



The Business Voice of Global South Cities

Insights from the Global City
Business Insights Survey

Driving Urban Advantage in the Next Economy

Basis and scope of this presentation

This presentation presents selected findings from the Global City Business Insights Survey, a proprietary business executive survey conducted as one of the data inputs for the Global South City Competitiveness Index (GS-CCI) 2025/2026.

This presentation focuses on selected survey results related to the urban business environment across Global South cities, including business leaders' assessment of current conditions, expectations for the next five years, and perceived obstacles affecting business operations.

The findings are analytical and comparative in nature. They reflect the views of surveyed business executives at a specific point in time and should be interpreted in light of the survey design, sample structure, data availability, and methodological choices.

The results are intended to support discussion and further analysis. They do not constitute prescriptive policy advice, investment recommendations, definitive city rankings, or evaluations of individual city administrations.

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The Global South City Competitiveness Index (GS-CCI) provides a tool for understanding how cities can accelerate transformation, build future-ready governance, and convert potential into sustained urban advantage

Context

The Global South is poised to lead the next era of global economic growth – with its share of global GDP (at PPP) expected to reach **60% by 2030**

Rapid **technological change**, shifting **global demand**, and **deepening geo-economic fragmentation** are reshaping how value is created, where investment flows, and which cities succeed

This momentum is being driven by major cities, making it essential to understand and improve urban environments to sustain long-term progress

Driving Urban Advantage in the Next Economy

The Global South City Competitiveness Index (GS-CCI) 2025/2026



 SUPERSYMMETRY
INSTITUTE

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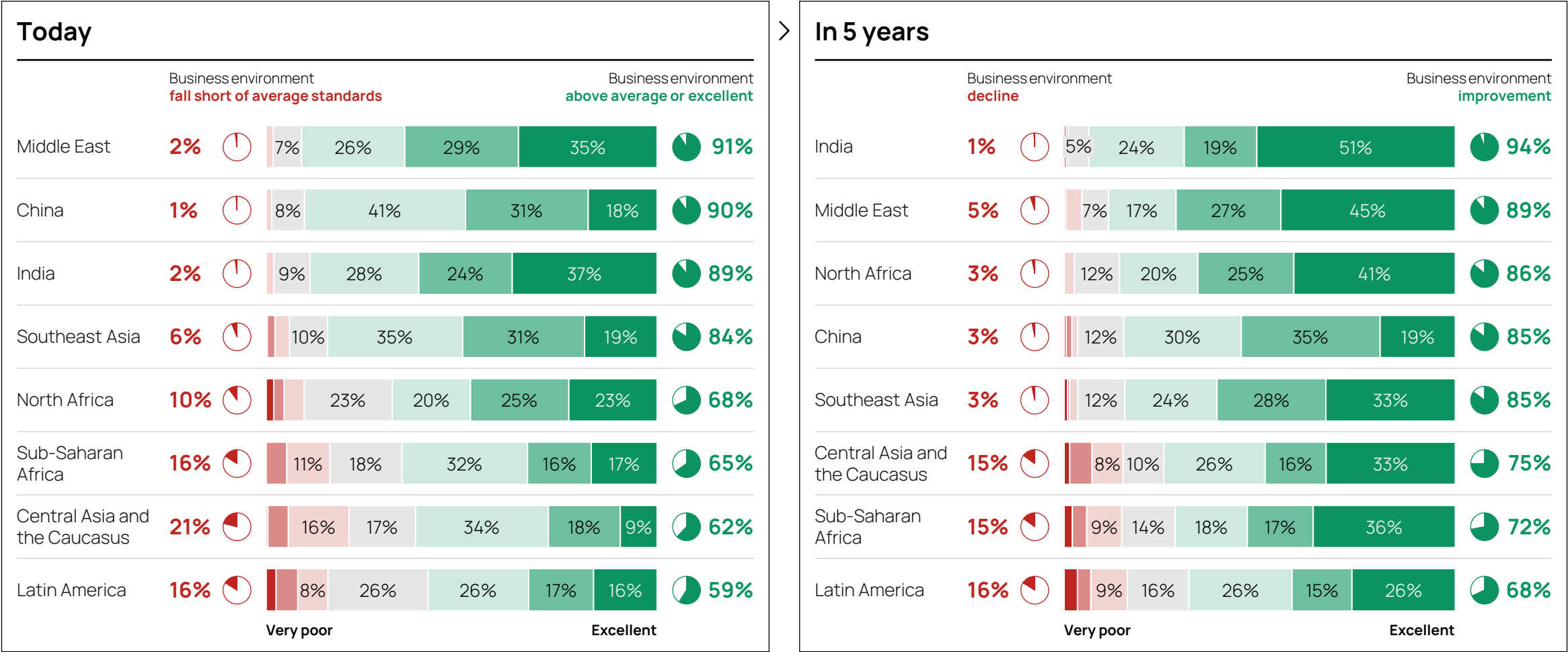
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The Global City Business Insights Survey is a strategic input to the GS-CCI, bringing the voice of business into a data-driven assessment of global city competitiveness



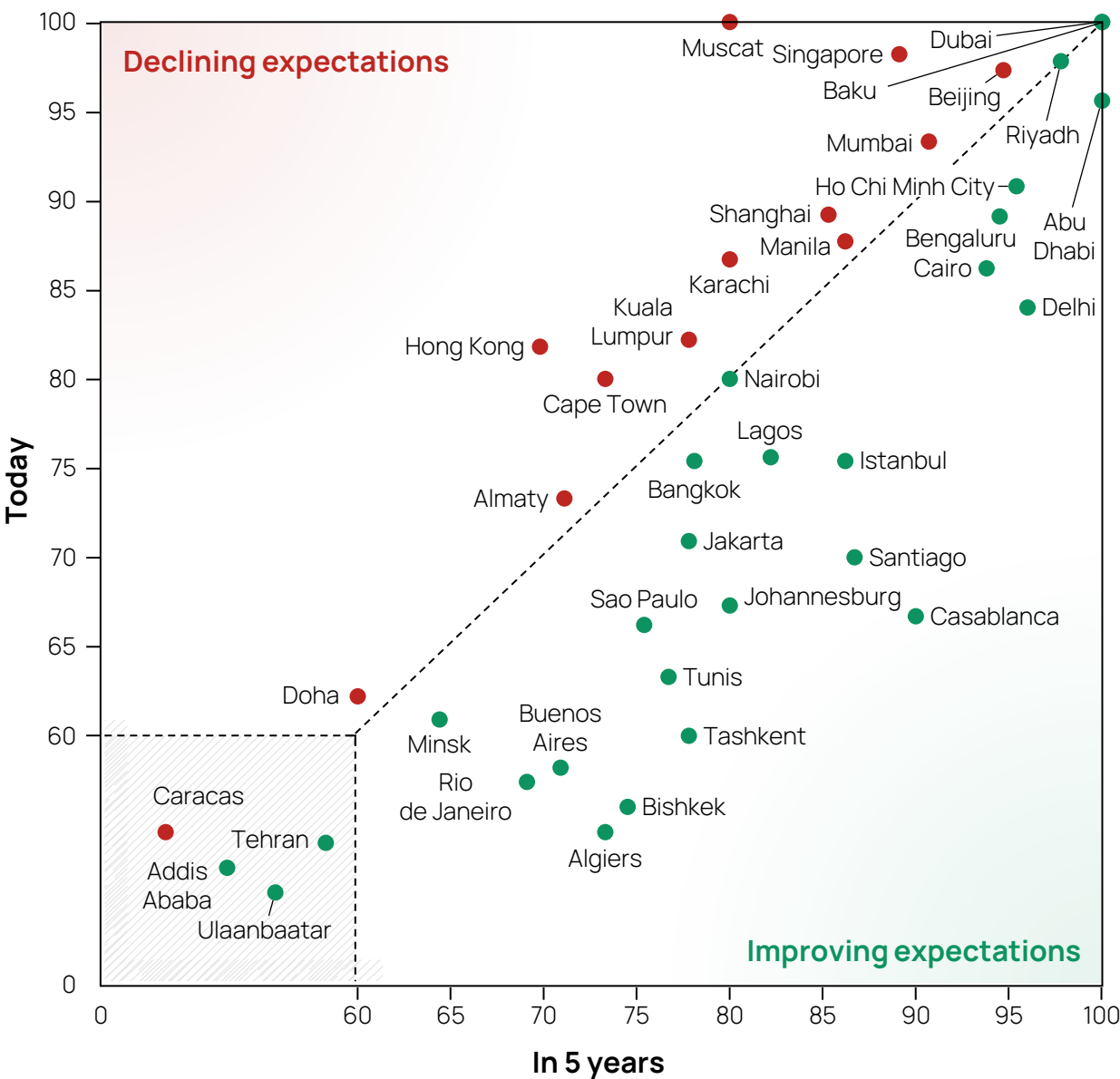
The Middle East, China and India lead business optimism today and are expected to maintain it over the next five years – while North Africa stands out with notably strong long-term expectations

Assessment of local business environments for growth, entrepreneurship and Investment Attractiveness, % of respondents



Business environment optimism across cities

% of respondents



Key insights

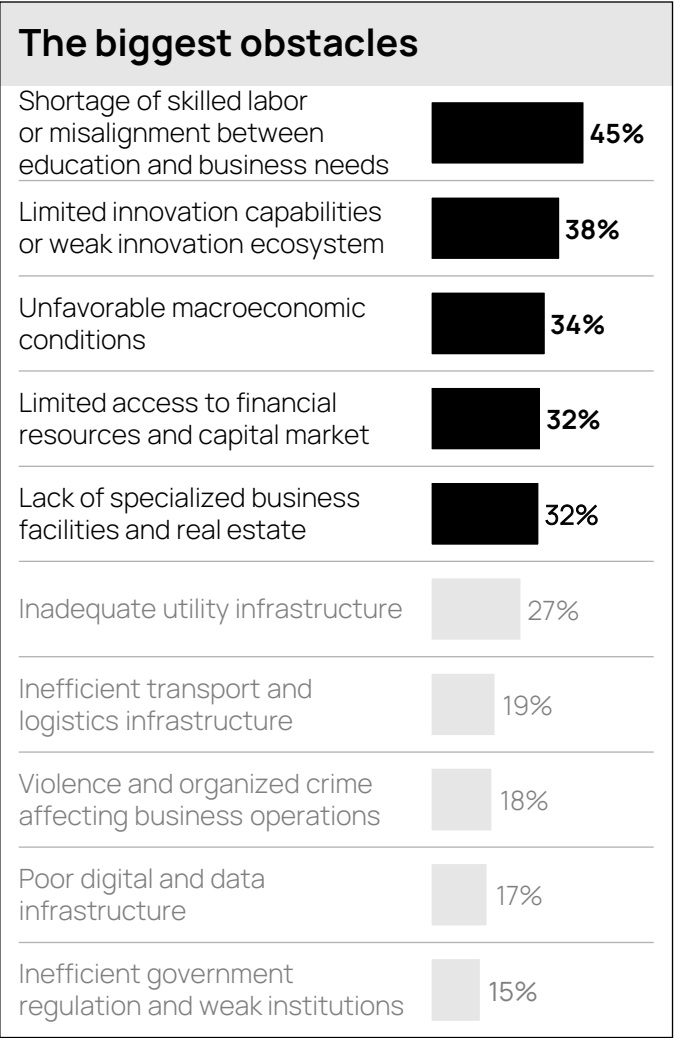
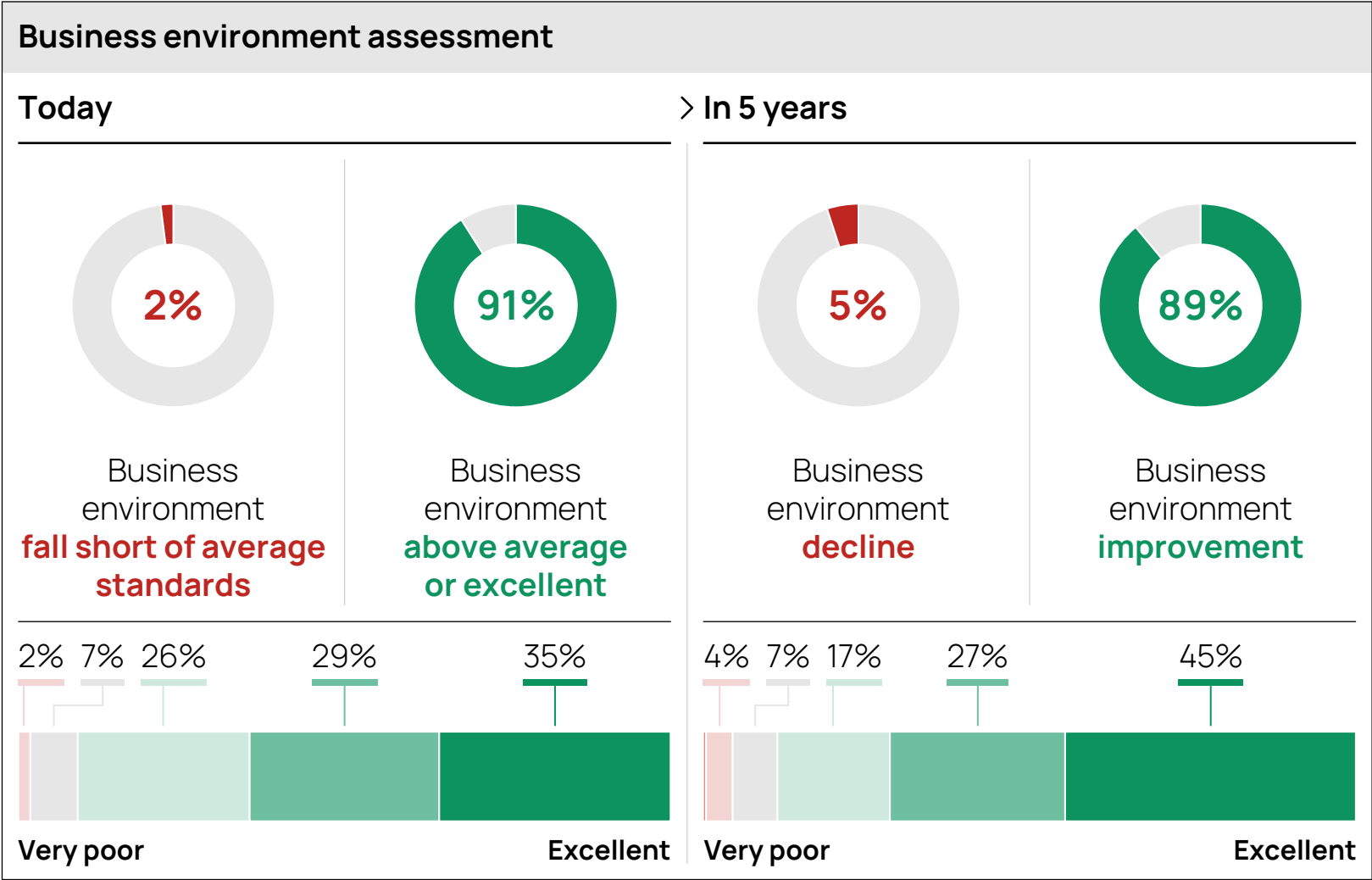
The average positive assessment of the current business environment stands at 72%, while the average expectation of future improvement is higher, at 78%

Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Dubai and Baku form the clear leadership group, with both current business confidence and future improvement expectations above 95%

Ulaanbaatar, Addis Ababa and Caracas are the weakest performers, with both indicators below 40%, with Caracas stands out as the key negative outlier, as future expectations are lower than current sentiment

Middle East's business environment: Today vs. In 5 Years

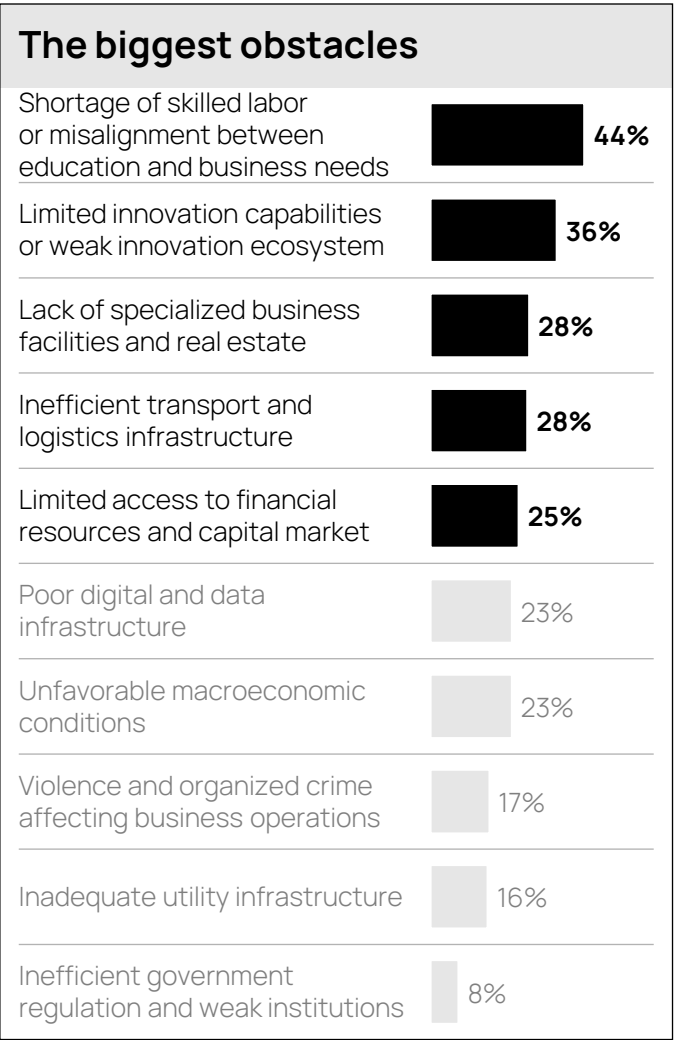
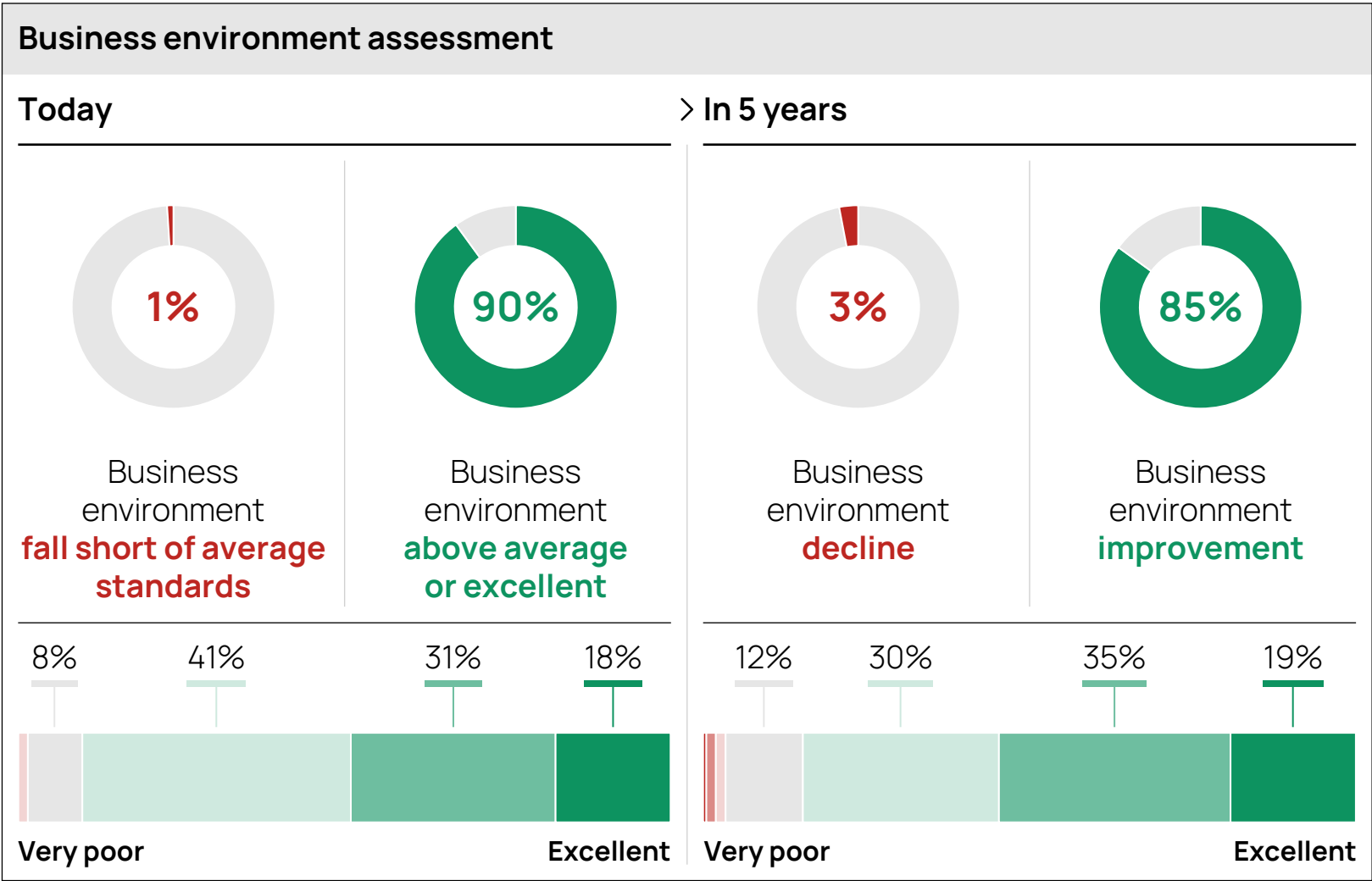
Cities: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Doha, Muscat



Note: Percentages reflect respondents who selected each answer option; percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; values of 1% or less are not shown
Sources: Global City Business Insights Survey 2025 (2,400 business executives, 48 cities, 41 countries), Driving Urban Advantage in the Next Economy: The Global South City Competitiveness Index (GS-CCI) 2025/2026, <https://cityindex.info/> 9

China's business environment: Today vs. In 5 Years

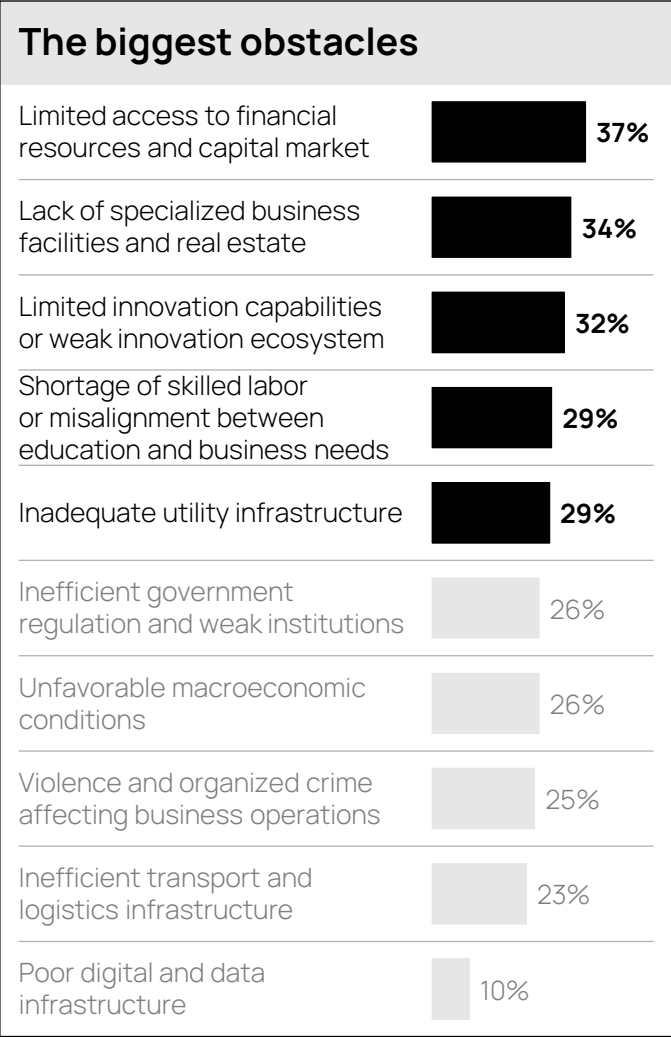
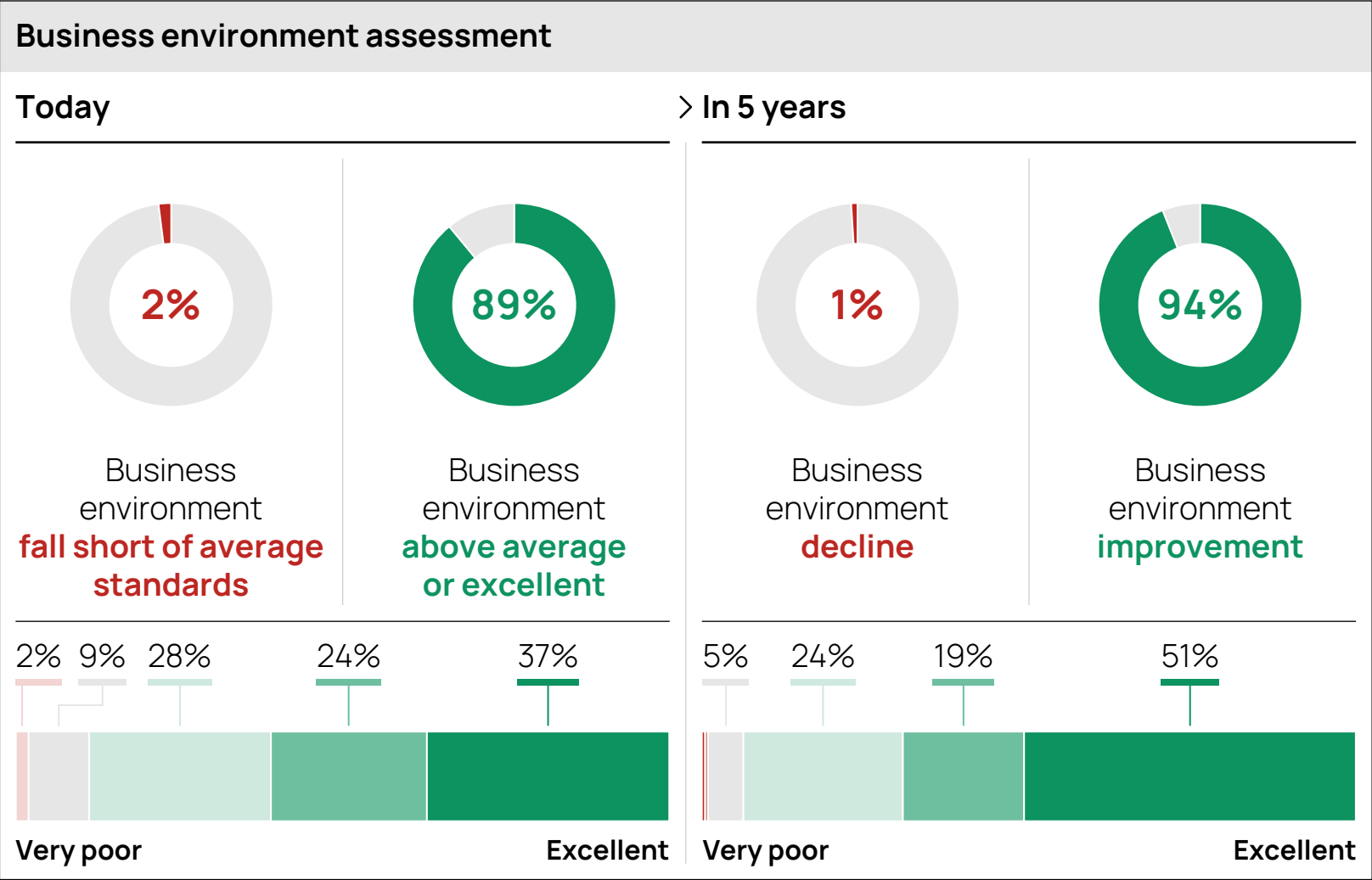
Cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong



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India's business environment: Today vs. In 5 Years

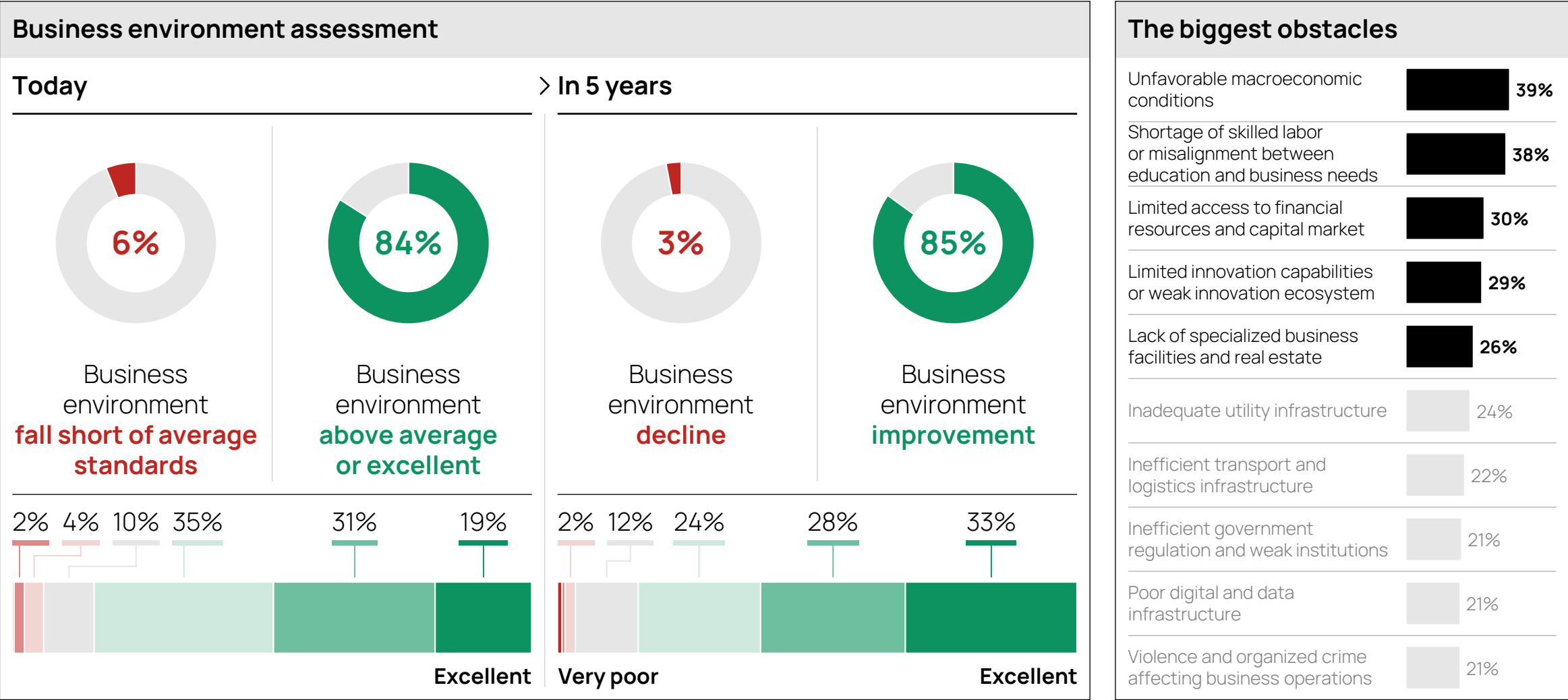
Cities: Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi



Note: Percentages reflect respondents who selected each answer option; percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; values of 1% or less are not shown
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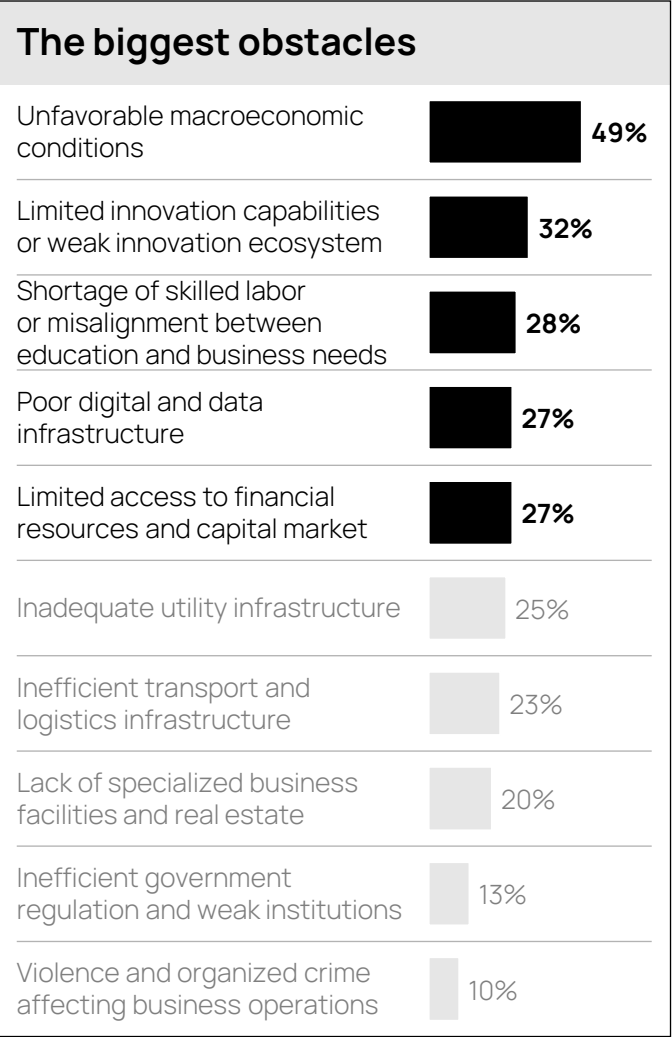
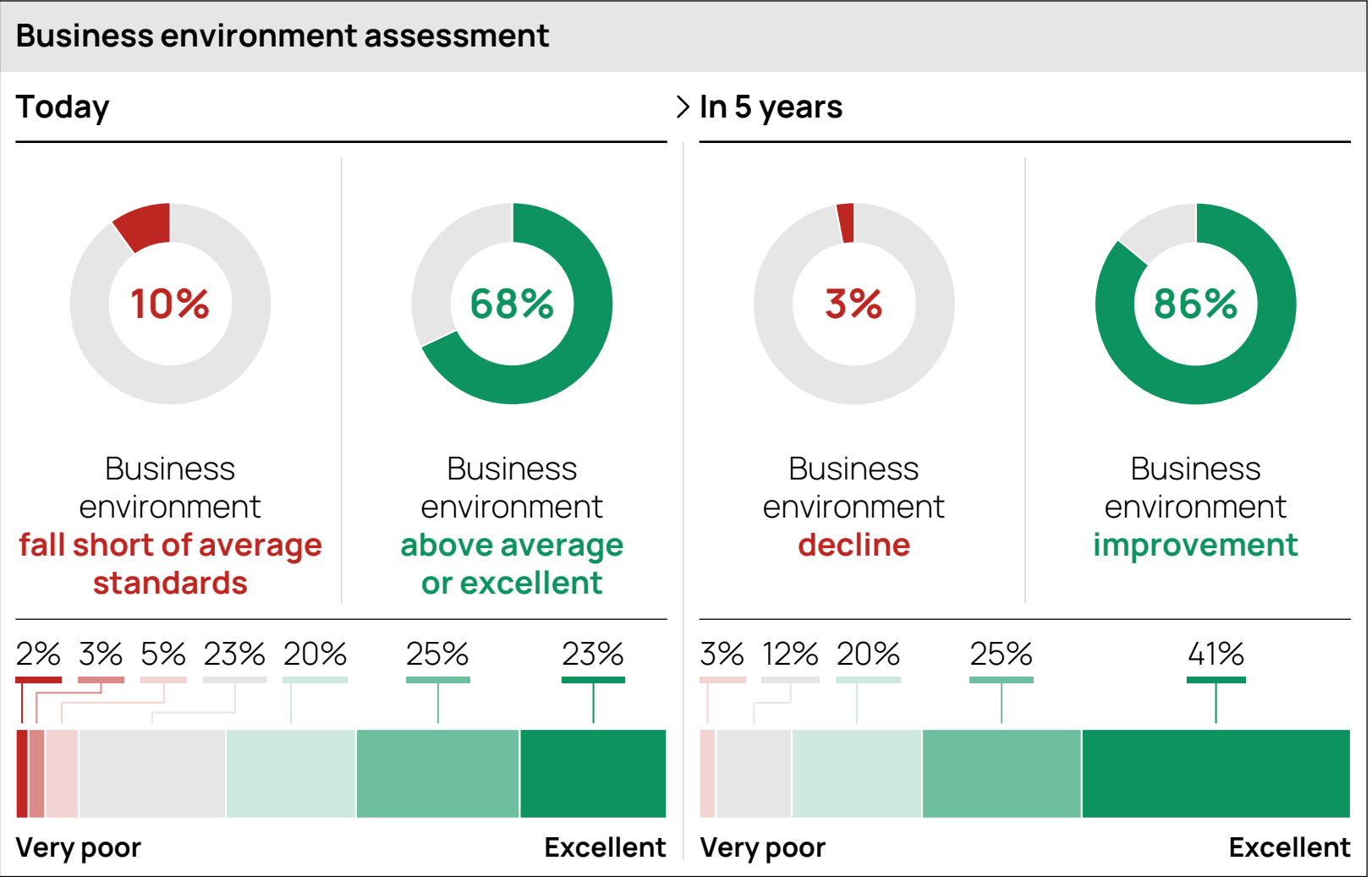
Southeast Asia’s business environment: Today vs. In 5 Years

Cities: Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh City, Manila



North Africa’s business environment: Today vs. In 5 Years

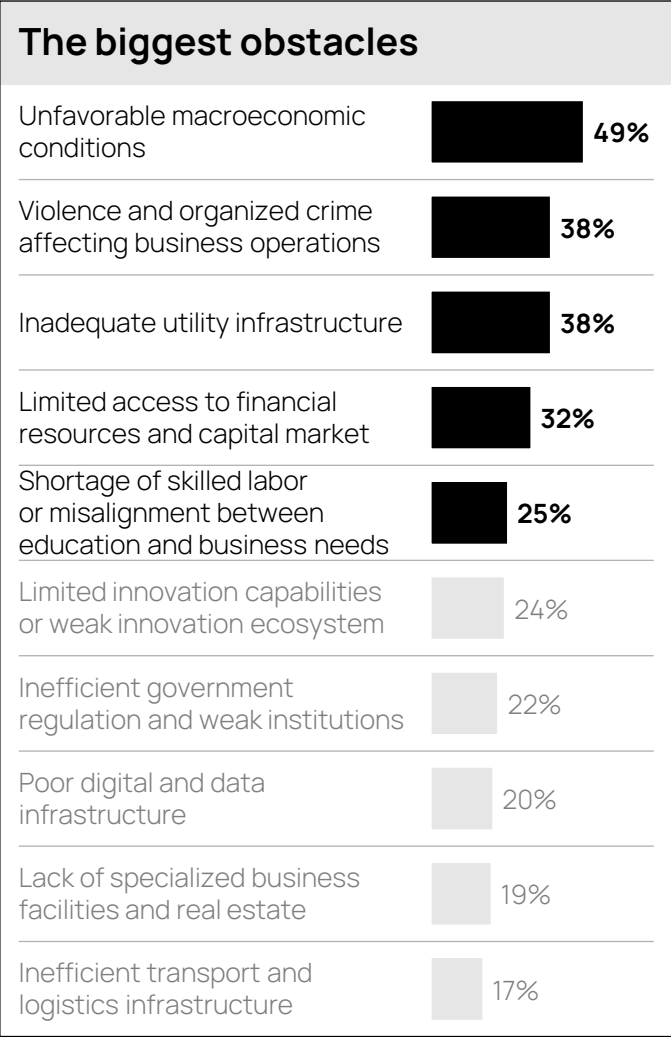
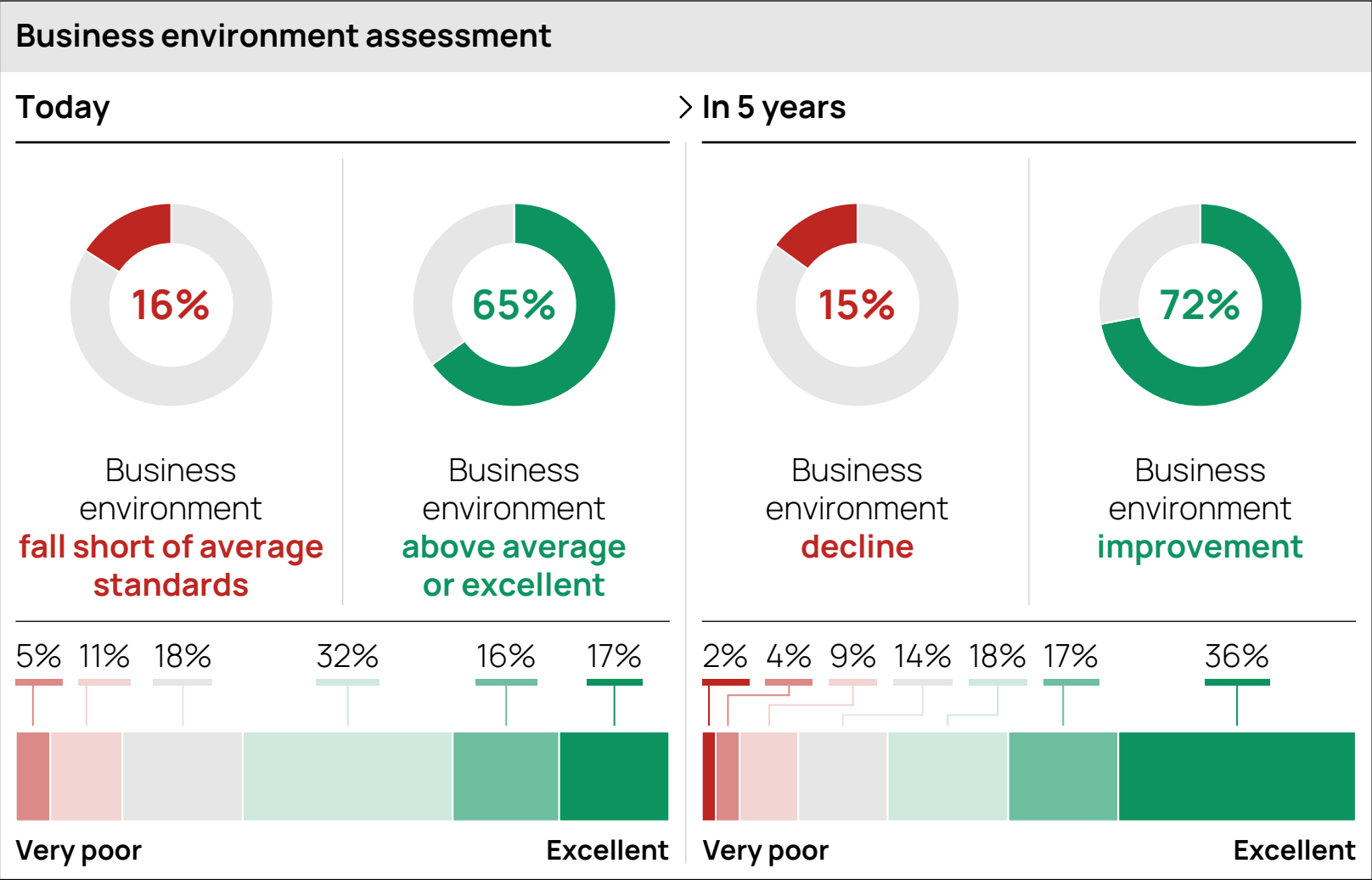
Cities: Cairo, Casablanca, Tunis, Algiers



Note: Percentages reflect respondents who selected each answer option; percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; values of 1% or less are not shown
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Sub-Saharan Africa’s business environment: Today vs. In 5 Years

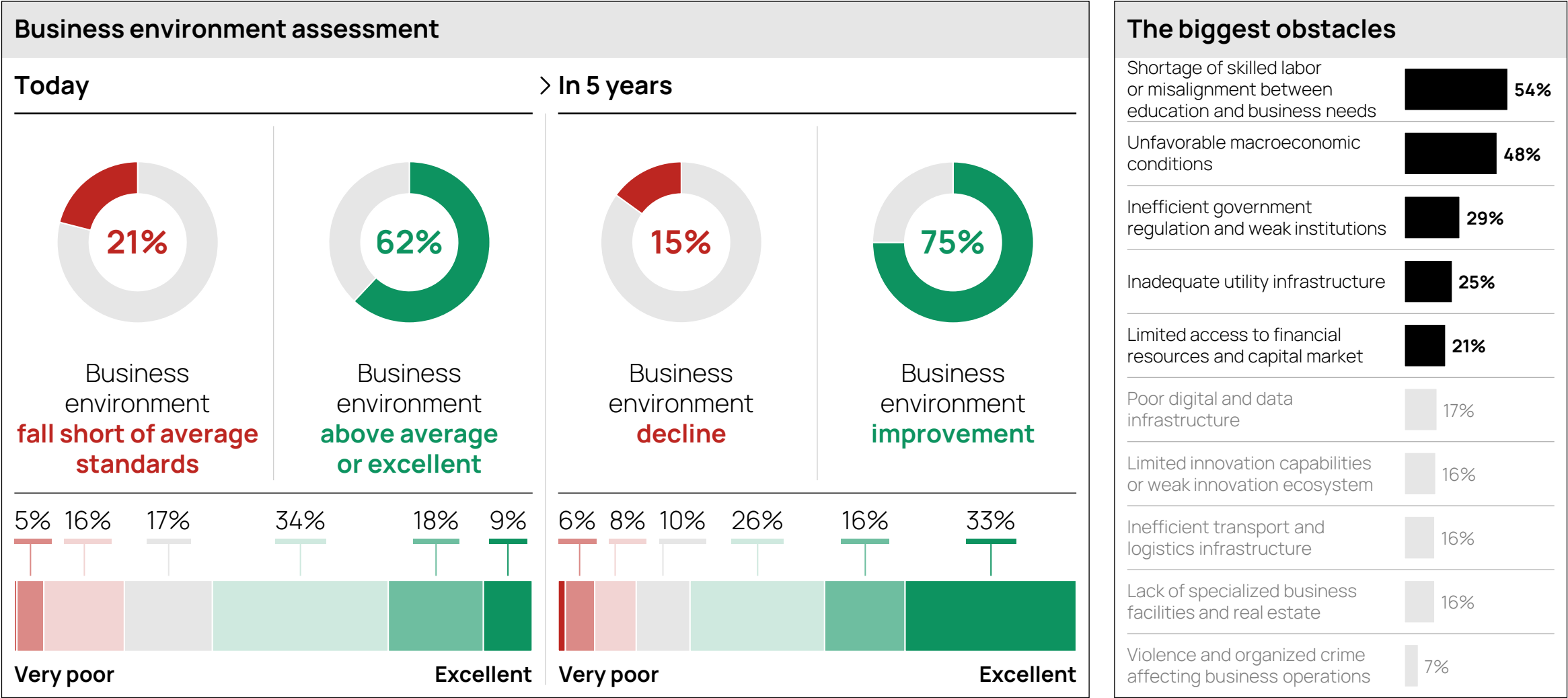
Cities: Cape Town, Johannesburg, Nairobi, Lagos, Addis Ababa



Note: Percentages reflect respondents who selected each answer option; percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; values of 1% or less are not shown
Sources: Global City Business Insights Survey 2025 (2,400 business executives, 48 cities, 41 countries), Driving Urban Advantage in the Next Economy: The Global South City Competitiveness Index (GS-CCI) 2025/2026, <https://cityindex.info/> 14

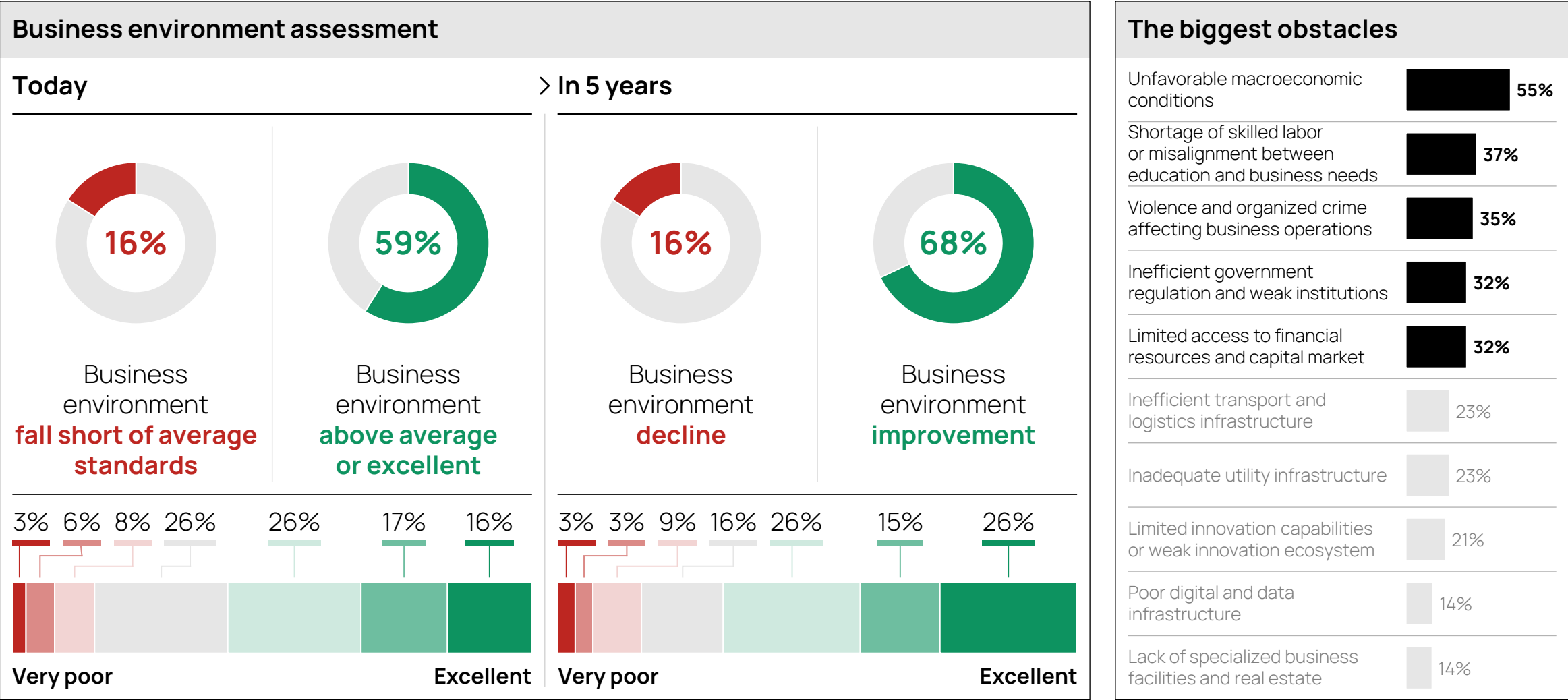
Central Asia and the Caucasus's business environment: Today vs. In 5 Years

Cities: Baku, Almaty, Tashkent, Bishkek, Ulaanbaatar



Latin America's business environment: Today vs. In 5 Years

Cities: Santiago, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Caracas



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The Global City Business Insights Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted in 2025 across 48 cities included in the Index

Sample sizes for each location were calibrated to city population and economic scale, ensuring balanced representation of the local business landscape

In total, 2,400 business executives participated, with respondent selection controlled for a representative industry profile, proportional company size distribution, and seniority from the CEO and Executive Board level to the level of Business Unit Head or equivalent

Additional screening on employment status and professional experience was applied to validate respondent relevance and maintain the robustness of the dataset

Methodological Approach
01 A hybrid data collection method was used, combining online and face-to-face interviews. The choice of method for each location was guided by prior experience in achieving representative coverage, fieldwork efficiency, and technical feasibility

Questionnaire Design
02 The survey instrument consisted of 73 closed-ended questions plus key demographic information, with identical content across cities to enable comparability. Questionnaires were translated into local languages by professional vendors to ensure linguistic and cultural accuracy

Data Quality Assurance
03 Robust quality control measures ensured the reliability of results. These included compliance with sampling controls, an 85%+ completion rate, and multiple technical checks such as response speed, internal answer consistency, alignment with recognized economic benchmarks, and detection of patterned or artificial responses. Any anomalies were addressed prior to analysis to preserve the integrity of findings

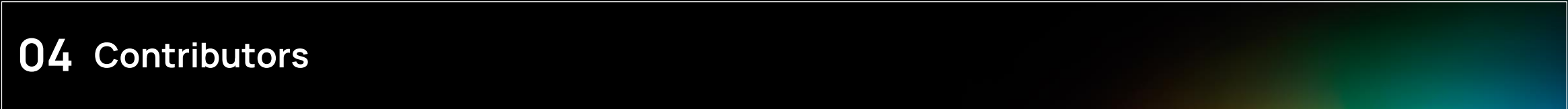
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SuperSymmetry Institute (SSI)

is a collaborative platform bringing together policy experts, practitioners, and business leaders to address structural asymmetries between the Global South and the Global North and advance more balanced, resilient, and future-oriented development pathways.

This initiative is being advanced under the SuperSymmetry Institute (SSI) through the joint efforts of the Eurasia Institute (Belgium) and ReState Foundation (Switzerland), in collaboration with partners.

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Explore the report **Driving Urban Advantage in the Next Economy** at cityindex.info 

