

LEVERAGING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Aka Lasbry



At Wider Perspectives Limited, we are at the forefront of championing PPPs as a veritable model for regional development.

Government institutions throughout the globe including Nigeria, regional economic development remains a key priority. Beyond the reach of public funding or policy interventions, strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors have emerged as one of the most effective vehicles for driving large-scale, sustainable growth.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) leverage the resources, expertise, and efficiency of private enterprises with the regulatory powers and reach of government. Yet, the full potential of this type of partnership remains largely under-utilized.

Several successful PPP models, both locally and internationally, demonstrate how such collaborations can enhance regional development across critical economic sectors like infrastructure, education, and healthcare. A strong example is the formidable PPP-driven Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.

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Through the support of private operators, the Lagos State Government significantly improved mass transit for millions, reducing commuter times and easing chronic traffic congestion. This success has become a model for other African cities seeking sustainable urban transport solutions. Similarly, the Lekki Deep Sea Port stands out as a relevant PPP project. Through collaboration between the Federal Government, Lagos State Government, and private investors, Nigeria's first deep seaport was built at a cost of \$1.5 billion. One of the largest in West Africa, it is well placed to decongest Apapa Port, create thousands of jobs, and boost regional trade and economic activity.

In education, India's PPP model for establishing Model Schools is noteworthy. Under this initiative, private partners handled infrastructure development and management, while the government provided curriculum oversight and quality assurance. This collaboration expanded access to well-equipped secondary schools in underserved regions, helping to close critical educational gaps.

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From the above examples, PPPs can deliver essential public services more efficiently, push innovation, and drive sustainable development. However, successful partnerships require clear governance frameworks, transparent contract management, and a shared long-term vision.

As Nigeria and other developing economies work to bridge their development gaps, scaling effective public-private collaborations will be vital. Lessons from past models show it is possible, but it demands strategic vision, planning, and unwavering political will. According to the World Bank, transparency and mutual accountability remain key pillars for ensuring PPPs deliver public value, not just private gain.

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