

UNDERSTANDING THE EU GLOBAL GATEWAY

FAQ



OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL GATEWAY?

The Global Gateway is the European Union's strategic framework to mobilize investment in hard and soft infrastructure in digital, climate & energy, transport, health, education, and research systems. It is framed as an initiative to promote the EU's values and strategic interests abroad. Global Gateway combines EU aid (NDICI-Global Europe), EFSD+ guarantees/blending, Member States, and private finance. It aims to mobilize €300bn by 2027; Africa is the largest regional package (~€150bn). GG is not a standalone funding instrument.

How and why was the Global Gateway created?

It was launched by the European Union in 2021 as a strategic initiative to operate in a more competitive, crisis-prone geopolitical landscape and to project an “economic foreign policy” that aligns EU interests and values while offering a visible alternative/“positive offer” in global infrastructure finance.

What are the five priority sectors?

- Digital: Infrastructure, regulatory framework, digital skills.
- Climate & Energy: Renewables, sustainable agri-food, water, waste, ecosystem preservation.
- Transport: Networks, logistical hubs, multimodal platforms.
- Healthcare: Pharmaceutical supply chains, local production.
- Education & Research: Quality education, vocational training, academic networks

How big is the portfolio today?

264 flagship projects in total, with 46 new in 2025 (most in climate & energy). Regional focus spans Africa, LAC, Asia, Balkans, with Africa dominant.

What is the “360-degree approach”?

The EU presents the 360-degree approach as a way to pair hard infrastructure with enabling-environment support: regulatory frameworks, ESG standards, skills/education, technology transfer, investment climate—screened against six principles (democratic values/high standards; good governance & transparency; equal partnerships; green & clean; security-focused; catalyzing the private sector).

GOVERNANCE & DECISION-MAKING

Who implements GG?

The Global Gateway governance brings together the European Commission (DG INTPA with Team Europe), EU Member States, development finance institutions (e.g., EFSD+, EIB/EBRD), and private sector partners. Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) often anchor delivery.

What is the Civil Society & Local Authorities Advisory Platform?

The Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Advisory Platform was set as a formal interface the Commission set up to consult CSOs and local authorities around the GG strategy (membership, modalities evolving).

Why do partners still find GG confusing?

Multiple institutions and tools mean different interpretations of what GG “is”, creating narrative confusion; slow disbursement and limited visibility of results also undermine clarity and buy-in.

FINANCE, INSTRUMENTS & ODA INTEGRITY

How is GG financed in practice?

- EU and Member State Institutions
- European Investment Bank (EIB) & European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- About €100 billion is expected to be mobilized by the European Investment Bank (EIB) – lending, guarantees, and large projects.
- Private Investment
- Grant and Loan Mix: The funding includes €135 billion in EU-guaranteed investments, €18 billion in direct grants, and €145 billion in lending and co-financing from development banks and other institutions.
- Key Instruments:
 - NDICI-Global Europe: grants, technical assistance (€79 billion budget)
 - European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) EU guarantees to mobilize loans/investment (blending), and
 - Member States' instruments
 - Private capital mobilized via risk-sharing structures

Target: €300bn by 2027 (aggregate, not a new pot).

What about the mix of grants vs guarantees/loans?

The framework leans heavily on blended finance/guarantees to crowd in private capital, while grants remain critical for social sectors, rights-based work, and CSO participation.

Is GG "using up" NDICI money? Should GG be separated from NDICI?

GG uses existing instruments, including the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI). While the NDICI regulation has clear spending targets (for instance, 30% for climate, 10% for migration and 20% of official development assistance (ODA) for human development) and the programming exercise was already underway when the GG strategy was released, in practice the GG has had a considerable impact on the EU's priorities in its partner countries. As DG INTPA's strategy, it is difficult to disentangle it from the NDICI as the main financing instrument for international cooperation. Clear targets, safeguards, transparency, and ring-fenced envelopes for development outcomes are key.

What are the concerns about integrating GG into the Global Europe Regulation in the next MFF?

The risk is a "dual objective" for the new Global Europe instrument—to contribute simultaneously to sustainable development and the strategic interests of the European Union. The European Commission's proposal provides considerable flexibility for the Commission in the use of the funds, notably by removing spending targets. This approach, without clear, measurable targets for areas like human development, gender equality and the environment, carries significant risks in terms of how the funding will be spent, potentially leading to the instrument being mostly used as a tool to advance EU competitiveness and economic security. However, with appropriate safeguards and interinstitutional coordination, aligning the financing instruments with the GG strategy could also be an opportunity to provide more clarity in the EU framework for international cooperation and promote mutually beneficial partnerships.

How much private finance has GG actually mobilized so far?

Currently unclear. Civil society consistently demands the Commission publish mobilization metrics and project-level disclosures (methodologies, baselines, actuals).



CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION: ROLES, ENTRY POINTS, SAFEGUARDS

How are civil society groups involved in Global Gateway today?

Formally via the Advisory Platform; informally through EU Delegations, national dialogues, and project-level consultations. In practice, engagement is ad hoc and uneven, especially for women-led, youth, disability, and grassroots groups.

Which challenges do CSOs face in engaging with GG?

CSOs highlight gaps in transparency, accountability, and real influence within the decision-making process and call for better inclusion, particularly at the project implementation level and in local communities directly impacted by investments.

What roles can CSOs play beyond “watchdogs”?

- Co-designers: Share knowledge and expertise, as they have access to local information and data that can shape project design, surface community priorities, data, gender/disability insights
- Implementation partners: deliver social/inclusion components.
- Accountability partners: independent monitoring, grievance mechanisms, and also support for constructive solutions and facilitating feedback loops to make projects more responsive to community needs.
- Bridge-builders: convene dialogue between authorities, DFIs, investors, and communities

Practical entry points at country level:

- Engage EU Delegations early (country MIPs/TEIs/pipelines)
- Link CSO Country Roadmaps to GG processes
- Propose KPIs on rights, gender, disability, inequality, ESG
- Request public project portals with pipelines, financing, contractors, safeguards, impact assessments

What resourcing is needed for meaningful CSO participation?

- Dedicated budget lines within flagships for CSO participation, engagement, and independent monitoring
- Capacity in EU Delegations (staff/time) to convene regular consultations

PRIVATE SECTOR AND DFIS: ENGAGING RESPONSIBLY

“DFIs are banks; NGOs don’t take loans.” How should CSOs navigate?

Protect grants for CS roles. Use DFI operations to hard-wire social KPIs, enforce independent monitoring, and ensure accessible grievance mechanisms.

Should CSOs engage European companies or in-country actors—or both?

Both:

- European firms: due diligence, ESG standards, remedy processes
- Local private sector: jobs, socially inclusive business models, women-led firms, maintenance ecosystems, domestic value-add
- Joint EU Delegation roundtables to align on community benefits

What safeguards are essential?

- Public E&S documents (ESIAs, RAPs, SEPs)
- ESIAs → *Environmental and Social Impact Assessments*
- RAPs → *Resettlement Action Plans*
- SEPs → *Stakeholder Engagement Plans*
- Gender/disability action plans
- Open data on finance/contractors
- Independent monitoring with community participation
- Grievance systems in local languages
- Just transition and local value-add measures

How can a shared vision between civil society and the private sector be achieved in practical terms?

One way to find complementarities is through the creation of socially inclusive business models and the strengthening of social protection systems, which can serve as building blocks to maximize the benefits of the Global Gateway.



INCLUSION, RIGHTS, AND “VALUES VS INTERESTS”

How does the EU reconcile values and interests in GG? On paper, GG combines development objectives with EU strategic/economic goals, notably through its 360-degree approach which outlines 6 principles for investments (democratic values/high standards; good governance & transparency; equal partnerships; green & clean; security-focused; catalyzing the private sector). Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that poverty eradication is the primary objective of development cooperation. In practice, the balance often skews toward interests; CSOs push for explicit, monitored targets (rights, gender, disability, community benefits).

For more insight on this, you can review the report from Counter Balance, Eurodad and Oxfam entitled “Who profits from the Global Gateway? The EU’s new strategy for development cooperation”, ECDPM’s report on “The EU Global Gateway strategy: Giving local authorities a voice” and Concord’s report entitled “A gateway to equality? Insights from El Salvador and Lesotho on tackling inequalities in the European Union’s Global Gateway programmes”.

How are disability issues integrated?

CSOs call for mainstreaming across the cycle:

- Selection: eligibility/weighting
- Design: universal access, assistive tech, accessible info
- Monitoring: disability-disaggregated KPIs
- Governance: participation and resourcing of DPOs

What exactly is the “360° approach” in practice?

The EU presents the 360-degree approach as a way to pair hard infrastructure with enabling-environment support: regulatory frameworks, ESG standards, skills/education, technology transfer, investment climate—screened against six principles (democratic values/high standards; good governance & transparency; equal partnerships; green & clean; security-focused; catalyzing the private sector). For example:

- Vaccine manufacturing hub in Africa, where the 360-degree approach includes investment in skills, technology transfer and the regulatory framework for vaccines.
- Green hydrogen project in Namibia, where infrastructure investment is accompanied by investments in skills and vocational training.

COUNTRY LENSES & CASE STUDIES

Kazakhstan (ARGO):

- Kazakhstan is a central partner for the EU due to its location on the Middle Corridor and its resources.
- Projects:
 - €50bn green hydrogen mega-project (Svevind Energy).
 - Large-scale lithium and rare earth mining.
 - Infrastructure upgrades on the Trans-Caspian route.
- Concerns: Weak ESG standards, poor consultation, environmental risks (water/land impacts), and risk of being reduced to a raw material supplier.
- Civil Society Response: Building coalitions of NGOs, experts, and communities to demand transparency, regulation, and local job creation.
- Recommendations: Ensure ESG frameworks, domestic processing, and just transition measures.

Chile (ACCION)

- GG projects include renewable energy and digital infrastructure.
- Positive: opportunities for modernization and diversification.
- Concerns: transparency of agreements, lack of structured consultation, and weak integration of social/environmental standards.
- Call for stronger civil society oversight to ensure projects benefit communities, not just markets.

Kenya (FEMNET/META):

- The META initiative supports CSOs in understanding and engaging with GG.
- Achievements: strengthening coalitions, creating a channel for women-led organizations to voice concerns.
- Challenges: lack of timely information on project pipelines, need for stronger EU Delegation engagement with grassroots groups.
- Recommendation: institutionalize CSO consultation as part of GG's governance cycle.



FUTURE OUTLOOK AND STRATEGY

What happens after 2027, and how can CSOs influence the next phase of Global Gateway?

- The Commission has signalled that GG's **core approach will likely continue** in the next budget cycle (2028–2034).
- The real question is whether GG will be embedded in a way that prioritises **EU strategic autonomy** or **balanced development partnerships**.
- CSOs can shape this by:
- **Providing evidence:** documenting where GG has delivered (or not) for communities, rights, inclusion.
- **Proposing measurable targets:** gender, disability, inequality, climate/ESG.
- **Engaging in MFF debates early:** inputting to consultations, lobbying national governments and MEPs.
- **Pressing for institutional safeguards:** binding consultation mechanisms, public portals, transparent metrics.
- **Highlighting alternatives:** advocating for grant-based financing, community-driven investments, and stronger social sector packages within GG.
- **Contributing to further shaping the 360-degree approach (and the role of CSOs in it)** by highlighting how investments in the 'enabling environment' (e.g. in social sectors) are key for the EU to be able to build stronger partnerships.

How can CSOs and think tanks best position themselves to influence future debates and negotiations on Global Gateway and EU development cooperation?

- **Engage early in EU budget debates:** The 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will determine how GG is financed and governed. CSOs should prepare now by feeding evidence and proposals into consultations and lobbying both Member States and Members of the European Parliament.
- **Document evidence from the ground:** Use case studies and data on GG's impact (or gaps) to show where it delivers for communities and where it falls short. Evidence-based advocacy is critical in Brussels debates.
- **Propose measurable targets and safeguards:** Push for binding KPIs on human development, gender equality, disability inclusion, inequality reduction, and civic participation.
- **Strengthen coalitions:** Build alliances across civil society, think tanks, academia, and local authorities to present a united voice.
- **Leverage EU Delegations:** Regularly engage with Delegations in partner countries to ensure that national and regional perspectives shape the Brussels-level narrative.
- **Stay visible in key fora:** Participate in the Global Gateway Forum, EU-Africa and EU-LAC Summits, and CSO Advisory Platforms to keep pressure on decision-makers.