

The EU Global Gateway, Critical Minerals and Conflict Dynamics in Africa: Reflections from a CMC Online Discussion

On 9 June 2026, Conflict Management Consulting (CMC) hosted an online discussion on *The EU Global Gateway, Critical Minerals and Conflict Dynamics in Africa*. The event brought together more than 80 participants from Africa, Europe, North America and beyond, including policy specialists, development practitioners, researchers, civil society representatives, human rights advocates and finance experts.

The discussion focused on the opportunities and challenges associated with large-scale infrastructure and critical minerals investments in fragile and conflict-affected settings, with particular attention to the Lobito Corridor and the European Union's Global Gateway strategy.

A recurring theme throughout the conversation was that infrastructure and extractive investments are never purely technical or economic undertakings. They inevitably shape access to resources, opportunities and political influence, with important implications for local governance, social cohesion and conflict dynamics. While such investments can contribute to economic development and regional connectivity, participants highlighted the risks that may arise when projects are implemented without sufficient attention to local contexts, existing grievances and power relations.

Speakers stressed that conflict sensitivity cannot remain an aspirational principle or a policy commitment alone. If it is to have practical value, it must be integrated into project design, financing arrangements, governance structures, due diligence processes and implementation mechanisms from the outset. Participants also underlined the importance of transparency, accountability and meaningful stakeholder engagement in reducing the risks of exclusion, displacement, corruption and social tensions.

The discussion highlighted the central role of local actors in shaping the success of major infrastructure and critical minerals initiatives. Communities, civil society organisations, women's groups, young people and local authorities need to be recognised not simply as beneficiaries or consultees, but as active participants in decision-making, monitoring and oversight processes throughout the life of a project.

Several areas for further research and dialogue emerged from the exchange. Participants reflected on the conditions under which large-scale investments can contribute to peace, local development and resilience, as well as the circumstances in which they may inadvertently exacerbate tensions or inequalities. Questions were also raised about how stronger incentives can be created for investors, development finance institutions and companies to operationalise conflict-sensitive approaches in practice. In addition, participants highlighted the need for comparative evidence on how the Global Gateway's stated principles of partnership, transparency and sustainability are translated into implementation on the ground.

A key conclusion emerging from the discussion was the need to move beyond coordination towards more meaningful forms of shared governance and partnership in the planning and implementation of strategic infrastructure and critical minerals investments.

This event forms part of CMC's broader work on conflict-sensitive investment, critical minerals governance and inclusive approaches to development in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. We look forward to continuing this conversation through future research, publications and events.

Watch the recording of the event here: [link](#)