

Briefing Note – Plenary session

Title of the plenary: “Fostering collaboration between Ghanaian and European entrepreneurial ecosystems – increasing investments in youth businesses in Ghana”

Date: Wednesday 21st May 2025 | **Time:** 09:00am-10:30am **Venue:** Accra, Ghana
Organized By: EU Delegation in Ghana, in collaboration with the [Team Europe Initiative](#) “Investing in Young Businesses in Africa” (TEI IYBA) and the EABF Facility. **Registration:** <https://ghanaeubusinessforum.eu/>

1 Background – key fact & figures

Ghana has a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. It has become an entrepreneurial hub in Africa, following Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. Ghana's startup and entrepreneurship scene has witnessed impressive growth over the last years. Currently, SMEs are the backbone of Ghana's economy, as they account for a staggering 85% of all enterprises in the country and contribute about 70% of Ghana's GDP. The nation's innovation ecosystems present an enabling environment that nurtures innovation and propel SMEs to unlock their full potential. There are over 200 different organizations supporting Ghana's entrepreneurial ecosystem through programming, funding, and other resources. Ghana's growth is thanks to several strengths, including significant consumer and business markets, sophisticated entrepreneurial talent, and a strong corporate sector.

However, challenges remain to promote young Ghanaian businesses towards investments. Some of the key challenges include: i) limited access to finance, with a certain misalignment between entrepreneurs seeking funding, and investors looking for investment opportunities; ii) limited business and management soft skills; iii) lack of collaboration and networking among entrepreneurs and ecosystem stakeholders within and outside Ghana; iv) complex and rigid regulatory environment; v) overlaps, overconcentration and weak coordination between entrepreneurship support programmes with a lack of diversification in the services being offered.

2 Plenary Objectives

This plenary session brings together entrepreneurs from early- to mid-stage businesses and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from across various sectors, alongside local and regional ecosystem stakeholders such as private investors, European development partners, finance institutions and Entrepreneurial support organisations (ESOs) – to **explore strategies for fostering collaboration between Ghanaian and European entrepreneurial ecosystems**.

The overall objective is to **find pathways and practical strategies to support the needs and overcome critical challenges faced by Ghanaian entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses**. How can local, regional and European ecosystem stakeholders can contribute to creating a vibrant environment that nurtures innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity by leveraging Ghana's rich human capital, natural resources, and strategic location? How can we foster investments in youth businesses in Ghana under the EU Global Gateway Strategy? How to unlock new markets and funding opportunities? In the end, how can African and European stakeholders and partners support Ghana to become the leading entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystem on the continent? The role of policy makers and the government entities supporting entrepreneurs and setting the stage for an enabling environment for entrepreneurs will be discussed.

By the end of the session, participants are also expected to gain a clearer understanding of available entrepreneurship support programmes, financial instruments, collaboration models, and support mechanisms that can help them scale their businesses sustainably and navigate the challenges of early and mid-stage growth, drawing success stories from Ghana, the region and Europe.

3 Key Topic for Discussions (tbc)

- **Fostering collaboration between African and European entrepreneurial ecosystems:** Understanding the unique strengths and challenges of both the Ghanaian and European entrepreneurial ecosystems is key. Examine opportunities, strategies and pathways for collaboration between EU and Ghanaian stakeholders. The session will highlight how strategic partnerships, cross-regional networks, support programmes and market linkages can open new growth pathways.
- **Accessing concessional finance and DFI Instruments:** Discuss the financing challenges entrepreneurs face and how EU-supported blended finance solutions — grants, concessional loans, guarantees, and equity—from DFIs can de-risk investments and unlock capital for growth and innovation. Zoom in on the EC tools and IYBA Guarantee Funds.
- **Building a policy and regulatory enabling environment to attract investment and favor ecosystem development:** A dialogue on how governments and regional bodies can harmonise policies and create enabling environments will help unlock sustainable capital and investment flows.
- **Sector-specific collaboration opportunities:** Certain sectors—such as agritech, fintech, green energy, and health—hold high potential for Ghana-Europe partnerships. Highlighting case studies and successful pilots in these areas can guide future targeted collaboration.
- **Mobilising diaspora and remittances:** The Ghanaian diaspora and Afro-European professionals can be powerful bridges between both ecosystems. The panel can explore strategies to engage them as mentors, angel investors, and ecosystem builders.
- **Gender-lens investment and empowering women entrepreneurs:** Focused discussion on gender-lens investing and support mechanisms can ensure that collaborations are inclusive and equitable.

4 IYBA Plenary

4.1 Panel Objective

Bring together entrepreneurs from early-stage businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from across various economic sectors (with a preference from pharma, renewable energy and agribusiness) – alongside investors, ESO / BSOs, networks and policy makers – to explore strategies for fostering collaboration between Ghanaian and European entrepreneurial ecosystems.

4.2 Panel Sequencing (75 mins)

9:00 – 9:05 AM: Opening remarks by DG INTPA Deputy Director-General, Mrs. Myriam Ferran, European Commission – Presentation and launch of the TEI IYBA in Ghana.

9:05 – 9:10 AM: Presentation of the “Green, Digital, Inclusive PSD” programme with RVO, Expertise France and UNCDF. By Mr. Mike SIPS (RVO).

9:10 – 9:15 AM: Presentation of the IYBA WIDU regional programme (implemented by GIZ).
By Mr. Tom Sorensen (GIZ).

9:15 – 10:15 AM: Panel discussions.

10:15 – 10:20 AM: Testimony from a Ghanaian women entrepreneur (WIDU programme).

10:20 – 10:30 AM: Q&A with the room.

10:30 AM: Closing (by moderator)

4.3 Panel Composition

Moderator: Mrs. Carole Ramella, GFA Consulting, Ghana

Panelists:

- Mr. Mike SIPS, Programme Advisor Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship - Orange Corners Innovation Fund, Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO).
- Mr. Francis OWUSU, Investment Manager, Investisseurs & Partenaires (I&P).
- Mr. Eugene ELUERKEH, Growth & Innovation Strategist, GrowthAfrica.
- Mr. Yaw BRAKO OSEI-TUTU, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Impact Investing Ghana (IIgh).
- Mrs. Maame TUTUA DADSON, Lead Counsel, Stafford Law.
- Mr. Kwabena BOATENG, Deputy Managing Director, Wholesale Banking, Fidelity Bank Ghana Limited.
- Representative from the Ghana Enterprises Agency (GEA). (tbc).

4.4 Possible questions for discussion (INDICATIVE)

Question 1: What are the key barriers entrepreneurs from early and mid-stage SMEs face in Ghana, and how can EU–Ghana ecosystem stakeholders help overcome these challenges?

Question 2: What types of concessional finance instruments and support mechanisms are available through EU Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), other IYBA and Team Europe programmes, and how can entrepreneurs effectively access them? How can we foster investments in youth businesses in Ghana under the EU Global Gateway Strategy?

Question 3: What would be critical strategies for fostering collaboration between Ghanaian and European entrepreneurial ecosystems? What is already existing? How to implement these collaboration strategies?

Question 4: In what ways can entrepreneurs form strategic linkages—with larger companies, DFIs, or ecosystem partners—to unlock business opportunities and drive sustainable growth across sectors? How to unlock new markets and funding opportunities?

Question 5: How can policy, technical assistance, and capacity-building programmes better align with the needs of entrepreneurs and SMEs to enhance their resilience and readiness for investment?

Question 6: How can Ghana and its European partners collaborate to harmonize regulatory frameworks and reduce policy fragmentation in order to make the entrepreneurial ecosystem more attractive to both local and international investors?

Question 7: What specific policy innovations or regulatory reforms have proven effective in other countries or regions that Ghana could adapt to unlock sustainable capital flows and support early stage business? Discussion on the Ghana Innovation and Startup Act.

5 Expected Outcomes

- Presentation of the Team Europe Initiative “Investing in Young Businesses in Africa” - country launch for Ghana.
- Presentation of the WIDU programme, implemented by GIZ.
- Presentation of the “Green, Digital, Inclusive PSD” programme with RVO, UNCDF and Expertise France.
- Fostering exchanges on key challenges faced by early-stage businesses in Ghana.
- Connecting Ghanaian entrepreneurs and investors.
- Offer a regional perspective to ecosystem stakeholders.

6 Target Audience

Entrepreneurs from Early-Stage and Mid-Stage SMEs

- Entrepreneurs and founders in growth sectors (e.g., agribusiness, health, renewable energy, digital, manufacturing, circular economy)
- Start-ups and scale-ups seeking investment and partnerships

Entrepreneurship Support Organisations (ESOs) and Incubators/Accelerators

- Chambers of commerce, innovation hubs, and enterprise development agencies supporting SME ecosystems

Development Finance Institutions (DFIs)

- Representatives from EU DFIs (e.g., Proparco, DEG, FMO, IFU) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) involved in SME financing

EU and African Policymakers & Programme Managers

- Officials from the European Commission (e.g., DG INTPA), African development ministries, and IYBA programme leads
- Local and regional government bodies supporting SME development

Investors and Financial Institutions

- Impact investors, commercial banks, and venture capital funds exploring blended finance models and green finance for SMEs

Private Sector Partners and Companies

- Companies seeking to develop supply chain linkages, local sourcing opportunities, or co-investment initiatives with SMEs

International Development Agencies and NGOs

- Organisations involved in SME ecosystem development, policy reform, and sustainability initiatives

7 Background on Team Europe Initiative “Investing in Young Businesses in Africa” (IYBA)

The **Team Europe initiative ‘Investing in Young Businesses in Africa’ (TEI IYBA)** brings together the EU, 10 EU MS, the EIB, the EBRD, and EDFI. The TEI IYBA is a Global Gateway flagship initiative aiming at boosting access to concessional finance and strengthening the business and investment enabling environment for MSMEs. It focuses on increasing investments aligned to the implementation of the EU Global Gateway Strategy as well as specific Global Gateway flagships. It **supports early-stage businesses and young entrepreneurs across Sub-Saharan Africa, especially women, to start and grow their businesses by enabling them to access financial and technical support more easily** - and in doing so, to create decent jobs. An initial mapping exercise identified **180 programmes** and projects which this Team Europe initiative encompasses, amounting to **€4.6 billion**.

