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## DISCUSSION PAPER No. 411

# Lessons from EU member states' Team National

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The EU's Global Gateway strategy aims to mobilise public and private investment in partner countries while advancing the EU's economic and geostrategic interests. Through the Global Gateway Investment Hub (GGIH), the European Commission, largely DG INTPA, has encouraged member states to establish 'Team National' mechanisms to coordinate domestic actors and facilitate companies' participation in Global Gateway investments. Several member states have begun developing these, and their experience offers lessons for others, especially newer ones.

First, while some Team Nationals pre-date Global Gateway, most new ones stem from the Commission's push to ease access to GGIH support. Many member states, however, see them more broadly, as national coordination tools serving wider private-sector internationalisation and economic diplomacy goals. Second, Team Nationals add most value by improving coordination among public institutions involved in investment promotion, development cooperation and export finance. Effective models typically rely on a small secretariat, strong leadership from foreign affairs and finance ministries, and a structure functioning as an investment committee. Third, engaging the private sector requires managing expectations and offering a clear value proposition. Interest in Global Gateway is real, but uncertainty over instruments and procedures has bred scepticism. Clear communication and a partnership-based approach can build credibility and improve project quality. Fourth, a step-wise approach is advisable: starting light, with a small secretariat coordinating a limited set of key stakeholders, minimises transaction costs and avoids unnecessary bureaucracy.

Finally, coordination challenges are rarely solved by changing institutional mandates. The real goal is enabling institutions with different mandates to work together more effectively.

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## Acronyms

|          |                                                    |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------|
| AEF      | Africa-Europe Foundation                           |
| DFI      | Development Finance Institution                    |
| ECA      | Export Credit Agency                               |
| EFSD+    | European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus     |
| EU       | European Union                                     |
| FEPS     | Foundation for European Progressive Studies        |
| GG       | Global Gateway                                     |
| GGIH     | Global Gateway Investment Hub                      |
| DG INTPA | Directorate-General for International Partnerships |
| MFF      | Multiannual Financial Framework                    |
| MS       | Member State                                       |
| MSME     | Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise           |
| PSE      | Private Sector Engagement                          |
| SME      | Small and Medium-sized Enterprise                  |

## Executive Summary

The European Union's Global Gateway strategy seeks to mobilise European public and private investment in partner countries that support sustainable and high-quality projects while strengthening the EU's economic and geostrategic priorities in mutually beneficial partnerships in line with the EU's interests and values: rule of law, human rights and international norms and standards. In the context of the Global Gateway Investment Hub (GGIH), the European Commission, to a large extent DG INTPA, has encouraged member states to establish "Team National" approaches – one of the components of a broader domestic private sector engagement (PSE) strategy – to better coordinate national actors and facilitate the participation of domestic companies in Global Gateway investments. Several EU member states have begun developing such mechanisms. Their experience highlights a number of lessons relevant to all Team Nationals, and especially the nascent ones.

First, while some Team National endeavours pre-existed the Global Gateway and the GGIH, new ones are primarily the result of the European Commission's push, and meant to facilitate access to EU support for EU member states' companies through the GGIH. Yet, several member states view their Team National set-up as broader national coordination mechanisms supporting the internationalisation of their private sector and economic diplomacy objectives.

Second, the main value of Team Nationals lies in improving coordination among public institutions involved in investment promotion, development cooperation and export finance. Effective governance arrangements – often centred around a small secretariat, supported by strong leadership from ministries of foreign affairs and finance and functioning as an investment committee – have proven essential.

Third, engaging the private sector requires managing expectations and ensuring a clear value proposition. While Global Gateway has generated interest among companies, uncertainties regarding available instruments and procedures have created some scepticism. Clear communication and a partnership-based approach with companies can help strengthen credibility and improve the quality of project proposals.

Fourth, given the above, it is recommended to adopt a step-wise approach to minimise transaction costs and clearly identify the effective potential of a Team National coordination. Many EU member states have started with a light Team National structure centred around a small secretariat to guide and coordinate the outreach to a small set of key (institutional) stakeholders who meet on a regular

basis in a Team National committee. Effective Team National mechanisms should avoid bureaucratic approaches and provide an effective response to domestic business needs and practices, in line with clear strategic objectives and selection criteria at the EU level (GGIH and other European Commission approaches) and at the national level.

Fifth, experience suggests that modifying institutional mandates may not necessarily resolve the underlying coordination challenges. Instead, the primary objective of Team National initiatives is to enable institutions with different mandates and instruments to work more effectively together.

## I. Introduction

The European Union (EU)'s [Global Gateway](#) strategy (December 2021) was conceived as a tool to stimulate geostrategic sustainable investment in partner countries, with a particular emphasis on development finance in key sectors based on European values, standards, quality and security. Since 2024, its implementation has built upon this initial foundation while responding to an increasingly complex geopolitical environment, focusing increasingly on European interests and the engagement of the European private sector ([Bilal, 2025](#); [Karaki, 2024](#)). In this context, Global Gateway has placed greater emphasis on geostrategic partnerships, mutual economic benefit and resilience in an increasingly competitive international landscape.

In parallel, the European Commission's proposal for the Global Europe instrument under the [next 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#) (Jones, 2026) places a stronger emphasis on the EU's geostrategic and competitiveness priorities, [in synergy with the European Competitiveness Fund](#) (Bilal et al. 2025). This orientation complements traditional development objectives by promoting mutually beneficial relations with partner countries, including by combining development objectives with economic diplomacy priorities. Achieving these objectives requires stronger mobilisation of the European private sector. One of the mechanisms promoted by the European Commission to facilitate this engagement is the "Team National" approach, which aims to better coordinate national actors in support of European companies seeking to participate in Global Gateway investments, and filter EU member states' companies' proposals submitted to the [Global Gateway Investment Hub](#) (GGIH).

This development at the European level is partly mirrored at the level of member states, where engaging the domestic private sector has become an increasing priority in foreign and international cooperation policy ([Karaki et al. 2022](#)). In this context, Team National should be understood as one of the components of a broader private sector engagement (PSE) strategy, and reflects a broader search for complementarities and synergies between development, economic and foreign policy objectives and institutions. Within the Global Gateway framework, this ambition is notably, though not exclusively, reflected in the development of a Team National approach. Currently, several EU member states are developing and operationalising their Team National mechanisms and broader approaches to PSE in the context of Global Gateway, as called for by the European Commission.

**This briefing note builds on a series of interviews with European actors, complemented by a desktop review focusing on a handful of member states, aiming to provide a set of recommendations for European policy-makers involved in the development of their Team National.** The note is not an evaluation of the Team Nationals, but rather highlights some of the opportunities and challenges they face in practice, with a view to providing valuable insights.

## II. Key dimensions of Team Nationals

**Most Team National initiatives were established following encouragement and pressure from the European Commission.** The latter pushed EU member states to organise national whole-of-government approaches, capable of interfacing with their domestic private sector and the GGIH. However, some countries have long-established Team Nationals, as in Finland and Sweden, while others, such as France, had already begun developing a “whole-of-government” approach to private sector internationalisation prior to the formal establishment of a Team National. This already indicates that the Team National approach has evolved within a broader national strategy for PSE, aimed at strengthening the international mobilisation and competitiveness of domestic firms.

### 1. Alignment with the Global Gateway Investment Hub

**All member states interviewed confirmed that the European Commission’s push provided an additional incentive and impetus for national institutions to coordinate more closely and work more systematically together under a Team National approach.** Most Team National initiatives are therefore framed as mechanisms designed to support Global Gateway priorities and facilitate interaction with the GGIH. In practice, this means that:

- Proposals tend to focus on Global Gateway priority sectors and geographies; and
- Eligibility criteria used by Team Nationals often mirror those of the GGIH, including the GGIH’s indicative investment threshold (€10 million), which frequently serves as a reference point.

**However, several Team Nationals have expressed reservations about limiting their scope strictly to the GGIH framework.** In their view, a number of strategic projects exist beyond the strict boundaries of the Investment Hub and may respond more directly to their own national economic interests.

- Some EU member states perceive their Team National primarily as a national initiative aimed at supporting domestic companies through both

financial and non-financial instruments. The European dimension – particularly interaction with the GGIH – is considered complementary and/or additional rather than defining.

- Similarly, in some EU member states, while the Team National initially emerged largely in response to requests from the European Commission (DG INTPA), discussions are ongoing about expanding its scope to better reflect national economic priorities. This reflection is partly driven by the observation that many project proposals received by the Team National do not meet the eligibility requirements of the GGIH.

**Beyond the desire to better reflect national economic interests, several pragmatic considerations were raised by interviewees to justify a broader scope for Team National initiatives:**

1. **Many proposals submitted by companies are unlikely to meet the GGIH eligibility criteria.** Leaving these proposals without follow-up risks generating frustration among the business community and undermining trust in the mechanism.
2. **There remains significant uncertainty regarding the concrete value proposition of the GGIH.** Even when projects are deemed eligible by DG INTPA, the nature of the support available to companies remains unclear, as the Investment Hub is currently presented more as a coordination framework than as a financial instrument in its own right.
3. **Concerns were raised regarding the complexity of EU procedures.** Several stakeholders fear that processes associated with the GGIH may prove bureaucratic and slow, potentially limiting their attractiveness for private sector actors. This concern is reinforced by uncertainty regarding the type and scale of support companies could realistically access.

**Last, even though there is merit in articulating Team Nationals around national policy priorities, many Team Nationals see an added value in strong yet agile coordination between Team Nationals and Team Europe, and between the Team Nationals themselves.** Yet, in practice, there is no formal coordination mechanism. Instead, several Team Nationals are discussing their respective approaches informally, but this happens on a rather ad-hoc basis, and is not seen as a substitute for a more sophisticated mechanism that would facilitate coherence and synergies, and help mitigate the risk of seeing 27 Team Nationals operating in silos (including with the Team Europe approach).



## 2. Approach and focus and PSE implications

### a. Open versus targeted approaches – with flexibility as a key principle

**Most Team National initiatives have adopted a relatively open approach.** In general, they encompass Global Gateway priority sectors and geographies and broadly align with the GGIH investment threshold of €10 million, while maintaining some flexibility. In practice, proposals that fall outside this scope are not necessarily excluded.

**A few member states have opted for a more targeted approach.** Some Team Nationals, for instance, consider focusing on a limited number of sectors – such as energy, digital technologies and health – where strong (and large) domestic companies are already present. Such targeting facilitates the identification of relevant private sector actors and limits the administrative resources required to manage the initiative.

**Related discussions have also taken place regarding the type of companies that should be prioritised.** Some Team Nationals have debated whether the mechanism should primarily target large corporations capable of developing projects above €10 million, or whether it should also actively support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Several structural considerations have emerged in this regard:

- Large companies often already have direct access to financial institutions and may require limited additional public support (mostly non-financial, such as political support by the EU in partner countries); yet, it is also (very) large projects by big companies that may require financial support beyond national means, and which may better reflect EU strategic interests;
- SMEs frequently propose projects with smaller investment volumes, which do not always align with the ticket-size requirements of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) or Export Credit Agencies (ECAs), and of less direct European geostrategic interest; transaction costs and the added value of EU support may be more limited for EU member states, although the bulk of the EU private sector is composed of SMEs.

**In practice, some stakeholders argued that focusing initially on larger companies could be a more pragmatic approach.** This segment is expected to generate the bulk of proposals capable of meeting the Investment Hub criteria, including the threshold. Demonstrating early successes with such projects could help validate the Team National concept and build credibility with the private sector, while requiring fewer outreach efforts than extensive SME engagement.

**Yet, most Team Nationals focus on industrial actors, overlooking, to some extent, private investors and financiers (such as impact investors, institutional investors (insurance and pension funds), etc.).** This may reflect, to some extent, a bias observed in the GGIH, which focuses on “industrial actors”, leaving a rather limited role to private investors (who can only potentially come in at a later stage to finance GGIH-related proposals but not initiate them).

**At the same time, most Team Nationals emphasised the importance of maintaining flexibility.** The ability to respond to emerging opportunities – even when they fall outside the strict GGIH criteria – is seen as essential to demonstrate the practical usefulness of the mechanism and to foster constructive engagement with the private sector.

#### **b. Communication for effective private sector engagement**

**PSE with Global Gateway has so far been characterised by mixed perceptions.**

The communication surrounding the strategy – including the headline figure of €300 billion in investments and the creation of Global Gateway Business Advisory Groups – raised expectations among companies that have not yet fully materialised. As a result, some degree of scepticism exists among private sector actors, particularly regarding the GGIH, which currently does not involve clear additional dedicated financial resources for European companies.

**Managing expectations and maintaining credible engagement** with the private sector have therefore become key concerns for most Team Nationals. Several approaches have been adopted to address this challenge:

**First, prioritising substance before communication.** Several stakeholders emphasised the importance of establishing a clear value proposition before publicly promoting the Team National initiative. This includes defining eligibility criteria, establishing operational procedures and clarifying the support that companies can realistically expect. Premature communication risks generating confusion or unrealistic expectations.

**Second, limiting public communication in the initial stages.** While some EU member states opted for a high-level public launch of their Team Nationals (to increase visibility), others adopted a more cautious approach, with limited communication/promotion exercises. Another set of member states are considering similarly focusing initial outreach on a limited segment of the private sector—primarily larger companies—before potentially expanding the scope of communication.

**Third, ensuring transparency regarding available support.** The European Commission clearly communicates during the “Global Gateway Roadshows”, which are those events set up to launch the Team Nationals, that no additional EU budget or instruments would accompany the Investment Hub beyond those already available. While such clarity may initially disappoint businesses, it helps set realistic expectations.

**Fourth, adopting a partnership approach.** In some cases, Team Nationals aim to operate as partners rather than simple gatekeepers. Instead of merely accepting or rejecting project proposals, they provide feedback on how proposals could be strengthened or adapted to become eligible. Although this cannot be done systematically for all proposals, such engagement has been positively received by the private sector. It is unclear, though, how such a national accompanying approach could take place once a proposal is submitted to the GGIH.

**Fifth, involving the private sector in the design of the mechanism.** In most cases, the private sector was consulted during the creation of Team Nationals but was not formally integrated into their governance structures (unlike the case of the early Team Nationals such as Team Sweden or Finland, for instance). Yet the Team National framework could represent an opportunity not only for public institutions to coordinate among themselves, but also to better understand the needs, priorities and constraints of the domestic private sector. Greater involvement of private sector actors could therefore contribute to shaping more effective Team National approaches.

### 3. Coordination within (and beyond) Team National

#### a. Institutional structure

**Most Team Nationals have established a formal governance structure centred around a light secretariat responsible for managing the overall process.** This typically includes pre-screening, screening and assessment of proposals submitted by private sector actors, as well as coordination among participating institutions.

**In some cases, the secretariat operates through a core unit, which can mobilise additional stakeholders from different ministries and institutions on an ad hoc basis to provide technical expertise on specific proposals.** This flexible structure allows the mechanism to remain relatively agile while limiting administrative costs. Some Team Nationals, for instance, convene a monthly meeting comparable to an investment committee to review relevant proposals. In other cases, the structure is more centralised, relying on a limited set of actors with the necessary expertise and experience.

**In most cases, the secretariat performs both strategic and operational functions.** Given Team Nationals' relatively recent establishment, this dual role facilitates an iterative approach that allows institutions to adjust processes and priorities as experience accumulates. Last, in most cases, the secretariat did not necessarily mean hiring additional staff but rather leveraging existing resources – at least in a first step.

## **b. Understanding the political economy of Team National actors**

### The absent actors

**Non-state actors are rarely formally integrated into Team National structures.** Civil society organisations and think tanks are generally not involved, as expected given the mechanism's economic and investment-focused orientation.

**More surprisingly, the private sector itself is formally represented in only a limited number of Team Nationals.** In most other cases, businesses (and/or business associations) were consulted during the design phase, but do not participate in the governance of the mechanism, which contrasts with the experience of the earliest Team Nationals, as seen in Sweden or Finland. In addition, private financiers (institutional investors, impact investors, etc.), which are not targeted by the GGIH, are often overlooked – though some Team Nationals are considering their indirect involvement.

**From the perspective of private sector actors – who are the primary beneficiaries of Team National initiatives – there are concerns that the mechanism may raise expectations without effectively addressing the structural bottlenecks companies faced.** In particular, there is scepticism regarding whether the GGIH will provide meaningful support capable of offsetting potentially slow or complex procedures. At the same time, some actors from the private sector highlighted a positive effect: the creation of Team Nationals has encouraged public institutions to coordinate more closely and has led, in some member states, to the development of mapping of financial instruments available to companies, many of which were previously not widely known within the business community.

### The motivated actors

**Ministries of Foreign Affairs and/or Finance generally play a strong leadership role in the design and implementation of Team National initiatives.** Their active involvement has often been essential in securing the participation and ownership of other institutions.

**Implementing agencies also appear highly committed to making the initiative a success.** This engagement reflects broader institutional dynamics: i) as the European Commission increasingly emphasises PSE within Global Gateway, development actors are reassessing how their mandates and instruments can evolve to contribute to these objectives; ii) implementing agencies' contribution to Team National and GGIH is expected to be similar to the Global Gateway 360 degree approach, which in turn facilitates their engagement (though moving from a more systemic to project-based approach will not be without challenges).

**In practice, however, their role within Team Nationals is not always clearly defined.** Implementing agencies can potentially provide non-financial support – such as technical assistance – to accompany selected projects. Yet they rarely operate on a project-by-project basis and often face structural constraints related to geographical programming, bilateral cooperation frameworks and limited operational flexibility. While sometimes associated with Team National, implementing agencies are often not official members.

#### The reluctant actors

**The financiers, DFIs and ECAs, are fully committed to the principle of Team National, and playing their part in making it a success.** Yet, the added value of the Team National is limited by i) structural factors: while the GGIH focused on direct project financing, on a case-by-case basis, DFIs follow an approach that is largely based on a portfolio approach and indirect operations with relatively high ticket sizes; and ii) is not fully clear in some respects:

1. **DFIs and ECAs have their own processes to originate projects.** They have yet to understand how Team National can best i) complement their own capacities and pipeline; and ii) put forward processes that are as effective and relatively similar to their own to ensure some degree of coherence.
2. **Some DFIs and ECAs also proved to be sceptical towards the GGIH and the extent to which this mechanism will be able to provide the type of support that would be needed, and in time for their clients.** If the support is not material, why should ECAs and DFIs go through Team Nationals and then the GGIH? On the other hand, other interviewees shared their concerns that projects that will go through the GGIH will only be those that are not mature enough or too risky, which may be at odds with the GGIH's initial objectives.
3. **Given their pillar assessment and their experience working with the EU, some DFIs regret having to go through the Team National instead of going directly at the European level.** This also reveals to some extent i) the limited added value DFIs may see in a Team National geared towards the GGIH; and ii) the reluctance of DFIs to engage in a project-based approach

at the expense of a portfolio (and often intermediated) type of approach, which, for some, fits better their business model and mandate.

4. **In some Team Nationals, DFIs and ECAs already have their books relatively full, leaving only a limited margin to really contribute to the Team Nationals.** This was the case for DFIs managing EFSD+ guarantees, for which an indicative pipeline of projects had to be submitted and updated on a regular basis. In some cases, the pipeline was already full, leaving the DFIs without much room to use EU resources to finance Team National proposals.

These issues are systemic and could be perceived in most Team Nationals. Further dialogues may be needed to address these:

- **First, it is important to consider for Team Nationals the extent to which they are open to the idea of DFIs and ECAs sharing their pipeline within the Team Nationals, while respecting confidentiality principles** – which again may be extremely pragmatic in the short-term;
- **Second, the Team National processes and eligibility criteria should, to some extent, build on the experience of DFIs and ECAs, and reflect their eligibility criteria** to limit the number of proposals that go beyond their financing scope;
- **Third, some stakeholders argue that emphasising the national rather than the European dimension of Team Nationals could strengthen their relevance** to financial institutions and domestic PSE.
- **Fourth, given the role of DFIs and ECAs in mobilising private capital, there is a merit to exploring, through strategic dialogues, the extent to which Team Nationals could better engage private financiers such as impact and institutional investors.** The latter could put forward relevant proposals and/or be interested in financing relevant proposals, alongside DFIs and ECAs.

## 4. Project origination and financing

### a. Project origination

**Project origination and the provision of support – whether financial or non-financial – lie at the core of Team National initiatives.** In most cases, projects originate directly from the domestic private sector. Companies submit proposals to the Team National structure, which then assesses their relevance and determines whether and how public institutions can support their development.

**In practice, however, the vast majority of proposals received so far from companies are not yet fully aligned with the objectives or eligibility requirements of the Team National framework.** Several factors explain this situation.

1. **There is a learning process on both sides.** The Team National concept remains relatively new, and private sector actors are still becoming familiar with its objectives, scope and potential benefits. As a result, many companies are still exploring whether and how the mechanism can respond to their investment needs.
2. **Some interviewees referred to a “fortune seeker” effect.** A limited number of proposals appear to be driven primarily by the expectation of accessing grant financing for early-stage ideas or concepts that remain insufficiently developed to qualify as viable investment projects.
3. **The flexible approach adopted by many Team Nationals may also contribute to this situation.** At this early stage, several initiatives have intentionally opted for open and flexible eligibility criteria to better understand the interests and needs of the domestic private sector. While this approach facilitates engagement with companies, it can also lead to the submission of proposals that ultimately fall outside the scope of available financial instruments.
4. **The ticket size of many proposals does not correspond to the financing requirements of national DFIs and ECAs.** While large companies generally have direct access to these institutions and may require limited public support, SMEs often see clear value in the Team National mechanism. However, the projects they propose frequently fall within an investment range of approximately €200,000 to €2 million—levels that are often too small to be financed through the standard instruments of most DFIs and ECAs.

**In response to these challenges, some Team Nationals have explored pragmatic solutions.** For example, some member states are considering allowing **national DFIs and ECAs to share part of their existing project pipelines with the Team National structure.** Such an approach could help ensure that at least some of the projects discussed within the Team National framework are already bankable or close to it, and therefore better aligned with the financing criteria of participating institutions. In other Team Nationals, financiers play a central role, as they de facto identify projects that meet the criteria for submission to the GGIH. In the short to medium term, this approach could provide a practical way for Team Nationals to demonstrate concrete results while continuing to build stronger engagement with the domestic private sector.

### III. Conclusion and recommendations

The experiences of some other EU member states provide several lessons that may inform the design and implementation of Team Nationals as they are developing in the EU. While institutional arrangements differ across countries, a number of common trends and challenges emerge, which shape the recommendations laid out below.

#### 1. Make the Team National relevant for national (and European) geostrategic interests

**One of the main questions faced by most member states concerns the overall positioning of their Team National initiative.** While the mechanism was initially encouraged by the European Commission to facilitate interaction with the GGIH, Team Nationals should first serve national interest, and where relevant European interest through the GGIH. In this context, Team Nationals are most likely to be effective when embedded within, and aligned with, wider national policy frameworks – such as PSE strategies, MSME development plans, sustainability roadmaps, and relevant sectoral strategies – thereby reinforcing policy coherence and maximising institutional synergies, with a view to supporting the strategic internationalisation of their private sector.

**In practice, limiting the scope of Team National strictly to the GGIH may prove too restrictive.** A significant share of proposals submitted by companies may not meet the Investment Hub's eligibility criteria, and the concrete support they can expect through this mechanism remains uncertain. This may, in turn, result in additional frustration from the domestic private sector. In addition, there is a merit for the Team National to consider other complementary approaches (such as portfolio or intermediated approaches that go beyond the project-based approach promoted by the GGIH), which could contribute more effectively to some of the national and European policy objectives (in particular when it comes to private capital mobilisation).

**In this context, Team Nationals should be framed primarily as a domestic coordination mechanism,** combining national entities, aimed at supporting strategic international investments by its domestic private sector, while connecting relevant projects to the EU level, and in particular the GGIH framework, where appropriate. As part of this effort, Team Nationals could provide a mapping capturing all the instruments available for the domestic private sector (which could be presented following the model of the InvestEU Advisory Hub webpage). This would also help leverage the existing experience, expertise and instruments of national institutions rather than necessarily developing new tools and/or adapting institutions' mandates (see recommendation #2). While flexibility



should be a key principle, strategic focus and engagement should guide Team Nationals in terms of sectors and geographies considered of prime importance for development objectives and geostrategic interests.

**Adopting a gradual approach, starting small, with a light coordination structure** (e.g. secretariat), reaching out to relevant entities (e.g. through an investment committee), with targeted (pilot) geographies and sectors, might prove a more successful approach to build domestic consensus based on pragmatic incentives and operational modalities of the various institutions concerned. Such a gradual and adaptive approach could then be strengthened over time, based on the experience accumulated, to foster a more ambitious and effective Team National approach. In doing so, there may be a merit to exploring synergies, in coordination with DG INTPA where relevant, with other Team Nationals, to facilitate partnerships between private sector actors. In this context, DG INTPA should also clarify how it intends to help coordinate different Team Nationals, to help ensure that these Team Nationals' efforts do not result in 27 + Team Europe fragmented approaches and initiatives.

## 2. Ensuring effective coordination among national institutions

**The core added value of Team National initiatives lies in their ability to improve coordination among public institutions that support private sector internationalisation.** Across member states, the establishment of a dedicated coordination structure – often in the form of a small secretariat – has been key to managing the process and facilitating collaboration between ministries, development agencies, DFIs and ECAs. The model of an “operational expert group” meeting on a regular (monthly or bi-monthly) basis was often discussed positively, as a means to limit transaction costs and provide more flexibility, whilst aiming to keep things simple.

**However, experience also suggests that institutional coordination is not without challenges.** The value of the Team National approach is not equally perceived and/or felt by all its members, including the financiers, while others, such as implementing agencies, may struggle to find their place in such a setting.

**Respecting the mandates and prerogatives of each entity**, building on their operational modalities, and focusing on the core added value of the coordination mechanism, are essential components of an effective Team National.

## 3. Managing expectations and engagement with the private sector

**Engaging the domestic private sector is central to the Team National concept, but also represents one of its main challenges.** Experience from some other member states suggests that companies often approach Global Gateway

initiatives with high expectations that may not fully correspond to the instruments currently available.

**Several countries have therefore emphasised the importance of establishing a clear value proposition before communicating widely about their Team National initiative.**

This includes clarifying the types of support that companies can realistically access, the eligibility criteria that apply, and the (streamlined, clear and predictable) processes through which proposals will be assessed.

**In addition, adopting a partnership-oriented approach – where institutions provide feedback and guidance to companies rather than simply accepting or rejecting proposals – seems most valuable** for building trust, creating a more positive experience, and developing expertise and knowledge in PSE-related needs and demands. Careful management of communication and expectations will likely be essential to ensure credible and sustained PSE.

#### 4. Addressing structural mismatches in project pipelines

**Across several member states, Team Nationals have encountered structural challenges arising from the nature of project proposals submitted by companies.** Many proposals remain at an **early conceptual stage**, do not meet the investment thresholds associated with EU instruments, or fall outside the financing parameters of national DFIs and ECAs. In particular, SMEs often propose projects with relatively small investment volumes, which may not align with the ticket sizes typically required by development finance institutions or export credit agencies. Some Team Nationals have also mentioned the poor quality of a number of proposals received, which seem to emanate from “**fortune seeker**” companies which have not found other forms of support.

**Some member states have responded by exploring pragmatic solutions, such as allowing DFIs and ECAs to share parts of their existing project pipelines within the Team National framework**, while respecting confidentiality criteria. This approach can help ensure that discussions focus on projects that are already bankable or close to bankable, while the mechanism continues to build a pipeline of future opportunities from the private sector. Balancing openness to private-sector proposals with the need to focus on financially viable/sustainable/additional projects may be an important design consideration for Team Nationals.

#### 5. Prioritising coordination over institutional restructuring

**Finally, discussions in several member states have highlighted debates regarding the mandates of participating institutions.** Some stakeholders have raised reflections on whether development agencies or DFIs should adapt their

mandates in order to engage more directly with domestic private sector actors.

**However, experience suggests that modifying institutional mandates may not necessarily resolve the underlying coordination challenges.** Instead, the primary objective of Team National initiatives is to **enable institutions with different mandates and instruments to work more effectively together.**

**In this regard, strengthening coordination mechanisms and creating incentives for collaboration, respective the mandates and operational modalities of each institution, may prove more effective than pursuing structural institutional reforms.** At the same time, some countries have experimented with dedicated facilities that allow institutions to pilot new forms of engagement with domestic companies without fundamentally altering their core mandates. Team Nationals approach could therefore be seen primarily as a coordination platform that **leverages the comparative advantages of existing institutions** rather than attempting to redefine their mandates.

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