

5 things to know about UNECE's work on PPPs

1. The [UN Economic Commission for Europe](#) (UNECE) is one of the regional bodies under ECOSOC. It brings together 56 countries located in the EU, non-EU Western and Eastern Europe, South-East Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States and North America; mostly developed countries. UNECE has been working on PPPs for more than 15 years now. UNECE's **Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships** is entrusted with the work on PPPs.
2. UNECE started its policy work to develop "international PPP standards" in June 2014 (before the FfD conference). As a regional body, UNECE is "acting on behalf of the UN system and the other UN Regional Commissions, to produce international PPP standards"¹. The standards cover specific sectors and topics. One standard on health care has already passed public review². The idea is that these standards will guide governments on both the procedures and processes to adopt and implement standards in various PPP sectors and sub sectors. Two specific departments support the work of the Committee: the "**PPP Centre of Excellence**" and the "**Team of Specialists on PPPs**".
3. The PPP Centre of Excellence is the body producing international PPP standards. The Centre comprises of "project teams" developing the specific standards, "specialist centres" which help with the preparation of best practice guides, and a "Business Advisory Board" comprising of private sector representatives. The Team of Specialists on PPPs "comprises of government experts, in particular those working in national PPP units, as well as experts from the business community, relevant research and academic institutions and NGOs"³. The Team is being supervised by a Bureau which consists of 10 members representing only 10 different countries: US, Germany, Russia, Moldova, Morocco, Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey, Canada and Japan⁴.
4. The Bureau of the Team of Specialists on PPPs approves proposals and draft standards coming from the PPP Centre of Excellence. Once endorsed by the Bureau, the draft standards have to be endorsed by the Team of Specialists itself. The last session of the Team took place in June 2015 in London, with over 150 participants representing national government agencies, the private sector, academic institutions and international organisations in attendance, but where only 38 countries were represented. Most of the power lies with the Executive Board of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs. This Board ultimately has to sign off draft standards that have been endorsed by the Team of Specialists on PPPs and its Bureau. It only consists of the US, EU, Russia and Belarus⁵.
5. The UNECE process has a **clear problem of legitimacy and representation**. The points above show that a selected group of UN member states makes key decisions: only 10 countries sit in the Bureau of the Team of Specialists, few countries are represented in the sessions of the Team of Specialists, and only 4 countries/regions are represented in the Executive Board of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs. This contradicts the "inclusive, open and transparent discussion" on PPPs that UN Member States commit to in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (Paragraph 48).

¹ https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/ceci/documents/ICoE_PPP/ICoE/ICoE_Brochure_September_20130924_edit.pdf

² <https://www2.unece.org/wiki/display/pppp/P0001-ODP4-Public+review>

³ [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/ceci/documents/\\$ToR/ToR_ppp.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/ceci/documents/$ToR/ToR_ppp.pdf)

⁴ <http://www.unece.org/ceci/ppp/bureau.html>

⁵ According to UNECE, the Committee also sends the standard for peer review to all UNECE members, CSOs, non-UNECE members, other UN agencies, World Bank Group, Multilateral Development Banks, and 65 focal points all over the world. Stakeholders can also share feedback and make suggestions to improve standards after adoption during a "maintenance period".