COUNTRY CONFERENCE

Bahrein

Key Indicators

- **Population :** 1.6 million (about 50% expatriates)
- **Geography:** The only island nation in the GCC, strategically located at the heart of the Gulf region
- **Economic Diversification:** Transitioned from oil dependence to a diversified economy
- **Top GDP Contributors:** Financial services, manufacturing, logistics, tourism
- **Investment Environment:** 100% foreign ownership allowed, competitive tax regime,lowest operational costs in the GCC

Major Trends

- **Long-standing economic diversification strategy** initiated over 20 years ago
- **Energy transition and push for sustainability**
- **Rapid digital transformation**, especially in the financial sector (fintech, AI, digital banking)
- **Strengthening regional and global connectivity** (GCC, USA free trade agreement, Asia corridor)
- **Growth of non-oil sectors**, positioning Bahrain as a services and investment hub

Flagship Projects

- **Financial services hub expansion** (BNP Paribas, Citi, sovereign wealth funds based in Bahrain)
- **Fintech and digital banking ecosystems** supported by the Central Bank of Bahrain
- **Integrated industrial and logistics platforms** serving regional and global markets
- **Strategic tourism developments**, including eco-resorts and premium hospitality projects
- **Tamkeen Labor Fund initiatives** to support workforce development and business growth

Business Insights

Priority Sectors

- **Financial Services:** A well-established financial hub with robust regulatory framework
- **ICT & Fintech:** Strong government backing to attract innovation-driven companies
- **Manufacturing & Logistics:** 50% lower cost base compared to other GCC markets, strategic location for exports
- **Tourism:** High-growth potential in luxury travel, wellness, and cultural tourism

Market Entry Advantages

- **One-stop-shop investor support** via the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB)

- **Attractive fiscal regime** and regulatory stability
- **Talent incentives:** Up to 70% salary support and government-funded training
- **Agile governance and fast-track decision-making** for investors

Recommendations & Tips

- **Focus on high-growth sectors:** fintech, manufacturing with export potential, tourism
- **Leverage competitive incentives:** taxation, workforce support, Golden License for strategic projects
- **Use Bahrain as a regional platform** to access both GCC and the US market (via FTA)
- **Explore co-investment opportunities** with local sovereign funds and family offices
- **Engage early with the French Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Bahrain** (FCCIB) to ensure a smooth market entry