

Global Gateway through the lense of local and regional governments

Note – December 2025

What is the Global Gateway?

The Global Gateway is the EU's flagship strategy for investment in partner countries, to promote smart, clean and secure connections in digital, energy and transport sectors, while also strengthening health, education and research systems worldwide. The initiative aims to mobilise €400 billion in investments by 2027 and, through a "Team Europe approach", engage the private sector to leverage financing for a transformational impact in partner countries.

Its investments follow six core principles: democratic values and high standards; good governance and transparency; equal partnerships; green and clean sustainability; security-focused approach; and private sector catalysation. The strategy addresses global investment gaps in five priority areas: digital; climate and energy; transport; health; education and research.

The Global Gateway is implemented through projects (both so called "flagships projects" and smaller regular "projects") in [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), [Asia and the Pacific](#), [Sub-Saharan Africa](#), as well as in the [Southern Neighbourhood](#), the [Eastern Neighbourhood](#), and the [Western Balkans](#).

Several examples of Global Gateway projects led or supported by local and regional governments (LRGs) illustrate its local impact potential – as emphasised by the examples of [LRGs best practices of Global Gateway projects](#), gathered in a booklet at the occasion of the 2025 Forum for Cities and International Partnerships.

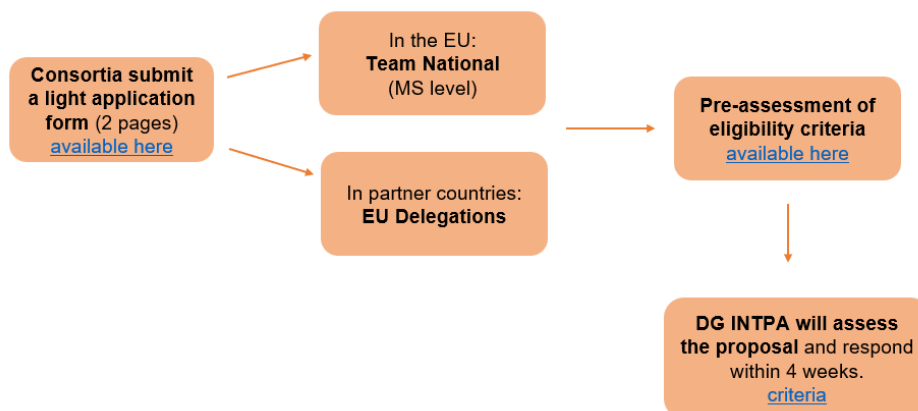
How can LRGs contribute to the Global Gateway?

Global Gateway promises a value-based offer and local impact, two areas where LRGs can play a key role, fostering inclusive governance and policy coherence. Their contribution can be enabled in two main ways:

Global Gateway Investment Hub

The first is through the [Global Gateway Investment hub](#), launched in October 2025. The Hub acts as a single-entry platform enabling companies, and potentially public authorities, to submit investment proposals and access **EU financial and non-financial support**, including funding from the European Commission, European Investment Bank (EIB), development financial institutions (DFIs), export-credit agencies, and national governments.

The application follows a few steps:



Source: PLATFORMA, based on the European Commission's website

1. EU companies and consortia should submit proposals through a simplified [application form](#) via their **Team National** for projects in the EU (Team National contact points [available at this link](#)), or through **EU delegations** for projects in partner countries.
2. To be eligible, projects must align with Global Gateway principles and priority sectors, demonstrate significant investment volume (typically above €10 million), and include a meaningful own contribution by the project sponsor (10% of project investment size), though this threshold does not apply where the financial support required is for a public authority from the partner country. **Other eligibility criteria applied during the pre-assessment phase are [accessible on the European Commission's website](#).**
3. Once a proposal successfully passes this eligibility stage, it is evaluated through the DG INTPA assessment criteria ([available here](#)). A response follows within four weeks.

Although simple, as it stands, this framework presents challenges for LRGs: local involvement is not an explicit assessment criterion, and the existing criteria tend to favour large, mature, physical investment projects, making it difficult for LRGs to compete with major private actors.

It is worth mentioning that punctual calls for proposals should be published, which, if targeted and tailored towards Local and Regional Governments, could indeed represent a potential opportunity to specifically support their involvement.

Complementary source of funding

An alternative way to enhance LRGs' participation is to support enabling environments that scale up initial investments and catalyse the local impact of Global Gateway projects. Even when not direct Hub beneficiaries, LRGs can **implement parallel, synergistic projects** that amplify local outcomes.

An example of best practice contributing through complementary sources of funding is the **mUEve project in Costa Rica**, carried out alongside the Global Gateway flagship *Electric Passenger Train* project, which aims to electrifying and rehabilitating two double-track railway lines covering 51 kilometres across the San José Greater Metropolitan Area. Funded by DG INTPA under the former *Partnerships for Sustainable Cities* (€4.9 million, 2019–2025), mUEve supported 15 municipalities along the train route, enhanced urban governance,

strengthened the national association of municipalities, promoted gender-inclusive infrastructure, and improved surrounding pavements, public spaces, pedestrian and cycle routes connecting neighbourhoods to the railway.

Despite representing less than 2% of the loan supporting the railway project, mUEve delivered significant added value for over 3 million citizens of the San José metropolitan areas.

Crucially, mUEve's success derived from meaningful LRG participation: **local governments were not seen only as passive beneficiaries, but they were involved in the project's governance and had access to supporting budget.** This empowered them to steer territorial development, while local ownership ensured political backing, alignment with local realities and long-term sustainability. The project also reflected the Global Gateway's principle of equal partnerships, building on LRG practices in decentralised cooperation. EU partners ([VNGi](#) and Ciudad de Fomento de San Sebastián) engaged in peer-to-peer exchanges with Costa Rican counterparts to reinforce capacities.

PLATFORMA's recommendations on the Global Gateway

Unfortunately, **meaningful involvement of LRGs is not yet consistent** across Global Gateway. Indeed, a preliminary study commissioned by the European Commission found that only 30% of projects place local and regional governments in the **driving seat**, giving them **direct access to funding** and an **active role in project design and implementation**. The mUEve case therefore illustrates that meaningful participation of LRGs and their associations is not an add-on, but a prerequisite for the success and sustainability of Global Gateway.

For Global Gateway to reach its full potential, LRGs must be supported in delivering their mandates within the initiative. They **require direct, tailored access to funding** that reflects their size, capacities, and competencies. Under the current outline of the Global Gateway Investment Hub, LRGs compete with private companies, whereas their involvement should be fostered through:

- **Dedicated calls for proposals** and **evaluation criteria** within the Global Gateway Investment Hub framework.
- **Complementary funding streams**, as demonstrated by the previous *Partnerships for Sustainable Cities* programme.

Additionally, Teams National and EU Delegations should receive guidance to ensure they systematically and meaningfully involve LRGs when assessing Global Gateway projects. Enabling networks, such as national associations of local authorities and their international networks, can be instrumental in coordinating the involvement, and capacity building for local authorities.