



UNECE

International PPP Centre of Excellence

Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships Fourth session

1-2 December 2020, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Room Tempus 2 and online

[Provisional Programme¹](#)

The Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships is an intergovernmental body established in 2016 and it convenes over 2000 experts coming from the public and private sector, civil society and international organizations. The Working Party provides a platform for different opinions on Public-Private Partnerships from all stakeholder groups. The session on 1-2 December 2020 will be held in a hybrid form with a very limited number of delegates present in the conference room and the vast majority of delegates joining remotely. The session will focus on the contribution of the UNECE work on People-first PPPs to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a policy discussion on the theme of ‘building back better’ through mainstreaming the People-first PPP model.

¹ As of 30 November 2020

Day 1 | Tuesday, 1 December 2020

Building back better

COVID-19 has been a monumental challenge that has overtaken all our lives, wreaking havoc, causing huge distress and economic turmoil and catching Governments unprepared. Not surprisingly, there is now a desire from people everywhere for a return to normal life. While understandable, the challenge however is not to return to normal and 'business as usual'; rather it is to learn the lessons from the pandemic and 'build back better'.

Equally important is to ensure that the path forward is an uncompromisingly green and sustainable one. In this regard, the focus should be on those who suffer disproportionately from the impacts of the pandemic and of climate change: these are the most vulnerable members of our society, e.g. the poor, elderly, ethnic groups etc. Additionally, this programme requires the rational use of natural resources and avoidance of waste. In this regard, the high-level theme of the forthcoming sixty-ninth Commission session in April 2021 is to promote circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources in the UNECE region.

One key task is to build resilience within communities. Resilience is the ability to withstand shocks, recover, carry on and move forward. The post pandemic recovery needs to improve the situation of vulnerable communities to make them more resilient: so that there can never be a recurrence of such a scale in the future, when next time a pandemic or disaster strikes.

Mainstreaming the People-first PPP model

The UNECE promotes People-first Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).² The People-first PPP model has undoubtedly a role to play in building community resilience. Amongst the advantages is its holistic approach: typically, the critical challenges facing the world, such as climate change, food security etc. rarely have a single cause or solution; they need integrated approaches involving varied solutions. In this way, PPP projects should move away from exclusively a 'value for money' approach to a broader more integrated 'value for people' one. This includes using social and environmental criteria in addition to the typical financial criteria in selecting and developing projects.

The Working Party promotes People-first PPPs with respect to undertaking the following:

- Tools and instruments for implementing People-first PPPs: these include the draft People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs ([ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2020/3/Rev.1](#)), the draft People-first Model Law and potentially several others.
- International standards, best practices and recommendations for industries and sectors in infrastructure and public services e.g. water and sanitation, urban metro rail, waste-to-energy etc.
- Capacity building programmes: Helping national governments and their PPP Units to achieve a change in law, policy and procedures to broaden the criteria of selecting projects from exclusively 'value for money' into 'value for people'.

Goals of the session

The goals of the session are:

- To **explore ways** the Working Party can help 'build back better' and build community resilience, including by making better use of its assets, such as its large network of support and its associated Specialist Centres of Excellence, thereby ensuring greater impact and leverage.
- To **increase the use and effectiveness** of the Working Party's tools and instruments, standards and capacity building activities, identifying specific gaps, and innovative ideas to fill these gaps.

In considering these issues, it is also important to bear in mind the availability of limited resources and the small secretariat responsible for the People-first PPP programme at UNECE which makes it imperative to forge partnerships with other stakeholders.

² A concept which UNECE has pioneered.

Programme organisation

The Working Party will be organised as a hybrid event with two 2-hour sessions from 10 am to 12 noon Geneva time on 1 and 2 December 2020 with interpretation in English, French and Russian.

The policy discussion will be organised in three distinct but interrelated panel discussions held on 1 December, two of which taking place as part of the formal session of the Working Party (in the morning under Item 3 of the draft Agenda) and a third as a side event held in the afternoon of 1 December 2020. The side event gives an opportunity to discuss new ideas on capacity building that originate from UNECE member States.

10:00-10:30 Opening, adoption of agenda³ and election of officers

Policy discussion: 'Building back better' through mainstreaming the People-first PPP model

10:30-11:15 Session I: Towards a fully usable People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs

Background:

Up until now, the UN System has lacked a way in which projects could be evaluated according to the SDGs. The UNECE People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs fills this gap. This tool will allow public and private sectors to demonstrate their concrete contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The challenge is providing an instrument that is open to all, relatively easy to use and fair in its evaluation of a project. Currently, the Methodology is being enhanced and a discussion on this will be held, among others, under agenda item 4 on 2 December 2020.

Key questions:

- What are the objectives of the Methodology?
- At what stage should projects be evaluated by the Methodology?
- What are the best ways and means for testing the Methodology?
- How can UNECE's People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology be further improved?
- How can UNECE and the Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation (SIF) work together in rolling-out the self-assessment component of the Methodology?

Speakers:

- Mr. Frédéric Bobay, Project Director, FIN INFRA, Ministry of the Economy, Finance and the Recovery of France (Bureau member)
- Ms. Tetiana Bessarab, Senior PPP consultant, Ukraine
- Ms. Nathalie Bernasconi-Osterwalder, Executive Director, IISD Europe, Senior Director, Economic Law & Policy
- Mr. Pierre Sarrat, Chief Operating Officer, Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation (SIF)
- Ms. Kari Aina Eik, Secretary General, Organization for International Economic Relations (OiER), Leader United for Smart Sustainable Cities Implementation Program

Documentation: A draft revised People-first Public-Private Partnerships Evaluation Methodology for the Sustainable Development Goals ([ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2020/3/Rev.1](https://www.unece.org/ceci/wp/ppp/2020/3/rev.1))

11:15-12:00 Session II: Waste-to-Energy's contribution to the circular economy

Background:

Given the interest of member States for UNECE subsidiary bodies to contribute to the high-level theme of the forthcoming sixty-ninth Commission session in April 2021 in promoting circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources in the UNECE region, this session will discuss the role of People-first PPPs in advancing the

³ The draft revised annotated agenda is contained in document [ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2020/1/Rev.1](https://www.unece.org/ceci/wp/ppp/2020/1/rev.1).

transition to a circular economy and the Guidelines on People-first PPP Waste-to-Energy projects and the Circular Economy (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2020/5).

Key questions:

- How can the Waste-to-Energy (WtE) industry transform itself to maximise its contribution to circular economy in support of People-first and the SDGs?
- How can guidelines that capture best practices in projects be further developed into People-first PPP standards for Governments and the industry to follow?
- Why are People-first PPP standards and guidelines so important? How practically can they contribute to genuine mainstreaming of People first models?

Speakers:

- Mr. Athanasios Bourtsalas, Lecturer in Energy and Materials, Columbia University
- Ms. Amanda Loeffen, CEO, HumanRight2Water
- Mr. Thomas Obermeier, Head of Business Development, EEW Energy from Waste GmbH and President, German Waste Industry Association (DGAW)

Documentation: Guidelines on Promoting People-first Public-Private Partnerships Waste-to-Energy Projects for the Circular Economy ([ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2020/5](#)).

12:00-14:00

Lunch break

14:00-16:00

Side event⁴ (English only): Capacity building and UNECE-affiliated Specialist Centres of Excellence

Background:

The key challenge in PPPs is to build the capacities of the public sector to deliver PPPs. Building back better however requires local authorities to deliver actual projects to support communities in need. Capacity-building now tends to be confined to setting up IT platforms for the sharing of documents to governments officials and other interested parties. Capacity-building also takes a long time for the transfer of the necessary skills to be achieved, at the end of which often the public sector officials leave the Government and join the private sector. One innovative idea to address this challenge is the creation of a 'hub programme' at local authority level to deliver municipal services. In the United Kingdom for example, the Scottish Futures Trust has been very successful in implementing a hub programme – a public-sector initiated programme – and delivered several billions of USD worth of services at the local level.

Key questions:

- Why is PPP capacity building so difficult to achieve?
- How can the UNECE-affiliated Specialist Centres of Excellence contribute to People-first PPP capacity building in low and middle-income countries, including on women's empowerment?
- Are there innovative ways to tackle the problem? Is the 'hub programme' model transferrable to low and middle-income countries?

Speakers:

- Ms. Irina Novikova, Deputy Minister of Economy of Ukraine
- Ms. Maria Usik, Head of PPP Unit of Belarus
- Mr. Diogo Faria de Oliveira, Executive Managing Director, Centre of Excellence in Portugal, Chair of the Centres of Excellence
- Mr. Marc Frilet, General Secretary, Centre of Excellence in France
- Mr. David Dodd, Founding President and CEO, Centre of Excellence in the United States
- Mr. Kerry Adler, President and CEO SkyPower, Canada
- Mr. David MacDonald, Programme Director, Scottish Futures Trust, United Kingdom

Documentation:

Case study: Smart and Sustainable Cities Sector – Hub Programme, United Kingdom ([Link](#))

⁴ The summary of the discussions of the side event will not be included in the report of the 4th session of the Working Party.

Day 2 | Wednesday, 2 December 2020

10:00-11:15 **Review of the PPP work since the third session of the Working Party on PPPs on 3-4 December 2019**

- **Implementation and impact of UNECE People-first PPP tools through capacity-building and the Specialist Centres of Excellence; and**
- **Standards, guidelines and other policy documents under preparation.**

11:15-12:00 **Implementation plan for 2020-2021**

Other business

Adoption of the report