VUB Chair in Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

Activity report 2010 - 2014
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“At the start of the VUB Chair in PPP, we aim at becoming an academic point of reference in Belgium, stimulating multidisciplinary research in the field of PPP and disseminating research output over a wide network.”

E. Haezendonck, 2010
A word on the VUB Chair in PPP

Worldwide, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) has become an increasingly attractive procurement method for the delivery of public services. Much of this is because many governments consider PPPs as a win-win option for meeting their investment needs. Nonetheless, there is growing evidence that the practical implementation imposes some challenges. Multidisciplinary research is needed to capture these issues and to propose relevant frameworks that both assist in assessing the potential of PPP projects, as well as contribute to more effective PPP management.

In the last five years, the VUB Chair in PPP aimed to achieve just that and hopes to continue to do so. At the start of the VUB Chair in PPP, we envisaged becoming an academic point of reference in Belgium in relation to academic research stimulating multidisciplinary research in the field of PPP and the dissemination of the research output over a wide network. Close collaboration with existing networks and the interaction between business and academics were the key success factors in carrying out this vision.

We are very grateful to Deloitte, Grontmij and Laga for the sponsorship of the VUB Chair in PPP. We can look back on a period of positive and intensive collaboration, in which we were able to make a significant step in becoming a point of reference in research on PPPs in Belgium.

Prof. dr. Elvira Haezendonck
Chair holder of the VUB Chair in PPP (2010-2014)
“The VUB Chair in PPP offers a platform for knowledge exchange and relationship building, bringing more stakeholders together for relevant and profound PPP discussions.”

E. Haezendonck, 2012
2| Short history of the VUB Chair in PPP

Both researchers and practitioners identified a pressing need for multidisciplinary research and the creation of an excellence pool of research in the field of Public-Private Partnership (PPP). Regardless the existence of some well-known institutions such as the ‘Vlaams Kennis Centrum PPS’, we believed that there was still a need for more comprehensive academic research. Existing research tends to investigate PPP arrangements too much from a single perspective (i.e., legal, economic or technical). Out of this concern the VUB Chair in PPP was born with the clear objective of conducting and encouraging multidisciplinary research in the field of PPP.

The VUB Chair in PPP at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) started in 2010, and is sponsored by Deloitte, Grontmij and Laga. The VUB Chair in PPP is led by Prof. dr. Haezendonck and is affiliated with three VUB faculties: The Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences and Solvay Business School, the Faculty of Law and Criminology (RC) and the Faculty of Engineering (IR).

Besides conducting multidisciplinary research the VUB Chair in PPP initiates, organises and participates in conferences, lectures, workshops and other activities for and with students, academics, practitioners and the general public. The Chair’s focus is locally, nationally and internationally oriented. Activities are organized in cooperation with the sponsors (i.e., Deloitte, Grontmij and Laga), and occasionally in cooperation with ADEB-VBA, the ‘Vlaams Kennis Centrum PPS’ and other organisations.

Elvira Haezendonck was proposed as Chair holder by the VUB, for the period 2010-2014.

Prof. dr. Elvira Haezendonck (PhD in Applied Economics, University of Brussels VUB) is senior research fellow and Associate Professor at the University of Brussels (VUB) and the University of Antwerp (UA), with a specialization in (project) management and strategy. She has been involved in over 50 research projects including multiple strategy analyses for seaports, large-scale project assessments, socio-economic feasibility studies and transport and infrastructure policy. Her teaching and academic research concentrate on (project) management, competitive strategy, (port) strategy and corporate responsibility. She has published various articles and books in these domains.
In order to achieve the objective two researchers and two co-promoters have further strengthened the VUB Chair in PPP.

2 researchers sponsored by the VUB Chair in PPP

Dr. Steven De Schepper studied Applied Economics: Business Engineering at the University of Brussels (VUB). After his graduation in 2009, he became a research associate at the department of Business. In 2010, he strengthened the VUB chair in PPP, where he conducted a four-year study on the management of PPPs and where he obtained his PhD in 2014. He is also involved in a number of research projects concerning complex (mega)projects. His interest includes various topics in the fields of strategic management of complex projects.

Geoffrey Aerts obtained his Bachelor degree in Political Science at the University of Antwerp in 2008. In the following years he earned a Masters degree in Comparative and European Politics, a Masters degree in Diplomacy and International Relations and a Masters degree in Maritime and Transport Management at the Institute of Transport and Maritime Management Antwerp. Currently Geoffrey Aerts is affiliated with the VUB Chair in PPP at the faculty ES and Solvay Business School of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, where he works as a research associate.

The defense of his PhD is planned early 2016.

2 co-promoters supported the VUB Chair in PPP in view of multidisciplinarity

Since 1985 Prof. dr. Kaat Leus (Doctor of Law, 1991, VUB) is associated at the Department of State - Administrative Law at the Faculty of Law and Criminology. She teaches public law, public company law, government contracts and administrative liability. She is also a lawyer at the bar in Antwerp and Brussels, specialized in public economic law. Besides she is director of several public companies and because of this, she is involved in various PPP-projects. She published numerous articles in the domain of public economic law, where she recently, as co-author in collaboration with the "Instituut voor Bedrijfsjuristen" published “DBFM: Meid voor alle PPS-werk?”.

Prof. dr. Danny Van Hemelrijck (doctor in de ingenieurswetenschappen, 1992, VUB) is a civil engineer (VUB) and additionally engineer in informatics. “Contribution to the development of thermo elasticity for the experimental mechanics of composite materials” was the title of his doctoral thesis. He is responsible for the courses: “Mechanica van materialen, vloeistoffen en constructies, Mechanica van het continuüm, Experimentele spanningsanalyse en NDT, en Ontwerpmethode en uitvoering” at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. He is (co)author of approximately 40 A1-publications and has more than 100 publications in congress proceedings. He is also involved in the postgraduate training management of major construction projects.
As both multidisciplinary research and communication and interaction between industry and academia are the Chair’s main objectives, the researchers of the VUB Chair in PPP were supported by several advisory and steering groups (as depicted in the organizational chart above).

The **Chair Steering Group** met every three months and supported the researchers in:
1. Shaping and developing the research;
2. Organising and quality reviewing the research;
3. Developing the doctoral theses.

The **Academic Steering Team** met on a regular basis to support the researchers in:
1. Shaping and developing the research;
2. Organising and quality reviewing the research;
3. Developing the doctoral theses.

The **PPP Workgroup** met on a regular basis to support the researchers in:
1. Providing PPP expertise and experience;
2. Validating the relevance of the research in the PPP field and related projects;
3. Validating the management and practical relevance of the research topic.

The **Advisory Board** met six-monthly and validated the direction and content of the VUB Chair in PPP as centre of knowledge.
Research output of the VUB Chair in PPP

The Chair's aim was achieved through publications and doctoral research. Since the start of the VUB Chair in PPP this included presentations at international conferences as well as publishing in a variety of international journals.

The emphasis of the Chair's research is on the potential of PPP projects and, among others, the following topics were analysed:

- Critical Success Factors of PPPs;
- Stakeholder management of PPPs;
- Transaction costs in PPPs;
- A qualitative success framework for PPPs;
- Capacity building for PPPs;
- Knowledge transfers from and to project teams.

Selection of scientific publications by the Chair researchers (2010-2014)


Although stakeholder management is seen as one of the main success factors of Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs), to date, limited research has investigated actual stakeholder management in PPPs. After positioning PPP in the current stakeholder management theory, a comparative case study analysis of four PPP infrastructure projects demonstrates the relevance and importance of stakeholder inclusion in PPPs. The case study findings indicate that a PPP makes the stakeholder environment more complex to manage, due to the increasing importance of the stakeholder context and dynamics. Hence, allocating stakeholder responsibilities between the public initiator and private consortium becomes problematic as it goes hand in hand with balancing between reactive and proactive responses to stakeholder claims. In order to cope with the PPP specific stakeholder characteristics, the use of a dynamic dual stakeholder management tool is recommended as well as the identification of governance structures that allow the sharing and division of responsibilities between stakeholders.


While public entities are still increasingly interested in Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs), we recently observe increasing reluctance from private partners to engage in PPP-bidding. Up-front costs that PPP bidders make are considered too high compared to the bidding chances, and may result in fewer bidders in the future. In this paper, we empirically analyse transaction costs of PPPs in the pre-contractual stage and compare these to similar costs borne by private partners for traditional public procurement. Statistical analyses based on sample of 172 public infrastructure projects enable the estimation of the pre-contractual cost burden. Based on the study results, suggestions are made to lower these costs or to improve the cost position of the private sector, in order to safeguard the competitive setting of the PPP market.

This paper offers an analysis of actual stakeholder management conducted by port authorities. Drawing from several organisation-centric stakeholder management theories, we study the conceptualisation and the identification of stakeholders, as well as the application of stakeholder management as executed by port authorities. By analysing the opinions of middle management, we examine whether daily stakeholder management reflects stakeholder theory findings, emphasising the importance of attribute-based stakeholder conceptualisation, identification and stakeholder management strategies. We also conduct a comparative analysis, assessing the quality of the stakeholder management practice in several seaports located in the Rhine-Scheldt Delta. The results show that actual stakeholder management practices, found at several port authorities, convey little resemblance to the methods and theoretical findings presented in academic stakeholder management literature.


Worldwide, infrastructure projects increasingly use forms of public-private cooperation in the project finance and provision of large-scale infrastructure projects. We use a multi-actor analysis in order to explore, which critical success factors (CSFs) are important in public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the port context, and to what extent different stakeholders have diverging opinions on the importance of these CSFs. The results of our questionnaire, indicate that eight CSFs are of superior importance in port PPPs: the concreteness and preciseness of the concession agreement, the ability to appropriately allocate and share risk, the technical feasibility of the project, the commitment made by partners, the attractiveness of the financial package, a clear definition of responsibilities, the presence of a strong private consortium and a realistic cost/benefit assessment. The reason for their importance is their deal-breaking character, which can lead to a total failure of PPP projects during the early stages of project conception.

A number of other research papers are currently under review.
• Selection of conference proceedings (2010-2014)


Abstract of the dissertation:

Worldwide, a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) has become an increasingly attractive procurement method for the delivery of public infrastructure services. Much of this is because many governments consider PPPs as a win-win option for meeting their investing/infrastructure needs. Nonetheless, there is growing evidence that the practical implementation is not without (managerial) problems. In this regard, this dissertation seeks to propose three relevant frameworks that both assist in assessing the success potential of PPPs, as well as contribute to a more effective PPP management. First, the use of a dynamic, dual stakeholder management framework and the ex-ante inclusion of stakeholders is suggested to put an appropriate stakeholder management process in place to capture and address stakeholder concerns more effectively. The need for such a stakeholder framework is motivated by the finding that stakeholder issues do not solely emerge because of a gap between stakeholder expectations but are often the result of an imbalance of reactive and proactive stakeholder management approaches and an absence of any guidance on the responsibility and accountability issues surrounding the stakeholder management of PPP projects. Second, a toolbox is offered to aid contracting governments in estimating and controlling ex-ante the transaction specific investments that bidders make in the procurement of PPP projects. The necessity of such a tool is driven by the observation that transaction costs in the procurement phase hinder the viability of some projects in the short run, and if these transaction costs remain high, the magnitude of these costs have the potential to harm the public infrastructure market in the long run. Third, a first step is made toward a conceptual ex-ante evaluation framework that incorporates different stakeholder perspectives, as well as the cause-and-effect relationship between success factors and stakeholder objectives/criteria. If further operationalized, the framework has the advantage of providing governments a set of alternative delivery models through a tool that could aid the (contracting) governments in optimising the chosen PPP alternative and future PPP initiation and procurement processes.

**Geoffrey Aerts will defend his PhD early 2016.**
• Advisory Board Meetings

One of the main events of the VUB Chair in PPP was the six-monthly organization of Advisory Board Meetings. Eight Advisory Board Meetings have taken place as from the start of the VUB Chair in PPP in 2010. The purpose of the Advisory Board Meetings was to tackle hot topics surrounding PPPs with a large community of stakeholder experts.

Overview of the Advisory Board Meetings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Advisory Board Meeting: Roundtable on the success factors of PPP projects</td>
<td>16/12/10</td>
<td>Roundtable with the Advisory Board Members</td>
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<td>2nd Advisory Board Meeting: Workshops on the Critical Success Factors of PPPs</td>
<td>20/06/11</td>
<td>2 workshops based on working papers of Steven De Schepper.</td>
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<td>3rd Advisory Board Meeting: Connecting Europe Facility and its innovative financial instruments</td>
<td>26/01/12</td>
<td>M. Bertrand (DG Move)</td>
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<td>S. Forrester (TEN-T)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Advisory Board Meeting: PPP and railway infrastructure: lessons learned and challenges ahead</td>
<td>21/06/12</td>
<td>L. Lallemand (Infrabel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Advisory Board Meeting: The need for capacity building at the public sector</td>
<td>24/01/13</td>
<td>H. Van Der Borght (Vlaanderen)</td>
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<td>Y. Verbakel (Vlaanderen)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>K. Leus (VUB)</td>
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<td>W. Decrem (PMV)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th Advisory Board Meeting: Project finance &amp; bankability of PPP projects</td>
<td>13/06/13</td>
<td>E. Meysmans (KBC)</td>
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<td>W. Vermeir (AG Insurance)</td>
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<td>D. Van Hassel (Royal BAM)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>L. Verstraeten (KBC)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>H. Vanderborght (Vlaanderen)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>W. Van Lembergen (Laga)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th Advisory Board Meeting: value creation of PPPs: how can PPP project create value for all stakeholders?</td>
<td>06/02/14</td>
<td>B. Van Zeebroek (S&amp;R)</td>
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<td>V. Van Daele (Lijninvest)</td>
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<td>B. Verhulst (Heymans)</td>
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<td>H. Baeten (Grontmij)</td>
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<td>J. Lindenbergh (Deloitte)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th Advisory Board Meeting: The Future of PPP in the context of budgetary constraints</td>
<td>16/10/14</td>
<td>J. Bosschem (ORI)</td>
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<td>H. Van der Borght (Vlaanderen)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>J. Ceyssens (Willemen Group)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>F. Boelaert (Vlaanderen)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>S. Ouaki (DG Move)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>R. Houthaeve (Grontmij)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Advisory Board Members:

1. **Client | 1.1. Government**
   - Yvan Verbakel | Vlaamse Overheid
   - Toon Colpaert | Vlaamse Overheid
   - Cedric Bossut | Federale Overheidsdienst
   - Hedwig Van Der Borght | Vlaamse Overheid

1. **Client | 1.2. (semi-) public agencies**
   - Roger Kesteloot | De Lijn
   - Bernard Blaszcak | MIVB - STIB
   - Jan Van Rensbergen | BAM
   - Marc Smeets | Infrabel
   - Karl Cools | AG Stedelijk onderwijs Antwerpen
   - Frank Nooten | AG Stedelijk onderwijs Antwerpen
   - Mieke Francken | AG Vespa
   - Marc Noppen | VUB

2. **SPV**
   - Luc Neyrinck | Noriant
   - Bart Keymeulen | Locorail
   - Alex Vandemeulebroecke | Locobouw

3. **Contractors**
   - Jean-Charles Vereerstraeten | CFE
   - Didier Cartage | ADEB-VBA
   - Bart Verhulst | Heymans
   - Rudi Cnudde | Besix
   - Paul Lievens | Jan de Nul
   - Jo Roelants | Jan de Nul
   - Marc Selen | Strabag
   - Diane Zygas | CFE
   - Robert Seghers | Alstom
   - Johan Ceysens | Kumpen/Aswebo

4. **Investors**
   - Marcel Van Handenhoven | PMV
   - Freddy Hoorens | Quares
   - Manu Vandemulcke | DG Infa

5. **Bank & Insurance**
   - Lode Verstraelen | KBC
   - Katrijn Quaghebeur | KBC
   - Peter Vermeiren | Belfius
   - Koen Wuyts | Belfius
   - Erik Vleminckx | Belfius
   - Isabel Fritz | ING
   - Benoit Theys | AG Real Estate
   - Marc Van Begin | AG Real Estate

6. **Architects**
   - Jacques Timmerman | G30
   - P. Swinnen | Vlaamse Bouwmeester
   - Philémon Wachtelaer | BURO II & ARCHI+I

7. **Advisors | 7.1. Legal**
   - Werner Van Lembergen | Laga
   - Kathleen De hornois | Laga
   - Stefaan Van Dyck | Laga
   - Danny Stas | Laga

7. **Advisors | 7.2. Financial/Technical**
   - Olivier Vanden Eynde | Deloitte
   - Coen Ysebaert | Deloitte
   - Erik Paquay | Deloitte
   - Marc Derycke | Deloitte
   - Rob Van Den Plas | Deloitte
   - Guido Van Der Vorst | Deloitte

7. **Advisors | 7.3. Technical**
   - Peter Vanhoegaard | Grontmij
   - Jo Belen | Grontmij
   - Bernard Gilliot | ORI

8. **Research centre**
   - Kaat Leus | VUB
   - Danny Van Hemelrijck | VUB
   - Patrick Uytendaele | VUB
   - Koen Verhoest | UA
   - Steven Van Garsse | Kenniscentrum PPS
   - Yseult Marique | Essex
   - Erik De Keuleneer | ULB
   - Yves Rammer | ULB
   - Paul De Knop | VUB

9. **International experts**
   - Willem Vermeend | PPS Netwerk Nederland
   - Alex Vermeulen | Rijksebouwendienst

10. **VUB team**
    - Elvira Haezendonck | VUB
    - Geoffrey Aerts | VUB
    - Steven De Schepper | VUB
• Awareness building among practitioners

The VUB Chair in PPP initiates, organizes and participates in multiple forums for discussing and communicating research results and relevant issues on PPP, such as lectures, expert meetings, seminars and conferences aimed at different types of audiences. Recently organized seminars and discussions are “Pre-contractual costs of PPP”, “Legal issues of design and build”, “Project management skills for PPP”. Examples of forums in which the VUB Chair in PPP actively participates in are the EU Open Days, the National PPP Day and Realty (Real estate networking platform).

A selection of events co-organized by the VUB Chair in PPP for practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Target audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evening lecture: ‘Public-Private Partnerships: Challenges for better project management’</td>
<td>07/06/11</td>
<td>About 100 PPP experts. (Large representation of contractors and advisers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference: ‘Precontractuele kosten: een obstakel voor de toekomst van PPS?’</td>
<td>06/12/12</td>
<td>About 150 PPP experts. (All stakeholder groups were present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a conference: ‘Panel discussion of Grontmij’ on the National PPP day</td>
<td>04/06/13</td>
<td>About 50 PPP experts. (All stakeholder groups were present)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Guest lectures for students**

Besides organizing seminars for practitioners, the educational component of the VUB Chair in PPP also entails visibility to a large number of bachelor and master students. In different faculties, and covering various topics directly or indirectly related to the Chair’s theme, the partners of the VUB Chair in PPP offer interesting guest lectures. These lectures are embedded in VUB courses and programs and taught by experts of the Chair’s partners. As such, they share knowledge and real life cases with many students, and they have the opportunity to give visibility to their expertise and organization. The VUB Chair in PPP offers this structured and continuous student-partners platform.

**Selection of guest lectures organized by the VUB Chair in PPP for students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Subject offered by lecturer from partner</th>
<th>Student reach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Management en strategie/ Management and strategy</td>
<td>CSR - social entrepreneurship</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Life cycle costing</td>
<td>Managementaspectsen bij bouwprojecten</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Publiek ondernemingsrecht</td>
<td>ESR 95 neutraliteit en PPS</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Organisatieontwerp en -verandering</td>
<td>As One</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Risk management</td>
<td>Inleiding tot Solvency II</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Ontwerp van constructies</td>
<td>Sustainability and innovation through PPP</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Venootschapsrecht</td>
<td>Rol van de revisor en commissaris</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Masterclasses Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>CSR - Social entrepreneurship</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Bestuursrecht</td>
<td>Benchmark PPS in Vlaanderen</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Bouwkunde</td>
<td>Sustainability and innovation in PPP</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Notarieel vennootschapsrecht</td>
<td>Vermogensplanning</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Life cycle costing</td>
<td>Managementaspectsen bij bouwprojecten</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
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</table>
7 | Media Presence

In the course of the past four years, the VUB Chair in PPP appeared on numerous occasions in newspapers and magazines (e.g. Trends, De Tijd, Knack and FD Magazine) raising the visibility of the VUB Chair in PPP, also benefiting the expansion of both the academic as well as the professional network of the VUB Chair in PPP.

Selection of media presence:
• Partners leren elkaars spel en spelen beter samen, 2010, Mediaplanet;
• Nood aan een Multidisciplinair kader, 2011, Mediaplanet;
• Recreatie houdt zwembaden uit het rood, 2012, Trends;
• PPS projecten: interessant maar toch opletten, 2012, FD Magazine;
• PPS wint nog aan belang, maar enkel met de juiste motivaties, 2012, PMV Ambitiekrant;
• PPS onder druk door hoge studiekosten, 2012, Mediaplanet;
• Wist u dat PPS-projecten gepaard gaan met te hoge kosten, te lage slaagkansen en te veel tijdsverspilling?, 2013, Akademos;
• Projectfinanciering voor PPS 2.0, 2013, FD Magazine;
• Meerwaarde voor alle stakeholders moet de missie zijn bij PPS, 2013, Mediaplanet;
• Stem van Elvira Haezendonck, 2014, 100 stemmen PPS.
Contact information

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Researchers
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   Geoffrey Aerts | Geoffrey.Aerts@vub.ac.be

As from January 1st, 2015
Chair holder 2015–2018
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Co-promoter
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