



ILX Forum 2025

Discussions & Outcomes

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Introduction

The ILX Forum 2025, held on September 25th at Move in Amsterdam, gathered over 200 global stakeholders to discuss and address one of the most pressing challenges in development finance: mobilising private capital to achieve the sustainable and climate goals in Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs). Against a backdrop of increased geopolitical tensions, reduced development assistance, and rising temperatures and disparities, the ILX Forum underscored the urgency and opportunity of investing in high-impact projects that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in EMDEs.

Since its inception in 2022, when the first ILX Forum was held, ILX has grown its investments in the development finance space, demonstrating that co-investment with Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) can deliver stable, diversified returns while advancing global sustainability objectives. With USD 1.7 billion under management from Dutch and Danish pension funds, ILX has already invested in over 65 projects across 29 EMDEs, partnering with ADB, AfDB, DEG, EBRD, FMO, IDBi, IFC, and Proparco.



First Half of the Day

A Pension Fund Perspective

The forum kicked off with a pension fund perspective – [Harmen van Wijnen](#), Chairman of the Executive Board of [ABP](#), Europe's largest pension fund, with over € 500 billion under management.

He delivered a powerful message on the evolving role of institutional investors in today's complex geopolitical landscape. In a time marked by rising populism, growing polarisation, and diminishing global stability, he emphasised the need for long-term thinking, cooperation, and impact-driven investments.

ABP's commitment to impact investing is rooted in its dual responsibility: securing pensions for its participants while contributing to a sustainable and liveable world. As part of its Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SRI) policy, ABP introduced impact investing in 2023 - not as a trend, but as a strategic instrument to address societal challenges without compromising the return-risk profile of the portfolio.

Harmen highlighted Emerging Market Private Debt – the development finance asset class – as a key asset class that meets both financial and impact objectives. Through b-loans originated by MDBs and DFIs, ABP, with the help of ILX, is able to invest in projects directly aligned with the SDGs, benefiting from these institutions' preferred creditor status and broad diversification. It offers comparable returns to public markets and delivers tangible, measurable impact, aligning with the priorities of long-term institutional investors.

He stressed that EM Private Debt is not a niche, but a strategic building block within their asset owner mandate. It reduces volatility, embeds ESG principles, and fosters engagement with policymakers. Compared to other instruments, it offers more targeted exposure and lower political risk.

However, scaling remains a challenge for now, but with no doubt that it will be overcome. Harmen acknowledged that fees and access must improve but emphasised that the real priority is recognising the validity of this asset class and integrating it more broadly into institutional portfolios.

His closing message was clear: the Development Finance asset class offers a unique opportunity to combine financial returns with societal and development progress, and ABP is committed to leading the way.



The Future of Development Finance

After Harmen van Wijnen's initial keynote, [Hans Peter Lankes](#), Managing Director at [ODI Global](#), a UK-based development think tank, took to the stage for a conversation with [Kevin Nijrani](#), Global Director for Mobilisation and Syndicated Loans, [IFC](#), to discuss the future of development finance. It offered a look at how MDBs and DFIs are evolving to meet the growing demands of climate and development finance.

Hans Peter opened by emphasising the increasingly central role of MDBs and DFIs in financing climate and SDG-aligned projects, especially as governments scale back their direct involvement. To increase impact, these institutions are expanding beyond traditional lending models. One notable innovation is the use of Synthetic Risk Transfer (SRT) instruments, which have helped unlock additional lending capacity, raising it from approximately \$120 billion to \$180 billion.

However, the most significant shift is the strategic move toward mobilising private capital. This is a necessity, given the scale of global financing needs. Kevin elaborated on this shift. Historically, IFC relied heavily on its own balance sheet for lending. But recognising the limitations of internal capital, IFC pivoted toward sourcing funds from insurance companies and pension funds, successfully mobilising \$980 billion in recent years. This marks a fundamental change in how development finance is structured.

To attract institutional investors to emerging markets, IFC is increasingly using securitisation structures, aiming to grow this segment to \$140 billion and establish an emerging markets asset class. These instruments help mitigate risk and improve accessibility for investors unfamiliar with EMDEs.

With the aim of scaling syndications, IFC sees strong potential in working with platforms such as ILX, which help bridge the gap between MDB-originated deals and institutional capital. Many investors lack country-specific knowledge, and these syndicated instruments offer a way to diversify exposure while maintaining acceptable risk profiles.

The conversation ended by zooming into Africa and its specific challenges, given Kevin's background, where he acknowledged the challenges posed by FX risk, which remains a deterrent for institutional investors. IFC is thus expanding its local currency offerings and promoting project finance, standardised investment vehicles, and equity instruments to make African investments more viable.

The ILX Journey

After this insightful conversation, [Manfred Schepers](#), CEO and Member of the Investment Committee, and [Luz Martinez](#), Head of Sustainability of ILX, stepped up to give an overview of the ILX journey since inception.



In the last three years, ILX has aimed to scale development finance as a credible asset class for institutional investors. The journey began with a four-year incubation period from 2018 to 2021, supported by the Dutch, German and UK governments. In 2022, \$1 billion was committed by Dutch pension funds, including APG on behalf of ABP and BpfBouw, and Achmea IM on behalf of Pensioenfond Vervoer. By 2025, ILX has grown to \$1.7 billion, expanding its investor base to include Danish pension funds.

ILX's strategy centres on bridging long-term institutional capital with the investment pipelines of MDBs and DFIs. By participating in B-loans alongside MDBs, ILX benefits from AAA-rated counterparties, preferred creditor status, and the privileges and immunities afforded to these institutions.

The ILX portfolio, spanning Fund I and II, now includes 64 MDB loan investments across 29 emerging market countries. Sector allocation is diversified, with financial institutions representing 33%, infrastructure and logistics 23%, renewable energy 18%, agriculture 15%, and manufacturing and services 11%. Regionally, the fund is distributed across Latin America (32%), Central and Eastern Europe (28%), Asia (25%), and Africa (15%).

Performance comparisons underscore ILX's strength. The fund consistently outperforms traditional emerging market benchmarks, including EM corporate bonds (JPM CEMBI), EM sovereign bonds (JPM EMBI) and high-yield bonds (JPM HY). Importantly, ILX has maintained this outperformance through periods of global stress - including the financial crisis, COVID-19, and the Ukraine war, demonstrating its stability and low volatility. *(Note: if you are an institutional investor and want to see the performance comparison, please reach out to investor.relations@ilxfund.com)*

Beyond financial metrics, ILX's impact is tangible. The portfolio has supported over 54,000 jobs, financed 2,496 MW of renewable energy (equivalent to 90% of Kenya's total capacity), and avoided nearly 4 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually - more than Amsterdam's entire yearly footprint. Projects span more than 25 countries and target themes such as inclusive finance, climate action, gender equality, and sustainable infrastructure. Nearly half of the portfolio is allocated to climate finance, and 7% to biodiversity-focused investments.

Sigrid Kaag: Time to Scale Up

One of the most exciting speakers then addressed the audience, [Sigrid Kaag](#), former Dutch Deputy Prime Minister and UN Under-Secretary-General. Her remarks were framed by the current geopolitical reality, as she had just flown back from New York Climate Week.

Global institutional investors and pension funds manage over \$100 trillion, a capital that remains largely disconnected from the real economies of EMDEs, precisely where it could drive long-term growth, climate resilience, and social inclusion. The gap between available capital and actual investment flows is still wide, and bridging it is now more important than ever, as urgency increases.



She argued that traditional banking and capital markets are failing to provide the necessary channels for this scale of mobilisation. Instead, the responsibility is shifting to the multilateral financial system, particularly MDBs and DFIs, highlighted in the recent [Sevilla declaration during FFD4](#), endorsed by governments from the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. This declaration set out a credible framework for scaling cooperation between institutional investors and MDBs and DFIs. It calls for a modernised multilateral financing approach, one that aligns public and private capital around shared sustainability objectives and enables direct investment partnerships.

Sigrid then advocated for ILX as proof of concept and a model for how public-private investment platforms can work efficiently and at scale. She also expanded the conversation to not just development and climate as key topics, but to include social infrastructure, particularly education. As Chair of the High-Level Steering Group of [Education Cannot Wait](#), Kaag highlighted the scale of and argued that it is not just a social good, but rather a strategic asset, foundational to human capital, productivity, and inclusive growth.

Scale requires not only efficient structures and sustainable returns, but also the courage to act. She called for a new compact between governments, MDBs, and institutional investors—one that treats social infrastructure as investable, scalable, and central to long-term stability and growth.

The Development Finance Panel: MDBs and DFIs at the Centre of Mobilisation

The first part of the ILX Forum closed with a development finance panel, in which the heads of syndications of different MDBs and DFIs discussed the essential role of their institutions in advancing development. The panel was composed of:

- ❖ [ADB](#): [Bart Raemaekers](#), Head of Mobilisation and Blended Finance
- ❖ [AfDB](#): [Max Magor Ndiaye](#), Senior Director of Syndications
- ❖ [DEG](#): [Peter Thimme](#), Senior Director of Syndications
- ❖ [EBRD](#): [Christian Kleboth](#), Head of Debt Mobilisation
- ❖ [FMO](#): [Annemieke Mokveld](#), Manager of Loan Syndications and Agency Desk
- ❖ [IDBi](#): [Jozef Henriquez](#), Head of Resource Mobilisation
- ❖ [IFC](#): [Giancarlo Ortega](#), Manager of Syndications Operations

[Rosy Khanna](#), the moderator and former Director at IFC, opened this panel with two foundational questions: What are the institutional missions of the MDBs and DFIs represented, and how does partnering with ILX help scale their reach and impact?



The responses painted a clear picture of a development finance ecosystem under pressure but also one evolving with purpose. Bart Raemaekers (ADB) described the bank's dual public-private mandate across 44 countries, noting that for every dollar invested, two are mobilised from private sources. With a portfolio averaging a B- credit rating, ADB's transactions are both impactful and client-aligned. ILX has co-financed eight transactions with ADB, totalling approximately \$200 million.

Christian Kleboth (EBRD) emphasised that of the bank's €17 billion balance sheet, 80% of it is private sector-driven. EBRD focuses on financials, eco-infrastructure, and industrial channels. ILX has co-financed around €50 million in projects with EBRD, making it EBRD's biggest mobilisation partner.

Jozef Henriquez (IDBi) highlighted the institution's regional focus on Latin America and the Caribbean, with over \$5 billion syndicated in the past two years. He stressed ILX's value in understanding emerging market risk - especially as traditional banks retreat. ILX, he said, is always top of mind when structuring transactions.

Giancarlo Ortega (IFC) shared that 2025 was a record year, with \$56 billion in long-term finance provided, \$38 billion of which came from mobilised private capital. IFC's diversified portfolio delivers risk-adjusted returns and aligns with the SDGs, particularly job creation. He emphasised the importance of local market knowledge and strong credit culture in building investor confidence.

Max Magor Ndiaye (AfDB) noted that AfDB covers all 44 African countries and aims to grow its private sector share from 25% to 50% over the next decade. He credited ILX with bringing pension funds into markets they would not otherwise enter, and with helping AfDB attract other institutional investors.

Annemieke Mokveld (FMO) explained that FMO's global mandate spans financial institutions, energy, and agri-food-water. She emphasised that impact cannot be achieved through FMO's balance sheet alone. ILX, she said, is a trusted partner that understands the asset class deeply - its appetite often serving as a test for pricing and transaction quality.

Peter Timme (DEG) added that DEG's strategy balances impact, climate, and returns. He mentioned that the GEMs database - which shows that perceived risks in emerging markets are often higher than actual risks - is an insight that helps reassure investors.

Rosy's follow-up questions focused on how MDBs and DFIs provide comfort to private investors and what lessons they've learned. Across the board, institutions emphasised the importance of local knowledge, long-term relationships, and transparent communication. ILX and similar innovative strategies were mentioned as a bridge, translating institutional investor expectations into actionable co-investment strategies.

This discussion echoed the themes from the previous keynotes, by placing MDBs and DFIs as key in private capital mobilisation and achieving development and impact. It showcased the expertise and skills that these institutions have from their +50 years of experience and their extensive resources on the ground, increasing investors' confidence to venture to EMDEs by mitigating their risk.



Second Half of the Day

After a break, the second half opened with two presentations: [Gianpiero Nacci](#), Managing Director, Climate Strategy and Delivery, EBRD, and [Arti Grover](#), Principal Economist, IFC.

Global Development Finance & Sustainable Investment in Emerging Markets and Developing Economies

Gianpiero, also fresh from the plane coming from New York Climate Week, opened the second part of the ILX Forum with a strategic imperative: we are in a time of profound changes in the global economy, driven by digital transformation, geopolitical uncertainty, and ecological fragility, that depends on an endangered planetary ecosystem.

Nacci began by outlining the macroeconomic and geopolitical shifts that are reshaping development finance. He noted the retreat of Official Development Assistance (ODA), with OECD data showing a 7.1% decline in 2024 and projections of a further 9-17% drop in 2025.

Within this context, the green transition and climate finance require urgent, substantial investment. Fortunately, climate finance is increasing globally, with total flows reaching USD 1.9 trillion in 2023 and exceeding USD 2 trillion in 2024. And, for the first time, private contributions surpassed public ones. However, EMDEs still require significantly more catalytic capital to scale climate flows. Gianpiero stressed that the challenge is not a lack of capital, but its allocation.

He detailed the sectoral financing needs, highlighting that energy systems, transport, buildings, and industry all require multi-fold increases in mitigation finance, as well as outlined how different private actors (venture capital, private equity, asset managers, financial institutions, and corporates) can play roles in scaling adaptation finance. He emphasised that markets for adaptation solutions are growing in real time and attracting private sector interest.

EBRD's operational model combines investment, advisory, and policy engagement to structure commercially sound green projects. He cited GEMs data, echoing the previous panel, to showcase the effectiveness of MDBs' operational models, and showing that MDB lending to private entities in EMDEs has an average default rate of 3.56% and a recovery rate of 72.2%, comparable to or better than many benchmarks in advanced economies.

MDBs, including EBRD, are increasingly working as a system to mitigate risks and mobilise private finance. This includes harmonising tools and standards, such as joint principles for tracking climate finance, nature-positive finance, and Paris Agreement alignment.



The Investment and Impact Case in EMDEs

Arti Grover, from the Economic Research Department at the IFC, followed by presenting on the intersection of investment and impact in EMDEs. She outlined how MDBs and DFIs operate at this intersection, providing analytical evidence and market intelligence, building institutional capacity in EMDEs, and conveying public-private partnerships for large-scale projects.

Arti emphasised that DFI-backed firms tend to outperform peers in profitability, employment, and innovation. She detailed how investments generate both direct and indirect effects across supply chains, and how the World Bank Group, to which IFC is part of, supports private sector growth through targeted interventions, infrastructure investments, and firm upgrading programs.

A key focus was on inclusion, particularly access to finance for women-led businesses. For example, IFC's Banking on Women initiative has mobilised over \$10 billion to support women-owned MSMEs, using capital market instruments like sustainability-linked bonds.

Grover concluded by highlighting that DFI-led investments in EMDEs are not only impactful but also financially sound. IFC's private equity portfolio has outperformed public benchmarks over decades. As mentioned, the GEMs database can prove this.

Institutional Investor Panel: Pension Funds Investing in EMDEs Private Credit

One of the highlights of the ILX Forum was an institutional investor expert panel, where pension funds expressed their view on investing in EMDEs. The panel was composed of:

- ❖ [ABP](#): [Katrien Hooyman](#), Sr Advisor Investments
- ❖ [Achmea IM](#): [Maureen Schlejen-Peeters](#), CEO
- ❖ [Blackrock](#): [Julie Ansidei](#), EMEA Head of Sustainability Policy and Engagement
- ❖ [Folksam](#): [Marcus Svedberg](#), Chief Economist
- ❖ [PGB](#): [Roy Kroon](#), Team Lead Credit Investments
- ❖ [PGGM](#): [Gary Barnes](#), Senior Portfolio Manager, Emerging Markets Credit

[Brenda Kramer](#), the moderator and Executive Director of the [Sustainable Finance Lab](#) started the conversation asking if institutional investors allocate 5% to emerging markets EMDEs, and what is needed to change that.

Katrien (ABP) noted its EMDE allocation is currently below 5%, not due to a lack of conviction but as a result of strategic asset allocation. However, she noted that they are growing their exposure to private markets, where EMDEs could play a larger role. PGGM, with \$15 billion in credit and \$1.5 billion in EMDEs, emphasised its long-standing mandate and in-house expertise. Its global sustainable credit portfolio includes one-third in EMDEs, with future growth dependent on allocation decisions.



Marcus (Folksam) shared that its EMDE exposure has declined in recent years due to a shift from public to private markets, which takes time to build, but he is sure that it will increase again. Roy (PGB) currently invests only in EMDE equities but is exploring debt for greater impact. Achmea IM reported that EMDEs represent a small portion of its impact allocation, though it sees strong opportunities, while BlackRock highlighted growing client interest in EMDE private markets, especially in resilience-focused investments.

The panellists noted the importance of measuring impact, and PGB described its global impact framework, noting EMDEs are particularly well-suited for capital deployment with measurable outcomes. ABP emphasised that private markets offer better conditions for impact in EMDEs but cited due diligence and scale as key barriers. MDBs and DFIs are seen collectively as essential partners to overcome these challenges.

Data availability was highlighted as one of the key barriers. Its importance of data availability and evolving tools to assess impact will allow for a greater allocation to EMDEs. When asked about the major hurdles to increasing the allocation to EMDEs private credit, the panellists agreed that liquidity constraints in private credit, home bias, and perceived risk were key, as well as it is hard to find a home for it in the portfolio. On the other hand, working with MDBs can help with other barriers, such as reputational risk.

The discussion concluded with a call for more scalable structures, better data, and comparable benchmarks to support the development finance asset class. While appetite for EMDE investment is growing, especially in private markets, institutional investors need clearer pathways, stronger partnerships, and more investable opportunities to scale their commitments.

Voices from ILX Portfolio Projects

The final panel of the ILX Forum 2025 shifted the focus from strategy to execution, highlighting how ILX's co-investment model delivers tangible impact through real-world projects in EMDEs. Moderated by ILX Investment Managers [Wieger Fokke](#) and [Guillaume Le Bris](#), the session featured two fireside chats with representatives from ILX portfolio companies and their MDB partners.

In the first conversation, [Andrew Keeley](#), Director of Investor Relations of [TBC Bank](#), and [Erdenedelger \(Degi\) Bavlai](#), First Deputy CEO of [Khan Bank](#), shared how ILX financing has supported their institutions' growth and sustainability ambitions. TBC Bank, Georgia's largest financial services group and a leading digital banking provider in Uzbekistan, has achieved a 22% average ROE and sixfold growth in active customers. Khan Bank, Mongolia's largest bank with a 32% market share, serves 2.9 million customers and leads in digital banking, with 96% of mobile transactions conducted digitally and a 29.5% ROE. With a strong focus on youth and sustainability, Khan Bank has embedded ESG principles into its corporate strategy.



Both banks emphasised the importance of long-standing partnerships with MDBs and DFIs. For Khan Bank, 20% of its funding comes from these institutions, while TBC Bank channels 70% of its MDB/DFI funding toward sustainable lending. They highlighted the value of MDB financing in providing long-term, stable capital at competitive rates, enabling on-lending to sustainable sectors. MDBs also offer multicurrency flexibility and valuable technical expertise, enhancing the banks' ability to deliver impact.

The second fireside chat featured [Ali Shaikh](#), CEO of [SAFCO Ventures](#) (Pakistan), and [Tarang Khimasia](#), Unit Head of Funded Distribution at the [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#). They discussed the structuring of impactful transactions in frontier markets, focusing on SAFCO's production of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) from recycled cooking oils. This innovative model not only reduces aviation emissions but also supports local restaurant incomes and contributes to a circular economy. ADB played a central role in originating and structuring the project, mobilising private investors and ensuring both financial returns and climate impact.

Together, these conversations illustrated how ILX's partnerships with MDBs and DFIs enable scalable, high-impact investments that align with institutional mandates and global sustainability goals.

Conclusion

The ILX Forum 2025 made clear that the development finance asset class is operational, investable, and increasingly essential. From institutional investors to MDBs and DFIs, the collective message was one of readiness and resolve: to scale impact, mobilise private capital, and build resilient partnerships that deliver both returns and measurable progress toward the SDGs. The conversations throughout the day underscored the need for better data, more scalable structures, and deeper collaboration. As ILX continues to grow, it is an example of how institutional capital can be effectively deployed in EMDEs, proving that impact and returns are not mutually exclusive but complementary. The time to act is now, and the ILX Forum has shown that the tools, partners, and ambition are already in place.

