

# NBB concludes second edition of Sustainability Academy 2025 to strengthen ESG Integration



Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) recently concluded the second edition of its Sustainability Academy for the year 2025, delivered in collaboration with Emritus and Columbia Business School.

The programme reflects the Bank's commitment to strengthening Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) capabilities across the organi-



sation and supporting the Kingdom's long-term sustainability agenda.

The Academy brought together team members from multiple departments including Corporate and Commercial Banking, Retail Banking, Market and Client Solutions, Compliance, Legal, Strategy, Operations, and Risk. Participants engaged in specialised training tailored to their specific roles to enhance ESG integration within banking processes

and strengthen alignment with national and global regulatory standards.

The programme covered key themes such as ESG risk assessment for credit facilities, climate-related and financial risk management, and sustainable finance frameworks. Sessions also addressed product structuring, governance, and oversight through reporting standards, compliance testing, internal audits, disclosures, and KPI monitoring. The course

content aimed to build practical understanding of how ESG considerations influence decision-making across the Bank.

By equipping employees with advanced sustainability knowledge and applied methodologies, the Sustainability Academy 2025 supports NBB's ongoing efforts to embed responsible practices into its operations and further solidify the Bank's readiness for the evolving sustainability landscape.

# EU hopes to sign Mercosur trade deal soon

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

The European Union yesterday said it hoped to sign a long-delayed trade deal with South American bloc Mercosur "soon", pointing to progress towards approval by the bloc's member states.

Diplomats have said the EU aims for a signature on January 12 after hopes to ink the agreement in December were dashed by France and Italy joining forces to demand a delay.

European Commission chief spokeswoman Paula Pinho did not confirm the new January date but insisted the EU was on the "right track" for approval.

"There have been discussions, work, and progress over the past two weeks," she told a press conference in Brussels.

In a push to get the deal over the line, EU agriculture ministers will discuss the agreement on Wednesday during an extraordinary meeting in Brussels.

European diplomats said that could be a prelude to a vote on Friday by member states, paving the way for an official signing.

More than 25 years in the making, the accord would create the world's biggest free-trade area, boosting trade between the 27-nation EU and the bloc comprising Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay.

But plans to seal the deal at a Mercosur gathering in Brazil

on December 20 ran into a late roadblock as heavyweights Italy and France demanded a postponement over concerns for the farming sector.

## France suspending imports

Germany and Spain are strongly in favour of the agreement, believing it will provide a welcome boost to their industries, hampered by Chinese competition and tariffs in the United States.

The deal would help the EU

export more vehicles, machinery, wines and spirits to Latin America at a time of global trade tensions.

In return, it would facilitate the entry into Europe of South American meat, sugar, rice, honey and soybeans.

This has alarmed many European farmers who fear they will be undercut by a flow of cheaper goods from agricultural giant Brazil and its neighbours.

Rome and Paris have called

for tougher safeguard clauses, tighter import controls and more stringent standards on Mercosur producers to protect their farmers. The French government also Sunday announced plans to suspend imports of foodstuffs containing substances banned in Europe.

This would include avocados, mangoes, guavas, citrus fruits, grapes, apples, melons, cherries, strawberries, and potatoes "from South America or elsewhere"

# Bahrain reviews preparations for World Radiocommunication Conference 2027

Manama

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) held the nineteenth meeting of the Spectrum Strategy and Coordination Committee, as part of its ongoing efforts to prepare Bahrain's telecommunications sector for future global developments.

One of the main topics discussed during the meeting was Bahrain's preparation for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 (WRC-27), an international conference organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The conference brings countries together to agree on how radio frequencies are used worldwide, which directly affects mobile services, satellite communications, and other essential communication systems.



The Committee highlighted the importance of early preparation for WRC-27, as the decisions taken at the conference will

play a key role in shaping global communication frameworks and enabling the deployment of new technologies. Active par-

ticipation helps Bahrain protect its national interests, support innovation, and ensure the availability of reliable and advanced communication services. The meeting also reviewed regional coordination with neighboring countries to improve cooperation in areas such as broadcasting and mobile communications. These efforts help reduce interference, improve service quality, and ensure smooth and reliable communication across borders.

In addition, the Committee discussed TRA's broader engagement at the national, regional, and international levels during 2025, reflecting Bahrain's commitment to aligning with global best practices and strengthening its role in the telecommunications sector.

Commenting on the meeting, Eng. Mariam Ahmed Jumaan, Chairperson of the Board of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and Chair of the

Spectrum Strategy and Coordination Committee, said: "The World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 is an important global milestone. Its outcomes will influence the future of communications and the adoption of new technologies. By preparing early and working closely with regional and international partners, Bahrain is ensuring that it remains ready to support digital growth and the evolving needs of all sectors."

The TRA affirmed that the Spectrum Strategy and Coordination Committee will continue its critical role in tracking global developments, enhancing coordination with relevant stakeholders, and advancing the efficient and sustainable use of spectrum resources in line with national priorities and in support of comprehensive development.