



## Minutes of the Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Advisory Platform Plenary Meeting

Brussels, 1 December 2025

### 1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda for the plenary Meeting of the Global Gateway (GG) Civil Society and Local Authorities Advisory Platform (hereinafter *the Platform*) was collaboratively developed in partnership with the steering group of the Platform.

### 2. Nature of the meeting

The Platform's third plenary meeting since its inauguration in October 2023.

The meeting took place on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025. The meeting was based on invitation only and included in-person participation of the Europe based members of the Platform and online participation of all the other Platform members.

### 3. List of points discussed

#### *Platform Working Session:*

- During the first working session of the meeting, participants were updated on the Global Gateway strategic evaluation planned indicatively to be launched at the end of 2026.
  - The Advisory Platform will be able to feed into the evaluation. The timing and objectives remain tentative, with confirmation expected early next year. The Platform will be informed to follow-up and align preparatory efforts and coordinate inputs.

- It was mentioned that the GAP III evaluation process had provided a good practice on how to involve civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) early into the evaluation design and process.
- The Platform was then updated on the ongoing mapping exercise, which aims to identify the geographical presence and thematic focus of Platform members and their local constituents, to enable rapid identification of engagement opportunities.
  - Currently, 40% of the platform members have completed the submissions, 40% have not started, and 20% have partially filled in the information.
  - The data already shows a strong presence on the African continent, with three main countries of operation (Kenya, Cameroon and Tanzania).
  - Technical improvements to the mapping platform are underway, including Excel data import to ease bulk uploads and revisions to questions for easier analysis; these aim to reduce user burden and increase data quality.
  - It was agreed to simplify the exercise and to focus on collecting information on country and thematic presence, leaving optional the completion of further details on the identify of their network members.
  - It was also agreed that Platform members would stay the contact point before outreach by EU delegations to their members and that data sensitivities are taken into account and therefore no publication of any data is foreseen.

*Dialogue with Jozef Síkela, Commissioner for International Partnerships:*

- In his opening remarks, Mr. Jozef Síkela, Commissioner for International Partnerships emphasised scaling up Global Gateway (GG) through sustainable, mutually beneficiary partnerships, highlighting the essential role of civil society and local authorities for grounded projects.

He noted improved social impact in 2024, with 62% of new investments contributing to reducing inequalities, up from 59% in 2023. He highlighted the €14.9 million committed to provide local communities with education on logistics, energy, and mineral processing within the Lobito Corridor project in Zambia as an example of integrated, locally impactful investment.

Commissioner Síkela outlined three ways to further enhance impact:

- 1) Deepening collaboration with EU delegations and civil society organisations, local authorities and philanthropic actors on Global Gateway to unlock innovative funding methods.
- 2) Using tools such as Finance Not Linked to Cost (FNLC) and direct access to finance for smaller or informal CSOs operating in restrictive environments through Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), and direct access to finance for local authorities.
- 3) Inviting civil society and local authorities to bring forward concrete initiatives that support Global Gateway projects.

He also encouraged civil society and local authorities to use the Global Gateway Investment Hubs to identify opportunities and coordinate efforts at EU Member State level.

- Members of the platform showcased for the Commissioner how civil society and local authorities strengthen Global Gateway projects through co-design, monitoring, and local ownership.

**Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)** gave overall feedback on the Global Gateway roll-out on behalf of all Platform members. They emphasised civil society's dual role as service providers and co-implementers, calling for the Investment Hubs to be more accessible to smaller actors and urging stronger safeguards on biodiversity, gender-based violence, and transparency.

**Plataforma/CEMR** highlighted Costa Rica's electric train project, the MuEVE project, as a model of early local government engagement. This project, funded under the "Partnerships for Sustainable Cities" EU programme, works directly with 15 municipalities to plan and implement infrastructure improvements around train stations and schools, ensuring inclusive access for women, vulnerable populations, and multimodal transport users. Through an intermunicipal cooperation agreement, the 15 municipalities jointly design and execute interventions, while contributing to a Sub-Regional Urban Development Plan.

Las were involved meaningfully in its governance and benefited directly from part of the funding. Core competences of the municipalities provided key added value to the project (urban planning, maintenance and construction of the roads and sidewalks, waste management). Thanks to several city-to-city partnerships aimed at sharing know-how and

technical expertise (with municipalities in the Netherlands and Spain), the project's governance was strengthened. While this project was a particular best practice, it was noted that more Global Gateway projects need to involve local authorities meaningfully.

The **Association for Progressive Communication (APC)** presented civil society-led initiatives in Argentina (Impacto Verde project) and Colombia (Comunidades Conectadas). These projects contribute to the Global Gateway's principles through co-creation and co-implementation with local communities and small local enterprises, creating both technical and social legitimacy at the local level as well as a local ownership. Through integrated innovative and blended finance mechanisms including social impact investors, philanthropy, and local and community enterprises, they demonstrate good practices to successfully catalyse private sector investments and the potential to scale-up larger investment opportunities. The projects show benefits for local communities and reduced inequalities, including gender disparities. Additionally, green jobs were created, especially for women and youth, empowering local communities and making the investments even more inclusive and sustainable.

**People in Need** described the "Corridor Voices" initiative along the Lobito Corridor, which links 74 CSOs across three countries (Angola, Zambia and the DRC) to improve coordination, data use, and community feedback, offering a unique model for other cross-border Global Gateway projects. With the objective to create a trusted pathway for engagement with the private investors and to operationalise the Global Gateway 360°-approach, this civil society platform organised mappings, workshops, social risk assessments and assessments of the CSO ecosystem and its readiness. It was noted that local CSOs have shown a high interest and engagement in this initiative, contributing to generating data needed for the inclusive and sustainable development of the Corridor. Furthermore, the initiative is a replicable model due to its modular approach, cross-border compatibility and evidence-based approach that is lightweight and flexible. It could therefore provide a framework for other Global Gateway projects such as the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor, the LAPSSET Corridor or other cross-border initiatives.

### *Global Gateway key principles working session*

- This working session was a guided discussion on how to ensure Global Gateway is people centred. Participants brainstormed on what the Platform would like to do on gender

equality in GG, inclusive decision-making in GG governance, and reducing inequalities with GG. The ideas were shared in an online platform and will be reviewed by the Steering Group for further steps.

### *Information exchange and updates on Advisory Platform members' work and research on Global Gateway working session*

- In the last working session, two recent research pieces by Platform members were presented, offering critical analysis and forward-looking recommendations to strengthen Global Gateway's impact, monitoring and strategic alignment.

[The Global Gateway's contribution to decent work](#) report from ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation's) identified gaps in decent work monitoring, recommending markers on employment and decent work in action documents and to track financial flows that support the GG implementation, streamlined indicators, and enhanced stakeholder consultation to improve evaluation and accountability.

The Africa Europe Foundation's [State of Africa-Europe 2025 Report](#) highlighted declining official development assistance and recommended smarter financing through domestic resource mobilisation, tackling illicit flows, and targeted investments in sectors like health and green value chains. It calls for pilot value chain analyses, better use of frameworks like PIDA, and investments in digital and cultural sectors to create youth jobs.

INTPA mentioned the launch of the updated Civil Society Roadmap guidance for EU Delegations to map relevant civil society and better integrate Global Gateway into their exchanges with civil society. INTPA also announced its plans to explore separate tracks and guidance for local authorities' engagement.

#### **4. Conclusions:**

It was agreed the meeting was very timely in preparation of the Global Gateway strategic evaluation process. Advisory Platform members and Commission staff agreed to focus on manageable, country- and theme-specific data contributions for the membership mapping. The discussion also highlighted exploring local authority engagement tracks. The Commission encouraged organisations to bring forward concrete initiatives that support Global Gateway

projects and to engage on EU Member States level through the Global Gateway Investment Hubs.

***Recommendations and key messages from Platform members:***

- Enhancing the work of the Advisory Platform by breaking silos with the private sector.
- Empowering local authorities to deliver their mandate in support of Global Gateway projects.
- Providing guidance to Teams National and EU Delegations to ensure systematic and meaningful involvement of local authorities.
- Going beyond simple consultation of CSOs and LAs, involving them in design and deployment of Global Gateway projects as a way to increase their value.
- Leveraging the ability of CSOs and philanthropies to contribute to these projects and attract other sources of private capital for SMEs, blending them with public resources.
- To actively consider CSOs as long-term partners in designing and deploying Global Gateway, leveraging local expertise and mechanisms to achieve its inclusive and sustainable development goals.
- Hard infrastructure alone doesn't deliver impact; it comes with the respect of the six GG Key principles and the involvement of CSOs and LAs.
- Barriers to a 360° approach are numerous (one-way consultations, exclusion of women and youth, lack of dialogue between the private sector and local communities, high social risks, etc.)
- A cross-border approach to CSO and LA engagement is essential to match the scope of regional GG projects and maximise its impact and CSOs and LAs' ability to bring value in a coordinated way.

***Next steps***

- The Platform will provide input and feedback on the Global Gateway strategic evaluation when requested.
- Platform members to submit membership and operational data in the mapping platform focusing on partner countries and thematic areas, acknowledging sensitive data issues, and following guidance from DG INTPA.
- The mapping platform will be upgraded and simplified.
- Steering group to follow-up on discussions in working sessions regarding what the Platform can do to ensure Global Gateway is people-centred (related to gender, governance and inequalities).