



International PPP Centre of Excellence

Programme¹

Fifth International PPP Forum:

“Building Back Better through People-first Public-Private Partnerships”

22-26 April 2021

*Palais des Nations, Tempus 2 and online
Geneva, Switzerland*

¹ As of 23 April 2021

Thursday, 22 April 2021

Tempus 2 and online
(Morning session)

10:00-10:45 **Opening session: “Building Back Better”: the policy challenge**

Challenge:

- What measures have been identified and/or taken for making infrastructure and public services more resilient?
- How are Governments protecting disadvantaged communities from the worst excesses of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What should be the role of a People-first approach to “Building Back Better”?

Moderator:

- **Olga Algayerova**, Executive Secretary, UNECE

Panellists:

- **H.E. Nikitina Anzhelika Aleksandrovna**, Deputy Minister of Economy, Belarus
- **H.E. Ambassador Meirav Eilon Sahar**, Israel
- **H.E. Ambassador Sadık Arslan**, Turkey

10:45-12:00 **International Debate: Is Building Back Better a slogan or can it really mean something?**

Challenge:

Concerted and focussed efforts will be needed to “Build Back Better”. Early months of the pandemic showed that the bottom 60 per cent of the population got poorer because of the economic crisis whereas higher earners were benefiting – the result in many cases of Government policy that supports employers and their companies. **Not all is however bad:** there are trends hastened by COVID-19 but apparent before it struck, such as the greater use of e-Commerce, the uptake of contactless payments, the use of new ways for connectivity and service delivery and the transition from carbon energy to renewable electric power and these trends need to become permanent shifts which will be positive for our future. **There is a need for infrastructure and services that can boost these positive trends, on the one hand, and which can overcome the increasing inequalities on the other.**

The debate will discuss three main questions:

- **Why** is “Building Back Better” so important and how People-first PPPs outcomes are aligned to contribute?
- **What** are the priority projects that can be used to “Build Back Better”?
- **How** is “Building Back Better” best accomplished?

Strategic goal and expected outcome

Raise the profile of People-first PPPs amongst key stakeholders and place “Build Back Better” into the policy mainstream.

Moderator:

- **Geoffrey Hamilton**, UNECE

Panellists:

- **Vera Songwe**, Executive Secretary, UNECA
- **Alexander Bazhenov**, Chairman, InfraKAP
- **Matthew Jordan-Tank**, Director, Sustainable Infrastructure Policy & Project Preparation, EBRD
- **Neil Dhot**, Executive Director, Aquafed
- **Louis Downing**, CEO, Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation
- **Nathalie Bernasconi-Osterwalder**, Executive Director, IISD Europe
- **Maksim Merkulov**, Managing Director, VEB.RF
- **James Mnyupe**, Economic Advisor to the President of Namibia

12:00-15:00 **LUNCH BREAK**

Thursday, 22 April 2021

Tempus 2 and online
(Afternoon session)

15:00-17:00 **Session 1: The UNECE Competition for the “Building Back Better” infrastructure award**

Challenge:

The challenge is to guide better design of People first PPP projects by testing and improving the Evaluation Methodology to ensure maximum use and effectiveness of project delivery: consulting and testing should be carried out with all stakeholders namely, Governments, private sector, civil society especially community groups who are at the forefront of “Build Back Better” programmes.

15:00-16:00 **Part 1: Commendations for projects meeting one specific People-first outcomes**

The Chair of the Jury,² James Stewart, will begin by announcing those projects which they consider merit commendations for better achieving one of the five specific People-first PPP outcomes.

Selected contestants will describe how their projects better meet one specific aspect of People-first PPP outcomes.

16:00-17:00 **Part 2: “Building Back Better” infrastructure award (putting the Evaluation Methodology into practice)**

The Chair of the Jury will announce the best “Build Back Better” projects selected for the final round and the rationales for their decision.

The finalists will then present to the Forum their projects aspiring to be People-first.

The Forum participants will, after these presentations, rank the finalists and select the winner using this [online form](#) or by scanning the QR code below from a smartphone or tablet (the vote will be opened from 17:00 to 18:00, Geneva time):³



The winner and the runner-up will be announced on the second day of the Forum at 15:00.

Moderator:

- Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, UNECE

Chair of the international Jury:

- James Stewart, Chair of the international Jury

Contestants - Special commendations for projects meeting one of the People-first outcomes:

- **Saudi Arabia: Social Care Homes:** Ahmed Abas - Access and equity
- **Scotland (UK): The Scottish Futures Trust hub Programme:** David MacDonald - Economic effectiveness and fiscal sustainability
- **Spain: MESBarcelona:** Miquel Rodríguez Planas - Environmental sustainability
- **Haiti: Water PPP in St Marc:** Jean-Mary M. Georges - Resilience
- **Russian Federation: Cancer diagnostic centres in the Moscow region:** Aleksandra Golovanova - Replicability
- **India, Indonesia, and Bangladesh: Better Life Farming:** Lino Dias - Stakeholder engagement

Contestants - Finalists of the “Building Back Better” infrastructure award:

- **Bermuda (British Overseas Territory): International Airport Redevelopment Project:** Gabriela Moreno
- **Brazil: Nova Ceasa:** José Wellington Barroso de Araujo Dias
- **China: Zhenjiang Sponge City:** Pei Peng
- **Philippines: Regional Development Programme in Caraga:** Jett Tommy P. Tolentino
- **Spain: MetroTenerife Light Rail Train:** Andrés Muñoz de Dios Rodríguez

Documentation:

- [First version of the People-first Public-Private Partnerships Evaluation Methodology for the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2020/3/Rev.1)
- [Draft Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Draft User’s Guide to the Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Testing Protocol](#)
- Rules on the competition (see [online](#))

Friday, 23 April 2021

Tempus 2 and online
(Morning session)

Session 2: Empowering local authorities to build community resilience

Challenge:

Local authorities must protect communities most at risk from the pandemic and must find the projects which can best do this. A new bottom up approach is called for. Local authorities however may lack the knowledge and expertise to deliver projects and make them bankable: local government revenues are also at an all-time low caused by the economic recession and the steep decline in revenues from local taxes, a huge challenge therefor is to identify those People-first PPPs that are especially needed (see below) to reach and protect the vulnerable members of communities: COVID-19 has struck at such groups and exposed existing social divisions, inequalities and community deprivations.

Format of the session

The session is divided into two panel discussions:

- **Panel 1. Involving Mayors and heads of local authorities - Protecting vulnerable groups and promoting People-first PPP projects: the views of Mayors and local authorities on the projects which can “Build Back Better”?**
- **Panel 2. Identifying priority projects in infrastructure and PPP that can build community resilience and can “Build Back Better”**

Strategic objective and expected outcome

- To discover the key projects that enhance community resilience
- A road map for “Building Back Better” and a pilot project launched involving local authorities and private sector and national PPP agencies to develop a portfolio of projects which can both be considered People-first and “Building Back Better”.

10:00-11:00 **Panel session: Involving Mayors and heads of local authorities - Protecting vulnerable groups and promoting People-first PPP projects: the views of Mayors and local authorities on the projects which can “Build Back Better”?**

Challenge:

Local authorities and cities are all engaged in “Building Back Better” and they have the direct challenge of finding solutions to very concrete problems and needs: They need in the day to day struggle against COVID-19 to engage directly with the communities concerned.

Key questions:

- Why do they see People-first approaches to infrastructure as contributing to Build Back Better?
- What specific projects are they targeting to build resilience amongst vulnerable communities in their cities?
- Have they got the necessary skills to develop these projects and if not, how is this skills’ gap to be overcome?
- How do they involve in the design and rollout of these projects, the full engagement with stakeholders and vulnerable communities?

Moderator:

- **David Dodd**, New Orleans, United States

Panellists:

- **Ilsur Metshin**, Mayor of Kazan and President of United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities
- **Miquel Rodríguez**, Commissioner of 2030 Agenda at Barcelona City Council
- **Maryna Khonda**, Deputy Head of Kyiv City State Administration
- **Quentin Messer**, President and CEO, New Orleans Business Alliance (NOLABA)
- **Alex Mejia**, Director, UNITAR

Strategic outcome

Agreement on the best approach / policies to engaging with communities and meeting their needs through infrastructure projects and PPP.

11:00-12:00 Panel session: Identifying priority projects to enhance community resilience and “Build Back Better”

Challenge:

What projects should be prioritised to deliver projects that “Build Back Better”?

Amongst some of the possible sectors where projects could be envisaged, are the following:

- Healthcare;
- Education;
- Food security;
- Water, Sanitation, Waste management and circular economy;
- Promotion of new jobs amongst poor communities, e.g. IT, start-ups, innovative industrial districts, expanding broadband etc.

Key questions

- Why is People-first approaches in PPP consistent with “Building Back Better”?
- What are the priority projects that can enhance community resilience?
- Can these projects belonging to the “pandemic cluster” be joined up to maximise their beneficial impact?

Moderator:

- **Paola Deda**, Director, UNECE

Panellists:

- **David MacDonald**, Programme Director, Scottish Futures Trust
- **Imeh Okon**, Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on Infrastructure
- **Mark Halliday**, Global PPP Director, Medtronic
- **Carlos Salle**, Volunteer, Energía Sin Fronteras
- **Daniel Adrados**, Head of Operations, Energía sin Fronteras

12:00-15:00 LUNCH BREAK

Friday, 23 April 2021

Tempus 2 and online
(Afternoon session)

15:00-15:05 Announcing the winners of the “Building Back Better” infrastructure award	Olga Algayerova , Executive Secretary, UNECE
15:05-15:15 The role of People-first PPPs in “Building Back Better”	Special address by: Sanda Ojiambo , Executive Director and CEO, UN Global Compact
15:15-16:00 Panel discussion: Setting up a Project Team to develop a framework for “Building Back Better” projects Challenge: “Build Back Better” will require an inter-disciplinary team that has expertise addressing not just the technical, financial and legal aspects of the projects, but also the social, environmental and climate change aspects with stakeholder participation that can effectively deliver the five People-first outcomes. Key questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What are the project pipelines that can “Build Back Better” especially to enhance community resilience (e.g. waste, healthcare, food, water etc.)?- How can the experiences of local authorities to date be best distilled into a document that would help local authorities to “Build Back Better”?	Moderator: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jan van Schoonhoven, Former Chair of the UNECE Team of Specialist on PPPs Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tetiana Bessarab, Managing Partner, Bessarab and Partners Attorneys at Law, Ukraine- Anand Chiplunkar, Former Director, Urban and Water Division, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank- Art Smith, Co-Chair of the Working Party on PPPs- Felix Dodds, Senior Fellow, Global Research Institute, University of North Carolina
16:00-17:00 Concluding session and next steps Challenge: “Build Back Better” will remain a slogan until delivery of pipelines of projects become a reality. And critical are the challenges local authorities face when directly with communities where access to services like health, meaningful jobs, adequate housing are problematic. However, these high valued projects are difficult to do and need new skills such as procurement, contracts, negotiation etc. How can the capacity within the Governments be strengthened to develop and complement their skills? It takes time to develop these skills and while many staff in public administrations having acquired skills, leave for jobs in better paid private sector work. This being said, national PPP units have engaged with local authorities to deliver municipal services, demonstrating that such challenges can be overcome. But even so, there are today, to date, few regular opportunities to exchange experiences on PPP activities and projects internationally. This is a pity as such work could do much to improve the capacity of the Governments at all levels.	Moderator: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tony Bonnici, UNECE Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tientip Subhanij, ESCAP- Ricardo J. Sanchez, ECLAC- Yohannes Hailu, ECA- Yarob Badr, ESCWA

This final session explores how the UN Regional Commissions are playing an important role in developing regional networks of PPP units and infrastructure entities to improve the capability to deliver projects and how such networks can turn their attention to those projects which can have potentially a dramatic impact on “Building Back Better”: ESCAP, UNECA, ECLAC, ESCWA and UNECE.

Key questions:

- How could the UN Regional Commissions develop their own networks and institute greater cooperation between PPP Units across their respective regions?
- Could the annual PPP Forum be a mechanism by which PPP Units from each of the UN Regional Commission organise regular exchanges on best practices, “Building Back Better” strategies and achieving the SDGs?

Monday, 26 April 2021

Side events to the International Forum⁴
(Morning session)

9:00-10:00 Side event (English only) organised by the International Specialist Centre of Excellence on PPP Policy, Laws and Institutions: Impact of the Centre in attracting the private sector for People-first PPP projects in low and middle-income countries

Documents:

- UNECE Guiding Principles on People-first Public-Private Partnerships in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([see online](#))
- UNECE Standard on a Zero Tolerance Approach to Corruption in PPP Procurement ([see online](#))
- Public-Private Partnerships: Project Planning and Prioritization ([see online](#))
- Involving reliable and independent experts to develop People first Public-Private Partnerships projects in low and middle-income countries ([see online](#))
- Concession for essential public services meeting the SDG's in LDC's and MIC's (PfPPP): Proposed list of clauses and guiding principles ([see online](#))

Moderator:

- **Marc Frilet**, General Secretary, International Specialist Centre of Excellence on PPP Policy, Laws and Institutions

Panellists:

- **Roger Fiszelson**, Advisor and former Managing Director, Confederation of International Contractors' Association (CICA)
- **Maude Vallée**, Chief Legal Counsel & Head of Operations, African Legal Support Facility (African Development Bank)
- **Vincent Piron**, Senior economist and PPP expert, PIRON Consulting, lead contributor to SOURCE and GLOPRAM
- **Fred Einbinder**, French American Attorney, Consultant and Expert in PPP transactions and Associate Professor in law at the American University of Paris
- **Júlio César Bueno**, Lead Infrastructure and PPP expert in South America, partner at Pinheiro Neto Advogados

[Link to join the side event on Microsoft Teams](#)

10:00-11:00 Side event (English only) organised by UNECE (Urban Development, Housing and Land Management Unit): U4SSC Thematic Group on Innovative Financing Instruments for Smart Sustainable Cities

The side event is a Special Meeting of the U4SSC Thematic Group on Innovative financing instruments for smart sustainable cities.

The Group exists to facilitate an exchange of information on activities of different UN agencies, national and local governments and relevant stakeholders related to the existing and emerging instruments to finance urban development projects aimed at supporting cities' sustainability and smartness.

In 2021 the Group is working on developing the Compendium of Practices to Finance Sustainable Smart City Projects.

The objective of the Meeting is to share 6 out of 15 cases selected for the Compendium with the members of the group and the registered participants and to facilitate further cooperation and peer learning among the participants on the subject of financing of Sustainable and Smart city projects.

Moderator:

- **Nadiia Yeremenko**, Coordinator of the U4SSC Thematic Group on Innovative financing instruments for smart sustainable cities, UNECE

Opening by Co-Leaders of the U4SSC Thematic Group:

- **Gulnara Roll**, UNECE
- **Tony Bonnici**, UNECE

Panellists:

- **Peter Malika**, Global Manager for the Local Finance Initiative, UNCDF: *Municipal Solid Waste Management of the City of Mamou, Guinea*
- **Pedro Neves**, CEO, Global Solutions: *Regeneration Project in Parque das Nações, Portugal*
- **Irina Zapatrina**, Founder of Ukrainian PPP Academy: *University Campus in a Smart and Sustainable City Vilno, Ukraine*
- **Eduardo Avila**: *The First Solar Energy Cooperative in Rio Favelas (Informal Settlements), Brazil*
- **Mehmet Uzunkaya**: *Elazig Fethi Sekin City Hospital, Turkey*
- **Alexander Bazhenov**, *InfraKap: Rostov on Don Wastewater System, Russian Federation*

[Link to join the side event on Microsoft Teams](#)

11:00-12:00 Side event (English only) organised by the Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND) and the World Association of

**PPP Units & Professionals (WAPPP):
Making PPPs fit the 2030 Agenda**

This Side Event is co-organised by CSEND and WAPPP. During the session, PPP experts will present chapters of a new publication titled “Making PPPs fit the 2030 Agenda”. The research has been undertaken jointly by seven authors, all are members of WAPPP and two are also members of the UNECE PPP Bureau. The intention of this paper is to contribute to the development of PPP theory and best practice and to align PPPs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The seven chapters reflect the individual authors’ insights into different aspects of the current state of PPP development and areas for policy and practice improvement including: - The need for harmonized actions and - The evolving theoretical developments of PPP and their alignment with the 2030 SDG Agenda. The topics of the presentations will be:

- The Need for a High-Quality SDG 17.17.1 Indicator
- Evolution of PPP Concepts and Practice
- The Emergence of People-first PPP
- When Public-Private Partnerships Put People First
- PPPs and ESG
- Intergenerational Redistributive Effects in Value for People and Value for the Future
- Closing Comments

The paper is still under embargo. It will be released to the public on 26 April 2021 at 11am on the occasion of the UNECE side event on both websites. For more information see the preface [here](#) and WAPPP videos [here](#).

Moderator:

- **Elisabeth Tuerk**, Director, UNECE

Panellists:

- **Raymond Saner**, Director CSEND, Prof Titular, U. of Basel, Vice-Chair of the UNECE Working Party on PPPs
- **Marc Frilet**, General Secretary, International Specialist Centre of Excellence on PPP Policy, Laws and Institutions
- **Jean-Christophe Barth-Coullaré**, Executive Director, WAPPP
- **David Baxter**, former Executive Director of the Institute of Public-Private Partnerships (IP3)
- **Ziad Alexandre Hayek**, President of WAPPP and Vice-Chair of the UNECE Working Party on PPPs
- **Domingo Penyalver**, PPP Advisor, UNOPS
- **Mateu Turró**, Honorary A. Director, European Investment Bank (EIB)

[Link to join the side event on Microsoft Teams](#)

12:00-13:00 Side event (English only) organised by 4IP Group: Levers which can help Governments and DFIs increase private-sector financing for SDG-aligned infrastructure

According to a 2017 report by the United Nations, the current world population of 7.6 billion is expected to reach 8.6 billion in 2030. This population increase will necessitate commensurate increases in development and expansion of infrastructure. While new or expanded infrastructure systems will ensure a basic level of service is provided to meet individuals’ needs, the short-term and long-term impacts of these systems will be more far-reaching.

Developing countries will need to invest more than \$2 trillion a year in infrastructure just to keep pace with projected GDP growth over the next 15 years—yet many of them face challenges in mobilizing the resources to finance this investment.

To close the gap, governments in these countries, together with their partners in DFIs, will need to unlock private-sector infrastructure financing at scale.

Moderator:

- **Jean-Patrick Marquet**, Member of the Global Future Council, World Economic Forum

Panellists:

- **Thibaut Mourgues**, Managing Partner 4IP & Member of WAPPP Executive
- **Christian Kingombe**, Managing Partner 4IP & Board Member of SIIA
- **Brandon Cox**, Senior Investment Director 4IP: 4IP-IIF1’s Project Pipeline Analysis by Region and Sector.
- **Louis Downing**, CEO, GIB Foundation
- **Anders Hove**, Project Director at GIZ CN
- **Doris Chevalier**, CEO, Infraboost & 4IP Advisory Board

[Link to join the side event on Microsoft Teams](#)

⁴ The side events are held under the responsibility of the organisers of the side events, and the opinions and views expressed in these sessions do not necessarily reflect those of the UNECE.

Monday, 26 April 2021

Side events to the International Forum
(Afternoon session)

13:00-14:00 Side event (English only) organised by 4IP Group and Global Infrastructure Basel: How Technology can facilitate ESG data collection and verification?

Infrastructure ESG ratings and standards can play a decisive role toward reaching out to the 2030 SDGs especially in the context of Public-Private Partnerships.

ESG ratings can play a substantial role in this respect in several dimensions:

Helping Governments preparing infrastructure projects ensuring that the projects design and objectives will be aligned with the SDGs and will actually contribute to reach them.

Helping Government to prioritize projects that are most supportive of SDGs. Helping to make sure that infrastructure projects are operated and maintained in a way that is SDG-oriented.

Helping to attract investors (Retail, HNWI or Institutional like DFI) that focus on the ESG dimension by convincing them that the projects are well aligned with their strategy.

Unlocking the growing pool of retail capital could create an essential source of future funding.

Moderator:

- **Pablo Nunez**, Director Sustainable Finance, GIB Foundation

Panellists:

- **Nicolas Merle**, Innovation Designer
- **Louis Downing**, CEO, GIB Foundation
- **Yves Carnazzola**, President of AxxessThinkTank, Representative at SI Geneva Hub, CEO AxxessImpact
- **Dag Dawit**, CFA, FRM, Advisory Board AxxessThinkTank, Executive Director - Private Wealth Management
- **Thibaut Mourgues**, 4IP Group
- **Michele Soavi**, 4IP Group
- **Christian Kingombe**, 4IP Group
- **Anders Hove**, Project Director at GIZ CN

[Link to join the side event on Microsoft Teams](#)

14:00-15:30 Side event (English only) organised by the UNECE: Improving, using and testing the UNECE People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology as a public good

In the first part a short video will be presented.

The side event starts with the secretariat presenting the preliminary results of a survey for Government users.

This side event will be split into two parts as follows:

1. Improving and using the Evaluation Methodology
2. Testing the Evaluation Methodology

Moderator:

- **Doris Chevalier**, CEO, Infraboost

Video on the Evaluation Methodology

Speaker:

- **Irina Novikova**, Deputy Minister of Economy of Ukraine

Presentation by the secretariat

- **Antonin Menegaux**, UNECE

Panellists:

- **Jean-Patrick Marquet**, Member of the Global Future Council, World Economic Forum
- **Melissa Peneycad**, Managing Director, Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure
- **Sedef Yavuz-Noyan**, Head of PPP Department in the Presidency of Turkish Republic
- **Rose-Lourdes Elysee**, Chief of the Central Management Unit of PPP of Haiti

[Link to join the side event on Microsoft Teams](#)

16:00-17:00 Side event (English only) organised by the World Bank: Role of the private sector in Building sustainable and socially inclusive infrastructure in Europe and Central Asia

The session will highlight the efforts of international organizations to support essential infrastructure to build back better post COVID-19 crisis in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia member countries. In doing so, the discussion will aim to respond to two main questions:

- Year 2020 has seen decrease in the private sector investment in infrastructure in the Europe and Central Asia region, mainly due to the pandemic-related measures. Can this trend be reversed going forward?
- Can the private sector serve as a partner and a major source of financing the transition to a Resilient, Inclusive, Sustainable and Efficient (RISE) infrastructure needs of developing Europe and Central Asia countries?

Moderator:

- **Jyoti Bisbey**, Infrastructure Finance Specialist, The World Bank

Panellists:

- **Imad Fakhoury**, Infrastructure Finance, PPPs and Guarantees Global Practice, Director, The World Bank
- **Fatouma Ibrahima**, PPP Group- Practice Manager in the Infrastructure Finance, PPPs and Guarantees Global Practice, The World Bank
- **Paul da Rita**, IFC Transaction Advisory-PPPs
- **Edwin Law**, Head of Division in the Infrastructure and Procurement Division in Governance, OECD
- **Lora Kamenova**, State Expert, Economic and Social Policy Directorate, Administration of the Council of Ministers, Bulgaria

[Link to join the side event on Microsoft Teams](#)

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed the world, giving Governments huge challenges and straining healthcare systems to breaking point. In the fight against the pandemic, despite over a year having elapsed, many UNECE member States still face virtual lockdown and quarantine restrictions, resulting in untold damage to national economies and the health and mental wellbeing of countless numbers of people. Tragically, a huge loss of life has, and continues to be, registered. The reverberations from this crisis will be felt for many years to come.

There is now a widespread view that as the world continues to wrestle with the pandemic, the goal must be to “Build Back Better” so that catastrophes on such a scale will never happen again and that the world will be better prepared in the future.⁵ As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stated, “a return to business as usual and environmentally destructive investment patterns and activities, must be avoided”.⁶ More and more, Governments indeed are announcing their intention to “Build Back Better”.

This Introduction to the Forum discusses the relationship between “Building Back Better” and People-first Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). It is organised in four parts around the following questions related to “Building Back Better” starting with the Why then the What and ending with the How.

1. Why is “Building Back Better” so important?

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable ...

It is not surprising in an extreme event or emergency that the poor suffer more than the rich. However, one of the myths that has been propagated by some commentators and parts of the media is that COVID-19 has a socially neutral impact conveyed in the terms – “we are all in it together” or that “COVID-19 does not discriminate between rich and poor”. This however is simply not the case!

... hitting the elderly, the poor, the young, women and ethnic and minority groups very hard ...

Study after study has demonstrated starkly that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on social groups. It has made the socio-economic position of the socially and economically vulnerable members of communities far worse. Indeed, the terrible feature of this pandemic that sets it apart, is that it is the poor, minorities, ethnic groups, young, women etc. that have suffered the most. It has been also the elderly, especially in care homes and hospitals, that have been most vulnerable to the spread of the awful virus.

... accentuating existing social divisions ...

Government subsidies of the employers have maintained income levels of the wealthier groups. Even though such support is also given to the employees it tends to diminish over time and will eventually disappear (as funds run out). It is fair to predict that beyond this short-term arrangement, the scars, divisions and inequalities that have been caused will not be healed and strong fiscal measures will continue to be needed for some time.

... and increasing inequalities, especially in health ...

While it is the underlying health conditions which make people more at risk from the pandemic, it is the fact that those people with such conditions tend to be drawn from socio-economic groups where these conditions (obesity, heart disease etc.) are more prevalent, while their chances of surviving are reduced further by poor access to health care services (e.g. access to doctors, hospitals etc.) again because of their socio-economic circumstances. And this is true even in countries with universal healthcare systems.

... evidenced by a growing mass of research data.

Evidence of the impact of social inequalities is already overwhelming. In one region of Spain, the rate of COVID-19 infection was six or seven times higher in the most deprived areas of the region compared to the least deprived. Studies in New York City as well as in Chicago, in the United States showed with regards to residents from the most disadvantaged areas, a dramatic risk of death. The mortality rate of males from black communities in fact, has been four or five times higher than in males on average.

⁵ The term entered the UN System with the Sendai Declaration in Japan as a response to natural disasters. Its meaning became quite concrete as the World Bank called for the adoption of all national legislation mandating that all new construction should be energy-efficient and built to withstand natural hazards.

⁶ Building back better: a sustainable resilient recovery after COVID-19, OECD, 5 June 2020. Many national Governments too, use the phrase “Build Back Better”, notably the new United States of America administration.

As a result of the pandemic, a number of critical social problems and issues have been observed ...

... in healthcare ...

Access to healthcare is in a crisis situation with healthcare systems close to breaking point. Moreover, those dependent on healthcare for existing conditions are having to forego important examinations and treatment. The crisis affects those with least resources including notably people of colour, ethnic and minority groups. Equally tragic, such groups are, for various reasons, most reluctant to take the vaccines even when they are available.

... in food security ...

Millions – often typically single parent families – are for the first time having to use food banks in order to put food on the table for their children. Often, these persons have lost their jobs and their social and economic decline has been precipitous. Globally, the World Food Programme has warned about the risk of starvation arising from the pandemic.

... in access to water supply and sanitation, waste management and environmental sustainability ...

On one hand, the issue of our disadvantaged communities facing inadequate access to water and sanitation, has emerged as a critical issue hampering the implementation of the COVID-19 safety practices. On the other hand, the waste management problem – around a third of food for example in some countries is actually wasted – has grown and the potential in circular economy processes such as reduce, reuse, recycle begs much more to be achieved – refuse including medical and hazardous wastes are typically being thrown away in environmentally non-sustainable landfills. The pandemic has diverted Governments attention from dealing with waste management. Waste of all kinds including food, reflects a non-sustainable, linear production process; and the irrational use of natural resources which because of its contribution to rising temperatures, threatens the future of the planet.

... and in education ...

Amongst the young and school children age through lock downs, and with limited or no access to the Internet, their development is being held back, ultimately making social divisions worse.

... while the economic crisis has resulted in huge unemployment especially in the informal work sector and amongst the young...

The pandemic while severely impacting the informal work sector employment also threatens the creation of a “lost generation” of young people who have lost job opportunities as a result of the pandemic and may not find alternative employment in the near future or even ever in their working lives.

... and women ...

Women have had to leave their work to look after their families and relatives. Women too have, in some cases also suffered from domestic violence caused by lock downs.

... while the climate change issue remains.

There has been no let-up in the number of extreme weather events – floods, hurricane, forest fires etc. – caused by global warming.

“Build Back Better” is about addressing these problems and making our societies far more resilient ...

Such enhanced resilience should be implemented across the board, covering industries, our healthcare systems, our governance and regulatory response, our communities, our infrastructure etc.

... not just in terms of infrastructure and “bricks and mortar” ...

The concept of resilience has tended to be used in addressing disaster and climate risks. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for a resilient infrastructure aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), moreover, making references to and setting targets for resilient infrastructure. They call *inter alia* for an upgraded infrastructure and retrofitted industries; the concept of resilience being closely related to ensuring the continued operation of physical infrastructures during extreme events.

... but also in terms of making our disadvantaged communities more resilient too.

“Build Back Better” must build resilience especially in those communities worst affected by the pandemic and align the public sector institutional priorities all the more towards this approach to arrest the spread of pandemics in future.

“Build Back Better” is so important because coming out of the pandemic more resilient as a society will reduce the risks of having to confront events on such a scale again. The mantra of Government efforts in building resilience should be “never never again”.

2. Why can People- first PPP contribute to Building Back Better?

The recovery and cost of rebuilding of infrastructure and public services will be huge ...

There is a huge price tag to “Building Back Better”. For example, designing a new infrastructure can no longer ignore the issue in designing access and equity, economic efficiency, environmental sustainability replicability and stakeholder participation, it will have to take account of far wider number of cross cutting issues not least the need to ensure safe work areas in offices and factories, public transport systems, public spaces in cities etc. Some projects will also be PPP while others will be purely public. They will also tend to be different with different local and national entities and different private sector which will add to cost and complexity.

... and Governments with rather limited resources ...

Governments have been hit by the double shock of having to spend huge amounts of resources on keeping the economy going during the pandemic and having to do this from a continuously declining tax revenue base.

... are thus looking to the private sector ...

Governments have used PPP quite widely to harness the skills, technology and expertise as well as finance of the private sector to develop infrastructure – both economic (transport, energy etc.) and social (health, water, and sanitation etc.).

... to fill the gap through the creation of PPPs ...

Traditional PPP however according to some voices, have been portrayed as a “broken” model. What can be said is that overall, it is not “fit for the purpose” for the mammoth task of “Building Back Better”. The traditional PPP model that is characterised by “value for money” delivering infrastructure projects “on time and within budget” was in some countries quite effective and efficient; but the challenges that have arisen as a result of the pandemic, are of a far greater order.

... inspired by the international vaccine partnerships.

PPP has undoubtedly also been placed on the agenda of many Governments by the experience and the tremendous success of the vaccine partnerships, in an amazing short period of time, demonstrating the power of Governments and private sector working together.

People-first PPP is a new model ...

UNECE coined the term “People-first PPP” in 2015 to coincide with the adoption of the SDGs. SDG 17 explicitly recognises PPP as a preferred model for implementing the various ambitious goals.

... and is urgently needed and “fit for purpose” for the new reality.

People-first PPP is the model that puts sustainable development at the core of infrastructure projects and people as the main beneficiaries. It is defined collectively as giving “value for people” and/or “value for the planet”.

The People-first designation is given if projects fulfil the following five outcomes:⁷

- i. Increasing access to essential services and lessen social inequality and injustice

Increasing access and equity, means that access to essential services, such as health and education etc., should be increased to people, especially to the socially and economically vulnerable.

⁷ Guiding Principles on People-first Public-Private Partnerships in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/2019/5), see online https://unece.org/DAM/ceci/ppp/Standards/ECE_CECI_2019_05-en.pdf

ii. Improving economic effectiveness (and women’s empowerment)

Demonstrating projects’ economic effectiveness: projects must be efficient, successful, achieve “value for money” and be transformative in that they have a measurable impact by removing economic barriers or creating new means for integrating groups into the global marketplace. Empowering women is a particularly important outcome to achieve here. Accordingly, People-first PPPs should:

- Enhance the role of women inside the companies undertaking PPPs and in the PPPs themselves.
- Help women-led companies in the supply chain compete in tenders.
- Make a difference in the communities where they do business – train young women to become the business leaders of the future.
- Help women deal with the special challenges they face in their daily lives in the design and operational phase of projects.

iii. Enhancing resilience and more care with the environment

This means developing a resilient infrastructure and moving to a circular economy, improving environmental sustainability, cutting CO₂ emissions to move to a green economy and developing circular not linear projects; thus engaging with and supporting communities where they live and helping to overcome their vulnerabilities.

iv. Promoting replicability and the development of further projects

Projects should be replicable and scalable so the particular project or approach can be repeated and/or scaled up as needed to attract the investment and transformational impact required by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This criterion also needs to consider whether the local staff and the Governments have the capacity or receive the necessary training and knowledge to do similar projects going forward. Training will be critical for “Building Back Better” as new skills will have to be taught to make the workforce more adaptable to the new opportunities post COVID-19.

v. Fully involving all stakeholders in the projects.

Engaging all stakeholders that are either directly involved in the PPP project or directly or indirectly affected in the short and/or long run, focusing on disadvantaged populations.

The People-first approach with its focus on equitable distributions, equality, social justice, women’s empowerment, is especially well equipped to tackle the problems and challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The introduction is continued in the annex to the Programme.

Purpose and objectives of the Forum

The purpose and objectives of the Forum are threefold:

- (ii.) **Discuss** the challenges to “Build Back Better” plan and strategy form looking at how Governments are operationalising this in terms of their infrastructure projects and public services.
- (iii.) **Explore** the UNECE People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology.
- (iv.) **Identify** the People-first work that could provide tools and instrument and templates to promote “Building Back Better” and community resilience amongst vulnerable members of society.

Organisation

The Forum will be held as a hybrid event⁸ as follows:

An **international debate** on how the world can “Build Back Better”. It will also explore how People-first approach to PPP, can be more widely known and used by the UN System.

Session 1 reviews best practice “Building Back Better” projects, that are aligned to the five outcomes of People-first PPPs, using the Evaluation Methodology as a self-assessment and guiding tool that helps identifying ways in which

⁸ Restrictions to in-person participation apply and delegates are encouraged to join the sessions virtually.

project preparation, design and implementation approaches can imbibe increasingly improved practices, with possible revisions in the tool itself to better guide such practices. .

Session 2 discusses with local authorities and city administrations their needs in protecting the vulnerable members of their communities and the projects that will be required in core areas – healthcare; education; food security; water supply, sanitation, waste management and circular economy; and innovation and jobs – to delivering People-first PPP that can “Build Back Better” and promote community resilience.

An **award ceremony** for the best “Building Back Better” projects.^{9,10}

A **panel** to discuss a possible roadmap to develop a standard or framework for Building Back Better through People-first PPPs.

A **concluding session** that explores how the UN Regional Commissions are playing an important role in developing regional networks of PPP units and infrastructure entities to improve the capability to deliver projects and how such networks can turn their attention to those projects which can have potentially a dramatic impact on “Building Back Better”.

⁹ Call for projects “UNECE “Building Back Better” infrastructure award 2021”. Visit <https://unece.org/ppp/forum5/awards>

¹⁰ Key indicators for resilient People-first PPPs to “Build Back Better”. Visit <https://unece.org/ppp/forum5/awards>

Annex 1. Building Back Better: Importance of People-first Public-Private Partnerships

(contd. from the Introduction)

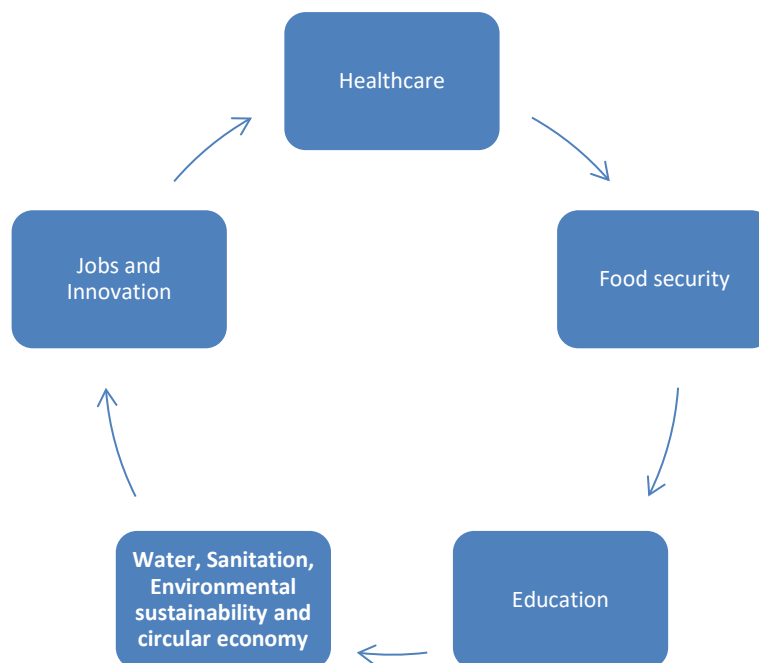
3. What should be the main People- first projects to Build Back Better?

Enhancing community resilience especially those at risk and vulnerable ...

A resilient community is defined as one that is socially connected and can access important services and systems so as to withstand pandemics and other disasters leading to a quick community recovery.

... and the areas, activities, and services where building community resilience is important to belong what might be described as a core “pandemic cluster” ...

Diagram: Pandemic cluster



... that involve healthcare, food security, education, environmental sustainability and circular economy, and jobs and innovation ...

This is not to say that other infrastructure and services are unimportant in building community resilience. But many of these – such as water and sanitation or transport – “feed into” these core services and infrastructure. Water and irrigation is critical, for example, in providing adequate food supplies. Transport systems are needed for bringing workers to their factories etc.

... where building community resilience amongst deprived and vulnerable groups is important.

- **Healthcare** is the key element in building community resilience as it is critical in protecting lives and preserving human health and welfare. Actions to do this consist of prompting education on health risks, strengthening access to health services, expanding communication and cooperation, engaging with “at risk” individuals and the programmes that serve them, and building networks where communities can share experiences with each other.

- **Food security:** Food security is another core element of community resilience. With lockdown and mobility restrictions imposed by Governments and the consequences that the subsequent loss of income and purchasing power has had a devastating impact on people’s food security.
- **Water, Sanitation, Environmental sustainability and circular economy:** The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the pressing needs of our disadvantaged communities requiring adequate access to water and sanitation for implementation of the COVID-19 safety practices. The COVID-19 pandemic has also produced increased amounts of plastic household waste and hazardous medical waste, adding to the existing huge waste problem. Waste urgently needs to be better managed through recycling, reducing and reusing and circular economy processes for the long-term welfare of communities.
- **Education:** Communities are built on education. This is true of school as well as further education where the pandemic has increased pressure on students and their parents’ payment capacity, unknown reliability of external funding sources and dramatically reduced international enrolment.
- **Innovation and jobs:** the COVID-19 pandemic has also led to a huge loss of jobs and livelihoods and communities and need to fill these gaps by exploiting opportunities arising from innovation and the new technologies with the accompanying development of various infrastructure projects.

What are the projects that can best build community resilience and “Build Back Better”?

i. In healthcare

The challenge is not necessarily the building of new hospitals ...

Initially, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an emphasis on constructing hospitals – in some cases at amazing speeds – to meet the huge demand. But as this demand lessened, so the newly created hospitals became unused. Hospitals sadly, moreover, also were instrumental in the spreading of the virus. At the same time, hospitals may continue to be needed, if and when, there are further surges and new strains which raises the question of precisely what to do with hospitals in pandemics?

... but rather putting a far stronger emphasis on more projects to provide healthcare in the community such as community clinics treat directly those at risk where they live ...

Such clinics would focus on education, prevention as well as the ongoing treatments of chronic diseases. Ideally the personnel should be from the communities themselves in such a way to raise awareness about the risks of the spread of the virus within communities as well as the need to get vaccinated, overcoming the reluctance of many in deprived communities to get vaccinated.

... care homes ...

The loss of life in care homes has been one of the tragedies of the pandemic and far greater security and safety is needed to protect the residents in projects that can bring “smart home” technologies into the protection of these vulnerable residents.

... and increasing the use of telemedicine.

Thanks to IT and broadband, doctors and nurses and their patients are more protected and use of these projects has risen exponentially in many countries since the pandemic began.

ii. In food security

The challenge is to find sustainable solutions – not just programmes and projects that paper over the cracks ...

Use of food banks has grown enormously during the pandemic. Food banks however tend to rely on non-nutritious, heavily processed “staples” (baked beans, pasta etc.) and there is a stigma and embarrassment for people who have to rely on these facilities. The challenge is to find more sustainable solutions.

... and bring local foods production back into the communities and cities and grow locally....

Food security is strongest when food is produced and distributed locally as this will mean that the food is fresher and so more nutritious. This at the same time contributes to building the local economy and creating jobs. Businesses are created to produce many varieties of fruits and vegetables in such “urban farms”, linked often to top research centres.

... which can overcome supply chain uncertainty and cut back on pollution ...

With the creation of local food farms, derelict space caused by the closure of retail outlets in cities can be reclaimed for green purposes and year-round fresh food that stops the environmentally unsustainable practice of importing fruit and vegetables from abroad.

... through projects that can also be linked to local schools.

Pupils can be taught how to prepare fresh food, participate in “breakfast clubs” at schools, school lunches as well as after school activity, (extra tuition etc.) which also has the effect of providing more time to women to participate in the workforce.

iii. Education

The challenge is to provide children from deprived backgrounds with better IT and internet access ...

Poor children and their education have suffered during the lockdowns from poor access to the Internet, computers, lack of room to study in cramped living conditions.

... Through projects and investment needed to expand broadband services to underserved communities, including those living in rural areas.

iv. Water, Sanitation, Environmental sustainability and circular economy

The challenge is to provide adequate access to basic services of water supply and sanitation, create value from waste and make it part of a circular economy activity ...

There is a need to strengthen the access to basic services such as water supply and sanitation specially to the disadvantaged communities, and to treat waste management as an urgent and essential public service with a focus on “reduce, reuse, and recycle”.

... that accelerates the transition from a linear economy to circular economy ...

The linear economy can be summarised as follows: take (raw material) – make (products) – use (consume) – dispose (of non-recyclable waste). This has been the economic and social modus operandi for many years now. Under this model, waste is the final phase in a society that, it is fair to argue, assumes it has unlimited resources for its consumption and production cycle. Knowing well that this is not the case, the need to optimise the available resources through circular economy must be incorporated.

... and use projects such as waste to energy projects ...

These Waste-to-Energy projects – often typically done as PPPs – should be done only if the materials cannot be recycled or reused.

... to provide power to local communities at the same time ...

Projects can provide towns and cities with a substantial proportion of their electricity needs.

... getting rid of landfills ...

Landfills are one of the most unsustainable ways of getting rid of waste. In some countries landfills not just spoil the environment they can have serious consequence for local industries. In Greece for example, the use of landfills in the beautiful islands are leading to the contents getting into the sea and threatening the local tourism industry.

... and providing more sustainable alternatives.

According to the latest estimates, 8% of the greenhouse gas emissions are caused by food that is lost and wasted.¹¹ One innovative scheme to address the food waste problem is to create a parallel market from the food that would otherwise have gone to the landfill, generating income and creating new businesses.

v. Innovation and jobs

Industrial district and inside cities that boost innovation and provide a basis for the establishment of start-ups and better jobs for young people applying the new technologies such as blockchain, Artificial Intelligence (AI) etc.

Industrial districts and start-ups

The idea is to meet to challenge of creating jobs in communities that have been particularly devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic ...

The huge levels of unemployment especially amongst the young are blighting many of the communities. It is also an intergenerational: high levels of debt needed to support the healthcare and treatment of the older members of society will have to be borne by the younger generation. The latter have suffered already by precarious employment conditions and have been in many lockdowns the first to lose their jobs. There is a huge need for retraining and finding the jobs in innovative industries.

... and borrow from experiences of promoting industrial clusters of related projects that can create high quality jobs in inner cities ...

Here, innovative industrial districts inside city centres have grown up around the world and can, through People-first PPPs, bring together entrepreneurs, the IT savvy youth, and local authorities with office space to produce the software and hardware for new industries. Many of these are associated with the so called “fourth industrial revolution” based on the new emerging and disruptive technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Internet of things, 5G, and new energy sources such as bioenergy. There is a huge economic need for innovation systems that can help communities to “Build Back Better”.

... which not necessarily focusses on one infrastructure project but can involve many interrelated projects ...

Such districts can be run as a PPP and can be innovative, digital and might contain training centres for start-up companies to enter the market successfully. Analysis of the experiences show that they have had positive impacts on jobs and generated new infrastructure opportunities (e.g. mass transit and utilities and faster broadband services, waste disposal).¹²

Also pertinent in such a project portfolio is the above-mentioned Waste-to-Energy sector as part of the circular economy, especially projects that are based on non-incineration methods. Broadband is another: it has been critical for building resilience in cities during lock downs and communities are depended on this and on the fastest and latest. Resilience of communities in cities also means building broadband and using 5G to higher standards. Other project areas include:

- Urban science parks and start-up incubators.
- Street lighting and redesign for safe distancing.
- Renewable energy, local grids etc.
- Low carbon, local sustainable transit systems (including pedestrian only streets and bike lanes).
- Real estate development and residential housing, community centres, leisure, and cultural buildings.

Better healthcare, more nutritious food, more circular economy and less waste, more broadband and accessible education in lockdowns, high quality jobs are arguably important steps forward in building both community resilience and building back better.

¹¹ See <http://feedup.unece.org/food-waste-info>

¹² One of the early examples of an industrial district being created from scratch was the London Docklands scheme that despite encountering initial difficulties blossomed into one of the largest development schemes in Europe building on the successful Dockland mass transit, light railway scheme.

4. How can “Build Back Better” be best accomplished?

As stated above COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted the socially and economically vulnerable ...

Countless studies have already shown that it is the socially and economically vulnerable members of our societies which have most suffered and “Building Back Better”, in terms of the projects that are needed, should target these groups.

... and in “Building Back Better”, it is important to engage and consult with those communities most at risk in order to mitigate the risks of future pandemics causing the scale of such tragedies in the future ...

Addressing the needs of communities at risk is by no means easy. First of all, the vulnerable groups are often part of wider communities and they are difficult to engage as a result. Also, sometime, NGOs often attempt to speak on behalf of these groups which raises the question of whether the views being presented are genuinely representative of such people.

... typically on the design, development and operational projects ...

It is critical that those who are supposed to benefit from the projects are engaged with and fully consulted on all the aspects of the project at different stages.

... but such communities are often side-lined and ignored in project development – ostensibly because projects are too complex for them to understand.

The challenge now is to create a more propitious environment where their voices can be heard.

It is important that communities and their representative are listened to. These representatives have inside knowledge of their own community’s resilience and where weaknesses and risks lie ...

Governments, national, regional and local, are giving a very high priority to engaging with such vulnerable communities.

... change is however in the air; increasingly many companies and project sponsors hold regular meetings and consultations in order to listen to the views of local stakeholders. Some of these meetings are transparent and results oriented and aimed at genuine project improvement ...

For example, in Waste-to-Energy, many companies have formal meetings with local stakeholders and the minutes of these are put on websites so that there is full transparency.

... however, often the information on which such meetings are based tend to be rather limited and technical in nature, without a “real” involvement of the communities concerned.

A new way to increase participation and accountability is to provide stakeholders and local communities with actual information on the performance of the project.

i. UNECE People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology

UNECE has prepared an evaluation methodology that actually measures the impact of projects and their performance in meeting the five People-first outcomes ...

The UNECE People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology – unique within the UN system – is such an instrument. It can actually empower local communities by providing them with data on which they can make decisions on projects. Rather than what tends to happen up to now, being overlooked in the delivery of projects, perhaps on the grounds that the issues are “too complicated” for local people to understand. The same can be said to for women. As a factor in a project’s economic effectiveness, the Evaluation Methodology identifies several indicators that urge greater employment of women at different levels of the work force in infrastructure, transport, and construction where women traditionally have been poorly represented.

... such information can give proof that the project is performing well ...

The Evaluation Methodology which is being currently improved provides a mechanism by which Governments, private sector and other stakeholders can see the extent of which their projects are aligned with the SDGs. More than this, it can also identify whether and how the projects can be better designed to meet the five People-first outcomes described in People-first PPPs and thus become fully aligned with the SDGs.

... allows local communities to ascertain the extent to which their projects are meeting the People-first outcomes...

Given the similarities between the SDGs, “Building Back Better” and People-first as indicated in Chapters 1 and 2, the Evaluation Methodology can play a role in orientating stakeholders as to the suitability of projects for “Building Back Better”.

... and gives them a mechanism by which they can discuss with project sponsors the merits or demerits of the project in question ...

But there is a need for proof and a rather comprehensive test of projects to demonstrate that they are producing real results and benefits – jobs, incomes, new technologies, etc – for people, especially low-income groups

... leading to better assurance that the interests of communities are protected ...

Taking decision with the communities and their representatives is critically important to get their commitment to projects. It is by no means easy or straightforward to engage with difficult-to-get at communities. In similar fashion, a focus on infrastructure resilience should not be done to the detriment of community resilience. For example, increasing spending on a road may improve the resilience of the road, but may reduce available budgets for infrastructure that are critical at the community level, such as healthcare etc.

... as well as demonstrating the results from infrastructure and PPP projects.

People-first projects and the “Build Back Better” programme need to be seen and shown conclusively, to be delivering projects that contribute directly to more resilient communities and a levelling up in incomes and livelihoods.

ii. Developing cooperation in project delivery between the national and local authorities

A further obstacle to overcome in “Building Back Better” is how to build the capacity of local authorities in particular to deliver effective projects ...

Many local authorities lack the capacity to deliver effective projects. They lack the skills, knowledge and expertise in project development and finance and need help. They also have difficulties in accessing capital markets. Many projects fail in getting off the ground as a result.

... and a useful way to overcome such capacity challenge is to encourage closer cooperation between local and national PPP authorities ...

One example of this cooperation is where the local municipal authorities join with the national PPP Unit in a hub programme¹³ whereby the hub designs, finds funding, and operates the projects on behalf of the local public authority.

... and communities need support from new arrangements to design and operate projects for “Building Back Better”.

Such above mentioned projects once fully developed can potentially be consistent with being both People-first and “Building Back Better”. But there is a need for proof and a rather comprehensive test of projects to demonstrate that they are producing real results and benefits – jobs, incomes, new technologies, etc – for people, especially low-income groups.

¹³ On behalf of the Scottish Government, Scottish Futures Trust developed and manages the hub Programme and, through five regional public / private hub companies (“hubCos”), has delivered circa 2.4 UK pounds billions worth of public sector community infrastructure projects over the last decade, 2021 (see video presented for this Forum).

Possible follow up

- (i) **The elaboration of some critically important international People-first PPP standards** for projects that are part of the so-called “pandemic cluster”. This may include some healthcare projects, the various joined up projects that together constitute a food hub; IT and broadband; Waste-to-Energy projects that contribute to circular economy processes and industrial districts said in the heart of cities where start-ups can be encouraged and jobs created.
- (ii) **The bringing together under the chapeau of the UN Regional Commissions in cooperation with the Multilateral Development Banks and national PPP Units (and interested local authorities)** to exchange experiences and project information that can feed into the “Build Back Better” programme. There is generally a lack of capacity at all levels of Government to develop successful projects. PPP are complicated enough to do; People-first PPP are even more complicated. Such a community of interest could regularly meet to get into contact with others to exchange project information and on a peer to peer basis. Some UN Regional Commissions have developed their own networks of PPP Units where such an exchange of practises and experiences and project information has already had beneficial impacts and lowered project transaction costs.
- (iii) **New mechanism – for example the Scottish Futures Trust hub Programme – that can develop projects and bring public and private sectors together in contractual agreements which incorporate community benefit and social value obligations, thereby filling a gap in local authorities and cities’ capability to deliver People-first projects.** This will involve a possible pilot project with a number of interested cities, local authorities, national PPP Units etc. to work together on a hub-type programme of People-first projects that can build community resilience on the projects highlighted (healthcare, food security, environmental sustainability and circular economy etc.).