Africa has enjoyed more than a decade of strong economic growth. However, maintaining this momentum will require rapid infrastructure development. Furthermore, Africa must industrialize to end poverty and to generate employment for the 12 million young people who join its labor force every year. One of the key factors hampering industrialization has been the insufficient stock of productive infrastructure in power, water, and transport services. Developing these would allow firms to thrive in industries with strong comparative advantages.

Increasing and improving water, sanitation, transport and energy infrastructure could increase the continent’s annual GDP growth by 2 percentage points\(^1\), but the continent faces a significant gap in investment in infrastructure. In order to bridge this gap, an increasing number of African countries are turning to Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to tap into private capital.

PPPs are considered effective vehicles which offer a unique opportunity to drive infrastructure in a context of limited government budgets while leveraging the strengths of both public and private resources. At the same time, if not done right, concerns arise around their ability to meet the challenge of poverty alleviation and other development goals in Africa.

This thematic session will shed light on the potential of PPPs to contribute to greater development impact in Africa, as well as the barriers that impede optimal utilization of PPPs to drive infrastructure development.

The first part of the session, on **Bringing down the barriers for PPPs**, will feature a keynote, a brief evaluation presentation and a panel of experts who will share their views on what they consider enablers and obstacles for PPPs in Africa.

In the subsequent discussion, **From Lessons Learned to Action**, a panel of experts will reflect on the lessons Africa has learnt from PPP projects from across the continent and suggest strategies that could improve the quality and delivery of future PPPs.

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