International Journal of Social Science, Management and Economics Research
Volume 4 Issue 6 Nov-Dec 2026
ISSN: 2583-9853| www.ijssmer.com

BRIDGING INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUITY: ASSESSING KENYA'S NAIROBI EXPRESSWAY PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

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Received: 25/09/2026 Accepted: 07/10/2026 Published: 04/11/2026

DOI - https://doi.org/10.61421/IJSSMER.2026.4601

ABSTRACT

Kenya's infrastructure deficit and constrained public finances have made Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) a central instrument for delivering large-scale projects. This article assesses the implications of PPPs for infrastructure development in Kenya, using the Nairobi Expressway, a 30-year Build–Operate–Transfer concession awarded to the China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), the project is to be constructed for 3 years and 27-year operation as a case study. Anchored in Dependency Theory, the study sought to (i) assess the implications of PPPs for infrastructure development, (ii) examine the distributional impacts of the Expressway on Kenyans, and (iii) analyse the government's role in ensuring that PPPs benefit citizens. A mixed-methods design was adopted. Structured questionnaires were administered to motorists, business owners and residents selected through stratified random sampling, while semi-structured interviews were held with purposively selected officials from the Ministry of Transport, the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA), the PPP Unit and CRBC the submissions analyzed in thematic form. Of 80 questionnaires issued, 60 were completed (75% response rate). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Most respondents agreed that PPPs improve infrastructure quality (71.6%) and timely delivery (70.0%), and that the Expressway improved traffic flow (81.7%) and stimulated nearby business activity (63.3%). However, 58.3% disagreed that tolls are affordable, only 63.4% agreed that PPPs reduce the government's financial burden, and just 41.7% agreed that policies ensure benefits reach citizens. Weak transparency, limited public participation and gaps in institutional capacity emerged as the main constraints. The study concludes that PPPs are a viable model for closing Kenya's infrastructure gap, but only where they are supported by strong institutions, transparent contracting, affordability safeguards and meaningful citizen participation.

Keywords: public–private partnerships; infrastructure development; Nairobi Expressway; toll affordability; dependency theory; Kenya

1. INTRODUCTION

Governments across the developing world face a persistent gap between the infrastructure their economies require and the public resources available to finance it. Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become a prominent response. The World Bank (2017) defines a PPP as a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility and remuneration is

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linked to performance. Such contracts take several forms, including Build–Operate–Transfer (BOT), Build–Own–Operate (BOO), Design–Build–Finance–Operate (DBFO), affermage, lease and concession (Jeffery, 2010), and typically bundle financing, construction, operation and maintenance within a single firm (Engel et al., 2014). The model gained momentum from the 1970s and 1980s, when the United Kingdom and Chile privatised public enterprises guided by the free-market economic preposition, and it was later promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund alongside market-oriented reform programmes.

Kenya has embraced the model raking cognizance of the Public Private Partnerships Act, 2013 and as repealed in 2021providing for private-sector participation in the financing, construction, development, operation or maintenance of infrastructure and establishes a PPP Committee domiciled at the National Treasury (Government of Kenya, 2021). Projects pursued through, or associated with,

PPP arrangements include the Lamu Port–South Sudan–Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET), the Nairobi Western Bypass, affordable housing schemes, geothermal power development and, most recently, the Nairobi Expressway. The Expressway is a 27-kilometer elevated toll road developed by CRBC under a BOT arrangement, under which the concessionaire recovers its investment through toll revenue over the concession period before the asset reverts to the state.

Despite its visible benefits, the project has attracted sustained criticism. Concerns include the affordability of toll charges for ordinary citizens, the risk that private partners prioritise cost recovery over public interest, the possibility of hidden costs and contingent liabilities falling on public finances, the adequacy of public participation and contract transparency, environmental effects, and the security and sovereignty implications of an elevated road passing close to Parliament buildings. These concerns are amplified by a wider debate on whether PPPs, promoted by international financial institutions, genuinely serve developing-country interests or reproduce structural dependence.

Driven by persistent infrastructure deficits and constrained public finances, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have increasingly become a central instrument for delivering large-scale development projects. While PPPs have been studied extensively on a global scale, limited empirical research has closely examined the Nairobi Expressway; a flagship 27-year Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) concession awarded to the China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC). Specifically, critical questions remain underexplored regarding the project's long-term implications for public finances (including government guarantees and contingent liabilities), the socio-economic exclusion of lower-income commuters facing steep toll affordability barriers, the transparency and adequacy of public participation during project conceptualization, and strategic infrastructure security. This article addresses that gap by providing a rigorous assessment of these intersecting socio-economic and governance dynamics.

The research was guided by three objectives: (1) to assess the implications of PPPs for infrastructure development in Kenya; (2) to examine the distributional impacts of the Nairobi Expressway PPP project on the people of Kenya; and (3) to analyse the role of the Government of Kenya in ensuring that infrastructure PPPs benefit citizens. The remainder of the article reviews the literature and theoretical framework (Section 2), describes the methodology (Section 3), presents results (Section 4), discusses the findings (Section 5), and offers conclusions, recommendations and directions for further research (Sections 6 and 7).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 PPPs and infrastructure development in Kenya

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The African Union (2024) advocates greater use of PPPs to mobilise private capital, sustain high growth and raise infrastructure investment, noting that small and medium enterprises, which generate a large share of employment, depend on reliable infrastructure networks. In Kenya, the literature attributes several development gains to PPP-type arrangements. The LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (2016) reports that the corridor has cut travel durations on parts of its route from three days to ten hours, lowered logistics costs and stimulated new economic activity in previously marginalised regions. Kiragu (2021) describes the Nairobi Western Bypass as a component of the city's ring-road plan that diverts traffic from the congested core and has catalysed real-estate development, although he also documents residents' concerns about its cost. Njeri (2024) highlights affordable-housing partnerships that stimulate the construction sector and bundle social amenities with housing, while Carlo (2023) credits Build–Own–Operate arrangements with technology transfer and rapid expansion of geothermal capacity.

For the Nairobi Expressway specifically, (Elvis,202) reported that commercial rental yields along the Nairobi Expressway corridor experienced a substantial surge, rising from 4.9% to 7.9%. This sharp appreciation reflects heightened investor confidence and underscores how high-capacity transport corridors stimulate commercial property demand and capital inflows into adjacent urban nodes. Ayumnah (2023) situates the Expressway within the Nairobi Metro 2030 vision of a world-class African metropolis and notes that its implementation yielded lessons on land acquisition and traffic management for future urban PPPs. Collectively, this literature signifies a vote of confidence in PPPs as a means of overcoming fiscal limits while importing private-sector expertise.

2.2 Distributional impacts of the Nairobi Expressway

A second strand of scholarship and commentary emphasises who benefits. Buyanzi (2024) argues that toll pricing excludes low-income commuters and that the privatisation of a public asset raises questions about equitable access, a concern with constitutional dimensions. Syllus (2023) reports that daily traffic on the Expressway rose by about 40%, which, although evidence of demand, also raises the prospect that congestion is displaced to interchanges and feeder roads rather than eliminated. Comparably there exist environmental and participatory concerns cited in Greenbelt Movement & 4 others v National Environmental Management Authority & another (Kenya Law, 2023), a tribunal appeal that challenged the adequacy of the licensing and consultation process. Security concerns have been raised in public and parliamentary debate about the road's proximity to the parliamentary precinct (Geoffrey, 2022). Together, these accounts suggest that the gains from PPP infrastructure are unevenly distributed and that procedural legitimacy matters as much as physical delivery.

2.3 The role of government

The Public Private Partnerships Act, 2021 enacted in 2021 sought to repeal the existing legal framework the Public Private partnerships Act, 2013 and serve as the primary legal instrument. It creates a PPP Committee at the National Treasury chaired by the Principal Secretary responsible for finance, with members drawn from planning, infrastructure, the Office of the Solicitor General, the Council of Governors and non-public officers, and a Director General as secretary (Government of Kenya, 2021). Complementary instruments, such as the Public Roads Toll Act (Cap.407) as revised in 2012 and subsequent amendments to accommodate modern infrastructure including public-private partnerships. Further the public financial management legislation support and fortify the tolling and fiscal control. International guidance stresses that governments remain exposed to contingent liabilities and revenue guarantees even when the private sector finances a project (Engel et al., 2014; World Bank, 2017), and that oversight structures often struggle to embed citizen-

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welfare safeguards (Farquharson et al., 2011). Whether Kenya's framework achieves this balance in practice is an empirical question this study addresses.

2.4 Research gaps

Four gaps emerge. First, there is little in-depth analysis of the economic viability of the project from the standpoint of the citizens who pay for it over the concession period. Second, the limits of corporate social responsibility as a means of compensating for ecological loss are underexamined. Third, contract secrecy limits citizens' access to information and hampers scrutiny. Fourth, scholarship on the sovereignty and security implications of PPP arrangements for strategic infrastructure remains thin. This article addresses this critical research gap by analyzing how these multi-layered factors shape the socio-economic realities of urban development in Kenya with focus on the Nairobi Expressway.

2.5 Theoretical framework: Dependency Theory

The study is anchored in Dependency Theory, developed by Prebisch (1950), Frank (1966) and Cardoso and Faletto (1979). The theory holds that the international economic system is hierarchically structured, with core economies dominating peripheral ones through unequal exchange, foreign capital penetration and political influence. Frank (1966) argued that underdevelopment is a product of, rather than a stage before, integration into the capitalist system, while Cardoso and Faletto (1979) introduced the notion of dependent development, whereby growth occurs but in ways that reinforce subordination and privilege alliances between foreign capital and local elites.

The research study is anchored on four propositions from the theory and buttress the analysis. First, asymmetric bargaining power between a developing state and a foreign investor may produce contractual terms that favour the investor, for example long revenue-collection periods. Second, foreign capital may extract profit, with the state retaining maintenance obligations and fiscal risk. Third, dependence on external financing and firms may erode policy autonomy and sovereignty. Fourth, dependent economies also generate domestic resistance, including litigation and public protest. However, Liberal institutionalist accounts would instead present PPPs as mutually beneficial exchanges, the study has in effect provided a direction on the benefit metrics; Dependency Theory provides the critical counterpoint against which the study's evidence is interpreted.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

A mixed-methods design combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to produce a comprehensive picture of the Nairobi Expressway PPP and to allow triangulation. The quantitative component used structured questionnaires to capture measurable perceptions of socio-economic and infrastructural impacts. The qualitative component used semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth insights into policy frameworks, government involvement and implementation challenges.

3.2 Target population and sampling

The target population comprised four groups directly or indirectly affected by, or involved in, the Expressway: motorists and commuters, business owners along the corridor, residents of adjacent neighbourhoods, and government and PPP officials. A total of 80 respondents were targeted, allocated as 33 motorists and commuters, 20 business owners, 16 residents and 11 officials from the Ministry of Transport, KeNHA, the PPP Unit and CRBC. Stratified random sampling was used

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to select motorists, business owners and residents so that different socio-economic groups were fairly represented, while purposive sampling identified key informants with specialized knowledge of the project.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires containing closed- and open-ended items, and through semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face or virtually. Closed items used a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Secondary data were drawn from legislation, policy documents, transport-sector reports, evaluation documents, academic articles and media reports. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group and refined for clarity, and reliability was checked using the test–retest method. Data were collected over four weeks, with trained research assistants ensuring uniform administration. Quantitative data were analyzed with descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and presented in tables; qualitative data were coded and analyzed thematically around the three study objectives.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Respondents were informed of the study's purpose and procedures, gave written or verbal consent, and were told they could withdraw at any time. No personal identifiers were recorded in research documents, data were stored securely, and a research permit was obtained from the relevant University Ethics Committee and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Because some respondents were reluctant to discuss government operations, participants were assured that information would be used strictly for academic purposes and were allowed to remain anonymous.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Response rate and respondent profile

Of the 80 questionnaires issued, 60 were completed and returned, a response rate of 75%, which was considered adequate for analysis. Table 1 summarises the respondent profile. Motorists and commuters formed the largest group, and respondents were concentrated in the economically active 21–40 age bracket, the segment most likely to use, and bear the cost of, the Expressway. Men (58.3%) outnumbered women (41.7%), although both were well represented.

Table 1. Profile of respondents (Returned Questionnaires-60)

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Respondent category	Motorists and commuters (25)	41.7
	Business owners (15)	25.0
	Residents (adjacent communities) (12)	20.0
	Government / PPP officials (8)	13.3
Gender	Male (35)	58.3
	Female (25)	41.7
Age group	21–30 years	35.0
	31–40 years	40.0
	41 years and above	25.0

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Note. Percentages as reported from the field data (n = 60 completed questionnaires).

4.2 Implications of PPPs for infrastructure development

Table 2 shows that respondents were generally positive about the technical performance of PPPs. A combined 71.6% agreed that PPPs improve infrastructure quality and 70.0% agreed that they ensure timely delivery. Agreement was lower (63.4%) that PPPs reduce the government's financial burden, and 18.3% of respondents disagreed. A transport officer captured the ambivalence: "Without PPPs, the Expressway would have delayed for years, but the repayment structures still strain public finances."

Table 2. Respondents' views on PPPs and Infrastructure development

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
PPPs improve infrastructure quality	5.0	6.7	16.7	40.0	31.6
PPPs reduce government financial burden	8.3	10/0	18.3	36.7	26.7
PPPs ensure timely project delivery	6.7	8.3	15.0	43.3	26.7

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. n = 60. Rows may not sum to exactly 100.0% because of rounding in the source data.

Respondents were also asked to identify the most pressing challenges of PPPs (Table 3). High project costs, largely borne by users through tolls and related fees, ranked first, followed by government over-dependence on private actors, limited transparency and political interference. As one respondent put it, "Deals are often signed without public knowledge, and citizens feel excluded from key decisions."

Table 3. Perceived challenges of PPPs in infrastructure development

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
High project costs	20	33.3
Risk of government over-dependence on private actors	15	25.0
Limited transparency	13	21.7
Political interference	12	20.0

Note. n = 60.

4.3 Distributional impacts of the Nairobi Expressway

Table 4 reveals a clear contrast between efficiency gains and access barriers. Some 81.7% of respondents agreed that the Expressway has improved traffic flow, and 63.3% agreed that it has boosted business activity nearby. Yet 58.3% disagreed that toll charges are affordable to all citizens, against only 26.7% who agreed. A business owner explained: "I've gained new customers, but many ordinary Kenyans avoid the road because fees are too high."

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Table 4. Perceived socio-economic impact of the Nairobi Expressway

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Improved traffic flow	3.3	5.0	10.0	50.0	31.7
Toll charges are affordable	25.0	33.3	15.0	18.3	8.4
Boosted Business Activities	5.0	11.7	20.0	41.7	21.6

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. Observations (n) = 60. Rows may not sum to exactly 100.0% because of rounding in the source data.

Perceptions of social and environmental effects were more divided (Table 5). Some 45.0% agreed that the Expressway displaced local communities while 35.0% disagreed, and 51.7% agreed that it increased noise and pollution. A resident near Mombasa Road remarked: "The road is beautiful, but our homes are noisier and dustier now."

Table 5. Community perceptions of social and environmental impacts

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
The Expressway displaced local communities	16.7	18.3	20.0	26.7	18.3
The Expressway increased noise/pollution	10.0	20.0	18.3	36.7	15.0

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. n = 60. Rows may not sum to exactly 100.0% because of rounding in the source data.

4.4 The role of the Government of Kenya

As Table 6 shows, 53.3% of respondents agreed that government provides adequate oversight of PPP projects, but only 41.7% agreed that government policies ensure PPP benefits reach citizens; 35.0% disagreed. A PPP official observed: "We can enforce compliance, but ensuring equitable access remains a challenge." Trust was low: 43.3% of respondents doubted that government negotiates fair PPP contracts and 51.6% disagreed that citizens' voices are considered. A commuter noted, "These deals happen behind closed doors; we only see the results, not the negotiations."

Table 6. Respondents' views on the role of government in PPPs

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Government provides adequate oversight	11.7	13.3	21.7	36.7	16.6
Government policies ensure PPPs benefits reach Citizens	15.0	20.0	23.3	28.3	13.4

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. n = 60. Rows may not sum to exactly 100.0% because of rounding in the source data.

Figure 1 consolidates the headline results across the three objectives and shows how agreement falls as the focus moves from operational performance to affordability and equity.

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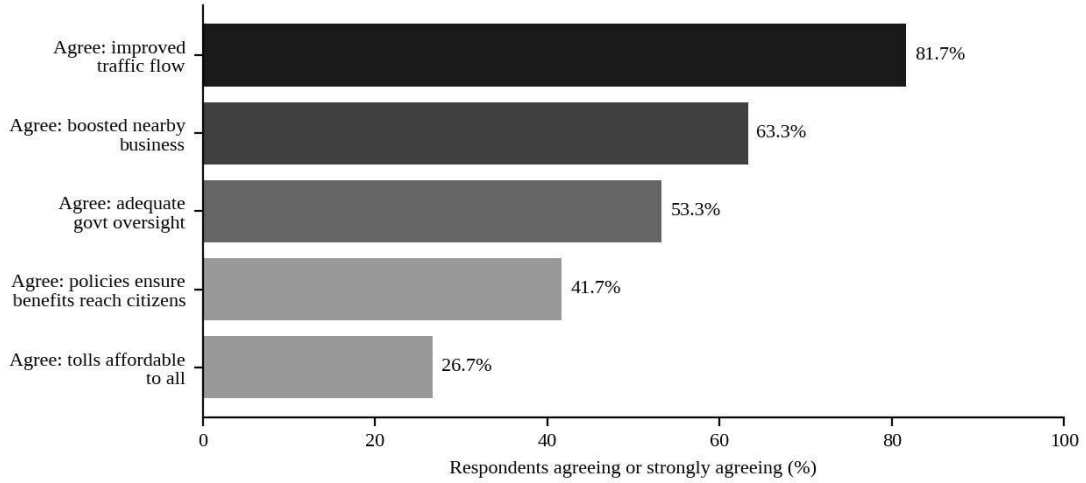


Figure 1. Share of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with key statements (n = 60)

4.5 Themes from the key informant interviews

Thematic analysis of interviews and open-ended responses of 60 government officials yielded four recurring themes. First, informants stressed that PPPs promote collaboration and risk-sharing between the public and private sectors, allowing government to direct scarce budgets to other pressing sectors. Second, they described non-disclosure of contractual frameworks and limited transparency in procurement, which made it difficult for the public, and sometimes for implementing agencies, to understand obligations and revenue arrangements. Third, informants noted limited technical capacity within public institutions, which they associated with contractual liabilities and contingent issues that would tilt the agreements in favour of concessionaires. Fourth, informants and open-ended respondents alike cited inadequate local participation, both of communities during consultation and of Kenyan firms and professionals during implementation, and persistent dissatisfaction with tolling as a barrier to equitable access.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings present a consistent picture: PPPs are credited with delivering infrastructure faster and to a higher standard, but confidence weakens when attention turns to cost, fairness and governance. The positive assessments of quality (71.6%) and timeliness (70.0%) are consistent with claims that private-sector expertise and financing can accelerate delivery (World Bank, 2017; Elvis, 2022). The lower agreement that PPPs reduce the government's financial burden (63.4%) echoes the warning that governments remain exposed to contingent liabilities and revenue guarantees (Engel et al., 2014), and it supports the interviewees' view that repayment structures still strain public finances.

On distribution, the findings indicate that the Expressway benefit those able to pay hence the pay-as-you use principal. Improved traffic flow (81.7%) and business gains (63.3%) coexist with a majority (58.3%) who find tolls unaffordable. This pattern matches critiques that user-pay models can exclude lower income citizens from infrastructure that public resources helped enable (Buyanzi, 2024), and it reflects the risk-pricing and equity trade-offs noted in the wider PPP literature (Makovšek & Moszoro, 2018). The results exhibit a divided view on displacement and the majority report that noise and pollution increased indicate that the project also generates localized costs in the form of externalities that are not captured by headline mobility indicators.

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The results on government's role point to what may be termed an inclusivity gap. Oversight is judged reasonably adequate (53.3%), yet fewer respondents (41.7%) believe policies ensure equitable benefits, consistent with Farquharson et al. (2011), who observe that governments often establish oversight structures without embedding citizen-welfare mechanisms. Low trust in contractual processes including negotiation as a form of procurement mechanism and in the consideration of citizens' voices underscores the importance of transparency and participation, themes that also surfaced in the litigation over the project's approval process (Kenya Law, 2023).

Arising from the Dependency Theory framework, the findings are suggestive rather than conclusive. The concession structure, in which a foreign contractor collects toll revenue for 27 years, and the respondents' concern about government over-dependence on private actors (25.0%) resonate with the theory's propositions on asymmetric bargaining, external dependence and sovereignty of citizens as users of infrastructure facility (Frank, 1966; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). The public backlash over tolls and the court challenges also mirror the theory's expectation of domestic resistance. At the same time, the findings point to a strong link between PPPs and infrastructure quality, speed and mobility; this shows that PPPs can deliver tangible development gains, which supports the theory's notion of dependent development: growth occurs, but its distribution and governance remain contested. The study did not directly test contract terms or capital flows, the feasibility of toll charges meeting the overall cost and profit leverage remain unexplored

Two implications follow for policy design. First, the divergence between perceived efficiency and perceived fairness suggests that value-for-money assessments should be broadened beyond cost and speed to include affordability, distributional effects and the fiscal risks retained by the state. Second, because trust in negotiation and consultation is low, transparency is not merely an administrative virtue but a condition for social acceptance; disclosure of key contract terms, toll-setting rules and performance data would allow citizens, Parliament and civil society to hold both government and concessionaires to account. These implications are relevant beyond the Expressway, since Kenya's pipeline of PPP projects in transport, energy, housing and water will face similar questions of pricing, participation and risk allocation.

Table 7 synthesizes the main findings against the three study objectives and the theoretical propositions.

Table 7. Summary of findings by study objective

S/no.	Objective	Key findings	Dependency Theory Link
1.	Implications of PPPs for infrastructure	Improved quality (71.6%) and timeliness (70.0%); weaker agreement on reduced fiscal burden (63.4%); costs, overdependence and opacity seen as main challenges	Dependent development- growth and delivery alongside long-term obligations.
2.	Distributional impacts of the Expressway	Better traffic flow (81.7%); and business gains (63.3%); tolls unaffordability to (58.3%): divided views on displacement, noise and pollution reported by (51.7%)	Uneven benefits- profits recovery prioritized over broad access by citizens. Prohibitive toll charges

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3.	Role of government	Oversight rated adequate by (53.3%); only (41.7%) agree that policies ensure citizen benefit; low trust in contractual processes & negotiation and participation	Asymmetric bargaining; limited participation; domestic resistance

Note. Percentages are shares of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed unless otherwise stated.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that PPPs have become an important and innovative infrastructure financing mechanism capable of delivering large-scale infrastructure in Kenya, and that the Nairobi Expressway demonstrates their capacity to improve mobility, shorten travel times and stimulate economic activity. However, the long-term success of the model depends on how well institutional governance, inclusivity and transparency are managed. Toll affordability, limited public participation, contract opacity and weak institutional capacity, which can deliberately result in skewed contractual processes towards amplifying the concessionaires returns, threaten the social legitimacy of PPPs. PPPs are therefore a viable route to closing Kenya's infrastructure deficit and advancing Vision 2030, provided that benefits are shared equitably. Principally, the study links its conclusions to empirical findings as highlighted herein: -

(i) **PPPs are viable financing vehicles but present dual realities-** The Nairobi Expressway demonstrates that Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) PPP arrangements successfully unlock private capital, overcome state budgetary constraints, and deliver world-class infrastructure rapidly and efficiently (71.6% quality, 70.0% timeliness). However, this technical success is accompanied by a shadow fiscal reality: the model does not eliminate state financial vulnerability, as long-term repayment structures and contingent liabilities continue to burden public finance reserves.

(ii) **The priority of capital recovery over social equity (toll affordability gap)-** While the Expressway delivers substantial macro-economic benefits by resolving corridor congestion (81.7%) and boosting commercial rental yields (63.3%), its benefits are severely skewed toward upper-middle-class motorists and commercial fleets able to pay. With 58.3% of stakeholders viewing tolls as prohibitive, the project exemplifies a commercial user-pay model where concessionaire revenue extraction takes precedence over public equity, effectively creating a two-tiered transport system where public resources support infrastructure that excludes lower-income citizens.

(iii) **Contractual process opacity and asymmetry bargaining undermines social legitimacy** – The project suffers from a profound deficit in social legitimacy driven by closed-door negotiations, non-disclosure of concession terms, and inadequate public consultation (51.6% feeling unheard). Technical capacity deficits within state agencies (KeNHA, PPP Unit) create asymmetric bargaining power that favours foreign concessionaires, leaving the state exposed to risk while alienating the public.

(iv) **Empirical validation of dependent development process-** The study provides empirical validation for Dependency Theory's 'dependent development' thesis. The Nairobi Expressway generates genuine physical and economic growth, yet it reinforces structural dependence through a 27-year revenue extraction window by foreign capital, minimal local contractor integration, and civil society resistance (court challenges and public toll pushback).

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

(i) **Institutional capacity:** the Government should strengthen the technical capacity of the PPP Unit, KeNHA and related agencies in project appraisal, contract negotiation and risk management.
(ii) **Transparency and accountability:** project documents should be publicly accessible at all stages, supported by independent oversight bodies.
(iii) **Affordability and inclusion:** flexible toll structures and targeted subsidies should be adopted so that low-income users are not excluded.
(iv) **Local content:** policies should require meaningful participation of Kenyan contractors, suppliers and professionals to promote technology transfer and domestic capacity.
(v) **Public participation:** structured, early and inclusive consultation should precede contract award, including environmental and community safeguards.
(vi) **Monitoring and evaluation:** a national framework should track PPP performance against Vision 2030 and sustainable development indicators.

Strategic recommendation implementation matrix

Recommendation Domain	Specific Action Item	Key Implementing Agency	Linked Empirical Finding
Institutional capacity	Financial modelling & negotistion capacity training for state Counsels & engineers	PPP Unit, KeNHA, National Treasury	Asymmetric Capacity & skewed terms
Contract Transparency	Proactive public disclosure of concession agreements & financial models	National Treasury, Parliament, Auditor-General	21.7% respondents identified contact secrecy & 43.3% on mistrust
Affordability & Inclusion	Off-pick discounts & toll exemptions/subsidies for high occupancy mass transit.	Ministry of transport, CRBC and NTSA	58.3% toll unaffordability barrier
Local content and technology transfer quotas	Enforce 30% local sub-contracting & mandatory engineering knowledge transfer.	Ministry of Transport, NCA, KeNHA	Lack of inclusivity in contracting leading to Marginalization of local firms/professionals
Public participation	Statutory pre-contract public consultations & localized	NEMA, KeNHA, County Govt of Nairobi	51.6% citizens unheard & 51.7% pollution

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	environmental mitigation.		
Lifecycle Monitoring & Evaluation	Implement long-term VfM audit tracking fiscal risk & Vision 2030 indicators.	National Treasury, PPP Committee, Vision 2030 Secretariat	Uncertain fiscal burden relief(18.3% Disagreeing)

7. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The study relied on a single case and a modest sample, and 25% of questionnaires were not returned, so findings are indicative rather than statistically generalizable to all Kenyan PPPs. Access to officials was constrained by the sensitivity of government operations, and perception data cannot substitute for audit of contract terms and financial flows. Future research should:

a) compare PPPs across sectors such as energy, water, housing and health;
b) examine long-term socio-economic effects on employment, income distribution and regional development;
c) study public perception and community engagement;
d) analyze gender dimensions of PPP infrastructure;
e) assess environmental sustainability and climate resilience; and
f) analyze actual contract provisions, toll revenue performance and fiscal exposure to test the dependency-theory propositions more directly.

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