



HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF  
COVID-19  
ESSENTIAL TRAVEL ONLY

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– Lori-Benita KERR, World Bank, Washington

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. March 28, 2020. COVID-19 highway sign in Toronto, March 2020. Image by EelamStyleZ. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COVID-19\\_highway\\_sign\\_in\\_Toronto,\\_March\\_2020\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COVID-19_highway_sign_in_Toronto,_March_2020_(cropped).jpg)





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## Changing trends and new priorities in the global infrastructural space

Globally, the infrastructure investment rationale is changing, along four main directions:

### 1. Infrastructure operation and resilience

Resiliency is no longer only an issue of how infrastructure could be made resilient, e.g., more climate-resilient, but about how infrastructure could make communities resilient, e.g., navigate through climate changes shocks.

### 2. Infrastructure as a system (and no longer as an addition of assets)

Connectivity & digital: role of communication through digital infrastructure is booming, a trend only accelerated by the Covid19 pandemic. It is about how the work gets done, including new ways of remote working. The sector is poised (ready for) growth. Integrated and spatial planning infrastructure as system includes nature-based solutions while

taking a long-term view on infrastructure, i.e., maintenance in terms of life cycle (this also refers to infrastructure resiliency).

### 3. Infrastructure governance

Infrastructure investment is largely a public issue. Improving infrastructure efficiency is critical, especially as public funding is becoming even more constrained across developing countries due to Covid-19. If private investment gains importance, governance issue will also become more complex, with a rising involvement of local governments.

### 4. Private investments

ESG (environmental, sustainable governance), Climate Finance, and lately, the SDGs (sustainable development goals) provide a number of common criteria in support of sustainability for capital markets. The G20 quality infrastructure investment principles, now including a broader focus on sustainability, are becoming part of the dialogue.

Q: What's the link to global government?

A: There is a growing recognition of subnational governments and cities within the infrastructural space, which means increasing the dialogue how to work with cities in recognition of urbanization. Cities are becoming a strategic theme in the infrastructure world.

Q: What's the balance between digital and physical assets?  
How fast is it changing?

A: Main conversations still focus primarily on physical infrastructures, like energy, transport, sanitation, etc. Due to the Covid-19, the conversations have flipped 180 degrees with an unprecedented focus on digital infrastructure. There is a specific focus within the World Bank on the subject of digital connectivity – that kind of sector hadn't been there before.

Q: What's the ratio between public and private investment?  
How does this relate to the city?

A: Data points are 83% from the public sector. 17% are from private investment. Climate policy initiatives and in particular climate finance have been a forerunner in connecting a number of global institutions and initiatives with cities in the past decade.

Q: The problem in the developing world right now is the fact that there are not enough physical infrastructures for digital communication. This creates an inequality in terms of access to education, information, etc. Does the World Bank have an overview of various developing countries to achieve the standard of digital infrastructure?

A: Digital data development practice group within the World Bank would have data on that. Universal access to digital broadband to everyone is becoming a global priority.