

# **EBOWN REGIONAL MEETING**

**June 4, 2025**

**Voice of European Business Abroad**

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTED BY
	<b>SESSION 1: 60 Minutes of Presentations</b>	
15:00 – 15:05	Welcome Note & Tour de Table	EBO Nepal
15:05 – 15:25	Seg 1 - Regional Insights: A Multi-National Perspective	All EBOs
15:25 – 15:40	Seg 2 - EBOWN Regional Sentiment Report: Insights and Opportunities	EBO India
15:40 – 16:10	Seg 3 - Strengthening Regional Collaboration through the	
	A) South Asia MIP	
	B) Joint Communication on a “Strategic Partnership with the Gulf”	Ms Barbara Einhauser
16:10 – 16:20	Global Gateway Project/s	EBO Saudi Arabia
	<b>SESSION 2: 90 Minutes of Dialogue</b>	
16:20 – 16:40	Round Table 1: Policy Advocacy for Growth - Strategies for Championing Union Interests in Today’s Market	Led by EBO India
16:40 – 17:00	Round Table 2: Bridging the Gaps: Addressing EBO Challenges	Led by EBO Saudi Arabia
17:00 – 17:10	Round Table 3: Innovative Approaches to Regional Collaboration: The EBOWN Way	Led by EBO Bangladesh

# Welcome Note & Tour de Table

# **SOUTH ASIA AND MIDDLE EAST**

## **Regional Sentiment Survey: Insights and Opportunities**

**June 4, 2025**

EU Trade with South Asia and Middle East

South Asia / KSA Exports	EU to South Asia / KSA Exports	Total
€149.06	€115.55	€264.62

GDP	2024
India	3440
KSA	895.84
Bangladesh	300.08
Nepal	38.2096
Sri Lanka	88
Billions of Euros	4762

# Content

- 1. EBO Contribution to EU Business Competitiveness**
- 2. Evaluating Synergy : EBO & EU**
- 3. Breaking Down Regional Business Barriers**
- 4. Boosting EU Business through Regional Integration**
- 5. Key Barriers to Attracting Foreign Direct Investment: EBO Top 5 Choices**
- 6. EBOs Top 3 Barriers in the market**
- 7. Key Trade Barriers For European Business Top 5 Choices**
- 8. Overcoming Obstacles: Bangladesh and Nepal's Path to Development**

# EBO Contribution to EU Business Competitiveness

POLICY ADVOCACY

56%

MARKET INTELLIGENCE

44%

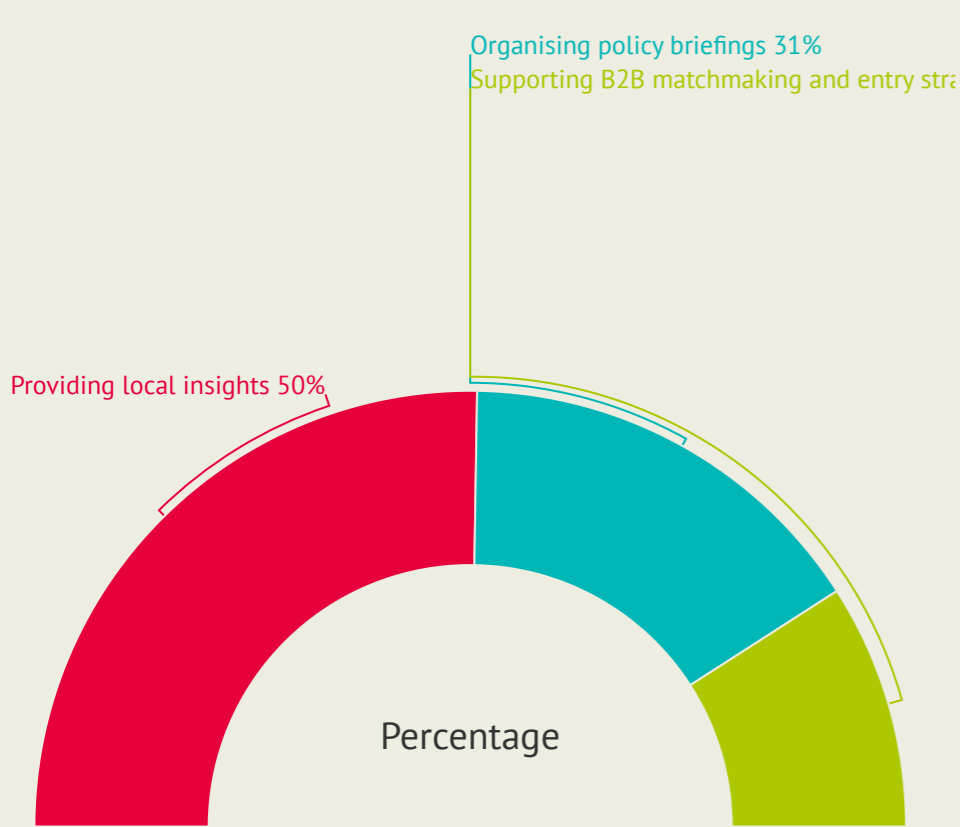
BUSINESS MATCHING

38%

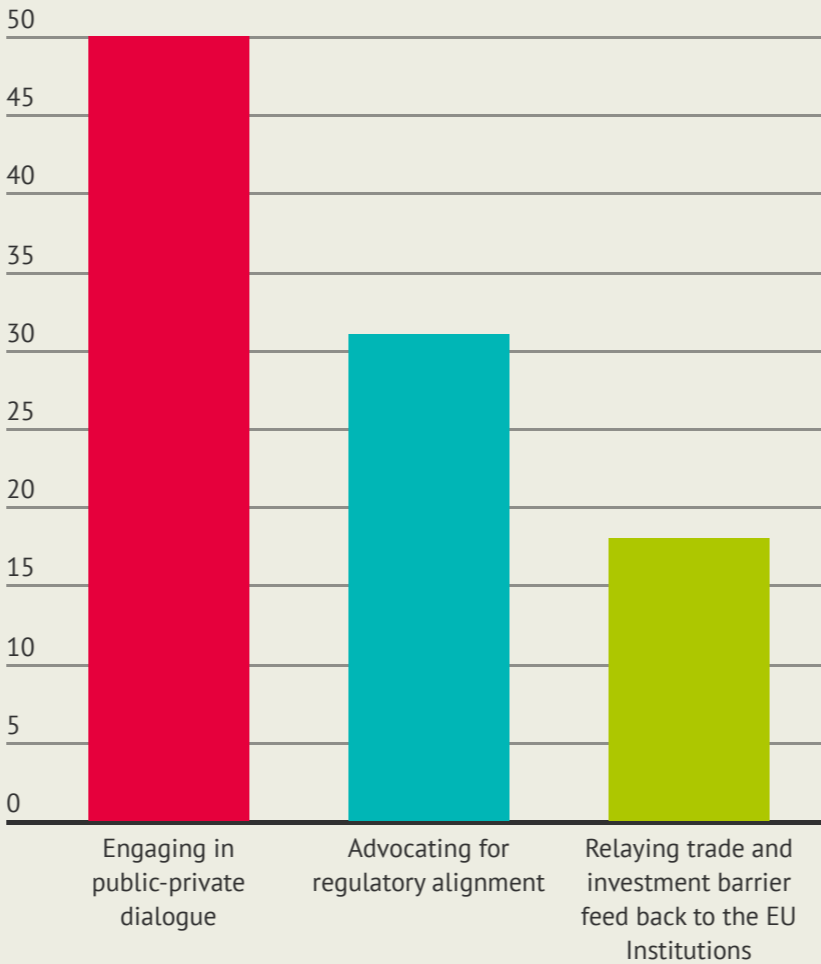
ACCESS TO EU INSTRUMENTS

28%

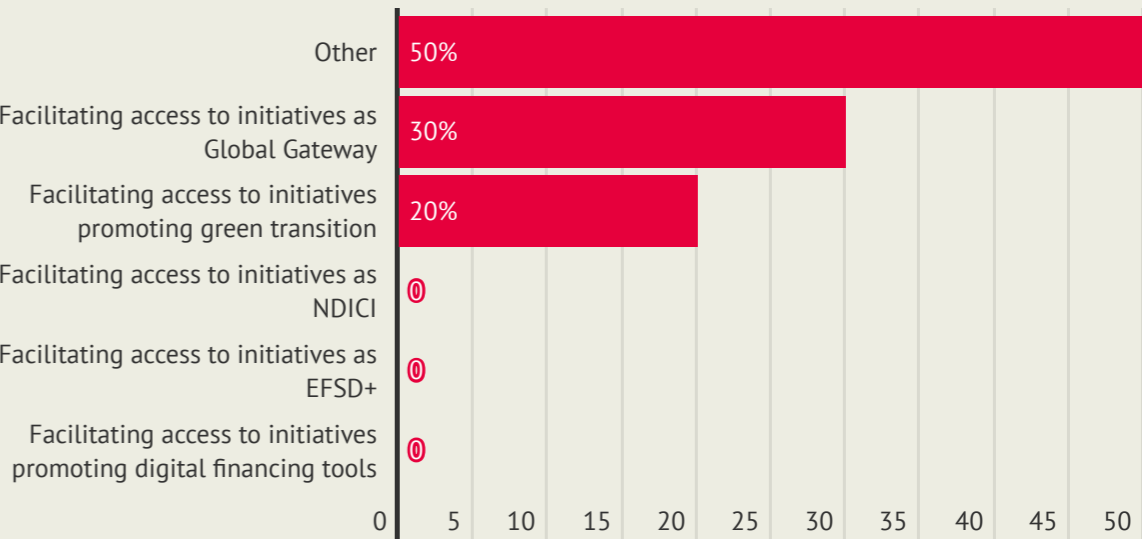
## Market Intelligence & Business Facilitation



## Policy Advocacy & Regulatory Support

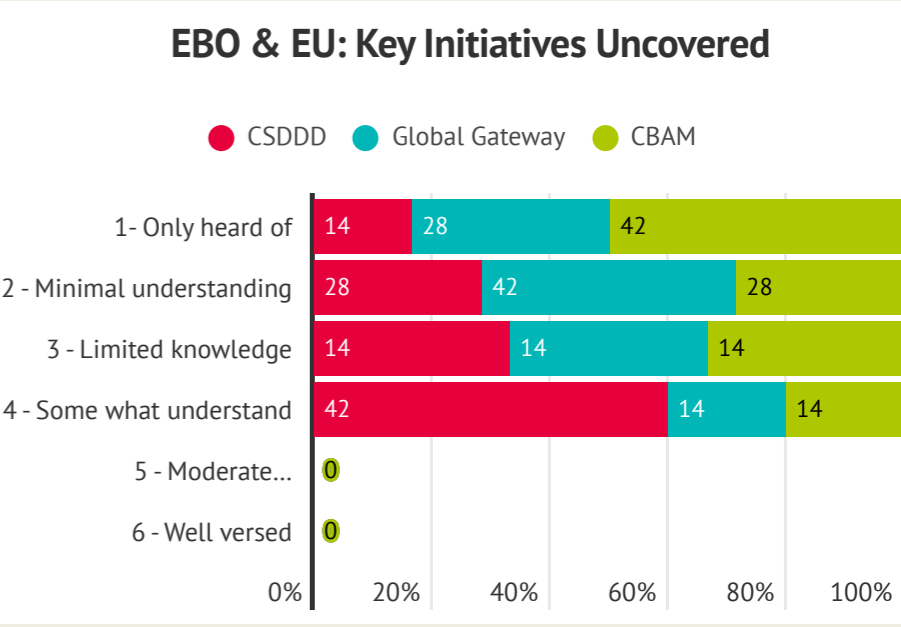
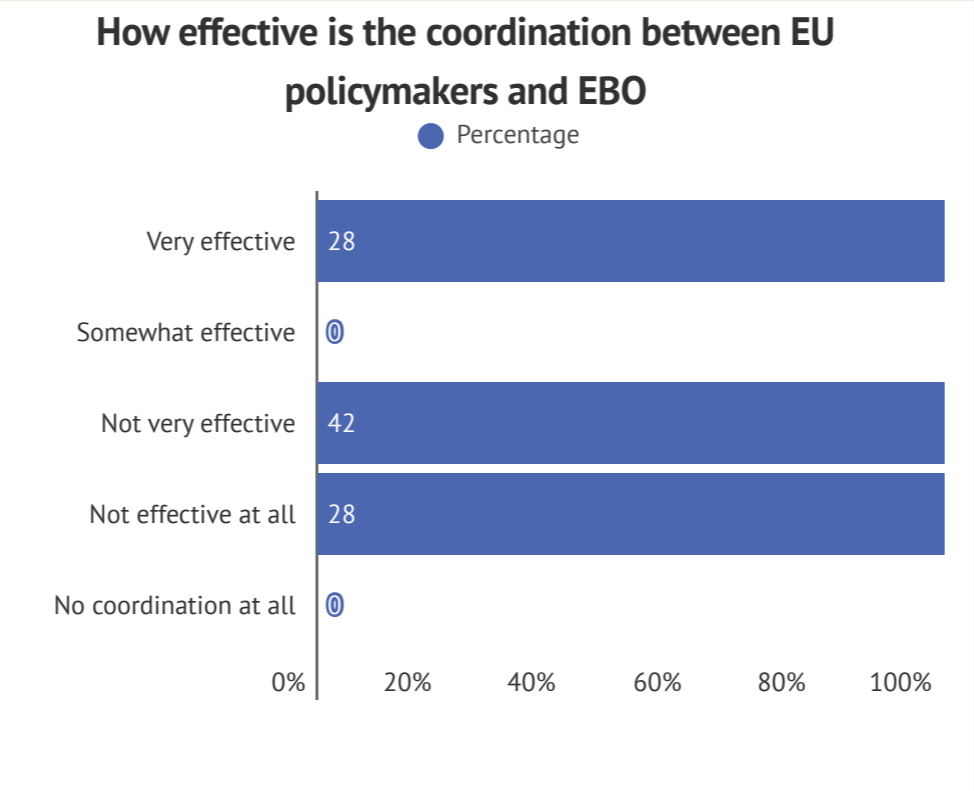
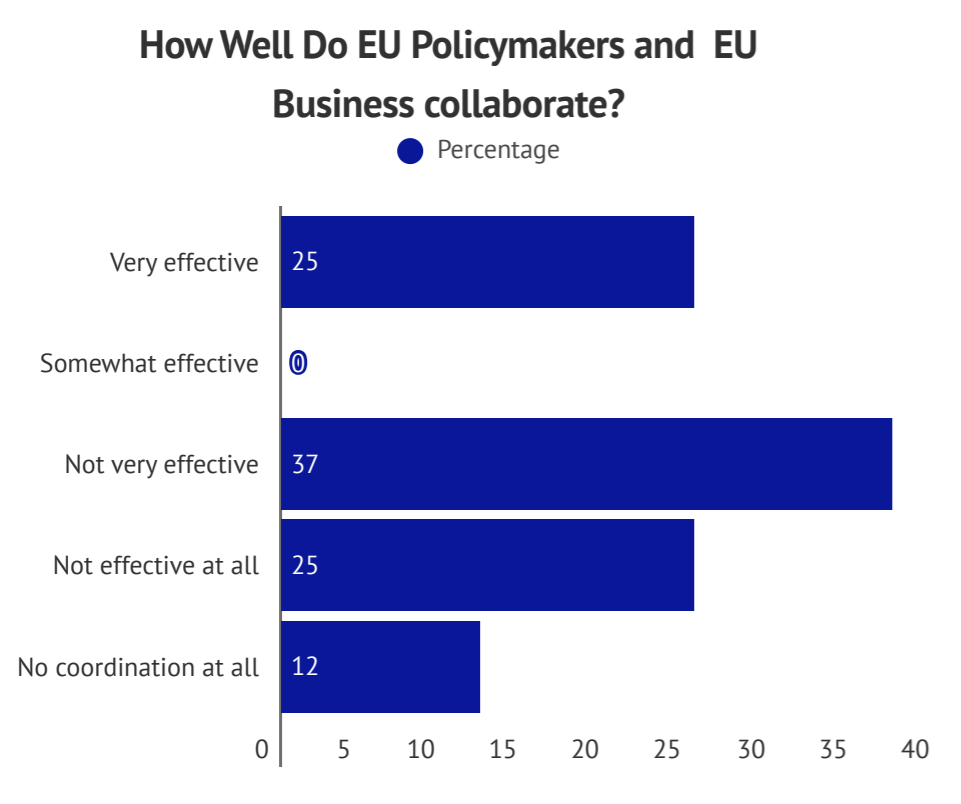


## Alignment with EU Instruments & Flagships



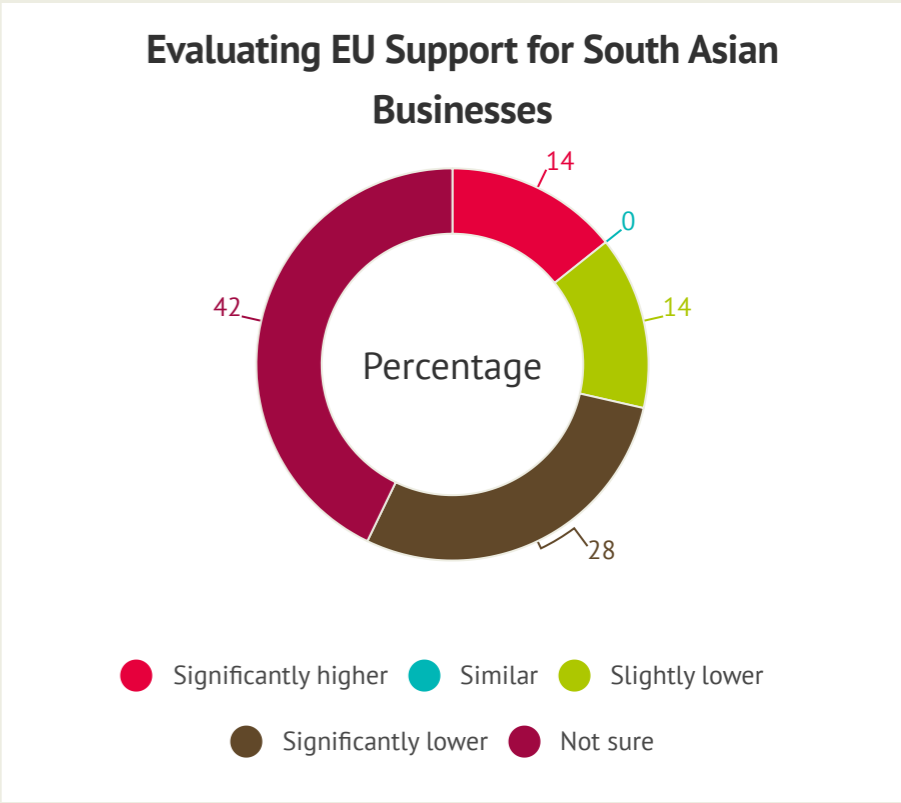
Service	Percentage
Supporting European SMEs	33.33%
Promoting Entrepreneurship	16.67%
One stop shop business support	16.67%
Technical Assistance on Local Regulatory Compliance	16.67%
Technical Assistance on EU Regulatory Compliance	8.33%
Industry specific Technical Assistance	8.33%
Other	0.00%

# Evaluating Synergy : EBO & EU

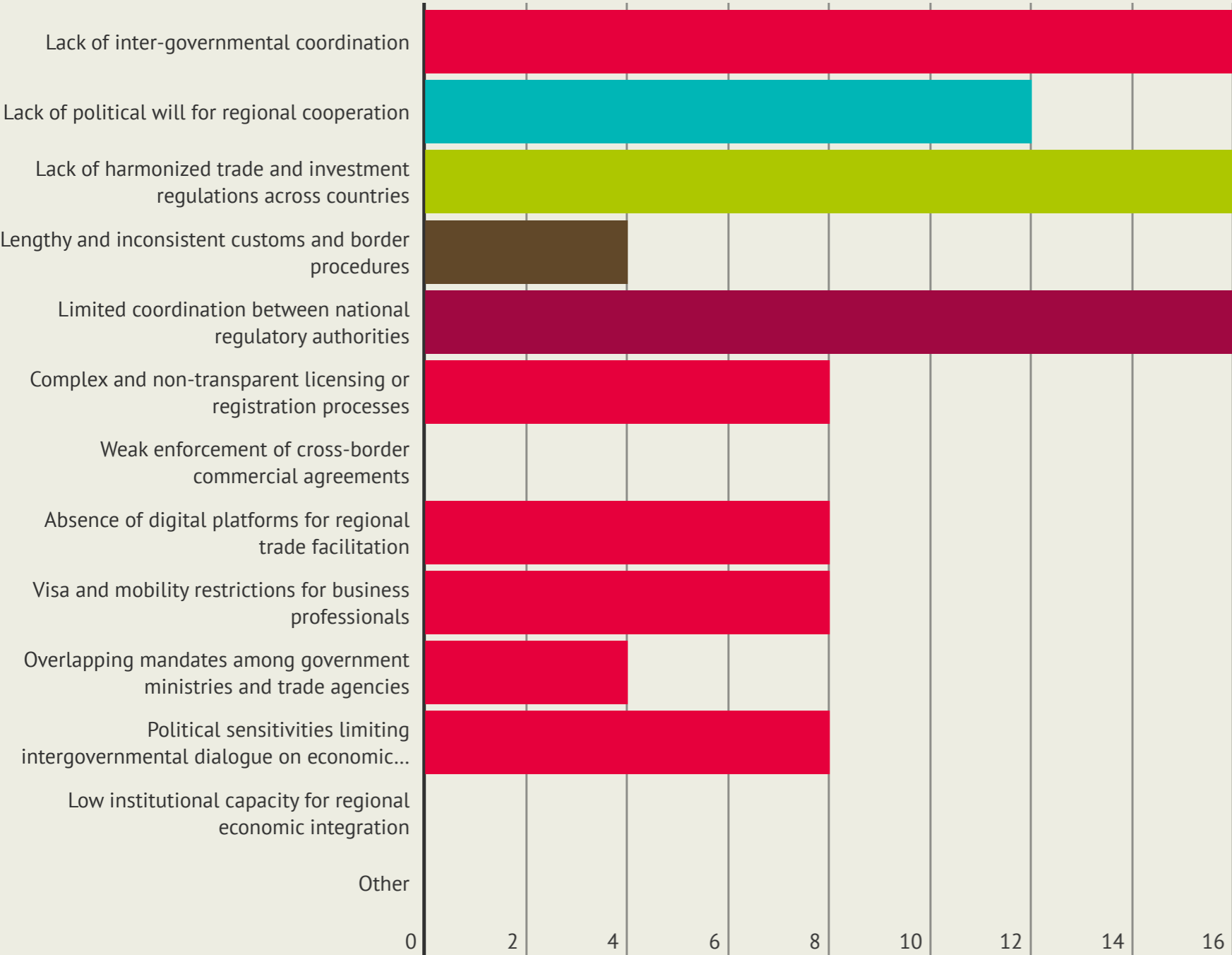


## Engaging EBO Insights: Observations that Matter!

- ✓ Limited strategic alignment.
- ✓ EBOs are often excluded from EU programme design.
- ✓ Bridge-building entities between EU and local business ecosystems.
- ✓ Act as multipliers for EU flagship initiatives.



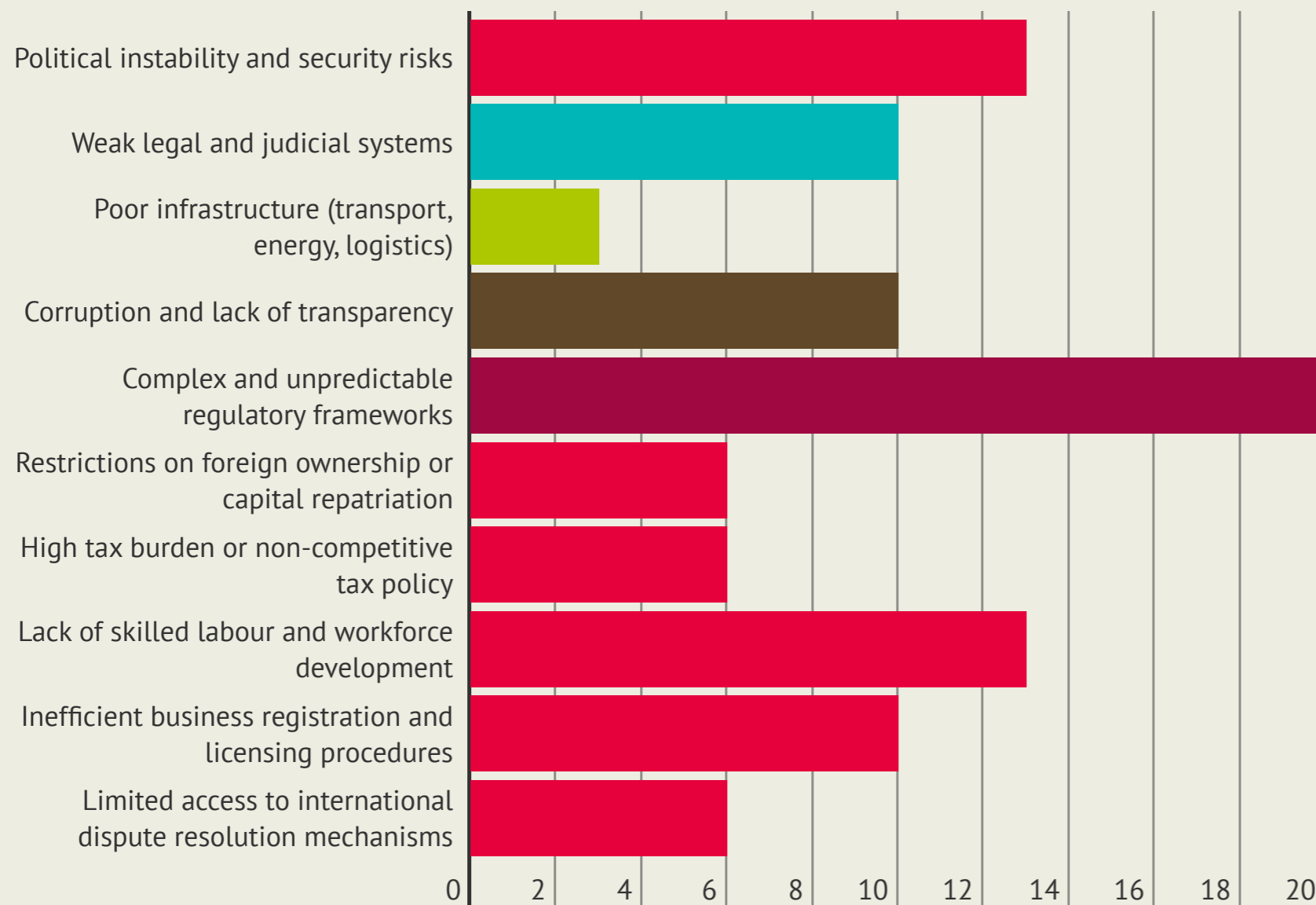
# Breaking Down Regional Business Barriers



# Boosting EU Business through Regional Integration



## Key Barriers to Attracting Foreign Direct Investment: EBO Top 5 Choices



## EBOs Perspective of Top Barriers in the market

### 1) Human Resources and Capacity Building

- a) Workforce shortages hinder growth.
- b) A lack of technical assistance limits SMEs' ability to connect with European firms.

### 2) Access to Information

- a) Limited regulatory updates impact operations.
- b) Insufficient government communication regarding investment areas affects decision-making.
- c) Low awareness of EU business practices obstructs collaboration.

### 3) Market Dynamics and Support

- a) The small market size challenges EU manufacturing companies.
- b) SMEs encounter obstacles to accessing broader markets.
- c) Insufficient government support at trade fairs affects SMEs.

### 4) Financial Constraints

- a) High production costs due to local raw material shortages impact competitiveness.

### 5) Government Engagement and Policy Environment

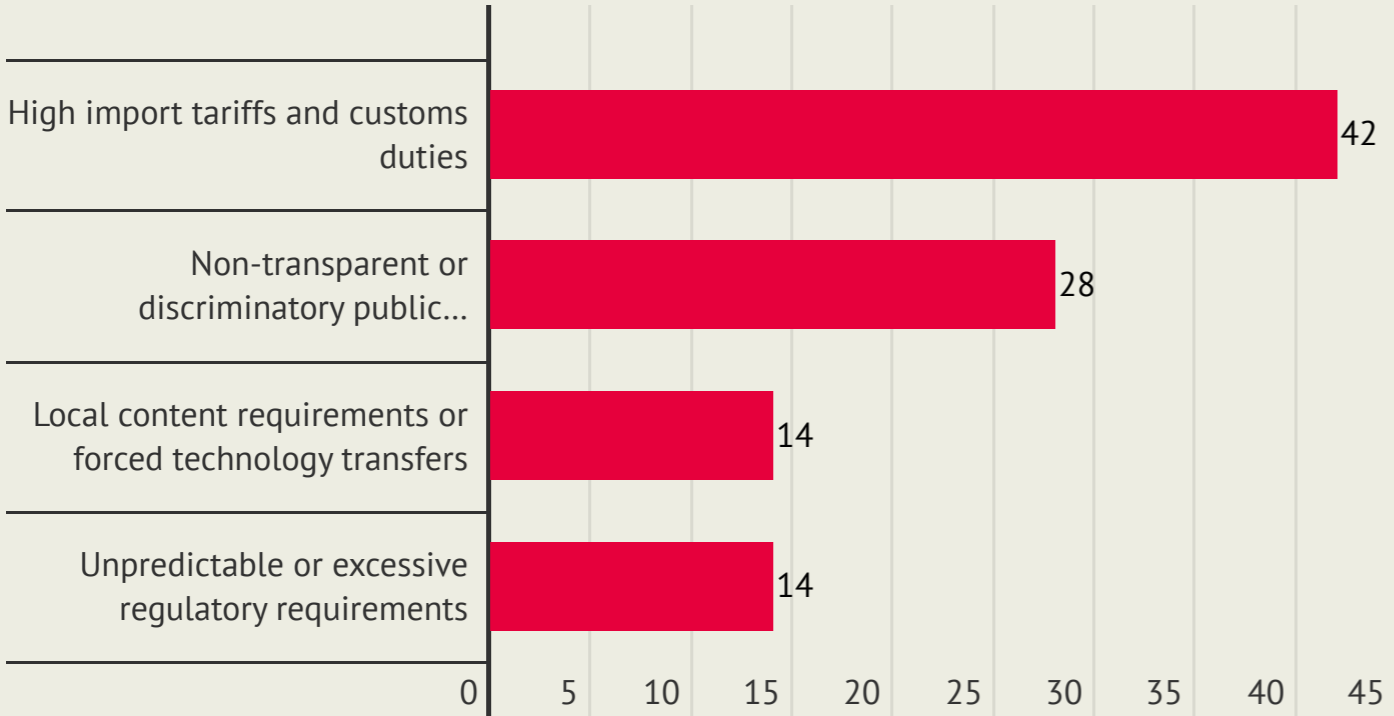
- a) More targeted initiatives are needed to attract EU foreign direct investment.
- b) Bureaucratic hurdles contribute to unfavourable investment conditions.

### 6) Infrastructure Challenges

- a) Inadequate infrastructure hampers economic activity and investment potential.

# Key Trade Barriers For European Business Top 5 Choices

Percentage

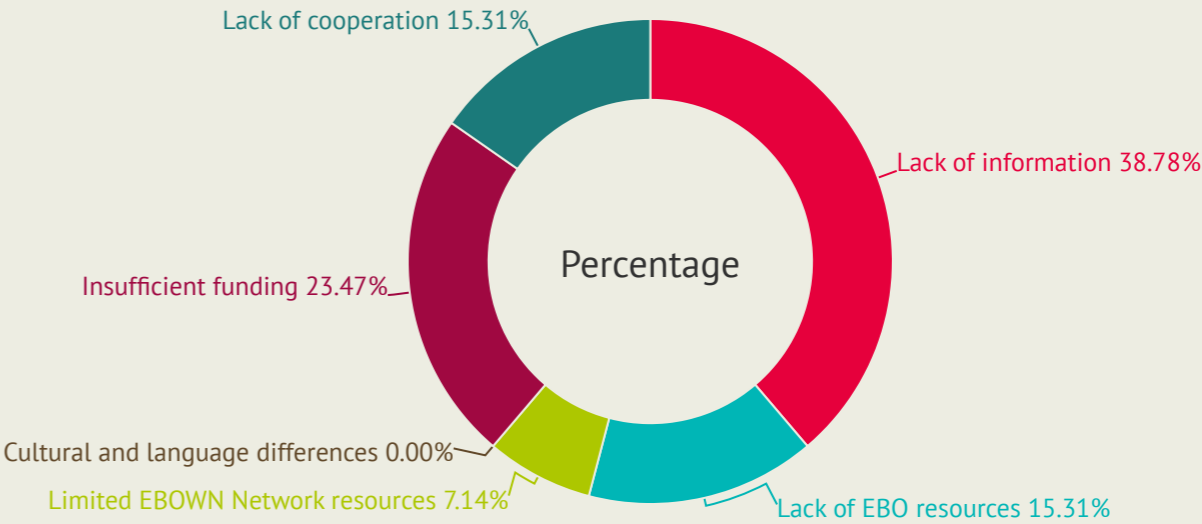


Lack of EBO resources  
**Lack of information**  
Limited EBOWN Network resources  
Insufficient funding  
Lack of cooperation

# Overcoming Obstacles: Bangladesh and Nepal's Path to Development

Answer choices	Percentage
Loss of preferential market access (e.g. duty-free, quota-free trade schemes)	19,04
Limited economic diversification and export dependency	9,52
Insufficient infrastructure and connectivity	14,28
Vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters	4,76
Weak institutional capacity and governance frameworks	9,52
Low levels of foreign direct investment (FDI)	9,52
Inadequate access to quality education and skilled workforce	4,76

# Overcoming Global Business Barriers in the EBO Network



# Open Questions : Enhancing EU Funding, Policy Tailoring, and Private Sector Engagement through EBOWN

Do you have any observations as an EBO about EU Cooperation at the Country and Regional level?

Do you have any recommendations as an EBO about EU Cooperation at the Regional level?

What specific actions would you recommend to increase EU funding and support for EBO in South Asia & the Middle East?

How can EU policies be better tailored to meet the specific needs of countries in the region?

## Regional Objective:

Enhance EBOWN's impact in South Asia and the Middle East by optimising funding, aligning policies with local needs, and leveraging private partnerships for sustainable EU cooperation.

## Issue at Stake:

EBOWN's strategic position in high-growth markets is not fully leveraged due to current EU funding frameworks. EU cooperation is often inflexible, misaligned with the private sector, and lacks regional coherence, hindering competitiveness against global challenges.

## 1. Improve EU Funding and Support for EBOs

- Rebalance funding
- Deploy Global Gateway tools through local EBOs
- Institutionalise EBOs as implementing partners

## 2. Tailor EU Policies to Regional Needs

- Localise EU green/digital strategies
- Support LDC transitions
- Shift development aid
- Institutionalise stakeholder consultation

## 3. Strengthen EU Cooperation Frameworks

- Modernise EU Delegation capacity
- Ensure policy coherence between national and regional programming for business
- Host a biennial Asia Pacific/South Asia–EU Business Conference
- Develop country-specific strategies

# Open Questions : Regional Trade, Investment, and Resilience Building

What regional initiatives could help foster better connections and cooperation between businesses in different regions?

What would you recommend to improve EU foreign direct investment (FDI) flows and trade from the EU into your markets?

What is the most critical recommendation you have for improving EU-South Asia and EU Middle East business relations and strengthening regional cooperation?

## Regional Objective:

Enhancing EU business competitiveness in South Asia and the Middle East through improved trade connectivity, investment facilitation, and a coordinated EU presence, with EBOWN as a key implementation partner.

## Issue at Stake:

The EU's economic influence is underutilized. EU businesses encounter fragmented trade environments and limited visibility, hindering investment and cooperation. Although Member States have formed bilateral agreements, these lack the necessary collective strength to enhance EU competitiveness in key regions.

## 1. Foster Regional Business Cooperation Platforms

- Synchronised EBO-to-EBO delegations and platforms
- Knowledge paper exchange and best practices
- Create regional business councils and thematic platforms
- Support regional pitch events under the Global Gateway
- Institutionalise dialogues

## 2. Improve EU FDI and Trade Flows through Institutional and Market Interventions

- Advocate for an EU–Saudi Arabia Free Trade Agreement
- EBO-led regulatory compliance and market navigation support
- Sectoral mentoring programmes
- Align EU development cooperation and national development plans
- Deploy EU Helpdesks in underrepresented markets

## 3. Strengthen EU Cooperation Frameworks

- Expand EU institutional presence
- Promote collective EU Member State action
- Organise a high-level EU–GCC Business Summit
- Integrate cultural intelligence into business strategy
- Align all cooperation initiatives with national transformation agendas

# Open Questions : Strengthening Regional Resilience and Risk Mitigation for EU Businesses

How can regional cooperation mechanisms in South Asia & middle east be leveraged to enhance economic resilience for EU businesses, particularly in sectors where cross-border supply chains and market access are most vulnerable to external pressures?

What specific regional dynamics—such as regulatory barriers, trade restrictions, or security concerns—pose the most significant challenges to EU businesses in South Asia and the Middle East, and how can regional frameworks help mitigate these risks through collective action??

## Regional Objective:

Strengthen EU business resilience in South Asia and the Middle East by addressing risks like supply chain fragmentation, regulatory inconsistencies, and geopolitical tensions through regional cooperation and targeted EU support.

## Issue at Stake:

EU businesses operating in SAME face growing exposure to external shocks stemming from geopolitical instability, restrictive border regimes, regulatory fragmentation, and weak risk mitigation infrastructure. These challenges threaten supply chain continuity, investment confidence, and the EU's overall competitiveness in strategically significant sectors, including agri-food, pharma, electronics, and green tech.

## 1. Leverage EU Instruments to Advance Regional Integration

- Strengthen advocacy for flagship EU programmes
- Utilise EBOs as intermediaries
- Ensure the effective deployment
- Alignment with market needs.

## 2. Facilitate Regional Supply Chain Dialogues

- Establish structured public-private dialogues
- Convene dialogues through EBOs
- Emphasise efficiency in pharmaceutical, electronics, and agri-food value chains across borders.

## 3. Harmonise Regional Trade Standards

- Advocate for the harmonisation of regional certification and standards
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder consultations and identify priority areas for regulatory convergence to enhance business predictability.

## 4. Address Geopolitical Barriers through Business Diplomacy

- Visa and mobility restrictions
- Border disputes
- Supply chain fragmentation

## 5. Establish Risk Monitoring and Early Warning System

- Collaborate risk dashboards and early warning systems.
- Cover political, trade, and environmental risks.
- EBOs partner with EU Delegations for ground intelligence.

# Segment 3

## 1 - Strengthening Regional Collaboration through the South Asia MIP

# Segment 3

## 2 - Joint Communication for Strategic Cooperation with the GCC region

# Segment 4

## Bridging Continents: Unlocking Opportunities Through Global Gateway



## **SECURING CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS: A STRATEGIC EU-SAUDI PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY**

2025

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# ECCKSA'S PROPOSED **ROADMAP** FOR 2025-2026

## Fostering EU–Saudi CRM Business Dialogue

As of May 2025, EU and Saudi Arabia are finalising a landmark **MoU on Energy Transition and Clean Tech Cooperation**, the first of its kind with a Gulf country. It covers key areas such as hydrogen, CCUS, energy efficiency, clean tech supply chains and **critical raw materials (CRM)**.

Phase 1 (Q1–Q3 2025)

### Preparation & Strategic Alignment

- Establish **contact with DG GROW, DG TRADE, DG ENER**, to align on goals and roadmap.
- Engage with **key EU industry associations** (Eurometaux, EIT RawMaterials, ERMA, etc.) and relevant clusters.
- Map **EU industry interests** (Aluminium, Phosphate, Rare Earths, Copper)
- Engage with **key strategic partners from Saudi Arabia** (Ma'aden, Saudi Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources)
- Secure EC endorsement for inclusion of KSA in **Global Gateway and CRM dialogues**

Phase 2 (Q4 2025–2026)

### Engagement & Implementation

- Obtain a **support from the EU Commission** to implement this roadmap
- Organise a **first EU-KSA CRM business dialogue** with EU Delegation in KSA, EU businesses, Saudi Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources, and Ma'aden
- Launch **EU-KSA CRM Business Taskforce** with biannual meeting schedule.
- Coordinate a high-level **EU business mission to Saudi mining sites** (Q4 2025–early 2026).
- Organise **B2G and B2B matchmaking events** under ECCKSA umbrella.

Phase 3 (2026 onwards)

### Long-Term Strategic Integration

- Integrate **KSA into EU raw materials diplomacy** as a strategic partner.
- **Facilitate partnerships** between EU tech providers and Saudi mining actors.
- Support a **delegation of European companies** at the Future Minerals Forum 2026 (13–15 January in Riyadh).
- Publish an **annual progress report** for stakeholders and the EU Commission.

# A RAPIDLY MOVING LANDSCAPE, AND EUROPE'S WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

**EL PAÍS** U.S. REPORT

**Trump signs \$600 billion deal with Saudi Arabia for weapons and critical minerals**

The measures include a \$142 billion agreement to supply US defense equipment to Riyadh



**U.S.-Saudi Business Council** عنصر الأعمال السعودي الأمريكي

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**U.S.-Saudi Business Council Leads Third Delegation to Future Minerals Forum**

February 3, 2025 | Artificial Intelligence & Robotics, Featured Articles, Industrial Services & Manufacturing, Mining & Metals, Past Events, Renewable Energy & Clean Energy

The U.S.-Saudi Business Council (USSBC) led a delegation of eight North American companies to the 4th Future Minerals Forum (FMF), held January 15-16, 2025, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

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**Maaden, MP Materials partner to develop Saudi rare earth supply chain**

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the US-Saudi Investment Forum 2025 in Riyadh.

May 15, 2025


**ARAB NEWS** SAUDI ARABIA MIDDLE EAST WORLD BUSINESS MEDIA LIFESTYLE OPINION

**Saudi Arabia, India agree to strengthen critical minerals partnership**



**UK to sign critical minerals partnership with Saudi Arabia**

Reuters | January 13, 2025 | 4:16 pm Battery Metals News Europe Middle East Copper Lithium Nickel



UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer met with his Saudi counterpart Mohammed bin Salman late last year.  
Credit: UK Prime Minister via X

Britain will sign a minerals cooperation partnership with Saudi Arabia that could help strengthen supply chains, create opportunities for British businesses and attract investment into the UK, the British government said on Tuesday.

# WHY THIS MATTERS FOR GLOBAL GATEWAY AND STRATEGIC CORRIDORS



**What about the development of Global Gateway in the MENA Region?**

## ECCKSA's role in the Global Gateway Development in KSA:

- Privileged access to **Saudi ministries, regulatory bodies, and major national programs.**
- ECCKSA **connects European companies to the right counterparts** for joint industrial development.
- ECCKSA is **uniquely positioned to translate Global Gateway objectives into concrete, coordinated projects in critical sectors.**

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IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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# Round Table 1

**Policy Advocacy for Growth - Strategies for Championing Union Interests in Today's Market**

# **Round Table 2**

## **Bridging the Gaps: Addressing EBO Challenges**

# **Round Table 3**

## **Innovative Approaches to Regional Collaboration: The EBOWN Way**

**Thank you & Let's Network**