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## 9. Conclusions about the performance advantage of PPPs

**Carter B. Casady, Stefan Verweij, and Ingmar van Meerkerk**

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### INTRODUCTION

At the outset of this book, we observed that little was known about whether the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) performance advantage exists or not. In the opening chapter, we identified three reasons for this: the dominance of single case studies in the PPP literature (Hueskes et al., 2019; Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2015; Tang et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2016), the performance benchmark that PPPs are compared to is often vague and underspecified and/or it involves ex-ante expectations of performance (e.g., public sector comparators) that may be biased in favor of PPPs (Boardman & Hellowell, 2017; Boers et al., 2013; Hodge, 2010), and PPP project data are often hard to obtain (Chen et al., 2016). From there, we set out to achieve two aims: (1) to critically assess and empirically explore the existence of a PPP performance advantage, and (2) to explore explanations for why the performance advantage of PPPs may exist or not. To make a meaningful contribution to the first aim, we asked the contributors to this book to comparatively analyze *actual* project data—instead of estimations or prognoses of performance found in public-sector comparators or business cases (Petersen, 2019)—that represent *materialized* performance. We also asked them to adopt a research design that focuses on the comparison of PPPs with traditionally procured projects (i.e., non-PPPs) within a single country, within a single infrastructure sector, and within a relatively short time frame. In this way, we sought to adopt a quasi-experimental design that allowed us to assess with more confidence the effects of the PPP model on project performance (see Chapter 2).

This approach increased the comparability of PPPs with the benchmark of the traditional alternative (i.e., it improved the suitability of the counterfactual situation; see Chapter 1) because it decreased the effects of project risks, complexity, institutional frameworks, and legal systems (that may differ considerably across countries, sectors, and over time) on any performance dif-

wish to call attention to the development and application of ex-ante evaluation methods for decision-making and procurement more focused on the quality of the service delivery. At the very least, more attention must be given to the value aspects embedded in VfM assessments (cf. European PPP Expertise Centre, 2018). Then, after projects are constructed or finished, evaluation should focus on the extent to which the ex-ante quality expectations have been achieved ex-post.

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