



**UNECE**

## **Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships**



## **Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships<sup>1</sup>** **Eighth Session**

### **Provisional Programme<sup>2</sup>**

Palais des Nations, Room VII  
Geneva, 25-26 November 2024

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<sup>1</sup> The ECE Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships is an intergovernmental body established in 2016. It convenes over 3000 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 ECE PPP programme is hosted in the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (ECTD).

<sup>2</sup> As of 20 November 2024



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## Introduction

The Eighth Session of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) will be held on 25-26 November 2024 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. This session will provide a platform for exploring how PPPs can be effectively leveraged to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to global climate action.

At the core of the discussions will be the PPPs for the SDGs approach, which redefines traditional PPP models to ensure they are "fit for purpose" in achieving the SDGs. This enhanced approach addresses the limitations of conventional PPP models by drawing on the private sector's expertise, efficiency, and innovation while safeguarding public interests. For PPPs to align with the SDGs, they must meet five desirable outcomes that prioritize both "people" and "planet" and ensure a human rights-based approach, making infrastructure projects accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status or location.

A main point of departure in the discussions will be the UN Pact for the Future, adopted in September 2024, and its annexed Global Digital Compact. These frameworks outline an ambitious global agenda to address critical challenges and accelerate progress towards the SDGs. The Pact for the Future highlights the importance of closing the SDG financing gap, with PPPs for the SDGs playing an important role by leveraging private sector efficiency, expertise, and capital. Meanwhile, the Global Digital Compact emphasizes the transformative potential of emerging digital technologies to foster an inclusive, secure, and equitable digital future. While these technologies offer immense opportunities, they also bring significant risks, such as exacerbating the digital divide, threatening data privacy, and introducing ethical concerns. Balancing the potential benefits with these risks is critical to ensure that the digital transformation in PPPs contributes positively to the SDGs.

Participants in this session will discuss how PPPs can be structured to align with global initiatives, focusing on driving transformative change in infrastructure development. Key themes will include fostering climate resilience, integrating cutting-edge technologies and harnessing digital transformation, promoting transformative innovation, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability in PPP projects.

The discussions will build on the cross-cutting theme of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the Economic Commission for Europe (April 2023), which focused on "Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region", and the theme of the 71<sup>st</sup> session (April 2025), devoted to "Climate action and resilient infrastructure for a sustainable future".

### Goals of the session

- To **increase** knowledge on the contribution of PPPs in the context of climate action and resilient infrastructure;
- To **highlight** the importance of PPPs for the SDGs as a tool to contribute to achieving the global ambitions set by the UN Pact for the Future and its annexed Digital Global Compact; and
- To **review the impact** of ECE PPP normative tools, guidelines, and capacity building activities and **chart a path** for the future work of the Working Party.

### Programme organisation

**The policy dialogue** will consist of a series of panel discussions focused on "Climate Action and SDG Acceleration through Sustainable PPPs and Resilient Infrastructure".

**The general segment** will focus on discussions and decisions related to the UNECE PPP programme, including future work and priorities.

The Working Party will be conducted in person only, with interpretation services provided in English, French, and Russian.



## Monday, 25 November 2024

10:00 - 10:20

### Opening:

- **Ms. Tatiana Molcean**, Executive Secretary, UNECE

### Item 1. Adoption of the agenda

### Item 2. Election of observers to the Bureau

10:20 - 11:30

### Item 3. Policy Discussion: Climate action and SDG acceleration through sustainable PPPs and resilient infrastructure

#### Keynote speaker:

- **Mr. Surya Deva**, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development

#### Opening panel

#### Connecting the United Nations Pact for the Future to the UNECE PPP Programme in support of the Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations [Pact for the Future](#) (the Pact), adopted on 22 September 2024, sets forth an ambitious agenda to address global challenges and achieve the SDGs by 2030, with PPPs playing an important role by leveraging private sector expertise, capital, and efficiency.

A central focus of the Pact is securing sustainable resources to close the SDG financing gap and address climate change. It emphasizes environmentally responsible infrastructure development, while the annexed [Global Digital Compact](#) highlights the transformative potential of digital and emerging technologies, such as AI, in advancing sustainable development. The Compact aims to create an inclusive, secure, and equitable digital future by bridging digital divides, expanding access to the digital economy, safeguarding human rights, and improving data and AI governance.

The Pact underscores the pivotal role of PPPs in realizing these goals, harnessing private sector innovation, efficiency, and capital. This framing session will link the vision of the Pact and its Global Digital Compact to the UNECE PPP Programme in support of the SDGs, demonstrating how well-structured PPPs can significantly contribute to achieving global ambitions for the future.

#### Key questions:

- How can PPPs for the SDGs play a pivotal role in advancing the objectives of the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact?
- What strategies can be adopted for PPPs to contribute to financial sustainability, climate action, and innovation in infrastructure development?
- How can digital transformation and emerging technologies be effectively integrated into PPPs to align with the objectives of the Global Digital Compact?

#### Moderator

- **Ms. Elisabeth Türk**, Director, ECTD, UNECE

#### Introduction to the United Nations “Pact for the Future”:

- **Mr. Daniel Holz**, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Germany

#### Panellists (in alphabetical order)

- **Ms. Doris Chevalier**, CEO, Infraboost
- **Mr. Jean-Patrick Marquet**, President, Observatory of the Values in Society & Management, Switzerland
- **Ms. Stacy Sinclair**, Partner, Fenwick Elliott LLP
- **Mr. Syed Zaidi**, Chairperson, Bureau of the UNECE Working Party of PPPs



11:30 - 13:00

### Panel 1

#### The contribution of resilient PPPs and infrastructure to climate action for a sustainable future

This panel explores the role of resilient PPPs in driving sustainable infrastructure projects that contribute to both climate action and the achievement of the SDGs. Building on SDG 13, which calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, this panel will discuss how PPPs can support climate-resilient and adaptive infrastructure development, particularly in light of the distinctions and interconnections between climate adaptation (proactively adjusting to anticipated impacts) and resilience (the capacity to absorb shocks and recover).

The panel will review international best practices for incorporating climate resilience and adaptation into PPP projects. Special emphasis will also be placed on identifying gaps in current practices and discuss pathways to overcome operational and financial barriers in both developed and developing economies.

By addressing how PPPs can be structured to blend climate action with sustainable infrastructure, this session sets the stage for deeper discussions on innovative funding solutions, tender processes that prioritize resilience, and policy frameworks that align national SDG plans with climate-adaptive infrastructure development.

#### Key questions:

- How can PPPs be structured for climate resilience and adaptation to be fully integrated into infrastructure projects, particularly in regions highly vulnerable to climate change?
- What financing mechanisms and strategies can be deployed to incentivize private sector investment in climate-resilient infrastructure?
- How can international best practices be adapted to local contexts, particularly in developing countries, to address the dual challenges of climate adaptation and sustainable development in PPP projects?

#### Moderator

- **Ms. Eleni Bakoula**, Vice-chairperson, Bureau of the UNECE Working Party of PPPs

#### General overview by the Team Leader

- **Mr. David Dodd**, Team Leader, UNECE PPP workstream on resilient infrastructure

#### Panellists (in alphabetical order)

- **Mr. David Baxter**, Senior Sustainability and Resilience PPP Advisor
- **Mr. Christophe Dossarps**, CEO, Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation, Switzerland
- **Ms. Turkan Vusat**, Head, PPP Unit, Azerbaijan

#### Q&A

#### Expected outcomes:

- Gain insights into effective strategies for incorporating climate adaptation and resilience into infrastructure and PPP projects, with a focus on leveraging PPPs for the SDGs to address both current and future climate risks.
- Identify and discuss successful examples and best practices of integrating climate resilience into PPP projects, offering models that can be replicated or adapted in different regions.

13:00 - 15:00

### Lunch break

13:30 - 14:30

### Lunchtime Side Event on the Circular Economy, led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation Presentation of the report [“Building Prosperity: Unlocking the potential of a nature-positive, circular economy for Europe through strategies for the built environment”](#)

Room VII



15:00 - 16:30

## Panel 2

### Financial sustainability of PPPs for the SDGs: Ensuring long-term viability in infrastructure projects

The success of PPPs as vehicles for achieving the SDGs hinges on their long-term fiscal sustainability and the affordability of tariffs for end users. While PPPs can bring significant private sector investment and expertise into public infrastructure, without careful financial planning, they risk creating unsustainable debt burdens for governments, particularly in low and middle-income countries. Hidden debts, long-term fiscal commitments, and unaffordable tariffs can compromise the ability of PPPs to deliver positive outcomes in support of the SDGs.

This panel will explore how PPP projects could remain financially sustainable throughout their lifecycle while avoiding the pitfalls of hidden debt and long-term indebtedness. A focus will be placed on enhancing fiscal transparency, managing contingent liabilities, and preventing debt traps. Additionally, the panel will address how tariff structures can be designed to remain affordable for users, ensuring that newly developed infrastructure services do not disproportionately burden the end users.

#### Key questions:

- (i) How can governments enhance fiscal transparency and effectively report sovereign or sub-sovereign debt and contingent liabilities from PPP projects to avoid hidden debt?
- (ii) What strategies can be adopted to ensure PPP projects remain financially sustainable without placing excessive strain on public budgets, especially in low and middle-income countries?
- (iii) How can tariff structures be designed to ensure affordability for users throughout the entire lifecycle of PPP projects, while maintaining the financial viability of the projects?

#### Moderator

- **Mr. Jean-Patrick Marquet**, President, Observatory of the Values in Society & Management, Switzerland

#### Panellists (in alphabetical order)

- **Ms. Doris Chevalier**, CEO, Infraboost
- **Ms. Idil Gursel**, Regional Head, Infrastructure, EBRD
- **Ms. Jekaterina Šarmavičienė**, Head, Methodological support and Competence Center for Public investments, Central Project Management Agency
- **Mr. Nikos Sergis**, Head, PPP Unit, Greece

#### Q&A

#### Expected outcomes:

- (i) Gain a clearer understanding of how to enhance fiscal transparency, manage contingent liabilities, and avoid hidden debt in PPP projects, to guarantee long-term financial viability without overburdening public budgets.
- (ii) Provide practical recommendations for designing tariff structures that remain affordable for users throughout the lifecycle of PPP projects, while ensuring that projects are financially sustainable and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.



16:30 - 18:00

### Panel 3

#### Leveraging new technologies in PPPs and resilient infrastructure the SDGs: Integrating cutting-edge technologies to enhance project effectiveness

The ongoing digital transformation offers an unprecedented opportunity to enhance the effectiveness and resilience of PPPs in delivering infrastructure aligned with SDGs. The [Global Digital Compact](#) underscores the transformative potential of digital and emerging technologies, including AI, to drive sustainable development. Its goal is to foster an inclusive, secure, and equitable digital future by narrowing digital divides, broadening access to the digital economy, protecting human rights, and strengthening governance around data and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This panel will discuss how cutting-edge technologies – including AI, Building Information Modelling (BIM), Digital Twins, automation tools, e-procurement platforms, smart contracts, and digital records etc - can be integrated into PPP projects to drive greater efficiency, transparency, and sustainability. In addition, this panel will also focus on PPP projects that exist as a result of digital transformation itself. It will provide a platform for discussing best practices, risks, challenges, and innovative solutions for integrating advanced digital tools into both traditional and digitally driven PPP projects. Participants will explore how these technologies can be harnessed to build more resilient, efficient, and inclusive infrastructure, supporting long-term sustainability goals.<sup>3</sup>

#### Key questions:

- (i) How can cutting-edge technologies such as AI, BIM, and Digital Twins be effectively integrated into PPP projects to enhance efficiency, transparency, and sustainability?
- (ii) What are the specific challenges related to data security, privacy, and ethical considerations that arise when implementing advanced digital tools in PPPs, and how can they be addressed through regulatory frameworks?
- (iii) How can AI and other digital tools be leveraged to improve and streamline PPP projects?

#### Moderator

- **Ms. Stacy Sinclair**, Partner, Fenwick Elliott LLP

#### Panellists (in alphabetical order)

- **Mr. Olivier Ginépro**, Project Director, International Affairs, FIN INFRA, France
- **Mr. Gabriele Pasquini**, Director, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy
- **Ms. Melissa Peneycad**, Manager, Sustainable Infrastructure and PPP Programs, Beyond21 Academy, Canada
- **Mr. Eyüp Vural Aydin**, Chairman, Istanbul PPP Center of Excellence, Türkiye
- **Mr. Nicholas Yatromanolakis**, Principal, Policy Lab; Strategy Advisor, AAnG Holdings Group

#### Presentation of the “AI for Good” initiative

- **Mr. Jin Cui**, International Telecommunications Union

#### Q&A

#### Expected outcomes:

- (i) Identify key best practices and strategies for integrating advanced digital technologies into PPP projects to enhance resilience and sustainability.
- (ii) Gain a clearer understanding of the potential role of AI in lowering transaction costs, improving decision-making, and predicting infrastructure needs, particularly within small-scale PPP projects, as part of the ECE’s future workstream, cognizant of the associated challenges and risks.

18:00 - 19:30

### Reception

<sup>3</sup> While the session will cover a range of digital technologies, particular focus will be given to AI. AI's role in predicting infrastructure needs, optimizing decision-making, expediting projects and lowering transaction costs for governments, particularly in small-scale PPP projects, will be a key theme of this discussion, along with its associated challenges and risks.



Tuesday, 26 November 2024

10:00 - 11:30

### Item 3. Policy Discussion (continued)

#### Panel 4

#### Transformative innovation and PPPs: Enhancing PPP procurement through innovation practices

In recent years, public procurement has shifted from traditional methods focused on cost, quality, and functionality to approaches that emphasize sustainability, environmental responsibility, and long-term societal benefits. Governments are increasingly integrating "sustainable," "green," "circular," and "innovation-enhancing" procurement practices to achieve better environmental and social outcomes.

The panel will consider how PPP procurement, based on a lifecycle approach, is well-suited to incorporate green and sustainable practices into large and small-scale projects. It will specifically discuss how innovation-enhancing procurement (IEP) can be further integrated into PPP practices to foster transformative innovation – the integration of cutting-edge technologies and new methodologies that radically improve public infrastructure delivery. IEP in PPPs can serve as a strategic tool for stimulating technological advancements and addressing unmet public needs. By engaging the private sector to procure innovative processes and solutions, governments can promote R&D, accelerating the adoption of transformative innovations like AI, green technologies, and digital platforms, ultimately fostering long-term competitiveness and sustainability.

#### Key questions:

- (i) How can IEP practices be effectively integrated into PPP projects to support the development of sustainable, resilient, and inclusive infrastructure projects?
- (ii) What are the advantages of having green and sustainable PPP elements when procuring PPP projects to ensure resiliency throughout the project lifecycle (including the PPP contract)?
- (iii) How can lifecycle approaches within PPP frameworks minimize waste, optimize resource efficiency, and contribute to achieving the SDGs?

#### Moderator

- **Mr. Steven Van Garsse**, Vice-Dean Faculty of Law, Hasselt University, Belgium

#### Panellists (in alphabetical order)

- **Ms. Petra Ferk**, Institute for PPPs, Slovenia
- **Mr. Marc Frilet**, General Secretary, International Centre of Excellence for PPP Policy, Laws and Institution
- **Ms. Anita Skog**, Innovation Broker, Artic Pioneers, Norway
- **Ms. Lina Svensberg**, Innovation Manager, Compare Foundation, Sweden
- **Mr. Vasileios Tsanidis**, Senior Innovation Procurement Advisor, European Innovation Council, EU Commission

#### Q&A

#### Expected outcomes:

- (i) Gain a deeper understanding of how IEP can be applied within PPP frameworks to stimulate technological advancements, promote sustainability, and address public infrastructure needs, leading to more efficient and inclusive project delivery.
- (ii) Identify practical strategies and examples that can be scaled and replicated in PPP projects to foster long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability in alignment with the SDGs.



11:30 - 13:00

## General Segment

### Item 4. Review of the work since the sixth session of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships on 30 November - 1 December 2023

- A. Presentation of policy guides initiated in 2023 submitted to the Working Party for decision**
- (i) Improving the delivery of PPPs through digital transformation throughout the project lifecycle in support of the SDGs (**Ms. Stacy Sinclair**, team leader)
  - (ii) PPPs in digital infrastructure: diagnostics in healthcare (telemedicine) and other digital public services (**Mr. Gabriele Pasquini**, team leader)
  - (iii) Green and sustainable PPP procurement for the SDGs (**Mr. Steven Van Garsse**, team leader)
  - (iv) The state of PPP and infrastructure finance midway to 2030 (**Ms. Agnès Mazurek**, team leader)
- B. Status report on the work of new PPP workstreams launched in 2024**
- (i) Standard on the use of off-grid rural electrification renewable energy and energy efficient PPP solutions (**Mr. David Baxter**, team leader)
  - (ii) Guide on promoting climate resilient PPP and infrastructure projects in support of the SDGs (**Mr. David Dodd**, team leader)
  - (iii) Guide on promoting gender equality and women empowerment through PPPs for the SDGs (**Ms. Doris Chevalier**, team leader)
  - (iv) Guide on the use of small-scale PPPs in support of the SDGs (**Mr. Steven Van Garsse**, drafting team member)
  - (v) Guide on enhancing stakeholder engagement in PPPs (**Ms. Melissa Peneycad**, team leader)
- C. Implementation through capacity building and policy advisory services**

13:00 - 15:00

## Lunch break

15:00 - 18:00

### Item 4. Cont'd

#### Evaluation and impact of the PPP Programme

- (i) Presentation of the progress on implementing the recommendations of the evaluation of subprogramme 4 undertaken by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) (**Ms. Elisabeth Türk**)
- (ii) Presentation of the main results on the use and impact of the UNECE guidelines on promoting circular economy in PPPs for the SDGs (**Ms. Maria Cristina Montero de Espinosa Garcia**)

### Item 5. Implementation plan for 2024-2025

#### Presentations of proposed future work to be launched in 2025

- (i) Proposed Policy Briefs series on AI-enhanced PPPs and infrastructure projects for the SDGs: Potential and limitations (**Ms. Stacy Sinclair**)
- (ii) Proposed Guide on enhancing fiscal sustainability and affordability in PPPs for the SDGs (**Mr. Jean-Patrick Marquet**)

### Item 6. Other business

### Item 7. Modalities for the adoption of the report of the eighth session





## Useful information

### Maps | Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

#### Room VII

Please register ahead of the event at [Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships \(25-26 November 2024\): Overview · Indico.UN](#)

Prior to the Session, delegates (with the exception of delegates from the Geneva-based Missions) are requested to present themselves with a valid identification card/passport at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at [Pregny Gate, Place des Nations](#), for the issuance of an identification badge.

See map and additional information for delegates available on the UNOG website and at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/practical-information>



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