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**Report of the meeting of the UNECE-affiliated International
PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence****Note by the secretariat***Background*

This document contains the main points and follow up action agreed at the meeting of the International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence affiliated to the UNECE held in Beijing, China, on 3-4 December 2018. The discussion focused on:

- (i). The impact of the Centres;
- (ii). Their role in the implementation of the evaluation methodology being developed by the UNECE to score projects against the People-first outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (iii). Capacity building and training; and
- (iv). Governance issues, including a draft code of conduct for the Centres (see Annex II).

An outcome document (Annex I), with a number of commitments and tasks to be undertaken in 2019, was agreed by the Centres at the end of the two-day meeting.

The Committee is requested to take note of the main points and follow up action agreed by the International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence affiliated to the UNECE and the Centres' commitments in the outcome document. The Committee is also requested to take note of the draft code of conduct for the Centres and request the Bureau and the secretariat to finalise the document and submit it to the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships for its consideration and endorsement at its third session in December 2019.

Main points and follow up action agreed at the meeting of the International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence

“Delivering ‘as One’ for Sustainable Development through People-first PPPs” (3-4 December 2018, Beijing, China)

The first meeting of the PPP Specialist Centre of Excellence (Centres) affiliated to the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence (ICoE) took place in Beijing, China on 3-4 December 2018. Representatives of the Centres in China, France, Japan, Lebanon, Portugal, Spain and the United States were present. The coordinator of the proposed Centre in Germany attended as an observer.

The discussion focused on the impact of the Centres, their role in the implementation of the evaluation methodology, capacity building and training, as well as some important governance issues. An outcome document (Annex I), with a number of commitments and tasks to be undertaken in 2019, was also agreed by the Centres. A draft code of conduct for the Centres was also discussed (Annex II). Below are the main points discussed and the corresponding agreed follow-up action:

I. Impact of the Centres

Main points:

- There is a growing expectation to see more evidence of the impact by the Centres;
- More coordination is needed among the Centres and the small hub in Geneva;
- Centres are a vehicle to promote the UNECE People-first PPP coordinating approach;
- Need to move away from bilateral exchanges between individual Centres and the hub;
- Need for regular meetings of the Centres and a rotating Chairmanship to enhance cooperation and coordination, ultimately leading to more visibility and impact;
- Explore the creation of a common platform to exchange information; and
- A marketing expert might be engaged to better package the Centres’ outputs. Suggestions on this will be welcome.

Follow up:

- Prepare a press release on the resolve of the Centres to achieve impact and results as one collective body. Such a press release can be issued and communicated by the Centres in their respective countries;
- Hold regular meetings under a rotating chairmanship beginning in January 2019;
- Prepare regular reports of the Centres;
- Centres should keep their respective Permanent Missions in Geneva informed on their work by holding frequent meetings/calls with the diplomats;
- Centres should encourage their Missions to use all opportunities to underscore the important work carried out by the Centre in their respective country;
- By the next meeting, agree on a concrete strategy on how the Centres’ activities should be more impactful.

II. Evaluation methodology to score projects

Main points:

- The Centre in China (TUPPP) presented its methodology to score PPP enabling environments in Chinese cities;
- Evaluation methodology to be developed by a UNECE multi-stakeholder Project Team, the purpose of which is to score/evaluate projects;
- A two-step approach proposed for the Centres to implement the methodology:
 - **1st step** – Centres to test the methodology by evaluating projects. This would serve to fine tune the tool;
 - **2nd step** – Centres certificate the individuals/entities who would evaluate and score the projects.

Follow up:

- Invite interested Centres to join the Project Team developing the evaluation methodology; and
- At the next meeting, continue elaborating on the Centres' role in the implementation of the evaluation methodology.

III. Capacity building and training

Main points:

- Training by the Centres could focus on specific areas (e.g. train young female entrepreneurs);
- Provide joint training and capacity building activities (e.g. resilient transport infrastructure); and
- Look into the feasibility of developing a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on People-first PPPs in various languages.

Follow up:

- The Centres in Beijing (TUPPP) and in Barcelona (IESE) take a leadership role to prepare a MOOC programme on People-first PPPs in Chinese, English and Spanish; and
- At the next meeting, a draft strategy on priority capacity building to be delivered by the Centres should be discussed and agreed.

IV. Governance issues

Main points:

- A code of conduct for the Centres is an important step to enhance the transparency and good governance of the ICoE;
- This Code could be supplemented by a more detailed users' guide;
- The use of the UN logo in official activities of the Centres was the focus of the discussion where some considered it a “deal breaker”;

- Periodic reporting by the Centres is very important to ensure transparency and show impact

Follow up:

- The secretariat will make an additional attempt with the UN Senior Legal Counsel to clarify the use of the UN logo and propose a more balanced language;
- The secretariat will circulate a revised outline to be used by the Centres in its reporting.

V. Outcome document: Beijing Statement of Intent (see Annex I)

Main points:

- A system of a rotating chairmanship among the Centres was agreed;
- The Centres will prepare case studies and will select 20 case studies per year that comply with the People-first outcomes;
- The Centres will promote People-first projects in support of the SDGs; and
- The Centres agreed to address priority areas in their training and capacity building activities in countries.

Follow up:

- Post the outcome document on the UNECE and the Centres' websites;
- Inform the Bureau and the member States about the commitments undertaken by the Centres for 2019; and
- At the next meeting, deadlines will be discussed and agreed on the programme of work/list of activities agreed by the Centres for 2019 in the outcome document and beyond.

Annex I

Beijing Statement of Intent by the International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence affiliated to the UNECE

1. *Recalling* Paragraph 48 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development which calls for the promulgation of guidelines for the use of PPPs;
2. *Stressing that* the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development involves designing and implementing a People-first approach to PPPs;
3. *Recognizing that* the People-first PPP model developed by UNECE is vital to make infrastructure and public service projects - whether at national or cross-border level - “fit for purpose” for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
4. *Mindful of* our duties to bring significant contribution to the advancement of the SDGs through People-first PPPs;
5. We, the International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence affiliated to the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence (ICoE) met in Beijing, China, on 3-4 December 2018 to discuss future directions for our work and agreed on the following lines of cooperation:
 - (i). We will continue to develop and promote together the concept of **People-first PPPs**;
 - (ii). We will support, in our respective areas of speciality, the promotion of **PPP projects that are aligned** with the UNECE Guiding Principles on People-first PPPs in support of the SDGs;
 - (iii). We will consult with our respective constituencies and networks on the **values of People-first PPPs**;
 - (iv). We will support the work of the UNECE project team developing the **UNECE evaluation methodology** and will make sure that this tool for scoring projects against the People-first criteria is widely promoted and implemented in our respective countries and regions;
 - (v). We will reach out to our networks to **prepare People-first PPP case studies** according to our respective templates. The latter would be put in a format that can be reproduced and incorporated into a database, with a view to showcase these projects and demonstrate how they meet the People-first outcomes and advance the SDGs;
 - (vi). We will select **twenty (20) PPP projects per annum** following the template mentioned above, complying with the five People-first outcomes;
 - (vii). We will address priority issues by undertaking for example **training and capacity building activities** in specific areas, targeting specific groups (e.g. young people including young female entrepreneurs, other vulnerable groups, etc.) to promote small scale, people-to-people projects that are directly beneficial to local communities;
 - (viii). We will design and **carry out other activities** that significantly contribute to promoting UNECE People-first PPP programme (cooperating more extensively on the Belt and Road Initiative, helping improve standards and international best practices, etc.);

- (ix). We agree to hold regular meetings of the Specialist Centres under a **rotating chairmanship** and will give media attention to this chairmanship in the pursuit of our objective to publicize the UNECE People-first PPP approach;
- (x). We will provide significant input to the UNECE secretariat for the **Annual Report** on our respective activities to demonstrate the impact of our work on the promotion of the People-first PPP approach and the advancement of the SDGs; and
- (xi). We pledge to adhere to the code of conduct, including equal rights for men and women in our activities.

Annex II

Draft Code of Conduct for the UNECE-affiliated International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence

I. Purpose and scope

Purpose and scope: The International PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence (hereinafter, ‘the Centres’)¹ affiliated to the UNECE by virtue of Memorandums of Understanding, Contribution Agreements, exchange of letters or other institutional arrangements (affiliation agreements) have the overarching goal of contributing to the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence (ICoE) in Geneva in promoting the UNECE people-first PPP programme for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The specific contribution of the Centres - both collectively and individually - to the ICoE is agreed upon in a work plan approved at the annual meetings of the Centres starting from 2018.

This code of conduct is applicable to the Centres, their staff, interns, contractors and collaborators, as well as to the experts and consultants engaged by the Centres, in a paid or pro-bono position, participating in any manner in the substantive work of the ICoE.

II. Guiding Principles

United Nations Charter: The United Nations Charter guides the operations of the United Nations, and the Centres and their members are expected to adhere to the overarching values enshrined in the United Nations Charter, namely:

- Respect for fundamental human rights, including equal rights for men and women;
- Social justice and human dignity; and
- Peace and security

Integrity: The Centres and their members are expected to uphold the integrity of the United Nations, in particular by clearly advancing the objectives, activities and purposes of the United Nations.

General Principles: In addition to the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Centres and their members are expected to be guided in their day-to-day activities by the principles that are included in the United Nations Global Compact and the United Nations Guiding principles on Business and Human Rights.

The United Nations Global Compact provides an overall value framework for cooperation with the business sector. The principles on the Global Compact on human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption are based on intergovernmental agreements and are specifically relevant for business.

Similarly, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights serve as the baseline reference point for expected business conduct, and as a benchmark for responsible business implementation.

¹ Including the Centre as an institution and its staff, contractors, interns and collaborators as well as the experts and consultants engaged by the Centre.

III. Professional Competence

The Centres recognise their boundaries of competence and shall refrain from expanding their scope without the prior approval of the ICoE. The Centres are expected to be forthcoming and truthful about their professional experience, including that of their members, which they are expected to select diligently, and will represent their achievements accurately and without exaggeration. Wilful failure to do so, if brought to the attention of the UNECE, will result in a written warning to the Centre; repeated wilful failure may result in the withdrawal of affiliation of the Centre with the ICoE.

Consultants and experts that the Centres intend to engage for any substantive work must justify their qualifications and experience in the particular field of expertise of the Centres in relation to people-first PPP projects with a focus in low and middle-income countries.

IV. Ethical conduct

Confidentiality and Privileged Information: The Centres and their members are expected to protect the confidentiality of all privileged information obtained from the secretariat and from client Member States. Furthermore, the Centres shall not exploit any relationship with a client Member State or any privileged information obtained for the benefit of the Centre, the Organization hosting the Centre (where applicable), or any individual connected with the Centre.

Use of the United Nations name and emblem: The Centres may not use the United Nations name and emblem in their business cards, email signatures, website or for other communication purposes. The use or reproduction of the UN name and emblem in any activity of the Centre will be conditioned upon this activity being co-organised or co-sponsored by the UNECE.

Conflict of Interest: The Centres are expected to disclose to the UNECE secretariat any situation that discloses or may appear to disclose a conflict of interest. This also applies to any of its members. The Centres and their representatives may elect to recuse themselves from participating in an activity because of a potential conflict of interest or lack of impartiality in the implementation of an activity endorsed by the ICoE.

Corruption: The Centres and their members are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional, moral and ethical conduct, to respect the local laws and not engage in any form of corrupt practices, including but not limited to, extortion, fraud, embezzlement or bribery.

Intellectual Property: The Centres and their members are expected to refrain from knowingly infringing the intellectual property rights of other parties at all times. Failure to do so may not only result in the initiation of legal proceedings against the Centre concerned at the national level, but also to withdrawal of that Centre's affiliation with the ICoE.

Sexual exploitation and abuse: sexual exploitation and sexual abuse violate universally recognized international legal norms and standards. In line with the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin dated 9 October 2003 (ST/SGB/2003/13), the United Nations shall receive a written undertaking from the Centres that they accept these standards. Failure by a Centre to take preventive measures against sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, to investigate allegations thereof, or to take corrective action when sexual exploitation or sexual abuse has occurred, shall constitute grounds for termination of that Centre's affiliation with the ICoE.

V. Continuing affiliation conditions

Operational matters: The overarching principle is that Centres have to become operational within the first six months of their establishment and remain operational throughout their lifecycle. Any delays have to be justified and discussed with the UNECE secretariat, which has full discretion to grant an extension. If a Centre is not operational within one year of its creation, or does not remain operational throughout its existence, the UNECE secretariat in consultation with the Bureau of the Working Party on PPPs will decide on its continued affiliation with the ICoE.

Sunset provision: The Centres have been established for a definite period of time (typically five years) with a sunset provision included in the affiliation agreements. The continued operations of a Centre beyond its sunset provision is exclusively at the discretion of the Bureau of the Working Party on PPPs in consultation with the UNECE secretariat. One of the key factors to be taken into account in these circumstances is the Centre's capability to remain fully operational.
