Foundation exam, giving an overall pass rate of 89 per cent and a strong record of participation and achievement by women and men across both groups. Participant feedback confirmed that the course effectively explained 5CM and its application, although many felt that more time and additional practical examples would have been beneficial for first-time learners.

The training established a broad, accredited cohort across GPG with a shared language and methodology for improving the quality and consistency of business cases.

### **Applying the Five Case Model to a live waste management project**

After the training, GCIEP collaborated with GPG to select a smaller cohort of 15 officials to develop a draft EBC focused on waste management data and decision-making. The project aimed to create a digital, data-driven tool that would enhance the monitoring of waste management performance across the province and support more effective planning, funding and service improvements. The team brought together staff from the Department of Environment, Department of E-Government, municipalities and finance and governance institutions, ensuring a mix of technical, operational and strategic perspectives.

GCIEP provided mentoring through two one-week, in-country visits and structured remote sessions between them. Workshops followed the 5CM logic, guiding officials to clarify the strategic case for change; develop critical success factors and longlist options; undertake option sifting and appraisal; and draft sections of the economic, commercial, financial and management cases. GCIEP facilitators provided feedback and challenged ideas, but did not write the business case, with the intention that ownership of the

analysis and narrative would remain with GPG officials. The live waste management project served as a practical vehicle for embedding 5CM, while also generating a draft business case with real potential value for provincial decision-making.

### **Embedding inclusivity, climate and systems change**

The mentoring process deliberately integrated gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) considerations alongside climate, nature and environment issues in the development of the EBC. Officials were encouraged to consider how improved waste services and better data could benefit vulnerable groups, identify potential distributional impacts across communities, and reflect these factors in their option assessment and preferred way forward. The team also considered how the project could support emissions reduction, resilience and environmental co-benefits through more efficient waste management, data-driven planning and potential links to recycling and resource recovery initiatives.

At the institutional level, the intervention reinforced the PgMO's role as the anchor for improved project development practice in Gauteng. The 5CM methodology has been incorporated into PgMO standard operating procedures, and officials indicated strong intent to apply the approach to other projects, share learning with colleagues



The second cohort of 15 government officials trained in the Better Business Case Foundation.

and use the PgMO as a platform for raising business case quality. This created a visible link between individual's gaining skills and the wider system change that GPG is seeking to achieve. By connecting 5CM to GEDSI, climate priorities and PgMO processes, the intervention positioned better business case practice as a core driver of more inclusive and lower-carbon infrastructure across the province.

### Capacity building outcomes for Gauteng Provincial Government

GCIEP's work delivered outcomes that can be seen at the individual, project and system level. For individuals,

35 officials are now trained in the Better Business Case Foundation, with 31 holding an internationally recognised accreditation and a clear understanding of how to apply 5CM to their day-to-day work. Many participants expressed plans to use the methodology to strengthen funding applications, improve project appraisal and mentor junior staff, suggesting that the benefits will continue beyond the life of the programme.

At the project level, the draft EBC for the waste management data tool is a tangible output that can be refined and potentially advanced to subsequent business case stages. The process of co-authoring the

EBC has strengthened officials' confidence in structuring analysis, articulating strategic rationale and assessing options within an established framework. At the system level, embedding 5CM into PgMO procedures and aligning the intervention with the PgMO's operating model has laid the groundwork for more consistent, transparent and rigorous project preparation across GPG. Taken together, these changes indicate a shift from ad hoc business case preparation towards a more systematic, skills-based and institutionally anchored approach to developing investable and inclusive infrastructure projects.

### Key learnings from the Five Case Model training and application

The intervention generated several learning points of wider relevance for capacity-building programmes focused on public sector business case development:

- **Training duration matters for first-time learners:** The standard Better Business Case Foundation course is intensive and many participants reported that more time and additional real-world examples would help them absorb and apply the methodology more effectively.
- **Careful delegate selection increases impact:** Training is most beneficial when targeted at officials directly involved in project preparation and appraisal, rather than those in senior roles who are less likely to work with business cases on a regular basis.
- **In-person mentoring is particularly valuable for complex analytical work:** Face-to-face sessions enabled more effective collaboration, deeper discussion and faster progress on drafting the EBC, than remote support alone.
- **Remote support must be backed by clear organisational commitment:** Competing priorities and limited protected time reduced engagement in some virtual sessions, underscoring the importance of strong senior sponsorship and explicit time allocation for participants.
- **Institutionalisation through systems and procedures is essential:** Embedding 5CM within PgMO standard operating procedures, and aligning training and mentoring with these processes, has been critical to ensuring that improved business case practice will continue beyond the life of the programme.
- **Live projects provide a powerful learning vehicle:** Using a real provincial priority – in this case, waste management data – helped officials to see the relevance of 5CM, practice the methodology in context and produce a draft business case that can be taken forward.
- **Integrated programme design:** Future programmes seeking to strengthen government business case capability should combine well-targeted training, structured applied mentoring on live projects and deliberate integration into institutional systems to ensure durable and scalable improvements.

GCIEP is a demand-driven initiative focused on sustainable green cities and climate-resilient infrastructure in lower-income countries. As the flagship programme of the UK's Centre of Expertise for Green Cities, Infrastructure and Energy, GCIEP supports the UK Government's mission to accelerate investment in, and delivery of, infrastructure and urban development that is responsible, reliable, inclusive, low-carbon and climate-resilient.

A significant proportion of GCIEP's work is carried out in seven priority countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Philippines, Mozambique, Vietnam and Zambia, where a Deep Offer programme provides long-term, systemic interventions focused on transformative change and infrastructure financing.

To keep up to date with GCIEP's work:

Visit [ukgreencitiesandinfrastructure.org](http://ukgreencitiesandinfrastructure.org) | Follow GCIEP on LinkedIn | Sign up to the newsletter | Contact GCIEP

The UK's Green Cities, Infrastructure and Energy Programme accelerates the delivery of sustainable green cities and climate-resilient infrastructure – tackling climate change and extreme poverty.