

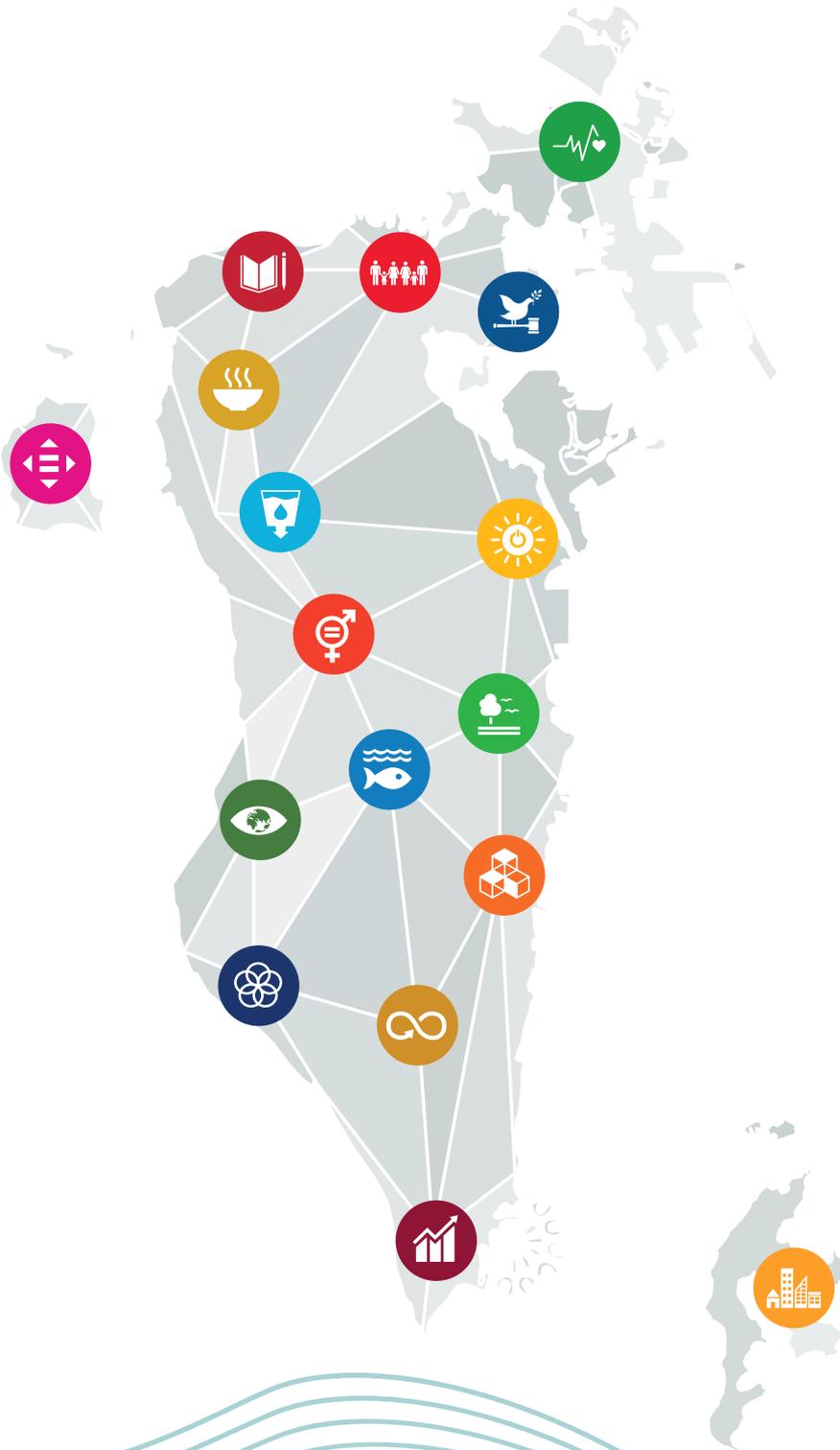


مَمْلَكَة البَحْرَيْن  
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

أهداف التنمية  
المستدامة البحرين  
BAHRAIN SDGs 2030

# BAHRAIN

## VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW 2023





His Highness  
Shaikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa  
The Late Amir



His Majesty  
King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa



His Royal Highness  
Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa  
The Crown Prince and Prime Minister





## OPENING STATEMENT

The Kingdom of Bahrain's progress and development has been driven for generations by the passion and determination of the Bahraini people.

Under the guidance of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Bahrainis have continued to build toward a more prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive Kingdom. This Review rightly recognizes the efforts and outcomes delivered by Bahrain's Government and people.

Spurred on by the ambitions of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Government is in the process of implementing extensive economic reforms and development programmes that align with Bahrain Economic Vision 2030.

Central to the Government's agenda is a commitment to build upon the Kingdom's human development capacity. It is the Government's firm belief that the Bahraini people are the true wealth of our nation. In recognition of this, the Government is actively promoting public-private partnerships in education, healthcare, and housing to develop services sustainably and create a brighter and more prosperous future for the Kingdom and its people.

From an international perspective, the Kingdom of Bahrain believes that we are collectively responsible for the creation of this brighter and more prosperous future. Through international collaboration, we are developing and implementing strategies that build sustainable economic growth and improve quality of life.

To conclude, the Kingdom is proud of the contribution that it has made to the global community's collaborative efforts and is firmly committed to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Although led by the Government, our progress has been driven by the contributions of the private sector and wider civil society. The advancement of these Goals is a cause that the whole of Bahrain is committed to, one that may be seen as a challenge for not only the Kingdom but also the international community. However, they should not be viewed as challenges that obstruct progress, but rather as an opportunity to create a more sustainable future.

We look forward to continued cooperation with the United Nations to achieve our shared development aspirations and goals.

**His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa**

Crown Prince and Prime Minister



## OPENING STATEMENT



A year on from the establishment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, I am pleased to present the Kingdom of Bahrain's Second Voluntary National Review on the progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, at the mid-way point to 2030.

Thanks to the decisive leadership and forward-looking vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Bahrain is taking transformative actions to accelerate the progress made towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Since the preparation of the Kingdom's first Voluntary National Review in 2018, we have, undoubtably, witnessed acceleration in addressing environmental challenges, investment in renewable energy, digitization, emergency and disaster preparedness, as well as tackling the fiscal sustainability challenges. Furthermore, the Government continued to embed sustainability at the heart of its policies and frameworks; the current Government Plan (2023-2026) is titled "From Recovery to Sustainable Growth" with strong alignment to the SDGs at the social, economic and environmental fronts; while the Economic Recovery Plan, launched in 2021, advocates for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable recovery post the global Coronavirus pandemic.

Since the establishment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development in June 2022, we have undertaken a diagnostics exercise to assess the alignment of ongoing and new government policies and plans with the SDGs, and the progress made towards achieving the goals. In addition to the alignment with the government plans, the Ministry of Sustainable Development welcomed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' review of the alignment of both the National Human Rights Plan (2022-2026) and the Recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review with the SDGs, reflecting the Government's commitment to advance the ongoing efforts.



## OPENING STATEMENT

Another key priority for the Ministry has been tackling the data challenge; coordinating the collective efforts by government agencies to make available accurate, timely, relevant, and quality data to measure progress. The Government has been working closely with the UN agencies to increase awareness, provide technical training and review the current data processes with the aim of adopting global best practices. The Ministry is also targeting measuring progress using indicators “beyond GDP”; incorporating all dimensions of sustainable development.

The preparation of the Voluntary National Review is viewed as an essential tool to enrich the diagnostics exercise which will inform future decisions. In preparation for this Review, the Ministry adopted a whole-of-government, whole-of society approach, coordinating with all relevant stakeholders through a series of meetings and consultation workshops including with representatives of the private sector, civil society organizations, academic institutions, research centers, youth and women representatives, people with special needs as well as members of the Legislative Authority, in partnership with the UN Resident Coordinator’s office in the Kingdom.

To conclude, we believe further accelerating our efforts towards achieving the SDGs requires an integrated holistic approach that embeds sustainability within the Kingdom’s development path. Through this review, the Kingdom of Bahrain re-affirms its dedication and commitment to the 2030 Agenda and to working with the international community towards achieving sustainable development and a better future for all. We look forward to participating in the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and in the upcoming SDG Summit.

**Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif**

Minister of Sustainable Development





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

---

Page **11**

### CHAPTER 1

POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

---

Page **16**

### CHAPTER 2

COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

---

Page **30**

### CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

---

Page **40**

### CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY & STAKEHOLDER  
ENGAGEMENT

---

Page **49**

### CHAPTER 5

PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE  
SDGS

---

Page **54**

CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD

---

Page **140**

APPENDIX

---

Page **143**



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AWS</b>	Amazon Web Services
<b>BDF</b>	Bahrain Defense Force
<b>CBB</b>	Central Bank of Bahrain
<b>COP</b>	UN Climate Change Conference
<b>COVAX</b>	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
<b>DCO</b>	Digital Cooperation Organization
<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council
<b>EUA</b>	Emergency Use Authorization
<b>EWA</b>	Electricity and Water Authority
<b>ESCWA</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FinTech</b>	Financial Technologies
<b>GBF</b>	Global Biodiversity Framework
<b>GCC</b>	Gulf Cooperation Council
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HLPF</b>	High Level Political Forum
<b>IGA</b>	Information and E-Government Authority
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IISS</b>	International Institute for Strategic Studies
<b>LMRA</b>	The Labor Market Regulatory Authority
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>NEEAP</b>	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan
<b>NPHL</b>	National Public Health Laboratory
<b>PV</b>	Photovoltaic Solar Panel
<b>RHF</b>	Royal Humanitarian Foundation
<b>SCW</b>	Supreme Council for Women
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
<b>SPL</b>	Spent Pot Line Treatment Plant
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UN-HABITAT</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UNSDCF</b>	UN Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WRM</b>	Water Resources Management Unit



## INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Bahrain has made strides in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), since their launch in 2015, thanks to the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. The top-down approach by the leadership ensures sustainability is always at the forefront of government plans.

The Kingdom of Bahrain presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the national progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2018, through which the Kingdom reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and showcased its alignment with its national development plans.

The significant progress reported in the 2018 VNR towards achieving the SDGs built on the Kingdom's successes in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in eradicating poverty, ensuring economic prosperity, achieving high net enrollment and eradicating illiteracy, reducing maternal and child mortality rates, and guaranteeing universal social protection and health coverage for citizens.

At the same time, the 2018 VNR adopted imperative recommendations to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in Bahrain, including creating sustainable cities, developing strategies to protect the environment, enhancing the role of evidence-based national statistics as a stimulator of innovation, and continuing to combat human trafficking and enhancing victim protection; all of which are current national priorities.

Bahrain's 2023 VNR, which comes at the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda, builds on the progress achieved and affirmations made in the 2018 Review, and further asserts our nationwide commitment to accelerating the implementation of the SDGs, taking into consideration the important developments that have had a bearing on the pace of the implementation of the goals; namely the global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the global geopolitical tensions, the global economic and financial challenges, and the heightened risks of vulnerable groups being left behind.

The 2023 VNR presents the sustainability audit undertaken by the Kingdom on the progress made to date in the implementation of all 17 SDGs, identifying challenges and exploring solutions and ways forward towards a more sustainable future for all. Bahrain recognizes that SDGs are indivisible, and the relevant authorities' focus for any SDG should be in line with the overall agenda



## INTRODUCTION

for all SDGs. An example of this is the net zero target by 2060; where achieving the targets requires prioritizing SDGs that are directly related to the country's ambitious aims, when formulating national policies and strategies: SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) emphasizes the importance of accessibility to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy; SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) highlights the need to reduce carbon emissions within the manufacturing industries; SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) calls for sustainable cities and communities, including resilience to natural disasters; SDG 13 (Climate Action) is focused on climate action, with an emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions; SDG 15 (Life on Land) promotes preserving life on land; and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) emphasizes that a peaceful and just society is essential to ensuring that the transition to net zero is only achieved in an equitable and fair manner.





## INTRODUCTION

### Theme of the 2023 HLPF

The 2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will be held under the theme “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels.”

Bahrain’s 2023 VNR showcases how it adroitly managed the COVID-19 pandemic by adopting a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach, which was documented by the World Health Organization (WHO), in a case study as a guide for preparedness and early response, and for adopting innovative approaches to strengthen health systems’ resilience. To support the recovery from the impact of the pandemic, the Kingdom launched the Economic Recovery Plan at the end of 2021, which aims to place Bahrain in the best position to benefit from the global recovery post COVID-19 and achieve fiscal and economic sustainability.

Through aligning its government plans with the principle of its Economic Vision 2030 and the SDGs, the Kingdom of Bahrain is actively working on accelerating the pace of efforts towards achieving the goals by 2030.

The Government’s efforts during the pandemic focused on:



Protecting Public  
Health



Offsetting the  
Economic Impact



Economic Recovery &  
Fiscal Sustainability



## INTRODUCTION

### SDGs in Focus at the 2023 HLPF

The HLPF in 2023 will also review in-depth 5 SDGs: SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the Goals.

While our VNR covers all 17 SDGs, the below summarizes the efforts undertaken to advance the 5 SDGs in focus:



- Approved the National Water Strategy 2030 in 2018.
- Adopted greenhouses, hydroponic systems and modern irrigation technologies in agricultural sector.
- Between 2000-2021, Bahrain reduced a fifth of its freshwater withdrawals and increased water-use efficiency by 80 percent.
- Achieved 100 percent supply coverage of equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water.



- Announced the commitment to double the original renewable energy targets to 20 percent by 2035.
- Several ongoing projects are in the pipeline including the 100-MW solar power plant and the 72-MW project to install solar energy systems on government buildings' rooftops.
- The Solar Financing Scheme was launched by the Labour Fund (Tamkeen) in partnership with several leading banks, to empower and enable enterprises to purchase solar energy panels to generate energy.



- Launched the Industrial Sector Strategy (2022-2026) to further support the diversification and development of industries.
- Adopted the Cloud-First policy, offering 229 government services online.
- Achieved 100 percent 5G network coverage and fiber-optic broadband network.
- Set-up the regulatory sandbox in 2017 and Fintech Bay in 2018 to promote financial innovations.



- In 2022, fulfilled His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's royal directive, issued in December 2013, to provide 40,000 new housing services to citizens.
- Launched innovative housing initiatives to provide affordable housing solutions to citizens and facilitate further partnership with the private sector.
- Three UNESCO world heritage sites: Qal'at Al-Bahrain (2005), the Pearling Trail (2012) and the Dilmun Burial Mounds (2019).



- The Kingdom provides humanitarian assistance globally, most recently to the victims of earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye.
- The Kingdom has assumed presidency of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) to empower nations through digital transformation and promote sustainable technology.



CHAPTER 1:

# POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



# 1

## CHAPTER 1

# POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### OUR SUSTAINABILITY FOOTPRINT

Throughout its history - and well in advance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - the Kingdom of Bahrain has been predisposed toward the key tenets of the SDGs: fairness, equity, prosperity, peace, cooperation and inclusiveness. Today, in 2023, Bahrain’s policies and institutional environment have a deep-rooted alignment to the SDGs.

#### Constitution & National Charter

Key doctrines that promote peace and tolerance, advocate for the protection of the disadvantaged, ensure gender equality, guarantee access to universal healthcare and free education for all, and seek to protect the environment and natural resources

#### Adopting the Agenda

Bahrain was among the first in the region to localize and meet the targets of the MDGs ahead of the deadline and was an early adopter of the SDGs

#### Establishment of Ministry of Sustainable Development

Established to coordinate and promote efforts to achieve sustainable development

#### Bahrain's 2023 Voluntary National Review

The second VNR demonstrates the kingdom’s management of the COVID-19 pandemic, its recovery process, and how it continues to advance plans for sustainable development

#### Economic Vision 2030

A broad-strokes vision that is intended to act as a new paradigm for thinking about Bahrain’s economic trajectory, built on “Sustainability” and “Fairness” as guiding principles

#### Bahrain’s 2018 Voluntary National Review

The VNR promoted awareness of the goals and set a benchmark for future plans

#### Government Plan

Formed following a broad consultation exercise and approved by the Legislative branch, with the theme “From Recovery to Sustainable Growth” and makes explicit references to the SDGs



# CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

## THE CONSTITUTION

To reflect the joint aspirations of His Majesty the King and Bahraini citizens, and as per the contents of the National Action Charter, Bahrain’s Constitution, which was enacted in 1973, was amended in 2002; ahead of the launch of the 2030 Agenda – and at the time of the launch of the MDGs. Bahrain’s Constitution lays the groundwork for societal action that is highly aligned with the SDGs (Refer to Appendix-1).

## ECONOMIC VISION 2030

In 2008, Bahrain launched its Economic Vision 2030; an overarching strategy and a broad-strokes vision that is intended to act as a new paradigm for thinking about Bahrain’s economic trajectory for the period 2008-2030. The key goal of the Vision is the doubling of household disposable income by 2030. The Vision’s departure point was three observations; First, Bahrain’s economy needed transformation due to the overdependence on hydrocarbons. This observation arguably accounts for Bahrain’s early status as a sustainability advocate, as its historic reliance on a depletable natural resource – oil – has heightened its

awareness of the need to adopt a sustainable growth model. Second, regional economic integration and partnership under the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) umbrella offered favorable circumstances for realizing higher levels of economic growth. Third, increasing global competition accentuated the need to focus on innovation and productivity growth.

In light of these observations, the Vision established three guiding principles, reflecting a deep synchronicity with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: sustainability, competitiveness, and fairness.



### Economic Vision 2030 Guiding Principles



#### Sustainability

Achieve economic prosperity through empowering the private sector, improving human capital and promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, while protecting the environment and preserving the cultural heritage.



#### Competitiveness

Attain a high level of competitiveness in a global economy through investing in talent and making Bahrain an attractive business destination for local and foreign companies



#### Fairness

Instill Fairness in the society with the guarantee of equal treatment under the law, ensuring equal access to social services, and support vulnerable individuals through training and social safety nets



## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Vision 2030 describes the principle of “Sustainability” as follows:

- By 2030, the private sector should be able to drive economic growth in Bahrain independently;
- Government finances will adhere to the principle of sustainability, upholding a system that is stable and forward-looking;
- Bahrain will use its resources to invest for the future, improving its human capital through education and training, particularly in the field of applied sciences;
- Entrepreneurship and innovation will ensure the sustainability of a vibrant private sector; and
- Economic growth must never come at the expense of the environment and the long-term well-being of the Bahraini people: no effort will be spared to protect the environment and preserve the cultural heritage.

### THE ADOPTION OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND COOPERATION WITH THE UN

The Kingdom of Bahrain’s commitment to the implementation of the SDGs is manifested in its participation in the negotiations to formulate the goals at the national, regional, and international levels. Bahrain hosted the second session of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Environment Programme

(UNEP), in cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS), in May 2015. The Forum supported regional preparations to the 2015 session of the HLPF, leading up to the formulation of the post 2015 development agenda and the SDGs. The Forum adopted the Bahrain Document; a set of 19 recommendations on the key issues related to sustainable development in Arab States.

Moreover, Bahrain hosted the sixth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) in November 2017, in which Bahrain also represented the GCC member countries.

The Government of Bahrain has also shown its commitment to the SDGs through developing and committing to the, first of its kind in the region, UN Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), signed in 2017<sup>1</sup>.

The UNSDCF is designed to provide a comprehensive, long-term framework for achieving sustainable development in the Kingdom, through partnership with the UN agencies operating on the ground, in four key priority areas: Environment, energy, and food; quality and comprehensive social services; Economic diversification, public administration, and resilience; and Bahrain among nations.

<sup>1</sup> The agreement was initially named the Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) Agreement.



## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The 2021-2022 UNSDCF, subsequently extended to 2024, was developed after conducting a thorough analysis of the Kingdom's development context and economic, social, and environmental challenges, ensuring alignment with its Economic Vision 2030 and government plans. A Joint Steering Committee (JSC), co-chaired by the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs and the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Bahrain, was established to oversee the implementation of the programs.

This ongoing cooperation between the Kingdom, the UN, and other partners has contributed to the successful preparation of this VNR.

### The Strategic Cooperation Framework 2021-2024

#### Key Results in 2022



First National Blacklist of Invasive Species of Plants and Animals and National Biosafety Action Plan developed



Comprehensive National Food Security Strategy formulated



2 cities designated as healthy cities and 5 universities designated as health promoting universities



Roadmap for management of electrical and electronic waste (E-waste) developed



120,000 people reached with information on healthy habits to reduce Noncommunicable Diseases



3 global awards implemented, consolidating Bahrain's profile as a champion for SDGs



1,655 business plans developed regionally and supported with an estimated investment of \$20M led to 335 business plans developed by Bahraini entrepreneurs, with an estimated investment of \$12M and 225 jobs created



Bahrain has engaged in a Progressive Management Pathway for Aquatic Biosecurity and strengthened its capacities in eradication of animal disease and conservation of animal genetic resources



16,000 experts and entrepreneurs reached through 38 events, workshops and forums aimed at stimulating start-ups and the growth of SMEs at the local, regional and international level



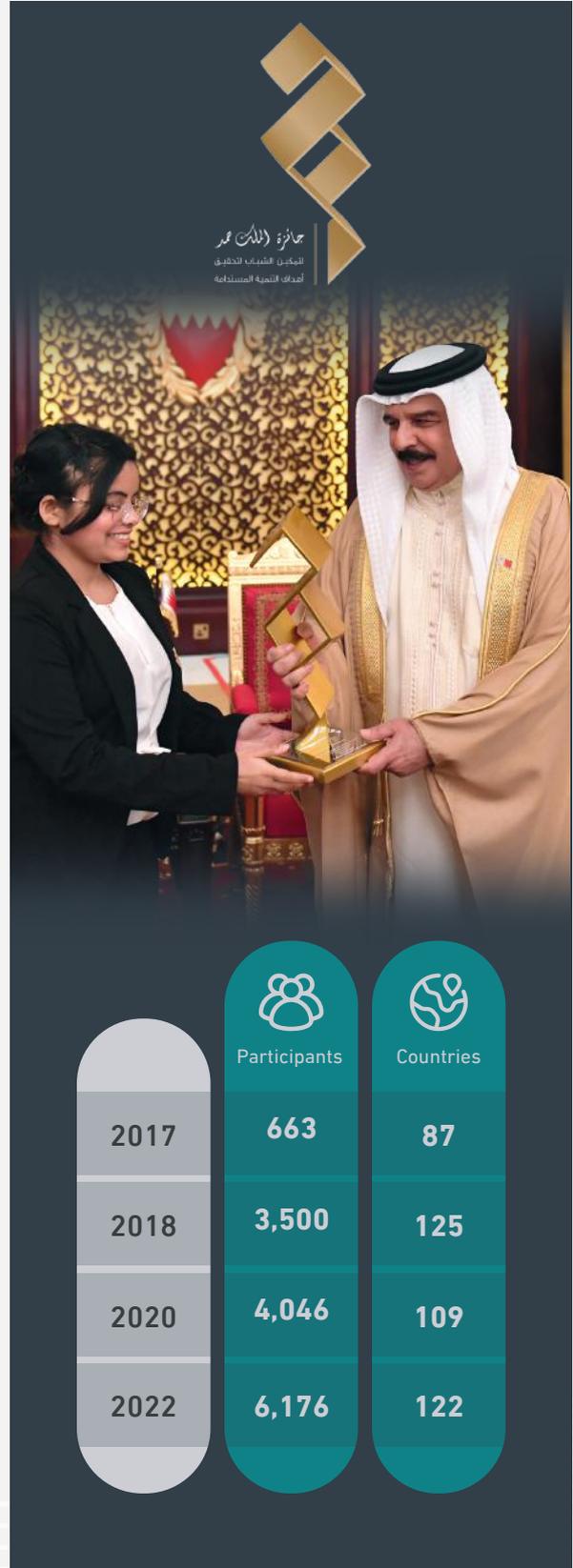
## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### THE KING HAMAD YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AWARD TO ACHIEVE THE SDGS

In January 2017, the Kingdom of Bahrain launched the prestigious King Hamad Youth Empowerment Award to Achieve the SDGs to support young people in contributing to the 2030 Agenda on both the local and the global levels, and lead communities and countries towards a better shared future of peace and prosperity for all people on a healthy and sustainable planet.

The Award is implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is awarded in two categories: “Recognizing Youth Contribution to Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”; and “Recognizing Enablers of Youth Participation, Action and Impact for SDGs Achievement.”

The Award reflects His Majesty’s belief in the capabilities of the youth of the world, who have become the asset of the future and a force that is capable of setting priorities through presenting creative ideas that contribute to drawing a road map for the implementation of the SDGs.





## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### “The Bapco of Tomorrow”

Bapco Refining (formerly ‘Bapco’) won the King Hamad Youth Empowerment Award to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in 2022 under the category “Recognizing Enablers of Youth Participation, Action and Impact for SDGs Achievement,” for its “The Bapco of Tomorrow” initiative. The initiative’s theme reflects the 90-year transformation of the company into a modern, sustainable, cost-competitive, and market leading organization, that will successfully serve the Kingdom for decades to come.



The theme further reflects the culture of developing talent from within Bapco Refining by providing opportunities for employees to ensure that they are ready and equipped for today’s challenges and anticipating their readiness for the future. To support the leaders of the future, Bapco Refining awarded 19 scholarships in 2021 and was managing a total of 88 scholars. In addition, over 270 of the employees’ children received financial assistance for their university education classes.

In addition to its significant contribution to the economy, Bapco Refining also leads the way in contributing to the social and cultural life of Bahrain through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) outreach activity. The company played a role in assisting the nation in its fight against COVID-19, through promoting awareness and assisting the surrounding communities. It also contributes to educational organizations, sports clubs, social and cultural clubs and professional and specialized exhibitions and conferences.

Bapco Refining provides disclosures under the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards in its annual sustainability reports. In its latest report for 2020-2021, Bapco Refining sheds light on its sustainable development initiatives which can be linked to the 17 SDGs.



## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### TEAM BAHRAIN

Team Bahrain (#TeamBahrain) is an initiative of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, which is now a well-established approach that is embodied in the Kingdom's national development. Collaboration is at the heart of the Team

Bahrain approach, where Bahrain's agile government is working together with the private sector to deliver high impact initiatives that contribute to economic growth and human capital development in the Kingdom.



### THE MINISTRY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In June 2022, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued Decree No. (25) of 2022 which established the Ministry of Sustainable Development as an integrating institution for the government sustainability policies and an advocate for the Kingdom's efforts, achievements, and future plans to further advance the sustainability agenda across all fields.

The Ministry is building on the successes of the National Committee for Information and Population, which previously oversaw the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and continues to work under its umbrella

in order to tackle the data challenge; ensuring government agencies are working collectively to make available accurate, timely, relevant, and quality data to measure progress in the implementation of the SDGs and inform future decisions. The National Committee was established in 2019 with the mandate of undertaking the process of localizing, implementing and realizing the SDGs, through a wide range of government plans. The National Committee is chaired by the Minister of Cabinet Affairs and is made up of representatives from all relevant entities involved in the delivery of the SDGs.



## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The National Committee and the Ministry of Sustainable Development established a monitoring and reporting system for SDG indicators, and set up a reliable platform to facilitate the exchange of information and periodic updates between the government entities and partners in a cooperative and collaborative manner.

### LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

The Kingdom of Bahrain is fully committed to the 'Equality and Leaving No One Behind' principle and works to promote the values of religious tolerance, peaceful coexistence and combating discrimination across all segments of the Bahraini society. The Kingdom takes a firm stance against discrimination, including gender, race, color, language, politics, sect, ethnicity and more. It combats all forms of violence and hatred, ensuring everyone is equal under the rule of law.

Bahrain proved to be among the front lines of countries that successfully tackled the COVID-19 pandemic with access to healthcare, testing and vaccinations offered to expatriates alongside citizens and residents, ensuring no one is left behind in the battle against COVID-19.

Furthermore, Bahrain emerged among the first responders following the deadly earthquakes that hit Syria and Türkiye in February 2023, following His Majesty the King's directives for swiftly dispatching cargo shipments and relief goods.

The Kingdom adopted the same whole-of-society approach when preparing for the VNR, ensuring inclusion of representatives from across the public and private sectors, civil society and academia.





## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PLAN (2022-2026)

The Kingdom of Bahrain, a country known throughout history for its civilization, coexistence, openness to others, and tolerance, has a clear vision and determination to promote and advance human rights, as stipulated in its Constitution and the National Action Charter. This approach is harmonious with the culture of Bahrain, as well as the sentiment of its leadership, government, and people.

In 2022, The Government of Bahrain developed its first National Human Rights Plan (2022-2026), which comprised 17 primary goals, 34 secondary goals and 102 projects in areas of: civil and political rights; economic, social, and cultural rights; the rights of groups with priority care needs; and solidarity rights. On the other hand, the Government presented its fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in November 2022, and in February 2023, it accepted 172 recommendations and took into considerations 73 recommendations.

The Government has undertaken an exercise to align both with the SDGs:

#### Alignment of the SDGs with the National Human Rights Plan (2022-2026)

**102** Projects in the National Human Rights Plan Associated with **11** SDGs Encompassing **37** Targets



#### Alignment of the SDGs with the Recommendations of the UPR

**172** Total accepted recommendations Associated with **9** SDGs Encompassing **35** Targets





# CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

## GOVERNMENT PLAN (2023-2026)

In light of the broad-strokes nature of the Economic Vision 2030, the Government supplements this with a series of four-year plans, known as “government plans” that must also be approved by the Legislative Authority; ensuring that it is an inclusive document, and that all citizens have the opportunity to express their opinions regarding its content, and for their opinions to have a bearing on the final version that comes into effect.

The 2023-2026 Government Plan revolves around six policy pillars: Improving living standards; Sovereignty and legislations; Infrastructure and the environment;

Economic recovery and financial sustainability; Community services; and Government performance and digital transformation. These pillars align closely with the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda: people; prosperity; planet; partnership; and peace, with the Government Plan making explicit references to the implementation of the SDGs.

Each of the six policy pillars in the Government Plan is then broken down into several specific and targeted plans, and this is where the relationship between the Government Plan and the SDGs can be seen more clearly.

FIRST: IMPROVING CITIZENS' LIVING STANDARDS		
IMPROVING LIVING STANDARDS		
Objectives	Initiatives	Aligned SDGs
Raising the efficiency of social support and protection provided to citizens	8	
Supporting pensioners	2	
SECOND: JUSTICE, SECURITY AND STABILITY		
SOVEREIGNTY AND LEGISLATIONS		
Objectives	Initiatives	Aligned SDGs
Strengthening security and stability	6	
Consolidation of constitutional rights and freedoms and promotion of women's advancement program	3	



## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Objectives	Initiatives	Aligned SDGs
Developing legislation to ensure that it meets development requirements	5	
Developing litigation services and procedures	3	
<b>THIRD: ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT - ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>		
Objectives	Initiatives	Aligned SDGs
Continuing infrastructure development to support development efforts	11	
Enhancing food security and water recourses	4	
Climate resilience and preserving the environment and resources	9	
Creating promising job opportunities for citizens	5	
Facilitating and increasing the effectiveness of commercial procedures	4	
Implementation of major development projects	2	
Development of strategic sectors	5	
Financial sustainability and economic stability	5	



# CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

## FOURTH: QUALITY AND COMPETITIVE GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### COMMUNITY SERVICES - GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Objectives	Initiatives	Aligned SDGs
Improving the performance of education and training and encouraging scientific research	5	
Innovative housing solutions that meet the needs of citizens	2	
Enhancing the quality of health services	4	
Empowering youth and increasing their participation in development plans	3	
Supporting the support sector to continue to attain achievement	3	
Developing and sustaining social services, ensuring their quality, and strengthening partnership with the private sector	4	
Enhancing the role of media in achieving national priorities	3	
Empowering and developing national government cadres	4	
Governance, oversight and enhanced accountability	4	
Enhance strategic planning and digital transformation	6	
Enhancing the follow-up of government performance	7	



## CHAPTER 1: POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Kingdom realizes that fiscal sustainability promotes local and inward foreign investment, both of which are critical to Bahrain's efforts at achieving the SDGs, as capital of any origin is required to accelerate the transformation and the adoption of the latest technologies and innovations.

For years, the Government of Bahrain launched several initiatives and programs, underpinned by the principles of its Economic Vision 2030, that have promoted investment into the economy and led to the strengthening of the national economy, the diversification of economic sectors and the maintenance of low unemployment rates. This long-standing commitment to economic diversification has delivered tangible results across key sectors. However, non-oil government revenues have not kept pace with economic growth. The dependence on oil revenues and the global drop in oil prices have led to successive budget deficits which have subsequently resulted in increases of public debt.

To address these fiscal challenges, the Government launched the Fiscal Balance Program in 2018 with the overall objective of achieving a balanced budget by 2022 through the implementation of a number of initiatives to reduce government expenditures and increase revenues, whilst enhancing service delivery to citizens.

Whilst significant progress had been made across all initiatives, global external shocks, including lower oil prices and the adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, interrupted that progress. The Government's commitment to achieving fiscal balance has led to the introduction of a set of new initiatives in the updated Fiscal Balance Program, with a revised target of achieving an overall fiscal balance by 2024; a two-year extension of the original target. The revised target and the additional measures follow the same principles of the Program launched in 2018, namely: the Government started with addressing its own fiscal challenges and reducing its operational costs; maintaining social support to citizens most in need; and continuing to provide government services in an efficient manner.

The Government established a governance framework to support the effective implementation of the Fiscal Balance Program, ensuring the Program is responsive to local and global economic developments, and aligns government revenues with positive economic growth.

Preliminary financial data for the year 2022 showed an increase in total oil revenues by 36 percent compared to the actual results for the year 2021. On the other hand, the Government was able to maintain the estimated levels of total public expenditures, leading to a reduction in total fiscal deficit.



CHAPTER 2:  
**COVID-19 RESPONSE  
& RECOVERY**



# 2

## CHAPTER 2

# COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

The Kingdom of Bahrain's agile government and solid fundamentals for care provision have characterized its much-admired response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, as demonstrated in the World Health Organization's case study on Bahrain. Overall, through pursuing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, the Kingdom was able to respond effectively, to protect communities, limit the economic impact and leave no one behind.

Three weeks before the first case was reported in February 2020, the National Taskforce for Combatting COVID-19 (NTCC) was created by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. The Taskforce held daily meetings to plan and coordinate prevention, preparedness and response activities, while senior leadership met twice a week to review policies and formulate decisions.

Furthermore, ten days before the first confirmed COVID-19 case, a "War Room" was established to play the integral role of operationalizing COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts. Its most important function was to collate comprehensive and



real-time data and produce dashboards that were shared with decision-makers at regular intervals throughout the day, ensuring that strategic health and economic decisions could be made in real time on an informed basis.

From the very beginning of the pandemic, His Majesty the King issued Royal Directives to provide free COVID-19 testing and treatment for all citizens and residents in Bahrain.

Essential to limiting the health and economic impacts of the global pandemic was the decision to ensure uninterrupted provision of essential health care services, with all 27 primary healthcare centers open throughout. Furthermore, Bahrain did not impose a complete lockdown nor closed international borders, ensuring the continuation of trade and travel.



## CHAPTER 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

One of the clear outcomes of the pandemic response is the evidence that confronted with challenges, Bahraini youth are adaptable and able to offer innovative solutions. The War Room was populated by young, creative, and multidisciplinary Bahrainis with the stamina and commitment necessary to shoulder the responsibility of fighting COVID-19 for over two years.

### DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES

Equipped with solid infrastructure and systems already in place, Bahrain capitalized on and scaled-up its existing resources and displayed a level of preparedness and synergy of efforts from both the top down and the bottom up. The below is a list of some examples of efficient resource deployment:

- The launch of a multilingual national campaign, later expanded to 12 languages, to build awareness of COVID-19's threat and ways to prevent its spread.
- The adoption of a 'Trace, Test, Treat' strategy, to contain the spread of COVID-19, which ensured a comprehensive treatment approach, under a specialized medical team.



- The establishment of Bahrain's first national testing center was done in only two days.
- The establishment of drive-thru testing centers increased capacity for the testing of routine and suspected cases. To heighten screening, testing was also conducted at random locations in mobile units.
- The building of capacity by the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) in pandemic preparedness meant that staff were trained in testing techniques and equipment. Upon notice of the first COVID-19 case, the NPHL activated existing preparedness plans.



## CHAPTER 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

- Health and economic decisions were data-driven. Advances in testing capacities allowed for the production of comprehensive and real-time epidemiological and virological data. The data obtained from testing were invaluable in guiding decision-makers and protecting communities.
- The conversion of the multi-storey car park of the Bahrain Defence Force Royal Medical Services military hospital into a 130-bed intensive care unit for patients in seven days.
- As preparations for the infrastructure for COVID-19 treatment began, internal human resources were repurposed from other departments for mobilization across the facilities designated to provide COVID-19 medical care.
- The introduction of the COVID-19 Alert Level Traffic Light System, which changed the alert level based on the rolling average of positive COVID-19 cases in intensive care units (ICU). Comprising four levels – Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red – each with distinct criteria, it provided a framework for swift escalation or de-escalation in response to real-time epidemiological data.
- The nightly publication of a government issued COVID-19 report, showcasing key indicators such as total tested, new cases, status of cases, recoveries, and deaths contributed to transparency and trust between the community and authorities.

### INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Bahrain adopted innovative approaches to strengthen health systems' resilience:

- The Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA), in collaboration with the NTCC, launched the "BeAware" application which complemented the efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus by advancing contact tracing efforts to swiftly identify and keep track of all active cases and their contacts. The application alerted individuals in the event they approach an active case or a location an active case has visited, allowed them to book their COVID-19 test and vaccination appointments, view their test results and provided regular local and global updates on cases and measures. Ultimately, the BeAware App has proven instrumental in helping the Government manage the spread of the virus and save lives.



## CHAPTER 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

- The Kingdom introduced robots, utilizing artificial intelligence technology, to treat isolated COVID-19 patients in an effort to maximize the protection of health workers from contracting the virus.
- In support of national efforts and in an example of effective collaboration between the Government and the private sector, Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) engineers, in cooperation with the healthcare authority doctors, designed breathing apparatus for non-ICU patients in need of respiratory assistance. The devices were designed in just under two weeks thanks to the dedication and ingenuity of BIC's engineers. The BIC made the blueprint designs freely available to organizations around the world seeking to find similar solutions.
- Adoption of technology was also most critical for the education sector. Schools largely moved to an online environment, with nearly 150,000 students continuing their education through a series of remote learning initiatives. The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the international cloud computing platform Amazon Web Services (AWS), launched a dedicated electronic education portal which included recorded lessons, e-books and other educational material and sample tests. Alongside the development of the portal, remote learning options were facilitated through

the country's television channel which broadcasted lessons in a mixture of Arabic and English.



### VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers played a pivotal role in the Kingdom's successful mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting the vibrancy of Bahrain's civil society. Volunteers, of all ages and from varying academic backgrounds, were recruited, from a national platform which saw more than 50,000 people register in a country of just 1.5 million.

Initial volunteer recruitment focused on volunteers with health care experience such as university students from health-related disciplines and retirees from the



## CHAPTER 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

health sector, subsequently expanding to include volunteers from outside the health sector supporting in roles such as data entry and validation, inspections, and public sanitization.

Training was provided for health workers and volunteers through induction and specialization courses, both in person and virtually, with high engagement among professionals and volunteers who were driven by a desire to help.

One of the notable initiatives to ensure inclusivity, led by the Supreme Council for Women, was the “Together to Keep Bahrain Safe” campaign. Through this campaign, educators from the Bahrain Education Trade Union volunteered their time to provide lessons for the children of front-line workers, allowing them to continue with their demanding jobs while ensuring that their children would be able to complete their studies without worry. This campaign also provided low-income families, and families with female breadwinners, with computers and other digital tools to ensure their ability to keep up with distance learning.

### VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

As soon as the first COVID-19 cases were announced globally, Bahrain acted to scale-up its vaccination workforce capacity by redeploying staff in the healthcare sector and engaging health workers in the private sector. The Kingdom’s vaccination roll-out started in December 2020.

Bahrain achieved a high vaccination rate, with 92.9% of the eligible population vaccinated by 30 September 2021, exceeding the WHO’s goal of 70% by the end of 2021. This was supported by:

- The community’s familiarity with prevailing vaccine programs,
- Participation in clinical trials, such as the Sinopharm vaccine in 2020,
- Being the second country to issue Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for Sinopharm and Pfizer- BioNTech vaccines, along with being the first to issue EUA for Johnson & Johnson and Valneva vaccines,
- Early procurement of vaccines, with five types being made available to citizens and residents, on a voluntary and free basis,



## CHAPTER 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

- The flexibility of receiving a vaccine; appointments could be booked via the 'BeAware' App, and if someone was over 50, they could visit a walk-in health center, while for those with special needs or older adults, mobile units were made available, and
- The provision of 31 vaccination centers, with the capacity to provide 30,000 vaccinations daily.

Bahrain implemented the vaccination passports since February 2021, becoming one of the first countries in the world to use a digital COVID-19 vaccine passport, through the BeAware application.

### SUPPORTING WOMEN

In Bahrain, supporting women and upholding the progress achieved by them both socially and economically was an essential component of the Kingdom's response to the pandemic.

Bahraini women made up the vast majority of frontline workers; 75% of the national taskforce. From the earliest stages of the outbreak, His Majesty the King directed authorities to enable mothers in the public sector to work from home. Additionally, based on a recommendation by the Supreme Council for Women (SCW), the Government granted the spouses of women assuming vital frontline duties the opportunity to work remotely. In a survey of approximately

350 Bahraini women, a subset of women expressed that remote work conferred substantive benefits upon their lives stemming from the enhanced flexibility and the saved commuting time.

In May 2020, Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Consort of His Majesty the King and President of the SCW, extended a loan and debt waiver to women with outstanding debts - who were primarily divorced, widowed or are suffering from chronic diseases - facing court orders to repay their financial dues. Women's mental health was also supported through the provision of psychological, family, legal and economic counsellors online.





## CHAPTER 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

### MANAGING THE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

To offset the economic impact of the pandemic, a financial and economic stimulus package worth more than 4.5 Bahraini Dinars (approximately USD 12 billion) was launched in March 2020 to support households and corporations; focusing on the most affected sectors; protect jobs, stabilize markets, and restore confidence in the financial system.

Over 40 initiatives were launched over a period of 17 months, including the payment of wages of Bahrainis working in the private sector - hence preserving the stability of the labour market, the payment of individuals and businesses electricity and water utility bills, the exemption of all tourism related levies for tourism establishments, the doubling of the size of the Liquidity Support Fund available for businesses with short-term liquidity shortages, as well as providing support for tourist guides and taxi drivers.

The Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) issued a package of regulatory measures to mitigate the financial implications on financial services customers, increase banks' lending ability, and protect the stability of the financial sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Furthermore, Bahrain's Labour Fund (Tamkeen) announced its Business Continuity Support Program which provided liquidity support to adversely affected enterprises to help them continue their operations during the pandemic.

Between 2020 and 2021, the Government ran the "Feena Khair" campaign – Arabic term meaning "there is charitableness in us". The campaign sought to collect funds from individuals, civil societies, corporations, and certain government donors and redistribute them among those most financially impacted by the pandemic. Aside from financial support, the Feena Khair campaign also led to producing 224,000 face masks, providing 13,000 laptops to families to help their children study online, providing psychiatric consultations to approximately 4,500 individuals, and distributing 7,300 food baskets.

### Financial & Economic Stimulus Package

Five stimulus packages were launched, including more than 40 Programs worth over BD 4.5 Billion





## CHAPTER 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

### COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

#### WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT

Multisectoral collaborations were witnessed involving, among others, the NTCC, the Supreme Council for Health, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, civil defense, the Ministry of Works, and the Ministry of Education, which allowed the rapid setting-up of infrastructure that was vital for the operation.

#### WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Partnerships established between the public and private sector laboratories allowed the expansion of testing capacity and facilitated resource sharing and alleviated the testing burden on the NPHL.

Nurses and physicians from the private sector also came forward to offer their expertise, demonstrating the commitment and collaboration between sectors.

While the Government played a key role in enabling e-learning, a number of private partners were proactive in allowing students to continue their studies. Bahrain's telecoms companies provided free-of-charge data to browse designated educational websites.

#### WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Bahrain hosted two Formula One races and provided free vaccination for foreign staff taking part in the events.

Bahraini doctors were sent to Jordan and India to help with the local COVID-19 response, extensive sessions were held with the United Kingdom to discuss strategies when the Delta variant first emerged, and medical teams from Italy and Germany visited Bahrain to exchange experiences.

Bahrain pledged USD 2.5 million in funding to support the WHO's COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility.

#### International Cooperation

Intensified cross border collaborations especially in the field of capacity building and vaccine sharing

#### The Government and the Private Sector

Partnerships increased testing capacities, enhanced healthcare service offerings, and ensured educational continuity

#### Within the Government

Multisectoral collaboration to establish the operational infrastructure



## CHAPTER 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

### GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Due to its swift response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its commitment to prioritizing the lives and livelihood of citizens and residents, the Kingdom of Bahrain received global recognition for adopting one of the most successful response programs to the pandemic on a global level. This was highlighted during a visit by Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the WHO, to Bahrain in July 2021 to officially open a WHO Country Office in Manama; who noted:

“Bahrain has always been one of the pioneering countries in the COVID-19 global collaborative response. Bahrain implemented a comprehensive package of public health measures to control transmission in the country from the very start, before the first case was detected in-country. Bahrain’s approach has been

holistic, evaluating the social and economic impact of all health measures. Efforts have also been made to ensure full continuity of treatment for other health conditions. Bahrain has managed to vaccinate more than one million people with 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, ensuring that almost 70% of the population is now provided with an additional layer of protection against the virus. The vaccines were provided free of charge, regardless of citizenship status. Bahrain’s approach has been fully in line with the WHO’s mandate for universal health coverage and the regional vision of ‘Health for All by All.’”

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus - World Health Organization Director-General.

The opening of the WHO office aims to further enhance and strengthen the capacity for proficient health service delivery and help in advancing the global health agenda.





**CHAPTER 3:  
ECONOMIC RECOVERY  
PLAN**



# 3

## CHAPTER 3

# ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

In October 2021, under the leadership of His Majesty the King and the directive of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Bahrain launched its Economic Recovery Plan, which aims to support the post COVID-19 recovery; building on the momentum of the BHD 4.5 billion financial and economic stimulus package; and to enhance long-term economic competitiveness, in line with the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030.

At a time when countries worldwide were grappling with uncertainty and hardship, Bahrain took decisive action unveiling a multi-year plan consisting of 27 initiatives, under 5 pillars: creating quality jobs for citizen to make them the 'Employee of Choice' in the labour market; simplifying and increasing the efficiency of commercial procedures; launching major strategic projects; developing strategic priority sectors; and achieving fiscal sustainability and economic stability.

The Economic Recovery Plan represents the Kingdom's investment in its people, businesses, and its future, as to position it on a path towards resilience and prosperity. The Plan not only addresses the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic but is also yet another step in accelerating the efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs. By diversifying the economy, attracting foreign investments, and fostering public-private partnerships, the Economic Recovery Plan contributes to various SDGs; including in areas of improving the living standards, education, economic growth, innovation and digital technology, in addition to promoting partnerships.





## CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

1

### Creating Quality Jobs for Citizens to make them the 'Employee of Choice' in the Labour Market



Includes a long-term National Labour Market Strategy and the launch of a new strategy by Tamkeen, both aiming to continue upskilling the Bahraini workforce.

Tamkeen – an Arabic term that means empowerment – has a dual mandate of making the private sector the key driver of economic growth and making Bahrainis the employees of choice. On the human development support programs front, Tamkeen prioritizes programs that lead to employment, skills, and career development for Bahrainis.

Tamkeen’s new (2021-2025) strategy aims to provide solutions at a time when technological innovation and the COVID-19 pandemic have caused structural changes in the labour market, which need to be turned into a sustainable foundation for a strong economic recovery. Making Bahrainis the employee of choice requires a strong private sector that creates sustainable quality employment opportunities, but also a labour market that works more efficiently and

responds to skill development mechanisms. Newly introduced programs include: the Mid-Career & Executive Leadership program which provides wage subsidies to hire and promote experienced Bahrainis; the Global-Ready Entrepreneur program which covers 70% of the cost of participating in reputable overseas structured entrepreneurial programs; and the Train and Grow program which provides financial support to enterprises to facilitate training and wage increments for their Bahraini employees.

The Kingdom has successfully exceeded its 2022 job recruitment targets, demonstrating remarkable progress.

150%

Of target achieved in 2022 with 29,995 Bahrainis recruited



## CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

2

### Simplifying and Increasing the Efficiency of Commercial Procedures



Represents a regulatory reform package designed to further enhance Bahrain's business environment and nurture optimum commercial conditions. Several of the reforms revolve around the utilization of technology including the launch of a new Government Land Bank to optimize land resource management, the launch of an online portal to simplify urban planning-related services, and upgrading the online companies system to accelerate the issuance of government licenses. As part of the package, the Government announced a new residency permit program to attract global talent and investors, the Golden Residency, further bolstering Bahrain's economic competitiveness.

Legislative reforms have long been a competitive advantage of Bahrain's business environment, and since the launch of the Plan, the Government issued several new legislations. A particularly significant piece of legislation is Resolution No. (30) for the year 2022, which issued the "Guide Regulating Partnerships between the Public and Private Sectors," which establishes a

robust legal framework for public-private partnerships, promoting transparency, efficiency, and accountability. The guide simplifies procedures, encourages private investment, and facilitates infrastructure development, thereby contributing to Bahrain's business environment and economic diversification goals.

The Kingdom also aims to sign international bilateral economic agreements, to encourage cross-country investment and eliminate barriers to trade in goods and services.



## CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

3

### Launching Major Strategic Projects



A package of 23 infrastructure and strategic projects across key sectors – including telecommunications, tourism, education, manufacturing, infrastructure, and health. The multi-year initiative represents one of Bahrain's most significant ever injections of capital investment, designed to enhance the long-term competitiveness of Bahrain's economy, and stimulate post pandemic growth.

These planned projects exemplify Bahrain's commitment to leveraging public-private partnerships as a vehicle for economic growth. Through these initiatives, Bahrain reinforces its position as an attractive investment destination, bolsters its economic recovery, and stimulates sustainable development.

The new projects include two new hospitals – the 200-bed Dilmunia Health Services Complex, and the 125-bed King Hamad American Mission Hospital, which will derive 75 percent of its power from solar panels. Bahrain is also due to complete the King Abdullah Medical City which includes academic and medical facilities and research centers to study diseases prevalent in the region such as cancer, diabetes and obesity.

Also supporting the education sector is the new College of Engineering at the University of Bahrain which will incorporate modern technology and is designed to meet future needs in the fields of space science and sustainable industries, preparing specialized cadres in various engineering fields.

On the tourism front, the Exhibition World Bahrain, a state-of-the-art exhibition center in the Sakhir area, opened in 2022, aiming to continue to build the tourism business in the Kingdom. Further projects are being undertaken including beach developments and hotel and resort constructions, to enhance Bahrain's reputation as a unique island destination.

The newly announced projects build on the Kingdom's 2015 infrastructure plan – worth more than USD 32.5 billion – which delivered the new Bahrain International Airport terminal, Aluminum Bahrain's Line 6 expansion project, a new oil pipeline between Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as the five housing towns – Salman City, Khalifa City, East Sitra Town, East Hidd Town and Al Ramli Housing Project.



## CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

4

### Developing Strategic Priority Sectors



This pillar aims to enhance non-oil gross domestic product (GDP) by introducing six new industry strategies across oil and gas, tourism, logistics services, manufacturing, financial services, and telecommunications, IT, and digital economy.

#### OIL AND GAS STRATEGY

His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty’s Representative for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs, Chairman of Bapco Energies, is leading the industry’s transition toward sustainable and responsible energy production in the Kingdom of Bahrain, that is aligned with the net-zero goals, through developing the National Energy Strategy. The Strategy reflects efforts to advance investment in the energy sector, with the aim of accelerating the pace of energy transition and diversification, while ensuring the provision of uninterrupted energy supplies.

The Kingdom aims to be one of the leading countries in the region in generating most

of its energy needs through renewable sources. Bahrain realizes the importance of building strategic partnerships and co-operation and exchanging experiences to advance the oil and gas sector.



*We are well aware of the importance of moving forward in the process of transition and diversification of energy production sources, whether it is in order to achieve the goals of climate action, or to ensure the security of supplies.*



**His Highness**

**Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa**

His Majesty’s Representative for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs, Chairman of Bapco Energies



## CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL ECONOMY SECTOR STRATEGY

As stipulated by the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, the Kingdom has been pioneering the deployment of advanced technologies for the benefit of citizens, residents, and businesses. The Government considers access to digital government services a public right and requires government entities to ensure digital inclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic has further augmented the use of the Kingdom's existing and emerging technologies, allowing the country to broaden the reach of its national digital transformation initiatives and electronic services, as well as demonstrating its readiness to face conventional disasters and pandemics.

Through the overarching national Telecoms, IT and Digital Economy Sector Strategy, Bahrain aims to establish world-class digital infrastructure, become the regional digital innovation hub, attract big-tech companies, expand the use of artificial intelligence (AI), develop cyber-security skills and standards, and strengthen partnerships with the private sector.

The Government is currently working on finalizing the National Digital Economy Strategy, which aims to create an innovative and borderless digital economy, an advanced and agile digital government and a connected and attractive global digital hub.

On the other hand, the Government is powering through its Digital Strategy 2022, led by the iGA, which focuses on enhancing e-governance and developing digital capabilities:

#### The Digital Strategy 2022 identifies three tracks for utilising digital technologies to achieve SDG targets:



##### Digital Technologies for Sustainable and Equitable Growth

- Augmenting connectivity
- Strengthening fintech & e-banking
- Encourage remote working
- Enhance Smart manufacturing



##### Digital Technologies for Energy & Environment

- Smart energy
- Smart water management
- Smart conservation
- Smart building



##### Digital Technologies for Quality of Life, Education & Capacity Building

- Digital government
- Real-time disaster warnings
- E-health
- E-learning
- Smart mobility, including smart logistics, traffic control, and optimisation



## CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

### Other Priority Sectors Strategies

#### Tourism Sector Strategy

Aims to position Bahrain as a leading tourism destination, and diversify the tourism offering



Support leisure & entertainment



Improved infrastructure and offerings



Focus on culture & history

#### Logistics Services Sector Strategy

Focuses on revising laws and regulations, developing infrastructure, and enhancing regional and international communication



Develop the infrastructure



Review laws and regulation



Strengthen regional and international engagement

#### Industry Sector Strategy

Focuses on boosting national industries, improving the investor experience, and investing in infrastructure



Support the transition towards the industry 4.0



Promote efficient use of resources



Adopt the concept of a circular carbon economy

#### Financial Services Sector Development Strategy

Revolves around creating quality job opportunities, developing the financial markets sector, legislation, insurance sector, and financial and fintech services



Create quality job opportunities



Promote sustainable economic growth



Foster innovation



## CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

### ECONOMIC GROWTH

Bahrain's Economic Recovery Plan helped deliver the Kingdom's highest ever registered non-oil sector percentage contribution to real GDP, at 83.1 percent in 2022, based on preliminary results published. According to the preliminary national accounts data, Bahrain's economy

recorded a significant growth rate of 4.9 percent in real terms in 2022, driven by a 6.2 percent growth in the non-oil sector, the highest in a decade, exceeding the targets set in the Economic Recovery Plan.

5

#### Achieving Fiscal Sustainability and Economic Stability



As described in earlier sections, despite the lower international oil prices and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted the fiscal results, the Government remains committed to achieving fiscal balance and has made significant progress in the implementation of the Fiscal Balance Program.



CHAPTER 4:

# METHODOLOGY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



# 4

## CHAPTER 4

# METHODOLOGY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Bahrain's approach towards the VNR has been one of commitment, transparency and inclusiveness, reflecting its holistic view towards the SDGs. Building on Bahrain's first VNR in 2018, an inclusive process of data collection and stakeholder engagement was key to comprehending progress since 2018.

The VNR is viewed as a valuable diagnostic tool by the Kingdom. Going forward, lessons learnt from the recommendations will be incorporated into the design of future plans, in line with the Government Plan direction; further accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

In addition, the VNR preparation process has been an effective tool to raise awareness within government entities and the wider public about the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation; helping promote active participation in the process and partnerships between key stakeholders.

The Ministry of Sustainable Development coordinated the VNR Taskforce, consisting of a core team of civil servants with expertise in inter-agency projects and data gathering,

and a team of Bahraini researchers responsible for compiling and analyzing data for the review.

The VNR Taskforce met regularly to monitor the progress of the review. The Taskforce adhered to United Nation's guidelines, namely the "Handbook For the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews 2023," with the UN Country Team working as a partner throughout. The Government teams also actively participated in the global and regional events, such as the UN Statistics Division webinar on evidence-based VNRs, ESCWA workshop on VNRs in the Arab Region, UNICEF webinar on child-inclusive VNRs and others.



## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### DATA COLLECTION

One of the challenges in implementing Agenda 2030 for many nations is the ability to collect data for the monitoring of progress. Through the National Committee for Information and Population, the Kingdom of Bahrain had responded to this challenge with a whole-of-government approach, whereby agencies are working together to bolster the quality, accuracy, relevance, and timely nature of data. The first source of data used for the VNR was the government's database on SDG indicators; the SDG Portal. In 2016, following the launch of the SDGs and their formal integration into its action plan, Bahrain's government established a unit within the Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA), Bahrain's national statistics office, dedicated to gathering data on SDG indicators. In 2022, following the establishment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Ministry shares the responsibility of monitoring the data with the iGA. In addition to the SDG Portal, the UN's public database was especially useful for the establishment of regional benchmarks.

The Ministry of Sustainable Development actively sought both quantitative and qualitative data from government entities in an institutionalized manner. Entities were asked to submit information on the progress on the SDGs relevant to their mandate, the main challenges faced, the key plans to accelerate the progress as well as the latest

records of the SDG indicators. The reporting level for each SDG was impacted by the availability of valid and accurate data.

On the quantitative data side, the Ministry of Sustainable Development, under the guidance of the National Committee for Information and Population, established an "SDG Indicator Taskforce" to regularly monitor and update the SDG indicator records. The mandate of the SDG Indicator Taskforce extends beyond the preparation of the VNR and aims to ensure accurate and timely information is consistently available to inform recommendations and decisions. Government entities showed a high degree of ownership over the indicators, with each indicator assigned to a lead and supporting responsible entity. Based on the recommendation of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the National Committee for Information and Population has recently approved a plan that aims to: increase awareness among responsible entities of the SDG indicators, provide technical training to individuals monitoring the indicators within the responsible entities, improve the mechanism for the collection and review of the data, and ensure data is periodically published on the SDG Portal. Furthermore, the Ministry of Sustainable Development facilitated the hosting of two workshops by ESCWA and UN DESA to provide technical support to the relevant teams.



## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



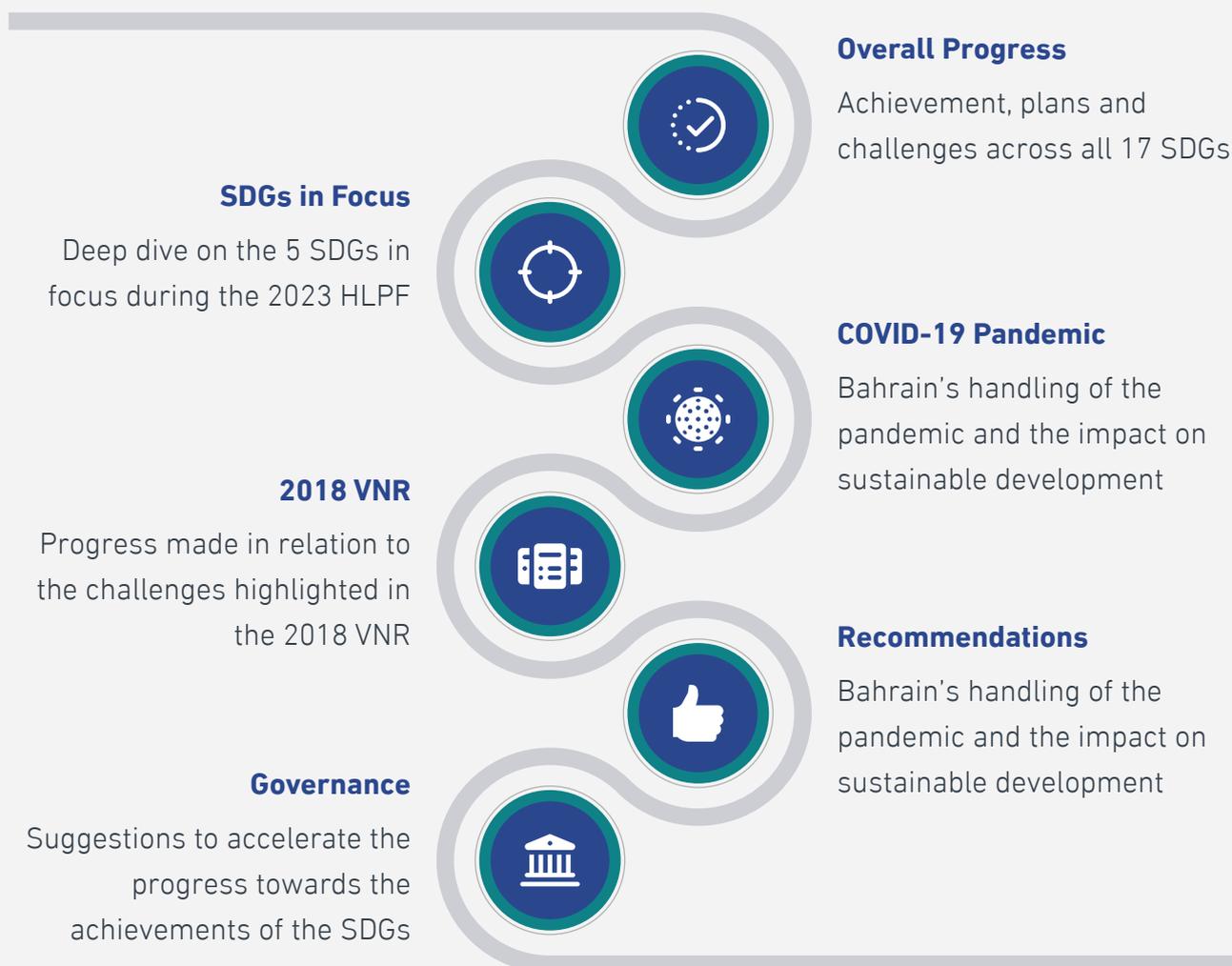
### VNR WORKSHOPS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Kingdom was keen for the VNR to reflect the sentiments of partnership and to capture the experiences of the major groups and stakeholders, as their input is key in providing a holistic view of policies and initiatives to achieve sustainable development through its economic, social, and environmental dimensions.



## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The consultation sessions focused on the following:





CHAPTER 5:  
**PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING  
THE SDGS**

# 1 NO POVERTY



The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain guarantees social protection for the elderly, orphaned, widowed, unemployed, and people with disability or diseases. As stipulated in Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, the Government's priority is to improve Bahrainis' quality of life through better jobs opportunities and higher wages. The Kingdom is making continuous efforts to improve standards of living through robust social protection measures, targeted poverty alleviation programs, employment generation strategies, economic stimulation initiatives, and investments in education and skills development.

The Government of Bahrain, with an annual social support expenditure of BD 454 million, equivalent to 13.6 percent of the Government's total annual expenditure for 2021, had provided extensive social welfare support to various segments of society.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Social Support Programs

Bahrain offers a range of subsidies for citizens, including electricity and water services, gasoline, and flour, with the latter two available to all residents and visitors. Furthermore, the Government implements direct cash subsidies to eligible individuals, ensuring targeted financial support to those in need. The main support programs are:

- Cost of Living Allowance: Provided to all Bahraini retirees.
- Financial Support: Provided for low-income persons based on the income of the head of the household.
- Rental Allowance: Provided to each head of household who has submitted a housing service application five years prior and continues until a housing service is provided.
- Social Security: Provided to eligible individuals and families under 11 categories including families in need, widows, divorcees, elderly, families of prisoners, those unable to work, individuals with disabilities, unmarried daughters, and orphans.



- Disability Allowance: Monthly social allowance provided to eligible individuals with disabilities including physical, intellectual, and visual impairments, hearing impairments, autism, cerebral palsy, and others.
- Compensation Subsidies on Meat: Disbursed in advance every 3 months to all registered familie.

The Government continues to review social programs providing additional support as needed:

- To manage the impact of VAT increasing from 5 percent to 10 percent on 1 January 2022, and under the request of the Legislative Authority, the Government approved a 10 percent increase in the Financial Support program and an increase of the amounts of the Social Security program effective from January 2022. Notably, 94 basic commodities are zero-rated and 1,800 government services are exempted from VAT in the Kingdom.

- During Ramadan, the Government doubles the financial support for eligible individuals receiving the Social Security and Disability Allowances.
- In January 2023, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister directed the Government to disburse an additional month of Financial Support for eligible families to ease the global inflationary pressures.
- Following a proposal by the Legislative Authority, the Government has committed to doubling the Disability Allowances for those with extreme disabilities.

In addition to the above, Bahrain provides free education and healthcare, and a subsidized higher education tuition fees to all citizens. Other examples of support include discount cards for senior citizens, aged 60 and older, and those with disabilities, which offer fee reductions on a range of government services.

### Fael Khair

The Kingdom of Bahrain's Ministry of Interior launched the 'Fael Khair' (Person of Goodwill) campaign, in 2020, to allow individuals to assist Bahrainis that have been issued sentences in financial civil cases, under set criteria. The financial assistance not only relieves the burden on individuals that face difficulties in meeting their financial obligations but also maintains the financial stability of their families.

As of May 2023, more than BHD 2 million (More than USD 5 million) donations were made, which benefitted more than 500 beneficiaries.



### Better Living through Employment

Bahrain recognizes the critical role of creating employment opportunities in addressing poverty and social protection. The Government has implemented a range of policies and programs aimed at promoting job creation and reducing unemployment, including through the National Labour Market Strategy, the Tamkeen human capital development support programs, and its investments in education and vocational training, reflecting Bahrain's holistic approach in addressing social protection – Further details are provided in SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth).

Furthermore, eligible unemployed individuals can claim unemployment compensation, through the Unemployment Insurance fund. Under the National Employment Program, launched in 2019, the Government increased the amount of the unemployment compensation offered to first time job seekers and those who are unfairly dismissed from their jobs, and extended the compensation period from six to nine months. The Ministry of Labour, which reviews unemployment cases, also provides training for the unemployed and assists in finding suitable job opportunities.

### Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment

Bahrain prioritizes entrepreneurship and economic empowerment to address poverty; facilitating access to finance, and supporting micro businesses as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The existing law regulating the practice of productive activities from home empowers individuals to engage in economic activities from the comfort of their homes, fosters entrepreneurship, and enables flexibility in work-life balance. Moreover, it facilitates job creation, especially for women, by removing barriers to entry and providing a conducive environment for home-based businesses to thrive. Family development programs run by the Ministry of Social Development delivered a remarkable 526 specialized courses in 2022, resulting in over 19,500 individuals benefiting from skill-enhancing opportunities. Furthermore, the Ministry organized 18 exhibitions that acted as platforms for almost 5,900 family beneficiaries to showcase their products and services.

In 2021, the Kingdom also launched the 'Khatwa' program for home-based businesses; a free-of-charge alternative to families, registered with the Ministry of Social Development, to start and register their projects if they are not able to obtain a commercial registration. The program



is open for a host of activities including photography, handcrafts and online advertising, and aims to regulate the market, provide beneficiaries with support and financing and ensure that consumer rights are protected.

The Government provides various other means of support to families to enable them to become entrepreneurs:

- The Family Microfinance House provides microfinance loans for low-income groups, without bank guarantees, assisting them to establish income generating projects.
- Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka's Award for Productive Families is an annual opportunity to showcase the work of productive families and encourage their role in advancing social and economic development.

**Ministry of Social Development Home Business Support Programs Results (2022)**



**526**

Courses offered



**19,567**

Beneficiaries



**125**

Families benefiting from the Design and Innovation Center



**423**

Families benefiting from the Center of Excellence



**18**

Exhibitions for productive families



**5,893**

Families benefiting from exhibitions



### Social Development Centers

Social development centers aim to serve the elderly, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals and families through providing specialized services such as learning and training, rehabilitation facilities, gyms and special needs services.

The Ministry of Social Development manages 9 social development centers and plans to continue expanding in this area, with the construction of five more social development centers across the Kingdom. The recently completed Budaiya Comprehensive Community Centre, serves the Northern Governorate and offers social support, family counseling, training programs, employment support, and dedicated centers for the elderly and children. The Ministry is also finalizing the Mubarak Kanoo Social Centre in the Capital Governorate, which will house an elderly club, social research sections, family counseling, and incubators for productive families.

In 2023, the Government approved plans to extend the opening hours for centers to cover evenings.

### Civil Societies

Civil society organizations are a fundamental pillar of Bahrain's social support infrastructure, with their focus varying widely, including charitable, social, human rights, women, youth, professional, and foreign community focuses.

Aware of their pivotal role in supporting the achievement of SDGs, the Government, through the Ministry of Social Development, provides societies with technical and financial support. The Ministry supervises 15 parental care homes and provides annual financial support to 12 community centers that provide rehabilitation services to people with disabilities.

In recent years, societies played a role in raising awareness about the net-zero commitments and environmental challenges, through promoting planting and use of bio products and green plastic, innovating watering solutions for trees, and many more.

**Royal Humanitarian Foundation**

The Royal Humanitarian Foundation, established under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, is a charitable organization committed to humanitarian causes. The Foundation sponsors widows, orphans, and people with special needs, through providing social, medical, and educational assistance to alleviate the burdens faced by them. The Foundation also establishes non-profit projects such as orphanages, care centers, and rehabilitation facilities and coordinates foreign humanitarian aid.



The Foundation provided assistance to the following number of individuals to date:



**11,000**

**Orphans and Widows**



**4,096**

**Scholarships**



**8,311**

**Health Care**



**36,228**

**Humanitarian Aids**

**CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the relatively higher inflation rates have certainly challenged the existing social programs, a risk which the Kingdom has proactively tackled through providing direct support to individuals, as the case with the increases in social support following the increase of the VAT, and adopting policies that maintained stable inflation rates.

Another challenge identified is the effective allocation of government subsidies to eligible individuals. Bahrain recognized the importance of addressing this challenge, including it as an initiative under its Fiscal Balance Program launched in 2018. The

Government and the Legislative Authority established a joint committee to review citizen’s living standards, which will review the mechanism for the distribution of subsidies, taking into consideration the needs of the most vulnerable segments of society.

The Ministry of Social Development is actively incorporating the concept of “Multidimensional Poverty” in its strategies and plans, considering not only a household’s income but also access to health services, education, basic services such as electricity and water and sanitation.

# 2 ZERO HUNGER



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has always been an advocate for strengthening food security; recently directing the Government to continue adopting initiatives that would raise the level of food security in the Kingdom and support national food production.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic and the geopolitical tensions highlighted threats to food security posed by global crises. However, Bahrain has long emphasized the importance of diversifying its supply chain in food items, maintaining the subsidized prices of certain food, exempting essential food items from the VAT, offering consumer protection services, supporting local farmers and fisheries, utilizing technology to grow crops, and furthering international collaborations.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### The National Initiative for Agricultural Development

Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Consort of His Majesty the King and the President of the Supreme Council for Women, has undertaken a pioneer role in protecting and developing the agricultural sector and advocating for achieving the necessary balance between agricultural land and urban development. The National Initiative for Agricultural Development (NIAD), which was launched in 2010 to implement the directives of Her Royal Highness, is working on several

projects that support agricultural workers, increase green spaces, stimulate and support agricultural manufacturing industries:

- King Hamad Prize for Agricultural Development: the prize, launched in 2015, targets agricultural entrepreneurs or projects, farmers and researchers and aims to stimulate the competitive environment to develop a sustainable agricultural sector in Bahrain.

- Supporting “Agricultural and Marine Resources Affairs” projects: including providing support for the maintenance of the farmers markets in Budaiya and Hoorat A’ali, and running agricultural programs in the Agricultural Incubators Centre in Hoorat A’ali, since 2018 and in cooperation with Tamkeen, which provide agricultural entrepreneurs with various means of support to start their projects using modern agricultural techniques.
- Bahrain International Garden Show: offers a range of benefits to participants and the wider agricultural and gardening sectors. It serves as a platform for showcasing and learning about the latest ideas and innovations in agriculture, gardening, food security, and sustainability. It fosters networking opportunities, enabling the establishment of new partnerships, client relationships, and expert knowledge exchanges, contributing to the enrichment of the agricultural and gardening sectors.



### Agricultural Capacities

Developing local agricultural capacities is essential to safeguarding the supply of food against external shocks. In recognizing the importance of such matters, the Kingdom of Bahrain developed a set of policies that target the capability of local farmers in boosting their outputs:

- The Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture offers, 24 farms per month, agricultural advisory services and follows-up on the progress of local agricultural production and the level of activity of farms.
- The Ministry also offers a training program that saw the enrollment of over 900 Bahrainis to learn the use of the latest farming techniques, develop their skills in managing the agricultural challenges posed by climate change, and how to maximize production yields considering environmental difficulties.
- Under the concept of inclusion, Bahrain also trained several widows in soilless cultivation techniques and is cooperating with the private sector to find suitable jobs for the widows.
- These training programs have been developed partially in collaboration with the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas to ensure the adoption of best practices.



- Land availability is crucial for the sector and the Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture Ministry offers lands that are suitable for agricultural investment, while requiring the use of modern agricultural technologies when implementing the projects to ensure production efficiency and sustainability of natural resources. The Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, directed the Ministry to offer new lands for agriculture and make them available through the Land Investment Platform.
- Marketing local produce is a priority for the Kingdom of Bahrain, which led to the establishment of a permanent farmer's market in Hoorat A'ali in 2018, which serves as a critical venue for local farmers to showcase their produce.

### Foreign Direct Investments to Promote Food Security

When mitigating food security risks, all stakeholders can play their part. Corporates can act as catalysts for technology adoption and research, and development anchors that test proof of concept and provide contract manufacturing services for innovative global startups.

Bahrain's foreign direct investments (FDIs) in food security have seen notable success with four specialized production facilities being established and 10 existing ones being expanded.

One such example is Arla Foods which expanded its production facility in Bahrain at a cost of USD 63 million, making it the company's biggest extra-European investment. The company is able to serve 95% of the Middle East's needs out of the Kingdom.

Arla's production capacity has increased from 20,000 tonnes to 80,000, producing Puck and Kraft processed cheese and sterilized cream products. This project also came with a USD 1.3 million investment in green energy capable of producing approximately 20 percent of the site's yearly energy consumption while also reducing its overall carbon dioxide impact by 1,600 tonnes per year.



### Fisheries and Poultry

Fisheries is another key sector in Bahrain and the Government worked on multiple initiatives including launching training programs in partnership with Tamkeen and several international training centers to train Bahrainis in fish farming in 2019, allocating multiple sites for fish farming, setting up of a new fish farm in the Southern Governorate near the National Aquaculture Centre in Ras Hayyan in 2020, and inviting private sector investment in the sector.

Bahrain is witnessing development of two new state-of-the-art fin fish hatcheries in collaboration with the FAO and several other international partners to produce 20 million fingerlings per year and provide a strong base for aquaculture industry in the region.

The Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture champions new poultry projects, as is the case with the new expansion of the General Poultry Company, completed in 2022, which raised its production by 50 percent, contributing to the increase in egg production and self-sufficiency in this basket. To address the space challenge, the company adopted vertical construction.

### International Collaboration

Bahrain signed four three-year agreements in 2019 under the UN Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) covering: the development of a food resource diversification strategy to support food security; improving IT systems, databases, and agricultural statistics; and supporting the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector.

In 2022, Bahrain joined the Integrated Industrial Partnership for Sustainable Economic Development with the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Egypt. This partnership aims to achieve integration in resources, capabilities and experiences owned by the partner countries, which provides industrial opportunities that contribute to diversifying the economy. Through this partnership Bahrain secured an investment of USD 10 billion to develop five industrial sectors which included agriculture and food.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

A challenge for the Kingdom of Bahrain lies in stimulating the agricultural sector against the backdrop of two main hurdles; climate change and limited space. Addressing the later challenge for the Kingdom would lie in further developing agri-tech especially in the fields of hydroponics and vertical farming, and boosting partnership with the private sector to invigorate investments and increase local agricultural production. The first challenge can be best addressed by implementing circular economy strategies that would secure the necessary raw material for farming and, composting, whilst also developing sustainable irrigation techniques and, recycling grey water.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has good potential for fish farming considering the advantages offered by the climate, location, coastal area, and market. Many types of aquaculture activities are feasible, and a wide range of aquatic species could be cultured. Bahrain, by virtue of its location, possesses rich finfish and shellfish resources, some of these have already been identified as potentially suitable for aquaculture development by the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture.

Improving the level of research is a critical element in achieving food security. Universities in Bahrain have been studying

new ways of securing certain agricultural activities; the University of Bahrain, for example, prepared a study on exploring the opportunities behind vertical farming.

The public sector is working on making research and more data available to encourage more participation in the sector:

- A study is underway by the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture to set-up a gene bank of seeds for plant conservation, and is working with the FAO to update the agricultural sector database with the aim of making it available for decisions makers.
- The Information and eGovernment Authority launched the Botanical Atlas, in 2023, which provides a set of vegetation maps, classifications, types of agricultural crops in the Kingdom, along with their areas through the employment of satellite images and remote sensing techniques in addition to the use of field surveys, which contributed to the production of spatial information segments.





Packages will also be offered to expatriates which will be funded by employers and will be made available in government and private facilities. Visitors to the Kingdom will be offered a mandatory package – available in all government facilities – which will be funded by the visitor and insured by SHIFA.

Technology was part of the designing of the new SEHATI program, with every citizen and resident in Bahrain due to receive a chip-enabled card containing their medical history, test results, diagnoses and prescription details.

The new health insurance program is expected to enhance competitiveness and boost the private healthcare sector, providing investment opportunities for businesses.

### Preventative Measures

Preventative measures in the form of immunizations are critical to protecting the population from communicable diseases that can easily spread in the community. The Kingdom of Bahrain offers immunizations free of charge for citizens as per a set schedule. Immunizations are a pre-requisite for school entry since 2012, with some vaccines, including booster doses, given to students at their schools to ensure full accessibility. As such, Bahrain maintained high rates of coverage for routine childhood

immunization, exceeding 95 percent every year since 1997, with some immunizations achieving 100 percent coverage.

The Kingdom's long-term experience in immunizations has led to advanced levels of health awareness which contributed to the high take-up rate of the COVID-19 vaccinations. Bahrainis displayed high sense of responsibility during the pandemic, setting an example of effective partnerships to ensure the success of the plans to combat the virus. The availability of free vaccinations for every citizen and resident stressed Bahrain's humanitarian approach.

### Other Services

- Mother and child health services are provided to all citizens and residents in the Kingdom of Bahrain and continue to be prioritized by the Ministry of Health. These services include reproductive health – the ability and the freedom for family planning –, postnatal care, school health and child screening.
- The first nutrition clinic was established by the Ministry of Health in 2007 due to the high number of patients with obesity in the Kingdom and the subsequent health complications it caused. The clinic achieved significant success in reducing obesity and limiting its risks. Nutrition clinics are now open in all health regions in the Kingdom.



## CHAPTER 5: PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE SDGS

## SDG 3

- Intensified mental health programs, awareness campaigns, the introduction of the new traffic law of 2016, and smart systems for monitoring violations and red-light crossings have contributed to the reduction in road traffic injuries.
- The Ministry of Interior launched the 'Ta'afee' program which aims to assist drug users and treat their addictions. The program was inaugurated in 2018 as part of the national plan to combat drugs and psychotropic substances, where it offers the necessary psychological and social services to treat those who have joined from addiction, and provides health services if needed, in cooperation with the relevant institutions. To break the fear barrier for drug users, the program has placed a strong emphasis on respecting the privacy of those enrolled. As of 2022, the program facilitated the enrollment of 672 individuals and the successful recovery of 491 participants.

### National Genome Program

Bahrain plans to establish a specialized genetic analysis center using the latest scientific innovations, in partnership with Harvard Medical School, as part of its National Genome Program, to further its efforts in improving the quality of health services and preventing diseases – particularly genetic, intractable and deadly diseases. The center will have a database of the Bahraini population's DNA that will be analyzed and studied

to identify opportunities that contribute to improvements in disease diagnosis, early detection, as well as lowering the population's risk of contracting diseases. The program's approach differs from other genome projects in that it integrates research, clinical and comprehensive capacity building and technology transfer efforts; the Program involved training 60 genomics technicians in advanced genetic decoding techniques.

Bahrain achieved significant progress in the program by recording the first complete sequence of the human genome in the country. The program, led by Bahraini researchers, included three human genome samples with a high coverage rate of 97 percent. The researchers also successfully monitored the genetic sequence of COVID-19 through integrated genetic sequencing, analyzing over 31,000 viral samples.

### Pharmaceuticals

As part of Bahrain's broader health sector efforts, a new pharmaceuticals plant was opened in early 2023. The Bahrain International Medicine Manufacturing Company started producing Omega-3 Soft Gel Capsules and cough syrup; the first domestically produced pharmaceuticals, which will be marketed to the rest of the GCC, Iraq and Yemen. The plant also features a research and development laboratory, contributing to Bahrain's aforementioned efforts at boosting innovation.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

The Government is committed to creating opportunities for investments by the private sector in healthcare, such is the case with the new health insurance plan. Two recent examples of private sector led investments are the King Hamad American Mission Hospital and the Dilmunia Health Services Complex. The Government plans to strengthen the integration between the Ministry of Health and private health care providers, encouraging a unified system with standardized guidelines and protocols to ensure consistent and high-quality care across all healthcare facilities.

Bahrain will continue to provide support for scientific research focused on addressing health-related challenges and the continuous training of specialists. The Government plans to utilize recent projects; including the King Abdullah Medical City, which includes academic and medical facilities as well as research centers to study diseases prevalent in the region such as cancer, diabetes and obesity.

The monitoring and studying of the causes of illness and deaths will continue, with the aim of enhancing and developing data driven plans for their reduction, alongside collaborating with relevant entities to identify vulnerable groups at higher risks of diseases. The Ministry of Health is preparing

a national health survey in 2023 – the last survey was conducted in 2018 – which will cover 4,000 Bahraini and non-Bahraini families and will provide an updated database for the well-being of citizens and residents.

Bahrain integrated mental health in primary health care, hence increasing the efficiency of services and reducing the stigma by attending a psychiatric hospital. Going forward, the Government will continue to work on updating the Mental Health Law, which aims to regulate the relationship between patients and stakeholders in their circle, protecting the patient's rights, and promoting the integration of the mental patient into society. The Government is currently studying the plans to also establish the first psychiatric hospital for children which will help with early diagnostics.

Furthermore, the Government plans to utilize artificial intelligence to support the digital transformation of the sector, focusing on modern practices in the use of information and modern technologies to reduce effort and cost, and simplify procedures.

# 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Bahrain's commitment to SDG 4 (Quality Education) is evident through significant investments in education infrastructure, digital empowerment initiatives, and higher education and skills development programs. The Constitution made education "compulsory and free in the early stages", while Vision 2030 recognized that "A first-rate education system enables all Bahrainis to fulfil their ambitions."

In line with the "Education for All" principle, the Government provides free, high-quality education to Bahrainis at public schools and in keeping with the "Leaving No One Behind" principle, students with special needs have been integrated into schools, which have the appropriate equipment, tools, and experience to meet their needs. The Kingdom's achievements in key indicators, such as primary completion and access to computers in schools, are globally recognized.

Bahrain's participation in the "Transforming Education" Summit in 2022 and the submission of a National Statement of Commitment reflects the national commitment to transforming education at the local level. The outlined priorities and actions, such as addressing the effects of the pandemic, reimagining education for the 21st century, revising standards, and ensuring enhanced public funding, demonstrate the comprehensive efforts to achieve SDG 4 (Quality Education) and advance the quality and accessibility of education in Bahrain.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Uninterrupted Education During the Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Bahrain displayed remarkable adaptability by activating remote learning, ensuring uninterrupted education while quality standards are maintained, as evidenced by

the fact that 90 percent of schools received an "A" grade in the "School Performance Improvement" program over the period 2019-2022.



The Government accomplished this by establishing several task forces that uploaded hundreds of academic courses, tens of thousands of electronic educational exercises, and previous samples of final exam questions and answer forms, to the relevant online platforms. It also set up tens of thousands of discussion forums, digital activities, and online lessons produced by teachers, including YouTube videos on 14 different channels, with one made specifically for students with disabilities.

### **Education Strategy and Infrastructure**

The Kingdom of Bahrain places great emphasis on strategic planning. The Government approved a comprehensive 10-year infrastructure plan for the Ministry of Education (2020-2030) to establish schools in various governorates of the Kingdom. Guided by innovative principles, the plan aims to digitally interconnect schools with a cutting-edge infrastructure suitable for the evolving demands of the 21st century.

In March 2023, the Ministry of Education unveiled its Strategic Plan for 2023-2026, which aligns with the Government Plan (2023-2026) and the SDG 4 (Quality Education) targets. This strategic plan includes initiatives aimed at improving service levels, and enhancing educational performance, all with the overall objective of closing the skills gap and boosting worker efficiency.

Over the past five years, Bahrain made significant investments in education infrastructure, constructing seven new schools and five academic buildings, equipped with environmentally friendly infrastructure – five schools are equipped with solar panels, updated scientific laboratories, large sports facilities, elevators for students with disabilities, modernized ICT services, and security cameras.

The National Higher Education Strategy (2014–2024) is underway led by the Higher Education Council (HEC), which aims to position Bahrain as a regional hub for quality higher education by equipping graduates with the skills, knowledge, and behaviors required to succeed in the global knowledge economy while contributing to the sustainable and competitive growth of Bahrain. The Strategy ensured that two percent of annual revenues by institutions is allocated to the career development of faculty members, while three percent is allocated to scientific research.



### Digital Transformation

Since the launch of “King Hamad’s schools of the Future Project” in 2005, following the directives of His Majesty the King, the Kingdom has been committed to the digital transformation and digital empowerment of the education sector. Since then, the Ministry of Education launched The Digital Empowerment in Education Program which includes several digital empowerment initiatives, including eduNET; the current national e-learning platform which was published in 2015. The platform, serving all government schools in Bahrain, aims to enhance education quality through e-learning, promoting student self-learning, replacing traditional materials with digital methods, and involving parents more in their children’s academic lives. This initiative enabled the education sector to continue seamlessly during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the Ministry launched the “My Digital Library” initiative, which aims to host distinguished digital content produced by teachers and students in government schools. The initiative won the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) Prize for open digital educational resources in 2019 and the Arab Government Excellence Award in 2023 for the best Arab government project to develop education.

### The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)

The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) in Bahrain is a matter of high priority. The membership in the Network provides school coordinators with the educational capacities and skills necessary to aid in creating innovative ideas and initiatives that would help shape future generations and provide the schools in the network with the necessary platform that would present their ideas in achieving the SDGs. Since joining the Network, the number of participating schools has increased from 30 schools in 2007 to a total of 112 public and private schools today. Of these schools, two were selected by UNESCO to participate in the first edition of the global initiative ‘Litter Less’; alongside representatives from only 5–6 member countries, with a third school invited to participate in the second edition of this initiative.

**The UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICT in Education**



Bahrain's commitment to advancing education through innovative means is well exemplified by its support of the "UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICT in Education". This prestigious prize, established in 2005 and awarded to two laureates, aims to honor outstanding initiatives that effectively utilize ICT to enhance education outcomes, as well as align with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

The 2022 edition of the Prize, due to be awarded in 2023, is held under the theme "Using Public Platforms to Ensure Universal Access to the Contents of Digital Education" in response to the UN call to better the quality of digital education during the global Transforming Education Summit (TES) held in September 2022.

To date, the Prize has been awarded to 26 laureates, championing projects and innovation in areas of: digital learning programs during the COVID-19 pandemic; digital learning for refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people; educational entertainment; use of AI to reach learners from rural and remote areas; detecting and supporting learners with dyslexia; enhancing visual media for learners with disabilities or limited ability for expression; and digital literacy among students, adults in employment, seniors and others.

**Inclusive Education**

Accessibility remains a strong value both within Agenda 2030 and the Government's development plan for education. The Ministry of Education introduced the Special Education program, aimed at supporting and integrating students with disabilities, other learning difficulties, and students with critical health conditions – at least 175 public schools implemented the program. The Ministry of Education equipped 61 public schools with devices and facilities for students with disabilities, including Braille signboards, audio devices, wheelchairs, ground paths for blind students, transportation services, and elevators. It also

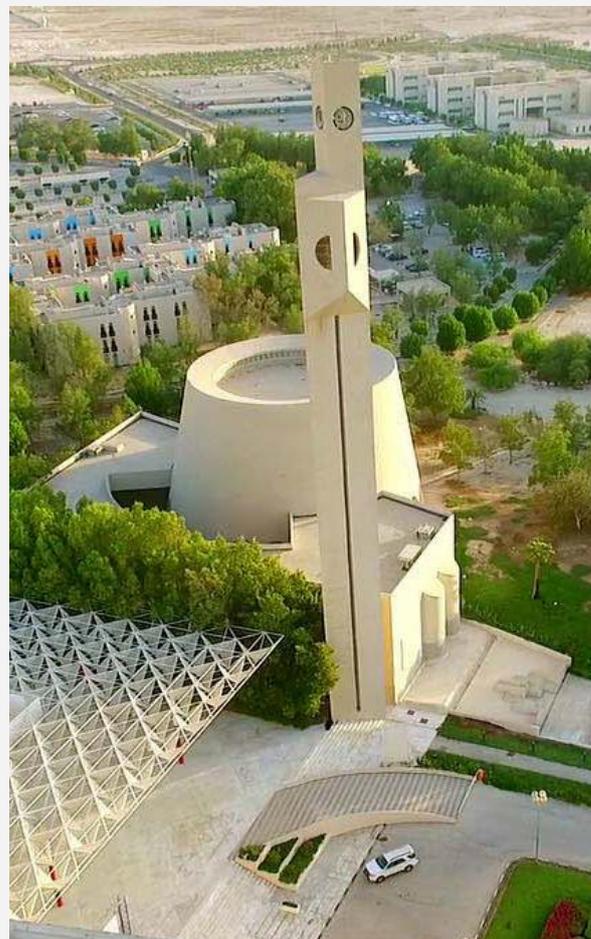
initiated programs to integrate deaf students into secondary schools by providing sign language translators and provided annual scholarships for students with disabilities that fit certain criteria.

The Ministry of Education assumed responsibility for illiteracy and adult education since 1973. Since then, the Ministry established a framework that provides programs for eradicating illiteracy and evening educational programs which enable those past the compulsory age to continue the basic education (equivalent to primary and intermediate stage) until the completion of the secondary stage.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Research and development's (R&D) contribution to the GDP remains small. The Higher Education Council works to improve public awareness and spread the culture of scientific research among high school and university students, conducting workshops and issuing guidance. The Council aims to also partner with international research institutions to promote R&D. Bahrain has launched a long-term National Research Strategy inspired by Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 that calls on the Kingdom to "encourage research and development in universities to create the platform for a knowledge-based economy." This strategy paves the way for all universities and research institutions to identify the necessary key tasks to expand their research capacity.



# 5 GENDER EQUALITY



The Kingdom of Bahrain has made remarkable progress in advancing gender equality and empowering women. Women in Bahrain have gone through the traditional phases of empowerment and attainment of rights to become important partners in every aspect of development. Their participation in the workforce and in economic, social, and cultural activities, as well as in every other aspect of public life, has increased to the point that women now act on an equal footing with men and represent an essential component of comprehensive development and a driver of the national economy.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### The National Strategy for the Advancement of Bahraini Women

His Majesty the King adopted the National Strategy for the Advancement of Bahraini Women in a historical precedent; becoming the first qualitative strategy concerned with women's affairs to be adopted by a head of state in the Arab world. With a clear vision, the Supreme Council for Women (SCW) launched the National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women (2013-2022) to implement the strategy, which was prepared in active partnership with all components of society and institutions. The Plan includes five pillars that seek to ensure family stability within the framework of family interdependence, and to enable women to meet the requirements

of competitive participation in national development, based on a principle of equal opportunities. In view of the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workflow of the National Plan during the last quarter of its ten-year term, the SCW extended the timeframe of the current plan to the year 2026 and updated some of its focus areas to keep pace with the new developments, while reviewing plans, programs, and initiatives considering "post-COVID" conditions.

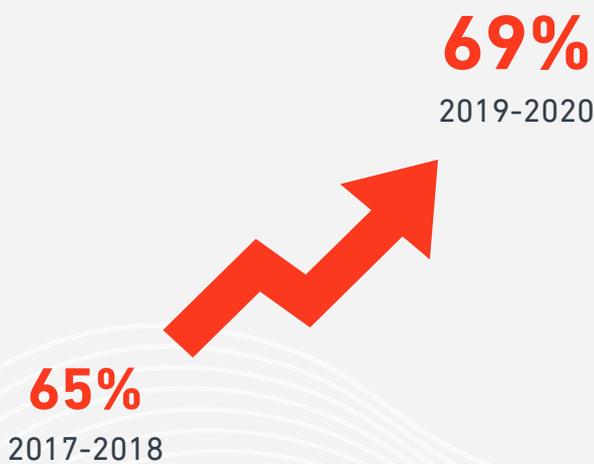
### The National Gender Balance Model and Report

The National Gender Balance Model was developed to support the implementation of the National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women. The National Model

acts as a national action guide targeting policymakers, parliamentarians, and project implementers to ensure the empowerment and advancement of women at the national level and across five themes: Policies, Budgets, Knowledge, Management, Auditing, Monitoring, and Measuring Impact. Through this Model, the Kingdom of Bahrain continues to spread a culture that supports gender balance through close cooperation with universities, schools, and civil society institutions.

The National Gender Balance Report has also been adopted by the Government as a means to evaluate the performance of the public sector in terms of following up on the implementation of equal opportunities and achieving gender balance and equality in development fields.

**The National Index for Gender Balance**



The National Report on Gender Balance

**The National Observatory for Gender Balance Indicators**

The National Observatory for Gender Balance Indicators, with over 4,000 indicators, is an initiative that aims to ensure that the female component in indicators and statistics is duly reflected in national and international databases and records. The Observatory includes six main areas: Population, Family Stability, Quality of Life, Education, Economic Participation, and Political Participation.

**International Cooperation**

- Bahrain acceded to numerous treaties supporting women rights and equality, notably the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), an international blueprint for gender equality, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
- In response to Bahrain’s proposal, the GCC Women’s Affairs Committee was formed, with a taskforce led by Bahrain’s SCW to draft the GCC Strategy on Women’s Affairs. This demonstrates regional confidence in Bahrain’s expertise in gender balance and equality at the national level.
- At the 146th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, hosted in Bahrain, the Kingdom launched a Parliamentary

Handbook for Mainstreaming Women's Needs in Development, issued by the SCW. The Handbook is aligned with international commitments like CEDAW, Beijing Declaration, and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), serving as a guide and

reference to all parliaments in equality in legislation, policies, and national action plans, enhancing gender balance and equality through-out parliamentarian work.

### The Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Global Award for Women's Empowerment



The Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Global Award for Women's Empowerment, launched by UN Women, builds on its fifteen-year national success. The Award underscores the significant role of women in development and community stability and encourages global women's empowerment, acknowledging their essential contribution to sustainable and comprehensive development. The Award provides international recognition for institutions and individuals globally, fostering competition in women's empowerment and advancement.



**Supporting Working Women**

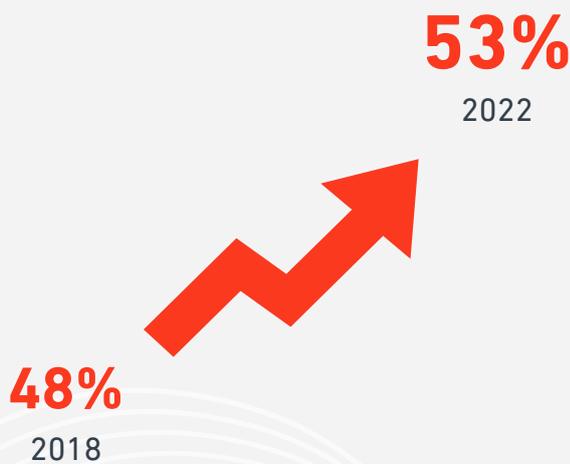
In 2022, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry mandated female representation on public joint-stock company boards and mandated disclosure of gender-disaggregated board member statistics in annual corporate governance reports, to further reinforce female leadership in the private sector. Similarly, the Central Bank of Bahrain introduced amendments for female representation on boards of Bahrain Bourse-listed companies. Moreover, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy continues to issue directives and instructions to public entities in relation to the consideration for equal opportunities and addressing women’s needs in preparation of the financial budget.

Equal Opportunities Committees have been established mandatorily in the public sector, through a circular issued by Civil Service Council in 2014, and voluntarily in the private sector and civil society association. These committees play an important oversight role to monitor any challenges that face gender balance and equality and women’s advancement in the workplace and address them through recommending policy changes or implementing target-specific initiatives.

Several other initiatives have been launched in partnership with relevant stakeholders that support working women, including:

- Riyadat, the region’s first business incubator for women entrepreneurs, in partnership with Tamkeen, launched the updated Riyadat financing program for Bahraini women, providing comprehensive support to women-led businesses.
- In 2016, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry rolled out the online ‘Sijili’ system – Arabic word for “My Registration” –, which gives legal status to businesses without the need for a physical address, which supports the transition of women from informal to formal work.

**Virtual Commercial Registrations Owned by Women**





- The National Initiative for Gender Balance in Future Sciences, set up by the SCW, encourages women's participation in vital economic fields like FinTech and ICT. The Women in Fintech Committee oversees initiatives to boost women's involvement and empower them in decision-making roles.
- The Women's Political Participation Program, established by the SCW and Bahrain Institute for Political Development, offered training, consultations, and support for female candidates in parliamentary and municipal elections. Notably, it contributed to the election of the first female Speaker of the Council of Representatives in 2018 and increased women's representatives in the Council of Representatives to 23 percent and 25 percent in the Shura Council.

### Protecting Women

Family Protection Offices, set up in several Bahraini police stations, handle domestic violence reports, provide preventive services, and ensure victim privacy and safety. Following their success, the Minister of Interior issued a decree to expand the offices to all governates. A specialized Family and Children Prosecution Office has also been established, providing psychological, social, and legal support to victims, ensuring their safety, and holding perpetrators accountable.

The SCW also launched a unified national database with statistics on domestic violence, called "Takatof" which is an integral part of the National Strategy to Protect Women from Domestic Violence. The database aims to monitor cases of domestic violence and create linkages among relevant government agencies to both adopt unified definitions regarding the classifications of violence and enable these agencies to provide the necessary support for said cases through facilitating access to health, psychological, and social services.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Going forward, the implementation of these key solutions can address the challenges in SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and foster gender equality, women's empowerment, and sustainable development within the country:

- Sustainable development of the legislative framework is crucial, including updating and developing laws to bridge gaps, mainstream women's needs, and ensure gender balance and equal opportunities.
- Continuing to mainstream women's needs in national development.
- Enhancing the social care and protection services system is vital, requiring continuous development and increased efficiency to provide comprehensive support for women's well-being and safety.
- Continuing to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship is essential, involving investments in financial resources, business training, and networking opportunities to empower women entrepreneurs.
- Promoting women's participation in the labour market and leadership roles requires ongoing support, such as equal opportunity policies, mentorship programs, and leadership development

initiatives, and leveraging information technology and digital transformation to enhance women's economic participation.

Furthermore, going forward the Kingdom of Bahrain will extend the National Plan for an additional four years (2023-2026). This extension aims to ensure sustained implementation, aligning with national, regional, and global developments, while fostering self-responsibility and an institutional culture among partners. It also emphasizes the need to maintain equal opportunities, gender balance, and stability in sustainable development processes. To achieve these goals, it is crucial to build specialized knowledge, promote flexibility, transparency, and comprehensive risk management.

The next period will also focus on upholding Bahrain's position as an expertise center in women's empowerment, and promoting Bahrain as a global hub for institutional and individual expertise in gender balance and women's empowerment.

# 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Conservation of water resources is a critical element that drives action in several fields including food security, climate action and good health to name a few. Due to the rapid social development and economic growth in Bahrain, demand for portable water was on the rise, which required more desalination plants to be built and put in-service. This demand is expected to continue to grow. Furthermore, the Kingdom is exposed to extreme heat and is in a region that is on average drier than others, as such a high degree of importance has been designated to securing the Kingdom's natural water resources and further bolstering its sanitation efforts whilst adhering in parallel to campaigns that drive sustainable water consumption and use.

The Government's efforts cultivated in achieving 100 percent supply coverage of equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water in the Kingdom.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### National Water Strategy 2030

The Government of Bahrain approved the National Water Strategy 2030 in 2018, in line with the GCC Unified Water Strategy (2016-2035), which aims to ensure effective management of water resources, providing sustainable water supplies of the required quality for the various economic sectors in order to boost sustainable development. The National Water Strategy relies on three main pillars: promoting coordination among various water-related bodies, following-

up and monitoring of the implementation of activities, programs, and services and increasing awareness.

The UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) presented a series of 'acceleration snapshots' to draw attention to successful country action in delivering on the goal. The Kingdom of Bahrain was selected as an example<sup>3</sup> for accelerating progress in SDG indicator 6.4.2 – Level of water stress:

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.unwater.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/sdg6\\_acceleration\\_snapshot\\_642\\_bahrain\\_feb\\_2023.pdf](https://www.unwater.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/sdg6_acceleration_snapshot_642_bahrain_feb_2023.pdf)

freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources. In the year 2000, Bahrain was withdrawing 195 percent of its renewable freshwater resources, and thus relying on non-renewable sources that face the risk of eventually running dry. By 2021, the water stress level had dropped to 156 percent; meaning Bahrain managed to reduce a fifth of its freshwater withdrawals in two decades. In the same period, water-use efficiency increased by 80 percent. These results were possible thanks to a growing supply of non-conventional water resources, mainly desalinated seawater and treated wastewater – the Kingdom terminated the

withdrawal of fresh water in August 2016 and designated it as emergency reserve. At the same time, the agricultural sector widely adopted greenhouses, hydroponic systems and modern irrigation technologies, allowing for more efficient use of existing water resources.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has set a strategy for expanding water production projects by the year 2027. This includes increasing the water reserves of the Kingdom to over 227 thousand cubic meters per day from 114 thousand for emergency use.

**6** CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



## UN Water highlights the Kingdom of Bahrain's efforts in accelerating progress towards achieving SDG6

More specifically the target of substantially increasing water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

 <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: #00AEEF;">80%</p> <p>Increase in water use efficiency</p>	<p>Between 2000-2021</p>	 <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: #00AEEF;">20%</p> <p>Reduction in freshwater withdrawals</p>
 <p>Growing supply of non-conventional water sources (desalinated seawater and treated wastewater)</p>	<p><b>Main Initiatives</b></p>	 <p>The agriculture sector widely adopted greenhouse hydroponic systems and modern Irrigation technology</p>

**Infrastructure Development**

Driven by its commitment to provide clean water, the Kingdom of Bahrain continued to work on improving its infrastructure in order to meet the growing demand, while not compromising the environmental impacts of the ongoing developments.

The Kingdom worked steadily to both increase the level of drinkable and clean water supply and enhance its capacity to develop the sanitation services and treatment of water. The Al Dur Phase 2 power plant, completed in partnership with the private sector, has the capacity of producing 227 thousand cubic meters of desalinated water per day. The Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) also launched a tender to consult on the Al Dur Phase 3 plant which is targeting a desalinated sea water output of 227 thousand cubic meters per day. The water transportation network has also been expanded from 150 kilometers in 2002 to 618 kilometers in 2022. Similarly, the storage capacity was increased from 87 tanks to 164 tanks in 2022.

In terms of sanitation, the Tubli Wastewater Treatment Plant is in the 4th phase of its expansion project, with the primary objective being enhancing the performance of the plant for the production of treated water, doubling daily production and meeting needs for irrigation works, agricultural beautification and absorption

of the increasing sewage flows due to urban development and population growth.

The development of the water supply networks over the years has resulted in reaching a storage capacity of 2.6 million cubic meters that would meet the demand for water, under normal conditions, for over 4 days in the event of a complete shutdown of all plants.

**The Water Resources Management Unit**

- In October 2018, Bahrain was granted approximately USD 2.3 million by the Green Climate Fund for the “Enhancing climate resilience of the water sector in Bahrain” project. The Supreme Council for Environment established the Water Resources Management Unit (WRM) to implement the four activities under the project:
- Establish a knowledge management platform for climate change impacts on Bahrain’s water sector to facilitate improved water demand management.
- Build the institutional capacity of the water resources council to establish and operate a climate resilient integrated water resources management (IWRM) framework in a cross-sectoral manner.
- Promote water conservation technologies and practices at household and farm level.



- Produce guidelines for rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling.

Since 2019, the WRM conducted comprehensive water audits to develop a knowledge base for climate-resilient water demand management, and facilitate a deeper understanding of water usage across sectors, optimizing water consumption while reducing wastage. The WRM also established the water resources database which contains 440 statistical variables and data, ranging from water quality, groundwater levels and water demand management to climate and socioeconomic parameters.

### Public Awareness

The Kingdom is also invested in reducing water consumption through daily monitoring of accounts' consumption, notifying account holders in the case of any unusual hikes, which may be the result of leaks or over consumption. The Electricity and Water Authority has launched several awareness campaigns to encourage water conservation.

### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Digital technology will provide a key tool for the Kingdom to incorporate more environmentally friendly desalination techniques that achieve water security and preserve the marine environment. This matter can be best approached through intensified R&D in this field.

Along the same lines, as the Kingdom embarks on an ambitious afforestation initiative, part of its net-zero plans, it would be essential to continue to develop and adopt the efficient irrigation infrastructure to accommodate the increase in demand for water, including traditional rainwater distribution networks and the recycling of greywater.

The WRM is facilitating the implementation of the integrated water resources management (IWRM) framework which will adopt a circular water economy approach; considering the water cycle as one connected system, creating interlinkages between the water supply, wastewater, stormwater systems and the utilities that manage them.

Furthermore, the reduction of water wastage at the household level will continue to be a focus for the Government.

# 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



The Kingdom of Bahrain, in its development journey, has created the infrastructure to ensure energy access for all; successfully achieving 100 percent access to electricity for its population. This equity in access has now been paired with ambitious goals that will drive the Kingdom's transition towards cleaner energy sources, and a more sustainable future. At the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister announced the Kingdom's plans to double its previously announced renewable energy targets; from 10 percent to 20 percent by the year 2035. More recently, His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty's Representative for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs and Chairman of Bapco Energies, further affirmed the Kingdom's ambitions of transitioning to cleaner energy sources and becoming one of the leading countries in meeting energy demand through clean sources.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### National Energy Strategy

Bapco Energies is spearheading the development of a national energy strategy, aiming to optimize the utilization of national resources and paving the way for a low-carbon future in alignment with Bahrain's net-zero targets. The strategy focuses on Bapco Energies' transformation from a conventional oil and gas company into a more diversified energy entity, incorporating various decarbonization options like carbon capture, utilization, and storage. To facilitate its implementation and monitoring, the strategy proposes operational and

governance arrangements that align with the national decarbonization efforts. This holistic approach to sustainable energy transformation is a key aspect of the strategy.

### Renewable Energy

The Kingdom has set its sights on greener pastures in the form of renewable energy. Through the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), Bahrain aims to increase the share of renewable energy in its



energy mix, as per the COP26 commitments. The Plan includes the implementation of solar and wind energy projects and aims to generate 5 percent of the country's electricity from renewable sources by 2025, further increasing it to 20 percent by 2035.

The NREAP also laid the foundation to encourage household participation in the push towards renewable energy usage. In 2021, the Electricity and Water Authority launched the Net Metering System which allows consumers to generate their own power from renewable energy for self-consumption and to feed the excess into the national grid, earning an energy credit on their electricity and water invoice.

Several government-led major renewable energy projects are currently underway, including:

- A 100-MW solar power plant in Askar, with enough capacity to power more than 17,000 homes.
- The installation of solar energy systems, with a total capacity of 72-MW in four government sites located in the Sakhir area: the Bahrain International Circuit, the New Exhibition Centre, Al Dana Amphitheatre and the University of Bahrain.
- The installation of solar energy systems on the roofs of eight public schools,

with the aim to have all public schools powered by solar energy by the year 2031.

In addition to the NREAP, the Government launched its National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) in 2017, which set 22 initiatives to promote energy efficiency practices across various sectors and led to changing all government lights to LED, initiating the process of moving to solar energy, issuing regulations for district cooling, issuing building recommendations.

### Solar Financing Schemes

In 2020, Tamkeen partnered with several leading banks in the Kingdom to establish the Solar Financing Scheme, which aims to empower enterprises by helping them acquire solar energy panels for energy generation, thereby reducing their costs.

The Government is financing its strategic solar schemes through a Build-Own-Operate-Maintain (BOOM) model under a 20-year contract; a clear example of effective public-private partnership.

Bahrain has witnessed active involvement of banks in providing financial support for solar projects, available to both individuals and corporates.

**Electric Vehicles**

In 2021, the Kingdom of Bahrain issued the “Electric Vehicles Technical Regulation”, to promote and adopt green transport in Bahrain. In 2023, the Ministry of Electricity and Water Affairs awarded a contract for the development of an electric vehicle (EV) strategy for the Kingdom. The strategy is expected to address EV penetration in a controlled and sustainable way; increase the deployment of solar as an upstream source of electricity; reduce the overall fossil fuel dependency and consumption; reduce

the cost-of-ownership for government, industries and private citizen and advise on charging policies, regulations and infrastructure. The Ministry has also awarded a contract for the installation of five electric vehicle charging stations across the Kingdom. Several private sector companies announced investments in electric car plants in the Kingdom, further raising awareness on the role the electric vehicles can play in supporting clean energy efforts.

**The Bahrain Formula 1 Grand Prix 2023 – The Most Sustainable Race Ever**



The Bahrain International Circuit, Home of Motorsport in the Middle East, announced that the 2023 Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix is its most sustainable race ever. It also announced future plans to ensure it further reduces its impact on the planet and supports F1’s 2030 net zero goal and well as those of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Circuit’s solar panels produced 5.28 MW of clean energy, enough renewable energy to cover all of the usage for F1 with significant capacity to spare, the equivalent of offsetting 3,108 tonnes of carbon.

In addition, the Circuit has undertaken several measures to reduce energy consumption, including a new building management system that efficiently monitors and manages light and air conditioning provision, upgrading to more efficient air conditioning chillers and replacing all street and building lighting with LED lights.

## CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

The Kingdom of Bahrain is a small island, with limited availability of space for large scale solar farms. This challenge is overcome by implementing projects to install solar energy systems in vacant spaces such as rooftops and parking lots. The Government will study the possibility of installing floating solar panels (Offshore Floating Solar) to assess their suitability for the climate and nature of the Kingdom.

The need to balance fiscal targets and scaling up investments in the development of the Kingdom's renewable energy capacity is also a challenge. And similarly, Bahrain is also faced with the challenge of establishing the economic case of a renewable energy mix for households to increase their installation of solar panels and navigate a transition to renewable energy.

The fiscal challenge can be best addressed through a robust public-private partnership model, especially in attracting international firms that specialize in breakthrough technologies.

The involvement of the private sector in solar projects has been gaining momentum, with several projects completed or underway, these include:

- As of June 2023, the total renewable energy installed capacity in the Kingdom of Bahrain amounts to 51.9 MW, whereas the projects currently in progress and being developed will contribute another 218.8 MW.
- The companies under the umbrella of Bapco Energies have been leaders

in pursuing renewable energy, with Bapco Refinery's 5 MW solar project inaugurated in 2014, while Bapco Upstream's (formerly Tatweer) 5 MW solar project was completed in 2019.

- Khalifa Bin Salman Port expects to operate its 20,000 installed solar panels by the end of the year. The panels are expected to generate 18.5 gigawatts of electricity per year, making the port the region's first energy self-sufficient terminal.
- The Bahrain Mall inaugurated its 6.2 MW-peak solar power plant in March 2023, developed through a solar power purchase agreement between Majid Al Futtaim Retail and Yellow Door Energy.
- The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland – Medical University of Bahrain (RCSI Bahrain) launched its solar farm project, expected to produce the equivalent of 55 percent of its current energy consumption, marking the start of its "Green Campus Initiative" to enhance campus sustainability.
- Aluminum Bahrain (ALBA), the aluminum smelter, recently awarded a contract for the installation of a 6 MW solar farm project.

Furthermore, expanding the R&D capabilities in the field can address the development of technologies that would help Bahrain utilize solar and wind energy with the key issue of limited space in mind. It is also imperative for Bahrain to develop specialized curriculums in renewable energy to prepare the future workforce and upskill the current stock of human capital operating in energy fields.

# 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Underpinned by the Economic Vision 2030, Bahrain embarked on policies of economic diversification, aiming to build the economy by focusing on high-potential sectors that are independent of oil. As a result, the oil sector, which contributed over 40 percent to the GDP in 2002, now contributes less than 20 percent despite the absolute growth in hydrocarbons production, signaling considerable diversification into sectors such as finance, manufacturing, and services. Preliminary results for 2022 indicate the non-oil sector contributed 83.1 percent to the economy.

Over the years, many policies have been adopted to create more employment opportunities, reach higher productivity, raise the standard of living, and achieve a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects.

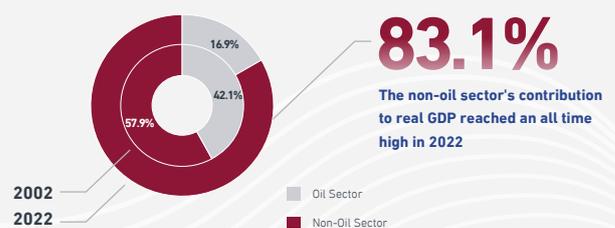
## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Economic Growth

Bahrain enjoyed steady economic growth over the past decades. Before the pandemic, the economy registered real GDP growth of 2.2 percent in 2019, driven by the growth of the manufacturing and tourism sectors, thanks to the large investments and package of strategic projects implemented across these two sectors. However, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bahrain's economy contracted by 4.6 percent in real terms in 2020, with the biggest drop in growth registered in the second quarter of the year. However, due to the stabilization of

the health implications of the pandemic and the launch of the Economic Recovery Plan, Bahrain registered growth of 2.7 percent in 2021 and 4.9 percent in 2022<sup>4</sup>, the highest growth rate recorded in a decade.

Non-Oil Sector Contribution to Real GDP



<sup>4</sup> Preliminary.

**Labour Market Reform**

The National Employment Program, initially launched in 2019, was designed to make citizens the first choice of employment in the private and public sectors. The Program comprised of four key initiatives: launching an awareness campaign to encourage citizens to register hence improving labour market records, increasing unemployment compensation, increasing expatriate fees, and redesigning Tamkeen’s Training and Wage Support Program. A year later, the National Employment Program 2.0 was launched offering wage support for Bahraini job seekers and fresh new graduates registered with the Ministry of Labour for a period of up to 36 months.

Under the Economic Recovery Plan, the Government launched initiatives to further empower Bahraini youth and facilitate their entry into the private sector. These measures have successfully led to the employment of 29,995 Bahrainis in 2022, surpassing the annual target of 20,000. Additionally, over 10,280 individuals received training, exceeding the target of 10,000 for the year.

The Ministry of Labour continues to explore different innovative ways to train Bahrainis and connect them with employers, these include electronic job fairs; the launch of a digital portal for job seekers; the provision of professional training and career guidance; and apprenticeship programs.

Moreover, The National Labour Market Plan 2021-2023 aimed to amplify the contributions of Bahraini workers and employers towards national development. Through a harmonized approach involving all stakeholders, the plan seeks to strengthen institutional integration, monitor labour market indicators, and make informed decisions for sustainable economic progress. The Plan thus plays a crucial role in contributing to Bahrain’s comprehensive development and the achievement of its economic and labour goals.

The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) is responsible for regulating expatriate employment with the aim of maintaining an organized labour market that meets the needs of its users, preserves the rights of all its parties, achieves social security, and ensures economic growth. Key protections available to expatriate employees include the establishment of the Wage Protection System, that went into effect in May 2021, which gives LMRA visibility to monitor the payment of salaries to employees, and the establishment of the ‘Expatriate Protection Center”, a central hub curated towards providing services to expatriate employees, which includes a legal clinic to provide legal support and assistance in filing cases, passport retrieval services, and a shelter for victims and potential victims of human trafficking.

**Tamkeen**

During the period 2019-2022, Tamkeen spent around BD 45 million on various human capital development programs, with 55,000 beneficiaries. The funds supported the acquisition of professional certificates, employability skills training, licenses, and technical-vocational training; with 58 percent of training expenditure spent on Bahraini women. Furthermore, 27,000 Bahrainis, working for almost 6,000 enterprises, benefited from the wage subsidies programs with a total outlay of approximately BHD 150 million. Notably, 40 percent of the outlay went to Bahraini women.

Tamkeen works closely with the Economic Development Board to attract foreign companies wishing to set up their businesses in Bahrain, seeking further job creation for Bahrainis. One successful example of this partnership is the Citi Tech Hub in Bahrain which aims to employ 1,000 Bahraini coders, over a 10-year period, to support the large cliental of Citi. The program will see the upskilling of Bahrainis in digital skills.

**Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)**

The small and medium-sized enterprises make up the majority of the businesses in Bahrain, over 90 percent of registered companies, and their innovative capacities

is of most importance for Bahrain's sustained economic growth and overall strategic objectives. Bahrain recognizes the significance of intensifying dialogue between SMEs and the public sector, as it facilitates the identification of priority areas for development and investment. The Kingdom of Bahrain has always been keen to consolidate this sector through the promulgation of legislation and the development of infrastructure to create an investment-attractive environment. SMEs are therefore important drivers to advance the achievement of the SDGs. The SMEs Development Board, formed in 2017, aims to strengthen the establishment of the processes and capabilities of the SMEs sector to improve the competitiveness of its enterprises in local, regional and global markets, as well as to develop initiatives aimed at increasing the sector's contribution to GDP, export and local employment levels.

Tamkeen continued its long-standing private sector development program, disbursing over BHD 29 million during 2019, benefiting almost 1,700 Bahraini businesses, of which 93 percent were SMEs. In addition, the Kingdom also launched Export Bahrain in November 2018 to facilitate the global reach of local SMEs.



### Human Capital Development

Launched in 2015, the Prime Minister's Fellowship Program offers an opportunity to young and talented individuals to develop their skills in public service leadership. Selected individuals spend a year working as full-time research fellows in the Prime Minister's Office, benefiting from advanced training in writing skills, research methods and policy analysis, both in-house and through the Bahrain Institute of Public Administration. Fellows also benefit from the opportunity to interact with – and learn from – decision-makers at the highest levels of government. To date, 7 cohorts have graduated from this program, many of whom are now holding vital positions in government entities.

### Promoting Sustainable Tourism

At the policy level, Bahrain's tourism sector is integrated with its culture and antiquities. The Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, which oversees the culture sector in the Kingdom, works to update and develop the cultural infrastructure, and activate the role of culture in social and economic development.

Culture-related industries, family and cultural tourism, and arts are undoubtedly areas that can significantly contribute to economic development as they offer ample

job opportunities and high revenue streams, as well as aiding in the recycling local capital. 'Made in Bahrain' is an initiative, launched in 2020, through which the Authority revisits the visual and functional identity of Bahraini handmade products, introducing elements of modern sustainability and providing support to local craftsmen.

The Authority launched a handicraft training program in 2021, that aims to transfer the expertise of local craftsmen to the younger generations, develop craft and artistic skills and create cooperation between artists and designers alike. The products created during the training programs were used in Bahrain's pavilion at the 2020 Expo in Dubai. In addition, the Authority launched the "Artist in the Classroom" initiative in 2019, in cooperation with four formative art fine artists and the Ministry of Education, to educate the school community about the value of art in our society.

**INJAZ Bahrain**

INJAZ Bahrain is a non-profit organization that was established in 2005 as part of Junior Achievement Worldwide, with the aim of empowering young people to own their economic success and be prepared for today’s business challenges. INJAZ Bahrain delivers hands on immersive learning, in-work readiness, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, sustainability, STEM, digital literacy, and more.



With the help of its partners and volunteers, INJAZ Bahrain impacts thousands of students every year bringing them closer to the real world and opening their minds to their own potential.

INJAZ Bahrain’s programs include the “Preparing Tomorrow’s Workforce” program, which equips students with the tools and skills required to earn and keep a job in high-growth career industries, and the “A Focused Look at the World of Work” program, which gives secondary school students the opportunity to gain insight into the workplace.



**Volunteers**  
61,700



**Educators**  
300



**Alumnus**  
5,098



**Students**  
396,918

**CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD**

The Government of Bahrain has taken important steps to enhance the skills and knowledge of its workforce, helping them meet and adapt to the ever-changing requirements of the labour market. Despite this, some graduates still face difficulties in finding employment, due to the progressively

increasing number of university graduates and mismatches between skills and market needs. Addressing this gap between the higher education outcomes and market needs requires closer partnerships between educational institutions and employers, expanded career guidance programs that

help students make informed decisions about their education and future careers, increased flexibility in selecting majors and in reskilling, and more practical training and apprenticeship opportunities that focus on new and emerging skills and the use of virtual and online programs.

The Government introduced several vocational training programs and other initiatives to address the gap:

- In 2008, His Majesty the King established Bahrain Polytechnic to address the need for a skilled Bahraini labour force, with the aim of supporting economic growth and diversification. Programs, qualifications and courses, offered by Bahrain Polytechnic and the underlying methodology of how they are delivered are developed in consultation with businesses, industries, professions, international education and training institutions, ensuring graduates meet the needs of the labour market.
- In March 2023, the Government launched the Technical Development Program, overseen by the Information & eGovernment Authority, to refine the skills of young Bahraini university graduates and job seekers with technical specializations in the IT field and supports them financially while they are undergoing training.
- Also in March 2023, the Ministry of Labour launched a support program

for law graduates, including a monthly reward of BD 300 for two years, to encourage law firms to provide them with training opportunities, with the aim of assisting them with obtaining their legal license.

- In May 2023, Tamkeen announced the launch of the “Aspire” initiative, in response to requests by the Legislative Authority, which aims to support national cadres currently employed in jobs that do not match their academic qualifications, by providing training programs to support their career progression and promotion. Support is given in the form of increased wage support for two years to enterprises aiming to develop and promote employees, bridging the gap between their skills and the requirements of the jobs they are hired to do. Benefits also include 100 percent training support that is linked directly to the employee promotion.
- This was not the first program that Tamkeen launches since in February 2022, it launched the “Skills Bahrain” program which seeks to fill the skills gap of local talent resulting from the constant changes and development in the labour market. Skills Bahrain works closely with employers, education and training providers, and government stakeholders, to bridge the skills gap by providing its stakeholders with the necessary intelligence, sector-specific data, and tools.

# 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. Since the announcement of the Economic Vision 2030, the Kingdom has made significant efforts to integrate sustainability into its public systems with an emphasis on improved infrastructure and digitalization. Moreover, the Government's 2023-2026 Plan echoes the SDG 9 principles in its emphasis on infrastructure development, economic recovery, and digital transformation pillars. The Government invested significantly in the modernization of its physical infrastructure, including transport, utilities, and public buildings, and over the coming four years it plans to continue to promote cross-government coordination, expanding the partnership with the private sector, and expediting the provision of infrastructure for key strategic projects.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Digital Transformation

Bahrain is embracing the digital revolution by integrating advanced technologies into public services, as evidenced by the transformation of 229 government services into online services during the period 2019-2022; promoting digital skills among the younger generation and a culture of digital literacy among the population, by providing access to modern technology in educational settings; and fostering partnerships with tech companies:

- The Personal Data Protection Law, announced in July 2018, sets a legal framework that determines how the information of individuals should be accessed and used when it is in the possession of companies and organizations. It is designed to maintain public confidence in the security of their personal information through ensuring the information is managed in a sensitive, advanced, and secure manner.

- Bahrain's forward-thinking vision for data and cloud computing lead to the adoption of the Cloud-First policy in 2017, which provides a clear road map and guidance for the deployment of advanced technology at the public sector level. By adopting cloud computing services, the government reduced operational costs, increased security and productivity, and developed excellent public services. This resulted in the migration of more than 70 percent of the operations and systems of 72 government entities to the Cloud; the complete migration of 32 public and private entities; and the establishment of four entirely cloud-based government entities.
- In 2019, Amazon Web Services (AWS) set up the first AWS Middle East Region center in the Kingdom. Bahrain was selected due to its willingness to champion the, first of its kind, cloud computing services data sovereignty law<sup>5</sup>, or data embassy, giving foreign data holders sovereignty over their data.
- Tamkeen, in collaboration with AWS, launched two Cloud Innovation Centers at the University of Bahrain and Bahrain Polytechnic in 2019, to accelerate the digital transformation of the public sector through utilizing cloud technologies to solve real life challenges.
- Bahrain Polytechnic, in collaboration with Tamkeen and Microsoft, launched the Artificial Intelligence Academy in 2020. The Academy, the first of its kind in the region, provides a platform for students to boost their innovation and creativity capabilities.
- Bahrain's commitment to technological advancement is evident with 100 percent population coverage by a 5G network and the availability of fiber-optic broadband networks to 100 percent of the businesses in Bahrain. Furthermore, available data convey the high levels of mobile, broadband, and internet penetration in Bahrain. These achievements underscore Bahrain's proactive approach to creating an environment that promotes innovation and drives economic diversification.
- In 2022, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority launched a new Innovation License to enable live testing of new technologies and services, including 5G and IoT technologies, through a light-touch regulatory environment known as a Regulatory Sandbox.

<sup>5</sup> Legislative Decree No. 56 of 2018 In Respect of Providing Cloud Computing Services to Foreign Parties.

**Financial Sector Innovation**

Bahrain has excelled in fostering innovation and enhancing its innovation ecosystem through progressive policies, especially in the financial services sector.

The Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) is driving the FinTech agenda via a dedicated unit for Fintech and Innovation that is tasked with creating a conducive regulatory environment to support FinTech business models and innovation within the Kingdom’s financial services sector. The Fintech and Innovation Unit launched its regulatory sandbox in 2017, which allows for testing in the Fintech field and has issued a few FinTech related regulations including Open Banking, Crowd Funding, Crypto-assets, Robo-Advisory and others.

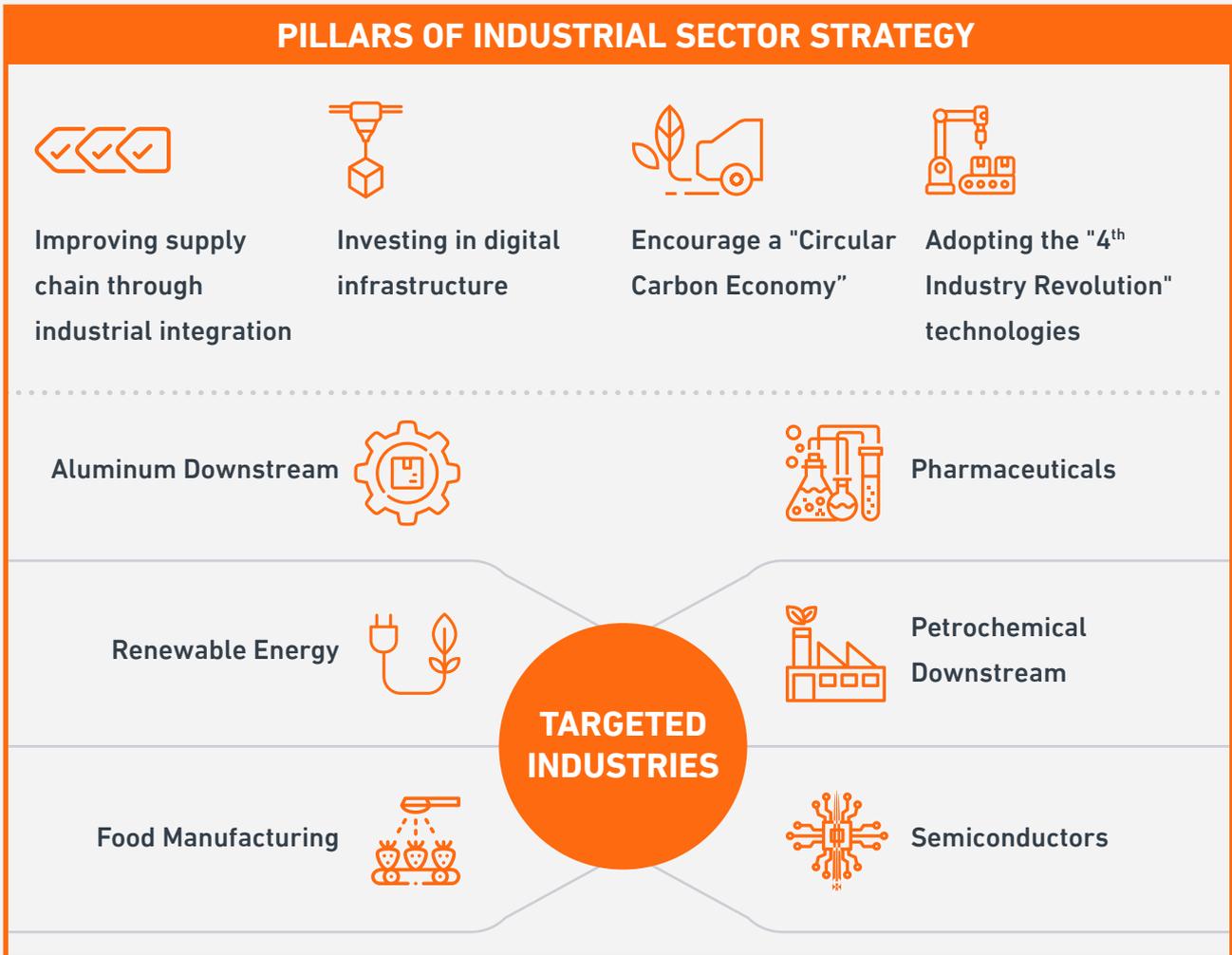
The establishment of Bahrain FinTech Bay, in 2018, allowed startups, financial institutions, and government entities to collaborate to drive financial technology innovation. This has positioned Bahrain as a regional leader in digital finance, attracting local and international talent and investment.

Given that the financial services sector in Bahrain provides services and financial access to all categories of the population, financial inclusion efforts in Bahrain aim to ensure that all businesses and households, have access to and can efficiently use the suitable financial services needed to engage in day-to-day transactions. Efforts have been

made by CBB to prioritize financial inclusion include: improving women’s, SME, and young people’s access to financial services; promoting the protection of consumers of financial services; improving and providing financial coverage data and statistics to support policy development; and promoting awareness and financial education.

**Manufacturing Sector Development and Sustainability**

- The country’s Industrial Sector Strategy (2022-2026), launched as part of the Economic Recovery Plan, aims to support various industries, including aluminum, petrochemicals, green energy, food, pharmaceuticals, and semiconductor manufacturing. To achieve comprehensive manufacturing transformation, Bahrain is prioritizing and promoting Industry 4.0, investing in technological infrastructure, digitization, and adopting circular economy concepts.
- In addition to further growing priority industries within the strategy, the Government sought to explore new sectors to further drive growth and facilitate integration. The National Space Science Agency was established in 2014, to promote space science, technology and applications in the Kingdom. Capitalizing on its state-of-the-art infrastructure, the Agency is working on launching the first fully locally made satellite, designed and developed by a team of young Bahrainis.



**Government Innovative Practices**

‘Fikra’ – Arabic work for “Idea” – is a government-led innovation competition which represents a significant stride in the field of public administration. Inaugurated in 2018, the initiative extends an open invitation to public sector employees to

submit proposals aimed at enhancing government performance. Such initiatives serve as catalysts for innovation, offering substantial assistance in propelling Bahrain towards sustainable industry, innovation and infrastructure.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

While Bahrain has made extensive progress in infrastructure development, sustaining this growth, and ensuring it is inclusive and sustainable is challenging. However, the Kingdom is committed to continuing its efforts in advancing sustainable industrialization, infrastructure development, and innovation, ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth for the future, and acknowledged a number of key areas of focus:

- Access to startup capital is limited and private sector uptake of innovation is relatively low, due to the perception of higher investment costs. To address this, Tamkeen's "Startup Bahrain" initiative aims to nurture entrepreneurship by providing comprehensive support.
- Fostering a supportive innovation ecosystem and driving infrastructure development can be achieved by strengthening collaborations between startups, industry players, academia, and government entities.
- Promoting sustainable industrialization through the adoption of green technologies and circular economy practices is vital.
- Investment in education and skills development programs, particularly in vocational training and technical education, is crucial for a skilled workforce.
- Expanding support for SMEs through tailored assistance and streamlined government tender processes is important.

# 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to the principles of inclusivity and equality, and persistently strives to reduce social and economic disparities. Upholding Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), Bahrain has demonstrated remarkable resilience, extending comprehensive social and economic support to all residents, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups. Initiatives such as the Feena Khair campaign, skill development programs, and protective measures during the COVID-19 pandemic showcase Bahrain's determination. Investment in community centers and accessibility services for people with disabilities and the elderly underline the nation's efforts towards fostering an inclusive society. Thus, Bahrain's actions embody a steadfast dedication towards achieving a future marked by reduced inequalities.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Peaceful Coexistence

Bahrain has endeavored to consolidate the values and principles of religious tolerance, national unity and peaceful coexistence among all religions and sects and all the segments of the society, through the various media and the various religious platforms, and through the implementation of a number of educational and awareness initiatives and programs to promote the values of pluralism and the coexistence of cultures and civilizations, in addition to incriminating the incitement to hatred, sectarianism, violence and terrorism of all kinds.

The King Hamad Global Center for Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence is a key example of how Bahrain works towards eliminating all forms of discrimination. The Center through the doctrine of the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration supports the various religious freedoms that are guaranteed to citizens and residents. Furthermore, the center is the primary mechanism of sharing Bahrain's experience in coexistence with the world. In fact, the King Hamad Centre is one of the primary drivers of the EU-GCC project on religious harmony.

### The Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration



“Ignorance is the Enemy of Peace, it is, therefore, our duty to learn, to share, and to live together, by the Tenets of Faith in the spirit of mutual respect and love.” - His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa - King of The Kingdom of Bahrain

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa released an official declaration calling for religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

The Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration articulates the values of religious tolerance, diversity, and peaceful coexistence that have long characterized Bahrain. The declaration emphasizes the coexistence of different faiths in Bahrain, where churches, synagogues, and temples are built next to mosques, promoting mutual respect and understanding. The declaration also highlights the active role that diverse religious communities play in Bahrain’s society, including Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, Hindu, Sikh, and Jewish communities. The importance of religious pluralism is also underscored, which is protected by law to ensure everyone the right to worship freely and safely, and to build their places of worship without hindrance.

The declaration further elucidates on five key principles: religious faith and expression, freedom of choice, the determination of God’s will, religious rights and responsibilities, and the hope of faith. These principles underline the inalienability of religious freedom, the necessity of inter-faith dialogue, the rejection of religious violence, the responsibility of governments to protect all religious communities, and the obligation to foster mutual respect and cooperation. Ultimately, the declaration posits that religious faith should be a blessing for all and a foundation for world peace. It is a call to action for leaders and citizens to do everything within their power to ensure that religious faith leads to peace and unity rather than division.

### Youth Empowerment

Empowering the youth in the Kingdom of Bahrain and providing the appropriate platform to develop this critical demographic segment is essential in catalyzing action towards Agenda 2030. Recognizing their impact, the Kingdom of Bahrain has established a number of programs that target the youth through the efforts of the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

One of the key programs launched is “Lamea” – an Arabic word meaning “Shining” – which is a program that identifies youthful talents and further develops them in a manner that creates opportunities for this segment.

Another key program is “Ghaia” which aims to connect entrepreneurs and local innovators with the international community and social innovation. The program aims to magnify the impact of entrepreneurs and social influencers whilst being based on societal contribution and a scientific methodology.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Youth Affairs’ 11th edition of Youth City 2030, held in collaboration with the Tamkeen, offered 2,400 training opportunities aimed to prepare the youth for the labour market and assist them in unlocking their talent potential.

The Ministry also launched the Bahrain Women’s Leadership Program which targets women aged between 15 and 18. The program is composed of a series of workshops led by experts in leadership principles aiming to develop that skill set in young ladies.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is considered one of the leading countries in guaranteeing the rights of children. It has promulgated the Child Law, which protects all the rights of the children guaranteed by the Constitution, such as the rights to education, good healthcare, recreation, family custody and many aspects of life.

### Expatriate Workers Support

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Bahrain focused on safeguarding the health and well-being of every citizen and resident, including expatriate workers. This dedication was reflected in extensive testing, quarantining, and immediate free medical treatment and meals for foreign workers who tested positive of the virus. Moreover, a nine-month amnesty period was introduced by the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) for expats residing in the Kingdom without proper permits. This initiative allowed these individuals to rectify their status or return home without legal repercussions.

- The LMRA's wages protection system requires all private sector employers to pay workers' wages through banks and financial institutions licensed by the Central Bank of Bahrain, according to agreed dates. This initiative not only helps protect the wages of expat workers to reduce inequalities, but also enhances the Kingdom's financial inclusion efforts to promote access to financial services by all segments of the population.
- With regards to human trafficking, the Government continues to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts in relation to combating trafficking in persons. This is evidenced by the Kingdom's retention, for the fifth year in a row, of its position among the countries ranked in the first category (Tier 1) in the US Department of State's report on Trafficking in Persons report, and by the assignment of the Permanent General Secretariat of the Government Forum to Combat Trafficking in Persons in the Middle East since 2019.
- Further to the efforts highlighted in Bahrain's 2018 VNR, including the launch of the Expat Protection Center and the National Referral Mechanism to identify and handle cases of trafficking in persons, the LMRA launched several additional initiatives to combat trafficking in persons. In March 2023, it announced the establishment of the Office for the

Protection of Victims and Witnesses in cases of trafficking in persons which aims to protect victims from the psychological and material damage during the investigation and trial phases and provide rehabilitation programs including psychological assistance and counseling in addition to supporting victims in the reintegration process.

**Social Security and Welfare**

The Government of Bahrain, as mentioned in SDG 1 (No Poverty), paid close attention to providing the necessary social security programs in the case of the elderly, sickness, disability, orphanhood, widowhood, or unemployment, to all those eligible.

**Support for People with Disabilities**

The Bahraini government remains persistent in its commitment to empower people with disabilities, promoting their full participation in education, the labour market, and broader society. This effort, embedded in its Social Security Law and related legislation, has enabled 13,000 individuals to benefit as of March 2023.

The Ministry of Social Development developed the National Strategy for People with Disabilities (2023-2027), which was endorsed by Cabinet. The strategy will focus on developing the relevant legislative frameworks, promoting a collaborative

approach to monitor the rights of people with disabilities, ensuring access to adequate health, education and other services, promoting buildings accessibility, and increasing access to the labour market.

Current ongoing support available to people with disabilities includes the integration of disability data into the identity card,

providing access to discounts and additional services. In addition, a pivotal training program was initiated in 2019 to aid people with disabilities in acquiring their driver's licenses for free. By 2023, this program has enabled 162 individuals to obtain their licenses.

### Bahrain Paralympic Committee



The Bahrain Paralympic Committee was established in 2017, as an official entity to include and support all athletic competencies of people with Impairment. The Committee provides support, incentive and encouragement to young and emerging athletes across the Kingdom, nurturing and developing them by providing year-round sports training for them to compete in various Olympic-style sports; in local tournaments and representing the Kingdom in regional and international competitions.

In 2021, the Kingdom hosted the Asian Youth Para Games, with around 750 Para athletes from 30 countries competing in nine sports. Furthermore, the Kingdom is set to host the 2023 International Paralympic Committee General Assembly and Conference in September 2023, following a competitive bid process, reflecting the Kingdom's role in supporting Para athletes.

It is worth noting that Bahrain made its Paralympic Games debut the same year as its Olympic debut, at the 1984 Summer Paralympics in New York City, and participated in all games since then. Bahraini women's participation in the Paralympics predates their participation in the Olympics, which began in 2004.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to continuing the significant progress made in line with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), addressing any challenges as they arise. The Kingdom is leading in the area of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence and maintaining harmony within a diverse society. The Kingdom also leads in guaranteeing children's rights and emphasizing disability inclusion. Moving forward, implementing more inclusive policies and promoting positive societal attitudes will be pivotal in sustaining progress.

Protecting expat workers and preventing their exploitation remains a priority. Bahrain's dedication to expat worker rights, evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic, has marked considerable progress. Going forward, stringent enforcement of labour laws, offering legal assistance and counseling services, and continued efforts to combat human trafficking are key steps to enhance the welfare of expat workers.

# 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



The Kingdom of Bahrain remains committed to providing adequate and sustainable housing solutions to its citizens; and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) marked an important area of advancement in the 2018 VNR and has since also witnessed noticeable progress.

In 2022, the Kingdom marked the completion of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's royal directive, issued in December 2013, to provide 40,000 housing units to citizens. Collaborative efforts and public-private partnerships have resulted in innovative plans and financial solutions for housing projects which have enhanced the Kingdom's long-term sustainable development.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Bahrain Collaboration with UN HABITAT

UN-HABITAT recently established its country program in the Kingdom of Bahrain, with the UN agency working closely with stakeholders to address the challenges brought about by urbanization. Its most recent initiative saw the agency partner with HSBC Bank Bahrain to develop, through innovative measures, the coastal ecosystem of Tubli Bay which is home to a large mangrove ecosystem.

### Housing, Urban Planning and Innovative Programs

In accordance with the New Urban Agenda (NUA) issued by the UN-HABITAT, Bahrain initiated the movement towards smart cities, whereby urban areas in Bahrain can become more efficient, livable, and sustainable in

both the short and long term with the active participation from the government, citizens and businesses.

The Kingdom, following a consultative process, published its National Report on the "Achieved Progress in the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA)" in 2021; joining global efforts to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

The Government of Bahrain delivered on its commitment to provide 40,000 housing units to citizens, between 2013 and 2022, through the construction of five new cities, financed through the GCC Development Program and through partnership with the private sector; namely: Salman City, Khalifa City, East Hidd, East Sitra and Al Ramli.

The most recent housing project, Salman City, provides more than 12,000 housing units spanning over 740 hectares, with the capacity to support a total residential population of 100,000. Beyond these figures, the town offers all its housing units with access to greenspaces in the form of parks, bike lanes, and pedestrian walkways. Additionally, it has a water treatment facility with a daily capacity of over 39,000 cubic meters.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, and its affiliated Eskan Bank, play a vital role in providing affordable housing solutions to Bahraini citizens. Through collaborations with private sector institutions, they work diligently to meet the Kingdom's diverse housing needs. Recently announced innovative housing initiatives in Bahrain include:

### The New Housing Financing Programs

#### Tas'heel Program



#### Available options

 <p><b>To utilize the financing program individually</b></p>	 <p><b>To utilize the financing program to benefit from property owned by relatives</b></p>	 <p><b>To utilize the financing program collectively as a group</b></p>
---	---	--



Construct a housing unit



Purchase a housing unit



Purchase a land plot



Purchase a building and add to it



Addition to an existing property



Purchase a land plot and construct on it

### Public-Private Partnership

Bahrain's housing sector has been at the forefront of the public-private partnership model of economic development. Initial successes motivated the establishment of the social housing financing program "Mazaya", which represents a significant departure from the traditional model of government construction and direct allocation of housing. Under Mazaya, Bahraini citizens can secure subsidized loans to purchase fully built homes, where the subsidy is means-tested and designed to offer the largest support to those with limited means.

The Government's commitment to leaving no one behind and the program's rapid popularity, acted as a powerful motivator for private developers to produce affordable housing. The program has spawned sub-programs that target more specific categories of homebuyer, improving the program's effectiveness, including women who are divorced, separated, widowed, or single. Moreover, special processes for housing requests from people with disabilities have resulted in 278 housing services being delivered.

The Government announced its "Land Development Rights Program" to strengthen the partnership between the Government and the private sector, through the

participation of real estate development companies in the implementation of housing units, which will be directed to citizens benefiting from housing financing at prices commensurate with the value of the funds.

### Transportation

Bahrain's transport infrastructure has also been developed considerably since 2018, with the most salient element being the opening of the new international airport in 2021. The new terminal is four times the size of its predecessor and has a capacity of 14 million passengers per annum; a significant upgrade to the 9.6 million served annually prior to its construction. The airport was built with sustainability as a primary goal, and in a manner consistent with Bahrain's renewable energy and energy efficiency action plans. Its greenness has been further enhanced by state-of-the-art digitization of many airport services, including check-in, passenger identification, shopping, and so on.

Bahrain's road and sanitation infrastructure have witnessed continued upgrades during the last five years, supported by funding from GCC partner countries. In 2022, the Ministry of Works developed and improved 146 km of roads, demonstrating a strong commitment to improving connectivity and

transport efficiency. In its recognition of the importance of promoting more sustainable forms of transportation, contributing to healthier lifestyles, and the provision of a safe environment for cyclists, the Kingdom announced plans to develop a network of bike and e-bike lanes throughout the country.

One of the key transportation projects under the Economic Recovery Plan is the Bahrain Metro, offering citizens and residents a more sustainable mode of transport. The project, expected to be completed by June 2027, will span a total length of 109 kilometers, surpassing the length of Bahrain, and will be executed in phases, with the project's first phase implemented using an integrated public-private partnership model.

**Bahrain's Green International Airport**

**Bahrain International Airport Sustainability Awards**



**ACI Green Airports Recognition Silver Award - 2023**

The 2023 Green Airports Recognition Silver Award recognizes Bahrain Airport's sustainable initiatives, focusing on energy efficiency, waste management, and reducing carbon emissions in its operations.



**ACI Airport Carbon Accreditation Program Level 4 "Transformation" Certificate - 2023**

The ACI Airport Carbon Accreditation Program Level 4 "Transformation" Certificate 2023 acknowledges Bahrain Airport's significant strides in actively reducing its carbon footprint and driving change towards a low-carbon aviation sector.



**Recognized as a distinguished LEED Gold-certified Airport - 2021**

LEED certification recognizes sustainable building practices. Bahrain International Airport earned LEED Gold by reducing water use by 57.71%, achieving 26.58% energy savings, recycling 22.14% of building materials, designating 5.05% of parking for low-emission vehicles, and diverting 77.91% of construction waste from landfills.



**Green Airports Recognition award - 2022**

Bahrain International Airport (BIA) has been awarded the Green Airports Recognition 2022 by Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific. BIA, one of only 12 airports in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, received the Silver level recognition for its outstanding efforts in minimizing environmental impact.

**Preserving Culture and Heritage**

The Kingdom of Bahrain has seen rapid developments in its economic, social, and urban landscapes but has remained committed to preserving its rich cultural heritage, which is integrated with its tourism offering, through the efforts of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities.

Prior to the 2018 VNR, Bahrain had two UNESCO world heritage sites, which serve the dual purpose of attracting tourists and contributing to Bahrain’s national identity: Qal’at Al-Bahrain, a medieval fort; and the Pearling Trail, which is a series of buildings and sites that tell the story of Bahrain’s pearling industry, which constituted the backbone of its economy until the early part of the 20th century. In 2019, Bahrain successfully added a third world heritage

site; the Dilmun Burial Mounds, which date back to around 2000 BC, and the Early Dilmun Civilization. Over the period 2018-2023, Bahrain also continued developing its Pearling Trail, with new structures and installations.

The Kingdom also preserves the villages known for their historical links to cultural crafts. The planned Naseej Factory at Bani Jamrah seeks to revitalize the century-old craft of textile weaving in the village. The project will also provide a sales and merchandising center that will help in promoting and selling the products to both tourists and visitors. The project will also act as a community center and play area for the whole village, adding some needed green public space.





### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

One of the key challenges facing the Kingdom of Bahrain in relation to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) is maintaining the pace of urban development to meet the demand for housing solutions by Bahraini citizens in a sustainable manner. Continuing the path of increased public-private partnerships in the Kingdom of Bahrain will be a critical element in addressing the challenges, in addition to further developing the data and research-based pathway. The Government, in collaboration with the UN-HABITAT, is working on establishing the National Urban Observatory to be a center for urban planning data and indicators, supporting the timely monitoring of performance and providing training to employees.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Bahrain is faced with a challenge of developing a network of public parks and green spaces in several communities that lack immediate access to such spaces. The afforestation campaign in Bahrain will also take into consideration the strategic planting of trees and increasing the green cover of various urban areas.

Moreover, promoting and encouraging more individuals to utilize the public transportation network is also a key challenge in developing the societal uptake of sustainable modes of transportation. Preservation efforts of cultural elements must be further intensified, especially for items that are critical both to Bahrain's national marine heritage and that would promote sustainable and eco-tourism in the Kingdom.

# 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Bahrain made commendable national efforts towards achieving SDG 12 (Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns) by implementing various waste management strategies and initiatives. Bahrain has taken significant steps in managing plastic, hazardous, and electronic waste through the implementation of relevant legislation and regulations.

The Kingdom promotes waste reduction measures and recycling initiatives across various industrial sectors. The implementation of best available techniques, best environmental practices, and the circular economy approach has resulted in significant progress. In 2021, approximately 95,000 tons of waste were recycled locally and approximately 130,000 tonnes of waste was imported to be utilized in production activities, while 325,000 tonnes were exported for recycling and recovery purposes.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### National Waste Management Strategy

The Kingdom is taking steps to review the existing National Waste Management Strategy, adopted in 2018, which emphasizes waste reduction and recycling initiatives. The strategy contains five main pillars:

- The backfilling of waste by engineering methods.
- Recycling demolition and construction waste.
- Recycling and converting waste into energy.
- Recycling household and commercial waste.
- Recycling green waste.

### Plastic Waste Management

Bahrain implemented waste reduction and recycling initiatives and issued legislation to regulate plastic waste. Ministerial Orders, over the past 4 years, banned the import of non-biodegradable plastic bags; the manufacture, import or trade of plastic water bottles and cups below 200ml, the import, manufacture, and distribution of single-use plastic bags with a thickness of less than 35 microns. The use of plastic bags is expected to be banned in a later phase.

**Hazardous Waste Management**

In 2020, a Ministerial Order, prepared in cooperation with the WHO, related to the management of hazardous medical waste was issued, addressing the management of hazardous medical waste from production until disposal. It includes strict conditions for proper segregation, sorting and storage of medical waste. The Government conducts annual inspections to all the healthcare facilities to ensure their compliance to the new legislation.

One of the most successful and effective waste management projects in Bahrain is the “Spent Pot Line (SPL) Treatment Plant”, inaugurated in 2021, which treats the SPL waste (hazardous waste) generated from the aluminum smelter. Previously, all SPL

waste was disposed at the landfill at a rate of 36,000 tons a year; an unsustainable waste management method. Currently, the new project transforms all of SPL waste to value-added product which creates sustainable value in a circular economy with zero-waste going to the landfill.

**E-Waste Management**

Bahrain became one of the first countries in the region to issue special legislation related to the management of E-Waste. The new legislation was issued in 2021 and aims to regulate the process of managing electronic waste in a sound, safe and sustainable manner to protect public health and the environment.

**Sustainable Consumption**



For years, civil societies demonstrated a strong commitment to the SDGs; promoting sustainable consumption of food. The Conserving Bounties Society (Bahrain Food Bank) specializes in collecting and packaging surplus food from hotels, restaurants, consumer markets and various special events according to the health standards adopted in the Kingdom, and then redistributing such food to families, expatriate workers and individuals in need throughout the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Society has conserved more than 1,920,000 meals and distributed them to more than 1,800 families, 10,000 individuals and 5,000 expatriates.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

The Kingdom of Bahrain is prioritizing the development of comprehensive waste management strategies, the investment in infrastructure for waste separation and recycling, the establishment of an effective system for sorting and segregating municipal waste, and raising public awareness while promoting sustainable consumption and production in education.

To further advance its efforts in reaching SDG 12 (Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns), it is essential to diversify financing options and provide incentives to attract private sector involvement in waste treatment and recycling projects. Optimizing land utilization through innovative solutions and improving waste management systems are also crucial steps.

# 13 CLIMATE ACTION



Bahrain has recently embarked on a significant journey towards mitigating the effects of global climate change and achieving SDG 13 (Climate Action), by announcing its commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2060. This ambitious goal was announced by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, during the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow:

**“Today, I am pleased to announce that Bahrain is committed to reaching net zero by 2060 and has set a range of ambitious interim goals to ensure that we proceed without delay. By 2035, we will reduce emissions by 30 percent through decarbonization and efficiency initiatives and double our deployment of renewables from the targets we set at COP21. Our 2035 targets also include carbon removal solutions by quadrupling mangrove coverage, doubling tree coverage in Bahrain, and directly investing in carbon capture technologies, which we believe is essential.”**

**HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister**

The targets announced by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister support a holistic approach to climate action by addressing both mitigation (i.e. preventing or reducing greenhouse gas emissions) as well as adaptation (i.e. adapting to climate change impacts). Moreover, these targets represent economy-wide emission reduction goals, reflecting a high level of ambition and champions a whole-of-government approach to mitigation.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Legislative Infrastructure

Addressing climate change in the Kingdom of Bahrain is carried out through a multifaceted approach that is anchored to robust legislative protections. One of the key developments in this matter was the issuance of the Environment Law No.

(7) for the year 2022 which addresses the environment through an approach that is not only relevant to SDG 13 (Climate Action), but to others as well such as SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The Law’s primary objectives is to protect the



environment from various harmful activities, to prevent and address pollution, and to preserve natural resources. It also grants the Supreme Council for the Environment the legal mandate to conduct studies, assess projects, and develop policies in the context of environmental protection. One of the key features of the Law is that it sets the necessary provisions for the establishment of a fund for environmental protection and development.

### Mitigation

The Kingdom's process for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions in line with the net-zero targets involves continuous outreach and collaboration with key domestic emitters – including more than 10 entities in the private sector and 3 entities in the public sector – on their emission reduction plans. Collectively, these emitters make up more than 90 percent of the Kingdom's greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the Kingdom leverages the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) and the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) to augment its efforts in curbing emissions.

To bolster its climate action efforts, the Supreme Council for Environment is developing a comprehensive and multi-step Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) System that will track the national

greenhouse gas inventory and the progress in achieving national emission reductions, as well as adaptation action. The MRV system will help provide credible data on Bahrain's progress, thus enhancing transparency, strengthening institutional structures and reporting mechanisms, and facilitating high-quality submissions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Kingdom, through the Supreme Council for Environment, also focuses its efforts on realizing a range of additional measures across various sectors, including industry, energy, oil and gas, transportation, and waste management. For example, a new methane collection system is being installed in Askar landfill covering around 20 percent of its total area which will significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the landfilled waste. This is a key contribution to national methane emission reduction actions in line with the Global Methane Pledge that Bahrain joined in 2021, which aims to reduce global methane emissions by 30 percent by 2030.

To complement action in reducing emissions, the Kingdom is also increasing natural carbon sinks in the form of an afforestation campaign and mangrove rehabilitation initiative, which will be covered in SDGs 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

### Adaptation

As a low-lying island state in an arid region, Bahrain is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. To address these vulnerabilities, Bahrain has developed the 'National Adaptation Investment Plan (NAIP)', which serves as a blueprint for enhancing resilience in the Kingdom's most vulnerable sectors, namely agriculture, water, biodiversity/ecosystems and urban development. Through a variety of adaptation projects, it aims to effectively tackle challenges such as rising sea levels, water scarcity, extreme temperatures, and food security. Several projects are included in the NAIP, such as developing a green belt surrounding, establishing climate-smart nurseries for afforestation planning and management, rehabilitating mangrove ecosystems, institutional strengthening for enhancing the surveillance, diagnostic and control of animal diseases, developing climate-resilient and low-carbon livestock and poultry value chain, enhancing fish rearing habitats and shoreline protection, upgrading municipality nurseries, and improving irrigation networks for roads and expanding treated wastewater transmission.

In order to promote the importance of ensuring adaptation planning, financing and implementation while keeping up with climate change impacts across the world, the Supreme Council for Environment

organized a two-day 'National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Implementation Workshop' in May 2023 in coordination with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat to promote partnership and peer-learning in this field. The workshop convened more than 100 policymakers, experts, implementors and observer organizations from more than 35 countries to discuss common challenges and best practices in implementing NAPs.

### Monitoring Climate Impacts

A nationwide sea-level rise study that assessed the potential of flood inundation under different climate scenarios culminated in a proposal of over 190 physical interventions to collectively protect homes, commercial premises, cultural and religious assets, and key national infrastructure. The study's proposals were presented to a cross-sectoral Sea Level Rise Committee for consideration and action, with a key outcome the creation of a 'Tidal Atlas', that comprises a digital terrain of the Kingdom. The benefits of this approach include an ability to stress test vulnerabilities under different future scenarios and adjust a multitude of assumptions and variables as new data becomes available in the future.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

The Kingdom of Bahrain's approach to addressing climate change is proactive, ambitious, holistic and future-oriented. As such, the Kingdom will continue to make progress on multiple fronts to tackle emerging challenges, including the following:

- Government entities face a primary obstacle in the form of limited financial resources competing on differing priorities. These limitations restrict the available funding for projects dedicated to attaining sustainable energy and environmental objectives, as transitioning to low-carbon alternatives requires significant investments across sectors. Similarly, adaptation projects face difficulty in securing funding due to their perceived lack of profitability or bankability. Bridging the gap between fiscal constraints and capacity development in public climate initiatives is achieved through reinforcing the economic and fiscal sustainability efforts through the Economic Recovery Plan and the revised Fiscal Balance Program and an intensification of public-private partnerships in the climate field. The Ministry of Finance and National Economy is a member of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action which helps countries mobilize and align the finance needed to implement their national climate action plans.
- Certain industries in Bahrain, such as steel and aluminum, fall under the hard-to-abate sectors. Technological advancements required to address emissions in these industries are still in development. Whilst this is a key challenge for the Kingdom of Bahrain, investing in appropriate research and development culture would drive the development of homegrown technologies and attract foreign specialized companies. This matter could be in the form of leveraging recently launched initiatives such as the Golden License – a national initiative granting several benefits to companies employing more than 500 Bahrainis or investing in projects valued at more than USD 50 million – providing R&D grants to SMEs, and enhancing the level of data availability and access.

**Raising Awareness in the Financial Sector on Climate Related Risks**

**Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB):**

In November 2021, the CBB issued a circular to all licensees, followed by a guidance note in March 2022, on raising awareness of climate related risks, with related requirements expected to be issued in phases over 2024. The Central Bank conducted a survey in 2022 to determine readiness to disclose Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) practices, and to seek regular feedback from licensees on their readiness to potentially implement a framework to identify and manage climate-related risks, and also capitalize on climate-related opportunities. The CBB is looking to publish ESG guidance in 2023. Furthermore, the CBB is currently studying issuing a regulatory framework specifically for green bonds and the launch of a framework to support innovation and financial technologies for sustainable finance. They are also a member of the Central Banks Network for Greening the Financial System.



**Bahrain Bourse:**

The Bahrain Bourse has joined the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) initiative in promoting sustainable and transparent capital markets, seeking greater performance on ESG issues and encouraging sustainable investment. The Bahrain Bourse also released its ESG reporting guidelines in 2020.

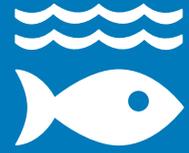


**Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance:**

Work is ongoing in the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance, through its Sustainability Academy, to provide training opportunities to raise awareness about sustainable development and its requirements.



# 14 LIFE BELOW WATER



The marine and coastal environment of Bahrain, an archipelago of 84 islands, is distinguished by a diverse range of living organisms, comprising over 1,300 species across various taxonomic groups. These habitats hold significant value in terms of their environmental, economic, social, cultural, and national importance, recognized at local, regional, and global scales. As a coastal nation, the Kingdom recognizes the significance of preserving and sustainably managing its marine ecosystems.

Bahrain has implemented various measures to protect its marine biodiversity, combat pollution, and promote responsible fishing practices. Bahrain has established marine protected areas, enforced regulations to prevent overfishing, and conducted research and monitoring programs to better understand and address the challenges faced by its seas. Additionally, Bahrain actively participates in international collaborations and initiatives aimed at promoting ocean conservation and sustainable use of marine resources.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Legislative Protection

The newly issued Law No. (7) of 2022 on the Environment introduced changes to various environmental and climatic fields in keeping pace with international best practices in sustainable development and dealing with new environmental challenges. The new Law aims to protect the environment and its sources from all activities and practices causing pollution and the degradation of the environment and biodiversity and aims to preserve the environmental resources

and develop them to serve the goals of sustainable development and biodiversity within the territorial borders of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Over the years, the Kingdom issued various legislations to protect natural reserves in various terrestrial and marine areas:

- Under Bahrain's national CITES legislation Law No. (5) of 2021, the Kingdom introduced licensing programs

for endangered wild species that contribute to combating their smuggling and trafficking, in cooperation with the security services and customs at land, sea, and air borders, in addition to strengthening the control program on markets and land and sea environments.

- The Kingdom identified seven<sup>6</sup> protected areas (6 of which are marine areas) considered important to marine life, including Najwat Bulthama; one of Bahrain's most vibrant coral beds.
- Seasonal fishing was introduced for certain species of fish and shellfish to protect their population numbers. Bahrain has protected several species of fish from the threat of fishing and unlawful capture such as dolphins and some species of sharks.
- The Kingdom issued red lists of endangered species and launched a species-monitoring program.

### Oversight and Monitoring

The Supreme Council for the Environment monitors protected areas and takes appropriate action towards any violation of the Law. These efforts have increased the percentage of marine protected areas from 5.11 percent in 2010 to 22.12 percent in 2022. Building on the critical role the

Supreme Council for the Environment plays in protecting life below water, the Council conducts an ongoing marine mortality monitoring program to record and identify the source and reason behind marine mortality recorded either during coastal monitoring or through citizens' notifications. This program allowed for the issuing of successful control measures prior to 2019 to reduce marine mortality due to human influence.

One of the key threats to marine mortality is the use of bottom trawling nets. Traditionally these nets have been widely used by shrimp fishermen, but they have an adverse effect on ecosystems at the seabed. In recognizing the danger of bottom trawling nets, the Kingdom of Bahrain outlawed their use without a license in 2002 with the coast guard performing regular inspections that would result in a confiscation of material and the implementation of the necessary legal measures. In 2018, the Government issued a ban on shrimping that use bottom trawling nets, offering to purchase the fishermen's assets in exchange of revoking their license or switching it to fishing license; hence achieving the balance between safeguarding the livelihoods of shrimp fishermen whilst rehabilitating the populations of shrimp in Bahrain's waters.

<sup>6</sup> Hawar Island, Tubli Bay, Arad Bay, Masthan island, Northern Oyster beds, Najwat Bulthama and Al Areen

**Pearling**

Part of Bahrain’s cultural heritage is the decades old trade of pearling. With that heritage in mind, the Kingdom of Bahrain worked to preserve the marine locations that provide the Kingdom with this vital marine resource.

Furthermore, Bahrain launched an exercise to assess pearl oyster beds over two phases. The first phase, conducted in 2021 in collaboration with the Bahrain Institute for Pearls and Gemstones (DANAT), evaluated the conditions of the oyster beds and provided policymakers with a statistical analysis of their current state. The second phase extends the assessment to cover more sites, originally studied a 2012 report. This comparative assessment enabled an analysis of the changes in Bahrain’s oyster beds over a 10-year period.

Relevant to Bahrain’s coral beds is Bahrain’s pH level which, at 8.2, is below the global pH levels of 8.1, making it more basic than acidic. The significance of marine acidity to the vitality of its ecosystem is high, as more acidic waters are detrimental to coral as well as shellfish such as oysters. Preventing pollutants from altering the pH level is critical and the legislative infrastructure placed in Bahrain is a vital tool in its maintenance.



**the Bahrain Institute for Pearls and Gemstones (DANAT)**

Founded in 2017, the Bahrain Institute for Pearls and Gemstones (DANAT) is a world class gemmological laboratory, education and research centre, with a particular focus on testing and studying natural pearls. Its expert team of gemmologists serve clients and students from around the world through pearl, gemstone and diamond identification, as well as teaching a range of internally developed courses and internationally recognized gemmological qualifications. In 2022, DANAT launched a new mobile application that enables customers to view the results of examinations of their pearls, diamonds, and gemstones on their smartphones.



### Marine Biodiversity

The Kingdom of Bahrain announced, in 2021, its commitment to quadruple the mangrove coverage across coastal areas by the year 2035, part of its plan to achieve net-zero by 2060. Mangroves are essential in deterring coastal degradation and in their capacity to capture carbon. Furthermore, mangrove ecosystems are essential for marine biodiversity especially as they provide safe nurseries for young marine life. In 2022, Bahrain successfully planted 110,000 mangroves. Efforts continued throughout 2023, with another 100,000 seedlings of mangrove trees planted in May 2023 by the BDF Royal Guard in cooperation with the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture. In June 2023, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister announced the doubling of the previously announced target of planting 230,000 mangroves in 2023 to 460,000, in an effort to further accelerate the plans.

To support mangrove cultivation and conservation, multiple initiatives were launched, key of which include:

- A general study in 2022 on the most prominent options available for mangrove cultivation in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- Establishing three nurseries for the cultivation of mangroves in 2022 and

2023; one in Tubli Bay (Ras Sanad) and another in Al Areen Wildlife Park and Reserve.

- Signing a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation on mangrove conservation with four different governmental and private institutes namely Bahrain Petroleum Company (2019), Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (2021), Bahrain Defense Force (2021) and Aluminum Bahrain (2022).

Bahrain is an active member of the international community in its participation in the various activities that relate to biodiversity. In 2022, Bahrain prepared its Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which outlined the key features of the biodiversity in the Kingdom, whilst also demonstrating the latest in protection efforts. In 2021, Bahrain submitted the National Report on the Implementation of the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands.

Furthermore, the Kingdom launched the national artificial reef project, in 2023, to introduce new artificial habitats to bolster growth of marine organisms, support biodiversity and rehabilitate damaged coral reefs.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Addressing life below water must first stem from the development of the informational background necessary to identify policy gaps, and to establish biodiversity trends in marine life. This research-based approach, with collaboration between researchers and policy makers, will be essential to preemptively address any adverse impacts on the marine ecosystem especially in the availability of fish stock and coral health.

Approaching this SDG, amongst others, must be taken through the grassroot approach which requires a significant increase in the level of public and institutional awareness of life below water and how to best preserve it; through awareness campaigns and government or private sector sponsored beach cleaning initiatives.

Furthermore, enhancing the adoption of sustainable fishing through targeted workshops can be a key tool in promoting the practice in Bahrain. There is a growing recognition of emerging sustainable fishing practices along the coast of Bahrain; however, there is a need for these practices to be implemented on a larger scale. Important actions to be taken include consistently enforcing fishing restrictions during critical breeding periods, regulating the incidental capture of non-target species, and closely monitoring the usage and proper disposal of fishing equipment. It is crucial to promote and customize innovative approaches to ensure their widespread adoption and popularity among fishing communities.

# 15 LIFE ON LAND



As an island nation, Bahrain's commitment to SDG 15 (Life on Land) is vital to preserving its rich biodiversity, emblematic of its natural and cultural identity, despite the region's arid conditions. Home to over 330 bird species, including the globally endangered osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, Bahrain's diverse ecosystem offers a haven for wildlife. Balancing pressures from urbanization, climate change, and industrialization with sustainable land management, restoration of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, and conservation strategies is the key behind Bahrain's SDG 15 progress. The Kingdom's dedication to counter wildlife trafficking and maintain sustainable natural reserves underlines its intent to protect its unique natural heritage, contributing to the global sustainability goals.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Protected Areas and Conservation Efforts

Bahrain's commitment to land conservation and sustainable development is evident through its participation in the global 30x30 initiative, pledging to protect 30 percent of its land and ocean by 2030. The establishment of protected areas has been a key strategy in achieving this goal, with the latest addition being the declaration of Wadi Al-Buhair as a natural reserve in July 2022.

### Legal Framework and International Cooperation

Bahrain enacted Law No. (5) of 2021 on Regulating and Controlling International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Animal

and Plant Groups, aligning with global conservation efforts under the Convention on International Trade of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and ensuring sustainable trade practices. Bahrain submits Annual CITES Reports covering the status of legal and sustainable international wildlife trade of endangered species. The reports include information on permits, trade quantity, species, and specimen types, offering an overview of Bahrain's efforts in international wildlife trade regulation and conservation.

Bahrain developed the National Action Plan on Biosafety in collaboration with UNESCO-Cairo and DANAT as a Global Environment Facility project, aiming to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The plan includes operational procedures, a draft

executive regulation, and strategies to ensure the safe management of genetically modified organisms. Bahrain submitted its Fourth National Report to the Cartagena Protocol in 2021, providing an overview of its progress in implementing biosafety measures, contributing further to global efforts in promoting biosafety and the sustainable management of living modified organisms. The Kingdom is working on Biosafety Executive Regulations; an outcome of the Biosafety National Action Plan completed in 2022, which comprises detailed provisions and procedures to ensure the safe handling and transport of living modified organisms to prevent adverse impacts on biodiversity and human health.

### **Afforestation Efforts**

Launched under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Consort of His Majesty the King and President of the Supreme Council for Women, the “Forever Green” national campaign for tree planting aims to expand green areas, support environmental conservation, and uphold the agricultural sector’s development in the country. By promoting community partnerships and engaging the private sector, the campaign encourages active participation in tree planting projects. It also seeks to raise awareness among students about the significance of agriculture for food security, health, and the national economy. Through

this campaign, Bahrain is contributing to the United Nations Decade for Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.

Part of its net zero plans, the Kingdom committed to doubling the number of trees from 1.8 million currently to nearly 3.6 million trees by the year 2035 through the expansion of afforestation projects in various streets and intersections, and municipal and government projects. The Ministry of Municipality Affairs and Agriculture prepared an afforestation strategy to deliver on the targets and to ensure the use of large evergreen trees due to their suitability to the climatic conditions of the Kingdom and their low water consumption. In only 2022, Bahrain surpassed its annual tree-planting target, of 140,000 trees, by successfully planting 150,000 trees, bolstering Bahrain’s resilience against climate change-induced challenges, such as rising sea levels, while simultaneously acting as a valuable carbon sink.

### **Conservation Initiatives and Plans**

In 2020, The National Space and Science Agency signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture to facilitate collaboration in the field of identifying and combating the red palm weevil, as well as conducting a comprehensive census of palm trees in the Kingdom of Bahrain.



Bahrain is developing a scientific paper and a blacklist of invasive alien species in co-operation with DANAT and UNESCO-Cairo. Additionally, a grey list and monitoring plan will be established for species that may exhibit harmful traits in the future.

Bahrain is participating in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Support Project supported by the Global Environment Facility, to align its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan with the Post-2020 GBF. The project includes assessing monitoring systems, reviewing policies, and addressing biodiversity finance.





### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

The Kingdom recognizes that leveraging advancements in technology will allow it to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of biodiversity monitoring and research efforts, and to overcome challenges inherent in species monitoring.

As a small island state with limited land mass, Bahrain has experienced the loss of terrestrial areas due to necessary urbanization. Furthermore, the fragmented distribution of privately owned gardens, farms, and palm groves poses challenges in establishing environmental corridors. Bahrain recognizes the need to address these physical constraints to ensure

effective protection and conservation of biodiversity within its limited land area.

Limited financial resources present a challenge in scaling up captive breeding programs and implementing conservation projects. Bahrain acknowledges the importance of adequate funding to support initiatives aimed at conserving endangered species such as the Bahraini Bulbul. Efforts to secure additional funding and explore partnerships with relevant stakeholders will contribute to the successful implementation of conservation strategies aligned with SDG 15 (Life on Land).

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Bahrain's political system is built on a solid democratic base; its constitution enshrines many articles that align with the core principles of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). These include the democratic system of government (Article 1), which rests on a separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial authorities. Bahrain also actively fosters interfaith dialogue (Article 32), it ensures that all citizens have a right to vote and to stand for election (Article 1) and guarantees them freedom of speech (Article 23) while maintaining an independent judicial system (Article 104).

The King Hamad Global Centre for Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence, covered in more detail under SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), stands as a testament to Bahrain's centuries-old tradition of welcoming people of different religious groups, who have lived side-by-side in harmony in Bahrain and practiced their faiths in peace.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### Bahrain's Judicial System

The Kingdom continues to enhance the judicial system to ensure justice and efficiency. It has implemented alternative penalties for convicts, including the launch of the open prisons program in 2023 which serve as a rehabilitation approach that promotes the reintegration of prisoners into society. In these facilities, eligible inmates with demonstrated good behavior and low-risk profiles are provided with a more flexible and relaxed environment. They have increased freedom of movement within the facility and are offered various vocational

and educational programs to develop their skills. By implementing alternative penalties such as open prisons, Bahrain strives to reduce recidivism rates, enhance prisoner rehabilitation, and contribute to the overall advancement of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

The judicial sector made significant strides in the modernization of legal services with a comprehensive digital transformation that encompasses every stage of litigation. The sector underwent a full digital overhaul

of civil and Sharia litigation services in 2020, and court administration has been transferred to an all-inclusive digital platform, providing streamlined processes across all litigation stages.

In addition, the Kingdom automated the execution of court decisions through a unified electronic system. This allows court clerks to monitor the implementation of rulings across all courts, ensuring a distribution of tasks, standardized procedures, and coordinated responsibilities between clerks and secretaries. Furthermore, support tasks were outsourced to the private sector, creating new job opportunities for private executors and further streamlining execution procedures.

A unified payment service has been launched in 2021 to facilitate digital payment for all judicial services. This service covers everything from fees to judicial expenses, providing a more convenient and efficient means of payment.

The launch of the private notary initiative, with the objective of assigning all notarization procedures to the private sector, covered contract and real estate transaction authentication. Since its inception in May 2019 and up to the end of 2022, 80 private notary licenses were issued, accrediting more than 176,980 documents.

Furthermore, the remote notary initiative allows remote visual communication for documentation procedures related to inmates, detainees, and prisoners, eliminating the need for personal attendance. Individuals do not need to be physically present, offering the advantage of increased convenience and accessibility for those in correctional facilities.

### **The 2022 Elections**

The Council of Representatives, a key part of the Legislative Authority, plays a pivotal role in the legislative process. The elected Council contributes to ongoing constitutional and political reform in Bahrain, enforcing the separation of powers. The Kingdom of Bahrain had its sixth general election for the Council of Representatives in November 2022, recording the highest voter turnout (73 percent) compared to 2018 (67 percent), with an increase of 30 percent in women's representation with the election of 8 women.

### **Anti-Corruption Efforts**

The Kingdom has made significant strides in its efforts to combat corruption and promote transparency. Bahrain involves all members of society in the fight against corruption by holding regular national campaigns and via the national anti-corruption hotline, 'Nazaha 992', which was launched on International Anti-Corruption Day in 2009.

The government established robust anti-corruption mechanisms and institutions, including the Anti-Corruption Directorate and the National Audit Office. These entities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting corruption cases, conducting audits, and ensuring accountability in public administration. The Ministry of Interior's General Directorate of Anti-corruption and Economic and Electronic Security remains committed to partnering with the community in the fight against crime and corruption.

The Kingdom enacted laws such as the Anti-Corruption Law and the Money Laundering Law, which provide a strong legal foundation for combating corruption and money laundering activities. Additionally, Bahrain has signed international conventions, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption, demonstrating its commitment to international cooperation in the fight against corruption.

Furthermore, the public prosecution established a specialized prosecution for financial and money laundry crimes in 2020.

### **Low Crime Rate**

The Kingdom of Bahrain has one of the lowest intentional homicide rates, reflecting its commitment to enhancing public safety and addressing societal challenges. The Ministry of Interior adopted advanced

technologies, including artificial intelligence technologies, to detect individuals at risk, allowing targeted deployment of countermeasures and ensuring a sense of safety and security. Additionally, the launch of a dedicated mobile application for substance abuse support reflects the government's proactive approach to combating drug-related crimes by providing effective rehabilitation programs. Furthermore, significant resources have been allocated to reducing traffic accidents, with a focus on rewarding safe driving practices and emphasizing awareness and education to discourage reckless behavior. Bahrain's comprehensive efforts demonstrate its dedication to ensuring the well-being and security of its citizens.

### **The National Suggestions and Complaints System "Tawasul"**

The Government of Bahrain is cognizant of the need for citizens, residents and business owners to be able to engage government entities. To this end, it offers several avenues by which stakeholders can communicate their opinions and concerns including the National Suggestions and Complaints System "Tawasul" system, which was launched in 2014. It is a unified and comprehensive communications system that allows people residing in Bahrain to contact government entities to make inquiries, register complaints, or make suggestions.



### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Bahrain's pursuit of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) is not without its challenges. The Kingdom acknowledges the need to raise awareness among institutions about the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The establishment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development is one tool to address this, along with integrating SDGs into school curricula and promoting a culture of sustainable development from an early age, increasing collaboration with the private sector, academia and civil societies, and allocating more resources for effective data monitoring and coordination.

Bahrain's dedication to improving public administration demonstrates its commitment to strong institutions and governance. These measures, combined with ongoing reforms in the judicial system and innovative initiatives like open prisons, exemplify Bahrain's determination to foster transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in pursuit of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

# 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Bahrain's government recognizes the role of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) as a key driver towards accelerating the implementation of the SDGs. Over the years, Bahrain has made noticeable active diplomacy and efforts to develop positive relationships with other nations as well as the larger international community. This includes south-south cooperation, foreign trade investments, humanitarian assistance, international awards, UN Days and other forms of UN cooperation.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

### COVID19 Response

The Kingdom of Bahrain demonstrated extraordinary efforts in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, with partnerships and collaborations playing a pivotal role:

- The Government established effective communication channels and formed partnerships between ministries to address healthcare needs and demands.
- Collaboration with pharmacies and the national ambulance service ensured swift fulfilment of prescriptions and the transportation of positive cases.
- Joint training programs strengthened the skills of individuals working within and between ministries, bolstering Bahrain's health system resilience.
- The country actively engaged in international partnerships, dispatching doctors to support other healthcare systems and exchanging strategies with the United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany.
- Collaboration with the WHO and the existence of a WHO Country Office facilitated a comprehensive operational strategy.
- Bahrain also contributed to the COVAX initiative and conducted clinical trials for COVID-19 treatments and vaccines.

These partnerships and collaborations exemplify Bahrain's commitment to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), emphasizing the importance of global cooperation in addressing global health challenges.

**Climate Change Mitigation**

Bahrain’s climate change mitigation efforts are marked by collaboration across sectors and with international partners, international organizations, and UN entities. The Government is actively engaging in afforestation projects through collaboration with local and regional agricultural experts, as well as partnering with ministries, charities, private sector companies, and individuals. Knowledge transfer sessions on solar PV installation are being conducted through South-South and Triangular Cooperation partnerships with international consulting and engineering companies. The development of the National Adaptation Investment Plan involves close collaboration with the Global Green Growth Institute and local environmental consultants, with support from the oil and gas sector a necessity to achieve ambitious net-zero targets.

**Development and Humanitarian Assistance**

Bahrain plays a significant role in providing humanitarian assistance globally, with the Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) and the Bahrain Red Crescent Society being major organizations involved. The RHF has been active in providing aid across the world, including assisting Syrian refugees in Jordan and responding to floods in Pakistan.

The RHF has also supported Ukraine by signing a USD 1 million grant agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In 2023, the RHF raised BD 1.5 million under its national campaign for urgent humanitarian relief for the victims of earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye. The donations received helped deliver 40 tons of medical equipment, establish a hospital, and send medical relief teams to support treating those injured. The RHF’s efforts demonstrate its dedication to alleviating suffering and promoting resilience worldwide.

**Partnerships with UN Agencies**

Even beyond the Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the Government established impactful partnerships with various UN entities such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) for specific projects. Collaborating with the FAO, Bahrain has undertaken projects in food diversification, strengthening the statistical system, developing the aquaculture sector, and eradicating animal diseases. The Government has also partnered with the ILO to address domestic work and the rights of expat workers, including the “My Fair Home” campaign. In addition, Bahrain has

worked with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to combat human trafficking, resulting in the development of a national strategy and action plan. Recently, a joint agreement was signed with the FAO and UN-HABITAT to promote sustainable and climate-adapted urban systems and enhance the use of green public spaces for the well-being of residents.

**The Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies**

Diplomacy also plays an important role in achieving sustainable development by keeping pace with the rapid change in the global business environment, enhancing cooperation and trade exchange, and combating environmental degradation. In recognition of that, the Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies was established in August 2019, to train the Kingdom's diplomats. The Academy aims to become a regionally and internationally renowned Academy of diplomatic training and research by creating various programs that equip individuals with the knowledge and tools required in the field of diplomacy. The International Diplomats Program (IDP) is an outreach initiative by the Academy, first held in 2019, with diplomats from over 20 countries taking part. In 2021, the Academy launched the Diplomatic Fellowship Program which provides young, distinguished diplomats the opportunity to

gain valuable work experience at several of the Kingdom's missions abroad over a 12-month period.

**Institutional Efforts**

Tamkeen, a key player in Bahrain's sustainable development efforts, has made significant strides towards the SDGs through partnerships with global entities. Collaborations with various organizations have focused on youth capacity building, skills development, entrepreneurship, and fostering innovation for sustainable economic growth. These partnerships, including initiatives with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, WorldSkills, Mowgli, Huawei, and others, have resulted in programs and opportunities such as the United Nations Junior Professional Officer Program and quality job and training opportunities for cybersecurity professionals, contributing to the advancement of the SDGs in Bahrain.

The University of Bahrain, through collaborations with the National Space Science Agency, the UNDP and Amazon Web Services (AWS), established satellite and cloud innovation centers, contributing to education, research, innovation, sustainability, and international cooperation in line with the SDGs.

The Institute of Public Administration (BIPA), a leading regional and global public sector human development institution,

implemented several initiatives to create government leaders in the public sector and improve the quality of training in this field. The institute contributed substantially in the area of south-south cooperation in recent years, including contributing to the establishment of the Middle East and North Africa Public Administration Research (MENAPAR), a registered international network with approximately 70 members with its Secretariat in Bahrain and serving the MENA region, in a joint effort with UNDP Bahrain. In June 2021, the MENAPAR network organized a virtual workshop on promoting investments between the Arab Region and Southern countries post the COVID-19 pandemic.

**IISS Regional Security Summit**

The Annual Manama Dialogue is a premier security summit where dozens of government officials, businessmen, international figures, economists and political and strategic thinkers from Asia, Africa, North America, Latin America and Europe meet to exchange views on regional security challenges. It is a platform for prime ministers, defense ministers, foreign ministers, national security advisors, and military and intelligence chiefs to engage in three-day long debates to address the Middle East’s most pertinent security and foreign policy challenges.

**International Days Promoted by Bahrain**

The Kingdom of Bahrain has been a pioneer in prioritizing and ensuring the well-being, prosperity and financial stability of people and communities from all around the globe and has been successful in promoting a number of international UN Days:



**International Day of Conscience**

The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted a proposal to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to declare an International Day of Conscience, which was accepted on 25 July 2019 by declaring the 5<sup>th</sup> of April as the International Day of Conscience.

This contribution ensures that global efforts of the international community are regularly mobilized in promoting a culture of peace.



**International Day of Banks**

The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted a proposal to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2019 to declare December 4<sup>th</sup> an international day of banks which was then accepted.

This effort comes to recognize the significant potential of multilateral development banks and other international development banks in financing sustainable development; it also recognizes the vital role played by the banking systems in contributing towards improving peoples' standard of living.



**International Day of Islamic Art**

The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted a proposal to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to declare November 18<sup>th</sup> an international day of Islamic Art which was then accepted.

The objective of this is to encourage greater awareness of past and contemporary artistic impressions of Islam, and to celebrate diversity, freedom of expression and dialogue with other artistic movements.

### The Digital Cooperation Organization

The Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) was launched by Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, and Pakistan, with the objective of empowering women, youth, and entrepreneurs and advancing the digital economy through innovation. As a founding member, Bahrain aims to boost inclusive growth in the digital economy, empower nations through digital transformation and promote sustainable technology. Bahrain assumed the presidency of the DCO in 2023, regulating its strategic direction, supporting ongoing initiatives for inclusive digital economic growth and facilitating knowledge-sharing among member states.

Bahrain's active participation in the launching and presidency of the DCO demonstrates its commitment to achieving the SDGs through partnerships for the goals. Bahrain collaborates with the DCO to organize a series of international and regional side events, aiming to highlight the organization's efforts and share the experiences of Bahrain and the DCO in the digital field. These events serve as platforms to showcase the achievements, best practices, and lessons learned, allowing more countries to benefit from the expertise and knowledge of both the DCO and Bahrain. Through these initiatives, Bahrain and the DCO foster greater global cooperation and promote the inclusive growth of digital economies worldwide.

#### DCO Portfolio

**DCO:** Global multi-stakeholder organization focusing on the digital economy

**Member States:** 13 (as of June 2023)

**GDP of Member States:** Over USD 2.2 trillion

**Population of Member States:** Over 600 million

**Global Observers and Partners:** 22

**Official Observer:** DCO is an official observer of UNGA



### Isa Award for Services to Humanity

The Isa Award for Services to Humanity was established in 2009 by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa as a gift from Bahrain to the world. It aims to inspire young people in different parts of the world to look for innovative ways to change the world and play their role in service to humanity.

The Isa Award is named after His Highness the Late Amir of Bahrain, Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, may God rest his soul in peace, and is granted every two years to either individuals or organizations who have been selected by an expert panel of jurists. The USD 1 million cash prize is presented by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to the winners, in addition to a pure gold medal and a high-level certificate of appreciation.

Since its launch, the award was presented to a total of 5 laureates:

- First edition: Malaysian Dr. Jamila Mahmoud for her disaster-relief efforts.
- Second edition: Indian Professor Ashiuta Samantha in recognition of his dedicated role combating poverty and destitution.
- Third edition: the Children's Cancer Hospital in the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- Fourth edition: Edhi Charitable Foundation in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its efforts to combat poverty and destitution.
- Fifth edition: Nepalese Ophthalmologist Dr. Sanduk Ruit who was able to devise a new cheaper method for treating cataracts.





### CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Despite the challenging global macroeconomic conditions and the divergence nations are facing in their economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kingdom of Bahrain remains committed to harnessing the role of partnerships to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. The Kingdom recognizes that progress in achieving the SDGs globally is significantly dependent on SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and is linked to its targets. Since the majority of these targets necessitate collaborative endeavors that go beyond the confines of individual nations and require the participation of the global community, inter-country cooperation becomes the primary catalyst for advancement. Memorandums

of Understanding (MOUs) also play a critical role in incorporating the goals into policy and planning frameworks. Nevertheless, different countries face their own distinct challenges while attempting to foster global partnerships.

Bahrain has made several multi-sectoral partnerships on a national level to achieve the SDG targets. The Kingdom also recognizes the importance of fostering more public-private partnerships to effectively achieve its goals. These collaborations can leverage both sectors' resources, expertise, and innovative approaches to address the challenges related to finance, technology transfer, capacity building, and sustainable development.



# **CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD**



## CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD

The preparation of the Kingdom of Bahrain's second VNR has been a crucial step in the assessment of the progress made towards achieving the SDGs and fulfilling the aspiration of the 2030 Agenda. The 2023 VNR will not only serve as a reminder of the significant progress achieved and the magnitude of challenges that were overcome, but also one that will inform decisions going forward. The VNR has also been a useful tool to raise awareness and gather momentum amongst the various stakeholders to accelerate the progress across all sustainability targets.

Since the Kingdom's first VNR, published in 2018, the Government launched and delivered on its Government Plan (2019-2022) which focused on upholding the values of the state and society; achieving financial sustainability and economic development through championing the Fiscal Balance Program; and supporting an enabling environment for sustainable development. The Government has also navigated the COVID-19 pandemic through affective preparedness, leaving no one behind and launching a financial and economic stimulus package that supported households and corporations and stabilized the market. Coming out of the pandemic, the Kingdom launched its Economic Recovery Plan which advocates for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable recovery post pandemic.

The results achieved to date were possible thanks to the Kingdom's Team Bahrain

motto, and its policy of harnessing the power of its human capital and pioneering the deployment of advanced technologies. Bahrain's agile government continued to work together with the private sector to deliver high impact initiatives that contributed to economic growth and human capital. This partnership with the private sector has delivered major strategic infrastructure, housing, tourism and health projects.

On the digital transformation front, the Government launched its telecommunications, ICT and digital economy strategy, adopted a Cloud First policy, pioneered a legislative decree in respect of Providing Cloud Computing Services to Foreign Parties (Data Embassy), and advocated for digital transformation across education, health, labour market, judicial and other sectors. The Kingdom's efforts are exemplified through its pool of world-class tech talent, including a high percentage of females with digital skills.

The main takeaways from this VNR also point to the significant progress that the Kingdom has achieved in positioning itself as a global thought leader advocating for peace, stability and peaceful coexistence. The Kingdom continued to strengthen its partnerships and international engagements with the rest of the world. Various contributions were also made through humanitarian assistance, international awards, opening opportunities for the rest of the world, south-south



## CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD

cooperation, foreign trade and investments, cultural contributions, promoting UN Days and more.

As the Kingdom stands at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, it does so with a commitment to continue its efforts in delivering on its goals and accelerate progress where required. The Government Plan (2023-2026) titled "From Recovery to Sustainable Growth" is expected to deliver tangible outcomes across its general objectives, which include: creating more quality opportunities for citizens; transitioning to a value-added economy; building on the foundations of partnership with the private sector; supporting international efforts to combat climate change; fostering the advancement of Bahraini women; and facilitating increased participation in the youth and sports sector.

The rapid change and disruptions to the labour market brought about by digitalization, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic, has drawn more attention towards the importance of re-skilling and upskilling. The Kingdom will continue to address these challenges through designing and implementing programs that focus on vocational training, mentorship and enhancing educational performance to align with the requirements of the labour market and close the skills gap.

Much progress has been made under the Government's Fiscal Balance Program; and fiscal sustainability will remain a priority

area going forward. The Government is advancing with its implementation of its Program which aims to reduce operational costs, target social support to citizens who are most in need; and continuing to provide government services in an effective and efficient manner.

An area that witnessed noticeable progress in recent years and is placed at the forefront of the Government's future sustainability plans, is around addressing the environmental challenges. In 2021, the Government announced its commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2060, and since then, both the Government and the private sector registered promising results. The challenges going forward revolve around securing funding for transition and adaptation projects and addressing the perceived lack of profitability or bankability of such projects.

Data is another focus area, and the Kingdom will continue to strengthen its data monitoring efforts, ensuring accurate, timely, relevant, accessible, and easy to use data are available to decision makers. The Kingdom will do so through its whole-of-government approach, capacity development and strengthening data literacy of data users, adopting data analytics tools, and investing in innovation.

To conclude, the Kingdom of Bahrain's second VNR re-affirms that the Kingdom maintains its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs.



# APPENDIX



# APPENDIX - 1: ALIGNMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE SDGs

CONSTITUTION CLAUSES	ALIGNED SDGs
<p>Citizens, both men and women, are entitled to participate in public affairs and may enjoy political rights, including the right to vote and to stand for elections.</p>	
<p>Justice is the basis of government. Freedom, equality, security, trust, knowledge, social solidarity and equality of opportunity for citizens are pillars of society.</p>	
<p>The Law protects mothers and children and the State guarantees reconciling the duties of women towards the family with their work in society, and their equality with men in political, social, cultural, and economic spheres.</p>	
<p>The State cares for the physical, moral and intellectual development of the young.</p>	
<p>The State guarantee social security for its citizens including the old, disabled, sick, orphaned, widowed, and unemployed.</p>	
<p>The State safeguards the Arab and Islamic heritage and contributes to strengthening the bonds between Islamic countries and achieve the aspirations of the Arab nation for unity and progress.</p>	
<p>The State sponsors the science, humanities and the arts, and encourages scientific research.</p>	
<p>Education is compulsory and free for all in early stage.</p>	
<p>Every citizen is entitled to healthcare.</p>	
<p>The State shall endeavor to provide housing for citizens with limited income.</p>	



## APPENDIX - 1: ALIGNMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE SDGs

CONSTITUTION CLAUSES	ALIGNED SDGs
<p>The State shall make the necessary arrangements to ensure the exploitation of land suitable for productive farming. The Law lays down how small farmers are to be helped and how they can own their land.</p>	
<p>The State shall take necessary measures for the protection of the environment and the conservation of wildlife.</p>	
<p>The State shall endeavor to achieve the economic unity between the Cooperation Council for the Arab states of the Gulf and the states of the Arab League, and everything that leads to rapprochement, cooperation, coordination and mutual assistance among them.</p>	
<p>Work is the duty of every citizen. The State guarantees the provision of job opportunities for its citizens.</p>	
<p>People are equal in human dignity, and citizens are equal before the Law. There shall be no discrimination among them on the basis of sex, origin, language, religion or creed.</p>	



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

### 1 NO POVERTY



Indicator		Units	2018	2020
1.4.1	Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services	Percent	100.0	100.0
1.4.1	Proportion of population using basic drinking water services	Percent	100.0	100.0
1.a.2	Proportion of total government spending on essential services, social protection	Percent	11.1	12.0

### 2 ZERO HUNGER (NO HUNGER)



Indicator		Units	2018	2020
2.a.1	Agriculture value added share of GDP	Percent	0.3	0.3
2.a.1	Agriculture orientation index for government expenditures	Index	0.8	0.7
2.a.1	Agriculture shares of Government Expenditure	Percent	0.2	0.2



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Indicator	Units	2018	2020
3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio	Per 100,000 Live birth	20.3	11.1
3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate	Per 100,000 Population	4.3	3.1
3.6.1 Number of deaths rate due to road traffic injuries	Number	72.0	65.0

### 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Indicator	Units	2018	2022
4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities	Percent	100.0	100.0
4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to computers for pedagogical purposes, by education level	Percent	100.0	100.0
4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to the internet for pedagogical purposes, by education level	Percent	100.0	100.0



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

### 5 GENDER EQUALITY



Indicator	Units	2018	2021	
5.2.1	Proportion of ever partnered women and girls subjected to physical violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months	Percent	0.3	0.2
5.3.1	Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18	Per Woman aged 20-24	4.7	4.5
5.5.1	Proportion of seats held by women in local governments (% of total number of seats)	Percent	20.9	22.5
5.5.1	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (% of total number of seats)	Percent	7.5	15.0
5.b.1	Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone	Percent	100.0	100.0



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

### 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Indicator		Units	2018	2021
6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	Percent	100.0	100.0
6.2.1	Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services	Percent	100.0	100.0
6.3.1	Proportion of wastewater treated	Percent	100.0	100.0
6.4.2	Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources	Percent	151.9	157.1

### 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Indicator		Units	2018	2021
7.1.1	Proportion of population with access to electricity	Percent	100.0	100.0
7.2.1	Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	Percent	0.0	0.4



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

### 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Indicator	Units	2018	2021	
8.1.1	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	Percent	2.0	0.5
8.10.1	Number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults	Per 100,000 adult population	39.7	40.7
8.10.1	Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults	Per 100,000 adult population	14.3	13.3

### 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Indicator	Units	2018	2020	
9.1.2	Passenger volume	Million Passenger Kilometres	11,640	3,371
9.2.1	Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP	Percent	14.4	14.3
9.c.1	Proportion of population covered by at least a 4G mobile network	Percent	100.0	100.0



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

### 10 REDUCED INEQUALITY



Indicator		Units	2018	2020
10.4.1	Labour share of GDP	Percent	29.7	27.2
10.5.1	Nonperforming loans to total gross loans	Percent	5.5	3.2
10.5.1	Return on assets	Percent	1.0	1.1

### 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Indicator		Units	2018	2021
11.6.1	Proportion of population served by municipal waste collection	Percent	100.0	100.0
11.6.1	Municipal Solid Waste collection coverage	Percent	100.0	100.0
11.6.2	Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (population weighted)	Microgram/ Cubic meter	45.7	33.6



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

# 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Indicator		Units	2018	2020
12.4.2	Hazardous waste exported	Tonnes	4,408.0	4,603.0
12.4.2	Hazardous waste generated	Tonnes	81,152.0	119,916.0
12.4.2	Hazardous waste generated, per capita	Kg	54.0	81.5
12.4.2	Hazardous waste treated or disposed	Percent	57.6	70.5
12.4.2	Municipal waste collected	Million Tonnes	1.8	1.4
12.5.1	Municipal waste recycled	Tonnes	45.5	341,770.0

# 13 CLIMATE ACTION



### Key Targets:

- Reaching net zero by 2060
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2035, compared to 2015 levels
- Doubling the number of trees (from the current 1.8 million) by 2035



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

### 14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Indicator		Units	2018	2020
14.3.1	Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations	pH	8.1	8.2
14.7.1	Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP	Percent	0.1	0.1

### 15 LIFE ON LAND



Indicator		Units	2018	2021
15.9.1	Countries that established national targets in accordance with Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (1 = YES; 0 = NO)	Number	-	1



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Indicator		Units	2018	2021
16.1.1	Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population	Per 100,000 population	0.3	0.1
16.2.2	Detected victims of human trafficking	Number	8.0	83.0
16.6.1	Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget	Percent	97.8	97.1
16.9.1	Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Percent	100.0	100.0
16.a.1	Countries with National Human Rights Institutions not fully compliant with the Paris Principles, B status (1 = YES; 0 = NO)	Number	1	1



## APPENDIX - 2: SDG INDICATORS

# 17 PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS



Indicator		Units	2018	2021
17.1.1	Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP	Percent	19.6	17.9
17.3.1	Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows	Millions of US dollars	1,654.3	1,777.5
17.3.2	Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP	Percent	8.6	7.1
17.8.1	Internet users per 100 inhabitants	Percent	98.6	100.0