

# 1. Background

## Overall Objective of the Meeting:

The primary goal of the meeting is to assess and enhance regional collaboration between South Asia, the Middle East, and the European Union. Through discussions and strategic initiatives, the participants aim to address key challenges and unlock opportunities that foster economic growth and strengthen partnerships in the evolving market landscape.

## Meeting Priorities

**MP1: Addressing Policy Advocacy and Strategic Messaging**, Focus on developing cohesive policy strategies and recommendations that align with EU interests, facilitating deeper cooperation between South Asia and the EU to drive the competitiveness agenda of EU businesses regions.

**MP2: Enhancing Regional Sentiment and Collaboration**, strengthen regional business sentiment and identify actionable solutions to overcome challenges faced by EU businesses in South Asia and the Middle East, thereby promoting sustainable development.

**MP3: Unlocking Investment Opportunities through Global Gateway Initiatives**, Explore Global Gateway projects that leverage European market demands to attract investments, foster innovation, and improve regional infrastructure, facilitating connectivity and economic growth.

## Market Focus

EBO Bangladesh, EBO India, EBO Nepal and EBO Sri Lanka collectively represent EBOWN South Asia, which will present from the South Asia Perspective, while the Middle East will have representation from EBO Saudi Arabia.

## When & Where

4th June 2025, from 15 Hrs – 17.30 hrs, at Albert Borschette,

## Indicative Agenda

Time	Description	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 and b) Joint Communication for the GCC region	Directorate General International Partnership Service for Foreign Policy Instrument, Mrs Barbara Einhauser

16:10 – 16:20	Seg 4 - Bridging Continents: Unlocking Opportunities Through Global Gateway	Led by EBO Saudi Arabia
	<b>Working Coffee Session</b>	
<b>SESSION 2: 90 Minutes of Dialogue</b>		
16:20 – 16:40	<b>Round Table 1:</b> Policy Advocacy for Growth - Strategies for Championing Union Interests in Today's Market	Led by EBO India
16:40 – 17:00	<b>Round Table 2:</b> Bridging the Gaps: Addressing EBO Challenges	Led by EBO Saudi Arabia
17:00 – 17:10	<b>Round Table 3:</b> Innovative Approaches to Regional Collaboration: The EBOWN Way	Led by EBO Bangladesh
17:10 – 17:15	Concluding Remarks	

## 2. Brief about the Meeting

### SESSION 1: 60 Minutes

#### Seg 1 - Regional Insights: A Multi-National Perspective

Examine the key highlights from South Asia and the Middle East, including the latest developments, challenges, and opportunities in countries like Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, and Sri Lanka. Special focus will be placed on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations and their potential impact on regional dynamics.

#### Seg 2 - EBOWN Regional Sentiment Report: Insights and Opportunities

A comprehensive survey on regional business sentiment EBOWN sentiment in South Asia and the Middle East. These findings provide actionable insights into the obstacles faced by enterprises, paving the way for strategic solutions to enhance regional cooperation and development.

#### Seg 3 - Strengthening Regional Collaboration through the South Asia MIP and Joint Communication for the GCC region

This session will explore the overarching goals of the South Asia Multi-Indicative Programme (MIP) and the EU Joint Communication on the GCC, highlighting their strategic context, private sector engagement, and alignment with EU external policy. It will focus on fostering regional collaboration, identifying business-driven priorities, and outlining a targeted action plan for the upcoming term to enhance economic integration and support EU business interests across South Asia and the GCC region.

## Seg 4 - Bridging Continents: Unlocking Opportunities Through Global Gateway

EBOS will explore Global Gateway-type projects identified in the region. The focus will be on understanding how EBOS can contribute to the Global Gateway Agenda based on European business interests and market demands. By examining selected projects, the discussion will highlight their potential to attract investments, promote innovation, and enhance infrastructure. These initiatives aim to complement and improve connectivity, spur economic growth, and foster collaboration between the EU and the target markets.

### SESSION 2: 60 Minutes

#### Round Table 1: Policy Advocacy for Growth - Strategies for Championing Union Interests in Today's Market

Based on EBO findings, the EBOWN members in South Asia and the Middle East will present **actionable policy**-based actions and recommendations tailored to contribute to and enhance the broader interests of the EU in the markets. The round table aims to cohesively strategise on enhancing consistent and effective policy messaging across the target region and advocate for deeper cooperation between South Asia and the EU in the interest of EU Business. EBOS will present broad initiatives and programmes that can drive competitiveness for EU businesses in the region and stimulate EU business growth through strategic partnerships and innovation initiatives.

##### Focused Round Table Questions:

- *EU aid in many regions still prioritises governance over private sector development. What policy advocacy is needed to shift this imbalance and directly support SMEs and innovation ecosystems?*
- *How can digital business intelligence platforms, sectoral reports, and virtual matchmaking funded by the EU help EBOs advocate more convincingly for high-growth sectors?*
- *If you could prioritise one EU policy shift or funding change in the next 12 months to unlock growth for EU businesses in your region, what would it be—and how would EBOs drive it forward?*

#### Round Table 2: Bridging the Gaps: Addressing EBO Challenges

EBOS and the EU will discuss the obstacles presented in the current **operating model between the EU and EBOs**. They will also discuss the gaps to reach the Union's shared objectives at the country and regional levels. The discussion will include proposals for enhanced cooperation and exploring enhanced cooperation to bolster regional projects.

##### Focused Round Table Questions:

- *Q1: How do you see European Business Organisations (EBOs) boosting the EU's global competitiveness, simplifying business operations, and expanding European companies' international presence? What are your expectations from us?*
- *Q2: How can we create a consistent financial support framework for the first 2-3 years to ensure newly established EBOs perform well across regions?*
- *Q3: What mechanisms could be introduced to ensure that EBOs integration as strategic implementation partners?*

## Round Table 3: Innovative Approaches to Regional Collaboration: The EBOWN Way

This segment will strategically examine the potential for enhanced regional and intra-regional cooperation, particularly between South Asia and ASEAN, as well as the Middle East and Africa. We will explore the European Union's interest in fostering collaborative initiatives, aiming to deepen partnerships that drive economic growth and sustainable development across these dynamic regions. By strengthening these ties, EBOWN proposed to unlock new opportunities for mutual prosperity and shared progress in the interest of EU Business.

### **Focused Round Table Questions:**

- ***Q1: What tools, exchange mechanisms and platforms should be implemented to facilitate the regular connectivity on trade and Investment opportunities and business risks for European businesses?***

## Conclusions

In conclusion, a discussion on several key matters, as taking stock of our findings to assess the effectiveness of current regional collaboration efforts and targeted next steps.