

First meeting of UNECE's Team of Specialists on Public/private Partnerships



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The United Nations Economic Commission on Europe (UNECE) has established a Team of Specialist on the topic of PPP, following an approval decision in December by the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration. The Team of Specialist had its first meeting on 28 and 29 February in the United Nations Palais in Geneva, Switzerland. The IRF was represented in this meeting by Michel Démarre of COLAS and Caroline Visser of the IRF Geneva Programme Centre.

The meeting attracted over 140 participants from the UNECE's region and was chaired by Charlie Solomon, Deputy Director General in the Ministry of Transport of Israel. The main topics addressed in the meeting were the training needs and experiences in PPP, how governments meet their capacity building needs and the programme of work of the Team for 2008/2009.

During the meeting it was announced that a special Advisory Board of high level private sector representatives will be established. The Board will advise governments and Ministers on their PPP policies. Furthermore, a next PPP Conference will be organised in Moscow, Russia on the 6th and 7th of October 2008. The aim of the conference is to finalise training modules for capacity building. A final announcement concerned the launch of an interactive web-portal as a supporting tool for capacity building in PPP. This portal should among other things offer private sector players to display their PPP success stories and it should feature a demand-supply tool for capacity building activities. In the course of the meeting, there was a continuous call for higher private sector participation to the Team's activities, but no conclusion was reached as to how this involvement should exactly be organised.

On the second day of the meeting Caroline Visser made a short statement on behalf of IRF about the possibilities for cooperation with the Team of Specialists. Seen that the Team addresses PPP in all sectors, it was stressed that the IRF could play a vital role in the road infrastructure sector. With its global network of technical expertise, its robust consultancy services and the web-based PPP Knowledge Centre, IRF proposed to contribute to the three goals of the Team's work programme, being exchange of best practice, the set-up of training modules and project and policy support for governments considering to embark on PPP schemes.

For more information about the UNECE's Team of Specialists please contact Caroline Visser on cvisser@irfnet.org or tel. +41 22 306 02 60.