
German Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Statement on Global Gateway: Turning Vision into Investment

Ways to mobilise the private sector

In view of ongoing **geopolitical challenges**, the diversification of procurement and sales markets is becoming increasingly important for European and German companies. **Emerging and developing countries** are increasingly becoming the focus of economic cooperation. At the same time, global cutbacks in traditional state development cooperation have created a significant funding gap - a gap that cannot be bridged without the involvement of the private sector.

The EU connectivity initiative **Global Gateway** (GG) seeks to address precisely this development. It responds to existing global connectivity efforts by other economic powers and aims to align development cooperation more closely with foreign trade promotion.

According to the [EU Commission](#), Global Gateway is intended to "*boost smart, clean and secure connections in digital, energy and transport sectors, and to strengthen health, education and research systems across the world.*" In addition, stable economic framework conditions in partner countries are to be strengthened and the private sector involvement of European companies mobilised. Countries such as [Ghana](#) and [Zambia](#) explicitly call for this form of economic cooperation. To achieve this, a visible and coordinated EU presence in third countries ("**Team Europe**") is required, as well as dovetailing foreign trade promotion with development cooperation at national level ("**Team Germany**").

Prerequisites for successful private sector engagement

Since 2021, **GG** has been pursuing the goal of jointly achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals** while simultaneously representing **European interests** worldwide. A fundamental pillar is the establishment and implementation of European technology and industry standards, which should be considered as mandatory criteria in project tenders. To further mobilise the desired **private sector investment**, the financial framework conditions must be improved at both national and EU level. In concrete terms this involves:

- Better dovetailing of **development financing** and **foreign trade promotion**,
- Facilitating access through a **one-stop shop** and digital tools,
- Adapting **governance** to strategic goals,
- Strategically leveraging **Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships**,
- Increasing **the visibility** of Global Gateway and Team Europe,
- Communicating more clearly - especially in respect of SMEs

Better dovetailing of development financing with foreign trade promotion

To date, there has been no coherent strategy at EU level for linking development-cooperation-based financing of projects with foreign trade promotion objectives. This is partly since the EU has not developed a comprehensive GG strategy. In practice, the financing instruments **NDICI-Global Europe instrument** and the **European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD+)** are primarily used. According to [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/947](#), 93% of the funded projects must fall under Official Development Assistance (ODA). As a result, economic projects without explicit social or environmental benefits are not eligible for funding, applications are subject to requirements that are at times difficult to fulfil (e.g. environmental compatibility, gender equality, feasibility studies), or financial resources are channelled into economically less attractive projects for political reasons.

Concrete solutions:

- Despite the currently unclear funding situation, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) should be granted low-threshold access to the EFSD+. A direct interface to the fund for the European private sector would be a suitable option.
- The respective minimum project volumes should ideally be set lower than those of traditional development bank-financed projects (starting at EUR 500,000).
- Grants for project development can be a good approach to overcome existing hurdles such as feasibility studies, pre-qualifications, advisory services and sustainability standards (ESG compliance) as well as bid preparation through Technical Cooperation (TC), among others. Established European service providers such as German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHKs) or state implementing organisations for TC should be involved.
- To improve risk sharing, the EFSD+ could assume first loss guarantees or even partial default risks to attract private banks and investors. This would make investments in politically unstable regions more appealing. Loans and guarantees are essential, particularly in the construction and operating phases.

- Additional risk protection could be provided by a so-called country window - a thematically and geographically focussed funding framework within GG that is specifically tailored to fragile partner countries.
- A form of matchmaking would be particularly helpful for SMEs when forming consortia. Here, AHKs and Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs) could act as service providers.

The proposals listed above tie in with the existing discourse on opening further windows for financing and risk protection within the EFSD+, for example for export credit agencies or ideally also for SMEs. In this context, a further so-called test window could also be made available directly by the EU for smaller tickets, which would incur only minimal administrative costs. This would complement similarly well-functioning instruments such as Get.Invest, which are geographically and thematically limited. Support from intermediaries such as Germany's KfW/ DEG would also be conceivable. Furthermore, well-functioning projects should be transitioned into traditional large-volume financing at a later stage (upscaling). Finally, direct access to the ESDF+ would ensure direct participation of the private sector in GG, which has long been a goal in any case.

Facilitating access through a one-stop shop and digital tools

A one-stop shop/single point of contact, such as a centralised EFSD+ online portal, should be set up as a standardised platform to improve the provision of information and application options for tenders. Standardised procedures and reduced bureaucratic requirements for SMEs should be prioritised here. This includes a transparent, open application process based on common criteria. The contact point could also refer to other (national) funding opportunities and contact points for TC. A landing page with a decision tree or a quick check could be used to identify which funding instruments and financial institutions are available for the respective company.

A starting point for this could be the existing [European Commission website on business opportunities under the Global Gateway Initiative](#). It offers valuable information on participation opportunities in international EU infrastructure projects. However, the perspective of companies is currently lacking. A clearly structured guide would be helpful – especially for SMEs without prior EU experience - on how to get involved in GG. Moreover, there are too few specific successful projects or company testimonials. Practical examples that create trust and demonstrate tangible opportunities for participation are completely missing.

Furthermore, it is also unclear which projects are currently open or in preparation. The interactive project map appears superficial and incomplete (e.g. no filters for sector, financial volume, form of participation, planning status, etc.). This could be remedied by a comprehensive redesign of the site in the form of a project radar. Integrating useful tools such as [Access2Markets](#) or the [EU Funding & Tender Portal](#) could be valuable additions.

Adapting governance to strategic goals

The participation of the European private sector in GG must be structurally embedded. This applies in particular to tendering procedures. Consideration should be given to measures such as advance notifications (as already practised by other EU member states), non-price-related criteria or an EU preference principle. In any case, the basic tendering practices must change if European companies are to be given a fair opportunity to contribute to development cooperation. The **Global Gateway Board**, which has only met once so far in [December 2022](#), could help move the agenda forward.

The establishment of a **Commission Expert Group on Enhanced Coordination of External Financial Tools** is a further step towards improving GG. The structural problems could be actively addressed at a technical level. Similarly, it would be desirable to ensure that the content is presented in a more transparent way. Furthermore, the **Global Gateway Business Advisory Group** should be involved more actively and in a more structured manner in the concrete improvement of the modalities of Global Gateway, and its output should be made publicly available.

Last but not least, the respective team **national working groups**, including the responsible ministries and development banks, should also bring the private sector to the negotiating table. If a significant share of investments is expected to come from the private sector in the long term, aspects such as **economic efficiency** and **planning certainty** should receive greater attention. This expertise lies with the companies.

Strategically leveraging Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships (CTIPs)

CTIPs presented as part of the **Clean Industrial Deal** could offer the opportunity to better engage the private sector in GG - especially in terms of access to raw materials. It is crucial that CTIPs are strategically planned and implemented in a targeted manner - for example, by removing trade barriers and implementing specific global gateway projects together with European companies. On the partner side, it is important to ensure that authorisations (e.g. in the construction and environmental sectors) for the start of projects are obtained promptly. Applications for global gateway projects or strategic projects under the Critical Raw Material Act must not fail due to bureaucratic obstacles. The involvement of relevant stakeholders such as the private sector, the AHKs or the German Mining & Resources Network in the CTIP negotiations is essential. Furthermore, transparent reporting is needed to make progress measurable. To date, no systematic procedure has been installed.

Increasing the visibility of Global Gateway and Team Europe

Team Europe can only function with improved coordination among member states. Strategic and transparent **project mapping** is needed to align initiatives and analyse needs. The following key questions should be considered:

- Which projects are funded by whom?
- Where are synergies or duplicate structures?
- How can private sector interests be systematically integrated?

Export credit agencies and development banks at national and European level should improve their communication, e.g. through joint project teams, due diligence procedures or a shared digital platform. Greater transparency would provide the private sector more **planning reliability** and make investment opportunities more visible. A **project status overview** at the single point of contact proposed above would be expedient.

The EU delegations of the European External Action Service should also work more closely with the national foreign trade promotion structures of the member states, such as the AHKs. Joint workshops, for example, would be conceivable.

There are currently over 250 **flagship projects**, but they are rarely visible to the public. They therefore do little to raise the profile of GG. Quality should be prioritised over quantity: A targeted selection of strategically relevant projects, greater media visibility and transparent project criteria are crucial here.

Communicating more clearly - especially in respect to SMEs

Clear and transparent communication with and to all (including potential) GG stakeholders is particularly helpful regarding the available funding and application processes. If the involvement of the private sector is to be strengthened, easily accessible and **comprehensible information** should be provided – in the form of webinars and websites. **SMEs** in particular need a contact point that is easy to find. Commissioning established service providers for trade fair participations in the target countries, local roadshows and matchmaking events can help improve the access to information. IHKs and AHKs can play a key role in all of this - and as multipliers in general. For this to succeed, however, support is needed from the state and Europe (e.g. in capacity building). Such an approach was planned in Argentina, but the [tender](#) was withdrawn.

Best Practices Around the Globe - Voices from the AHK network

Bulgaria: Global Gateway contributes significantly to the economic development and stronger integration of the Balkans into global value chains.

Through projects such as Corridor VIII and the modernisation of the ports in Burgas and Varna, the country can expand its role as a logistics hub between Europe, the Black Sea and the Middle East. Energy projects such as the Trans-Balkan Electricity Corridor and investments in renewable energies and digital infrastructure are strengthening security of supply and innovation capacity. In addition, companies, particularly from the infrastructure and IT sectors, benefit from participating in international projects, often through public-private partnerships.

Central America: Global Gateway projects are in a promising phase

European, already established service providers such as the Chamber of Commerce Abroad, the development promotion agencies and the EU delegation are fully involved by the local government in the implementation of Global Gateway projects - from conducting feasibility studies and preparing bids to providing after-sales services.

Sri Lanka: Global Gateway offers important financial assistance with strategic support programmes for SMEs

As part of Global Gateway (under the EU initiative: Accelerating Climate Smart and Inclusive Infrastructure in South Asia), the Sri Lanka Export Excellence Initiative - a strategic support programme launched by the Export Development Board in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation and the EU - was launched on 28 January 2025. The aim is to strengthen the export capabilities of SMEs in Sri Lanka. The launch event took place in Colombo and marked the start of the ExpoScaleUp programme, which supports SMEs in Sri Lanka to export sustainably. The EU delegation in Colombo and the delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Sri Lanka (AHK Sri Lanka) was actively offered cooperation formats (workshops/trainings/publications) to reach companies that meet the desired sustainability criteria

Contact persons

Sandra Zwick

Director Europapolitik, EU-Finanzierungsinstrumente und EU-Außenwirtschaftsförderung
Europe | International Economic Policy

Zwick.sandra@dihk.de

+49 151 11314650

Katharina Wittke

Director South- and Southeast Asia, Pacific | Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA)
International Economic Relations

Wittke.katharina@dihk.de

+49 30 20308 2316

Who we are:

The 79 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHKs) are incorporated under the umbrella of the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK). Our joint aim: to obtain the best conditions for successful business.

The DIHK represents the interests of the entire commercial economy in dealings with decision makers, administrations and the public at federal and European level. Several million companies representing trade, industry and services are legal members of an IHK, ranging from kiosk owners to DAX companies. DIHK and IHKs therefore provide a platform for a whole range of corporate concerns. We group them together in an organised procedure on a statutory basis to formulate the general interest of the commercial economy and thus contribute to the formation of opinions in economic policy.

Our statements are based on economic policy positions and position papers adopted by the DIHK taking into account the comments received by the DIHK from IHKs and their member companies prior to the submission of the statement.

The DIHK also coordinates the network of 150 German Chambers of Commerce Abroad, delegations and representative offices of the German economy in 93 countries.

The DIHK is registered with the European Union's Transparency Register under registration number 22400601191-42.