

International Cooperative Alliance – Global Office

Concept Note — Session 1

Understanding the EU External Action Ecosystem and EU Delegations

Online Training Series: EU Delegations and EU Compliance for the Cooperative World

Session Details

Date(s): Wednesday, 7 October 2026**Cohorts:** Morning cohort 09:30–12:00 CEST | Afternoon cohort 16:00–18:30 CEST**Duration:** 2.5 hours per cohort**Format:** Live online session, delivered separately to each time-zone cohort

Overall Training Objective

This session is part of a four-session online training series for ICA member Apex bodies and cooperative organisations (national apex federations and individual cooperatives, large and small) on engaging EU Delegations and Member State institutions in support of participation in the Global Gateway initiative. The series aims to equip participants to understand the EU institutional landscape (notably DG INTPA and the EEAS), understand how EU grants work and how they differ from the blended (grant/loan/guarantee) financing of Global Gateway, follow how Global Gateway is being rolled out in practice, and build the practical value-proposition and compliance skills needed to be represented in EU-backed investment mechanisms.

Rationale and Positioning of this Session

This is the foundational session of the series. Before cooperatives and apex bodies can engage EU Delegations or explore Global Gateway financing, they need a clear, practical map of who does what across the EU's external action architecture — in Brussels and in-country — and, for European members, within EU Member State institutions.

The session should be treated as a 'who's who' and 'how to get in the door' session, not an abstract institutional lecture. Participants come from very different country contexts, so the content must translate into something each participant can apply to their own national situation by the end of the session.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the respective roles and structures of the European Commission (notably DG INTPA), the European External Action Service (EEAS), and EU Delegations.
- Understand how EU external action priorities are set and cascade to country level (Multiannual Indicative Programmes, Team Europe Initiatives).
- Distinguish between engaging an EU Delegation in a partner country and engaging EU Member State institutions directly (relevant for European cooperative members).
- Identify the correct entry points and appropriate protocol for approaching a Delegation or Member State institution.

Detailed Content Outline

1. The EU external action architecture

- European Commission vs. the Council of the EU vs. the EEAS — who sets policy, who implements, who represents the EU externally. (short)
- DG INTPA: mandate, thematic units, and its role in relation to Global Gateway.
- EEAS: diplomatic and political-strategic role, and its coordination role for Global Gateway.
- EU Delegations: legal status and structure (Head of Delegation, Cooperation section, Political section, Trade section) and how they relate to DG INTPA and the EEAS in Brussels.

2. Country-level programming

- Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) and how country-level priorities are decided.
- Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs): joint programming between the EU and Member States.
- The role of EU Member States' bilateral development agencies working alongside Delegations (e.g. national development agencies), and how they interact with Delegation priorities.

3. For European cooperative members: engaging EU Member State institutions

- National Permanent Representations to the EU and their role in shaping Member State positions.
- Relevant national development agencies and ministries.
- How intra-EU cooperative apex bodies can feed into Member State positions relevant to Global Gateway.

4. Entry points and protocol

- Who to approach within a Delegation (Head of Cooperation, sector focal points) and typical first steps.
- Appropriate channels: courtesy calls, position papers, civil-society and non-state actor dialogue mechanisms.
- Delegation frameworks for engaging civil society and economic actors, where they exist.

Practical Example / Case Study Expected

- A real or realistic composite example of a cooperative apex body's first successful engagement with an EU Delegation, walked through step by step (initial contact, meeting, follow-up).
- Where possible, a short illustrative example from a country with an active Team Europe Initiative relevant to the cooperative/agri-food or rural-livelihoods sector.

Suggested Materials to be Handed Out

- Annotated slide deck, retained by participants for later reference.
- One-page organigram of the EU external-action architecture (Commission / EEAS / Delegation).
- Glossary of key acronyms used throughout the series (DG INTPA, EEAS, TEI, MIP, NDICI-Global Europe, NIP, etc.), to be built on in later sessions.
- Template/checklist for participants to map the EU Delegation (or relevant Member State institutions) contact points in their own country.
- Short reading list of 2–3 official, plain-language EU sources on DG INTPA, the EEAS, and Delegation structures.
- An example of a how to present themselves through a factsheet to the EU delegations or Member State.

Expectations of the Service Provider

- Expert(s) with direct working experience of EU external action or Delegation engagement (e.g. former Delegation, DG INTPA or EEAS staff strongly preferred).
- Content adapted for a mixed international audience across very different country contexts — avoid a Brussels-centric framing; ensure practical relevance for Delegations in partner countries as well as for European members engaging Member States.
- A structured discussion/Q&A segment of at least 30 minutes, given the diversity of countries represented.
- Consistent core content delivered to both the morning and afternoon cohorts, with regional examples adapted where the two cohorts' participant composition differs.
- Materials submitted to ICA for review at least 2 working days before delivery.
- Plain, accessible English in all materials, given that they may later be adapted or translated — technical/institutional jargon should be explained on first use.

Suggested Methodology and Time Allocation (this can be changed)

- Approximately 40% presentation.
- Approximately 40% structured discussion and Q&A.
- Approximately 20% practical exercise — participants begin mapping their own country's Delegation/Member State contact points using the provided template.