



## Public-Private Partnerships and Sustainable Infrastructure Development in Nigeria: Evidence from Lagos State

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Publication Date: 2025/11/28

### Abstract

Infrastructure is vital to Nigeria's economic transformation; however, ongoing deficiencies in transport, housing, energy, water, and telecommunications hinder growth and fairness. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have surfaced as a strategic solution, harnessing private funding, knowledge, and creativity to enhance constrained public resources. This research rigorously evaluates the success of PPPs in delivering national infrastructure, using Lagos State as a primary example. Utilizing documentary analysis, secondary data, and theoretical frameworks like cross-sector partnership theory, resource dependence, and principal-agent theory, the study assesses governance frameworks, risk-sharing strategies, and socio-economic impacts. Results show that although PPPs in Lagos have hastened project completion and enhanced service quality in areas like transportation and urban development, difficulties remain. Limited institutional capability, inconsistent policies, and uneven access to information hinder both accountability and efficiency. Housing projects frequently encounter challenges related to affordability, whereas energy and water initiatives experience shortcomings in sustainability and inclusivity. The study emphasizes that adaptive governance, fair risk distribution, and participatory involvement are essential for aligning private interests with public good. The research finds that PPPs have the power to transform Lagos, but they need enhanced governance structures, creative funding methods, and the incorporation of climate resilience along with social inclusivity. By placing Lagos in the context of Nigeria's overall PPP environment, the research provides localized perspectives on global discussions regarding infrastructure governance in developing countries and suggests policy recommendations for attaining more sustainable and fair results.

**Keywords:** Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Infrastructure Development, Inclusive Development, Sustainability, Lagos State, Nigeria

### Introduction

Infrastructure is vital for Nigeria's economic advancement and societal health, yet persistent deficits in transportation, electricity, water, and telecommunications impede progress and worsen disparities (Jibrin, Abdulkareem & Lawan, 2018). Financial limitations, weak institutions, and inadequate project management have exposed the flaws of traditional government-led methods, prompting a shift towards Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as alternative approaches to delivery (Obasa & Oluyomi, 2024). PPPs seek to harness private investment and expertise, sharing risks and rewards with the government to improve efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and service quality. Information from Lagos State indicates that road initiatives managed by PPP were finished more rapidly and received higher levels of public

approval compared to conventional projects (Ahmadu, 2024). Similarly, studies highlight political support, risk sharing, and economic viability as crucial factors for the successful implementation of PPP infrastructure in Nigeria (Babatunde & Perera, 2017). Despite this potential, the outcomes of PPP remain inconsistent. The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission identifies common deficiencies—poor feasibility studies, inadequate legal frameworks, weak contract enforcement, and political interference (ICRC, n.d.). Empirical research likewise reveals stakeholder doubt, competing motivations, and limited governmental capacity for managing and supervising projects (Dada, Ogunlana & Anakor, 2024). Broader examinations link poor performance to inconsistent policies, corruption, and inadequate regulatory frameworks (Jibrin et al.,

2018). The limitations are evident across different industries. Partnerships for housing have encountered difficulties in delivering affordable units due to lack of adequate institutional support (Ibem, Adeboye & Alagbe, 2014). In transportation, despite some advancements, issues such as funding shortfalls, insufficient maintenance, and lack of accountability persist (Edogbanya & Adekeye, 2024). These discrepancies highlight the absence of unified frameworks to link PPP practices with developmental goals. Equally pressing is the neglect of social worth. PPPs often focus on profit rather than inclusivity, sustainability, and equitable access. Studies emphasize that accountability, transparency, and citizen-centered governance are vital for public-private partnerships to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria (Obasa & Oluyomi, 2024).

### **Objective of the Study**

The core objective of this study is to critically examine the role and effectiveness of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in national infrastructure development in Nigeria, with emphasis on performance outcomes, governance frameworks, and sustainability implications.

The specific objectives are to;

- i. evaluate the performance, governance structures, and risk-sharing mechanisms of PPPs in Nigeria's infrastructure sector.
- ii. To assess the socio-economic and technological impacts of PPP-driven infrastructure projects, and propose policy recommendations for enhancing their effectiveness and sustainability.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are germane to the study:

1. To what extent do PPPs enhance efficiency, governance quality, and risk allocation in Nigeria's infrastructure development?
2. What measurable socio-economic, technological, and sustainability outcomes are generated by PPP-driven infrastructure projects in Nigeria?

### **Scope and Limitations**

This research explores Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Lagos State from 2020 onwards, focusing on transportation, energy, water, housing, and telecommunications. Lagos is chosen as it serves as Nigeria's economic center, featuring the widest variety of PPP initiatives, and is backed by a committed policy structure. The emphasis is on formal PPPs evaluated via qualitative case studies and secondary data to understand how the government utilizes private investment for infrastructure provision.

The study is limited by insufficient reliable data, intricate contracts, and a lack of transparency, all

of which hinder performance evaluation. Dependence on case studies limits generalizability, and the rapid advancement of technology indicates that upcoming trends may not be completely addressed. Wider economic and political factors also influence results but are not the primary focus of the study. Nonetheless, Lagos presents a distinct perspective: its scale, assets, and innovative PPP policies position it as a strategic example for comprehending sub-national infrastructure management in developing situations

## **Literature Review**

### **Conceptual Foundations of PPPs in Nigeria**

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have developed as strategic methods for tackling Nigeria's infrastructure shortcomings by combining public and private resources. They are more frequently seen as cooperative governance frameworks that utilize private investment and knowledge to enhance restricted public finances (Akinkunle & Ajayi, 2015; Nwangwu, 2017).

### **Institutional and Regulatory Landscape**

The framework for PPPs in Nigeria is based on the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) Act of 2005, which offers legal support for concessions and project supervision. Even with these frameworks, inadequate regulatory enforcement and political meddling persist in compromising PPP results (Ogunlana, 2010; Odigbo, 2015). Enhancing institutional capacity and regulatory autonomy is key to boosting the effectiveness of PPPs.

### **Performance, Risk, and Infrastructure Delivery**

PPPs have shown the ability to lower project expenses, enhance service quality, and effectively shift risks. Nonetheless, issues like inadequate project implementation and unbalanced risk distribution frequently endure (Edogbanya & Adekeye, 2024; Okoye & Chukwuemeka, 2012). Tackling these problems necessitates more explicit contractual frameworks and open procurement procedures.

### **Socio-Economic Impacts and Local Relevance**

The socio-economic effects of PPP projects go further than just infrastructure provision. Research indicates that they can create jobs, promote regional integration, and alleviate poverty, yet success frequently depends on governance abilities at both state and federal levels (Akinwale, 2014; Onwuekwe, 2015). Engaging all stakeholders inclusively is crucial to guarantee fair advantages.

### **Governance, Ethics, and Public Trust**

Integrity in governance and ethical responsibility are essential for maintaining the legitimacy of PPPs in Nigeria. Studies indicate that leadership, responsibility, and ethical behavior significantly affect public sector efficiency and, consequently, the results of PPP (Mukoro & Okereka, 2023; Erude, 2024). Thus, guaranteeing transparency in procurement and oversight processes is vital for tackling public doubt and enhancing confidence in PPP agreements.

### **Technological Integration and Innovation**

Recent PPP efforts are progressively utilizing digital platforms to enhance oversight, transparency, and effectiveness. Despite inconsistent integration of ICT and data systems, digital innovations present chances to enhance accountability and operational efficiency (Ojo, 2016; Udeh, 2020). Therefore, increasing the adoption of technology is essential for updating PPP frameworks in Nigeria.

### **Overview of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are vital for addressing Nigeria's infrastructure gap by utilizing private investment, expertise, and creative solutions (Babatunde, Opawole, & Akinsiku, 2012). Through frameworks like Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) and concessions, these agreements are especially pertinent in managing Nigeria's evolving political and regulatory environment (Babatunde et al., 2012). Efficient PPPs can improve effectiveness, speed up project completion, and offer performance rewards—mitigating enduring inefficiencies found in the public sector (Babatunde et al., 2012). Nevertheless, difficulties emerge from misaligned motivations, governance flaws, and institutional deficiencies (Babatunde, Perera, Zhou, & Udejaja, 2015). Enhancing regulatory bodies like the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) and maintaining transparency are crucial for the sustainability of projects (Babatunde, Ekundayo, Udejaja, & Abubakar, 2020). Erude (2024) emphasizes that Nigeria's public enterprises suffer from systemic flaws—characterized by governance issues and inefficiency—which have hindered infrastructure development, thus highlighting the need for PPPs as a different governance and funding approach.

### **Historical Context of Infrastructure Development in Nigeria**

After gaining independence, Nigeria depended significantly on government-driven infrastructure projects. Despite aspirations, public projects faced financial restrictions, bureaucratic delays, and governance challenges, resulting in ongoing underachievement (Babatunde et al., 2015). The early 2000s brought about reforms and sector

liberalizations that formalized the adoption of PPPs, including the creation of the ICRC under the National PPP Policy (ICRC, 2022). In spite of these reforms, the execution of PPP remains hindered by structural issues, particularly in risk distribution where public partners frequently carry unequal loads, and in policy inconsistency (Babatunde et al., 2015).

Successful initiatives, however, are those that align with national development goals and address local requirements (Babatunde et al., 2012; Babatunde et al., 2020). Mukoro (2024) emphasizes that without inclusive governance and awareness of Nigeria's socio-political contexts, especially in marginalized areas like the Niger Delta, infrastructure initiatives—including PPPs—are likely to lose their legitimacy and long-term viability

### **Models and Types of PPPs**

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) utilize various contractual and operational frameworks that allocate risks, duties, and advantages between the government and private entities. In Nigeria, these frameworks have been utilized in transportation, energy, and social infrastructure initiatives to close financing deficiencies and enhance service provision (Akintoye & Beck, 2009; Nwangwu, 2018). Choosing a type of PPP is influenced by project size, industry requirements, governance structures, and socio-political circumstances. An examination of essential models—including service contracts and intricate concession and finance-oriented agreements—provides insights into their flexibility and obstacles in Nigeria's infrastructure development environment.

#### **Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT)**

The BOT model enables private entities to fund, build, and manage infrastructure before returning ownership to the government. In Nigeria, it has been extensively utilized in road concessions, electricity production, and port facilities (Onwuekwe, 2014; Kiri & Adebayo, 2021). BOT draws in private investment and technology, simultaneously lightening the immediate financial load on the government. Nonetheless, obstacles comprise inconsistent regulations, ineffective dispute resolution, and political meddling. Successful stakeholder involvement and defined legal structures are essential to maintain BOT results and guarantee value-for-money in Nigeria's infrastructure development.

#### **Design-Build-Finance-Operate (DBFO)**

DBFO combines design, construction, financing, and operations into a single contractual agreement, shifting considerable risks to private partners while promoting efficiency throughout the project's lifecycle. Nigerian implementations in transport pathways and energy initiatives demonstrate its

capacity for enhanced delivery and maintenance quality (Nwangwu, 2018; Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2017). The model encourages innovation and alleviates public funding strains, but encounters challenges related to institutional capacity shortfalls and lengthy contract discussions. Success relies on clear governance, robust regulatory oversight, and fostering local capabilities to reduce the risks of foreign control and guarantee equitable advantages.

### Concession Agreements

Concessions provide private companies the authority to manage and operate public properties for a set duration, recovering investments via user fees or charges. They have played a significant role in Nigeria’s airports, ports, and roadways (Ikejiofor, 2016; Okoye & Chiejina, 2019). Concessions improve operational efficiency and upkeep while raising worries about the affordability of tariffs and public responsibility. Incorporating performance benchmarks and impartial oversight is crucial to reconcile profitability with public interest.

### Joint Ventures and Service Contracts

Joint ventures integrate public and private equity in co-owned organizations, distributing risks and promoting knowledge exchange, though they require robust governance to avoid conflicts (Eboh, 2013). Service contracts, conversely, are temporary arrangements where private companies provide defined services under governmental oversight—beneficial in areas such as water provision and waste disposal. Although simpler, their effect is confined to operational enhancements without long-term financing leverage. Generally, PPP models in Nigeria range from simple service agreements to capital-heavy BOT, DBFO, and concession arrangements. Their achievements are influenced not just by funding and risk-sharing methods but also by the quality of governance, involvement of stakeholders, and the capacity of institutions (Nwangwu, 2018; Onwuekwe, 2014). For Nigeria, customizing models to align with local socio-political and economic conditions is crucial for optimizing infrastructure results and long-term viability.

**Table 1**  
**Comparative Overview of PPP Models in Nigeria**

PPP Model	Core Features	Nigerian Applications	Key Challenges
BOT	Private partner finances, builds, operates, then transfers asset back to government.	Lekki-Epe Expressway; Independent Power Projects.	Regulatory uncertainty, political interference.
DBFO	Single contract covering design, construction, financing, and operation.	Road corridor projects; Independent energy plants.	Capacity gaps, dominance of foreign investors.
Concessions	Private operator manages public asset for fixed period, recoups via tariffs.	Port reforms (Apapa & Tin Can).	Tariff affordability, weak accountability.
Joint Ventures	Shared ownership between public and private partners.	Oil & gas sector; state infrastructure.	Governance conflicts, low transparency.
Service Contracts	Short-term private provision of defined services.	Water supply contracts; Waste management.	Limited scope, no financing leverage.

*Note.* Table developed by the author based on literature review (see Akintoye & Beck, 2009; Nwangwu, 2018; Onwuekwe, 2014; Ikejiofor, 2016).

### Challenges and Opportunities of PPPs in Nigeria

Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Nigeria are extensively advocated as a remedy for persistent infrastructure shortfalls. However, considerable governance shortcomings—like disjointed institutional frameworks, unclear regulatory processes, and fragile accountability systems—persist in eroding investor trust and the enforceability of contracts. For example, Erumebor (2017) highlights that failures in the execution of PPPs usually arise from strategic misalignment,

lack of transparency, and unclear regulatory frameworks. Additionally, systemic issues in public sector ethics and organizational conduct, highlighted in research on public service performance in Delta and Rivers States, emphasize the vital importance of institutional culture in influencing PPP outcomes (Okereka & Mukoro, 2023; Nwachuku, Okereka & Mukoro, 2023).

However, PPPs offer encouraging opportunities for infrastructure advancement when governance and stakeholder involvement are enhanced. Collaboration among multiple stakeholders—uniting government bodies, private entities, and communities—can improve transparency, foster innovation, and promote shared ownership. Comparable dynamics manifest in organizational settings: Okereka, Mukoro, and associates emphasize the impact of genuine stakeholder

engagement and ethical practices in public organizations. Incorporating participatory and ethical standards into PPP frameworks can enhance project credibility and ensure infrastructure delivery aligns with wider development objectives. Achieving these benefits depends on institutional changes: strong legal systems, defined regulatory supervision, open monitoring, and ongoing dialogue among all parties involved. Using these foundations, PPPs in Nigeria have the potential to transform from challenging trials into successful, inclusive, and sustainable drivers of infrastructure-driven development.

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

The dynamics of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Nigeria can be analyzed through various theoretical perspectives. Cross-sector partnership theory emphasizes the necessity of cooperation between public and private entities to accomplish common objectives. Van Tulder et al. (2015) contend that achievement relies on the quality of governance, trust, and the management of power imbalances, while Pattberg and Widerberg (2015) emphasize the importance of accountability and inclusivity. In Nigeria, these viewpoints indicate that inadequate institutions and a lack of transparency obstruct legitimacy and alignment among stakeholders. Resource dependency and institutional theories offer structural perspectives. Resource dependency perceives partnerships as tactics to obtain limited resources like funding and knowledge (Sadovnikova & Pujari, 2017). In Nigeria, the government relies on private investment, whereas investors depend on governmental legitimacy, thus making equal risk distribution crucial. Institutional theory highlights the impact of regulations and standards in influencing results (Van Tulder et al., 2015). Ongoing policy inconsistency, corruption, and gaps in contract enforcement highlight the need for institutional reform to facilitate sustainable PPPs. Relational and typological viewpoints provide additional insight. Social capital theory highlights the importance of trust and networks in facilitating cooperation (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2015), an essential element in Nigeria, where widespread public distrust frequently hinders projects. Partnership classifications, as described by Valli et al. (2016) and Bovill and Felten (2016), indicate that participatory and co-creative frameworks are more robust than solely contractual arrangements. In Nigeria, this implies that PPPs will be most successful when institutional capacity, inclusive participation, and trust cultivation come together to provide infrastructure that aligns with development objectives.

### ***Principal-Agent Theory***

The principal-agent theory illustrates the dynamics of delegation and control in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), in which the government assigns private companies the tasks of designing, financing, and delivering infrastructure. In Nigeria, this connection is frequently hampered by information imbalances, inadequate regulatory supervision, and differing goals. Private partners might leverage their advanced knowledge to distort costs or benefits, whereas governmental bodies find it challenging to ensure accountability. Such discrepancies often result in budget excesses, inadequate service provision, or disregard for social priorities, rendering the synchronization of incentives and risk-sharing crucial for successful results (Kolk & Lenfant, 2015).

Addressing these challenges necessitates more than just formal agreements; it requires flexible governance and comprehensive oversight. Enhancing state capacity, promoting transparency, and involving communities in oversight can reduce opportunism and enhance accountability. Data from partnerships in other contexts indicates that when risks are equitably distributed and performance is closely tracked, both trust and efficiency enhance, leading to a stronger alignment between the motivations for private profit and the objectives of public welfare (Sewankambo et al., 2015). Hence, the principal-agent perspective highlights that sustainable PPPs in Nigeria rely on enhancing institutions and governance systems that protect public interests while utilizing private sector knowledge.

### **Research Methods**

This research utilizes a qualitative design grounded in secondary data to analyze Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the development of infrastructure in Nigeria. Analyzing documents related to government policies, project reports, contracts, and regulatory frameworks offers understanding of governance frameworks, risk distribution, and institutional interactions (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998; Grimsey & Lewis, 2002). Additional evidence is sourced from existing studies, global reports, and historical records to reflect long-term trends and contextual changes (Holloway & Parmigiani, 2014). This method enables a thorough evaluation of PPP effectiveness and sustainability without the constraints of limited field access. To improve reliability, the research employs triangulation, contrasting official documents with academic literature and independent assessments to confirm results (Fiore, 2001; Epstein, 2009). The analytical focus is on risk management, governance structures, and the socio-political aspects of PPPs, guided by recognized partnership theories (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011). The design is investigative and interpretive, intended to generate

subtle insights that enhance academic discourse and guide policy regarding the efficiency, obstacles, and sustainability of PPPs in Nigeria's infrastructure domain.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Overview of PPP Projects in Lagos State**

Lagos State, Nigeria's financial hub, faces persistent infrastructure deficiencies driven by swift population increase, urban development, and budget constraints. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have thus emerged as a vital approach to attract private funding for important initiatives in transportation, energy, housing, and urban development. The state is frequently referred to as Nigeria's experimental site for PPPs, featuring significant projects like the Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lekki Deep Seaport, Eko Atlantic City, the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, and the Lagos Rail Mass Transit. Research indicates that PPPs in Lagos have improved service delivery and encouraged investment, although their overall impact has been diminished by governance, financing, and institutional capacity issues (Babatunde, Opawole & Akinsiku, 2012; Anigbogu et al., 2021).

### **Sectoral Experiences**

#### ***Transport Infrastructure***

The Lekki-Epe Expressway stands as Lagos's premier PPP project. The concession model drew initial investment interest but subsequently encountered challenges due to public opposition to tolls, inadequate risk-sharing agreements, and minimal government backing, which ultimately led to the state's repurchase of the project (Nwangwu, 2019; Ojo, 2014). In spite of these limitations, PPPs have enhanced traffic movement, decreased travel durations, and generated job opportunities (Ahmadu, 2024). Likewise, the Lekki-Ikoyi Link Bridge and the BRT system illustrate how PPPs can enhance urban mobility and alleviate congestion (Adeyemi, Adenusi & Osunsanmi, 2015).

#### ***Ports and Trade Logistics***

The Lekki Deep Seaport and the nearby Free Trade Zone demonstrate the strategic application of PPPs to enhance Lagos's regional trade competitiveness. Intended to alleviate congestion at Apapa Port and draw foreign investment, these initiatives have been praised for their economic potential, yet worries persist regarding their long-term environmental and social sustainability (Edogbanya & Adekeye, 2024).

#### ***Urban Development and Housing***

Notable initiatives like Eko Atlantic City highlight Lagos's goal to establish itself as a worldwide investment hub. Nonetheless, academics warn that

these initiatives frequently exacerbate social disparity by favoring upscale residences and business areas while overlooking the requirement for affordable housing. Advocacy for more inclusive PPP housing strategies has highlighted the importance of affordability, transparency, and social equity (Ibem, 2011; Sule, Esidene & Adadu, 2024).

### **Major Constraints**

Despite being a leader in PPP adoption, Lagos still faces persistent challenges:

1. Unbalanced risk allocation and weak financial structuring, particularly evident in the Lekki-Epe Expressway (Nwangwu, 2019).
2. Minimal stakeholder engagement, with citizen participation often limited or symbolic (Ashade, 2020).
3. Transparency and governance deficits, which discourage investor confidence and weaken public trust (Anigbogu et al., 2021).
4. Socio-economic exclusion, where infrastructure largely serves higher-income groups at the expense of broader societal needs (Ibem, 2011).

### **Strategic Directions**

For PPPs in Lagos to achieve transformative impact, scholars propose several measures:

- a) Strengthening community participation to improve legitimacy and ensure projects reflect local needs (Ashade, 2020).
- b) Enhancing procurement transparency and equitable risk-sharing to avoid failures experienced in past concessions (Nwangwu, 2019).
- c) Adopting innovative financing tools such as blended finance, green bonds, and impact investments to sustain long-term infrastructure delivery (Alamu et al., 2024).
- d) Mainstreaming resilience and climate adaptation metrics, given Lagos's exposure to flooding and coastal risks.
- e) Reorienting PPP housing projects toward inclusivity, with frameworks that address the needs of middle- and low-income groups (Ibem, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

The Lagos PPP experience highlights the potential and challenges of private sector partnership in infrastructure provision. Significant advancements have been achieved in transport, maritime commerce, and urban growth; however, challenges related to governance, risk distribution, and inclusivity persist in threatening long-term sustainability. A transition to more transparent, robust, and socially inclusive PPP frameworks—based on innovative funding and climate-conscious

planning—will be crucial for Lagos to completely harness the developmental advantages of PPPs.

### **Recommendations**

After a critical analysis we recommend that the government, private sectors and relevant stakeholders should;

1. Strengthen PPP governance with transparent, inclusive, and accountable frameworks.
2. Diversify financing through green bonds, blended finance, and climate-responsive investment tools.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study provides a Lagos-specific analysis of PPPs, showing how governance, financing, and inclusivity shape outcomes. It adds context-sensitive insights to the broader PPP discourse in developing economies.

Also, it will be useful for future studies on the subject matter.

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