

# EU-African SME Summit 2025

June 19th-21st | Johannesburg, South Africa

**When:** 19th-21st June 2025

**Location:** Johannesburg, South Africa

**N. attendees:** +/- 300 persons in 3 days

## 3<sup>rd</sup> EU-African SME Summit 2025

### *Concept note*

*The 3rd EU-African SME Summit 2025 aims to be one of the preparatory events organised in view of the **EU-African Business Forum 2025** organised by the European Commission and the African Union Commission, planned to be held in Africa in autumn 2025.*

**Topic: How Entrepreneurial Creativity, the EU's Global Gateway and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) can advance the sustainable development agenda in both continents.**

**Proposed Title: *PASSION FOR CHANGE – ENTREPRENEURS MAKE IT HAPPEN***

The **African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)** marks a significant step forward in boosting Africa's regional trade efforts. As the world's potentially largest free trade area, AfCFTA represents immense opportunities for African economies, that would drive inclusive growth, stimulate local economies, and foster equitable access to essential services such as water, electricity, education, training, and healthcare.

In support of its global and African partners, the **European Union** has launched the "**Global Gateway**" strategy, aimed at fostering a strong, inclusive, green and digital recovery. The Global Gateway is the EU's offer to its external partners to implement programs with concrete, transformational impacts on Africa. This initiative will strengthen reliable connections to address pressing global challenges, from combating climate change to improving health systems and enhancing the competitiveness and security of global supply chains.

Within this framework, **SMEs and Mid-Caps** play a leading role in both African and European economies. It is therefore crucial to explore the role of SMEs and Mid-Caps in **Scaling Africa's Sustainable Future**, specifically how these enterprises will be integrated into the EU's Global Gateway project and how to maximise their potential to realise the goals of AfCFTA.

**Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises** are pivotal in driving sustainable economic growth both within the EU and globally, due to their **Shared Value Business logic**. SMEs, with their "business is local" approach, are well-positioned to contribute to the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** by fostering sustainable development in local and regional ecosystems, rather than enabling market monopolisation.

The active **involvement of entrepreneurs from Africa and Europe** is essential and a great chance to fully realise the potential of the AfCFTA and of Global Gateway. In this process, **SMEs and Mid-Caps** must be recognized as essential partners and drivers of **Africa's Sustainable Future**.

**Organiser:** European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME, PACCI and their Partners in the EU-African SME Alliance: [www.euafricansmesummit.eu](http://www.euafricansmesummit.eu)

### **Strategy overview:**

#### **Day 1: Learn, talk and decide (afternoon of June 19<sup>th</sup>)**

- **Activity:** High Level Conference, Expert panel discussions, Setting the political and economic scene. Gaining insights into especially South Africa's economic potential.
- **Objective:** Facilitate the dialogue among public institutions and the private sector on the topic "How **Global Gateway** and the **African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)** can facilitate SMEs and Mid-Caps towards the twin-transition agenda".

#### **Day 2: Market of Opportunities (full day, June 20<sup>th</sup>)**

- **Activity:** One day dedicated to **pitching solutions** proposed by enterprises and immediately **connected B2B sessions**, in **strategic sectors** like agricultural value chain, renewables, fashion & Textiles, Water, Health services, Digital, Access to finance, IP Protection, professional training and NetZero/carbon offset in the interest of **African partner countries**, networking with local industries, learning about investment opportunities, and
- **We will arrange 8 pitching sessions for 8 strategic sectors with each +/- 3 business owners pitching their solutions, then following and directly linked to the topics B2B matchmaking sessions in breakout rooms. In addition to that we will offer 4 workshops: on Access to Finance (EABF), IP Protection (EUIPO), Carbon Credits (CARBONAUTEN / AFRINET CARBON), and Industrial Ecosystem around Global Gateway Lighthouse Projects ( UNIDO / DG INTPA / EABF ).**
- As a special feature, we will also make available a service for **Instant Business Collaboration – "Express MoU"**: a dedicated space where entrepreneurs can formalise their business collaborations or partnerships on the spot. As they network and exchange ideas, this service will allow them to generate an informal MoUs in real-time. The MoUs will be created, customised, and printed within minutes.
- **Objective:** Inspire and facilitate networking sessions among entrepreneurs, introduce (South) Africa's market potential, attract investors, involve SMEs in addressing with their solutions SDG Challenges. Promote collaboration and new partnership opportunities.

#### **Day 3: Experience Africa – Company Visits (full day June 21<sup>st</sup>)**

- **Activity: Visits to selected South African enterprises** across various industries, offering participants the opportunity to engage directly with local businesses. These visits will provide valuable insights into African entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainability practices. In addition, the breaks will offer the opportunity to be guided to the tastes of Africa (Coffee, Tea, Wine, Food)
- **Objective:** Provide entrepreneurs and business owners with a deeper understanding of the African business landscape. By engaging directly with local enterprises, participants can explore collaboration opportunities, exchange ideas, and build impactful partnerships. This hands-on approach aims to foster stronger business networks and leave participants with memorable, actionable insights into Africa's dynamic markets.

### **Partners:**

- **EU-African SME Alliance:** European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME, Pan-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Shared Value Africa (ZA), Ondernemers voor Ondernemers (B), Start-Up and SME Centres Ghana, Einstein Rising (UG), Lady Agri Impact Hub, CONFAPI (I),

Der Mittelstand. BVMW (D), COTEC Portugal, European Association of Professional Training Institutions EVBB, EU Digital SME Alliance, FIPME (CI), RIG Katowice (PL), AMSP (CZ)

- **South African government** - *tbc*: through Shared Value Africa and BVMW and their contacts that they have all over Africa, coordinator and facilitator and figures of relevance.

#### **Strategic partners:**

- **EU-AU Business Forum** (European Commission)
- **UNIDO** – United Nations Industrial Development Organisation - *tbc*
- **EUIPO** – Project AfriPi and SME IP Helpdesk Africa (European Commission)
- **Konrad Adenauer Foundation ZA** (Johannesburg) - *tbc*
- **Single Companies from Europe** pitching solutions and showcasing them in B2B sessions

#### **Climate and Weather**

June in Johannesburg falls within the **winter season**. During this month, the city experiences mild days and cold nights.

- Average high temperatures: 16°C to 18°C
- Average low temperatures: 2°C to 4°C

#### **Conference Venues and Accommodation**

##### [Johannesburg Stock Exchange](#)

Johannesburg, South Africa

Conference June 19<sup>th</sup> afternoon & Marketplace June 20<sup>th</sup>

##### [Radisson Blu Hotel Sandton](#)

Johannesburg, South Africa

Gala Dinner June 19<sup>th</sup> evening (selected guests)

Special Price room rates until April 21<sup>st</sup>: 109€/night



## Market of Opportunities Day 20/06/2025

### Draft programme

	Spaces				
Time	Plenary	Breakout Room 1	BR 02	BR 03	Foyer
08:30-09:00					Registration / Entrance
09:00-09:30	Opening / Impulse speech(es)				
09:30-10:00	<b>AGRIFOOD</b> 3 Pitches			<b>WORKSHOP</b> Industrial Ecosystems (UNIDO)	<b>COFFEE BUFFET</b>
10:00-10:30	<b>ENERGY</b> 3 Pitches	<b>B2B</b> AGRIFOOD			
10:30-11:00	<b>FASHION &amp; TEXTILES</b> 3 Pitches		<b>B2B</b> ENERGY		
11:00-11:30	<b>BREAK</b>	<b>B2B</b> FASHION & TEXTILES			
11:30-12:00	<b>DIGITAL</b> 3 Pitches			<b>WORKSHOP</b> IP Protection (EUIPO)	
12:00-12:30	<b>(EABF) PANEL:</b> Access to Finance		<b>B2B</b> DIGITAL		
12:30-13:00					
13:00-14:00	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>				
14:00-14:30	<b>HEALTH</b> 3 Pitches			<b>WORKSHOP</b> Access to Finance (EABF)	<b>COFFEE BUFFET</b>
14:30-15:00	<b>WATER</b> 3 Pitches	<b>B2B</b> HEALTH			
15:00-15:30	<b>CARBON CAPTURE &amp; OFFSET</b> 3 Pitches		<b>B2B</b> WATER		
15:30-16:00	<b>BREAK</b>			<b>B2B</b> CARBON CAPTURE & OFFSET	
16:00-16:30	<b>PROFESSIONAL TRAINING</b> 3 Pitches				
16:30-17:00	<b>(UNIDO) PANEL:</b> Industrial Ecosystems	<b>WORKSHOP</b> PROFESSIONAL TRAINING			
17:00-17:30					
17:30-18:00	Closing speech & Farewell moment				