

LeadIT roundtable discussion Sustainable Industrial Transitions: Building global partnerships for inclusive green competitiveness

Brussels, 25 March 2025



On March 25, the Secretariat for the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) convened a highlevel roundtable in Brussels, hosted by the Embassy of India to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, and Sweden's Permanent Representation to the EU.

The Chatham Houses style event, supported by the Mistra Geopolitics Research programme, brought together government representatives from emerging economies, EU institutions, industry leaders, and experts to explore how to build inclusive global part-

The roundtable focused on the global implications of the EU's Clean Industrial Deal and explored opportunities to align green industrial policy with shared climate objectives while balancing national competitiveness concerns. The event built on momentum from the 2024 LeadIT roundtable in Brussels, advancing discussions in a rapidly evolving policy context shaped by G20 agendas, COP30 expectations, geopolitical shifts, and revised national climate strategies.

Key Points

Building Partnerships on Fair and Mutual Terms:

Participants emphasized that strong international partnerships, built on mutual benefits and equitable terms, are central to driving a global green industrial transition. While competitiveness concerns are legitimate, these must be reconciled with the imperative of shared climate targets. The discussion underlined that partnership frameworks should accommodate different development stages, policy approaches, and national priorities.

FirstMover Tensions and the Need for Supportive Measures:

The EU's leadership in setting climate standards and adopting ambitious green industrial policy measures, such as the Clean Industrial Deal, was recognized as creating vital momentum. Highlevel visits to India and South Africa by the European Commission early in its new mandate have emphasized partnerships as a fundamental part of achieving its aims. However, the asymmetry between early movers and partner countries also generates tensions. Participants discussed the need for mechanisms that can ease adjustment costs and support countries affected by new market signals, such as carbon pricing and border measures, without diluting climate ambition.

The challenges of aligning critical green industrial goals and the policies needed to support them, while at the same time ensuring that support and trade measures do not constrain partner countries' own green transitions, were recognized as a difficult challenge. Regulatory coherence, differentiated trade rules for clean versus high-emission products, and recognition of diverse national policy frameworks were identified as areas requiring further cooperation.

Technology, Finance and Just Transition:

The role of international finance, technology cooperation, and equitable access to innovation was seen as essential to a just transition. Participants called for new forms of collaboration that help reduce the cost of capital in emerging markets, scale up investment in green industrial value chains, and promote technology transfer. There was also a particular emphasis on identifying how different countries and regions can build shared green industrial value chains and ensure strong local benefits. Promising areas for scaling action discussed included the development of cost-competitive hydrogen production in developing and emerging economies with rich renewable energy potential to produce green iron for the European market, as well as shared investment in building the industrial base for critical mineral refining and product development in source countries. Advancing the development of national carbon markets was also highlighted.

Operationalizing Cooperation:

Several speakers emphasized that high-level commitments must be translated into operational cooperation. Building shared technological pathways and coordinated investment strategies were seen as necessary steps to accelerate action in hard-to-abate sectors. Public-private collaboration and multi-stakeholder platforms—such as LeadIT's Industry Transition Partnership between India and Sweden and its business-to-business platform—were recognized as important tools for building the institutional architecture required to move from strategy to implementation.

The EU Clean Industrial Deal proposes a new approach to building partnerships called Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships (CTIPs). How these new partnerships will be developed and structured is not yet clear, although the first CTIP already under discussion between South Africa and the EU indicates that this could be a pragmatic approach that includes EU investment. Discussants raised this as a clear opportunity to find ways to operationalize action towards climate goals in the context of significant geopolitical disruptions, recognising that EU interests should be balanced with national priorities to ensure mutually beneficial partnerships.

Conclusion

The roundtable underlined that the global green industrial transition must be both ambitious and inclusive. Achieving this balance requires continued investment in fair partnerships, coherent policy frameworks, and joint action across public and private actors. The race to decarbonize cannot afford to leave any region behind, and cooperative models that reflect common but differentiated responsibilities are essential to realizing this vision.

This summary reflects the discussions that took place on 25 March and does not necessarily reflect the views of all participants, nor should it be taken as a reflection of LeadIT's official position.

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