



UNITED NATIONS
BAHRAIN



2022 COUNTRY RESULTS REPORT

JUNE 2023



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WHO and UN-Habitat

WHO and UN-Habitat mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities together with government, civil society partners and urban residents to highlight the importance of mainstreaming disability inclusion across all areas of society.

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Foreword



On behalf of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the Kingdom of Bahrain, it is my great pleasure to present this report which showcases our collective results for 2022. The report not only reflects the efforts of the United Nations in Bahrain, but is also a key accountability tool for UNCT towards the Government of Bahrain, UNCT key donors and partners, and other national stakeholders as it provides valuable insights on the progress made in support of the country's national development priorities and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the umbrella of the Government of Bahrain and the United Nations Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

In 2022, UNCT continued to support the country as it made further positive strides despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of a historic government reshuffle, the Ministry of Sustainable Development – a first in the region – was established demonstrating the country's commitment to place the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the forefront of national programmes and initiatives. The Ministry has already become a key partner of UNCT as a result of our collective contributions in preparation for the country's second Voluntary National Review that will be presented at the High-Level Political Forum in July 2023.

During the Transforming Education Summit spearheaded by the United Nations Secretary-General to address the impact of COVID-19 on the multiple facets of education, the Government presented 21 commitments to strengthen its education system. The commitments stem from a comprehensive national consultation process in 2022 which was implemented with UNCT technical guidance and advice.

On the human rights front, the Government submitted its national report as part of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. At the request of the Government, UNCT supported the process by sharing best practices for the development of its national submission. We also continued to promote human rights as well as gender equality and women's empowerment, disability inclusion, youth engagement in development processes and the protection of vulnerable groups throughout the year.

I reiterate our commitment to supporting the country's efforts towards achieving its national development priorities and the SDGs as we continue to implement our Cooperation Framework. In this regard, to further strengthen our support and advance a key facet of the United Nations development system reform, we have initiated discussions with the Government to establish a pooled country fund which we expect will enhance the implementation of the Cooperation Framework through catalytic funding.

I once again trust that this report provides valuable insights and serves as a useful resource for all our partners and stakeholders on the work of UNCT in Bahrain in 2022. I also hope that it presents further avenues of engagement in 2023 and beyond.

Khaled El Mekwad

United Nations Resident Coordinator
in Bahrain

United Nations Country Team

Overview

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the Kingdom of Bahrain is composed of representatives of 21 United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies working jointly under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator to support the country in achieving its development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations Information Centre in Manama (UNIC Manama) also works in close coordination with UNCT and is the principal source of information about the United Nations system in the country.

UNCT conducts its work in line with the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Nations Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SCF) 2021–2024. This document is the most important instrument for planning and implementation of UNCT development activities in the country. Anchored in national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda, SCF outlines four strategic directions corresponding to four outcomes and including several outputs. A steering committee, including representatives of

the Government and the United Nations, provides strategic oversight and guidance in the implementation of SCF.

UNCT is supported in its work by several coordination structures including four results groups – one per SCF outcome – and two thematic groups: the Disability Inclusion Task Force and the United Nations Network on Migration. An Operations Management Team, a United Nations Communications Group, and a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force further support UNCT in their respective areas of focus. Individually and collectively, UNCT coordination mechanisms contribute to the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations.



Cooperation Framework strategic priorities, outcomes and output areas



Priority area 1

Environment, energy and food

Outcome 1

Policies and frameworks are strengthened for the sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable energy, climate resilience and enhanced food security

Output Areas

- Conservation of natural resources and biodiversity
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Food security and nutrition



Priority area 2

Quality, comprehensive social services

Outcome 2

Strengthened social sector policies and systems improve the delivery of quality, inclusive services for Bahraini citizens and residents

Output Areas

- Quality education
- Healthy lives and well-being
- Inclusive, safe and resilient cities
- Social cohesion and protection of vulnerable groups



Priority area 3

Economic diversification, public administration and resilience

Outcome 3

Enhanced policies and regulatory frameworks strengthen conditions for economic diversification, employment creation, rule of law, and increased resilience and innovation

Output Areas

- Economic diversification
- Development-oriented and gender-responsive policies and tools
- Rule of law, access to justice and safety and security
- Research and data capacities



Priority area 4

Bahrain among nations

Outcome 4

The Kingdom of Bahrain plays an enhanced role in international and regional partnerships for sustainable development, including peace and security initiatives, and to expand South-South cooperation

Output Areas

- Fulfilment of international commitments
- Promotion and advancement of SDGs by all
- Advancement and protection of human rights

United Nations entities working under the Cooperation Framework



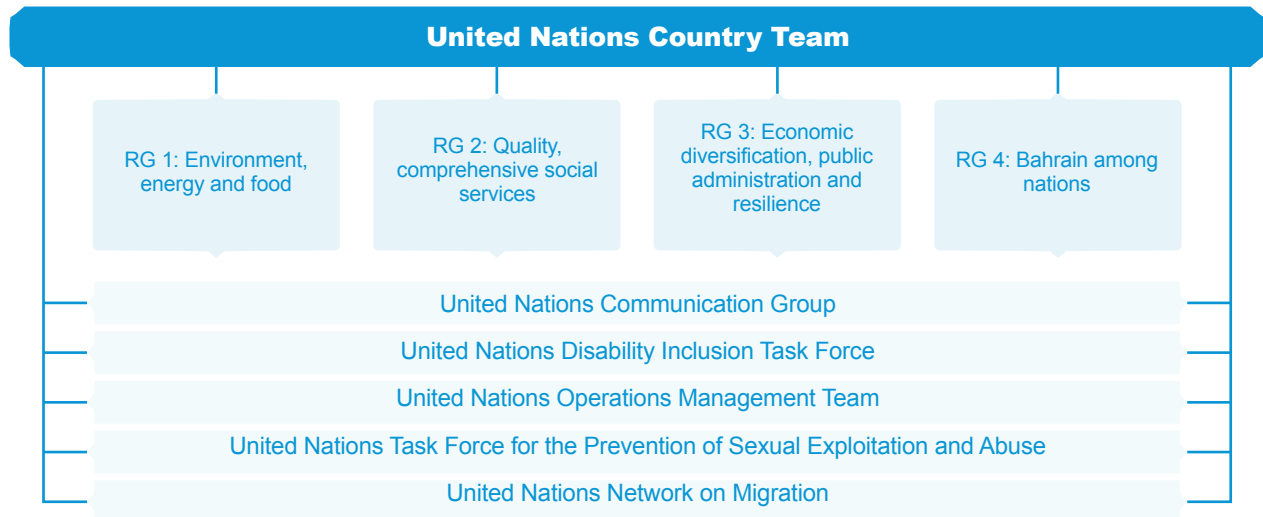
International
Labour
Organization



UNCT members by physical presence

Resident 8 13 Non-resident

United Nations Country Team coordination structures and mechanisms



Key development partners of the United Nations development system

• Implementing partners

Successful implementation of SCF is jointly attributed to the many partners of UNCT. The main partner is the Government with whom a common commitment is shared to advance national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) is the key coordinating entity and main counterpart in the cooperation process, with its Undersecretary for Political Affairs serving as the Co-Chair of the SCF Steering Committee along with the United Nations Resident Coordinator. Other government members of the Steering Committee include representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy.

At the same time, UNCT maintains strong partnerships with various other government ministries, agencies, advisory bodies, committees and councils. The wide range of government entities that work closely with UNCT on the implementation of development programmes, projects and initiatives demonstrates the commitment of the Government to foster partnerships and collaboration for the achievement of SCF outcomes. An important addition to the list of strategic partners is the recently created Ministry of Sustainable Development, with which a close and fruitful collaboration has already been established. UNCT also worked with the National Assembly in 2022 to promote the SDGs among members of parliament.

Civil society organizations and groups with whom UNCT collaborates – particularly on the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, youth engagement in development processes and initiatives, as well as the promotion of the rights of people with disabilities – have a special place among the many partners as they hold invaluable local knowledge and expertise, and are the link to the people served. UNCT also maintains strong cooperative relationships with academic institutions and think tanks to promote knowledge exchange and generation on sustainable development topics, relying on media organizations to amplify advocacy efforts in support of the 2030 Agenda. UNCT further taps into the potential of the private sector to develop innovative solutions for SDG financing and acceleration of the SDGs.

UNCT also collaborates with several embassies headquartered in Bahrain, sharing specialized knowledge and expertise, advocacy efforts on topics of common concern and mobilization of required resources for key development initiatives. Collaborative relationships with diplomatic missions in the country in 2022 extended to the embassies of Germany, Israel, the Philippines, State of Palestine, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.

• **Financing partners**

The Government is not only the major implementing partner but also the main source of funding for the programmes, projects and initiatives as well as the in-country presence of UNCT. Approximately half of all resources come from the Government. The Green Climate Fund and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol were the second and third largest sources of funding for UNCT in 2022. The Global Environment

Facility and the governments of Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom have also funded the work of UNCT, taking into account their contributions to regional initiatives.

A list of the key development partners is included in annex 1.

• **Key development partners**





Chapter 01

Photo crédit
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Key developments in the country and the regional context

With the pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic easing in 2022, the Government shifted its attention from response to recovery and beyond. Backed by decisive government actions undertaken in line with the Economic Recovery Plan, the national economy continued a healthy and broad-based rebound during the year. Gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 4.9 per cent in 2022, which is the highest since 2013. Economic growth was mainly propelled by non-oil sectors, with the hospitality sector being a key driver and the financial sector gaining a greater share of the economy. This demonstrates that the country is on a solid path toward a more diversified economic structure.

Owing to high oil and aluminium prices, and strong non-oil revenue, Bahrain significantly narrowed its fiscal deficit in 2022. This will allow the country to meet its budget balance target earlier than under the Fiscal Balance Programme. Inflation peaked at 3.7 per cent in 2022, mainly driven by food prices. To contain pressures from supply-side shocks and higher inflation in trading partners, Bahrain has synchronized its monetary policy with advanced economies by tightening financial conditions. Government measures such as subsidies, price caps on certain products and financial support to low-income families, have helped offset the impact of rising consumer prices.

The year brought several significant changes on the political front. A major cabinet reshuffle took place in June at the initiative of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, resulting in the change of 17 out of 22 ministers as well as the restructuring of several ministries and the establishment of 4 new ones. The reshuffle was considered one of the largest in the country's history introducing leaders from a younger generation. The new Ministry of Sustainable Development was created, reaffirming the country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda. Later in the year, shortly after the country's parliamentary elections, a new government was formed in line with the provisions of the constitution. All except for three ministers retained their positions.

Parliamentary elections took place in two rounds in November 2022. The elections were for the 40 members of the Council of Representatives – the lower chamber of the bicameral parliament. Elections for municipal councillors

were also held at the same time. A 73 per cent voter turnout was registered during the first round of elections, with six members of parliament being elected. The other 34 members were elected in the second round after run-offs. A total of eight women were successful in securing a seat representing 20 per cent of all seats – the highest number so far.

Soon after the elections, the Government presented a new Government Action Plan to parliament for consideration and approval, setting a roadmap for the country for the next four years. The plan was unanimously endorsed in an extraordinary meeting by the Council of Representatives in January 2023 under the title From Recovery to Sustainable Development, which is aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the global themes of the second SDG Summit that will be held in New York in 2023 under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly. In its final version, the plan is built around four priorities:



1. Raising the standard of living among citizens to preserve their gains;



2. Justice, security and stability;



3. Economic recovery and sustainable development;



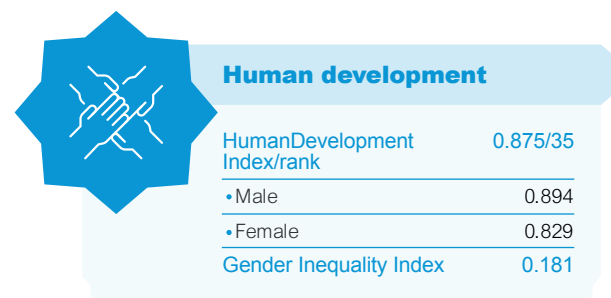
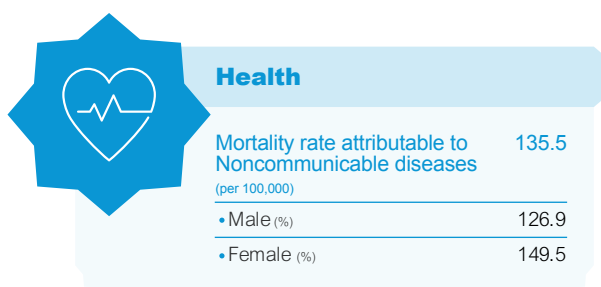
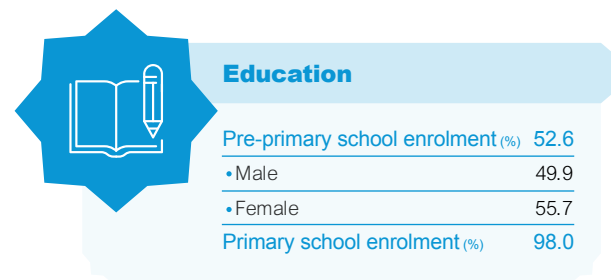
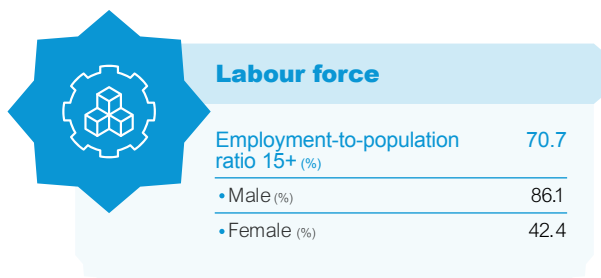
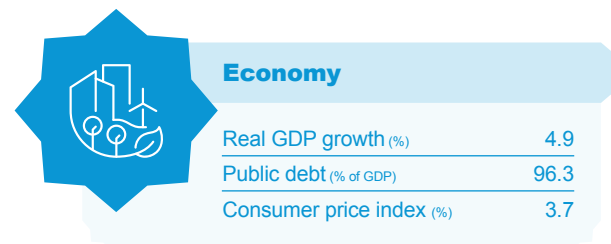
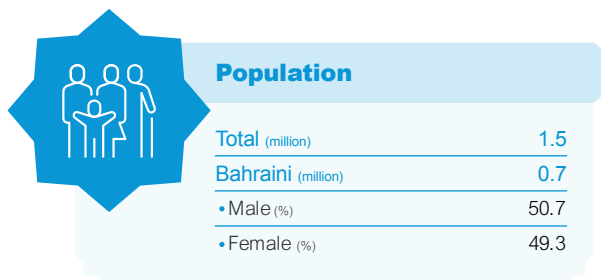
4. High-quality and competitive government services.

Bahrain has continued to broaden and strengthen its partnerships and global positioning.

A particular highlight during the year was hosting the global interfaith forum which brought together Pope Francis, Al-Azhar Grand Imam Sheikh Ahmed Tayyeb and other leaders to promote religious and cultural tolerance, and human coexistence. At the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), the country reaffirmed

its pledge to achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 while at the Transforming Education Summit it undertook a series of commitments to strengthen the education system. In recognition of the country's advancement in the communication, information technology and digital transformation sector, Bahrain was elected as a member of the International Telecommunication Union Council for its next session.

• Key facts and figures¹



A photograph of a city skyline under a hazy, blue sky. In the center, a tall skyscraper is under construction, with a large tower crane perched on its top. To its left is another tall, curved skyscraper. The foreground shows a street with a tall, thin pole. The overall scene is in a soft, blue-tinted light, suggesting early morning or late afternoon.

Chapter 02

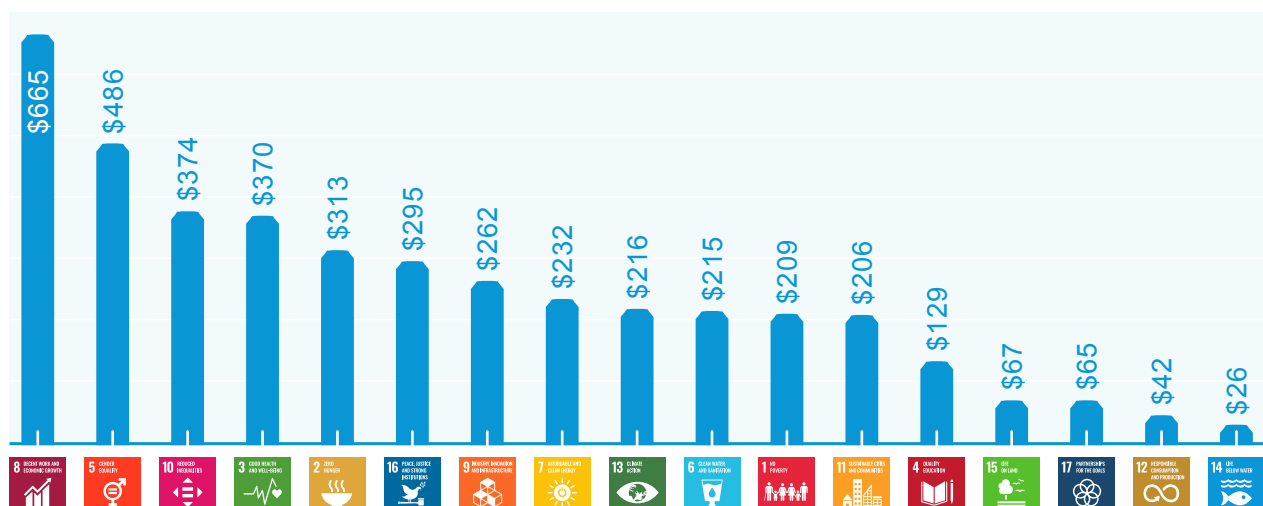
United Nations development system support to national development priorities through the Cooperation Framework²

Overview of the Cooperation Framework results in 2022

UNCT continued to make progress across all four SCF strategic priorities, while also supporting the overall monitoring and review of the country's progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and other international commitments. As the Government announced the intention to develop its second Voluntary National Review (VNR), UNCT drew on its internal capacities and expertise to provide relevant guidance and advice in the process. Preparations for VNR were well underway at the end of the year and support towards the finalization of the process will remain one of the key priorities for 2023.

As in previous years, the United Nations family made contributions across nearly all the SDGs, with support primarily being aimed at the strengthening of the policy and regulatory environment in the country as well as the consolidation of national capacities to ensure sustainability of results. UNCT also channelled efforts towards raising awareness of the SDGs through the implementation of several far-reaching communication and advocacy campaigns. Gender equality and human rights have remained at the forefront of the work being mainstreamed across all activities and interventions.

Expenditure by Sustainable Development Goal in thousands USD



• **Initiatives by focus area***



Initiatives with capacity development as a focus



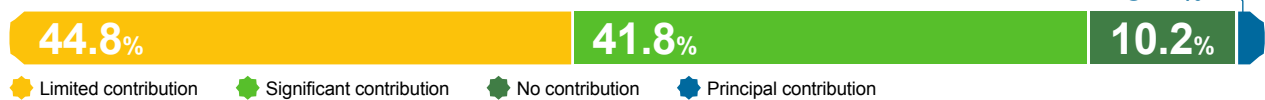
Initiatives with policy advice and thought leadership as a focus



Initiatives with convening partnerships and knowledge sharing as a focus

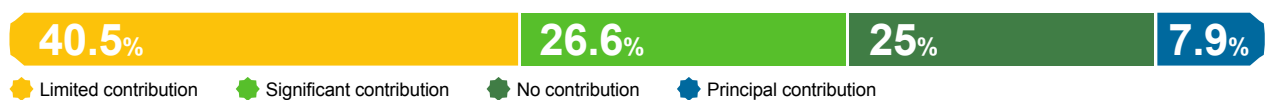
* An initiative may have more than one focus area.

• **Expenditure by contribution to gender equality**



■ Limited contribution
 ■ Significant contribution
 ■ No contribution
 ■ Principal contribution

• **Expenditure by contribution to human rights**



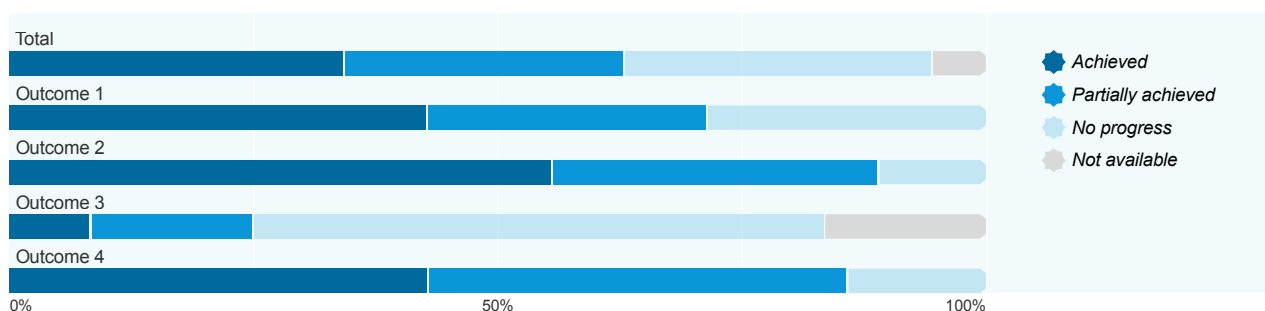
■ Limited contribution
 ■ Significant contribution
 ■ No contribution
 ■ Principal contribution

In 2022, the UNCT contributed to most of the SDGs, with SDGs 8, 5, 10, 3 and 2 receiving the largest share of funding. Almost half of the expended resources were directed towards activities that had gender equality and the empowerment of women as a principal or significant objective, and about one-third went to initiatives that had human rights as a principal or significant objective, demonstrating the commitment of UNCT to advance normative agenda in the country.

UNCT ambitions for the year were high, and over 60 per cent of targeted results were achieved or partially achieved. However, approximately 30 per cent of the planned results had to be either adjusted based on changing priorities to ensure alignment with local needs, or postponed because

of challenges experienced in SCF implementation. At the same time, several lessons were learned and new opportunities were identified to inform UNCT work moving forward.

• **Output indicator progress**



UNCT also made significant progress in strengthening coherence, effectiveness and efficiency, and took steps towards consolidating support to partnerships and financing the 2030 Agenda. These efforts have already resulted in the development of the first comprehensive joint programme proposals by UNCT, allowing for a more integrated offer of support to be provided to the Government in key areas of work, as well as the development and implementation of several new interagency initiatives.

A detailed account of the results of UNCT under each SCF priority area and a financial overview follow in this report. The progress made by UNCT in strengthening its coordination, coherence and efficiency, as well as the challenges experienced and lessons learned during the year, are also discussed along with key priorities for 2023.

Cooperation Framework priorities, outcomes and outputs

Outcome 1

Environment, energy and food



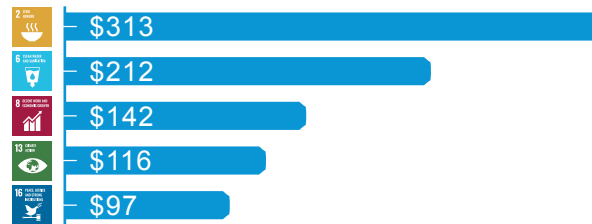
Contributing agencies



Contribution to the SDGs



Expenditure by top five SDGs in thousands USD



Source of funds



Key results



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.



Water and Climate Knowledge Management Platform established improving climate information and water resource management.



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



Comprehensive **National Food Security Strategy** formulated.



Relevant Bahrain professionals have **strengthened capacities in climate forecasting** including sand and dust storm forecasting.



≈ **70 professionals** have strengthened knowledge and skills to address **food security related issues**.



2 studies to inform the response to climate change and its impact completed.



Data for food and agriculture statistics strengthened through training and implementation of the Bahrain Agricultural Survey.

In 2022, the Government made further progress towards the conservation of natural resources, strengthening climate change adaptation and mitigation capacities, and improving food security and nutrition with specialized technical assistance and policy advice from UNCT.

◆ Conserving natural resources and terrestrial biodiversity

Efforts supported by UNCT during the year resulted in a better policy and regulatory environment, improved capacities for the protection of animal and plant health, as well as conservation of aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity. Working in close partnership with the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, an assessment of the fish disease risks was completed and several key documents were drafted to protect fish resources, including guidelines for trade in live aquatic animals and protocols on biosecurity in aquaculture. Systematic and large-scale screening of livestock was also implemented to identify and eradicate animal disease.

National capacities in the field were consolidated through the delivery of training to relevant government staff on animal disease surveillance and good practices in the management of animal health emergencies. UNCT specialists led and moderated workshops and national dialogues on biosafety-related matters organized by the Supreme Council for Environment and the Bahrain Institute of Pearls and Gemstones. The discussions resulted in the development of the first national blacklist of invasive species of plants and animals and a National Biosafety Action Plan which will further contribute to the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity in the country.

◆ Strengthening climate change adaptation and mitigation capacities

Responding to climate change and its adverse impacts was a top priority during the year with a few notable results being achieved in the field. Following UNCT support, national experts and institutions have strengthened capacities, and improved systems and platforms as well as a more robust evidence base to respond to climate-related challenges. National capacities were specifically enhanced in climate and seasonal forecasting, sand and dust storm forecasting, multi-hazard early warning, water resource management and urban greening for climate change mitigation, among others, through the implementation of targeted national workshops and the participation of national experts in relevant regional and international events organized or supported by UNCT throughout the year.

The Water Resources Council is now better prepared to respond to climate change following the establishment of a platform in 2022 that bridges the gap between climate information and water resource management to help optimize water resource allocation. UNCT also supported the implementation of two studies to further inform the response to climate change and its impacts, including a study that assesses the feasibility of implementing innovative urban farming solutions to mitigate climate



Photo credit
UNFPA and WHO

To celebrate World Cities Day and raise awareness of marine pollution, UN-Habitat organized a beach clean-up campaign in partnership with the Capital Governorate and the Embassy of the Philippines. Over 600 people actively participated in the event. Yusuf Lori, the Director of Information and Follow-up Department Capital Governorate, commented,

This collaboration during Urban October strives to bring global awareness to the importance of protecting our environment and emphasizes the need to take local action to make a global impact.

change as well as a country-level analysis of the complex linkages between climate change and human mobility, and their impact on the environment, ecosystems and natural resources.

The awareness and knowledge of various stakeholders on the links between urbanization and the environment, and how urban planning is crucial to support climate change mitigation and adaptation was raised in the framework of a series of events organized during Urban October, an initiative aimed at promoting a better urban future. The awareness of children in school was also enhanced on the impact of climate on water resources through dedicated awareness-raising sessions.

♦ Improving food security and nutrition

The arid climate and limited freshwater resources pose significant challenges to local food production and food security. UNCT continued to apply thought leadership and expertise to help strengthen food security. A revised draft of the Food Security Strategy was produced in 2022 with UNCT technical support and advice. The document addresses the challenges of climate change

and water scarcity, and the risks of food supply and food price fluctuations under the overarching principles of sustainability and nutrition, and food safety and utilization.

During the year, UNCT further worked towards the consolidation of national capacities to collect and analyse data for food and agricultural statistics as well as to better understand and address the complex relationships between human, animal and environmental health which have direct implications for food security. Over 70 professionals benefited from strengthened knowledge and skills on food security-related issues following their participation in capacity development events organized with UNCT assistance. The strengthened national capacities to produce food and agricultural statistics, coupled with UNCT technical support, allowed for the development and piloting of the Bahrain Agricultural Survey in 2022.



Photo credit
FAO

FAO staff at a local farm in Bahrain design and develop testing tools for data collection and survey monitoring to support the development of the Bahrain Strategic Plan for Agricultural Statistics 2021–2025. These efforts laid the foundation for further strengthening agricultural statistics in 2022.

Outcome 2

Quality, comprehensive social services



Contributing agencies



Contribution to the SDGs



Expenditure by top five SDGs in thousands USD



Source of funds



Key results



National commitments on **Transforming Education** endorsed at national level.



Integration of the **SDGs in student learning** advanced.



Food-Based Dietary Guidelines finalized.



> 120,000 people reached with information on healthy habits to reduce noncommunicable diseases.



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



2 WHO Collaborating Centres redesignated.



> 170 Ministry of Health staff trained to advance the realization of Universal Health Coverage and other health-related SDGs.



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



Evidence base for **ethical recruitment** strengthened.



Ministry of Interior capacities on rights-based border management enhanced.



50 asylum seekers in Bahrain reached with information on asylum procedures and benefited from individual counselling.

UNCT support to the strengthening of social sector policies and systems to improve the delivery of quality, inclusive services for the population in Bahrain resulted in several important achievements in the fields of education, health and urban development as well as in consolidated national capacities to ensure the protection of vulnerable groups.

• Enhancing the quality of education

Recognizing the value of education and the pressing challenges that education is facing in today's world, the United Nations Secretary-General convened the Transforming Education Summit in 2022. During the event, the Government underlined its commitments to transform education. These commitments were the culmination of an intensive and inclusive preparatory process, implemented with UNCT technical guidance and support. The process involved several consultations that resulted in key recommendations to shape the future of education which informed the national commitments undertaken in the field and the new Government Action Plan for 2023–2026.

Universities hold great potential for the advancement of the SDGs through leadership, knowledge sharing and creation, and innovation. Therefore, UNCT continues to strengthen its partnerships with academia. As a result, further progress was made in the establishment of an SDGs Hub and an Innovation Lab at the University of Bahrain to plan and monitor SDG-related efforts and support student innovation with a focus on the SDGs, respectively. Integration of the SDGs in student learning also moved forward, including through support for the development of new courses and the delivery of previous ones contributing to improved education programmes.

Early childhood development provides the foundation for success later in life. To increase awareness about the importance of early childhood development, a large public information campaign was organized in Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia through United Nations regional agency efforts in 2022. The campaign provided relevant information to an audience of 5 million across the three countries.

• Promoting healthy lives and well-being

Health for all by all vision continued to guide UNCT work in promoting healthy lives and well-being with several notable results being achieved. Nearly 180 professionals from health and health-related sectors gained increased knowledge and skills to advance the realization of Universal Health Coverage and other health-related SDG targets following their participation in capacity development activities supported by UNCT. To address non-communicable diseases in the country, at least three studies were completed during the year in partnership with relevant institutions. The findings are already informing decision-making in the field. Food-Based Dietary Guidelines, developed with UNCT support, are also now in place.

The Nursing Division in the College of Health Sciences at the University of Bahrain, and the College of Medicine and Medical Sciences of the Arabian Gulf University were redesignated as World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centres, harnessing their expertise and capacities to support UNCT activities. Two cities in Bahrain, A'ali and Busaiteen, together with Al-Sayah were designated as healthy cities, bringing the total number of healthy cities in the country to four. Five universities were also designated as health-promoting universities after meeting all the required criteria for the two awards, reflecting their efforts to prioritize the health and well-being of the population.

Several significant health-related communication and advocacy efforts were implemented during the year reaching large segments of the population. Over 120,000 people, including about 60 per cent youth, were reached with information on healthy habits to promote behaviour aimed at preventing non-communicable diseases as part of the Healthy Habits campaign organized in partnership with the Ministry of Youth. A campaign to celebrate the International Day of the Midwife and a walkathon to promote physical activity and health for all were also organized during the year. In addition, the national risk communication to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and combat stigma around mpox was supported through the development and distribution of relevant content through social media channels.

• Creating inclusive, safe and resilient cities

UNCT support throughout the year brought forward the sustainable urban development agenda. On the policy front, a roadmap towards an e-waste management system was developed through a consultative process with UNCT technical assistance and advice. Implementation of the document is expected to lead to the sound management of hazardous materials in e-waste. UNCT also shared valuable knowledge and provided technical assistance in support of the implementation of the national afforestation plan through community awareness, with a focus on tools for the participatory design of public spaces.

UNCT further contributed to the strengthening of national capacities in the field. The first class of a professional diploma course in waste management, developed with UNCT support and offered by the Arabian Gulf University, graduated in 2022. In addition, technical personnel working on air quality management in Bahrain increased their knowledge and skills on source apportionment of desert



Photo credit
UNFPA and WHO

Seven athletes from Bahrain joined the Healthy Habits campaign organized by WHO and UNFPA to encourage healthy nutrition and physical activity among youth. The basketball and field sports para-athlete Roba Alomari, one of the participants in the campaign, stated,

As a group and for me personally, we all gained a lot of experience from participating in the Healthy Habits campaign. I hope that sport and a healthy lifestyle spread in our culture, especially for people with special needs.

dust following their participation in a regional workshop.

The sustainability of previous efforts aimed at promoting affordable and clean energy was consolidated in 2022 with the Sustainable Energy Unit, established with UNCT support previously, being integrated into the Electricity and Water Authority. UNCT continued to support efforts in the field including the provision of technical assistance in the development of policy papers on sustainable building certification to inform decision-making.

People in Bahrain gained new knowledge and insights on important urban issues through their participation in awareness-raising initiatives, including an advocacy event to promote accessible and inclusive public spaces for persons with disabilities under the patronage of the Supreme Council of Health together with relevant ministries and organizations. A range of actions and events were also organized to raise awareness on the importance of public and green spaces, climate change, and the value of urban heritage and urban regeneration, among others.

♦ **Strengthening social cohesion and protection of vulnerable groups**

Leaving no one behind is central to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the work of UNCT, which translated into several concrete results for the protection of vulnerable populations. Approximately 50 asylum seekers received information on procedures and benefited from individual counselling during the year. Asylum seekers now have easier access to information and can submit their applications more

easily online following the launch of a dedicated website in both Arabic and English.

The protection of foreign workers was enhanced during the year through the promotion of ethical, transparent and responsible recruitment practices. More specifically, in close partnership with the Labour Market Regulatory Authority, both a post-arrival orientation for foreign workers and a nationwide awareness-raising campaign targeting employers and foreign workers were designed and developed. A range of research products were also developed to promote and inform ethical recruitment initiatives. To further strengthen the protection of foreign worker populations, the capacities of the Ministry of Interior were consolidated with 15 of its officials participating in a specialized workshop, organized with UNCT support. The officials are now better prepared to counter transnational organized crime involved in irregular migration using a rights- and evidence-based approach.

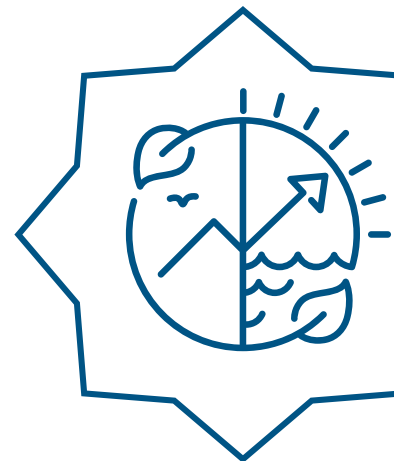
UNCT also supported the consolidation of local capacities to respond to gender-based violence by partnering with a civil society organization to improve a mobile application designed to provide victims with targeted information and comprehensive services. Messages aimed at raising awareness of the phenomenon were amplified with national and regional stakeholders now having increased awareness of the country's commitment to ending violence against women through United Nations documentation on digital media of the country's participation in the 2022 global campaign 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.



Photo credit WHO | Under the patronage of the Minister of Health, Dr. Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, and launched by Dr. Waleed Al Manea, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Health, Bahrain hosted the WHO "Walk the Talk" challenge, joining the global movement for health and well-being.

Outcome 3

Economic diversification, public administration and resilience



Contributing agencies



Contribution to the SDGs



Expenditure by top five SDGs in thousands USD



Source of funds



Key results

16,000 experts and entrepreneurs reached through **38 events** aimed at stimulating start-ups and the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises.

335 business plans developed by Bahraini entrepreneurs, with an estimated investment of **USD 12 million** and **225 jobs created**.

> 150 public and private sector professionals have increased knowledge of innovative practices and transformational leadership.

Banking sector professionals, members of the Bahrain Association of Banks, have greater awareness of the equality of opportunity principle.

≈ 100 specialists have increased knowledge and skills to combat trafficking in persons, including **25 specialists** who now have expert knowledge to train peers in the field.

Evidence base to inform policies and programmes aimed at promoting decent job creation, entrepreneurship and access to social protection measures for workers strengthened.

4 government institutions have increased knowledge of and capacity for monitoring urban and housing indicators.

44 law enforcement specialists can now support capacity-building for their peers in Bahrain and other countries on combating illicit drugs and crime.

UNCT targeted programmes and capacity development activities aimed at economic diversification and employment creation, as well as the strengthening of rule of law and innovation in the country, produced several important results in 2022.

• Increasing economic diversification

Diversifying the national economy is a key priority for the Government. UNCT continued to support the Government while also contributing to a more vibrant small and medium-sized enterprise sector in the region and beyond. Nearly 40 virtual events, workshops and forums designed to stimulate start-ups and the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises at the local, regional and international level were organized with UNCT support, including the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum and Arab Rally for Entrepreneurship and Innovation held in Dubai. The events brought together approximately 16,000 attendees with Bahraini experts and entrepreneurs joining both as participants and speakers.

UNCT supported the development of over 1,600 business plans through its programmes and initiatives attracting USD 20 million in estimated investments. About 20 per cent of all business plans were for Bahraini entrepreneurs, which brought USD 12 million in estimated investments and resulted in the creation of 225 jobs in Bahrain. Eight of the organized programmes specifically targeted Bahraini start-up entrepreneurs and existing small and medium-sized enterprises, with a strong focus on women entrepreneurs. A total of 190 Bahraini entrepreneurs participated in the 8 programmes, out of which more than 60 per cent were women.

• Promoting development-oriented and gender-responsive policies and tools

Throughout the year, UNCT contributed to an improved evidence base to inform social protection policies and programmes. A clear understanding of the existing social protection instruments available for foreign workers in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, including Bahrain, is now available following the completion of a comprehensive regional mapping undertaken by United Nations agencies with the active engagement of relevant public institutions and representatives of social partners and other stakeholders. A national profile was also drafted to assess the situation with respect to occupational safety and health, and recommend improvements in line with international labour standards, both in law and in practice.

The advancement of women's economic empowerment and youth employment through relevant policies and tools remained high on the agenda. Awareness among Bahraini banking professionals on the importance of policies for equal opportunities in the work environment was enhanced with UNCT support via the delivery of an information session as part of an online event convened by the Supreme Council for Women in partnership with the Central Bank and the Bahrain Association of Banks. The United Nations also initiated two analyses on women's labour force participation, including the participation of



Photo credit UNIDO | Closing ceremony of the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum organized by UNIDO ITPO Bahrain with the participation of Bahraini entrepreneurs.

women with disabilities in the labour market, to help tailor UNCT assistance in the field.

UNCT also helped consolidate the innovation and leadership capacities of public and private sector professionals for the ultimate benefit of society. Over 150 professionals from both sectors gained new insights on innovative practices and transformational leadership through their participation in the Innovation Practices Forum organized with the support of the United Nations in Bahrain. The event covered 24 key innovative practices in areas ranging from strategic planning and policy making to operational performance and quality of service delivery, focusing on enabling environment and capacity development components.

• Consolidating rule of law, access to justice and safety and security

Building on the success from previous years, UNCT continued to support efforts aimed at combating trafficking in persons in the country. As a result, and within the framework of the Regional Centre of Excellence in the Field of Combating Trafficking in Persons, 25 master trainers completed expert training in the field and are ready to train their peers. Approximately 150 government officials from various institutions increased their knowledge and skills to combat and respond to trafficking in persons and cases of exploitation in the work environment.



Photo credit
IOM

A three-day train-the-trainer workshop was organized by IOM and the Labour Market Regulatory Authority from 13–15 December 2022 under the auspices of Bahrain's Regional Centre of Excellence and Capacity Building for Combating Trafficking in Persons. In evaluating the workshop, one participant noted,

It was a very stimulating and interesting workshop, well-organized and presented. The trainer was helpful and understood our needs.

Three sets of draft standard operating procedures were produced or were in development towards the end of the year to support the effective implementation of the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Persons which will contribute to the standardization of practice in the field once approved. A Forced Labour Observatory was also launched. Although a global initiative to build a warehouse on forced labour and trafficking across countries, it includes a dedicated page for Bahrain. With the launch of the platform, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders gained access to accurate and up-to-date data and information on forced labour to inform their work.

UNCT continued to support the comprehensive capacity development initiative for law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners. Building on previous efforts, UNCT contributed to the expansion of the pool of expert instructors in the areas of combating illicit drugs and crime by conducting a training-of-trainers course for 44 officials of the Ministry of Interior. UNCT also advised members of the National Anti-Money Laundering Committee on enhancing the effectiveness of the national anti-money laundering regime.

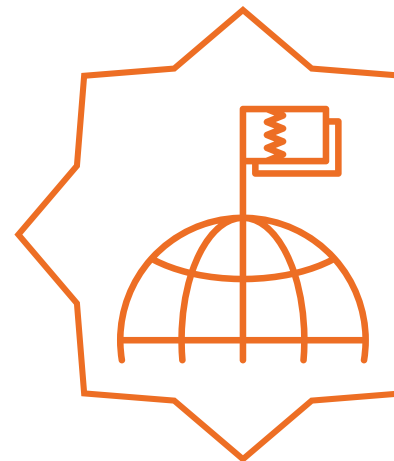
• Strengthening research and data capacities

Policymakers need quality and timely data as well as solid analysis to implement the 2030 Agenda and monitor progress on the SDGs. With data being a cross-cutting area of work, UNCT results in this field are reflected throughout this report. A few additional results in this area, however, include the finalization of an assessment on the social economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and the development of a draft report on the challenges and opportunities for financing urban infrastructure in the Arab region. Both studies were undertaken in partnership with the Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies and contribute to a strengthened evidence base for policy making.

Knowledge and capacities of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, and those of the Information and eGovernment Authority for monitoring urban and housing indicators were also strengthened through specialized technical advice and support. In addition, high-level officials in three government institutions have increased awareness of the importance of urban data following UNCT advocacy efforts, evidenced by a formal request for developing an urban observatory for Bahrain.

Outcome 4

Bahrain among nations



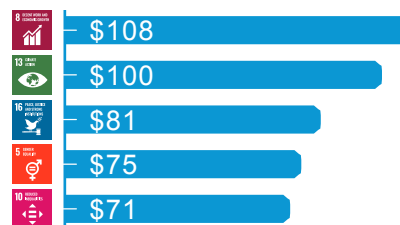
Contributing agencies



Contribution to the SDGs



Expenditure by top five SDGs in thousands USD



Source of funds



Key results

1st national implementation plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants developed and launched.

> 100 researchers, active social figures and government officials have increased awareness of volunteerism and its benefits.

HCFCs Phase out Management Plan, Stage I, completed, resulting in phasing out of 18.03 ozone depleting potential tons of HCFCs.

Comprehensive training programme launched for criminal justice professionals.

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

≈ 950 government, civil society and academic professionals are better equipped to promote and protect human rights.

> 15 civil society organizations and private sector organizations engaged in awareness-raising campaigns to promote the SDGs.

Bahrain's experience in the fields of combating trafficking in persons and alternatives to imprisonment **showcased at regional level.**

> 800 people, including youth, directly engaged in implementing and designing solutions to promote the SDGs.

Initial assessment of housing services for the lowest income quintile finalized to strengthen subsidy policies.

With UNCT support, the Government became better positioned to meet its international commitments for sustainable development, assume a greater role in international and regional partnerships and create a culture of global citizenships.

• Supporting the fulfilment of international commitments

In 2022, the Government was able to meet several of its commitments under international agreements with UNCT support. Measures taken towards the implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer ensured that the country remained on track to meeting its obligations under the treaty. The country also met its obligations under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants by submitting its periodic national report to the governing body of the convention. In addition, the first National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention was launched during the year, establishing a clear roadmap towards the protection of human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants.

UNCT facilitated Bahrain's participation in regional and global events to engage in dialogue on sustainable development issues and share its knowledge and experience in the field with other governments and stakeholders. In addition to events mentioned previously, UNCT supported the participation of Bahrain in the International Migration Review Forum which took stock of the ongoing implementation of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and where Bahrain supported the adoption of a Progress Declaration for

priority areas of future work. UNCT also supported the country's participation in and presentation of its national report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda – the first such report to be submitted in the Arab region – at the High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly held in April 2022.

• Supporting the engagement of civil society organizations and relevant institutions in the promotion and advancement of the SDGs

The United Nations development system continued its efforts to increase awareness around the SDGs and promote engagement of civil society through their promotion and advancement. Three global awards offered by Bahrain or in partnership with Bahrain-based organizations were implemented during the year with United Nations support, including the King Hamad Youth Empowerment Award to Achieve the SDGs, the Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa Global Award for Women's Empowerment and the Prince Mohammad bin Fahd International Foundation Insignia for Best Voluntary Work.

UNCT, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and five youth-serving organizations, continued to implement the Youth Leadership Programme by supporting a group of 40 young people to engage in sustainable development



Photo credit
UN Women

Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa Global Award for Women's Empowerment winners with Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, UN Women Executive Director Dr. Sima Sami Bahous and UN Women Regional Director for Arab States Ms. Susanne Mikhael Eldhagen. In the words of Evans Wadongo (left), the winner of the civil society category, the award.

Has enabled us to increase capacities and skills for women through women groups. The award itself has enabled us to reach 20 more women groups, which has enabled hundreds of women to have better skills in business development and micro-entrepreneurship.

by equipping them with the necessary tools to develop their own unique and innovative solutions to address real-life challenges. In addition, four Bahraini nationals were embedded as volunteers in United Nations agencies to both support the organization and to gain valuable knowledge on sustainable development in the process.



Photo credit
UN RCO

Jassim Mustapha Abdulredha, joined UNIC in Manama in 2022 as a United Nations volunteer in a position specifically aimed at integrating more persons with disabilities in the work of the organization. In discussing his aspirations at the beginning of his assignment, he mentioned,

“I look forward to improving my skills and abilities within the team to help advance the SDGs in the Kingdom of Bahrain.” – an aspiration that became a reality.

To further promote volunteerism and support youth empowerment at national level, UNCT released a promotional video on volunteerism to celebrate International Volunteer Day and, in partnership with a civil society organization, supported the organization of a conference on volunteerism held under the patronage of the Minister of Social Development. More than 100 humanitarian researchers, active social figures and government officials increased their awareness of volunteerism by attending the event.

Twelve private sector and civil society organizations engaged in a series of initiatives together with UNCT to promote sustainable urban development with a focus on mobility, heritage, public spaces, urban farming, waste management and nature-based solutions. A total of 7 initiatives, also targeted at children and youth, were organized with the participation of around 800 people who had the opportunity to learn about the importance of public transportation and benefits of urban mobility, gain additional knowledge about the value of public and green spaces, and engage in beach cleaning as well as awareness raising activities on waste management, among others.

• Strengthening the capacity of national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and other partners to promote human rights

The promotion and protection of human rights remains a key priority for UNCT with interventions in the field particularly focusing on strengthening national capacities. To support preparations for the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), an intensive capacity-building workshop on best practices and submission guidelines was conducted for relevant authorities. Following the workshop, the Government submitted its national UPR report to the Human Rights Council. A training session on the means for the implementation of the Human Rights National Action Plan was also delivered to professionals with responsibilities for translating the provisions of the document into practice.

During the year, steps were taken towards strengthening capacities among criminal justice institutions, professionals and other stakeholders to promote and protect human rights. Around 30 members of civil society organizations and academia increased their awareness of juvenile justice by participating in a roundtable discussion organized by UNCT. In addition, a comprehensive training programme for criminal justice system professionals with a focus on human rights was launched during the year in partnership with the Special Investigation Unit, contributing to strengthened training capacities in the field. Over 900 participants have already benefited from the programme since its launch.

UNCT also continued to engage with the Attorney General's Office to promote the use of non-custodial measures and sanctions, in the region and beyond, by supporting knowledge sharing and exchange. As part of these efforts, the legislation and experience of Bahrain – a pioneer across the region in this field – were showcased at an international and a regional conference. The experience of Bahrain in the field of preventing and combating trafficking in persons while promoting victims' rights was also presented as a model for other countries, particularly its National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Persons – the first-ever created in the region, including through study visits.

Efforts aimed at the promotion of the right to adequate housing, as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, were also supported through technical assistance and advice. Specifically, an initial desk assessment of suitable housing services that could be applied to the lowest income quintile in Bahrain was finalized and submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning as a first step towards strengthening subsidy policies and access to housing for the most vulnerable groups.



Photo credit MoFA | Interactive workshop on the means for the implementation of the Human Rights National Action Plan was delivered by the UN RCO Human Rights Coordinator, Assad Saleh (left).

United Nations support to partnerships and financing the 2030 Agenda

In 2022, UNCT continued to build and strengthen partnerships for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. UNCT further consolidated its long-lasting partnership with the Government through bilateral discussions and by engaging in strategic dialogue as part of the organization of two SCF Steering Committee meetings. The dialogue focused on issues of common concern including progress in the implementation of SCF outcomes, joint programming, support for the reinforcement of human rights capacities, and strengthening of the SDG financing architecture.

Discussions led to the approval by the SCF Steering Committee for further consideration of three comprehensive joint programme concept notes that seek to effect transformational changes in the fields of education, combating human trafficking and SDG localization. Further examination of the joint programme concept notes at the technical level brought together representatives of MoFA as the coordinating and convening entity on the side of the Government, Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Ministry of Sustainable Development and relevant line ministries, other government entities and United Nations agencies for each joint programme, creating a shared understanding of key development challenges and solutions to overcome them.

The conceptualization of a pooled fund took shape during the year to streamline SDG financing, prioritized in the two SCF Steering Committee discussions held during the year. Validation meetings were organized with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, at the end of 2022 to assess the feasibility of the fund's implementation and the opportunities for private capital mobilization towards the achievement of the SDGs in Bahrain. Broader topics related to SDG financing such as SDG budgeting and integrated national financing also came into focus during the year as part of the regular dialogue established with the Government.

In the context of the Government restructuring in 2022, UNCT renewed all key partnerships with ministries and other government entities. UNCT also established a fruitful collaborative relationship with the Ministry of Sustainable Development with a special focus on the preparation of the second VNR by the Government. The process, initiated in the second half of 2022, benefited from the specialized technical guidance and advice provided through a United Nations multi-agency effort in the framework of the partnership with the Ministry of Sustainable Development.

UNCT further contributed to the strengthening of



Photo credit
MoFA

On 6 October 2022, the Government and the United Nations convened the second SCF Steering Committee to examine three comprehensive joint programmes aimed at addressing key development challenges facing the country.

multistakeholder dialogues in different fields which is essential to tackling complex development challenges and accelerating progress towards achievement of the SDGs. By way of example, UNCT helped bring together state actors across various sectors in a national workshop to foster integrated and coordinated action on the health of people, animals and the environment. UNCT also supported the consolidation of cross-sectoral partnerships to enhance the climate resilience of the water sector in the country.

The United Nations family continued to foster partnerships with and among civil society, private sector organizations and academia to advance the SDGs, with around one-third of interventions being undertaken in collaboration with

partners beyond government institutions. For example, UNCT brought together over 10 civil society and private sector organizations as part of a series of events to promote sustainable urban development, partnered with Bahraini youth athletes to advocate for healthy lifestyle choices. UNCT also continued to engage with academic institutions to raise awareness on sustainable development issues. Notably, the benefits of UNCT partnership efforts extend beyond the country's borders and contribute to relief efforts in Afghanistan, as well as meeting the humanitarian needs of displaced Ukrainians, Afghans and Syrian refugees in Jordan.



Photo credit
UNHCR

The Bahrain Humanitarian Foundation and UNHCR signed three agreements for USD 3 million to support relief efforts in Afghanistan and in response to the humanitarian needs of displaced Ukrainians, Afghans and Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Results of the United Nations working more and better together: United Nations coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

Key results



Results groups operational and 15 results group meetings held



First joint work plan finalized and continuously updated, and first joint performance review conducted



3 comprehensive joint programme concept notes developed and presented to the SCF Steering Committee



Voluntary National Review preparations and Bahrain's participation in the Transforming Education Summit supported through an interagency effort



3 workshops to strengthen staff capacities implemented



Gender equality and disability inclusion advanced

UNCT is now better positioned to support the Government to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, following a year of targeted efforts to consolidate coherence, effectiveness and efficiency. In 2022, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNHCR strengthened their in-country operations by expanding their teams to include liaison staff on the ground, and UN Women finalized discussions with the Government for the establishment of a representative office in the country. The enhancement of UNCT in-country capacities has already contributed to more and better collaboration among agencies and the development and implementation of new joint initiatives.

Collaboration among agencies was also fostered through UNCT coordination mechanisms. First created at the end of 2021, results groups held a total of 15 meetings during 2022 to discuss issues of joint concern, engage in joint planning and assess their performance in the implementation of SCF. As a result, UNCT reviewed its yearly performance for the first time and finalized its first joint work plan that provides a comprehensive overview of UNCT programmes, projects and initiatives in Bahrain. UNCT presented the outcomes of both exercises to the Government, reflecting greater accountability and transparency for results. The development of the next joint work plan was also initiated in the second half of the year.

The strengthening of UNCT coordination mechanisms further enabled formulation of the three joint programme concept notes previously mentioned in the fields of education, combating human trafficking and SDG localization. These are the first such concept notes to be put forward to the SCF Steering Committee and to be approved for further consideration. In addition, results

groups expanded their analytical base on urban agriculture, foreign workers health and the participation of women with disabilities in the workforce as well as engaged in joint advocacy to promote disability-inclusive public spaces. Disability inclusion and safe, orderly and regular migration also continued to be promoted through the UNCT Disability Inclusion Task Force and the United Nations Network on Migration, respectively, which remained active throughout the year.

Integrated interagency support provided to the government in preparation of its second VNR in 2022, further demonstrates the increased coherence of UNCT work. Similarly, the support provided by UNCT to the Government in the context of its participation in the Transforming Education Summit was an interagency effort. In both cases, the now empowered and independent Resident Coordinator, backed by a reinforced Resident Coordinator Office, was the driving force behind the interagency support – a clear success of the United Nations development system reform.

UNCT continued to invest in the capacity of its staff by holding a series of workshops on mainstreaming gender equality, human rights and sustaining peace into joint work planning, ways of engagement with international human rights mechanisms and PSEA. UNCT also contributed to strengthening the capacities of other UNCTs in the region and beyond by sharing good practices, including the effective communication of UNCT results as well as implementation of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard³ exercise, highlighting the growing importance of interagency collaboration and coordination to achieve gender equality.



Photo credit UNFPA | In September 2022, the PSEA Taskforce of the United Nations organized a series of in-person workshops for UNCT. Over 60 participants increased their awareness on PSEA by attending the workshops, which included separate sessions for non-technical support staff, United Nations senior management, and United Nations technical staff.

Working in line with the United Nations Communication Strategy, the United Nations Communication Group ensured the coherence of advocacy and communication efforts. Opinion pieces and exclusive interviews posted in printed media and messages delivered by United Nations officials on sustainable development topics and amplified through social media, were among the tools used to share UNCT work with partners and the general public more broadly, and to advocate for the advancement of the SDGs. In addition to the successful communication efforts previously mentioned, UNCT also implemented several social media campaigns to celebrate International Women’s Day, International Youth Day and International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and to commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day.

To celebrate the work of the United Nations in the country, UNCT hosted United Nations Day in-person for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNCT utilized the opportunity to raise awareness and highlight the value of volunteerism and the role of youth in sustainable development. Notable media products that were developed and disseminated in 2022 included the previous year’s report and a UNCT presentation booklet to communicate key information about UNCT in Bahrain. In the spirit of leaving no one behind and to celebrate the International Day of Sign Languages, UNCT also produced a video on the work of the United Nations using sign language.

On the operations front, UNCT continued the implementation of its Business Operations Strategy for 2020–2022. The estimated gains realized from the implementation of the strategy constituted USD 34,783 for 2020 and 2021, with possibly further gains being realized

in 2022 but which remain to be quantified. As in previous years, through the generous support provided by the government amounting to around USD 450,000, UNCT benefited from rent-free joint premises and coverage of management costs for United Nations House. Notably, as a result of UNCT efforts to mainstream disability inclusion in its operations, several persons with disabilities joined the team. UNCT also achieved gender parity in staffing during the year.

UNCT overall efforts aimed at mainstreaming gender equality and disability inclusion in programming, operations and communications allowed important progress in the implementation of accountability frameworks for UNCTs in these two fields. UNCT went from not meeting any minimum requirements for UNCTs under the disability inclusion accountability framework at the end of 2021 to meeting 21 per cent of those requirements by the end of 2022. UNCT also went from meeting 13 per cent of the minimum requirements for UNCTs under the gender equality accountability framework to meeting 31 per cent of those requirements in the same period. However, renewed efforts will be required to ensure progress in mainstreaming youth in UNCT work.

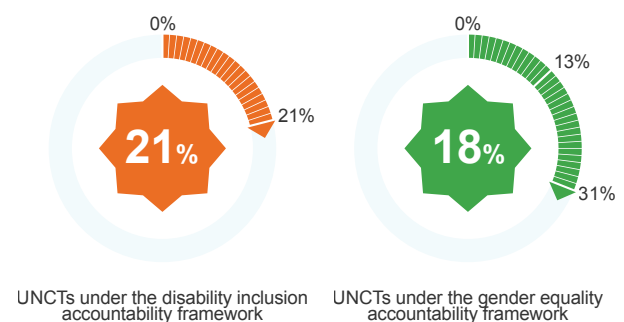




Photo credit | On 26 October 2022, the United Nations celebrated United Nations Day in an event that brought together key government partners, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives
UN RCO of civil society, academia and the business community.

Key challenges and lessons learned

• National commitment to sustainable development



Strong national commitment and leadership are indispensable in advancing development priorities, including through multisectoral and intersectoral collaboration that can facilitate progress and drive positive change for society. Therefore, advocacy efforts to promote the 2030 Agenda and continuous dialogue with the Government, as well as identification of opportunities for the consolidation of collaboration within and across sectors under the leadership of the Government will remain key to the work of UNCT. The newly established Ministry of Sustainable Development, in particular, may play an important role in strengthening coordination among different stakeholders and mobilizing the necessary expertise and resources for the achievement of the SDGs.

• Availability of financial resources for development



The limited availability of financial and human resources continued to constrain progress on development results. UNCT benefited from significant government funding and support from other development partners and relied on sizeable in-kind agency contributions to implement its programmes and projects during the year. However, the resources available were insufficient to cover planned activities fully, with further resource mobilization efforts being required.

• Changes in government structure



The changes in the structure and composition of the Government in 2022 impacted the implementation of some activities and required the rethinking of others, given that priorities needed to be reconfirmed and programmes needed to be adjusted in line with any new expectations. At the same time, the restructuring of the Government opened new opportunities for collaboration, especially with the establishment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, which demonstrates the firm commitment of the Government in advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

• Partnerships and stakeholder engagement



The unprecedented scope of the 2030 Agenda requires that all levels of government, development partners, civil society, private sector, think tanks, academic institutions and the general public work in tandem to achieve the SDGs. At the same time, participatory mechanisms need to be put in place to facilitate the meaningful engagement of those most disadvantaged and marginalized to ensure that the benefits of development are distributed in an equitable manner. Therefore, the strengthening of partnerships across the board, including with the private sector which holds underexplored potential for development, and ensuring the engagement of women, youth, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in development processes will need to be further prioritized.

• Physical presence of programme staff



More than half of United Nations entities working in Bahrain implement their activities through sub-regional and regional offices, where one third are physically present. While appreciating the overall delivery footprint in 2022, in-country presence remains an asset for regular engagement with partners and effective programming. Further ways of engagement need to be explored to ensure that all UN entities can contribute to the development of Bahrain in the most effective manner possible.

• Data availability and analysis



The availability of timely and accurate data, including disaggregated data, is essential to ensuring that development challenges are appropriately identified and development efforts respond effectively to existing needs. Data availability is also crucial to assessing progress towards the achievement of national development priorities and the SDGs. Continuous efforts are required to consolidate the national statistical system and streamline SDG monitoring and reporting process in the country, with the VNR process providing an excellent opportunity to identify gaps in available data and opportunities for the improvement of national statistical capacities.

Financial overview and resource mobilization

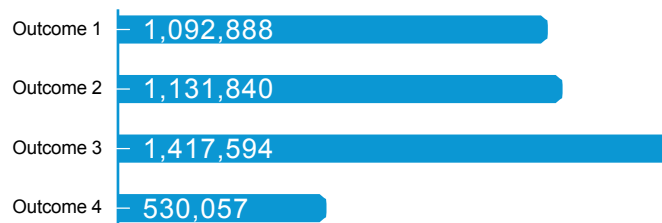
The total expenditure of UNCT under SCF amounted to USD 4.2 million in 2022. The figure includes both core and non-core resources, and reflects financial and in-kind contributions. About one-third of the spent resources was directed towards activities focused on economic diversification, public administration and resilience

followed by activities targeting the strengthening of social services and activities focused on the environment, energy and food which each accounted for approximately a quarter of the expenditure. The remaining expenditure was directed towards support aimed at enhancing the role of the government in international and regional partnerships.

Contribution to the SDGs



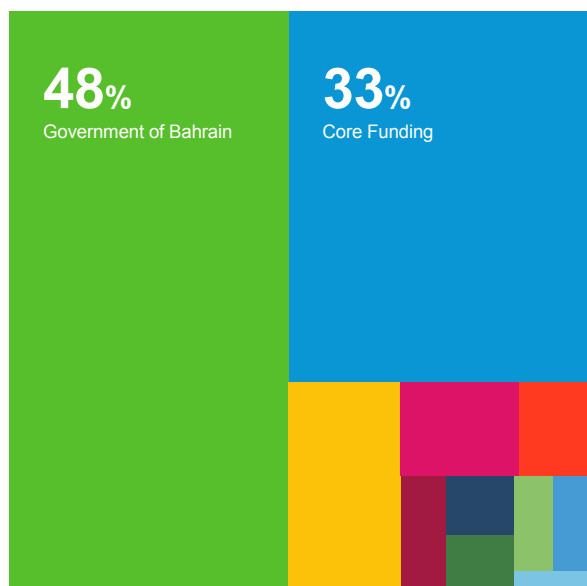
Expenditure by outcome in USD



In terms of funding sources, about half of the expenditure was incurred from financial contributions made by the Government and approximately one third of the total costs were covered from core agency funding. The remainder of resources came from the Green Climate Fund, Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, Global Environment Facility, as well as the governments of Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United

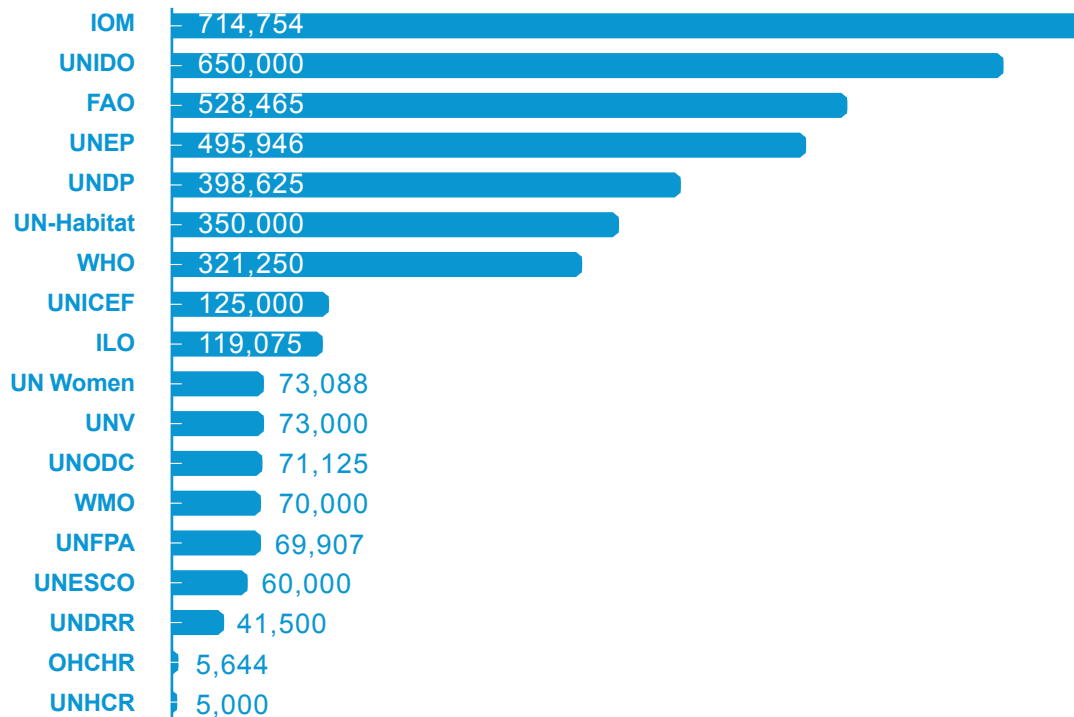
Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. Overall, about two thirds of resources came from non-core funding. The funds were expended by 18 United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies that implemented activities in 2022. Expenditure across agencies varied significantly but all UNCT members made important contributions to the achievement of SCF results, working in synergy to ensure a coherent response to the country's needs and priorities.

Expenditure by source of funding



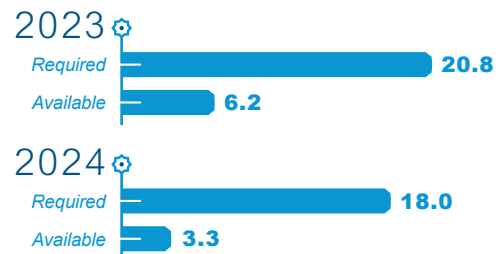
- 7% The Green Climate Fund
- 3% Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol
- 2% Government of Switzerland
- 2% Government of the Netherlands
- 1% The Global Environment Facility
- 1% Government of the United Kingdom
- 1% Government of United Arab Emirates
- 1% Government of Sweden
- 1% Government of Finland

⚙️ Expenditure by agency in USD



During the year, UNCT engaged in the development of its next joint work plan for 2023–2024 as an extension of its previous two-year plan that ended in 2022. The new plan includes a list of ambitious undertakings in support of SCF implementation. The total estimated required resources for the plan amount to USD 38.8 million, out of which nearly USD 9.5 is available. In 2022, UNCT already started to take steps towards bridging the gap in resources by consolidating efforts through the development of joint programmes and will continue to engage in joint resource mobilization activities moving forward.

⚙️ Required and available resources in millions USD for 2023–2024 by year





Chapter 03

Photo credit
Shutterstock

United Nations Country Team key focus for 2023

• SCF effective implementation

Effective implementation of SCF will remain a primary focus for UNCT throughout 2023. Building on previous successes and lessons learned, further efforts will be made in all priority areas of SCF 2021–2024 to support the country in achieving the SDGs and national priorities. With the recent approval by parliament of the Government Action Plan 2023–2026, UNCT will seek to align its programming to the new strategic imperatives to ensure a coherent and coordinated response to the country's needs and aspirations. UNCT will also undertake a final evaluation of SCF to inform the next cooperation framework.

• Formulation of a new Cooperation Framework

While implementation of SCF will continue to be a key priority for UNCT in 2023, attention will also be given to the drafting of a new Cooperation Framework that will guide its work starting in 2025. An inclusive and consultative process will be put in place for the formulation of the new strategic vision. Lessons learned from the implementation of the current Cooperation Framework, and an analysis of emerging trends and transformations in the local and regional context will inform the new document ensuring its tailoring to specific needs and realities on the ground. In the spirit of partnerships and the whole-of-society approach to development, the document will be drafted in close cooperation with the Government and with the engagement of all other relevant stakeholders in the process.

• Leaving no one behind

Advancing gender equality and human rights as well delivering on the promise to leave no one behind will stay front and centre in the work of UNCT moving forward. Efforts will be made to support the Government in the implementation of its National Human Rights Action Plan, and further strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights in line with international commitments. Gender equality, disability inclusion and youth mainstreaming into programming and operations will receive special attention and renewed efforts will be made towards strengthening coordination mechanisms around these areas.

• Preparation of the Voluntary National Review

Preparation of VNR, to be presented by the Government at the next High-Level Political Forum in July 2023, was well underway at the beginning of the year. As a trusted partner of the Government in the process, UNCT, under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, will continue to lend its full support towards the development of an evidence-based and forward-looking analysis of the country's progress in advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, reflective of diverse voices, perspectives and experiences.

• Joint programme development

UNCT development of the first three joint programme concept notes in alignment with global and country-level guidelines is a step forward towards the next level of inter-agency collaboration. However, the potential for transformational change that these programmes encapsulate can only be realized with their development into fully-fledged joint programme proposals, mobilization of required resources and eventual implementation. Hence, in 2023, UNCT will dedicate special attention to moving technical discussions on the three concept notes forward as well as identification of required resources for programme implementation, while also looking to develop new joint initiatives.

• SDG partnerships and financing

The scale and ambitions of the 2030 Agenda require the engagement of all segments of society in its implementation if the SDGs are to be achieved. UNCT will, therefore, continue to strengthen its partnerships in 2023 across all sectors. Relationships with the private sector will be particularly in focus during the year as UNCT explores new opportunities for collaboration. Discussions on the establishment of a pooled fund as a mechanism for catalytic funding to deliver on SCF priorities aligned with the SDGs and the national development goals, including with the participation of the private sector and financial institutions, will also be prioritized.

Annexes

Annex 1. List of key development partners in 2022

Financing partners

Government of Bahrain

Green Climate Fund

Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol

Global Environment Facility

Government of Switzerland

Government the Netherlands

Government of the United Kingdom

Government of United Arab Emirates

Government of Sweden

Government of Finland

Implementing partners

Ahlia University

Arab Voluntary Union

Arabian Gulf University

Arab Open University

Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH)

Attorney General's Office

Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities

Bahrain Bus

Bahraini Catalyst Disabilities Association

Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (DERASAT)

Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Bahrain Diabetes Society

Bahrain Institute of Pearls and Gemstones

Bahrain Institute of Public Administration

Bahrain Meteorological Directorate

Bahrain National Commission for UNESCO

Bahrain National Assembly

Bahrain Nursing Society

Bahrain Royal Humanitarian Foundation

Bnature

Brinc Batelco

Budaiya Hub

Building and Wood Workers International

Capital Governorate

Diyar Al Muharraq

General Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions

Electricity and Water Authority

Embassy of Germany

Embassy of Israel

Embassy of Palestine

Embassy of the United Kingdom

Embassy of Philippines

Eskan Bank

Information and eGovernment Authority

Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies

International Federation of Medical Students' Associations

Kingdom University

Labour Market Regulatory Authority

Manama Shapers

Ministry of Cabinet Affairs

Ministry of Education

Ministry of Finance and National Economy

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning

Ministry of Interior

Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments

Ministry of Labour

Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture

Ministry of Social Development

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Ministry of Youth

Ministry of Works

Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for
Diplomatic Studies

Muharraq Governorate

Mun Kids

National Initiative for Agricultural Development

National Institution for Human Rights

National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA)

Northern Governorate

Regional Centre for Information and Communication
Technology (RCICT)

Royal Academy of Police

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Shamsaha

Special Investigation Unit

Supreme Council for Environment

Supreme Council for Health

Supreme Council for Women

Supreme Judicial Council

Symbiosis

Tamkeen

University of Bahrain

University of Technology Bahrain

Urban Islander

Urban Planning and Development Authority

Water Resources Council

Annex 2. Acronyms

ESCWA	• United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
FAO	• Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	• Gross domestic product
ILO	• International Labour Organization
IOM	• International Organization for Migration
ITPO	• Investment and technology promotion office
ITU	• International Telecommunication Union
MoFA	• Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OHCHR	• Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PSEA	• Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
SDGs	• Sustainable Development Goals
SCF	• Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNCT	• United Nations Country Team
UNDP	• United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	• United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	• United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	• The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	• United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	• United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNHCR	• United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIC	• United Nations Information Centre
UNICEF	• United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	• United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOCT	• United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
UNODC	• United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRCO	• UN Resident Coordinator's Office
UNV	• United Nations Volunteers programme
UN Women	• United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	• Universal Periodic Review
VNR	• Voluntary National Review
WHO	• World Health Organization
WMO	• World Meteorological Organization



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