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Answer given by Mr Síkela
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission is bound by principles of neutrality and transparency and makes every effort to ensure equal treatment of all Member States and entities involved in EU-funded projects. Engagements with specific banks or companies are conducted with the intention of optimising project outcomes. If potential financial support is involved, all actors are subject to rigorous selection processes conforming to EU law and standards.

For actions under the Global Gateway strategy¹ implemented in indirect management, the choice of the entrusted entity is made in accordance with Article 157(1) of the Financial Regulation². These entities select their counterparts based on internal procedures that have been subject to an *ex ante* assessment in accordance with Article 157(3), ensuring equivalent protection of EU financial interests. For actions implemented in direct management, procurement, and grants, these are awarded through competitive procedures (call for tenders or call for proposals), except in limited cases in which direct award or negotiated procedures are possible.

The selection of participants in any EU initiative, including the Global Gateway projects, is primarily based on criteria such as expertise, experience and capacity to contribute to the project effectively. The EU is reaching out to all Member States to attract both public and private investors, including government actors, banks and companies. There are no situations where companies of one Member State are favoured.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/international-partnerships/global-gateway_en.

² https://commission.europa.eu/publications/eu-financial-regulation_en.