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## Economic Commission for Europe

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

#### Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships

##### Sixth session

Geneva, 1-2 December 2022

## Report of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships on its sixth session

### I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) held its sixth session on 1-2 December 2022 in hybrid format. Over 200 participants attended the meeting. The session was attended by delegates from Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Ukraine, United States of America and Uzbekistan.
2. Delegates from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Gambia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, Oman, Peru, Senegal and Tunisia, participated as observers.
3. Representatives of the European Union also participated in the session.
4. The following specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations participated in the session: the African Development Bank, the Eurasian Development Bank, the International Finance Corporation, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Ukraine and the World Bank.
5. Representatives from non-governmental organizations, private sector entities, academic institutions and independent experts participated in the session as observers.

### II. Opening of the session

6. The Executive Secretary of the ECE, Ms. Olga Algayerova, opened the session noting the relevance of the Working Party, as it remains the only intergovernmental body in the



United Nations system dedicated to sustainable PPPs and infrastructure finance. By addressing cross-cutting issues, such as the transition to the circular economy and digital transformation, she stressed that the Working Party was making a meaningful contribution to the themes for the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> Commission sessions in 2021 and 2023 respectively. In particular, she observed that through its PPPs for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approach, with its five distinctive outcomes, the Working Party has developed guiding principles, standards and an Evaluation Methodology to help ECE member States measure their PPP and infrastructure projects against the three pillars of sustainability.

7. She also remarked that the Working Party, through its compendium of case studies presented at the UNECE International PPP Forum in Barcelona, was a source of inspiration for the ECE in compiling a compendium on climate projects that was presented at the Regional Forum on Climate Initiatives to Finance Climate Action and the SDGs on 17 October 2022 ahead of COP27. The 30 projects from 12 ECE member States for a total investment value of 20 billion US dollars demonstrated the strong desire to attract sustainable and climate finance into projects to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

### **III. Adoption of the agenda (Agenda item 1)**

Documentation:

Annotated provisional agenda for the sixth session (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/1).

#### **Decision 2022 – 1**

The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda for its sixth session.

### **IV. Election of observers to the Bureau (Agenda item 2)**

8. The Working Party elected observers to the Bureau from three interest groups – private sector, civil society and academia – for a term of office of two years.

#### **Decision 2022 – 2**

The Working Party elected Ms. Doris Chevalier (France) from the private sector, Ms. Melissa Peneycad (Canada) from civil society, and Mr. Joan-Enric Ricart (Spain) from academia as observers to the Bureau for a period of two years.

### **V. Policy discussion:<sup>1</sup> Accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Economic Commission for Europe's region through Public-Private Partnerships (Agenda item 3)**

9. A number of keynote speakers introduced the policy discussion and provided the context for the ensuing debate.

10. In her keynote address, H.E. Ms. Ani Ispiryan, Deputy Minister of Economy of Armenia, stressed the importance of upgrading public infrastructure through PPPs in her country to ensure sustainable outcomes, which are critical to the SDGs. She informed the Working Party of a new law enacted in 2019 in Armenia, further revised in 2021, and expressed her appreciation to ECE for the PPP support received by Armenia to ensure that

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<sup>1</sup> The policy discussion consisted of a high-level debate and two expert panel discussions focused on the ECE PPPs for the SDGs approach to sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction, transition to the circular economy and digital transformation.

the improvement in its legal and regulatory framework is translated into concrete projects that attract sustainable financing.

11. In his keynote address, H.E. Mr. Narzullo Oblomuradov, Chairman of the State Committee for Ecology and Environment Protection of Uzbekistan, stressed the importance of getting back on track to achieving the SDGs and addressing the climate crisis, which requires uniting efforts and finding integrated and modern "green" solutions. He informed the audience that the transition to a green economy is a priority for Uzbekistan. To ensure this transition, the government adopted a law on PPPs in 2019 to ensure that PPP projects, including in the waste management sector, are in line with the SDGs. He concluded by expressing his appreciation to the ECE for its ongoing PPP support.

12. In his keynote address, H.E. Mr. Sharaf Sheralizoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, expressed the importance to develop PPP projects in key infrastructure areas to improve critical social and economic outcomes in rural and urban areas in Tajikistan in line with the SDGs. He informed the Working Party that the current PPP projects under implementation in Tajikistan are aligned with the country's national development strategy and the SDGs. He further mentioned that the ECE PPPs for the SDGs approach is consistently used for project selection by Tajikistan's PPP Council and expressed his appreciation to the ECE for its continuous PPP support.

13. The Chairperson's summary of the discussions is annexed to the report.

14. The panellists and participants appreciated the very valuable and impactful work undertaken by the ECE in promoting PPPs for the SDGs. They also emphasised the relevance of supporting cross-cutting Commission themes – the transition to a circular economy and digital and green transformations for sustainable development in ECE member States – and commended ECE for its timely work on topics of great policy relevance, including economic recovery and reconstruction.

15. The Working Party thanked the panellists and participants for the productive exchange of experiences and their contributions to the discussion.

## **VI. Review of the work since the fifth session of the Working Party on PPPs on 29-30 November 2021 (Agenda item 4)**

### **Policy documents: International PPP Standards, Guidelines, Guiding Principles, Declarations, and Recommendations**

Documentation:

Guidelines on Public-Private Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals in Waste-to-Energy projects for Non-Recyclable Waste: Pathways towards a Circular Economy (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/3);

Guidelines on promoting Circular Economy in Public-Private Partnerships for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/4);

Standard on Private-Public Partnerships/Concession Model Law (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/5);

Introduction to Public-Private Partnerships for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/6);

Guiding Principles on Public-Private Partnerships for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/7); and

Annual summary report of Bureau decisions since the fifth session of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships on 29-30 November 2021 (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/INF.1).

**A. Guidelines on Public-Private Partnerships to promote the transition to the circular economy**

16. A panel discussion presented a cluster of three documents prepared by the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (ECTD) on infrastructure and financing of the circular economy transition as a follow up to the decisions taken by ECE member States at the 69<sup>th</sup> Commission session in 2021. In introducing the discussion, Ms. Elisabeth Türk, Director ECTD, informed the Working Party that the ECTD was working on circular economy transition in its various workstreams on innovation, trade, infrastructure finance and PPPs. She added that the focus of today's discussion was on three papers on infrastructure and financing of the circular economy transition, as well as to introduce to the Working Party delegates the ECE CIRCULAR STEP – a stakeholder engagement platform in the ECE region.

17. The secretariat introduced for information the draft paper on financing for circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, and the CIRCULAR STEP network. The objective of the latter is to develop and disseminate evidence-based international good policy practices and bring together experts from national, regional, and local governments, business and academic community, civil society from the ECE region. The activities of the network are demand driven, to address the priorities and needs of ECE member States. The documents introduced today will be disseminated by the CIRCULAR STEP network.

18. The secretariat also introduced the following documents for decision by the Working Party:

- (i). Guidelines on Public-Private Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals in Waste-to-Energy Projects for Non-Recyclable Waste: Pathways towards a Circular Economy (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/3); and
- (ii). Guidelines on Promoting Circular Economy in Public-Private Partnerships for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/4).

19. The secretariat recalled that a first version of document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/3 was submitted to the Working Party at its fourth session in 2020 (as ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2020/5) and was subsequently submitted to the 69<sup>th</sup> Commission session in April 2021. At the time, the Working Party agreed on its further development by the secretariat based on comments from stakeholders. The secretariat added that the revised document before the Working Party is the result of a thorough stakeholder consultation and a peer review process.

20. When presenting ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/4, the secretariat recalled that the guidelines with practical industry examples and policy options to encourage a transition towards a circular economy within the infrastructure sector was requested by the Working Party at its fifth session in November 2021. The secretariat added that the document draws heavily on panel discussions at intergovernmental meetings and the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum in May 2022, in Barcelona, Spain.

21. Referring to the three documents, the panellists emphasised the following points:

- (a) PPPs, coupled with blended finance and impact investing, play an important role in de-risking investments in circular infrastructure;
- (b) Enabling policy frameworks that integrate circularity in national green action plans are essential to facilitate a transition towards the circular economy;

(c) Circularity is essential to achieving the SDGs in the infrastructure sector and can be incorporated across the different stages of a PPP: design, procurement and finance, construction, and operations and maintenance;

(d) The concept of circularity goes in line with the objectives of the PPP for the SDGs model by delivering high-value infrastructure at a lower cost;

(e) Supply chains must be reconfigured to create a system that keeps the value of materials used in infrastructure at their highest level;

(f) Waste-to-Energy projects that follow the PPPs for the SDGs approach can also contribute to the circular economy by recovering energy embedded in non-recyclable waste;

(g) Waste-to-Energy facilities for non-recyclable waste should form part of an integrated waste management system in order to maximise efficiency of collection and sorting of materials; and

(h) The documents provide a bridge between theory and practice by raising awareness of the circular economy objectives in the context of PPPs and provide practical and relevant ideas for future projects through concrete industry practices.

22. In concluding the panel discussion, Ms. Türk stated that the papers and initiatives presented in this discussion responded to the mandate given by the member States, and she was confident that the three papers, both in terms of substance and process, added value to the cross-cutting theme. She added that perhaps a next step for the Working Party was to endorse the papers and to consider concrete ways of disseminating and implementing them.

23. The Chairperson, Mr. George Katapodis (Greece) thanked Ms. Türk and the speakers for a very interesting discussion on the circular economy transition and opened the floor for comments.

24. The representative of Germany referred to document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/3 and emphasised the need to discourage the use of landfills. He argued that this aspect was properly reflected in the document and was one of the key elements in the transition to the circular economy. He suggested that the secretariat might want to focus on this aspect in its capacity building and policy advisory services to member States.

25. The representative of the Russian Federation thanked the secretariat for preparing the guidelines to promote circular economy with very practical examples and policy options for governments. She argued that the guidelines do not only raise awareness on the topic, but they also stimulate the transition to the circular economy and increase environmental management and sustainability.

#### **Decision 2022 – 4.1**

The Working Party:

1. Welcomed the debate that provided informative context for member States to develop an enabling environment that promotes circular economy practices through the use of the ECE approach of PPPs for the SDGs;
2. Noted with appreciation the Working Party's contribution since 2020 to promoting circular economy in PPPs and infrastructure in response to the 69<sup>th</sup> Commission session that was devoted to the circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, where member States requested ECE to promote circular economy transition and sustainable use of natural resources in relevant subprogrammes, sectoral committees and other subsidiary bodies (Decision 69A and Decision 69B);

3. Endorsed the:
  - (i). Guidelines on Public-Private Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals in Waste-to-Energy Projects for Non-Recyclable Waste: Pathways towards a Circular Economy (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/3); and
  - (ii). Guidelines on promoting Circular Economy in Public-Private Partnerships for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/4); and
4. Requested the secretariat to support their implementation and use through demand-driven capacity building and policy advisory services to ECE member States, as well as through the ECE network “CIRCULAR STEP”.<sup>2</sup>

**B. Standard on PPP/Concession Model Law**

26. The Chairperson recalled that at its last session, the Working Party requested the Bureau to undertake the following steps leading to the finalisation of the standard:

- (i). Engage in a consultation process of at least two months with all interested parties;
- (ii). Monitor the finalisation of the standard before 31 March 2022, in line with the Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2021-2022 of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (the Committee); and
- (iii). Submit a consolidated version of the standard in April 2022 to the Committee for approval at its 15<sup>th</sup> session in May 2022.

27. The Chairperson added that the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, followed the process set by the Working Party above and on 7 April 2022, produced a document with a recommendation to the Committee to approve it (ECE/CECI/2022/4). The Committee, at its 15<sup>th</sup> session in May 2022, took note of the standard and:

- (i). Requested the Bureau, without revising the document, to clarify issues related to comments by interested parties and stakeholders, as well as issues related to the mandate for the document;
- (ii). Further requested the Bureau to resubmit the document to the Working Party at this session for decision;
- (iii). Decided that unless the document submitted was endorsed by the Working Party at this session, no further work shall be undertaken; and
- (iv). Further decided that the Working Party will discuss and decide at this session on proposals for a possible change of the name of the “model law”, should this better clarify the purpose of this document.

28. The Chairperson further explained that since May 2022, with the support of the Bureau, especially the Bureau members from Belgium (Mr. Steven Van Garsse) and the United States (Mr. Arthur Smith), he led consultations with interested parties and stakeholders, including on a possible change of name of the standard. The consultations were successfully concluded in October 2022, and the Bureau endorsed a slightly edited version of the standard from that presented to the Committee in May 2022. The final document was

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<sup>2</sup> The ECE stakeholder engagement platform to accelerate the circular transition in the ECE region is available at: <https://unece.org/circular-economy/press/unece-launches-platform-policy-dialogue-circular-economy>.

submitted to the Working Party with a recommendation to endorse it (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/5).

29. The Chairperson added that during the consultations, it emerged that there was a preference to find an alternative name for the standard. To address this issue, the Bureau agreed at its meeting on 2 November 2022 to propose to the Working Party to rename the standard as: “Standard on PPP/Concession legal framework in support of the Sustainable Development Goals”

30. The Chairperson added that this proposal was communicated to all delegations in November 2022 and explained that the Bureau could not change the name of the document before the session given that the Committee requested the Working Party to decide on this matter at this session. He further explained that this was the reason why document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/5 still contained the name as included in the Committee’s Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2022-2023.

31. Referring to the commentary or implementation guide for the standard, the Chairperson proposed that this document be finalised in 2023 under the auspices of the Bureau.

32. The representative of the United States thanked the secretariat, the Bureau and all the experts who over the past few years worked so diligently to find a compromise solution and an agreed text that addresses all concerns of the member States and other UN bodies.

33. The representative of Germany stated this his delegation fully supported the renaming of the standard as it better reflects the nature of the document. Speaking on the implementation guide to accompany the standard, he added that this document to be developed in 2023 should take into account of the UNCITRAL model provisions to ensure a coherent approach within the UN system.

34. The representative of the Russian Federation thanked the secretariat and all the experts who participated in the development of the standard. The Russian Federation actively participated in the preparation of the document, which the delegation considers as a good instrument to stimulate private investment in order to finance the 2030 Agenda.

35. The representative of France thanked the secretariat for its contribution to this delicate process over several years. The delegate also underlined the contribution by the International Specialist Centre of Excellence on PPP laws, policy and institutions in France. He also thanked his fellow Bureau members for steering the process towards a successful conclusion and concluded by saying that France fully supported the draft decision.

#### **Decision 2022 – 4.2**

##### The Working Party

1. Endorsed the standard on Private-Public Partnerships/Concession Model Law (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/5);
2. Considered the proposal from the Bureau for a possible change of the name of the “model law” and decided to rename the standard as: Standard on PPP/Concession Legal Framework in support of the Sustainable Development Goals;
3. Requested the Bureau to finalise the commentary/accompanying guide under its auspices in 2023; and
4. Requested the secretariat to submit the standard to the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (the Committee) for approval at its next session in May-June 2023.

**C. Reissued documents in line with the decision 2022 – 4b.2<sup>3</sup> of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships**

36. The Chairperson recalled the decision by the Committee at its 15<sup>th</sup> session in May 2022 to change the name to “PPPs for the SDGs”, and to progressively reissue the documents endorsed and adopted by the Committee and the Working Party to reflect this change, giving priority to three core documents, namely:

- (i). The Guiding Principles on PPPs in support of the SDGs;
- (ii). An Introduction to PPPs in support of the SDGs; and
- (iii). The PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs.

37. The Committee requested the secretariat to reissue the three core documents within twelve months, that is by May 2023. The Committee also requested that the rest of the documents be reissued within three years, that is until 2025. All reissued documents are within the existing document quota for the Economic Cooperation and Integration (ECI) subprogramme.

38. The Chairperson informed the Working Party that two of the three core documents have been reissued for this session and are submitted for information, namely:

- (i). Introduction to Public-Private Partnerships in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/6); and
- (ii). Guiding Principles on Public-Private Partnerships in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/7).

39. The Chairperson added that the third and final core document – the PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs – will be reissued for the forthcoming Committee session in May-June 2023, and it will reflect the decision by the Working Party on the name of the Evaluation Methodology (see Decision 2022 – 4.4 below).

**Decision 2022 – 4.3**

The Working Party took note of:

1. The decision by the Committee at its 15<sup>th</sup> session in May 2022 to change the name to “PPPs for the SDGs”; and
2. The following documents reissued to reflect the change of name in line with the Committee’s decision 2022 – 4b.2:
  - (i). Introduction to Public-Private Partnerships in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/PPP/WP/2022/6); and

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<sup>3</sup> The Committee Decision 2022 – 4b.2 - Regarding the continued use of the name “*People-first PPPs for the SDGs*”, the Committee took note of the results of the informal consultations conducted with interested delegations on this matter since the fifth session of the Working Party in November 2021, and decided to (a) change the name to “*PPPs for the SDGs*” and (b) progressively reissue the documents endorsed and adopted by the Committee and the Working Party on PPPs to reflect (a). above within the document quota allocated to the ECI subprogramme and without incurring additional costs. The Committee requested the secretariat to reissue three core documents within twelve months, and the rest of the documents within three years. The Committee requested the Bureau of the Working Party on PPPs to decide on which non-core documents should be prioritised during this period.

Note: the three core documents referred to above are: the Guiding Principles on People-first PPPs for the SDGs (ECE/CECI/2019/5); an Introduction to People-first PPPs in support of the UN SDGs (ECE/CECI/2019/6); and the People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2021/3).

- (ii). Guiding Principles on Public-Private Partnerships in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/PPP/WP/2022/7).

**D. A more marketable name for the ECE Public-Private Partnerships Evaluation Methodology for the Sustainable Development Goals**

40. The Chairperson recalled that the PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs was endorsed by the Working Party at its last session and was further approved by the Committee in May 2022, with a recommendation for its implementation by member States in its self-assessment form.

41. The Chairperson added that in line with the Action Plan agreed by the Working Party at its fourth session in 2020 (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2020/2, Annex II), in particular the need to make the title of the methodology more attractive to facilitate its promotion, the Bureau proposed the following name for consideration by the Working Party: “UNECE PPP and Infrastructure Evaluation and Rating System (PIERS): An Evaluation Methodology for the Sustainable Development Goals”

42. The Chairperson concluded by recalling that this proposal was communicated to the member States during the preparations for this session.

**Decision 2022 – 4.4**

The Working Party:

1. Recognising the need for a more marketable name for the UNECE PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs, agreed with the Bureau recommendation to rename the Evaluation Methodology as “UNECE PPP and Infrastructure Evaluation and Rating System (PIERS): An Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs”; and
2. Noted that the Evaluation Methodology will be reissued in early 2023 to reflect 1 above and the Committee’s decision 2022 – 4b.2.

**Implementation: capacity-building activities and policy advisory services**

43. The Chairperson informed the Working Party that in the past twelve months, capacity building activities and policy advisory services covered most of the ECE 17 programme countries, with a number of in-person events organised in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. He also referred to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum in May 2022, and to a very interesting discussion under agenda item 3 on “Accelerating the achievement of the SDGs in the ECE region through PPPs”, which in itself is a capacity building activity for many delegates.

44. The secretariat provided detailed information on the following activities (in date order):

(a) Türkiye: A study tour for Kyrgyz government officials organised by the secretariat to learn about PPP institutional capacity at the “PPP Week” in Istanbul (6-9 December 2021);

(b) Ukraine: a training webinar for PPP practitioners in Ukraine on the identification and preparation of PPP projects compliant with the SDGs jointly organised with the Ministry for the Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture (15 December 2021);

(c) Spain: the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum held in Barcelona and it addressed a number of current and emerging challenges and opportunities at both national and city level, such as climate change, the circular economy, digital transformation, green and sustainable PPP procurement, and the blue economy. A highlight of the Forum was the presentation of 15 PPP projects from around the world. Each project

was self-evaluated using the ECE Evaluation Methodology, and a number of discussants made comments and observations on the links between the projects, the five desirable ECE PPP outcomes and the SDGs. The Forum was co-organised by ECE with IESE Business School, and with the support of the Barcelona City Council and the Government of Spain (4-6 May 2022);

(d) Spain: a capacity building event in Barcelona for 7 countries – Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan – on PPP projects and programmes and their links to the SDGs (6 May 2022);

(e) Online capacity building webinar for the ECE 17 programme countries on the use of the UNECE Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs (27 September 2022);

(f) Kyrgyzstan: in person training workshop in Bishkek for 55 government officials from Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan on the use of the UNECE Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs (5 October 2022);

(g) Kyrgyzstan: an international PPP Forum in Bishkek co-organised by ECE with the PPP Center of Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF, the Asian Development Bank and the International Finance Corporation (6 October 2022);

(h) Switzerland: a panel on climate finance organised during the UNECE Regional Forum on Climate Initiatives to Finance Climate Action and the SDGs towards COP27 in Geneva, where a compendium of 30 climate projects from 12 programme countries in the ECE region was presented (17 October 2022);

(i) Armenia: a PPP conference in Armenia co-organised by ECE with the Ministry of Economy of Armenia on sustainable PPPs and infrastructure projects in support of the SDGs (19 October 2022); and

(j) Uzbekistan: a policy advisory mission on PPPs in waste management and irrigation projects co-organised by ECE with the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Ecology and Environmental Protection (8-11 November 2022).

45. The Chairperson congratulated the secretariat for organising a very successful 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum in Barcelona, Spain from 4 to 6 May 2022. He also expressed his gratitude to the PPP experts participating in and contributing to policy advisory services and the capacity building activities, and to the secretariat for organising and servicing these activities.

46. The Chairperson reminded the Working Party that its policy advisory services and capacity building programme depended on extrabudgetary funding and in-kind contribution. He urged member States and other stakeholders to provide in-kind and financial support to the ECE PPP programme in support of the SDGs.

47. The Chairperson informed the Working Party that the secretariat has published all decisions taken by the Bureau since the last Working Party session in document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/INF.1, in line with Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2021/5/Rev.1).

48. The representative of Armenia noted that increasing the capacity of public officials remains a priority for Armenia. She expressed her gratitude to the secretariat for organising a PPP conference in Yerevan on 19 October 2022 on the importance of aligning PPPs and infrastructure to the SDGs. She looked forward to continue working with the secretariat on further PPP support and cooperation.

49. The representative of Uzbekistan thanked the secretariat for organising a policy advisory mission to Uzbekistan in November 2022 to explore how the waste management process in the country can be improved. The representative conveyed his delegation's

appreciation to the secretariat for its commitment to continue providing PPP assistance to Uzbekistan in the waste and water management sectors in 2023.

50. The representative of Kyrgyzstan referred to the fruitful cooperation with ECE over many years. He added that the UNECE PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs is one of the main instruments to evaluate PPPs in Kyrgyzstan. In October, the secretariat conducted training for over 50 government officials directly involved in PPP projects on the use of this methodology, and the PPP Center in Kyrgyzstan looked forward to further collaboration with the secretariat on the implementation and further use of the methodology.

#### **Decision 2022 – 4.5**

The Working Party:

1. Took note of the policy discussion under agenda item 3 on accelerating achievement of the SDGs in the ECE region through PPPs; and.
2. Requested the secretariat to further explore some of these discussions at the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum in 2023, in particular issues relevant to economic recovery and reconstruction and digital and green transformations, including the transition to the circular economy.

#### **Decision 2022 – 4.6**

The Working Party:

1. Welcomed the PPP policy advisory and capacity building work carried out since its last session;
2. Expressed its gratitude to the secretariat for organising a very successful 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum from 4 to 6 May 2022 (the Forum addressed topical issues such as the transition to the circular economy, green PPP procurement, and digital transformation for sustainable development);
3. Expressed its appreciation to the Government of Spain for supporting the Forum, and to IESE Business School and the Barcelona City Council for co-organising it together with ECE; and
4. Thanked all stakeholders and donors who have been supporting the PPP work and encouraged potential future donors to provide financial and in-kind contributions towards the ECE PPP programme in the years to come.

#### **Decision 2022 – 4.7**

The Working Party took note of document ECE/CECI/PPP/WP/2022/INF.1 containing the decisions by the Bureau since its last session in November 2021

## **VII. Implementation plan for 2022-2023 (Agenda item 5)**

Documentation:

Report of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships on its fifth session (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2021/2);

Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2022-2023 (ECE/CECI/2022/2, Annex II); and

Focus of future work of the Working Party in support of Public-Private Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/INF.2).

51. The Chairperson referred to the Committee's Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2022-2023 (ECE/CECI/2022/2, Annex II), which lists PPP activities for the rest of 2022 and for 2023.

52. The Chairperson added that the next major PPP event is the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum on 3-5 May 2023, which is being planned as a hybrid meeting with strong in person participation. He further added that no decisions are envisaged by the Working Party on those activities for the rest of 2022 and in 2023, which are already included in the Committee's Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2022-2023.

53. The Chairperson recalled that the Working Party had its mandate renewed for a further five-year period. He added that in the past five years, the Working Party has been at the forefront to ensure that the PPP model was "fit-for-purpose" for the SDGs with people as the main beneficiaries of infrastructure and public services. In this regard, the Working Party has developed guiding principles, standards, and an evaluation methodology to help ECE member States measure their PPP and infrastructure projects against the three pillars of sustainability. With its mandate extended until 2027 by the ECE Executive Committee, the Working Party has the opportunity to propel the ECE PPP for the SDGs programme to the next level by:

- (i). Developing policy documents on a range of issues on sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction, corruption, pandemic preparedness and response, food security, women's empowerment, and digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region (including, transition to the circular economy), in line with the focus agreed by the Committee at its 15<sup>th</sup> session in May 2022, more specifically, paragraph 15 of the Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2022-2023 in ECE/CECI/2022/2, Annex II;
- (ii). Mainstreaming sustainable finance – including transition finance – into the PPP work, to address the ever-increasing infrastructure investment gap, climate change, to recover better from the pandemic, and contribute to sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction; and
- (iii). Delivering demand-driven capacity building and policy advisory services to improve project delivery and attract sustainable and climate finance.

54. The Chairperson further added that with this in mind, the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, prepared document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/INF.2 for consideration by the Working Party, containing a consolidated list of topics for new policy documents. He remarked that the list is fully aligned with the focus of the PPP work agreed by the Committee in the Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2022-2023 (including with paragraph 20)<sup>4</sup>, and with the Guiding Principles on PPPs in support of the SDGs (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/7). The Bureau submitted detailed proposals on five topics for work to start in 2023, as listed in Annex II of document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/INF.2, namely practical guides on:

- (i). Improving the delivery of PPPs through digital transformation throughout the project lifecycle in support of the SDGs;
- (ii). PPPs in digital infrastructure: diagnostics in healthcare (telemedicine) and other digital public services;
- (iii). Green and Sustainable PPP Procurement for the SDGs;
- (iv). The state of PPP and infrastructure finance, midway to 2030; and

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<sup>4</sup> "Work on standards and guides on green and sustainable PPP procurement, and on digital transformation in PPPs for sustainable development will be decided by the Working Party on PPPs, at its next session in December 2022, based on proposals by its Bureau and on existing resources."

- (v). The pros and cons of simplifying and accelerating the delivery of PPP projects for the SDGs for sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction.

55. The representative of the Russian Federation, speaking on the future work of the Working Party, stated that her delegation agreed with the list presented in document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/INF.2. She added that, in particular, the proposed documents on green PPP procurement and on sustainable finance were crucial to guide public officials in ensuring that PPPs are contributing to the SDGs. In the guide on green PPP procurement, it was important to also address the social and economic aspects as well so as to have more balance between the three main SDG pillars.

56. The representative of Tajikistan informed the Working Party that almost ten years have passed since the UNECE national PPP readiness assessment report of Tajikistan was published. During this period, the situation in the PPP market has changed and while Tajikistan made visible progress in this field, the representative proposed that ECE conducts another study on the PPP enabling environment in order to measure the country's progress, identify bottlenecks and make recommendations for further development of PPPs. He further proposed to include capacity building on the use of the UNECE PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs in Tajikistan in the programme of work of the Working Party for 2023.

57. The representative of Ukraine requested the secretariat to prepare a study on how the UNECE PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs could apply to the Ukrainian context and to translate it in Ukrainian. He added that Ukraine was taking the implementation of this tool very seriously. More concretely, the UNECE PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs was referenced in Article 3 of the draft new law currently before the Ukrainian Parliament as a unique tool that shall be used in Ukraine's sustainable recovery and shall be instrumental in the implementation of SDG-compliant PPPs. He concluded by thanking the secretariat for its ongoing practical PPP support in these difficult times, including in implementing the methodology in post-war reconstruction projects.

58. The representative of the German development agency, GIZ, presented the Build4skills project funded by the BMZ, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by GIZ. The objective of the Build4skills project is to explore how infrastructure projects, including PPPs, and skills development can be combined taking inspiration from dual education system in Germany. The project is about improving livelihoods, decent work, productivity on construction sites, and aligning infrastructure projects with the SDGs. GIZ is very interested in cooperating with the ECE to collect case studies from around the world that highlight the link between infrastructure projects and skills development. GIZ can fund a study while the ECE can bring in the expertise to develop a joint knowledge product in 2023.

59. The representative of Germany spoke about the importance of PPP capacity building and knowledge transfer from the private partner to the public administration, and requested the Working Party to positively consider the cooperation initiative presented by the representative of GIZ.

60. The Chairperson informed the Working Party that all requests for capacity building activities and offers for cooperation have been duly noted and will be considered by the secretariat on the basis of available resources.

#### **Decision 2022 – 5.1**

The Working Party took note of the:

1. Renewal of the mandate of the Working Party by the ECE Executive Committee for five years until 2027; and

2. Committee's Intersessional Implementation Plan for 2022-2023 (ECE/CECI/2022/2, Annex II), in particular the new focus of the PPP work for the coming years (paragraph 15)<sup>5</sup> and the list of the PPP activities planned for the rest of 2022 and for 2023.

**Decision 2022 – 5.2**

In order to give effect to the new focus of the PPP work agreed by the Committee (ECE/CECI/2022/2, Annex II, paragraph 15), the Working Party:

1. Took note with appreciation of document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/INF.2 prepared by the Bureau;
2. Approved the list of topics for PPP standards and guides with policy options/recommendations as contained in Annex I of the document;
3. Approved the detailed proposals for work on new PPP products to start in 2023 as contained in Annex II of the document;
4. Requested the secretariat, working closely with the Bureau, to:
  - (i). Mobilise the necessary expertise and resources to implement 2 and 3 above; and
  - (ii). Organise sessions to advance the work on the new topics at the next edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum in 2023; and
5. Requested the secretariat to include Annexes I and II of ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2022/INF.2 as an Annex to the report of the session.

61. The Chairperson informed the Working Party that Greece submitted a proposal to the secretariat to host the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum in Athens, Greece, on 3-5 May 2023.

62. The representatives of the Municipality of Athens informed the Working Party on their proposal to host the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the UNECE International PPP Forum jointly with ECE, and he looked forward to welcoming PPP experts from around the world in Athens from 3 to 5 May 2023.

63. The representative of Greece informed the Working Party that her delegation fully endorsed the initiative by Mayor of Athens, Mr. Kostas Bakoyannis, to host and co-organise together with ECE the 7<sup>th</sup> UNECE International PPP Forum in Athens, Greece, from 3 to 5 May 2023. She added that Greece was ready to work closely with the secretariat to ensure a successful edition of the Forum following on the footsteps of Barcelona in 2022.

64. The Chairperson thanked the representatives of Greece for their kind offer and informed the Working Party that the Bureau fully endorsed this proposal and recommended to the Working Party to accept it.

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<sup>5</sup> “The focus of the work on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) is supporting ECE member States' use of PPPs to address a range of issues in the context of relevant cross-cutting Commission themes [transition to circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, and digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region], sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction, corruption in PPPs, pandemic preparedness and response, food security, women's empowerment, and accelerating achievement of the SDGs in the ECE region. The ECE Guiding Principles on PPPs for the SDGs provide the normative basis for the work on PPPs.”

**Decision 2022 – 5.3**

The Working Party:

1. Took note with appreciation of the offer by the Mayor of Athens supported by the Government of Greece to host and co-organise the 7<sup>th</sup> UNECE International PPP Forum in Athens on 3-5 May 2023 jointly with ECE; and
2. Requested the secretariat to co-organise the Forum based on existing resources in consultation with the co-organisers and the Bureau.

65. The secretariat informed the Working Party that in September 2022, it launched the ECE PPP and infrastructure award 2023, and issued a call for projects that contribute to the circular economy and the SDGs for showcasing at the 7<sup>th</sup> UNECE International PPP Forum on 3-5 May 2023. The secretariat encouraged member States and other stakeholders to submit their projects for inclusion in the competition.

66. The representative of the EU Commission presented a document on the use of PPPs in the framework of preventing and fighting money laundering and terrorism financing. The representative explained that the Commission's understanding of PPPs was as a tool to exchange strategic and operational information between financial intelligence units, law enforcement authorities and the private sector.

67. The representative of Germany thanked the EU Commission for presenting this document and noted that calling this initiative as a "PPP" was a bit misleading as it did not fit within the PPP definition as a delivery tool involving private financing. He remarked that the Commission's approach could be labelled as an 'initiative' or a 'special purpose vehicle' instead to avoid creating confusion.

**VIII. Other business (Agenda item 6)****Dates of the next session****Decision 2022 – 6**

The Working Party agreed that its next meeting be held in the fourth quarter of 2023. The secretariat will fix the dates in consultation with the Bureau and the Conference Management Unit at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

**IX. Adoption of the report (Agenda item 7)****Decision 2022 – 7**

The Working Party requested the secretariat, in line with the special procedures established by the ECE Executive Committee for the COVID-19 pandemic period (paragraph 3 of document ECE/EX/2020/L.12), to circulate the decisions agreed at the session through all Geneva Permanent Representations, the Bureau and Working Party delegations for approval by silence procedure by the participating delegations of the session.

The Working Party further requested the secretariat to prepare a draft report of the session and distribute it to all Geneva Permanent Representations and the Bureau for subsequent approval by silence procedure in accordance with Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure (ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2021/5/Rev.1) and paragraph 21 of Appendix III of document E/ECE/1464 (Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies). Once the draft report is adopted, it requests its publication in English, French and Russian.

## Annex I

### **Chairperson’s summary of the policy discussion “Accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Economic Commission for Europe’s region through Public-Private Partnerships” under Agenda item 3**

#### **Introduction**

1. In the current global context of economic, environmental and social instability, where the systemic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remain overwhelmingly present and while the war in Ukraine is raging, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been thrown further off course. As we approach the halfway mark of the 2030 Agenda, at the current pace of progress, the ECE region will only achieve 25 per cent of the SDG targets by 2030. Urgent action is needed to accelerate sustainable development.

2. The policy discussion considered how infrastructure projects aligned with the ECE PPPs for the SDGs approach can play an important role towards accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda by promoting sustainability, circularity and economic recovery and reconstruction within the ECE region and globally.

#### **High-level debate: The role of PPPs for the SDGs to accelerate sustainable development**

3. Panellists discussed the importance of the role of PPPs for the SDGs in enabling green, sustainable infrastructure projects. In the context of economic recovery and reconstruction, Ukraine in particular, panellists argued that multidimensional risks require systemic solutions that necessarily involve private sector engagement through sustainable PPPs.

4. Panellists touched upon ways and means of inspiring or incentivising public authorities to apply sustainable finance structures in their PPP projects in support of the SDGs. Attracting sustainable finance, a process that takes due account of ESG considerations, was considered key to sustainable PPP projects. Furthermore, the panellists discussed how IFIs are at the forefront of promoting sustainable finance globally, through financial instruments such as green bonds and loans. To better recover from economic shocks due to natural and man-made disasters, panellists stressed upon the importance of the right expertise to structure PPP programmes with embedded sustainability practices. Blended finance and impact finance were also considered as important mechanisms to secure seed funding.

5. The panellists highlighted four important steps to embed circular economy transition into PPPs and achieve sustainable and green PPPs in a timely manner by 2030: ambition, technology, private capital and pace. With regards to technology, an example given was on the efficacy of data from digital twin technology, useful to provide sustainable solutions in urban settings. As to pace of delivery, the panellists argued that PPPs take usually way too long and signalled the importance of the ECE PPP Evaluation Methodology as a practical tool to implement sustainable PPP projects as fast as possible, while ensuring their sustainability.

6. The panellists emphasised the need to take a whole lifecycle approach to PPP and infrastructure projects, accentuating its critical role to ensure circularity and promote green public procurement practices in PPPs. This included the importance of design approaches that enable disassembly without loss of value later on in the project lifecycle, as well as the development of digital-based solutions that optimise construction techniques and bring

traceability to materials, creating a shift to a component-based industry that is grounded on circular models.

### **Panel 1: Sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction: How can PPPs for the SDGs accelerate the delivery of sustainable infrastructure projects?**

7. Panellists discussed opportunities and challenges in streamlining and accelerating the delivery of PPPs for the SDGs in the reconstruction phase in post-pandemic, post-disaster and post-war contexts. The panel highlighted possible solutions to seek a fast-track PPP process while implementing the ECE PPPs for the SDGs approach and meeting the PPP for the SDGs outcomes.

8. Lessons learned from the reconstruction phases following hurricane Fiona in Canada, in 2022, hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, US, in 2005, hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, Dominica and Sainte Croix in the Caribbean, in 2017, the tsunami in Fukushima, Japan, in 2011, and the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, were highlighted and proposed as best practice to follow in other parts of the world, most notably in Ukraine. Specific innovative PPP solutions employed in the aftermath of these events, such as solar power microgrid, temporary and permanent shelters, and blue infrastructure to rebuild reefs and beaches were highlighted as key examples. The panellists emphasised the importance of the PPPs for the SDGs outcomes of access and equity and stakeholder engagement in the reconstruction phase, to involve the local populations and ensure sustainable recovery from these disasters.

9. The panel also addressed the question of how to accelerate the delivery of reconstruction projects in a post-war reconstruction scenario, while ensuring sustainability and due diligence to attract private investors. Focusing on the current war in Ukraine, where a vast number of infrastructure projects have been destroyed, the panel stressed the importance for Ukraine to attract sustainable investment in PPPs in a post-war context. Panellists commended the usefulness of the ECE PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs to build back better and ensure the fast delivery of reconstruction projects in Ukraine.

10. Referring to inward investment in Ukraine, one panellist noted that as the war still ravaged the country, both public and private investments were inexistant. Yet it is estimated that more than USD 350 billion will be needed to rebuild the country's infrastructure. As the public sector will not be able to finance these recovery efforts, private sector investment will be needed, especially in sectors, such as transport, health, education, municipal services and energy. Potential sources of SDG-compliant financing mechanisms were a priority for Ukraine, and PPPs were considered to be one of the prospective tools to ensure reconstruction, as well as to leverage international private capital and ensure transparency. The panellist argued that the PPPs for the SDGs approach is in this sense of considerable importance for Ukraine, especially its focus on 'people', sustainability and blended finance structures.

11. The panellists agreed on the central role of governments in implementing the tools available to them to ensure sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction through PPP projects. Panellists concluded by agreeing that the PPPs for the SDGs approach would benefit from being adapted to recovery and reconstruction processes, and that ECE guidelines would be beneficial in this regard.

## **Panel 2: Digital transformation: How can the PPP lifecycle be improved to deliver PPP projects in support of the SDGs?**

12. Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region is the cross-cutting theme for the 70<sup>th</sup> Commission session in April 2023. The panel considered this theme in the PPP context, more specifically on how digital solutions and technologies can enhance the delivery, performance and sustainability of PPP projects in support of the SDGs.

13. The panel emphasised the potential of digital transformation in financing, stakeholder engagement, and government approval processes, arguing that more and more, PPPs are becoming part of a digital model. For instance, measuring the bankability of a PPP project is carried out through digital models, which allow investors to assess full lifecycle costs, and governments to determine if a PPP is the right delivery tool vis-à-vis other procurement options. However, it was argued, the digital process was not yet developed when it comes to pre-bankability or early stage of project development, there was scope for further digital transformation.

14. The panel also dwelled on the ideal enabling environment for countries to promote and develop digital ecosystems through PPPs. Panellists argued that data-led decision-making is key to ensure the success of PPP projects. As PPPs and infrastructure projects generate a vast array of data, there is a need to capture, harness and utilise the data to enable successful outcomes. It was argued that data has already proven to be an enabler of solutions to design and improve existing structures. Some panellists also referred to the benefits of using digital tools and platforms, such as SOURCE<sup>6</sup>, to help governments' digitalisation agendas and enable targeted communication that takes into account the needs of stakeholders and support governments in preparing project pipelines.

15. On the notion of PPPs as 'enablers' of digital transformation by creating the necessary ecosystem, a panellist argued that there is no shortage of digital processes in infrastructure projects. The panellist mentioned machine learning in artificial intelligence, data analytics, building information modelling, digital twins, drones, design configurators, smart contracts and contract review platforms as examples of the many ways in which the sector enables systemic transformational changes for faster and more beneficial outcomes. The panellist noted that the main challenge is not the existence or availability of these digital processes, but rather their adoption by public authorities, that is, why and when would these processes be considered by governments in PPP projects. In this regard, the panel agreed that the role of governments is pivotal to enable digital ecosystems.

16. The panel dwelled up the replication of PPP projects through digital transformation. Healthcare and diagnostics were a case in point, and one panellist gave the example of the development of telemedicine through PPPs in Italy. The panellist argued that digital transformation in this sector resulted in significant improvements, including flexibility, reliability and robustness in critical public service provision, in particular in rural, remote and socially disadvantaged areas.

17. The panellists agreed that further ECE guidance to governments and other stakeholders is needed to ensure that a digital ecosystem can be further developed.

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<sup>6</sup> SOURCE is multilateral project preparation platform led and funded by the Multilateral Development Banks and is coordinated by the Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation, a not-for-profit Swiss foundation based in Geneva.

## Annex II

### List of topics<sup>7</sup> for PPP standards and practical guides <sup>\*8</sup>

The following list of topics for new policy documents was approved by the Working Party on its sixth session.

No.	<i>Standards/Guides with policy recommendations/options</i>
1	Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement in PPPs for the SDGs
2	Improving the delivery of PPPs through digital transformation throughout the PPP project lifecycle in support of the SDGs *
3	Achieving digital transformation in countries through PPPs for the SDGs
4	PPPs in digital infrastructure: diagnostics in healthcare (telemedicine) and other digital public services *
5	Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through PPPs for the SDGs
6	Green and sustainable PPP procurement for the SDGs *
7	Environmental sustainability and resilience in PPPs for the SDGs
8	The state of PPP and infrastructure finance halfway to 2030 *
9	Blended finance structures used in PPP and infrastructure projects in support of the SDGs
10	Fiscal sustainability in PPPs for the SDGs
11	Simplifying and accelerating the delivery of PPP projects for the SDGs for sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction: pros and cons *
12	Increasing food security through PPPs for the SDGs involving the water, energy and agriculture nexus

<sup>7</sup> The list of topics for PPP standards and practical guides updates and replaces that in Annex I of document ECE/CECI/WP/PPP/2017/2.

<sup>8</sup> An Asterix (\*) next to the topic denotes work to start in 2023.

## Annex III

[English only]

The Annex contains detailed proposals on five practical guides approved and prioritised by the Working Party for work to start in 2023.

### **1. Practical Guide on Improving the delivery of PPPs through digital transformation throughout the project lifecycle in support of the SDGs**

#### *Title*

Improving the delivery of PPP and infrastructure through digital transformation throughout the project lifecycle in support of the SDGs.

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of the proposal is to develop a guide for the public sector in the ECE region to improve and streamline the PPP project lifecycle in its different phases with digital technologies and solutions in support of the SDGs.

#### *Scope*

PPPs can be a tool to accelerate and attract investment in infrastructure that support the implementation of the SDGs. However, PPPs are complex and time consuming and new digital technologies and solutions can help streamline the PPP project cycles, especially the identification and preparation stages. The digital transformation of the PPP delivery process can improve the speed and integrity of PPP projects, provide enhanced insight into project components, and increase the likelihood that a PPP project will deliver infrastructure and public services with positive social and economic impact.

The scope of the intended guide is to set out guidelines and recommendations for the public sector to use digital technologies and solutions to improve the PPP project delivery, performance and sustainability. It will draw on best practices to use digital solutions and tools – including data, information technology and other digital approaches – at each stage of the PPP process with a particular focus on the initial stages of the PPP project life cycle, especially the identification and preparation stages. The guide will also cover the other stages such as the implementation stage where digital transformation can play a crucial role to ensure governments have the right information to successfully manage PPP projects.

#### *Added value by ECE*

Organisations working on the digital transformation/InfraTech tend to focus on the post-procurement phases of projects with a focus on industry digital solutions to improve infrastructure delivery (e.g. digital twins of buildings etc).

The ECE guide would instead focus on a crucial phase of the PPP development – the initial project phase, pre-procurement. Two areas are of particular interest:

1. Stakeholder engagement process (e.g. how digital technologies and solutions could make consultations more broad, democratic, accountable, open and transparent); and
2. Government approval process (e.g. how digital technologies and solutions could facilitate the interaction between the various government entities, including standard template documents for use across the public sector to expedite the PPP appraisal process, and make it more transparent and efficient).

***Drafting and/or peer review team***

Membership is open to experts with broad knowledge in the area of digital transformation and PPPs and ideally experience in low and middle-income countries.

***Timeline***

Work on the guide should commence by the secretariat in 2023 in coordination with the Bureau and should be completed and submitted to the Working Party for its consideration at its 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> session and in time for the 71<sup>st</sup> Commission session in 2025.

## **2. Practical Guide on PPPs in digital infrastructure: diagnostics in healthcare (telemedicine) and other digital public services**

***Title***

PPPs in digital infrastructure: diagnostics in healthcare (telemedicine) and other public services.

***Purpose***

The purpose of the proposal is to develop a guide for the public sector in the ECE region to highlight the PPP and infrastructure projects that exist as a result of digital transformation.

***Scope***

There are a number of sectors/sub-sectors, for example diagnostics via telemedicine within the health sector, that only exist as a result of the advances of information and communication technology (ICT), which enable people and organisations to interact in the digital world.

The scope of the guide is to:

- (i). Explore the role of PPPs in those sectors/sub-sectors that have benefited from the advances in ICT;
- (ii). List selected case studies from these sectors/sub-sectors; and
- (iii). Provide practical policy recommendations to governments wishing to use the PPP model in these sectors/sub-sectors.

***Added value by ECE***

Case studies from the ECE region, including very recent ones launched at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, will be showcased in the guide to inspire other governments in the ECE region to initiate these projects both in rural and urban areas (e.g., up to 2019, digital diagnostic services were mostly offered in rural areas, but the COVID-19 pandemic revolutionised digital diagnostics, which became a reality in cities across the ECE region). The guide will be the first to explore this new phenomenon and the link with PPPs for the SDGs.

***Drafting and/or peer review team***

Membership is open to experts with broad knowledge in the area of digital transformation and PPPs and ideally experience in low and middle-income countries.

**Timeline**

Work on the guide should commence by the secretariat in 2023 in coordination with the Bureau and should be completed and submitted to the Working Party for its consideration at its 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> session and in time for the 71<sup>st</sup> Commission session in 2025.

**3. Practical Guide on Green and Sustainable PPP Procurement for the SDGs<sup>9</sup>****Title**

Green and Sustainable PPP Procurement for the SDGs

**Purpose**

The purpose of the guide is to:

- (i). Identify green and sustainable public procurement best international practices and adapt them to PPPs, taking into account existing UNECE policy documents including the Guiding Principles and the Evaluation Methodology; and
- (ii). Develop policy recommendations and guidance for policy makers applicable to both developed and developing countries/economies in transition.

The Guide would advocate that using integrated green public procurement policies in PPPs for the SDGs can have a transformative effect on the capacity of governments, the private sector and other PPP stakeholders, and a significant potential for accelerating achievement of the SDGs.

The Guide would address a gap in policy implementation practices and the related research in using green procurement in PPPs and advise how the five ECE PPP project outcomes and in general the Evaluation Methodology could be used to introduce green procurement in the PPPs for the SDGs.

**Scope<sup>10</sup>**

The Guide would contain a description and rationale on how PPPs for the SDGs can accelerate the achievement of the SDGs if green and sustainable procurement practices are integrated into PPP projects, and provide member States with policy guidance on how to introduce, review or integrate existing green and sustainable public procurement policies into PPP policies, and vice versa, that is, how existing PPPs for the SDGs policies and practices can assist in implementing green procurement practices and progress on SDG targets identified in national SDG plans.

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<sup>9</sup> The three pillars of sustainability will be addressed in these guidelines.

<sup>10</sup> The Guide would not aim at:

- (i). Reviewing or substituting existing ECE documents, such as the Evaluation Methodology or the guiding principles on PPPs for the SDGs, but rather build and expand upon them and, where necessary, make suggestions on future work (such as improvements for certain indicators in the Evaluation Methodology);
- (ii). Providing any country-specific recommendations, recommendations on legislative or contractual provisions, or recommendations on changing the national legislation in specific member States; and
- (iii). Promoting the mandatory application or implementation of industry or regional technical standards or industry specific guides related to green procurement, although such standards and technical guides might be used in the Guide for reference purposes.

The Guide would aim to wide applicability and would focus on specific challenges for both developed and developing countries/countries in transition in the ECE region during the implementation of green procurement and PPPs for SDGs policies.

The Guide would also provide policy recommendations for the alignment of national SDG plans and green/sustainable procurement policies with national PPPs/infrastructure plans and PPPs frameworks. The policy recommendations would address specific issues of implementation of green and sustainable procurement during all PPP phases/project cycle.

While the recommendations in the Guide would be based on best international policies and practices, the Guide would focus on policy recommendations using actual selected case studies.

#### *Added value by ECE*

Most organisations and literature focus on green public procurement, with little or no focus on green PPP procurement. The value added for the ECE guide would be to focus on:

- (i). The whole lifecycle approach in PPP and infrastructure; and
- (ii). Output specifications in tender documents (versus input specifications in traditional public procurement).

Both elements are equally important to inspire green practices in PPPs by encouraging the private sector to propose green solutions.

#### *Drafting team*

Membership is open to experts with broad knowledge in the area of green public procurement and ideally experience in low and middle-income countries. The drafting team will be led by Mr. Steven van Garsse.

#### *Timeline*

Work on the guide should commence in 2023 and should be completed and submitted to the Working Party for its consideration at its 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> session.

## **4. Practical Guide on the state of PPP and infrastructure finance halfway to 2030**

#### *Title*

The state of PPP and infrastructure finance halfway to 2030.

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of the proposal is to develop a guide on the state of PPP and infrastructure finance halfway through the implementation phase of the 2030 Agenda. The guide aims to offer a snapshot of PPP and infrastructure finance from selected countries, and to provide governments in ECE member States with an overview of the investment strategies adopted by investors and debt providers involved in PPP and infrastructure finance.

#### *Scope*

The guide will provide a critical overview of the:

- (i). Financing mechanisms used in PPPs and infrastructure in the context of the post-pandemic recovery and other externalities;
- (ii). Latest development in project finance; and

- (iii). Use of blended finance and impact investing as possible tools to finance PPP and infrastructure and accelerate SDG implementation.

A number of examples will be used, while policy recommendations aimed at policy makers will be provided.

#### *Added value by ECE*

The guide will offer a unique insight into the financing of PPP and infrastructure from an independent and neutral perspective outside the three main actors in a PPP project: governments, private sector, lenders (MDBs and private investors)

#### *Drafting and/or peer review team*

Membership is open to experts with broad knowledge in the area of infrastructure and PPP finance and ideally experience in low and middle-income countries.

#### *Timeline*

Work on the guide should commence by the secretariat in 2023 in coordination with the Bureau and should be completed and submitted to the Working Party for its consideration at its 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> session.

## **5. Practical Guide on the pros and cons of simplifying and accelerating the delivery of PPP projects for the SDGs for sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction**

#### *Title*

Delivering PPP projects for sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction in support of the SDGs

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of the proposal is to develop a guide for the public sector to streamline and accelerate the delivery of PPPs for the SDGs including in the reconstruction phase in post-pandemic, post-disaster and post-war context.

#### *Scope*

PPP for the SDGs can boost investment in sustainable infrastructure. As we approach the halfway mark of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the pace of delivery of sustainable infrastructure projects – green, resilient, circular and of high quality – must be accelerated to meet the SDG targets by 2030 and to support sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction.

The scope of the guide is to set out recommendations on possible ways of streamlining and accelerating the delivery of PPPs for the SDGs. The guide will have a particular focus on the reconstruction phase in post-pandemic, post-disaster and post-war contexts by exploring solutions for a fast-track PPP process while implementing the ECE Guiding Principles and the five desirable PPP for the SDGs outcomes.

Such solutions may include special procedures enhancing the capacity and efficiency of the public sector, refining policies and legislation, a review of administrative roles and improving inter-agency and public sector coordination, improving replicability of similar projects (e.g., by procuring projects in batches), and the establishment of special funds and the use of blended finance. The guide will also include an analysis of successful projects and best

practices related to resilience, food security for the economic recovery and reconstruction of countries in the ECE region, including in sustainable agriculture, health and nutrition, food supply disruptions, food waste policies, and mitigating climate change.

***Added value by ECE***

An ECE guide on this topic will offer a unique perspective with practical examples on the reconstruction of cities and regions in the ECE region (e.g., New Orleans in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina) and beyond (e.g., Fukushima in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and ensuing tsunami).

***Drafting and/or peer review team***

Membership is open to experts with broad knowledge in the area of sustainable economic recovery and reconstruction and PPP.

***Timeline***

Work on the guide should commence by the secretariat in 2023 in coordination with the Bureau and should be completed and submitted to the Working Party for its consideration at its 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> session.

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