



REPORT

Global Gateway Strategic Corridors: a catalyst for regional connectivity and economic integration in Africa

International Partnerships InfoPoint

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Speakers:

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- **Bruce Byiers**, Head of African economic integration, ECDPM

The African Union Development Agency (AUDA) analyses regional integration along five dimensions - among which there are free movements as well as trade and macro-economic capacities - and has assessed that there is still a lot to do in terms of continental infrastructural integration. They have identified 69 infrastructural projects across different sectors (water, energy, transport, ICT) through an “**integrated corridor approach**” that takes into account criteria such as the potential of job creation, spatial connectivity, sustainability, urban-rural connectivity, gender and youth inclusiveness, smart and innovative technologies. Many of these projects have been selected due to their collocation on important and strategic corridors, highways or trans-African projects. Therefore, the EU aims at making sure that these strategic corridors align and link up with PIDA portfolio as much as possible.

The tools used by AUDA-PIDA to address challenges include:

- Project preparation
- Risk mitigation and investment mobilization
- Political steering
- Information management and knowledge capitalization

The Global Gateway initiative will help strategic corridors in the building of capabilities at the member states level, accelerate private investment and improve innovative sources of climatic finance (e.g.: green bonds), funding and consolidation of services, strengthen mutual cooperation (intra-African trade), synergy and coherence in finance mechanisms and initiatives (for better management of resources and in support of African ambitions in infrastructure development).

Historically, the EU has been one of the main partners of Africa in infrastructure financing and in 2022 the EU selected 11 strategic corridors, but it should engage to do even more. The EU has moved under the belief that it is possible to support infrastructure development to respond to increased demand without necessarily increasing carbon emissions and endangering biodiversity. Therefore the integrated corridor approach is a good approach and it can help meet the demand without leading to negative environmental impacts.



The Joint Research Centre has been involved in a multicriteria analysis to support the EU Commission to select corridors in Africa that can be interesting for African priorities and Euro-African partnerships.

In Europe, Art. 43 and Regulation 1315/2013 give a definition of corridors and identify projects of common interest, instead in Africa there is the absence of such legal provisions to apply instruments from the EU, but there is work in progress to develop a legal framework on the continental level. The study has identified 55 corridors (4 kinds of corridors: economic, system-of-city coastal, cross-regional, Africa-Europe connectivity) and they used 32 indicators to make them comparable for all four scenarios (green, human development, jobs & growth, Euro-African connectivity) with the broader aim to address poverty, land-locked areas and harmful practices for the environment. The majority of these projects are positioned in West Africa, due to its higher population density and its greater political links with Europe, but all of them have been selected on the basis of their impact on Europe and on African priorities in terms of win-win strategy.

For the period 2021-2027 the EU has allocated:

- € **1 billion** grants for strategic corridors (research, investment, governance)
- € **0.6 billion** for urban centres along the corridors mainly for urban mobility
- € **80 million** in support of African transport policies and regulations

State of play:

- Support from Global Gateway Package
- 2^o phase of the JRC study: zooming in what are the main areas of interest where there is a more added value for EU intervention along corridors
- Develop credible pipelines as Team Europe aligned with national strategies and needs
- Global Gateway Flagship Projects (2023, 2024...)

A political-economic analysis has shown that:

- Corridors are on the rise again, starting from the 1970s (trans-African highways) up until now with various projects
- There has been development through connectivity in sectors such as water, energy and transport but they also trying to reduce trade times and costs to promote local, external and intra-African trade.
- Two cases have been highlighted:
 1. the Maputo development corridor: a success story, on the political level there was a move towards establishing greater links between South Africa and Mozambique at the end of the 1990s through PPP (public-private partnerships)



2. the North-South corridor: multi-country, multi-donor, multi-border project with diverse state interests and shows how politically important are corridors on the domestic level because if it does not support domestic interests it comes to be seen as a “foreign intervention” → underlines the point that institutions between and within countries matter and the corridor can be used not merely for transport but also for development reasons
- There has to be an engagement from the political national level in corridors, but the question is: can corridors build-on or lock-in domestic policy reforms?
 - Formal and informal rules & actors are key (change of government leading to change in freight rules etc.)
 - Corridors may seem “technical” but they require thinking and working politically within and between states, between and within groups & actors and problem-solving
 - A continuous update is needed to keep the right focus on them