AU-EU Business Forum 2025

Joint Business Declaration of the Business Organisations

Luanda, 24-25th of November 2025

We, as Business Support Organisation (BSO) Leaders representing the interests of private sector actors in both Europe and Africa, declare the following as our joint position on supporting and strengthening the partnership between Europe and Africa:

This Joint Business Declaration, presented during the EU-Africa Business Forum (EABF) in Luanda, affirms the shared commitment of African and European business organizations to foster win-win partnerships built on mutual respect, shared prosperity and a genuine partnership of equals. Grounded in the vision of Africa's Agenda 2063, this declaration emphasizes the centrality of empowering the African and European private sector, including SMEs, women and youth, as a cornerstone for sustainable growth and transformation. It outlines joint recommendations to channel investments toward value addition, industrialisation and beneficiation, while advancing job creation, technology transfer and the development of Africa's manufacturing and human capital potential. As a strategic platform, the Global Gateway must serve as a catalyst for realizing the aspirations of both African and European peoples by strengthening inclusive private sector collaboration that unlocks Africa's natural resources for continental prosperity and global competitiveness.

1. Strengthening Private Sector Engagement in the Global Gateway

- The key issue remains how to effectively and systematically engage the private sector in the Global Gateway in a way that contributes to mutually beneficial partnerships and responds to European and African priorities and needs. Recognising that the Global Gateway can only achieve its full potential through active participation from both European and African businesses, we call for the establishment of structured, transparent and inclusive mechanisms that enable businesses - large and small - from both continents to co-design, co-finance and co-implement flagship initiatives related to trade and investment.

- The new "Global Gateway Investment Hub" should be built on to support the development of joint projects between EU and African firms in the priority areas for investment identified by the Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package. In key areas strategic to the EU-Africa partnership, the eligibility criteria should also allow consortia including African partners to be project sponsors. Indeed, involvement of local African partners early in project design is necessary to ensure proper co-ownership and fill relevant investment gaps in local markets.

- In addition, the investment hub could be operationalized through calls for projects aimed at specifically at consortia of European and African enterprises - by sector, by value chain, by region, or by corridor. These calls for projects could offer both financial support and non-financial support, aimed at facilitating investments by addressing issues related to, for example, the business environment or systemic challenges in specific sectors or value chains.

- The goal should be to simplify access for European and African companies to EU financial instruments (blended finance, guarantees, venture capital, reimbursable grants) by establishing a unified, transparent and accessible mechanism, particularly for SMEs. Selected projects should be supported with the efficient mobilisation of the relevant EU funding instruments.

- A Euro-Africa public procurement strategy should be adopted, that aims to incentivise proposals put forward by European and African partners, while remaining compliant with international commitments. This should include the integration of non-price award criteria taking into account factors such as quality, sustainability, resilience and local partnerships, balanced by the needs of African countries for cost-effective solutions.

- There is a need to enhance risk-mitigation instruments, such as export credit and guarantees, to make Global Gateway projects more attractive to businesses. Additionally, there is a clear demand to scale-up access to blended finance instruments to attract investors, particularly SMEs. This is especially important for early-stage project preparation, where access to equity and reimbursable grants can help overcome significant risks.

- Enhancing the access of SMEs to Global Gateway support is essential. As with projects contributing to a Global Gateway flagship, the EU should consider additional criteria for offering financing options for services deployment projects below the current 10 million EUR threshold. Larger European and African companies participating in consortia can also be encouraged to involve their traditional suppliers in projects so as to facilitate the participation of SMEs.

- Alongside the Team Europe facilities offered by the Global Gateway Investment Hub, the EU and African Union could also create specific joint tools (platforms, funds, investment facilities) designed to help projects proposed by EU and African companies in specific sectors that require support.

- Furthermore, strengthening coordination among European financial institutions is necessary to create more attractive integrated investment packages. EU support should be efficient at mobilising the relevant resources from the various actors in Team Europe, developing efficient cooperation models between the EIB, EBRD, and member state public development banks, that can build on each institution's specificities to bring the most added value to joint projects. A similar coordination can be pursued between banks and financial institutions in Africa, including the AfDB, Afreximbank, EBID, WADB and other national financial institutions. Coordination should also be strengthened between Export Credit Agencies (ECAs) and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) to produce more comprehensive investment packages that better share risks. Coordination meetings between financing institutions should aim to include the private sector when possible to gain valuable insights into the business community's needs.

- In the context of heightened global competition, visibility and strategic communication on joint projects must be strengthened to show the credibility of the EU-Africa partnership.

2. Enhancing Africa's Attractiveness for Sustainable and Mutually Beneficial Investment

- A favourable and predictable investment climate is essential to mobilising private capital and advancing shared prosperity across both continents. This requires joint efforts to improve the business environment, strengthen human capital, expand sustainable infrastructure and digital connectivity and enhance political and financial risk-mitigation mechanisms.

- Both Africa and Europe recognise that sustainable investment must generate local value, industrial growth, and decent employment. Reforms should therefore be designed to align with the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Agenda 2063. As a rapidly growing market of 1.5 billion people, poised to become a major workforce and consumer base, foreign investment must be geared towards developing Africa's status as a manufacturing and innovation hub integrated in global value chains.

- An enabling environment for investment is characterised by institutional quality and legal certainty. The promotion of investment protection and rule of law, notably through transparent dispute settlement mechanisms, is indispensable to encourage foreign direct investment.

- Investment in skills development and technical and vocational training is vital to spur economic growth by addressing shortages in skilled labour. Technical and vocational training programmes should be supported in connection with key industrial sectors (energy, digital, logistics, agri-business).

- Reforms should also aim to increase access to finance by firms, notably by strengthening national and regional capital markets and improving the quality of financial systems' regulatory frameworks.

- European and African partners commit to greater coordination between public and private actors, including business support organisations, chambers of commerce, development finance institutions, and SMEs, to unlock investment in priority sectors. Greater collaboration between public and private partners can unlock the full potential of African markets for sustainable and inclusive growth.

- Addressing the implications of regulatory frameworks, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D), will require structured dialogue to ensure transparency, fairness, and an enabling environment that promotes compliance, competitiveness and mutual benefit. Technical assistance for capacity building and financing should reduce the administrative burden for African SMEs in meeting these supply chain requirements.

- The sustainable sourcing and processing of critical raw materials is crucial to Africa's industrialisation. Joint investment from European and African companies in local processing of commodities, value addition and beneficiation should help African economies move up global value chains. This process should be undertaken in a flexible and agile manner.

3. Advancing Towards a Euro–African Free Trade Bloc Aligned with the AfCFTA

- Building on Africa's regional integration momentum under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), both continents reaffirm their commitment to progressively deepening economic ties towards a mutually beneficial and sustainable Euro-African trade and investment partnership.

- Any future framework must be aligned with the principles and schedules of the AfCFTA, supporting Africa's industrialisation, local value addition, joint production and the development of regional value chains. The expansion of the EPAs as building blocs towards increased bi-regional EU-Africa economic integration should also reflect these needs. The Global Gateway's development of energy, digital and transport infrastructure should complement the AfCFTA's aim of boosting intra-African trade.

- Cooperation should prioritise policy coherence, capacity building and fair competition, ensuring that African economies strengthen their productive base and retain policy space to sequence reforms in line with their development priorities. Developing African productive capacity is the near-term priority, while avoiding premature external alignment.

- Europe and Africa commit to expanding partnerships in technology transfer, services trade, knowledge sharing, digital innovation, and co-industrialisation - recognising these as prerequisites for inclusive and resilient growth across both continents, as well as levers for shared sovereignty and mutual competitiveness. These partnerships should include joint innovation centres, enhanced cooperation on research & development and other concrete mechanisms to enable European and African businesses to adopt and upgrade technological and managerial expertise.

- Regulatory cooperation on standards and certification should be enhanced to overcome barriers to EU-Africa trade and facilitate African products' effective access to the European market.

- The EU should use its experience with continental economic integration to help African partners work towards the effective implementation of the AfCFTA. This includes offering technical assistance and support on specific areas of implementation including trade facilitation, harmonisation of tariff schedules for goods and the application of rules of origin.

- The AU should maintain its commitment to providing a friendly business environment with high level private sector engagement and public-private dialogue in trade and investment policy formulation.

- A Euro-African free trade framework must evolve through co-creation, co-investment, transparency, and reciprocity, ensuring that integration contributes equally to both sides' prosperity and long-term sovereignty.

Finally, a joint EU-AU institutional mechanism involving both public and private sector representatives should be tasked with monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these recommendations, reporting annually on progress and identifying new opportunities for collaboration. This organisation could also oversee progress in the EU-Africa partnership, tracking key indicators related to investment, job creation and the volume of Euro–African co-investments.

Annex – Proposals by Technical Working Groups

PROPOSALS - AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

1 Sector overview and priorities

Agrifood systems are central to Africa's economic transformation, providing the backbone for employment, food security and industrialisation. However, the sector's growth potential is constrained by limited access to finance for agri-SMEs and cooperatives, high input and logistics costs, inadequate storage and transport infrastructure, and fragmented regulatory frameworks. Weak technical assistance and limited capacity to meet sustainability and traceability standards also reduce competitiveness and deter private investment.

Yet, the opportunities are equally significant. The AfCFTA, the Global Gateway investment framework and CAADP together create a powerful momentum for transforming agriculture into a driver of inclusive, green and resilient growth. Strategic priorities lie in expanding climate-smart agriculture, agri-processing and digital innovation; strengthening green logistics and certification systems aligned with the EU Green Deal; and mobilising blended-finance and de-risking instruments such as AgriFI to unlock investment for smallholders and SMEs.

Harnessing these opportunities through stronger EU-Africa business partnerships, joint ventures and policy coherence can accelerate the shift from primary production to value addition: building sustainable, competitive and resilient agrifood value chains that deliver jobs, food sovereignty and inclusive growth.

2 Business outcome

1. **Launch the EU–Africa Agribusiness Investment & Innovation Platform (A-IIP)**
   Establish a joint mechanism connecting DFIs (EIB, AfDB, Proparco, DEG), BSOs and private investors to co-design and co-finance projects in key value chains (cocoa, coffee, cashew, dairy, horticulture). The platform will pilot blended-finance instruments and support technical assistance for SMEs and cooperatives.

   Timeline: 12–18 months after EABF 2025.
   Lead actors: DG INTPA, AfDB, EIB, ITC, COLEAD, Eurochambres, AfBC.

2. **Operationalise De-Risking and Local-Currency Financing for Agri-SMEs**
   Expand the reach of EFSD+ guarantees and AgriFI windows through local banks and investment funds, providing smaller-ticket finance (≤ €1 million) in local currency to bridge the "missing middle" financing gap.

   Timeline: 2026–2027.
   Lead actors: EU Delegations, national DFIs, commercial banks, Team Europe partners.

3. **Accelerate Technology Partnerships and AgriTech Scaling**
   Facilitate EU–Africa joint ventures focused on digital agriculture, precision farming and green logistics solutions adapted for smallholder settings. This includes the creation of "Digital Innovation Hubs" and open-source technology transfer initiatives.

Timeline: Launch pilots in 2026.
Lead actors: EU and African Business Support organisations, R&D institutions, AUDA-NEPAD.

4. **Advance Green Certification and Traceability Systems**
   Support African certification bodies to develop regionally harmonised systems for traceability and compliance with EU sustainability standards (EUDR, CSRD). Establish joint capacity-building programmes for SMEs to adopt sustainable practices.

   Timeline: 2026–2028.
   Lead actors: African Union Commission, ITC, COLEAD, national standard agencies, regional and national chambers of commerce and industry.

5. **Promote Inclusive Skills and Entrepreneurship Development**
   Create targeted training programmes and incubation schemes for youth and women in agri-processing, quality control and circular economy solutions, linked to AfCFTA value-chain opportunities.

   Timeline: Roll-out 2026 onwards.
   Lead actors: EBOWN, AUDA-NEPAD, EU Member State programmes, AfBC and African BSOs.

6. **Strengthen Policy Dialogue for Investment Climate Reform**
   Establish a structured EU–AU–Private Sector Policy Dialogue on Agribusiness to align national regulations, facilitate market access and encourage investment in sustainable value addition.

   Timeline: Continuous, beginning 2025 Q4.
   Lead actors: AU Commission, DG AGRI, DG INTPA, regional economic communities (RECs), Continental and Regional private-sector platforms.

3 Call for action

1. **Adopt a Joint EU–AU Policy Framework for Sustainable Agribusiness Investment**
   Endorse a joint commitment under the Global Gateway and AfCFTA to establish predictable, transparent regulatory environments that attract long-term private investment in agribusiness value chains.

   Action: Integrate this framework into existing AU–EU ministerial dialogues on Trade and Agriculture by mid-2026.

2. **Enable Blended-Finance Deployment and De-Risking Tools at Country Level**
   Simplify regulatory and administrative procedures for deploying EFSD+, AgriFI, and Team Europe guarantees through local intermediaries.

   Action: Encourage Member States and DFIs to sign co-financing agreements with national development banks and commercial lenders for SME-level financing.

3. **Harmonise and Localise Certification, Traceability and Green-Compliance Systems**

Develop Africa-based systems for traceability and sustainability compliance that meet EU standards while ensuring affordability and gradual transition for SMEs.

Action: Establish AU-EU taskforce to align certification protocols (EUDR, CSRD) and recognise regional standards by 2027.

4. **Introduce Incentives for Local Processing and Value Addition**
   Encourage African governments to adopt fiscal incentives-tax breaks, duty exemptions on equipment and export credits-to stimulate processing and agri-industrialisation.

   Action: Integrate these measures into national investment codes and Team Europe Country Packages by 2026.

5. **Advance Skills Development and Technology Transfer Partnerships**
   Promote joint EU–Africa programmes for technical and vocational training in agri-processing, digital agriculture and green logistics.

   Action: Mobilise EU Member State expertise (Erasmus+, Enabel, GIZ, AFD, LuxDev, etc.) and align with AUDA-NEPAD's Skills Initiative for Africa by 2026.

6. **Strengthen Policy Dialogue and Private-Sector Voice in Decision-Making**
   Institutionalise structured dialogue between the EU, AU, RECs, and business networks (Eurochambres, EBOWN, EBCAM, CPCCAF, AfBC, PACCI, FEWACCI, BusinessAfrica) to co-shape trade, finance, and regulatory policies affecting agribusiness.

   Action: Launch the EU–AU Agribusiness Policy Platform by early 2026 to monitor progress and track commitments emerging from EABF 2025.

PROPOSALS - RENEWABLE ENERGY & GREEN TRANSITION TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

1 Sector overview and priorities

Africa's green transition is investable now, with grids spanning decentralised renewables, green hydrogen plants and pipelines, cross-border interconnections and clean industrialisation. Success hinges on portfolio-based project preparation, blended-finance de-risking and predictable policy/regulatory frameworks aligned with Agenda 2063 and Global Gateway.

Key challenges are regulatory volatility, investment guarantees, currency risk and payment security; weak off-taker credit; tariff caps that compress affordability vs bankability; under-resourced project-prep; and limited SME participation (youth/women).

Coordinated AU–EU action – through AfSEM (market rules/"software") and CMP (corridors/"hardware") – can convert project pipelines into bankable portfolios while advancing inclusion and skills, if necessary reforms are put forward in beneficiary countries as well as at EU level.

Priority solutions are:

1. scaling decentralised energy production and use, energy efficiency and clean-cooking solutions through private foreign investment remunerated by carbon credits recognised asap as compensation in the EU's Emission Trading System;
2. financing strategic transmission to integrate regional power markets;
3. crowding in private capital via guarantees, concessional windows, equity co-investment and – particularly for SME and Mid-Caps – offering pay-offs from carbon credits produced in Africa and used to compensate emissions in Europe, increasing exponentially decarbonisation as an intercontinental market for our common climate.

2 Business outcome

Under the EU–Africa business partnership, the private sector will accelerate renewable investment and green industrialisation by turning AfSEM/CMP policy frameworks into bankable project portfolios. The outcome focuses on decentralised renewables, cross-border interconnections, packaged with the project-prep, blended-finance and regulatory solutions needed to overcome today's constraints (regulatory volatility, currency risk, payment security and the affordability–bankability gap). This approach aligns with Agenda 2063 and Global Gateway, but requires urgent action also on EU level e.g. to allow international carbon credits to achieve Europe's climate targets while boosting investment in Africa into decarbonisation (through the activation of Art. 6.4. of the Paris Climate Agreement).

The outcome will aim at getting actionable outputs (operationalise corridor-aligned pipelines): a rolling AU–EU marketplace will match credible sponsors with DFIs/ECAs, banks, funds and public buyers to move from interest to term sheets; and a fast-track technical-assistance & project-preparation window will fund feasibility and transaction support.

Implementation will be led by private sector companies/consortia); Team Europe financiers (e.g., EIB and European DFIs) deploying blended finance and guarantees; the AUC/AUDA-NEPAD and regional Power Pools ensuring corridor prioritisation and AfSEM-consistent market rules; and programme facilities such as GET.invest/GET.transform and EU-

CEPA/ENGAGE providing upstream studies, structuring support and pipeline grooming-expanding on ongoing pre-feasibility and project-structuring work with the AU.

Timeline (2025–2027).
Months 0–6 (post-EABF 2025): launch templates and the common data-room standard; compile the first corridor-aligned tranche; hold inaugural matchmaking rounds; propose changes to EU ETS regulation and to CBAM.

Months 6–12: mobilise TA and de-risking (grants/loans/guarantees) to advance shortlisted deals to term-sheet stage; integrate clean-cooking pipelines across regions.
Months 12–24: reach the first financial closures, then scale to additional corridors/sectors with repeatable packaging and standardised processes

3 Call for action

The private sector calls upon African Union Member States and the European Union to implement AfSEM market rules and operationalise CMP corridor priorities, thereby creating bankable, corridor-aligned pipelines of renewable energy.

Key actions required include:

1. Market integration & regulatory clarity. Fast-track AfSEM implementation and CMP corridor prioritisation; adopt transparent, standardised competitive procurement with model PPAs, guarantee wheeling/open access, and enforce time-bound licensing for projects.
2. Revenue & payment security. Put in place payment-security arrangements (e.g., escrows/liquidity buffers/guarantee structures) and clear payment frameworks for off-takers that balance affordability with bankability.
3. Promote new business models for renewables, energy efficiency and clean cooking based on financing via international carbon credits.
4. Pipeline preparation at portfolio scale. Capitalise a project-preparation window tied to CMP strategic corridors to fund pre-feasibility, permitting and transaction support, using a portfolio-based approach to create a predictable deal flow.
5. De-risking & blended finance. Expand guarantees, concessional windows and equity co-investment (Team Europe/EIB/DFIs) and pair grants + loans to reach bankability and crowd-in private capital.
6. SME & local-industry enablers. Reduce collateral and borrowing costs via movable-collateral registries, partial-credit guarantees, stable VAT/duty policy for renewable equipment and standardised mini-grid tariffs/PAYGo e-KYC where relevant.
7. Clean-cooking acceleration. Embed national clean-cooking targets and tax/standards reform; integrate ongoing regional clean-cooking programmes (incl. EIB initiatives) into corridor pipelines to deliver rapid, inclusive impact.
8. Cross-border interconnections. Fast-track permitting/rights-of-way for priority interconnectors and support power-pool trading to unlock regional renewables (e.g., UTIP/Lake Victoria Ring as a replicable model).
9. Data & accountability. Publish a concise, disaggregated KPI set e.g., connection lead times, outage duration, affordability metrics, for all supported projects to drive transparency and course-correction.

By adopting these measures, governments will enable businesses to translate Africa's energy ambitions into tangible access, reliability, jobs and climate gains, turning policy into pipelines and pipelines into closed deals across priority corridors.

For its development, Africa needs much more energy production and energy distribution than today. Both require huge amounts of investment. In order to improve the quality of development, following the Paris Climate Convention, the use of fossil fuels and related CO_2 emissions must decouple from economic growth. That means investments should be directed towards renewable and sustainable energy sources. This allows to certify carbon credits, which could attract investments from Europe. In order to make this possible the EU needs to allow the accounting of international carbon credits against the EU Emission Trading Systems ETS and CBAM (see art. 6.4. of the Paris Climate Convention). Private business organisations from Europe and Africa invite the EU to urgently reform its climate policies in order to incentivise in this way private investments in to Africa in the Energy Sector, for our common, global climate, for Africa and tfor Europe.

PROPOSALS - EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

1 Sector overview and priorities

Education and skills development are pivotal to Africa's sustainable transformation, driving productivity, innovation and inclusive growth. Yet, persistent gaps between education systems and labour market demands continue to limit employability, particularly for youth and women. Fragmented qualification frameworks hinder skills recognition and labour mobility across African borders, while underfunded vocational training and weak public–private–academic collaboration reduce the capacity to generate market-relevant skills.

At the same time, major opportunities exist. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provides a framework for harmonising qualifications and boosting talent mobility. Under the Global Gateway Africa Investment Package the EU aims to mobilise 150 billion EUR of investments in Digital, Health, Climate and Energy, Transport as well as Education and Research. Education and skills come in as enabling elements across all these areas.

The Global Gateway flagships under Education and Research, namely Youth Mobility for Africa, Regional Teachers Initiative and VET Toolbox (now followed-up by Opportunity-driven Skills and VET in Africa) programmes address skills in a holistic manner directly linked to the key priority sectors. They aim to scale partnerships between industry, academia and public institutions. In addition, innovative blended finance models and public–private–academic partnerships (PPAPs) can attract private investment into skills development, making human capital a strategic asset for competitiveness in green, digital and industrial sectors.

Priority actions therefore include (i) integrating skills and education as a core component of investment decisions and investment packages, (ii) advancing mutual recognition of qualifications across the AfCFTA and (iii) scaling PPAPs to deliver future-ready talent that meets Africa's industrial and digital ambitions.

2 Business outcome

Outcome 1: Integration of Human Capital Development into Investment Packages
By 2026, EU–Africa investment frameworks under Global Gateway should systematically include skills development and vocational training components in all major projects. This will be implemented through joint efforts between African governments, European development finance institutions (DFIs) and the private sector, ensuring that workforce training aligns with investment priorities and accelerates project implementation. The outcome will result in stronger productivity, reduced investment risk and sustainable job creation in priority sectors such as renewable energy, manufacturing and digital services.

Outcome 2: Strengthened continental Africa-EU cooperation mechanism for agile skills intelligence, innovation, dialogue and advisory support in Global Gateway priority sectors
By 2027, there will be an established cooperation framework between the EU and Africa around skills development aligned with AfCFTA and Global Gateway priorities. This includes a regular AU-EU policy and technical dialogue mechanism around skills development linked to employment as well as the implementation and usability of a continental platform allowing for enhanced knowledge sharing and services around skills intelligence.

Outcome 3: Scaled Public–Private–Academic Partnerships for Market-Relevant Skills
By 2027, enhanced Africa–EU cooperation will scale joint study programmes, academic mobility and applied research partnerships that connect higher education institutions and innovation ecosystems with labour market transformation in priority sectors. These actions will build on existing Global Gateway and continental initiatives, reinforcing market-relevant skills, employability and transitions into green and digital industries.

3 Call for action

Call for Action 1: Institutionalise Skills Development within Investment Implementation Frameworks
Governments and development partners are urged to adopt policy measures requiring the inclusion of vocational training, higher education and research components in all public–private investment projects. Dedicated funding envelopes and incentives should be created to promote skills-linked investment packages across priority sectors.

Call for Action 2: Enhance EU-Africa cooperation around skills development: The EU and AU and its agencies should establish functional cooperation mechanisms for skills intelligence, innovation, dialogue and advisory support in Global Gateway priority sectors. This should closely link and facilitate private sector investments in priority sectors and allow the integration of skills and qualifications coherently across investment packages.

Call for Action 3: Accelerate Qualification Harmonisation under the AfCFTA
African Union Member States should fast-track the development and implementation of continental qualification frameworks and digital credentialing systems. This will enable the mutual recognition of skills, promote labour mobility and support private-sector competitiveness through access to a skilled, mobile workforce.

PROPOSALS - DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

1 Sector overview and priorities

Africa's human-centric digital transformation is at a defining moment. Secure and trusted digital infrastructure, including trusted 5G infrastructure in a mobile first region[1], harmonised data governance, and expanded cross-border connectivity are essential for unlocking trade, innovation and sustainable and innovation driven growth. These priorities align with the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy (2020–2030) and Agenda 2063 as well as the EU's International Digital Strategy[2], which together envision universal broadband access, inclusive digital economies and robust cybersecurity and e-commerce frameworks.

Key challenges: high cost of connectivity and power shortages and outages; fragmented regulatory and data governance frameworks; cybersecurity vulnerabilities, including strategic vulnerabilities, uneven access to digital infrastructure and skills; and limited access to financing for innovation and startups.

Priority solutions: promoting deployment of trusted 5G networks, establishing resilient cross-border digital infrastructure; promoting data governance harmonisation through the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol and Smart Africa Alliance; advancing digital skills development (particularly for youth and women); expanding access to finance for digital SMEs and projects; enabling secure, trusted and interoperable digital ecosystems; and implementing efficient digital services and solutions.

2 Business outcome

The EU and African Private sector must play a pivotal role in the development and expansion of the Digital Transformation, not only through investments, but also through technological innovation, expertise and strategic partnerships. A two- to three-year timeline (2025–2027) is envisaged to:

Business Outcome 1: Scale EU-Africa digital initiatives and strengthen innovation
The EU–Africa partnership under the Global Gateway and the Africa–Europe Investment Package are instrumental for the renewal and fostering of European and African relations in secure and trusted digital transformation. It is key to promote and increase visibility of opportunities and joint initiatives such D4D Hub, the AfricaConnect3 programme, the Africa-EU Space Partnership Programme and the Blue Raman submarine cable systems.
In addition, it is important to underpin opportunities within the various initiatives and calls of European programs and agencies with a broader scope, but where there is a possibility of international cooperation between EU and Africa in the digital area, such as Horizon Europe (namely the Horizon Europe EU-Africa Initiative), ESA Earth Observation Calls and Programmes, the new Joint Innovation Facility (JIF) platform / AEDID 2.0, as well as initiatives funded by EU such as the Africa-Europe Innovation Platform (AEIP) and the African Business Incubator Communities (BIC Africa).

Lead actors: DG INTPA; DG CONNECT; DG RTP; AUDA-NEPAD; African Union Commission (AUC); AfCFTA Secretariat, Smart Africa; Africa CDC Innovation Hub Network; EU–Africa Digital Innovation Bridge Secretariat; Digital Governance in Africa; D4HUB, EIB, DFIs, ECAs, relevant ministries, private sector and civil society, among others.

[1] https://event-assets.gsma.com/pdf/GSMA_ME_SSA_2024_Web.pdf?utm_
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/redirection/document/116454

Business Outcome 2: Support the adoption of interoperable digital public infrastructure (DPI) solutions such as GovStack and X-Road
Deploy and integrate DPI solutions across government services, standardise APIs and facilitate cross-border interoperability. Support will include capacity building, technical assistance and development of shared governance frameworks to ensure scalability and sustainability.

Lead actors: National ministries of ICT and digital transformation, EU Commission (DG CONNECT), Africa Digital Transformation Office, AfCFTA Secretariat, UNECA, and private technology providers.

3 Call for action

The private sector calls upon the **African Union** and the **European Union, and their member states and public institutions to adopt and implement enabling policy measures and financial instruments** that foster secure, trusted, and interoperable digital economies across Africa, promoting Africa-EU relations. It's key to secure a Team Europe and Partners approach, including coordination with initiatives from the United Nations System and International and Regional Financial Institutions, as well as philanthropic and civil society organizations.

Specific Key actions required include:

Call for Action 1: Regulatory alignment, promotion of Digital Skills and trusted data flows
Accelerate the harmonisation of data protection, cybersecurity, trusted 5G policy frameworks build on the EU 5G toolbox, and e-commerce frameworks under the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol; promote interoperable and secure cross-border data exchange and digitalization of custom processes to enhance public services, private sector competitiveness and trade facilitation; boost digital literacy and entrepreneurship programmes.

Action: To take forward the work of the European Union-African Union Digital Economy Task Force on Regulation, Skills and Inclusion, Transparent and Competitive Procurement, Data Interoperability and Governance.

Call for Action 2: Investment, Innovation and technology
Develop financial instruments that can secure digital infrastructure investments and facilitate partnerships between EU and African stakeholders to promote and co-develop digital solutions and emerging technologies (advanced connectivity, such as 5G, AI, cloud, IoT, space/earth observation) with clear IP and data governance frameworks.

Action: To adapt and establish financial mechanisms (grants, equity, loans, blending, guarantees, de-risking instruments) tailored to serve the needs of a mobile first region, digital infrastructure projects, scalable digital ventures and to make viable joint EU–AU Co-development labs, Innovation Hubs, ecosystems and networks.

PROPOSALS - HEALTH & PHARMA TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Sector overview and priorities

Africa's health sector stands at a pivotal juncture. While the continent has made major strides in controlling infectious diseases through EU–Africa collaboration (notably via the *MAV+ initiative* and *PHAHM*), the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular conditions poses a new and urgent challenge. This dual burden threatens to overwhelm already strained systems, exposing critical gaps in manufacturing, diagnostics and service delivery.

At the same time, the global shift towards local production, technology transfer and health sovereignty opens vast opportunities for investment and innovation. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can serve as a catalyst by integrating fragmented health markets, harmonising regulations through programmes like the African Medicines Agency (AMA) and connecting regional value chains.

Key challenges: limited pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity; fragmented regulatory frameworks; dependency on imports; lack of skilled health professionals; and uneven investment in NCD infrastructure.

Priority solutions: strengthening local production of vaccines, medicines and diagnostics; establishing public–private investment mechanisms; boosting training in biomedical engineering and specialised healthcare; and leveraging digital health innovation for diagnosis and treatment.

2 Business outcome

Through a coordinated EU–Africa business partnership, the private sector commits to advancing regional health manufacturing and innovation ecosystems that strengthen Africa's capacity to respond both communicable and non-communicable disease response capacities.

The outcome aims to operationalise regional value chains for priority health products: vaccines, essential medicines, medical equipment and diagnostics across several target countries such as Senegal, South Africa, Nigeria, Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Ethiopia, D.R.Congo, Egypt and Tanzania). Building on existing Team Europe initiatives (MAV+, PHAHM, PAMTA, Safe Birth Africa), it will expand local production, workforce training and technology transfer partnerships.

Implementation will be led by a consortium of African and European manufacturers, DFIs, and regulatory agencies (such as Africa CDC, AMA, EIB, AFD, AfBC Health industries Cluster and the European and African Private Sector private sectors).

A two-to-three-year timeline (2025–2027) is envisioned to:

Business Outcome 1: Launch pilot regional hubs for pharmaceutical and diagnostic manufacturing
Identify and operationalise three to four regional pilot hubs focusing on vaccines, essential medicines and diagnostic production. Each hub will serve as a centre for technology transfer, local production scale-up and regulatory harmonisation across the target countries.

Timeline: Q2 2025 – Q4 2026

Lead actors: African and European private sector consortia, Africa CDC, AMA, National Ministries of Health and Industry, with financial support from DFIs such as EIB, AFD and AfDB, and support under the framework of Team Europe Initiatives.

Business Outcome 2: Establish joint training and certification programmes in partnership with Africa CDC and universities
Design and roll out training modules on pharmaceutical quality assurance, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and regulatory science. Joint certification will be developed to align workforce skills with emerging regional production standards.

Timeline: Q3 2025 – Q2 2027
Lead actors: Africa CDC, regional universities and technical institutes, EU and African private sector partners, WHO Academy and relevant professional councils.

Business Outcome 3: Create a digital platform to map investment opportunities and connect regional suppliers under the AfCFTA
Develop an interactive platform to map health manufacturing investment opportunities, facilitate matchmaking between regional suppliers and investors and support transparent sourcing and procurement aligned with AfCFTA market integration.

Timeline: Q1 2026 – Q4 2027
Lead actors: AfCFTA Secretariat, national investment promotion agencies, private sector digital innovation partners and Continental AfBC and regional business councils.

3 Call for action

The private sector calls upon African Union Member States and the European Union to adopt policy measures that enable regional manufacturing and value chain integration in health and pharma.

Key actions required include:

Call for Action 1: Regulatory harmonisation
Fast-track the full operationalisation and mutual recognition mechanisms under the African Medicines Agency (AMA).

Action: Establish an EU–AU joint regulatory taskforce to support capacity building for national medicines authorities and accelerate AMA alignment across Member States.

Call for Action 2: Investment incentives
Create blended finance vehicles and fiscal incentives (e.g. tax reliefs, import duty exemptions for inputs, guaranteed purchase agreements) to de-risk manufacturing.

Action: Launch an EU–AU Health Manufacturing Investment Platform to pool DFI, public, and private capital for high-impact projects in regional hubs.

Call for Action 3: Skills and technology partnerships
Support EU–Africa twinning programmes and technical training for health professionals and engineers.

Action: Establish a joint EU–AU Centre of Excellence for Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Skills to coordinate curriculum design, certification and mobility schemes.

Call for Action 4: Digital health alignment
Endorse interoperable standards and data governance frameworks to scale telemedicine, diagnostics and monitoring systems.

Action: Co-develop an EU-AU Digital Health Interoperability Charter to harmonise data protocols and support secure cross-border digital health platforms.

By adopting these measures, governments will empower businesses to translate Africa's health ambitions into tangible growth, employment and resilience, transforming health from a development challenge into a driver of industrialisation and sovereignty.

PROPOSALS - TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS CORRIDORS TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

1 Sector Overview and Priorities

Africa's transport corridors are the arteries of continental integration, trade and industrialisation. Strategic investments in multimodal connectivity, port modernisation and green logistics systems, including trusted advanced connectivity such as 5G are central to unlocking regional value chains and facilitating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Under the AU's Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and the EU's Global Gateway, corridor development is emerging as a platform for growth, linking regions and driving sustainable value addition.

Corridors such as Lobito, Abidjan–Lagos, Walvis Bay, Beira–Maputo and Praia–Dakar exemplify the potential of EU–Africa cooperation in advancing physical, digital and green connectivity. Beyond infrastructure, corridor ecosystems integrate customs modernisation, digital logistics, vocational training and sustainable procurement elements that ensure efficiency, transparency and inclusivity. They connect ports, railways and road networks to Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and local economies, catalysing SME participation and job creation, particularly for youth and women.

Key Challenges include: i) fragmented regulatory frameworks; ii) high trade costs; iii) insufficient cross-border harmonisation; iv) limited access to blended finance and risk-sharing tools; and v) capacity constraints in logistics and transport management.

Addressing these barriers is vital for corridors to reach their full potential as engines of sustainable and inclusive growth.

Priority Solutions include: i) harmonising corridor governance under AfCFTA protocols; ii) scaling blended finance mechanisms for infrastructure and logistics; iii) integrating green and digital innovations; iv) embedding skills and vocational training programmes; and v) establishing transparent, regionally owned corridor management systems that balance competitiveness with sustainability.

2 Business Outcomes

The private sector commits to strengthening EU–Africa collaboration in developing efficient, green and digitally enabled transport corridors that drive regional integration, competitiveness and inclusive growth.

Through an enhanced partnership, stakeholders aim to operationalise flagship corridors such as Lobito, Cotonou, Abidjan–Lagos, Walvis Bay and Beira–Maputo, as models of sustainable and resilient connectivity. These initiatives will combine infrastructure development with logistics innovation, port digitalisation and vocational training, underpinned by public–private partnerships and blended finance instruments.

Implementation will be driven by a coalition of African and European partners including AUDA–NEPAD, INTPA, AfDB, AFC, AfBC FEWACCI, EIB, CDP, Invest International and private sector actors such as ApexLoads, Vecturis and AGL, working closely with regional economic communities and corridor authorities.

A two- to three-year timeline (2025–2027) will focus on:

1. Launching an EU–Africa Corridor Skills and SME Facility to **enhance vocational training, logistics certification and entrepreneurship**;
2. **Scaling digital customs, smart border infrastructure and cargo-tracking systems** along priority corridors;
3. **Establishing blended finance and de-risking mechanisms** to attract commercial capital;
4. **Advancing green hydrogen, renewable energy and sustainable procurement models within corridor ecosystems**; and
5. **Strengthening governance frameworks** to ensure transparent, predictable and business-friendly environments aligned with AfCFTA protocols.

3 Call for Action

The private sector calls upon the African Union and the European Union to adopt and implement enabling measures that foster competitive, green and efficient logistics and transport systems across Africa's strategic corridors.

Key actions required include:

1. Regulatory Harmonisation: Accelerate the alignment of transport, customs and logistics frameworks with AfCFTA trade facilitation and sustainable procurement standards.

2. Financing and Investment: Expand the use of Global Gateway instruments (EFSD+, EIB Global, Invest International, and AfDB Corridor Investment Platforms) to de-risk corridor investments and mobilise blended finance.

3. Green Transition: Integrate decarbonisation, renewable energy and green hydrogen initiatives into corridor planning to promote climate-resilient and low-carbon logistics.

4. Digitalisation and Innovation: Scale adoption of digital customs, port management systems, deployment of trusted advanced 5G connectivity and cross-border data platforms to reduce trade costs and increase transparency.

5. Skills and Inclusion: Embed technical and vocational training (TVET) programmes in corridor projects, focusing on youth and women, to strengthen workforce readiness and inclusive participation.

6. Governance and Transparency: Promote REC-led corridor authorities with clear accountability, monitoring, and reporting mechanisms aligned with AU–EU priorities.

By advancing these actions, governments and partners will unlock Africa's transport corridors as engines of trade, innovation, and shared prosperity, anchoring a resilient, sustainable and competitive Africa–Europe connectivity partnership.

PROPOSALS - ACCESS TO FINANCE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

1 Sector Overview and Priorities

Access to finance lies at the heart of the Global Gateway (GG) Initiative and the African Union's Agenda 2063, both of which recognise that sustainable development and inclusive industrialisation depend on a strong, dynamic private sector. SMEs and MSMEs, representing over 90% of businesses and 60% of jobs across Africa (AfDB, 2023)[3], remain the backbone of that growth. Yet, despite their potential, around 65% of African SMEs still lack adequate access to credit, creating an estimated USD 330 billion annual financing gap across Sub-Saharan Africa (IFC, 2022)[4].

The EU–Africa partnership under Global Gateway provides a unique platform to mobilise capital, de-risk investment and align policy reforms that unlock private-sector financing. High borrowing costs, often between 15% and 25%, limited collateral, and information asymmetries have constrained SME expansion and cross-border trade. To address these barriers, GG and Agenda 2063 promote an integrated, multi-layered approach to finance, combining micro-level SME instruments, meso-level market infrastructure, and macro-level regulatory alignment, to create a conducive investment climate.[5]

The landscape of access to finance is also rapidly evolving, driven by FinTech innovation, digital financial inclusion and blended-finance instruments that are expanding opportunities on both continents. EU-Africa cooperation adds tangible value by pairing Europe's expertise in green finance, guarantees and regulatory predictability with Africa's entrepreneurial dynamism, innovation, and expanding digital finance ecosystems. Together, both continents can crowd in private-sector investment, scale blended-finance models, and strengthen financial ecosystems that power green industrialisation, digital transformation, and value-added production under Global Gateway and Agenda 2063.

2 Business Outcome

To translate policy ambitions under the **Global Gateway (GG)** and **AU Agenda 2063** into tangible results, business-driven initiatives must directly address financing gaps and build inclusive investment ecosystems. These **Business Outcomes** propose practical, scalable solutions that mobilise both public and private capital, enhance SME competitiveness, and foster cross-border investment between Europe and Africa.

Each outcome identifies a concrete action, key implementing partners and an indicative timeline to ensure measurable impact.

1. **Launch an EU–Africa SME De-Risking Facility**

Establish a blended-finance vehicle, co-funded by the EIB, AfDB, and private investors, to expand access to green and digital MSME finance under the Global Gateway.

Action: Operationalise the facility and pilot deployment in three markets within 12–18 months.

[3] **African Development Bank (AfDB)** – *African Economic Outlook 2023: Mobilising Private-Sector Financing for Climate and Green Growth*
[4] **International Finance Corporation (IFC)** – *MSME Finance Gap Report 2022*
[5] **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** – *Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs 2023: An OECD Scoreboard*
European Investment Bank (EIB) & AfDB Joint Report (2022) – *Financing Africa's Sustainable Growth*

2. **Create an EU–Africa Fund-of-Funds Platform**

Link European institutional investors with African pension and sovereign wealth funds to scale SME and mid-cap financing across priority value chains.

Action: Design governance and investment architecture in 2026, with launch targeted by mid-2026.

3. **Develop Joint ECA-Backed Project Pipelines**

Coordinate Export Credit Agencies, DFIs, and national banks to structure and finance flagship projects in Global Gateway priority sectors such as energy, logistics, and agri-industry.

Action: Identify and package the first pipeline of projects for financing by early 2026.

4. **Establish Regional SME Investment Hubs**

Building on the IYBA, create integrated hubs that blend finance, technical assistance, and policy dialogue to strengthen SME ecosystems in selected pilot countries.

Action: Launch three hubs in partnership with local financial institutions between 2025–2026.

5. **Launch a Digital Trade-Finance Platform**

Develop an online platform connecting African SMEs to EU financiers, guarantee instruments and DFIs to streamline access to trade and working-capital finance.

Action: Beta-test the platform in two regional markets by late 2025, with full roll-out in 2026.

6. **Introduce a Blended-Finance Certification Programme**

Establish a joint EU–AU training and accreditation scheme for African banks and intermediaries to strengthen blended-finance structuring, risk management, and ESG standards.

Action: Develop curriculum and pilot the first cohort under the Global Gateway capacity-building track by 2025.

3 Call for Action

Access to finance is central to achieving the ambitions of the **Global Gateway (GG)** and **AU Agenda 2063**, both of which recognise that a thriving SME sector is the backbone of sustainable growth, innovation and job creation. Yet, fragmented regulatory frameworks, limited risk-sharing mechanisms, and foreign-exchange exposure continue to constrain investment flows. A coordinated **AU–EU policy effort** is needed to harmonise standards, mobilise blended finance and foster an enabling business environment that empowers SMEs and attracts long-term private capital.

1. **Adopt an AU–EU SME Finance Compact**

   Formalise a joint policy framework under GG and Agenda 2063 to harmonise credit-risk standards, guarantee mechanisms and cross-border lending criteria.

   Action: Endorse within AU–EU ministerial dialogues on Trade and Finance by **mid-2026**.

2. **Establish a Joint AU–EU Guarantee Platform**
   Pool instruments from DFIs, ECAs, and national development banks to expand risk-sharing capacity and derisk SME lending.

   Action: Launch pilot phase under the **Global Gateway Investment Package** by **early 2026**.

3. **Promote Local-Currency Financing Frameworks**
   Encourage EU–Africa DFIs and central banks to expand local-currency lines to reduce FX risk for SMEs and infrastructure projects.

   Action: Develop harmonised guidelines for local-currency facilities by **late 2025**.

4. **Integrate Credit-Information and Rating Systems**
   Scale regional credit bureaus and support the African Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA) to enhance transparency and reduce collateral requirements.

   Action: Establish AU–EU working group on financial data and transparency by **2025**.

5. **Accelerate Business-Climate and Regulatory Reforms**
   Advance predictable policy environments through simplified licensing, collateral registration and insolvency regimes aligned with Agenda 2063 reforms.

   Action: Incorporate progress tracking into **AU peer-review mechanisms** by **2026**.

6. **Institutionalise Technical-Assistance Facilities**
   Embed targeted TA programmes under Global Gateway to strengthen SME capacity and intermediary bank readiness for blended-finance deployment.

   Action: Operationalise first TA facility in collaboration with **EIB, AfDB and national DFIs** by **2025**.

PROPOSALS - CIRCULAR ECONOMY TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

1 Sector overview and priorities

Africa and Europe are at a pivotal moment in redefining economic cooperation through the lens of sustainability. The circular economy (CE) offers a transformative pathway to decouple growth from resource depletion, promote innovation and build resilience in the face of climate change. While CE adoption in Africa remains limited, its potential to drive green industrialisation, job creation and waste reduction is immense. Aligning with the EU Green Deal, the Africa Circular Economy Action Plan (2024–2034) and Agenda 2063, CE can foster new markets for recycling, eco-packaging, and secondary materials, while enhancing competitiveness under the AfCFTA.

Key challenges include limited access to finance for SMEs and community-led initiatives, fragmented regulatory frameworks, low levels of technical capacity, and insufficient investment in CE infrastructure and value chains. Priority opportunities lie in scaling blended finance mechanisms, harmonising CE standards and governance, and strengthening partnerships for skills development, innovation and technology transfer across both continents.

2. Business Outcome

The private sector commits to advancing inclusive EU–Africa investment partnerships that scale circular economy value chains and strengthen Africa's capacity for green industrialisation. This Business Outcome aims to establish a joint EU–Africa Circular Economy Investment Platform (CEIP) by 2026, to mobilise blended finance, de-risk CE-focused SMEs, and facilitate technology transfer and market access.

The CEIP will pool resources from European DFIs, African financial institutions and private investors to finance recycling and waste-to-value projects, eco-innovation and resource-efficient manufacturing. It will also support the creation of regional CE hubs and promote cooperation between industry, academia and governments to scale technical assistance and capacity-building programmes.

Implementation will be driven by a coalition of European and African partners, including Enabel, SITRA, INTPA, AUDA-NEPAD, the African Development Bank, and private sector actors from Europe and Africa such as Veolia, Scania, Gauff Engineering and others from Africa, aligned with the Africa Circular Economy Action Plan.

A two-year implementation window (2025–2027) will focus on:

1. **Launching the Circular Economy Investment Platform;**
2. **Mobilising initial investments; and**
3. **Demonstrating scalable CE business models across key sectors including plastics, construction and manufacturing.**

3. Call for Action

The private sector calls upon the African Union, the European Union, and member states to adopt enabling policy measures that accelerate the transition to a circular economy and unlock investment at scale.

Specifically, governments are urged to:

1. **Harmonise CE regulatory frameworks** across the AU and EU, aligning with the EU Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, and AfCFTA protocols to boost investor confidence and market access.

2. **Establish dedicated CE financing facilities and guarantees** under instruments such as Global Gateway and EFSD+ to de-risk private investment and expand access to blended finance for SMEs.

3. **Integrate CE principles into national industrialisation and trade strategies**, supported by extended producer responsibility and waste traceability systems.

4. **Invest in skills development and inclusion by strengthening TVET systems and empowering youth and women entrepreneurs in CE sectors**.

By adopting these measures, African and European leaders will enable a just and competitive CE transition that creates jobs, enhances sustainability and drives innovation across both continents.