

An overview of project finance and infrastructure

[Finance](#)



In the United States alone, firms financed \$19 billion of capital expenditures using project finance loans and bonds in 2009, down from \$39 billion in 2008 and \$47 billion in 2007. The economic crisis, which began as a housing crisis in the U. S. in 2007 and spread globally in 2008 and 2009, froze global capital markets, curtailed bank lending, and dramatically reduced project finance lending. For this reason, it makes sense to look back at 2007, when the credit markets were open and liquid, to understand the relative importance of project finance.

In the U. S., firms financed \$447 billion of capital expense indentures using project finance in 2007—much less than the \$1,126 billion corporate bond market, the \$944 billion MO Ortega-backed security market, the \$889.8 billion asset-backed security market, and the \$335.9 billion tax-free municipal bond market. Yet compared to financing much humanism for new or start-up companies, the \$47 billion invested in project companies was larger than the \$46 billion raised through initial public offerings (IPO) and the \$332 billion invested in new firms by venture funds. Private-sector firms have historically used project finance for high-risk projects such as mines, pipelines, and oil fields. Beginning in the early 1980s, however, private firms also began financing infrastructure projects such as toll roads, power plants, and telecoms immunization NSA systems. More recently, in the 2000s, private firms have begun to finance social infrastructure projects such as schools, hospitals, and prisons.

Studies on economic development find that infrastructure investment is associated with as much as one-for-one percentage increases in gross domestic product (GDP), though recent studies indicate that every dollar of increased infrastructure spending generates an additional 1.59 dollars of GDP. Information on some of these and other projects can be found in Benjamin C. Zesty, *Modern Project Finance: A Casebook* (New Jersey: Wiley, 2004). The infrastructure sector includes water, transportation, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications projects.

In these types of projects the users of the project or the buyers of the output or service are typically individuals rather than companies. Professor Benjamin C. Esty and Senior Researcher Aledo Assesoff of the Global Research Group prepared this note as the basis for class discussion. Copying or request permission to reproduce materials, call 1-800-5457685, write Harvard Business School Publishing, Boston, MA 02163, or go to www.hbs.edu/educators.

This publication may not be digitized, photocopied, or otherwise reproduced, posted, or transmitted, without the permission of Harvard Business School. This document is authorized for use only by Bogie Ghana in Financial Management taught by Seward, at University of Wisconsin - Madison from January 2015 to July 2015. 210-061 An Overview of Project Finance and Infrastructure Finance-? 2009 update increase of \$1.59 in GDP. Country-specific studies of development find that inadequate infrastructure severely hinders economic growth.

For example, insufficient or irregular power supply reduces GDP by 1% to 2% in India, Pakistan, Colombia, and Uganda. ³ Despite the growing demand and opportunities for private-sector involvement in building infrastructure, private firms still provide only a small fraction of the total amount invested, which is a small fraction of the total project demand. Indeed, many governments have announced multimillion-dollar stimulus packages with a heavy emphasis on infrastructure spending as a way to stimulate growth during the current global recession.