



THE TEAM EUROPE APPROACH:

*Methods and tools for
EU Delegations to work better
together with Member States
in a Team Europe approach.*

Guidance Abridged version

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Printed by the Publications Office of the European Union in Luxembourg. Manuscript completed in 2025

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025
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INTRODUCTION

This abridged version aims to give a short and accessible overview of and introduction to key elements of the guidance on working better together in a Team Europe approach (referred to below as the Team Europe approach) . It does not replace the full guidance, but rather serves as a taster for the topic.

The objective of the guidance is to help you to work better together in a Team Europe approach in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 17 on strengthening partnerships for enhanced collaboration and synergies.

The guidance is primarily directed at practitioners taking the Team Europe approach processes forward at country, regional or global level. It can also be helpful to partners of the Team Europe approach, particularly partner countries but also multilateral organisations, civil society and the private sector etc.

This guidance emphasises the voluntary, flexible, and context driven nature of the Team Europe approach. It is not prescriptive, but rather encourages colleagues to innovate and adopt pragmatic approaches that are best suited to specific objectives such as scaling up Global Gateway investments, capacities, and resources in line with the EU's values and principles.

THE FOUNDATION

The Team Europe Approach is a consistent, overall way of working. It has evolved from the idea of joint programming in 2008 and the subsequent EU commitment to the development effectiveness principles in 2011, to the Team Europe's approach response to COVID-19 and the Global Gateway strategy. Continuously evolving, the overall aim and guiding principle for the EU and EU Member States is to work with partner countries and other partners to improve development effectiveness and have greater impact for people living in poverty.

The Team Europe approach is essentially about 'coming together' to jointly reflect, analyse, and plan and 'doing together' through joint and coordinated policy dialogue, parallel and joint actions, projects and communication. Ideally actors following a Team Europe approach both 'come' and 'do' together, but it is possible to just focus on one or the other separately. The Team Europe approach comprises three main methods, all of which can contribute to the identification of Global Gateway investments: joint programming, joint implementation and Team Europe Initiatives. Joint programming can generally work as the strategic umbrella for joint implementation and Team Europe Initiatives, but the 3 methods can also be followed separately or in other combinations¹. The three different methods are implemented using tools that might be shared between the methods or specific to each method. Examples of such tools include joint analysis, parallel financing, joint intervention logics, joint results monitoring, policy dialogue etc.

The actors following a Team Europe approach are the European Union, the EU Member States (including their diplomatic network, finance institutions (including national development banks) and implementing agencies, as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). With the rollout of the Global Gateway strategy, European private sector representatives (e.g., companies, investors) as well as the Member States' export credit- and export promotion agencies are more and more integral to this grouping due to the role they play in catalyzing investments within the framework of our international partnerships. A partner of the Team Europe approach is defined as any organisation that is not a Team Europe actor but is an external partner to actors following a Team Europe approach in their work, such as partners working with us to deliver the results in a Team Europe approach such as development partners, local private sector, civil society, local authorities in partner countries, and multi-lateral partners such as the United Nations, the International Labour Organization or the World Bank.

Partnership and collaboration are at the heart of the Team Europe approach, in line with development effectiveness principles and a human rights-based, gender-responsive and conflict sensitive approach. Inclusive and meaningful consultations in all phases are central to the Team Europe approach to foster an inclusive, effective, legitimate, accountable engagement with partner countries, other development partners and other stakeholders to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, including through the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy. The Team Europe approach is built on i) enhanced consultation, ii) policy dialogue, iii) identifying priorities in line with partner country priorities, iv) strengthening partnership dynamics and v) requesting and providing input and feedback.

There is great value in the Team Europe approach. It enhances the EU's contribution to results and impact by responding to our partner countries' needs and priorities; strengthens European partnerships by aligning policy and political dialogue; promotes a joint EU response grounded in human-rights and gender equality; increases the EU's visibility and influence; strengthens the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; and makes EU development cooperation, external action, and European investments more inclusive through a broader and more diverse EU offer. In the context of Global Gateway and the launch of Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships Team Europe also helps deepen the EU's economic and trade relationships with partner countries. By aligning infrastructure investments with sustainable development goals and EU strategic objectives, Global Gateway supports job creation, economic diversification, and resilient value chains in key sectors such as renewable energy and critical raw materials. The engagement of export credit agencies and the EU private sector ensure that investment and trade is both sustainable and reciprocal—delivering tangible benefits for the European Union and its partners.

➔ For further reading please see Section 1 and Annex 4 of the full guidance.

¹ See visual overview of the TEA and its three main methods at the end of this abridged version of the guidance.

JOINT PROGRAMMING

Joint programming is a method for coming together through a joint analysis and joint response to develop a comprehensive, cross-sectoral shared strategic vision for EU and MS external action in a partner country. It is a strategic engagement process through which the EU and MS representations in consultation with national authorities and other key national stakeholders define a strategic framework for their relations with the partner country, which also covers the Global Gateway investment agenda. In line with the principles of development effectiveness, the joint programming is centred around joint, strategic objectives which are aligned with the partner country's National Development Plan. These provide an umbrella framework linking up the usually more sector-focused Team Europe initiatives and joint implementation to reduce silo-approaches and fragmentation. Joint programming allows actors following a Team Europe approach to make (joint) strategic decisions based on a comprehensive view of European actors' support to a given partner country. More specifically:

- Joint programming can be defined as a strategic, coherent, and coordinated method to European development cooperation and external action planning at country level. It is the preferred method for programming at partner country level, where feasible, and is a voluntary, flexible, and tailored process.
- Core elements, principles and steps include a joint analysis, a joint response, and a joint results framework. Reviews are foreseen as basis for collective dialogue, learning and adaptation.
- Joint programming supports “thinking jointly” about the implementation of development cooperation and other external activities. It enables actors following a Team Europe approach to make strategic decisions on the use of resources, drawing on agreed division of labour and potential joint implementation modalities.
- Joint programming should also lead to speaking with one voice in joint policy dialogue with partner country stakeholders as well as and joint visibility for European support.
- Heads of Delegation, together with Member State Heads of Mission, steer the process and consult the corresponding sections (Commission services/EEAS) throughout the process
- Beyond the actors following a Team Europe approach, external stakeholders should be involved and consulted throughout the joint programming process, from design to implementation and monitoring, considering that country ownership, partnerships and collaboration are at the heart of the Team Europe approach.
- The scope and ambitions of joint programming is to strengthen the efficiency, coherence, transparency, predictability, and visibility of the external assistance of the EU and its Member States. Core EU values and universally recognised human rights, including gender equality, and principles of good governance and engagement with civil society are core parts of the approach.
- Joint programming also provides an avenue to identify in a Team Europe approach the key issues at country and regional level that are conducive for the identification of Global Gateway investments.
- There is an opportunity to further expand joint programming to fragile situations and conflict-affected situations. The starting point for this must be an early, coordinated, and shared conflict analysis as a strategic basis for conflict-sensitive joint programming.

→ For further reading please see Section 2 and Annex 1 of the full guidance.

JOINT IMPLEMENTATION

Joint implementation is a method for working together to support more coherent implementation in a specific area, including by playing a key role in the implementation of Global Gateway investments. Joint implementation, whether financial or non-financial, translates shared objectives into collaborative action by establishing practical arrangements at implementation level. The goal is to maximise the impact of EU and Member States collective expertise and resources. Joint implementation should result in more coherent, effective, efficient and coordinated support at country and regional level, thus contributing to greater external action and development impact, the facilitation of European investments and EU strategic interest. More specifically:

- Joint implementation can take various forms, financial and non-financial, and has evolved towards becoming a collection of tools rather than a specific process. Whether financial or non-financial it translates shared objectives into collaborative action by establishing arrangements for working together. The purpose is to maximise the impact of the EU and Member States collective expertise and resources.
- Key characteristics of joint implementation include that it is specific to the country context; it makes best use of the combined toolbox of the EU, its Member States and their comparative advantages; it is based on the sharing and applying of best practices, experiences and networks at country/regional level; and it provides examples and content for joint communication and messaging on what can be delivered in a Team Europe approach.
- Involvement of actors and partners in Team Europe approach typically starts at the technical and operational level. Programme managers tend to be in the lead. It is important to link up this level with the mechanisms in place under the Joint programming and Team Europe Initiatives, especially to support joint policy and political-level dialogue. Joint implementation can include public and non-public actors and partners in a Team Europe approach that share European objectives and values.
- Joint implementation involves a wide range of financial and non-financial tools for working together. Joint implementation should cover all parts of the intervention cycle as well as activities around it, including coordination mechanisms and collaborative arrangements. Interventions involving non-financial means could include joint sectoral/thematic analysis such as joint gender analysis; joint project identification; joint follow-up and evaluation of interventions; joint visibility strategies. Actions involving financial means include delegated cooperation, joint and parallel co-financing and even contributions in kind. Examples include multi-donor actions, blending with European financial institutions or financial guarantees, Twinning/TAIEX modalities.

➔ For further reading please see Section 3 and Annex 2 of the full guidance.

TEAM EUROPE INITIATIVES

Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) is a method that straddles both ‘coming together’ and ‘doing together’. TEIs focus on specific areas of shared interest, where a coordinated and coherent effort through a Team Europe approach and anchored in European principles and values ensures results with a transformative impact. TEIs aspire to use the most effective combination of resources, instruments, and expertise to achieve impact and are one of the main tools that can be used to scale up Global Gateway. More specifically:

- TEIs can be defined as working better together through three elements: 1) scale, combining resources, expertise, and tools; 2) focus, becoming the partner of reference on selected priorities; and 3) ensuring visibility on the concrete impact of the Team Europe approach.
- TEIs combine existing and planned EU, Member States’ and European financing institutions’ resources, instruments, and expertise so that they jointly work on common objectives, which are of shared interest for both actors following a Team Europe approach and partner country governments. TEIs are comprised of coordinated but independently implemented components.
- TEIs are made up of different components that are each separately funded by one or more TEI participants. TEIs are about placing these different components in a coherent whole, which then becomes more than the sum of its parts because the TEI enhances development effectiveness and include, for example, joint policy dialogue and visibility dimensions.
- TEIs are grounded at the most appropriate level for action ie. country, regional or global. For regional and global TEIs it is important to ensure that they respond to challenges that are regional/global in nature and cannot be (solely) addressed at country level. Regional and global TEIs should not duplicate country level TEIs but complement and work in synergy with them.
- A TEI participant is any actor following a Team Europe approach, hence the EU, its Member States, including their implementing agencies, public development banks, development finance institution and export credit agencies, as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), that contributes financially to a TEI. Inclusiveness is a core principle and all TEI participants are part of the management and political steer of the TEI, whatever the size/type of their contribution
- Participation in a TEI could be through any implementation modality (grant, loan, guarantee, blended finance, technical assistance, hosting of an event etc.), including in-kind contributions if a financial value can be associated with them. For a country TEI there should be at least 3 TEI participants: for a regional TEI, at least 4.
- Coordination of TEIs and their management set-up should be as simple as possible and retain flexibility, building on the coordination role of EU Delegations. Ambassadors steer the process, while Cooperation and/or Political/Economic counsellors manage the implementation.
- The core elements of Team Europe Initiatives are the design and formulation of TEIs, which consists of a concept note, a Joint Intervention Logic (JIL) and a mapping of indicative financial contributions. The Monitoring, reporting and evaluation of TEIs is critical to showcase their impact, contribute to accountability and providing visibility to the work of the EU and Member States. Monitoring is conceived in a way to make use of EU and Member States usual standards and practices and a financial tracking methodology for TEIs has been agreed.
- Partner country authorities, other development partners, and other stakeholders and partners should be consulted throughout the TEI project cycle, considering that country ownership, partnerships and collaboration are at the heart of the Team Europe approach.

➔ For further reading please see Section 4 and Annex 3 of the full guidance.

VISUAL OVERVIEW OF THE TEAM EUROPE APPROACH AND ITS THREE METHODS



