

Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships for the Energy Transition

April 22, 2026 | Brussels, Belgium

Time: 8:30 AM - 4:45 PM CEST (GMT+2)

Background & Rationale

The global energy transition is rapidly reshaping international trade, industrial policy, and investment flows. As countries accelerate efforts to decarbonize their economies, the development of resilient clean-technology supply chains and new industrial value chains has become a central strategic priority. Clean energy technologies—including renewable power systems, hydrogen, batteries, critical minerals, and low-carbon industrial processes—are increasingly embedded within global trade and investment networks, making it a major policy challenge to ensure that these networks support both climate ambition and economic development.

In this context, the European Union has introduced the concept of [Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships \(CTIPs\)](#) as a new framework for cooperation with partner economies. CTIPs aim to deepen collaboration on clean industrial value chains by combining trade policy, industrial cooperation, and investment partnerships. The approach reflects the recognition that achieving climate neutrality will require not only domestic policy action but also strong international partnerships that facilitate technology diffusion, secure supply chains, and mobilize large-scale investment in clean industries. The [first CTIP with South Africa](#) was signed in November 2025, building on the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership and the Economic Partnership Agreement.

For many emerging economies, participation in these evolving clean industrial ecosystems presents both opportunities and risks. The global shift toward clean technologies offers prospects for industrial upgrading, investment attraction, and integration into new value chains. At the same time, concerns persist around access to affordable finance, meaningful technology transfer, regulatory alignment, and the impact of new trade measures such as carbon border adjustments. Ensuring that clean-trade partnerships support inclusive and sustainable development outcomes will therefore be critical.

[Geopolitics around the clean energy transition](#) is sharpening, with strategic sectors becoming arenas of both competition and cooperation. Critical minerals, clean manufacturing, hydrogen value chains, and low-carbon industrial materials are now framed primarily through economic security and supply chain resilience. For the world, this raises the stakes: clean energy choices are increasingly shaping who sets standards, captures value chains, and wields influence in the global economy—creating opportunities for new coalitions but also risks of fragmentation and green protectionism. Trade policy is therefore

emerging as a key geopolitical instrument for steering the transition. The effectiveness of new initiatives such as CTIPs will hinge on whether they can reconcile strategic objectives—accelerating decarbonization, shoring up industrial competitiveness, and advancing credible development pathways in partner economies.

Against this backdrop, there is growing recognition that effective clean-industrial cooperation will require deeper dialogue between Europe and Global South economies. Policymakers, industry leaders, investors, and experts must engage in open discussions on how to align trade frameworks, investment policies, and technology partnerships to support the next phase of global industrial transformation.

This [ORF America](#) convening will bring together stakeholders from government, industry, finance, and international organizations to examine the opportunities and challenges associated with Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships. The event will explore how CTIPs can support resilient supply chains, mobilize investment in clean industries, and foster technology partnerships that benefit both Europe and Global South economies.

Objectives

- Examine the strategic role of Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships in shaping the next phase of Europe’s global climate leadership and industrial cooperation with Global South economies.
- Identify opportunities and constraints faced by emerging economies in participating in evolving clean industrial value chains.
- Explore policy tools—including trade policy, regulatory cooperation, public procurement, and investment frameworks—that can accelerate clean industrial partnerships.
- Discuss how technology diffusion, intellectual property frameworks, and innovation partnerships can support broader access to clean technologies.
- Identify pathways to translate strategic dialogue into concrete industrial collaboration, investment pipelines, and scalable clean energy projects.

Expected Outcomes

- A clearer understanding of the role that Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships can play in strengthening EU–Global South cooperation on the energy transition.
- Identification of opportunities to develop resilient and diversified clean industrial value chains across strategic sectors such as critical minerals, hydrogen, and clean manufacturing.
- Policy insights on investment frameworks, technology partnerships, and regulatory cooperation that can enable more effective cross-border industrial collaboration.
- Strengthened dialogue between policymakers, industry leaders, investors, and experts on aligning trade policy with climate and development objectives.