UNITED NATIONS BAHRAIN

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

2025-2029

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United Nations Country Team in Bahrain

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Joint Statement

In 2023, the United Nations in Bahrain embarked on the development of a new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2025-2029 with the Government of Bahrain (GoB) to replace the outgoing Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SCF) for 2021-2024. The new UNSDCF promotes a coherent and coordinated strategy to implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while contributing to the attainment of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and the Government Plan 2023-2026: I) Raising the Living Standard of Citizens to Preserve their Gains, II) Justice, Security and Stability, III) Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development and IV) High-quality and Competitive Government Services. It seeks to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by capitalizing on key enablers. It was developed under the principles of the United Nations Development System Reform, using the new guidelines for the next generation of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. Launched in 2019, the reform places development at the heart of the United Nations, emphasizing the UN's 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs. It aims to reposition the United Nations as a stronger, better-defined collective identity and a trusted, reliable, cohesive, accountable, and effective partner to countries working towards the 2030 Agenda.

The priorities identified in the Cooperation Framework are:

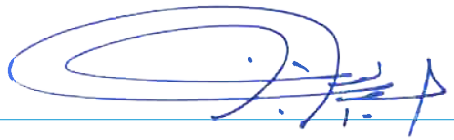
- **Strategic Priority Area 1**: People — Enhanced Social Equity and Well-Being
- **Strategic Priority Area 2:** Prosperity — Sustainable Economic Transformation
- **Strategic Priority Area 3:** Peace — Governance for Justice and Human Rights
- **Strategic Priority Area 4:** Planet — Resilient Environmental Stewardship

These priorities are supported by four core outcomes, aiming towards universal access to quality services and resilient public spaces, a diversified and inclusive economy bolstered by sustainable practices, governance structures that guarantee justice and human rights, and robust environmental stewardship, driving sustainable and inclusive development in harmony with global goals and national visions. Partnerships, which are central to the 2030 Agenda, are mainstreamed across all four strategic priorities.

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Bahrain led by the United Nations Resident Coordinator, is composed of representatives of 22 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes UNAFPs working jointly to support the country in achieving its development priorities aligned with the SDGs. Seven UNAFPs are physically present in Bahrain while 14 are Non-Resident Agencies (NRA).

In signing, the partners endorse this UNSDCF and emphasize their joint commitment towards fulfilling its objectives. The UNSDCF will be reviewed yearly by a Joint Steering Committee (JSC) of the GoB and the UNCT, thereby allowing the Government and the United Nations to reassess the designated areas of work and strengthen and adapt as needed, with the goal of accelerating progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030.

GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN



H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Alzayani

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

UNITED NATIONS

Khaled El Mekwad

UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR
IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Signatures

FAO

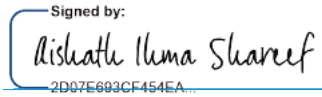
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Kayan Jaff

ILO

International Labour Organization

Ruba Jaradat



IOM

International Organization for Migration

Ihma Shareef

ITU

International Telecommunication Union

Adel Darwish

OHCHR

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mazen Shaqoura

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

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United Nations Development Programme

Asmaa Shalabi

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United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Karim Khalil

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Salah Khaled

UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

Sami Dimassi

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Khaled Khalifa

UN-HABITAT

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Ayman El-Hefnawi

UNIDO
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
Hanan Hanzaz Fehri

UNDRR
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
Nora Achcar

UNOCT
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
Vladimir Voronkov

UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Hatem Aly

Signé par :
Jocelyn Fenard
3F1290F2E224442...

UNFPA
United Nations Population Fund
Jocelyn Fenard

Olga Zubritskaya-Devyatkina

UNV
United Nations Volunteers
Olga Zubritskaya-Devyatkina

UN WOMEN
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
Moez Doraid

Signed by:
Dr Tasnim Atatrah
736B39970E5448E...

WHO
World Health Organization
Tasnim Atatrah

WMO
World Meteorological Organization
Celeste Saulo

UNIC Manama
United Nations Information Centre
Ahmed Ben Lassoued

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Executive Summary

The UNSDCF for Bahrain (2025–2029) represents a strategic partnership between the United Nations and the Kingdom of Bahrain, designed to advance the country's ambitious journey towards sustainable development, equity, and prosperity. Rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and closely aligned with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and the Government Plan 2023-2026, the UNSDCF focuses on transformative actions that cater to the evolving needs of Bahrain and its people. Through an inclusive consultative process involving a broad range of stakeholders, including youth groups, women, workers, trade unions and representatives for people with vulnerabilities[1], this framework outlines a unified approach to tackle the multifaceted challenges of sustainable development, while seizing opportunities to foster resilience, inclusivity, and economic diversification.

The UNSDCF is tailored to Bahrain's unique context and characteristics as a small, open, high-income, post-oil economy with a large body of expatriate workers, a highly climate-vulnerable arid, island city state with key geostrategic position in the Gulf. The UNSDCF is also cognizant of the last-mile development challenges of the country where the Government already has the fundamental structures and mechanisms for service delivery and social protection in place. It aims to accelerate SDG implementation by leveraging key enablers like digitization, artificial intelligence, and financial inclusion, while integrating youth into the development process.

Bahrain's commitment to sustainable development is underscored by its proactive measures to align national priorities with the SDGs. The UNSDCF leverages this alignment, focusing on four strategic priorities: enhanced social equity and well-being, sustainable economic transformation, governance for justice and human rights, and resilient environmental stewardship. These priorities encapsulate a holistic approach to development, integrating economic, social, and environmental dimensions to ensure no one is left behind. This alignment was achieved through a comprehensive consultation process that included diverse representation from Bahrain's diverse societal segments, ensuring that the voices of youth, women, workers, and populations with higher needs[2] were integral to the planning and decision-making processes.

Innovations and strategic partnerships stand at the forefront of the UNSDCF's implementation strategy. Recognizing the importance of collective action, the framework emphasizes the United Nations' role in bringing together Government, civil society, private sector, and international partners to co-create solutions that are sustainable, scalable, and impactful. Key innovations include the integration of digital technologies to enhance public services, the promotion of green economy principles for environmental sustainability, and the development of inclusive policies that ensure equitable access to opportunities for all citizens, especially the most vulnerable[3].

Adopting a system thinking perspective, the UNSDCF for Bahrain recognizes the dynamic interplay between various components of the national development ecosystem. Informed by a comprehensive understanding of this interconnectedness, the Framework is designed to be adaptive, responsive to changes, and grounded in the complex reality of Bahrain's socio-economic landscape.

The theory of change underpinning the UNSDCF articulates a clear pathway towards achieving sustainable development in Bahrain. It acknowledges the interdependencies among the strategic priorities and outlines the necessary conditions, actions, and partnerships to facilitate transformative change. By addressing key preconditions such as enhancing stakeholder capacity, aligning laws with international human rights standards, and promoting gender mainstreaming, the framework sets a solid foundation for progress towards the SDGs.

The United Nations' comparative advantage in Bahrain lies in its ability to provide integrated policy advice, technical expertise, and global best practices. Through a tailored UNCT configuration, the framework mobilizes the collective strengths of resident and non-resident United Nations entities to deliver cohesive and impactful support across all strategic priorities. This collaborative approach ensures that the UN's interventions are complementary and synergistic, maximizing the potential for sustainable development outcomes.

As Bahrain continues to navigate the complexities of the 21st century, the UNSDCF serves as a testament to the country's dedication to sustainable development and the UN's commitment to supporting these efforts. By fostering an environment of innovation, inclusivity, and partnership, the UNSDCF aims to accelerate progress towards a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future for all people living in Bahrain, contributing to the global pursuit of the 2030 Agenda.

[1] In this document, the term "people with vulnerabilities or higher needs" refer to people that may face specific challenges in accessing opportunities and services, necessitating targeted support and resources to improve their well-being. In Bahrain, these groups are acknowledged as integral parts of the nation's diverse social fabric. The final definition of people with vulnerabilities or higher needs will be jointly shaped through bilateral negotiations between United Nations Agencies, Funds, and Programmes (UNAPFs) and relevant line ministries or technical departments, ensuring a context-specific and collaborative approach tailored to Bahrain's unique landscape.

[2] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

[3] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Chapter 01

Country Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda is a pledge to ensure social inclusion, environmental protection, and economic development that is both sustainable and inclusive, to do so in partnership and peace. It is universal in scope and each of the 193 United Nations Member States are developing their own path to achieve this ambitious agenda.

The 2030 Agenda commits to 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB) and support the furthest behind first in a manner that targets their specific challenges and vulnerabilities. This generates an unprecedented demand for local and disaggregated data to analyse outcomes and track progress. The 2030 Agenda rests on the interconnected and indivisible nature of its 17 goals.

The 2030 Agenda embraces five critical dimensions: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership, also known as the '5Ps'. Traditionally viewed through the lens of three core elements – social inclusion (People), environmental protection (Planet), and economic growth (Prosperity) – sustainable development has evolved into a richer concept with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, which builds upon this traditional approach by adding two critical components: Peace and Partnership.

At the heart of this Cooperation Framework between the United Nations and the Kingdom of Bahrain, and of all contemporary United Nations-supported development efforts, resides a wider, ambitious, and holistic pursuit of the realization of a 'better and more sustainable future for all,' without leaving anyone behind and reaching the furthest behind first.

1.1 National Development Priorities

Bahrain's national development priorities are guided by its Economic Vision 2030, focusing on sustainability, competitiveness, and fairness. The vision aims for a diversified economy less reliant on hydrocarbons, improved human capital, efficient Government institutions, an enabling regulatory framework, world-class infrastructure, and enhanced social services. The Vision 2030's implementation involves four-year Government plans with specific pillars and objectives aligned with the SDGs.

The 2019-2022 GoB Plan focused on striking a fiscal balance between expenditure and revenue while continuing its economic growth, diversification of sources of revenue, monetary stability and comprehensive development. It aimed to transition the public sector's role from economic driver to regulator, in partnership with the private sector, to support innovation and improve citizens' living standards.

In 2021, the Government introduced the Economic Recovery Plan, a five-pillar plan to stimulate economic recovery, mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and update the Fiscal Balance Plan. This plan supports labour market reform, regulatory reform, strategic projects, and the development of priority sectors to boost Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the non-oil sector. The 2023-2026 Government Plan, «From Recovery to Sustainable Growth,» shifts focus to sustainable development across six policy pillars: sovereign and legislative; infrastructure and environment; economic recovery and fiscal sustainability; community services; improving standard of living; and Government performance and digital transformation. These pillars align with the 2030 Agenda's five dimensions: people, prosperity, planet, partnership, and peace.

1.2 Progress Towards the SDGs

The GoB has been making significant progress towards the country's Economic Vision 2030 – which largely harmonizes with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Bahrain's Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) in 2018 and 2023 highlighted achievements, challenges, and priorities for SDG acceleration but also revealed the need for tangible commitments and funding to ensure progress. As outlined in the 2023 VNR, Bahrain has seen an acceleration in addressing environmental challenges, investment in renewable energy, digitization, emergency and disaster preparedness, as well as enhancing fiscal sustainability challenges.

In particular, towards the goal of enhancing social equity and well-being, Bahrain has made significant strides in providing universal access to healthcare and education, supported by constitutional reforms and the establishment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development (MoS) in June 2022 to ensure alignment of Government policies and plans with the SDGs. A key achievement was the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing a whole-of-Government approach, and adopting innovative health strategies for infection prevention and control, as well as equitable access vaccines for all persons living in Bahrain. The Government also provided a financial and economic stimulus package amounting to BHD 4.5 billion, to counter the economic impact of the pandemic. In 2022, the country achieved its target set in 2013 to provide 40,000 new housing services to citizens and launched innovative affordable housing initiatives in partnership with the private sector. Challenges identified around the 2030 Agenda include fiscal sustainability for transformative investments and the need for accurate, timely data for monitoring progress towards the SDGs. Data gaps, particularly in climate action, sustainable cities, gender equality, and peace, justice, and strong institutions, hinder effective monitoring and implementation of the SDGs. To address this challenge, the MoS has been coordinating the collective efforts of Government agencies to make available accurate, timely, relevant, and quality disaggregated data to measure progress and strengthen evidence-based national policies. Working closely with United Nations agencies, the Ministry strives to increase awareness, provide technical training and review the current data processes with the aim of adopting global best practices.

The country has made consistent investments in improving the digital infrastructure, use of technology, and financial inclusion and as key enablers for SDG acceleration.

Bahrain has also demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthening migration governance. In 2018, Bahrain supported the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). This commitment aligns with Bahrain's dedication to international cooperation in addressing migration issues and implementing policies that are linked to the GCM's objectives. Bahrain's support for the GCM signifies its recognition of the importance of a comprehensive, cooperative approach to managing migration and protecting the rights and dignity of all.

Achievements around creating a **sustainable economic transformation** include the Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 focus on sustainability, competitiveness, and fairness, aiming to double household disposable income by 2030. Strategies for economic diversification, including strategies for the Industrial Sector, Tourism Sector, Logistics Services and Financial Services Sector Development Strategies (2022-2026), helped to increase significantly the non-oil sector contribution to economic growth. Efforts to empower the private sector and foster entrepreneurship have led to an estimated investment of USD 12 million, and attracted a record level of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows with the country's FDI stock reaching USD 42 billion in 2023[4]. The development of sustainable tourism supporting investments in culture and community-centered creative industries are aligning with sustainable development solutions and international cultural conventions. Bahrain has achieved a nation-wide 5G network coverage and made significant progress in ensuring financial inclusion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), women and youth, including through advancement of financial technologies (Fintech) and Islamic products.

In the area of **governance for justice and human rights**, Bahrain's constitution promotes peace, tolerance, gender equality, and access to justice for all citizens. Bahrain has actively participated in regional and international forums to shape the SDGs, showcasing its commitment to justice and human rights. It was the first country in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) region to develop a National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP), which was approved in 2023. Bahrain retains the Tier 1 ranking in the US Department of State's report on Trafficking in Persons for the seventh consecutive year.[5] There has been considerable progress made to advance gender equality for Bahraini women in respect of education, employment opportunities, and facilitating increased political participation of women.

Around **environmental stewardship**, Bahrain reduced a fifth of its freshwater withdrawals and increased water-use efficiency by 80 percent in line with the National Water Strategy 2030. It has adopted the National Adaptation Investment Plan and launched the new National Energy Strategy committing to doubling renewable energy targets by 2035 through large-scale solar power projects and solar financing schemes. Initiatives such as the First National Blacklist of Invasive Species and comprehensive national food security strategies have been formulated to protect the environment and promote sustainability.

1.3 Gaps and Opportunities

The UNSDCF 2025-2029 has been designed to build on the significant progress Bahrain has made, with a focus on areas with potential for further improvement to achieve the last mile, leveraging Bahrain's unique characteristics, challenges and strengths. As outlined in the VNR 2023, the country has made significant strides in providing access to healthcare, education and basic services to all its citizens. It's management of the COVID19 pandemic, which included provision of widely accessible vaccines to all citizens and non-citizens in the country was a global good practice. To sustain and build on the progress so far and to fully achieve the 2030 Agenda, efforts are needed to address remaining disparities

[4] Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Economic Quarterly Report, Q3 2023 https://www.mofne.gov.bh/en/BEQR
[5] https://www.lmra.gov.bh/en/page/show/508

in health, education, and gender equality, to further improve the quality of education and skill development, and to ensure sustainability of social spending for a growing population. Further enhancement of social safety nets is required to support the most vulnerable people[6] more effectively. The dependence on hydrocarbon earnings signals a need for accelerated efforts in diversification of budget revenue sources and innovative resource mobilization. Vulnerability to external economic shocks necessitates the continuation of strategic planning for economic diversification, stability and growth. Further strengthening of legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms is needed to fully protect human rights and facilitate justice. Enhancing public sector efficiency and transparency remains a critical area for ongoing development. In the area of environmental protection, addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution requires more integrated and powerful action plans. Sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems continues to be an area needing further development to ensure long-term environmental resilience.

Progress in harnessing digitalization, artificial intelligence and financial inclusion presents opportunities for the country to accelerate progress across multiple SDGs. A large, educated youth population also presents a potential to reap the demographic dividend.

Regional and Cross-Border Dynamics

Bahrain's strategic location within the GCC together with its high level of integration with the region presents unique opportunities and challenges that significantly impact its development trajectory. Sustainable development in Bahrain is intrinsically linked to broader regional dynamics, including economic integration, political stability, and environmental challenges. Regional economic integration supports Bahrain's diversification efforts, providing access to larger markets and investment opportunities, although economic shocks in neighbouring countries and oil price fluctuations pose significant risks. Political instability in the region will call for robust national and regional responses to ensure continued security and social cohesion. Additionally, environmental issues such as water scarcity, desertification, dust storms, and air and marine pollution necessitate regional cooperation, as Bahrain faces significant risks from climate change, including rising temperatures and sea levels.

A deeper analysis of the state of the SDGs and other cross-cutting issues reveals the following:

People – all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity, equity, and equality in a healthy environment (SDGs 1-5)

Bahrain has exhibited a steadfast commitment to social development and well-being, positioning these priorities at the core of its national strategies and action plans. This commitment is underscored by the allocation of a significant share of its budget to social sectors, with public social protection spending equivalent to 5 percent of GDP in 2023[7]. This expenditure is notably higher compared to regional peers and underscores Bahrain's commitment to fostering a supportive social infrastructure, despite the challenges posed by a high expatriate population which accounts for more than half of the total demographic.

Within this context, Bahrain's commitment to human development is reflected in its position as a very high human development country as ranked by the Human Development Index (HDI), at 34 out of 193 countries and territories. This is a result of sustained progress over three decades. Between 1990 and 2022, Bahrain's life expectancy at birth improved by 6.6 years, expected years of schooling by 3.0 years and mean years of schooling by 5.9 years between. Gender disaggregated HDI for Bahrain in 2022 highlights a difference between males (0.904) and females (0.847) that is driven largely by the estimated Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, that for a woman (USD 22,722) was less than a third of that for a man (USD 64,700).

Bahrain's educational system boasts near-universal enrolment rates with opportunities to improve further the quality of education and alignment with labour market demands. Initiatives to expand preschool education and the focus on closing the gender disparity in effective schooling[8] are positive steps towards addressing these gaps.

Healthcare in Bahrain has seen significant advancements, with life expectancy at birth increasing by more than five years since 2000. The nation has successfully managed communicable diseases and made strides in addressing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), which constitute the leading cause of death. The Government's proactive measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing efforts to tackle NCDs through public health campaigns against unhealthy diets and physical inactivity exemplify Bahrain's commitment to public health. Moreover, Bahrain's initiatives to establish a One-Health team to address antimicrobial resistance, and to reduce out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures[9] indicate the recognized need for a comprehensive approach to healthcare sustainability. Recent discussions between the World Health Organization (WHO) and Bahrain's Ministry of Health (MoH) Bahrain highlighted the importance of reinforcing data for evidence-based public health policy, and strengthening health diplomacy, collaboration, partnerships, advocacy, and strategic communications to further enhance Bahrain's health system.

Heavy reliance on food imports poses a challenge to food security in Bahrain, primarily due to global volatility of food prices and vulnerability of global supply chain to disruptions. The country's approach to mitigating the impact of rising food costs and reducing food waste highlights its responsiveness to

[6] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[7] Government Finance Statistics, 2023. Ministry of Finance and National Economy of the Kingdom of Bahrain
[8] According to the World Bank Gulf Economic Monitor (2019), an 18-year-old Bahraini male is expected to complete about 12.7 years of schooling, which corresponds to 8.8 learning-adjusted years of schooling. For Bahraini females, the 13.1 years of expected schooling translate into one year more, 9.8 years of learning-adjusted schooling.
[9] Out of pocket expenditure as a proportion of health expenditure for Bahrain was 23 percent as of 2021 as per World Development Indicators

emerging challenges. The social protection system in Bahrain predominantly benefits nationals, with efforts underway to progressively extend provisions to expatriate workers. For example, although migrant workers are excluded from the pension system, to protect them from abuses in the distribution of end-of-service (indemnity) benefits the General Authority for the Social Insurance Organization (SIO) began collecting end-of-service contributions from employers in March 2024, with migrant workers then being insured in the private sector. Furthermore, the SIO itself now disburses end-of-service benefits to migrant workers, which reduces the vulnerability of workers to unscrupulous employers. The disparities in access to social services and housing affordability, particularly among expatriates and low-income households, underscore the necessity of a more inclusive social protection framework. Given the universality of child protection concerns across the world, the institutional mechanisms for child protection in Bahrain can be strengthened in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Urban planning and housing policies are evolving to address the challenges of high population density and environmental sustainability. The development of public transportation and public spaces, alongside initiatives to ensure affordable housing, reflect Bahrain's strategic approach to urban development and social inclusion.

Leaving No One Behind

Bahrain's rapid population growth, alongside its high density and demographic, creates a unique social dynamic calling for tailored social inclusion strategies. Over half of the population are expatriates (52 percent), the vast majority of them male (71 percent)[10], creating a complex demographic structure. This diversity, combined with the country's spatially uneven population distribution and the specific challenges faced by non-Bahraini residents, highlight the criticality of addressing vulnerabilities to achieve the pledge of LNOB. According to the international human rights treaty body observations, key drivers for exclusion in any country may include specific national laws and practices which have a disproportionately negative impact on disadvantaged groups; prevailing social norms, beliefs and discriminatory attitudes; limited capacity of duty-bearers to deliver policies aimed at inclusion; limited participation of rights-holders in decision making; capacity of service providers to deliver public services, especially to the most vulnerable people[11]; and lack of arrangements for ensuring cooperation between policymakers and civil society organizations. Some of these issues will need to be addressed in Bahrain as well.

Consequently, Bahrain has adopted measures aimed at harmonizing its policies with global standards and responding proactively to the diverse needs of its population. These efforts are pivotal for Bahrain to fulfil the 2030 Agenda objectives and to ensure that no one is left behind.

Addressing the existing educational, protection systems and healthcare gaps, alongside labour market challenges, is the next step in achieving the 2030 Agenda. The nation's endeavour to navigate these challenges involves implementing comprehensive policy reforms, targeted interventions, and fostering an environment of inclusive development.

Planet — Protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably manage its natural resources, and take urgent action on climate change (SDG 6, 12-15)

Bahrain, alongside other countries of the GCC, is highly climate-vulnerable and faces significant environmental challenges. With over 36 islands, shoals, and islets and 15 percent of its land being reclaimed land, Bahrain's environmental landscape is unique yet fragile. The country experiences very hot summers and mild winters, with mean air temperatures having risen by 1.45°C between 1943 and 2018. Precipitation is scarce and variable, and evaporation rates far exceed rainfall, exacerbating water scarcity issues. In recognition of these challenges, Bahrain has significantly stepped up its climate change policies and initiatives in recent years to accelerate climate actions.

The impacts of climate change are multifaceted, affecting health, social dynamics, environmental sustainability, and economic stability. Heat stress and related illnesses are becoming increasingly pressing issues, with cardiovascular and kidney conditions being worsened due to extreme temperatures. Dust and sandstorms, more frequent and severe due to climatic changes, pose significant health risks, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, particularly impacting outdoor workers and people with vulnerabilities[12].

Bahrain suffers high levels of air pollution,[13] with annual PM2.5 concentrations reaching levels thirteen times higher than WHO guidelines. This pollution contributes to a range of health problems and imposes a substantial economic burden. The country's carbon dioxide emissions have more than tripled since 1990, with per capita emissions significantly exceeding the global average though the country accounts for a small fraction of global emissions. Bahrain's energy consumption patterns and reliance on fossil fuels for water desalination and air conditioning underscore the urgent need for sustainable energy solutions.

The Government has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2060 and has initiated a National Energy Transition Plan to increase the share of renewable energy in the total energy mix. The Plan will be particularly important in light of Bahrain's increasing energy demand driven by rising needs for water and cooling solutions.

Water scarcity is a critical challenge for Bahrain. Desalination, which accounts for a significant portion of the country's water supply, is energy-intensive and contributes to

[10] Information and eGovernment Authority, 2021 Population Census
[11] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[12] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[13] https://www.iqair.com/bh/world-most-polluted-countries?srsltid=AfmBOorKjSNePJG3s-wPtBPlusu9Imq17TroX2qKGy1zDFi_Ee5mCzHH

environmental degradation. Groundwater abstraction has led to aquifer depletion and quality deterioration, necessitating a comprehensive water resources policy to meet consumption needs in a sustainable manner.

Agriculture, while a small part of Bahrain's economy, faces sustainability challenges due to water scarcity and the cultivation of water-intensive crops. Land degradation and urbanization further strain the country's limited arable land. Waste management is another area of concern, with Bahrain producing the highest waste per capita in the GCC, and recycling rates remaining low.

Rising sea levels pose an existential threat to Bahrain's existence, with projections indicating significant land loss by 2100. Land reclamation projects, while economically stimulating, raise environmental sustainability questions, emphasizing the need for careful planning and preservation efforts.

Bahrain's biodiversity, including migratory birds and unique coastal and marine habitats, is under stress from human activities and climate change. Coral reefs, mangroves, and sea-grass beds have experienced decline, affecting the ecological balance and carbon sequestration capacity. Conservation efforts, such as mangrove restoration and cultivation, are underway, but more comprehensive reporting and action are needed to protect and restore these critical ecosystems.

In summary, Bahrain's environmental and climate challenges are complex and interlinked, requiring coordinated policy, technology, and behavioural changes to mitigate impacts and ensure sustainable development. The country's commitment to net zero emissions and renewable energy is a positive step, and requires comprehensive policy measures, and investment.

Prosperity — Ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives (SDGs 7–11)

Bahrain has witnessed substantial economic growth over the past two decades, with its nominal GDP expanding more than fourfold since 2002 to reach USD 43 billion in 2023. The nation's real GDP per capita has increased by 12 percent during the last two decades and reached USD 23,038 in 2023.

Over the years, Bahrain has successfully diversified its economy away from hydrocarbons into sectors such as banking, manufacturing, retail, and tourism, reducing the GDP share of oil and gas from 42 percent in 2002 to 16 percent in 2023. However, with hydrocarbons still accounting for one-third of exports and 68 percent of fiscal revenue (as of 2022), the economy remains sensitive to external shocks. The Government is prioritizing investments in new technologies and renewables to meet its net-zero targets by 2060 and to diversify energy sources.

Employment growth has been slower than economic growth, with the public sector accounting around 40 percent of total jobs. High unemployment rates, especially among Bahraini women (10.2 percent)[14] and youth (7.8 percent)[15], coexist with a structural dependence on expatriate labour (75.8 percent)[16]. The Government is striving to promote increased job opportunities in the private sector through strategic reforms aimed at fostering private sector growth and promoting entrepreneurship.

Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 had three guiding principles, viz. sustainability, competitiveness, and fairness. Its Economic Recovery Plan addresses the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic, and also represents a 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 seeks to contribute to multiple SDGs, notably by improving the living standards, education, economic growth, innovation and digital technology, in addition to promoting partnerships.

To take the ambition of the Economic Recovery Plan to full fruition, the structural challenges in the economy will need to be addressed. These challenges include labour market distortions, and rights of expatriate workers. Continued reforms in the sponsorship system for expatriate workers and greater labour mobility can enhance productivity and encourage investment in skills of young Bahrainis.

The nation's agriculture and fisheries sectors, while small, offer potential for development through technological innovation and sustainability practices. Despite high food import dependency, Bahrain is working towards enhancing food security and sector resilience. Bahrain's open trade regime and strategic location as a gateway to the Gulf position it as a key player in regional and global trade. Recent improvements in logistics and infrastructure development are set to enhance Bahrain's competitiveness and economic prospects. To sustain economic growth and diversification, Bahrain must address non-tariff barriers, deepen economic reforms, and embrace global climate commitments to transition towards a more sustainable and inclusive economic model.

Fiscal and Financial Landscape for SDG Financing

Bahrain's SDG financing landscape is diverse with both vulnerabilities and opportunities. The vast majority of development finance comes from the Government with implications for the budget. The fiscal dependence on oil revenues, has prompted the Government to broaden its resource base, notably through the introduction of a Value-Added Tax (VAT). The Fiscal Balance Programme (FBP), initiated in 2018, aims at improving public expenditure efficiency and achieving fiscal balance. Public investment, particularly in social housing, indicates the Government's role in addressing housing needs amidst rapid urbanization and population growth. However, the high public debt, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and reliance on foreign currency debt highlights challenges that the Government is addressing.

[14] Information and eGovernance Authority, 2021 Population Census
[15] Modelled ILO estimates, 2020
[16] Social Insurance Organization, Statistical Report 2023

Bahrain's financial sector, a cornerstone of its economy, showcases strength and resilience. The banking system, characterized by well-capitalized banks, underpins the financial system's stability. Growth of Islamic banking exemplifies Bahrain's innovation in financial services, catering to a broad client base. However, the financial sector's potential in supporting sustainable development and green investments remains largely untapped.

The Government's efforts to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) with policies favouring foreign ownership and growth in the manufacturing sector have generated significant inflows. However, there is scope for further broadening both the sources and uses of FDI. Bahrain's strategic initiatives, including the Economic Development Board's efforts, aim to diversify FDI sources and sectors, enhancing the economy's resilience and sustainability.

In summary, Bahrain's SDG-financing landscape is going through a transformation marked by efforts to diversify revenue sources, enhance fiscal sustainability, and capitalize on its strategic position in the financial sector. The challenges of managing a high public debt, ensuring fiscal stability, and fully harnessing the potential of the financial sector for sustainable development are counterbalanced by strategic initiatives aimed at economic diversification, attracting FDI, and fostering financial inclusion.

Peace, Partnership, and Other Cross-Cutting Issues — Foster peaceful, just, and inclusive societies and mobilize the means required for implementation (SDGs 16–17)

Bahrain's governance and political landscape is marked by both strengths and challenges as it seeks to fulfil its commitments to security, stability, and human rights within a complex regional and international framework. The country has established strong institutional frameworks and has engaged in efforts to promote human rights, as evidenced by the creation of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) and the development of the NHRAP, positioning Bahrain as a regional leader in these areas. Areas for further progress include strengthening of institutional mechanisms and processes including improving the compliance of NIHR with the Paris Principles. Other areas for further progress to achieve SDG 16 include voice, accountability, and addressing corruption.

The judiciary and law enforcement sectors have seen reforms aimed at improving justice delivery. Particularly progressive are the measures around the introduction of alternative penalties and restorative justice for children. New initiatives on socio-economic reintegration of prisoners subject to a royal pardon, and the recent creation of a Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission to be chaired by the the General Secretariat Ombudsman in the Ministry of Interior indicate further progress.

Bahrain's efforts towards human rights advancement and governance reforms are commendable, yet significant strides are needed to enhance political participation, transparency, and accountability. Addressing the challenges will be essential for Bahrain to achieve a more inclusive, stable, and democratic society, aligned with SDG 16 and broader international human rights standards.

Opportunities for Achieving the 2030 Agenda

Bahrain has demonstrated strong political commitment towards achieving sustainable development by 2030 and made progress in the various sustainable development dimensions. The country boasts a well-educated population with greater potential, particularly among women and young people. Further prioritization in human capital is crucial for building a resilient and skilled workforce, including enhanced investment in health services, education, and support for people with vulnerabilities[17]. Social protection programs require optimization to promote solidarity and buffer economic shocks for people with vulnerabilities[18], including low-skilled expatriate workers.

Bahrain unveiled an ambitious energy transition agenda that encompasses three broad principles: improving energy efficiency, increasing renewables' share and deploying technologies to reduce emissions, and launched the voluntary carbon offsetting platform. Given the country's reliance on desalination and groundwater abstraction for water supplies, it is crucial to focus on energy consumption for water desalination and policies to manage the water-energy nexus more sustainably. Investments in green development and effective natural resource management are essential to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure environmental sustainability.

Bahrain's economic diversification efforts have seen successful, particularly in the financial sector and fintech ecosystem. Further reforms in labour markets, education, and immigration policies are needed to boost productivity and economic opportunities for Bahrainis. Improving the fiscal balance and implementing climate-friendly diversification efforts are crucial for achieving long-term financial stability and improving living standards.

Bahrain has been engaging with the United Nations human rights institutions and treaty bodies and has adopted its first NHRAP. It is important to support these efforts by ensuring the availability of strong implementation capacity and monitoring mechanisms. The Government's focus on security measures and social benefits helps ensure social stability in the country. Improving governance, enhancing human rights, and ensuring greater political participation are vital for addressing societal grievances and promoting peace and stability.

In conclusion, Bahrain's journey towards achieving Agenda 2030 requires a balanced approach across all dimensions of sustainable development. By leveraging its human capital, addressing environmental challenges, diversifying its economy, promoting peace and governance, and strengthening partnerships, Bahrain can overcome structural challenges and ensure no one is left behind in its development progress.

[17] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[18] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Chapter 02

United Nations Support to the 2030 Agenda

The United Nations' support for Bahrain's ambitious march towards the 2030 Agenda is rooted in a collaborative and consultative process, engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders to pinpoint development priorities. This deliberative approach, emphasizing inclusivity and partnership, informed the selection of strategic priorities within the Cooperation Framework, aligning with national goals and the global SDGs. The process particularly focused on ensuring the inclusion of people with vulnerabilities[19], as well as changemakers like youth, women, workers, and the private sector, through innovative consultation approaches that facilitated their active participation and representation. The process was bottom up – starting with development solutions that were most relevant to Bahrain, filtering them through the United Nations' comparative advantages, exploring their interconnectedness and grouping them together into four clusters.

From this rich dialogue emerged an agenda centred around social equity, economic diversification, environmental resilience, and governance. These priorities were chosen for their transformative potential, their interconnectedness, and their alignment with both Bahrain's Vision 2030 and the global 2030 Agenda.

In crafting this Cooperation Framework, the United Nations system in Bahrain leveraged its unique convening power, technical expertise, and global perspective to support Bahrain. This partnership aims not only to accelerate progress towards the SDGs but also to catalyse a broader societal transformation, ensuring a sustainable, inclusive future for all people in Bahrain. The Framework's strategic focus areas are underpinned by the principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, with a clear vision to bridge gaps, overcome challenges, and seize opportunities for sustainable development.

The UNSDCF preparation process started in a critical year as countries are at the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 SDG, and Bahrain presented its second VNR at the 2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Following the parliamentary elections in 2022, Bahrain adopted the new Government Plan for 2023-2026 shifting the priorities from recovery to sustainable development. The GoB also reinvigorated its SDGs related institutional mechanisms by establishing the MoS. Lastly, the 2025-2029 Cooperation Framework will be the last full partnership framework between Bahrain and the United Nations before the endpoint of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, marking an important milestone in the SDGs implementation and identifying key acceleration areas for the United Nations support.

Based on findings of the 2023 VNR, the 2023 SDG progress reports[20], publications and analytical studies of different international and national institutions, a workshop with the Government and a stakeholder consultations process for this framework, the UNCT and its partners identified a broad number of key development solutions and opportunities around accelerating SDG process and agreed on four complementary and mutually reinforcing joint priorities and outcomes for the Cooperation Framework.

These common priorities are:

- **Strategic Priority Area 1**: People — Enhanced Social Equity and Well-Being
- **Strategic Priority Area 2:** Prosperity — Sustainable Economic Transformation
- **Strategic Priority Area 3:** Peace — Governance for Justice and Human Rights
- **Strategic Priority Area 4:** Planet — Resilient Environmental Stewardship

These priorities are supported by four core outcomes described in the section below.

[19] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[20] UNDESA. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/

2.1 Theory of Change for the UN Strategic Framework Priorities

The high-level theory of change outlines the pathway that will enable the country to accelerate actions to the desired state where the people in Bahrain - especially the most vulnerable[21] - contribute to and benefit equitably from integrated social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable and inclusive development under the country's Government Plan for 2023-2026 leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda, its SDG and the Economic Vision 2030.

The UNSDCF's goals are clear: the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and complementary progress towards Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. The four strategic priority areas, together with accompanying outcome statements and identified pre-conditions, provide the basis for the theory of change of this UNSDCF.

The theory of change for each of the four outcomes associated with the four strategic priorities is based on a forward-looking systems analysis, and accounts for both known and expected risks, and uncertainties. In particular, the Theory of Change accounts for the fact that we are in a period of unprecedented flux, and we do not have a complete sense of what events and trends will impact Bahrain's context and situation in the next five years. It also accounts for the fact that the United Nations in Bahrain has a very small programme footprint in the country. The approach to affecting change therefore must rely on influencing the bigger levers of change.

In a situation of heightened uncertainty, the theory of change must evolve with time. This calls for building into the theory of change and the UNSDCF itself a high degree of flexibility in structure and content. At the end of every year, the strategic priority areas/outcomes, and the ability of the United Nations to support them, will be reviewed by both the UNCT and the UN - GoB Joint Steering Committee (JSC) of the GoB, and adjusted as needed, to reflect relevant changes and developments.

Description of Key Development Solutions

To foster enhanced social equity and well-being, the Government of Bahrain and the UNCT have jointly identified several critical areas for development. These include ensuring everyone can access essential services of high quality, marking a significant step toward equality and inclusion. Strengthening the health system in the pursuit of universal health coverage, to make it integrated, people-centred, and responsive to emerging health needs, is a priority. National capacities must be enhanced to better prevent, prepare for and respond effectively to the health emergencies of the future. Tackling the underlying causes of ill health and creating enabling environments are essential. Enhancing early childhood care and education in Bahrain can ensure an optimal environment for development, growth, and learning for all children. Improving childcare quality will also empower parents and caretakers to better support their children's development and will facilitate women's increased participation in the paid labour force. Expanding high-quality childcare services requires strengthening the governance and regulatory framework and refining caregiver training and certification to meet global standards. Investing in childcare demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that children with disabilities receive care in all facilities.

Improving the quality and accessibility of public spaces and the built environment has been identified as vital to promoting healthier and more inclusive communities, especially in Bahrain's arid climate. The expansion of urban areas is planned with an eye on safety and inclusiveness, ensuring that public spaces and housing meet the needs of all community members equitably. Lastly, a shift towards evidence-based policymaking, supported by detailed and accurate data collection and SDG reporting, underscores Bahrain's approach to informed and effective governance in enhancing social equity and well-being.

In envisioning a prosperous and equitable future, Bahrain and the UNCT have identified several development solutions as pivotal. The Government prioritizes diversifying and strengthening the country's economy by enhancing regional competitiveness and forging global partnerships that attract foreign direct investment and spur innovation. A strategic overhaul of subsidies aims to ensure that those most vulnerable[22] benefit from increased efficiency and targeted support. Boosting the participation of women and youth in the workforce through targeted programmes is seen as essential to harnessing untapped potential. Furthermore, investments in the sustainable green economy as well as the orange economy, aiming to promote the cultural and creative industries, are expected to drive economic diversification and modernization. Aligning educational outcomes with labour market demands is critical to improving job readiness and fostering sustainable economic growth. The commitment to ethical recruitment practices and the extension of labour rights and social protection to all underscore a comprehensive approach to fair labour practices. Encouraging entrepreneurship and private financing for sustainable development, alongside enhancing the national financing framework to ensure an optimal mix of financing for development, are key to fostering an innovative and resilient economic landscape. Lastly, fostering a culture of research and development, revising policies for digital transformation, and strengthening digital innovation communities are fundamental to establishing Bahrain as a leading hub for innovation and sustainability.

[21] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[22] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Bahrain is set on enhancing governance for justice and human rights by strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to safeguard human rights and ensure justice. The nation focuses on maintaining political stability and fostering civil engagement for stronger social cohesion, with the UN's support to bolster institutional capacities for effective policy-making and public administration. Future priorities include improving stakeholder capacity for implementing UN human rights mechanisms recommendations, aligning laws with international commitments, enhancing access to justice, addressing violence against women and other people with vulnerabilities[23], strengthening counter-trafficking mechanisms, enhancing legal protections for expatriate workers, raising public awareness of rights, and promoting equity and empowerment for people with vulnerabilities[24]. Additionally, Bahrain aims to enhance human rights governance capacity, encourage public participation, and digitally transform Government services for greater efficiency and inclusivity.

Addressing the urgency of climate change and its multidimensional impact, Bahrain is proactively focusing on strengthening its environmental governance to tackle the triple planetary crisis —climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution— through regulations and targeted initiatives. The implementation of MEAs is a priority. Efforts are underway to enhance environments, making them healthier and less polluted, and to drive urban development towards greener, energy-efficient models. Strengthening resilience of the health system to manage climate-related health risks and impacts is essential. Water management, sustainable agriculture, and green financing solutions are key areas being developed to ensure a resilient, low-carbon future. Empowering Bahrain's youth and women to advocate for climate action encapsulates the vision of a participatory approach to environmental stewardship, aiming for ecological balance and energy security that benefits present and future generations.

Building on Successful Execution Mechanisms

The UNSDCF for Bahrain will leverage and build on successful execution mechanisms across all strategic priorities. These models provide tangible examples that can facilitate additional support from local mechanisms, enhance the overall impact of the Framework, and generate good practices for other countries to draw on.

1. Enhanced Social Equity and Well-Being:

- Bahrain's reforms in health systems have achieved universal access to healthcare, significantly improving health outcomes for all residents, especially the most vulnerable[25]. Digital health solutions, high levels of vaccine equity, and increased healthcare access in remote areas have been pivotal.
- The implementation of gender-responsive and inclusive social safety nets has ensured support for the most vulnerable people[26], addressing specific needs of women, children, and persons with disabilities.

2. Sustainable Economic Transformation:

- Bahrain is among the first countries in the GCC to start diversifying its economy to reduce dependence on the hydrocarbon sector. Deliberate initiatives to diversify the economy together with high levels of regional integration through trade, capital flows and movement of people, have vastly increased the resilience of the economy.
- The promotion of digital literacy and infrastructure has supported economic diversification and created new job opportunities. Bahrain's initiatives in fostering digital innovation have enhanced business operations and connectivity.

3. Governance for Justice and Human Rights:

- Initiating measures to raise awareness about and protect the rights of migrant workers and improving mechanisms to counter trafficking in persons has progressively strengthened the protection of some of the people with the most vulnerability[27] in the country.
- Implementing digital tools to enhance access to justice and streamline Government services has increased transparency and accountability. Bahrain's e-governance strategies have set a benchmark for efficient and inclusive governance.

4. Resilient Environmental Stewardship:

- Bahrain is leveraging geospatial mapping to inform and strengthen its efforts to enhance green public spaces with planting of trees.
- Using outcomes of groundwater hydrological and climate modelling together with coastal vulnerability index has strengthened the Water and Climate Knowledge Management Platform enabling more systematic monitoring and management of water resources.

These successful execution mechanisms demonstrate Bahrain's commitment to sustainable development and serve as models for further replication and support.

[23] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[24] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[25] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[26] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[27] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Integration of Strategic Priorities and Key SDG accelerators

Global analysis has led to the identification of six key transitions as critical pathways to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. These accelerators include food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Integrating these transitions into our strategic priorities ensures a holistic and interconnected approach to sustainable development.

Strategic Priority	Food Systems	Energy Access and Affordability	Digital Connectivity	Education	Jobs and Social Protection	Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution
Enhanced social equity and well being	YES	Limited	YES	YES	YES	YES
Sustainable Economic Transformation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Governance for Justice and Human Rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Resilient Environmental Stewardship	YES	YES	Limited	YES	Partial	YES

In Bahrain's context the six accelerators underlie the synergies across the different SDGs as well as the four strategic priorities.

Achieving the SDGs will also require careful management of trade-offs to balance economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability. For instance, economic diversification efforts (SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth) must be aligned with environmental sustainability (SDG 13 - Climate Action, SDG 14 - Life Below Water, and SDG 15 - Life on Land) to avoid adverse environmental impacts. At the same time reducing pollution will have at least a short-term impact on economic activity while the beneficial public health impacts are likely to take longer to emerge. Similarly, infrastructural development (SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) should incorporate inclusive practices to ensure social equity (SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities). During the implementation phase of the Cooperation Framework, the UNCT will employ integrated planning and policy coherence to address these trade-offs, ensuring that progress in one area does not come at the expense of another. This includes conducting impact assessments, engaging in multi-stakeholder dialogues, and utilizing data-driven decision-making to identify synergies and mitigate conflicts between SDGs.

The Cooperation Framework will adopt specific strategies to deepen trust, inclusion, social protection, and participation, with a focus on migrant workers, youth, and women. These strategies include engaging populations with higher needs[28] in policy-making through participatory approaches, ensuring their voices and needs are reflected in national development plans; as well as fostering community-level dialogue and collaboration to build trust among diverse population groups and promoting social cohesion through community-driven projects.

Embracing systems-thinking, the United Nations will **manage complexity** by addressing the interlinkages between challenges and solutions. It promotes innovation and flexible programming that can adapt to the changing context of Bahrain, ensuring the Framework remains relevant and effective.

To ensure the UNSDCF is **inclusive and representative**, the framework will incorporate explicit strategies to engage people with vulnerabilities[29] in all stages of its implementation. The UNCT will establish formal mechanisms for ongoing consultation with these groups, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are reflected in the framework's planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. The framework will enhance collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to leverage their expertise and networks in reaching and supporting people with vulnerabilities[30]. Regular forums, workshops, and advisory panels will be established to facilitate continuous dialogue and feedback. Specific CSO-led initiatives will be supported to empower populations with higher needs[31] and enhance their participation in decision-making processes.

The United Nations will contribute towards the objectives outlined in the UNSDCF through the following priorities and creating relevant pre-conditions.

[28] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[29] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[30] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[31] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Figure 1: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Theory of Change

VISION: By 2029 all people living in Bahrain contribute to and benefit equitably from the social, environmental, institutional, and economic aspects of sustainable and inclusive development supporting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in Bahrain and contributing to progress in sustainable development globally in line with the Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and 2050.

PRECONDITIONS

Universal access to quality essential services, sustainable public spaces, and enhanced social safety nets established, particularly for the most vulnerable people[32].

Sustainable livelihoods and decent work available to all in Bahrain, supported by a modernized, knowledge-based, digital, green, diversified, inclusive, and resilient economy, underpinned by established robust international partnerships.

Governance structures strengthened, providing universal access to justice and human rights protection, with enhanced capacities to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and other people with vulnerabilities[33], alongside a developed evidence-based, innovative, and efficiently responsive public sector.

Environmental resilience and sustainability enhanced, through targeted climate action, pollution reduction, sustainable management of land use and natural resources, and low-carbon development.

NEXT LEVEL PRECONDITIONS

- Universal access to essential services is established, with improvements in quality metrics to ensure equity and inclusion for all.
- Health systems are strengthened on the pursuit to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to be fully integrated, people-centred and responsive to diverse health needs, including NCDs.
- Public spaces and the built environment are enhanced to be more healthy, accessible, sustainable, and inclusive.
- Health systems' emergency prevention, preparedness and response capabilities are strengthened to reduce the impact of potential health threats and emergencies.
- Social determinants of health are addressed to reduce health disparities.
- Early childhood care and education is universally available and inclusive of children with disabilities.
- Education and lifelong learning opportunities must be available to all.
- Urban expansion, public spaces and mobility options are developed to be safe and inclusive.
- Universal access to adequate housing is achieved, ensuring all communities have equitable living conditions.
- Access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and social protection is specifically tailored to meet the needs of women and populations with higher needs[34].
- Evidence-based policymaking and accurate SDG reporting is enhanced through improved SADDD and spatial data collection.
- Enhanced disaster preparedness for response and early action is being prioritized to ensure timely and effective measures during emergencies, minimizing the impact on communities and infrastructure.

- Bahrain boosts its regional competitiveness and global partnerships, attracting more foreign investment and innovation, which supports economic stability and talent attraction.
- Subsidy reforms increase efficiency and better target the most vulnerable[35].
- Programs to develop entrepreneurship and life skills boost women's and youth labour participation.
- Green economy investments grow, including more Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for low-carbon growth.
- The cultural and creative sectors expand, aiding Bahrain's economic diversification and modernization.
- Education's alignment with labour market demands improves job readiness and sustainable growth opportunities.
- Ethical recruitment and worker protections are strengthened through multi-stakeholder collaboration, ensuring fair labour practices.
- Expatriate labor and social protections are enhanced, with stronger rights-based migration policies.
- Support for entrepreneurship and private sustainable development financing increases start-ups and SMEs in the green and circular economy.
- The national financing framework is improved to better integrate all finance sources, boosting investments and green financing.
- A culture of Research and Development (R&D) and innovation is fostered, with increased investment making Bahrain a leading R&D hub.
- Support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is enhanced, focusing on effectiveness and efficiency.
- Financial policies and strategies are updated to promote innovative financing and mitigate traditional investment risks.
- Digital innovation ecosystems are strengthened to foster entrepreneurship, tech readiness, and local success recognition.

- Stakeholder capacity to implement recommendations of United Nations human rights mechanisms is enhanced.
- Laws are aligned with international human rights commitments, incorporating gender mainstreaming.
- Access to justice for women and people with vulnerabilities[36], including children, the elderly, expatriate workers (particularly domestic workers), and people with disabilities, is enhanced.
- Institutional capacities to address violence against women and other people with vulnerabilities[37] and violence against children are strengthened.
- Mechanisms for counter-trafficking in persons, including enhanced screenings, are strengthened.
- Legal protections for expatriate workers, particularly those at risk in low-skilled, sectors, are enhanced through robust governance frameworks and social protection systems that address vulnerabilities and ensure rights and access to justice for all.
- Public awareness of rights, services, safeguards, and protections is increased.
- Equity and empowerment for people with vulnerabilities[38], including persons with disabilities and those less financially privileged, is achieved.
- Gender-sensitive policies and legal frameworks that promote equal access to resources and opportunities.
- Human rights governance capacity is enhanced, leading to improved transparency, responsiveness, and coordination among human rights bodies.
- National stakeholders' capacity for engagement with international human rights mechanisms and equal opportunities is enhanced.
- Public participation, awareness-raising campaigns, and civil society engagement in decision-making, including youth involvement, are expanded.
- Government efficiency and effectiveness are improved through strategic partnerships.
- Government services are transformed through digitalization to enhance efficiency, inclusivity, ease of access and user-friendliness.

- The triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss and pollution is being addressed through effective environmental governance including through regulations as well as targeted policy, advocacy and outreach initiatives.
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are being effectively and synergistically implemented to meet SDGs.
- Environments are becoming healthier, less polluted, and more sustainable through concerted efforts.
- Health resilience to climate change is strengthened to manage climate-related health risks and impacts.
- Urban expansion, public spaces and mobility options are evolving into greener and more energy-efficient models.
- Innovative sustainable green financing solutions are being devised to accelerate investment in green technologies and sustainable initiatives.
- Sustainable practices in agriculture and nature-positive food systems are adopted, promoting diversified sources and conservation technologies.
- Targeted support for women entrepreneurs in the green economy, providing access to finance, training, and market opportunities.
- Energy security, accessibility, and affordability are being enhanced through improvements in energy efficiency, diversification of energy mix, and introduction of incentives.
- Urban growth and regeneration are being approached in an effective, inclusive, and sustainable manner.
- Waste management, chemical management and pollution control are enhanced to mitigate environmental impact.
- Bahrain's youth are being empowered and mobilized to advocate for climate action on a global scale.
- Participation of Bahrain's youth and women in the green transition is being capacitated; women's role in environmental stewardship is being highlighted
- Innovative financing mechanisms and investments in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) are mobilized, and DRR preparedness and risk governance at both national and local levels is strengthened.
- The capacity of Bahrain to provide early warning to reduce disaster risk is developed and a road map for enhancing the early warning system is developed.

RISKS/DETERRENTS (NOT ALL OF WHICH CAN BE MITIGATED BY THE UNITED NATIONS ALONE)

Pandemic
Pollution including microplastic pollution
Regional unrest
Local unrest
Fiscal shock
Climate-related disaster
Misinformation
Cyberattack/Hacking
Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Supply chain disruptions

Fragmented labour market
Limits to manufacturing
Commodity price shocks
Supply chain disruptions
Climate related hazards
Decline of the hydrocarbon sector
Increased heat stress
Resistance of elites to change

Social polarization
Radicalization
Cyberattacks
Fundamentalism
Political instability in neighbouring regions Cultural resistance to change
Financial market volatility

Maladaptation to climate change
Economic diversification challenges
Technological disruption
Water scarcity
Climate-related disaster

FORCE MULTIPLIERS/LEVERS OF INFLUENCE

Digitalization
AI
Public infrastructure
Integrated health and social services
Community-based programs
Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)
Technology and innovation in service delivery
Capacity building for local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
Legislative frameworks
Awareness campaigns
Monitoring and evaluation systems
Financial incentives for service providers
Gender-sensitive design

Global standards
Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) compliance
Labour market reform
A strong service sector
AI
Automation
Skills development initiatives
Incentives for innovation
Enhanced connectivity and technology infrastructure
Strengthening regulatory frameworks
Partnership development programs
Economic zones and clusters
Promotion of social entrepreneurship
Labor mobility and integration policies

Public spaces
Public participation in decision-making
Bahrain's culture of hospitality
International partnerships
Education system reform
Legislative reforms
Youth engagement

Innovative financing models
Private sector engagement
Cultural heritage and tourism
Digitalization
AI
Global normative frameworks and commitments under them.

[32] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[33] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[34] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
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[37] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[38] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Key Risks and Uncertainties

In the context of increased global volatility and geopolitical flux, the theory of change must be cognizant of known risks but also uncertainties. While not exhaustive, below are some of the key risk factors that should be considered and mitigated in the implementation of the framework. Not all of these are downside risks.

In Bahrain, key risks impacting the UNSDCF outcomes encompass environmental challenges, health emergencies, social disparities, economic vulnerabilities, and regional geopolitical dynamics. Climate change, with its associated natural hazards and increased heat stress, poses significant threats, emphasizing the need for robust disaster risk reduction measures. Food security is highly reliant on imports, and thus vulnerable to global price shocks and supply chain disruptions. Repercussions of regional tensions, including social polarization, radicalization, and mistrust in multilateralism, are to be monitored. Risks in public health, migration, and infrastructure further highlight the urgency for comprehensive governance reforms and enhanced social protection mechanisms. Risks related to technology, including cyberattacks as well as misuse of AI for spreading disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech complicate the landscape. Resistance to change from elites and cultural resistance may impede necessary reforms. Economic vulnerabilities might be exacerbated by fiscal shocks, and supply chain disruptions. Water scarcity and maladaptation to climate change add layers of complexity to environmental risks.

These challenges require concerted efforts in policy adaptation, stakeholder engagement, and international cooperation to ensure sustainable development and resilience against both internal and external shocks. In this context, the United Nations is strengthening the Government's policies, processes, and systems through technical assistance, bringing to the country global best practices and adapting them to the local context. Stronger and more agile systems can adapt better and respond faster to sudden onset events. The United Nations is also advocating for greater resilience to be built into physical and natural infrastructure. To enhance risk prevention and management, the United Nations will also implement specific programmatic initiatives that foster linkages and trust between the population and populations with higher needs[39], including community-based DRR programs, inclusive social protection mechanisms, integrated public health initiatives and multi-stakeholder engagement in risk prevention strategies.

2.2 United Nations Priorities, Outcomes, and Partnerships

Strategic Priority Area 1: People — Enhanced Social Equity and Well-Being

OUTCOME 1: By 2029, all people living in Bahrain, especially the most vulnerable groups[40], benefit from universal access to quality essential services, sustainable public spaces and enhanced social safety nets, to support Bahrain's commitment to social equity.

For Bahrain to realize its vision of a society where all individuals can fulfil their full potential, an all-of-government and all-of-society approach will be needed to build on the current broad-based access to basic services with targeted investments to enhance human capabilities and determinants of well-being. Essential to this transformation is the strengthening of national capacity and institutional arrangements to scale up the impact and ensure sustainability.

Elements To Build On

By law, Bahrain provides free education to all its citizens. Expatriates have access to private sector education which is regulated by the Ministry of Education. Health systems have undergone significant reforms to become fully integrated, people-centred, and responsive to health needs. Additionally, social determinants of health have been addressed through various initiatives, including multisectoral collaborations. Repeal of Article 353 from the 1976 Penal Code was a key step in eliminating gender-based violence. Several social safety net measures are in place for citizens from the most vulnerable people[41].

Pre-Conditions of Change

To achieve the stated outcome, the following pre-conditions (many of which are currently among the Government's priorities) must be fulfilled:

Sustained improvements in quality of basic services are necessary to support inclusivity. It is essential to continuously develop health system capacities for effective pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. It is essential that existing early childhood care and education services be further enhanced and strengthened to ensure they are inclusive and universally accessible, with particular attention to the needs of children with disabilities. Education and lifelong learning opportunities must be available to all. The education and social needs of children and persons on the neurodivergent spectrum must be addressed systematically.

[39] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[40] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[41] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Laws and regulations to address drivers of violence, need to be further strengthened, enhancing and building upon current efforts to support both potential victims and survivors. Building on progress in amending laws, social drivers of violence against women and other people with vulnerabilities[42] need to be addressed, laws and regulations further strengthened. Public spaces, built environments, urban expansion, mobility options, and housing must be enhanced to be healthy, accessible, sustainable, inclusive, safe and equitable for all.

Evidence-based policymaking based on systematic SDG reporting must be improved through better disaggregated and spatial data collection, availability and usage. In particular, the needs of key groups such as persons with disabilities, youth—particularly those transitioning from education to the job market, women who have who have experienced violence, and expatriates need to be secured.

United Nations Contribution to the Outcome: The United Nations will address a subset of the above preconditions in light of its comparative advantages vis-à-vis other development actors. To catalyse social equity and enhance well-being, the United Nations and its partners embrace an open systems approach that dynamically interlinks healthcare, education, housing, and social development. By examining patterns of social change and adapting policies accordingly, Bahrain aims to achieve universal access to high quality and inclusive essential services, leveraging past insights to shape a future where inclusivity and health are cornerstones of societal growth.

To navigate existing challenges such as educational alignment with labour market needs, the healthcare burden of NCDs, and the inclusivity of social protection systems, Bahrain requires sustained efforts to improve policy reforms and implement targeted interventions. The United Nations' role in facilitating these changes involves offering expertise in evidence-based policy making, advocating for inclusive practices, and encouraging the integration of sustainable development principles across all sectors. By focusing on enhancing social equity and well-being, Bahrain can make significant strides toward achieving the SDGs and ensuring a prosperous future for all its citizens and residents. Therefore, the United Nations in Bahrain will focus its interventions on providing support in policy development, capacity building, and technical assistance across healthcare, education, urban development, and social inclusion. This includes leveraging expertise from various United Nations agencies to strengthen healthcare systems, improve education quality, and ensure affordable housing and equitable urban development. Specific drivers of vulnerability will be directly addressed in concert with the Government and civil society.

Specifically, the UNCT will support the Government with policy development, capacity building and technical assistance, in education, health, urban planning, social protection within a life cycle approach. In particular, policy for early childhood education and care, development of life skills, strengthening health systems and addressing social determinants of health, access of all to green and healthy public spaces, improved equity of access to housing and recourse for violence against women and other people with vulnerabilities[43] will be addressed. Target groups will include persons with disabilities, expatriates, survivors of violence, women, youth, and the elderly. Inclusivity and gender will be mainstreamed across all activities with a special focus on ensuring that urban public spaces and transport are not just safe and accessible to women, but also women-friendly. Given the specific role of expatriates in the Bahraini economy and society and in line with Bahrain's history and tradition of openness, the United Nations will work with the Government to enhance the rights and well-being of expatriates through policy advice, awareness raising and technical assistance.

Enhancing disaster risk reduction and preparedness early action and response is fundamental to reducing the impact of emergencies, especially on people with vulnerabilities[44]. The United Nations will work with national and local authorities to enhance disaster preparedness and response capacities to ensure timely and effective action during disasters.

Sustainability and Partnerships: The GoB will lead policy development and implementation for universal access to quality services, while CSOs will support the Government in achieving this outcome and monitor the progress of social equity initiatives and advocate for their stakeholder groups. International partners, including United Nations agencies, will offer technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen healthcare, education, and social protection systems. To ensure sustainability of its initiatives the United Nations will build on the work already done by the Government and leverage the skills and knowledge of local communities in participatory processes throughout the design and implementation of programmes under this priority. The United Nations will collaborate with Government entities, academia, civil society, the private sector, and international partners to mobilize resources, share knowledge, and align efforts towards common goals. It will draw on regional and global expertise and build the capacity of local Government and non-government entities.

Major Assumptions: The success of these initiatives hinges on continued political commitment to sustainable development, effective governance and institutional capacity, and the availability of financial resources to support long-term investments in social infrastructure.

National development priorities: Government Plan 2023-2026: Raising the Living Standard of Citizens to Preserve their Gains, High-quality and Competitive Government Services; Economic Vision 2030, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5; National Human Rights Action Plan 2022-2026; National Health Plan 2016-2025; Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2023-2026; National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini women 2013-2022; National Water Sector Strategy 2030

SDGs supported: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17

Key SDG Accelerators: Food security, Jobs and social protection; Education

[42] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[43] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[44] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

The integration of key transitions in food security, jobs and social protection, and education is essential to achieving Outcome 1. Food Security initiatives focused on sustainable agricultural practices and efficient water use to complement effective supply chain management will ensure that the most vulnerable people[45] have reliable access to nutritious food, and do not get priced out during periods of high inflation. Jobs and Social Protection transitions aim to create a resilient labour market through targeted education and training programs aligned with market demands, empowering women and youth, and extending social protection measures to cover all demographics, including expatriate workers and low-income households. This ensures economic stability and access to social safety nets for the most vulnerable people[46]. Educational transitions in the Kingdom of Bahrain emphasize strengthening and supporting the early childhood educational system by preparing a unified regulatory framework for early education institutions, and issuing legislation that obliges all citizens to basic education at compulsory age, free of charge, while providing an environmentally friendly infrastructure that enhances the use of digital technology and energy saving. The country also takes advanced steps in the field of equal opportunities in providing educational services to all segments of society, especially those with special needs and persons with disabilities. It also provides opportunities to increase investment projects in education and issues a regulatory framework for partnership with the private sector.

By improving educational outcomes and aligning them with labour market needs, Bahrain can foster a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, driving social equity and economic prosperity. These transitions, supported by robust governance, innovative financing, data and technology integration, and strategic partnerships, collectively contribute to a holistic approach to sustainable development and social equity in Bahrain.

UNCT Configuration: The following resident and non-resident UN entities working in Bahrain will leverage their collective expertise, capacities, and assets towards achievement of this outcome: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), World Health Organization (WHO).

Strategic Priority Area 2: Prosperity — Sustainable Economic Transformation

OUTCOME 2: By 2029, all people in Bahrain benefit from sustainable livelihoods and decent work in a modernized, knowledge-based, digital, green, diversified, inclusive and resilient economy, supported by robust international partnerships.

Bahrain is navigating a critical phase of economic transformation, enhancing diversification and stability amidst global and regional challenges, at the same time as it seeks to reduce fiscal dependence on its fossil fuel revenues. Strategic Priority 2 for Bahrain's Cooperation Framework focuses on achieving prosperity through sustainable economic transformation. This vision aligns with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and the SDGs, particularly SDGs 7-11, which emphasize affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, and sustainable cities and communities. Progress on these fronts will take Bahrain the full way to a modernized, knowledge-based, digital, green, diversified, inclusive, and resilient economy.

Elements to build on

As part of the Economic Recovery Plan, Bahrain took significant strides to recover the national economy after the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate economic transformation through diversification making the country the most diversified economy in the GCC region (83.9 percent of GDP coming from the non-oil sector in 2023). Successful implementation of the Fiscal Balance Programme (FBP) helped mobilize new revenue sources for the Government and improve the fiscal balance. Due to a regulatory environment amenable to attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), the FDI inflows grew more than six times in 2023 mainly concentrating in the financial services sector. Also, by advancing financial technologies and Islamic finance, the country has accumulated a huge potential to mobilize additional innovative financing for the SDG implementation.

Pre-conditions of Change

To achieve the stated outcome, Bahrain should continue to boost its regional competitiveness and attract foreign investment in highly productive sectors. Fiscal space must increase, and the subsidies offered must be both efficient and target the most vulnerable[47]. Alongside the economy should maintain the momentum in diversifying away from the hydrocarbon sector. A robust and resilient non-hydrocarbon economy must be based on knowledge and capacities for entrepreneurship as well as a workforce that has the skills to meet market needs. Building a workforce with a skillset congruent with the fourth industrial revolution would enable Bahrain to better reap the benefits of automation and digitization. Bahrain should continue its efforts to provide opportunities for women and youth in the labour force by focusing on innovation, entrepreneurship and skills training programmes. Investment in the green economy

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[46] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[47] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

must be expanded for low-carbon growth. Bahrain should further promote fair labour practices through multi-stakeholder collaboration to enhance worker protections. Entrepreneurship, private sustainable financing, and digital innovation ecosystems should be strengthened to foster startups, SMEs, and a culture of Research and Development (R&D) in the green and circular economies. An integrated national financing framework[48] can help mobilize diverse sources to catalyse investment in sustainable development. Bahrain's economic transformation journey requires an innovative approach that anticipates future market trends and global shifts.

United Nations Contributions to the Outcome: Among the above preconditions, the United Nations will support re-skilling and up-skilling the workforce, fostering entrepreneurship, and enhancing digital literacy, on one hand, and empowering workers with the tools for sustainable livelihoods. Recognizing the cyclical nature of economic development, the Framework's initiatives will focus on sustainable practices, the green and orange economies in alignment with international standards, and diversification strategies, ensuring that economic prosperity benefits from a 200-year perspective that considers the legacy we leave for future generations. The United Nations will support these endeavours by offering evidence-based policy advice, supporting ethical recruitment practices, promoting regular pathways for labour migration, and assisting in developing a national financing framework that aligns with the SDGs. The United Nations will further contribute through technical assistance and capacity building, aligning its support with Bahrain's national development priorities. This includes promoting gender equality, enhancing social protection frameworks, and supporting the development of a green economy.

Enhancement of the unemployment insurance system, labour programs and policies for employment generation, supporting social responsibility activities, strengthening capacities of tripartite partners in social protection, technical assistance and strengthening social dialogue systems, and protection of labour rights will be priority areas of joint work with the Government.

In its mission to leave no one behind, the United Nations will specifically target youth in the age group that is transitioning from education to decent work, women, green entrepreneurs, farmers, fishermen, and expatriate workers.

Sustainability and Partnerships: The GoB will drive economic diversification and innovation policies, focusing on sustainable practices and green economy initiatives. The private sector will continue to be pivotal in creating jobs, fostering entrepreneurship, and investing in sustainable development projects. United Nations agencies and international partners will support through capacity-building, policy advice, and facilitating access to global markets and technologies. The United Nations will support the strengthening of institutional capacities and arrangements to scale up impact and ensure the sustainability of outcomes. The United Nations will leverage the skills and resources of Bahrain's thriving private sector, including its well-developed financial sector to create new opportunities for decent work and the ecosystem needed for entrepreneurship to thrive.

Major Assumptions: Important for the achievement of this outcome will be continued political commitment and stable economic policies to support the outlined transformations, effective implementation of subsidy reforms without adverse social impacts, as well as the successful engagement and integration of the private sector in national development efforts.

National Development Priorities: Government Plan 2023-2026: From Recovery and Sustainable Development; Economic Vision 2030, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.3; Economic Recovery Plan 2022-2026; National Labor Market Plan 2023-2027; Fiscal Balance Program; Industrial Sector Strategy 2022-2026; National Water Sector Strategy 2030

SDGs supported: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17

Key SDG Accelerators: Jobs and social protection; energy access and affordability; digital connectivity

The integration of key transitions in jobs and social protection, energy access and affordability, and digital connectivity is crucial for achieving Outcome 2. Jobs and Social Protection initiatives focus on developing comprehensive education and training programs aligned with market demands, empowering women and youth through targeted entrepreneurship and skills training programs and improving labour inspection and occupational safety enforcement bodies. This transition ensures the creation of a resilient labour market, extending social protection measures to cover all demographics, thereby ensuring economic stability and access to social safety nets. Energy Access and Affordability transitions support the transition to renewable energy sources, promoting energy efficiency and providing incentives for industries to adopt sustainable practices and technologies. These efforts not only reduce carbon emissions but also create green jobs, contributing to a sustainable economy. Digital Connectivity enhances digital infrastructure to support economic diversification and create new job opportunities through digital literacy and innovation. By fostering an environment conducive to digital entrepreneurship and connectivity, Bahrain can drive economic growth and innovation. These transitions, supported by robust governance, innovative financing, data and technology integration, and strategic partnerships, collectively contribute to a holistic approach to sustainable economic transformation in Bahrain.

UNCT Configuration: The following resident and non-resident UN entities working in Bahrain will leverage their collective expertise, capacities, and assets towards achievement of this outcome: International Labour Organization (ILO), IOM, International Trade Center (ITC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, UN Women.

[48] https://inff.org/

Strategic Priority Area 3: Peace — Governance for Justice and Human Rights

OUTCOME 3: By 2029, all people living in Bahrain benefit from strengthened governance structures with universal access to justice and human rights protection, enhanced capacities to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and other vulnerable groups[49], and a public sector that is evidence-based, innovative and efficiently and effectively responsive to the evolving needs of the people.

Bahrain aspires to improve its governance structures, legal frameworks, and enforcement mechanisms to protect human rights and facilitate justice. This aspiration is embedded in its Economic Vision 2030, the Government Plan 2023-2026 and the National Human Rights Action Plan 2022-2026. Achieving universal access to justice and protection of human rights, eliminating discrimination and violence against women and other people with vulnerability[50], and enhancing public sector efficiency require continuous effort and capacity development. Moreover, the ongoing global shifts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and escalating climate crisis, have underscored the urgency of robust, adaptive, and inclusive governance systems in all countries.

To navigate these challenges, Bahrain, with the support of the United Nations, must enhance the capacities of its institutions to further increase the participation of civil society into the dialogue and ensure laws and practices effectively cater to all. This involves aligning laws with international human rights commitments, improving stakeholder capacity to implement recommendations of United Nations human rights mechanisms, and enhancing access to justice for women, children and people with vulnerabilities[51]. Moreover, public awareness of rights and services needs to be increased to ensure equity and empowerment for all.

Elements to build on

Bahrain is a signatory to multiple human rights treaties and conventions including the International Convention on Elimination of all kinds of Racial Discrimination (ratified/ acceded in 1990), Convention on Rights of the Child (1992), Convention on Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women (2002), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2006), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2007), Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2011).[52] National efforts to meet the country's obligations under these treaties have led to strengthening of laws and regulations as well as policies to enhance the exercise of specific rights. Significant steps have been taken to redress the violation of rights of expatriate workers and to raise awareness of their rights among both workers and potential employers.

Pre-conditions of Change

To achieve the stated outcome, the following sets of conditions must be fulfilled building on the work done:

Legal frameworks need to further align with global human rights standards, incorporating gender mainstreaming, and state institutions should be well-capacitated to implement those standards. Specific protection for people with vulnerabilities[53] must be built into governance mechanisms to address vulnerabilities and ensure rights and access to justice for all. Justice systems must be accessible and equitable, protecting women, children, people with vulnerabilities[54], such as expatriate workers. Institutions must build capacity to further address and mitigate violence against women and other people with vulnerabilities[55], supporting survivors and implementing preventative measures in line with SDGs 5 and 16. Strengthening legal and operational frameworks is crucial to combat trafficking, with enhanced screenings and victim support. Legal protections for expatriate workers and their children should be strengthened, ensuring greater access to justice and social protection. Raising awareness about rights, services, and legal protections is essential for empowering citizens and residents. Equitable access to services and opportunities benefits persons with disabilities and financially disadvantaged groups, fostering empowerment and inclusion. Building the capacity of human rights governance structures, such as the Office of the Ombudsman within the Ministry of Interior, enhances transparency, responsiveness, and coordination among various bodies. National stakeholders need to continue engaging meaningfully with international human rights mechanisms, promoting equal opportunities. Expanding public participation, especially from youth and civil society, in decision-making processes ensures diverse voices are heard. Leveraging strategic partnerships enhances Government service delivery, efficiency, and effectiveness across all sectors. Modernizing Government services through digital transformation improves access, efficiency, and inclusivity, making services user-friendly and accessible to all.

United Nations Contributions to the Outcome: As the custodian of global norms and standards the United Nations will work with the Government in strengthening its governance mechanisms to deliver fully in its role as duty-bearer. Acknowledging the complex adaptive systems that modern governance must respond to, the United Nations and its partners will aim to enhance the capacity of Bahrain's institutions, ensuring laws reflect global human rights standards and justice is accessible to all. By advocating for the integration of civil society in policymaking, the United Nations in Bahrain looks to foster a culture where change is managed inclusively and progressively. Emphasizing agency, the United Nations will work with Bahrain to address the challenges of eliminating discrimination and violence against women, children and other people with vulnerability[56], through enhanced institutions, well-capacitated service providers, and rights-holders who are aware of their rights and support available.

The United Nations' role is critical in complementing, partnering, and leveraging the work of other stakeholders to collectively

[49] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[50] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[51] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[52] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx
[53] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[54] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[55] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[56] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

achieve desired changes at the outcome level. The United Nations will provide key outputs, including integrated policy advice in accordance with international norms and standards, capacity building, and advocacy for human rights and gender equality.

Sustainability and Partnership: The sustainability of these efforts hinges on the continued development and strengthening of national capacities and institutional arrangements. The GoB will enhance legal frameworks and governance structures to ensure justice and human rights protection, with CSOs working in partnership with the Government to advocate for people with vulnerabilities[57] and promote public awareness of rights. International partners, including the United Nations, will provide technical support and capacity-building for legal reforms, human rights education, and strengthening institutional capacities for governance and justice. Partnerships with national and international entities will be crucial, requiring both existing and new collaborations to be strengthened and expanded. These partnerships are vital for enhancing national capacity, institutional arrangements, and scaling up impact. Specifically, CSOs and human rights defenders play an essential role in in achieving the outcomes in the area.

Major Assumptions: A critical assumption is the Government's continued commitment to and investment in governance reforms, human rights protection, and the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and other people with vulnerability[58]. Furthermore, the successful achievement of these outcomes assumes an environment conducive to civil society engagement and public participation in governance processes.

National Development Priorities: Government Plan 2023-2026: Justice, Security and Stability; Economic Vision 2030, 3.4; National Human Rights Plan 2022-2026; Digital Strategy 2022

SDGs supported: 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17

Key SDG Accelerators: Food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution

The integration of the six key transitions—food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution—is essential for achieving Outcome 3: Sustainable Economic Transformation in Bahrain. Food systems transition promotes sustainable agricultural practices and efficient water management, ensuring food security and supporting the agricultural sector's resilience and productivity. Energy access and affordability drives the shift towards renewable energy sources and enhances energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions and fostering green jobs while ensuring affordable energy for all sectors of the economy. Digital Connectivity enhances digital infrastructure and literacy, supporting economic diversification and innovation, creating new job opportunities, and improving business operations and connectivity. Education transition focuses on aligning educational outcomes with labor market needs, fostering a knowledgeable and skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of a modernized economy. Jobs and Social Protection ensures the creation of a resilient labor market through targeted training programs, extending social protection measures to all demographics, and empowering women and youth, thereby promoting economic stability and inclusive growth. Lastly, Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution transitions emphasize implementing comprehensive climate action plans, promoting sustainable practices, and enhancing environmental stewardship, which are critical for sustaining economic activities and ensuring long-term ecological balance. These transitions, supported by robust governance, innovative financing, data and technology integration, and strategic partnerships, collectively contribute to a holistic and sustainable economic transformation in Bahrain.

UNCT Configuration: The following resident and non-resident United Nations entities working in Bahrain will leverage their collective expertise, capacities, and assets towards achievement of this outcome: ILO, IOM, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women.

Strategic Priority Area 4: Planet — Resilient Environmental Stewardship

OUTCOME 4: By 2029, all people living in Bahrain benefit from enhanced environmental resilience and sustainability, achieved through targeted climate action, pollution reduction, sustainable management of land use and natural resources, and low-carbon development, ensuring ecological balance and energy security for present and future generations.

This strategic priority is aligned with Bahrain's national development priorities, including its commitment to the Paris Agreement and subsequent United Nations Climate Change Conference outcomes, including developing climate resilient and low carbon sustainable health systems, the Economic Vision 2030, and the SDGs, particularly those related to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), and climate action (SDG 13).

As a small island state with arid weather, Bahrain faces the impacts of escalating climate change, dust and sandstorms, and high temperatures. The country has taken significant steps to adapt to the impacts of climate change, at the same time as it has diversified its economy away from the oil sector.

For Bahrain to realize its vision of enhanced environmental resilience and sustainability by 2029, a multifaceted approach is called for, integrating technological innovation, public awareness, and strategic partnerships to transition towards

[57] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[58] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

sustainable land use, water management, pollution control, and low-carbon development.

Elements to build on

Bahrain has taken notable steps towards enhancing its adaptive capabilities and addressing potential vulnerabilities to climate change impacts. These steps include projects and strategies for sustainable management of water resources, the development of a comprehensive coastal resilience strategy and the formulation of a cross-sectoral National Adaptation Investment Plan to enhance the resilience of key sectors. The country has also taken steps to protect climate-vulnerable groups[59], such as outdoor workers. Bahrain is a signatory to the Paris Agreement and other key international environmental agreements. This has translated into national initiatives, notably a new law (Law 7 of 2022) was ratified and issued. This new law repeals its 1996 predecessor and covers a range of matters related to environmental protection, including (but not limited to) biodiversity, the marine and terrestrial environment, air quality, environmental disasters, waste management, pollution, environmental impact assessment and radiation.

Pre-conditions of Change

Robust environmental governance frameworks, including regulations, policies, and processes that are continually evolving in response to changing circumstances and needs will ensure resilience of systems and institutions. To accelerate progress, policies and strategies need to leverage synergies between socio-economic development, minimize inadvertent environmental harm and limit exacerbations of climate vulnerability.

Moreover, additional strengthening of resilience to climate in particular provides the added benefit of managing climate-related risks and impacts. Urban planning and development in Bahrain must take the country towards greener, more energy-efficient and more sustainable living spaces. This includes the development of public spaces that are accessible to all, and mobility options that are inclusive, effective, safe, sustainable and efficient. Timely transition to renewable energy and water security will be enablers for further economic development, environmental protection and higher standards of living. Embracing sustainable practices in agriculture and promoting nature-positive food systems are key to ensuring food security and environmental sustainability. This involves diversifying sources and adopting conservation technologies.

Moreover, innovative financing mechanisms are needed to fund climate adaptation, accelerate investments in green technologies and support an orderly transition to a low-carbon economy.

Mobilizing Bahrain's youth and enhancing the participation of women in the green transition will have an added value. Empowering these groups to advocate for climate action will ensure a broad-based commitment to environmental stewardship. Developing the capacities of youth and women to participate actively in environmental initiatives ensures they are equipped to lead and support sustainable development efforts.

United Nations Contributions to the Outcome: United Nations support to Bahrain's commitment to environmental stewardship will be guided by principles of open systems thinking, recognizing the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and economic factors. The United Nations and its partners will support further initiatives that contribute to resilience against climate change and maintain a sustainable, well-balanced environment while simultaneously promoting economic diversification and social well-being. This will cover the areas of fostering sustainable land use, enhancing water resource management, and reducing pollution. To do so effectively, relevant United Nations agencies will leverage foresight to anticipate and shape future environmental challenges and opportunities.

The United Nations will offer critical expertise in climate action, sustainable natural resource management, and pollution reduction, specifically: Providing expert advice on environmental legislation, climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, and sustainable resource management; enhancing the capabilities of Governmental institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector to implement and sustain environmental initiatives; as well as facilitating access to global best practices, innovative technologies, and platforms for knowledge exchange. Together with the GoB, the United Nations will identify points of improvement in existing environmental policies and regulations and enforcement, in line with international commitments such as the Paris Agreement, the SDGs and the country's announcements at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). This includes laws and policies on water management, land use, energy efficiency, and pollution control. Support will also be offered to ongoing efforts of pollution reduction, improvement of waste management, conservation of biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems. It will support Bahrain in raising public awareness about environmental issues and the importance of sustainability practices, fostering a culture of conservation and responsible consumption. Empowering communities, including youth and women, to participate in environmental conservation efforts will be an added value that contributes to long-term success. Developing green financing mechanisms and encouraging private sector investment in sustainable initiatives will accelerate the adoption of clean technologies, renewable energy, and efficient waste management systems. Biodiversity preservation and disaster risk reduction will be other areas of contribution.

To enhance national capacities on disaster risk reduction (DRR), the United Nations will support the creation of innovative financing mechanisms and the mobilization of investments in DRR as well as strengthening DRR governance at both national and local levels. In addition, the United Nations will support the creation of opportunities for Bahrain to engage with regional forums, such as the regional air quality network for West Asia.

[59] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[60] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Target groups will include the most climate-vulnerable groups[60], especially those in climate-dependent livelihoods including workers exposed to heat stress.

Sustainability and Partnership: The GoB will implement and enforce environmental policies and regulations, with CSOs engaging in advocacy, raising public awareness, and participating in conservation efforts. The private sector will invest in green technologies and sustainable practices, while international partners, including United Nations agencies, will provide expertise, technical assistance, and support for climate action and sustainable resource management initiatives. By partnering with Government agencies, civil society, and the private sector, especially green entrepreneurs, the United Nations will facilitate knowledge transfer, capacity building, and the implementation of best practices and innovative solutions. To facilitate progress towards the GoB's vision, the United Nations will seek to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships such as the financial sector, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia and Government institutions. This will allow stakeholders to effectively pool resources, knowledge, and expertise in line with Government priorities. By establishing strategic partnerships with private sector entities, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, the framework will leverage additional resources and expertise necessary for scaling up climate solutions and environmental sustainability initiatives.

Major Assumptions: This strategic priority hinges upon effective coordination among various stakeholders involved in environmental management and conservation as well as the sufficient funding and resources allocation for the implementation of sustainable environmental practices and technologies.

National Development Priorities: Government Plan 2023-2026: Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development; Economic Vision 2030, 3.5; National Plan for Afforestation 2022 -2035; COP conferences commitments; National Energy Strategy; Bahrain Natural Strategic Plan 2050; Industrial Sector Strategy; National Water Sector Strategy 2030; National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP); National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP); National Adaptation Investment Plan (NAIP)

SDGs supported: 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17

Key SDG Accelerators: Food systems; climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution control; renewable energy access and affordability

The integration of the key transitions in food systems, climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution control, and renewable energy access and affordability is crucial for achieving Outcome 4: Resilient Environmental Stewardship in Bahrain. Food systems transition emphasizes the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and efficient water management techniques to ensure food security while minimizing environmental impact. By promoting diversified and conservation-oriented agricultural practices, Bahrain can enhance the resilience of its food systems against climate variability and resource scarcity. Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution control transition involves implementing comprehensive climate action plans, advancing policies for biodiversity conservation, and further enhanced stringent pollution control measures. This transition is essential for mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, preserving biodiversity, and reducing pollution levels, thereby achieving higher levels of healthier environment for all. Renewable Energy Access and Affordability transition supports the shift towards renewable energy sources and enhances energy efficiency, reducing the nation's carbon footprint and fostering sustainable economic growth. By ensuring affordable and reliable access to clean energy, Bahrain can decrease its dependency on fossil fuels and mitigate the environmental impact of its energy consumption without compromising on future energy demands. These transitions, supported by robust governance frameworks, innovative financing mechanisms, data and technology integration, and strategic partnerships, collectively contribute to a holistic and resilient approach to environmental stewardship, will contribute to Bahrain's efforts on sustainable management of its natural resources and the protection of its ecological systems for future generations.

UNCT Configuration: The following resident and non-resident UN entities working in Bahrain will leverage their collective expertise, capacities, and assets towards achievement of this outcome: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNDRR, UN-Habitat, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNEP, WHO, World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

2.3 Synergies between Cooperation Framework Outcomes

Given the synergies among the Strategic Priority Areas, the four Outcomes are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. In the context of Bahrain's Cooperation Framework, synergies between the outlined outcomes represent a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development. These synergies, integral to the advancement of Bahrain's Agenda 2030 commitments, are evident across various domains, including social equity, economic transformation, governance, and environmental stewardship. For instance, the effort to enhance **social equity and well-being** is deeply interconnected with sustainable economic transformation initiatives. As Bahrain focuses on reducing disparities in health, education, and gender equality, it

simultaneously fosters a conducive environment for economic diversification and innovation. This not only aims at creating sustainable livelihoods and decent work but also ensures that advancements in healthcare, education, and gender equity contribute to a resilient and inclusive economy. The emphasis on integrating economic progress with social and environmental sustainability underscores the necessity of a multifaceted approach, where improvements in one area support and catalyse progress in others.

Moreover, the framework's focus on **governance for justice and human rights** complements and strengthens the other strategic priorities. Strengthening governance structures and enhancing access to justice and human rights protection are critical to achieving social equity, as they lay the foundation for a society that values inclusivity and ensures the protection of its most vulnerable people[61]. This aligns closely with efforts towards **resilient environmental stewardship**, where targeted climate action and sustainable management of natural resources necessitate robust governance mechanisms to be effectively implemented. The integration of climate action across strategic priorities further exemplifies the interconnected nature of these outcomes. As part of the United Nations' commitment to mainstreaming climate change, each outcome area will identify specific contributions towards national climate objectives. For example, the promotion of a green, diversified economy not only addresses environmental concerns but also supports economic transformation by creating new job opportunities and fostering innovation. Similarly, investments in education and health that incorporate climate resilience contribute to a society better equipped to face future challenges, demonstrating the profound interconnectedness of environmental, economic, and social sustainability efforts. Through such synergistic approaches, Bahrain's Cooperation Framework positions the country on a path towards comprehensive and inclusive development, reflecting a deep understanding of the interdependence among the SDGs.

2.4 Sustainability of Results

The sustainability of the Cooperation Framework for Bahrain is underpinned by a forward-looking strategy that aligns closely with Bahrain's Government Plan 2023-2026 and the long-term objectives of the Economic Vision 2030. This alignment is the result of a meticulous analytical and consultative process that considered the nation's medium and long-term development plans, objectives, challenges, and opportunities leading up to and beyond 2030. The essence of sustainability within this framework is to ensure that the impacts of the outcomes extend well beyond the immediate future, laying a foundation for continued progress and resilience.

A cornerstone of this approach is the commitment to making sustainable development a Bahrain-led endeavour, characterized by transparency and mutual respect. This principle ensures that the strategies and initiatives designed to achieve the Cooperation Framework's outcomes are not only aligned with Bahrain's priorities but are also owned by its people and institutions and implemented in through a development coordination architecture co-led by the GoB and the United Nations. This ensures that the support provided is coherent, efficient, and tailored to the nation's unique context and needs.

Forming strategic partnerships with community-based organizations, including civil society organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and community leaders, will ensure that development is not only sustainable but also inclusive and equitable across all segments of Bahraini society. This inclusive approach is particularly critical for reaching out to and meaningfully engaging with people with vulnerabilities[62], thereby embodying the spirit of "leaving no one behind" that is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In essence, the sustainability of the Cooperation Framework for Bahrain hinges on this deep integration of development priorities with national strategies, the emphasis on Bahraini leadership and ownership of the sustainable development agenda, and the commitment to inclusive and equitable progress that benefits all segments of the population. Through this approach, the United Nations and its partners aim to support Bahrain in achieving a future where sustainable development is not just a goal but a lived reality for every person living in Bahrain.

Addressing Regional and Cross-Border Challenges

Bahrain's strategic location within the GCC presents unique opportunities and challenges that significantly impact its development trajectory. As part of a highly interconnected region, Bahrain must navigate the complexities of regional geopolitics, economic interdependencies, and shared environmental challenges. The Cooperation Framework recognizes that achieving sustainable development in Bahrain is intrinsically linked to broader regional dynamics, including economic integration, political stability, and environmental stewardship.

To address these regional and cross-border challenges, Bahrain will focus on enhancing economic resilience through regional cooperation, fostering trade, and aligning with the

[61] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[62] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

economic diversification agendas of the GCC. The Cooperation Framework will support initiatives that strengthen Bahrain's regional diplomatic ties, participation in conflict resolution mechanisms, and contributions to collective security efforts within the GCC. Additionally, the Cooperation Framework will prioritize collaborative efforts in climate mitigation, adaptation strategies, and sustainable resource management to address environmental challenges such as water scarcity, desertification, and marine pollution. By embedding regional, sub-regional, and cross-border considerations into its strategies, the Cooperation Framework aims to enhance Bahrain's resilience and capacity to leverage regional synergies for sustainable development. This integrated approach ensures that Bahrain's development goals are supported by and contribute to the stability, prosperity, and sustainability of the entire GCC region.

To strengthen Bahrain's multilateral engagement and address the needs of expatriate workers, the Cooperation Framework will place a significant emphasis on fostering and enhancing relationships with countries of origin. Bahrain's participation in multilateral platforms such as the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, which facilitates dialogue between labour destination countries in the Gulf and labour origin countries across South and Southeast Asia, is pivotal in this regard. This multilateral platform allows Bahrain to engage in discussions and collaborations that aim to improve labour mobility, workers' rights, and fair recruitment practices.

2.5 United Nations' Comparative Advantage in Bahrain and UNCT Configuration

In alignment with the global shift towards integrated policy advice, the UNCT in Bahrain is committed to leveraging its collective expertise to provide cohesive and comprehensive support to the country's sustainable development agenda. This approach moves beyond traditional project and programme implementation, focusing instead on delivering strategic, integrated policy advice that aligns with Bahrain's national priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UNCT will act as a catalyst for policy coherence, ensuring that all interventions are harmonized and contribute to overarching development goals. This includes utilizing evidence-based and data-driven analyses, to inform policy development and implementation. The United Nations will facilitate multi-stakeholder engagements, bringing together Government entities, civil society, private sector, and international partners to foster collaborative and inclusive policy-making processes.

As part of the Cooperation Framework formulation process the UNCT defined with the GoB what the comparative advantage and value added is for the United Nations in Bahrain as a high income, net contributing country, where the Government already has a strong capacity for direct implementation. In this context, the United Nations' contribution is distinguished by its ability to offer global perspectives, facilitate access to international expertise, and serve as a bridge to a wealth of knowledge and best practices that align with Bahrain's development strategies and its Economic Vision 2030.

The GoB recognizes the United Nations' value add as the custodian of international norms and standards. The United Nations is uniquely positioned to support the Government in aligning its regulatory frameworks, policies, and strategies to international best practices, and to fulfil its obligations under international treaties and agreements. Examples include ongoing work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on human rights, the Ministry of Social Development on rights of the elderly, children, persons with disabilities and the Office of the Ombudsman on child protection. Given the centrality of data generation and use for sustainable development, the United Nations is able to draw on global and regional expertise across over 22 agencies, funds and programmes to provide technical assistance on data generation. Building on the ongoing SDG data consultations, the United Nations will continue working closely with the MoS, Information and e-Government Authority and other stakeholders to improve the national SDG monitoring process by providing hands-on support in filling in the identified data gaps, building the national statistical capacity and streamlining global and national reporting process on SDG indicators.

Bahrain is playing an increasingly visible role as a United Nations member state and contributing to global policy dialogues through the United Nations and other international fora. The country's role in maintaining peace, security and stability in the Middle East has particularly increased with the Bahrain's chairmanship of the Council of the League of Arab States and hosting the 33rd Arab Summit in May 2024. The UNCT can support the Government in its engagement in these international platforms by facilitating multistakeholder policy dialogues, drawing on lessons learned from programme activities, supporting South-South Cooperation (SSC), and incubating success through experiments and contributing to the United Nations' global repository of good practices.

With the intention of achieving ambitious national development priorities, the Government is bringing in a new generation of Government officials to deliver with speed and decisiveness. The UNCT can support the capacity development of the new generation of Government officials in international norms, standards best practices and approaches, including the human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming in policies and institutions.

The United Nations has a comparative advantage in working with directly communities and stakeholders. The UNCT will leverage this advantage in engaging youth, creating awareness, and strengthening community participation in development planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation.

UNCT Configuration

In support of the vision of change, the UN in Bahrain will leverage its collective mandates, capacities, expertise, partnerships, resources, and assets at country, regional, and global levels to maximize the impact of its work. The UNCT configuration includes both resident and non-resident agencies contributing directly or indirectly to UNSDCF outcomes, with a focus on leveraging collective expertise, capacities, and competencies across various sectors.

The UN system presence in Bahrain currently includes eight resident entities (IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNIDO, UN Women, WHO and WMO) and is set to expand to nine with the planned launching of an office in 2024 of ILO; and 12 non-resident entities (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), FAO, ITU, OHCHR, UNDRR, UNEP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOCT, United Nations Volunteers (UNV)), with International Trade Center (ITC) considering to join as well. Relevant programmes of non-residente entities will also be included in joint work plans for this Cooperation Framework. Entities not directly contributing to Cooperation Framework outcomes such as ESCWA, ITU, UNODC and UNV, and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Manama still have a crucial role to play in providing strategic advice or support capacity building in their specific areas of expertise on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the UNCT will draw on the technical capacity of some agencies which are not signatories to this document as well as on expertise from regional offices and headquarters.

While the primary responsibility for implementing the Cooperation Framework rests with the UNCT members, additional expertise from the broader United Nations system, including regional and global levels, will be mobilized as necessary. This additional expertise will be essential for the United Nations to provide cutting-edge advice. Resources from the broader United Nations system will be utilized on a needs basis, with the United Nations Resident Coordinator (RC) playing a key role in mobilizing expertise.

Chapter 03

Cooperation Framework Implementation Plan

3.1 UNSDCF Governance

Upon the signature of the new Cooperation Framework, the GoB and the United Nations will re-establish a JSC. It will continue to be co-chaired by the Undersecretary of the MoFA and the RC, and include senior representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy (MoFNE), MoS and key partners identified during the new Cooperation Framework prioritization process for joint contributions to national priorities and the 2030 Agenda. The JSC will ensure strategic direction and oversight of the Cooperation Framework, alignment with national, regional and international development processes, mechanisms and goals.

From the United Nations side, the membership will include all UNCT members based on the new configuration, including country-based and region-based UN entities. The JSC will meet at least twice a year. The UNCT will present to the JSC for its approval both the Joint Work Plan (JWP) for the year and the results report of the previous year.

The United Nations' internal programme management and coordination mechanism will contribute to the discussions at the JSC.

3.2 UNSDCF Management Structure

To ensure effective implementation of the UNSDCF, the United Nations in Bahrain will configure its management, coordination, and implementation arrangements to enhance system-wide coherence, efficiency, collaboration, and impact in the delivery of their collective mandates. This includes establishing participatory mechanisms to ensure continuous engagement with and feedback from diverse community groups, particularly focusing on women, youth, migrant workers, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and people with vulnerabilities[63] to ensure their needs and perspectives are continuously addressed.

Under the leadership of the RC and with representation of the heads of United Nations entities, the UNCT is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination for delivery in support of the UN Strategic Framework and is responsible for the overall effectiveness of the United Nations system's contributions and results. UNCT members will align their respective country programming instruments to the priorities and outcomes of the UNSDCF and in formulating programmatic interventions in support of its collective objectives.

Under the direction of the UNCT, the **Programme Management Team** (PMT) consisting of the deputy heads of United Nations entities or senior programme managers, is responsible for overall technical-level oversight and coordination of UNSDCF implementation (see below). The PMT will keep the UNCT informed on the status of implementation and provide strategic advisory support and recommendations as necessary.

In line with the recommendations coming out of the programme review of the ongoing Strategic and Sustainable Cooperation Framework (SCF), and to minimize the time commitment needed from the UNCT for coordination, there will be results groups. Furthermore, on an experimental basis programme implementation, monitoring and reporting for all outcomes will be coordinated through the PMT which will meet at least four times a year. At least once a year, the relevant line ministries will be invited to the PMT meetings for joint discussions on key programmatic initiatives. Outcome level programme coordination will be complemented by the three thematic groups: the Disability Inclusion Task Force, the United Nations Network on Migration, and the Gender Theme Group (GTG).

An Operations Management Team, a United Nations Communications Group (UNCG), 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.

Under the direction of the UNCT, the **Operations Management Team** (OMT) will continue to improve operational coherence, efficiencies, and cost-effectiveness of the United Nations' delivery in support of the UNSDCF through its common Business Operation Strategy 2.0 (2020–2025).

[63] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

The UNCG will seek to strengthen inter-agency cooperation in the field of communications and increase the media profile of the United Nations in Bahrain by speaking as "One United Nations" through unified messages and channels, promoting awareness and understanding of the United Nations' contribution to national development through the UNSDCF, as well as promoting partnerships with key stakeholders.

Through the GTG, the United Nations in Bahrain will also ensure the effective implementation of the UNSDG accountability mechanisms for integrating gender equality across UNSDCF implementation, primarily among these the UNCT System-Wide Action Plan Gender Equality Scorecard (UNCT-SWAP GES). In alignment with the UNSDG Standards and Procedures for Gender Theme Groups (2022), this includes policy and technical advisory services to the UNCT on advancing gender equality and strengthening UNCT capacities to mainstream gender equality through UNSDCF implementation.

The UNSDCF will establish and maintain a broad-based engagement platform, including Government bodies, civil society, the private sector, and people with vulnerabilities[64], to ensure that all stakeholders are actively involved in shaping and driving the cooperation framework. This platform will facilitate regular dialogue and consensus-building, ensuring that the initiatives are inclusive and aligned with national and regional priorities.

Regional Issue Based Coalitions (IBC) in the Arab region, including on social protection, climate change, migration and others, will be engaged in supporting implementation of the UNSDCF, when applicable.

The **Resident Coordinator's Office** (RCO), led by the Head of the RCO under the overall direction of the RC will coordinate and guide all interagency mechanisms and will facilitate United Nations system engagement with external multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms. The Office will facilitate coordination between interagency mechanisms around strategic priorities of the UNSDCF. The Office will further facilitate the participation and engagement of non-resident United Nations entities in United Nations interagency coordination mechanisms and processes for the implementation of the UNSDCF.

3.3 Resourcing the United Nations Strategic Framework

Bahrain, as a high-income country, does not receive significant donor funding for the United Nations' programming. At present the Government is the main donor for United Nations agencies, which also bring in some core funding. Resources earmarked for specific projects are also mobilized from vertical funds like the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Resource mobilization from the private sector is constrained among other things by the strict requirements of Government approval. In this context, development of funding framework is moot. However, an SDG financing strategy will be highly relevant, identifying diverse funding sources, including international financial institutions and private sector contributions. Once the Cooperation Framework is signed by the GoB and United Nations, UNCT Bahrain in close consultations with the MoFA, MoFNE and line ministries, will prepare a tentative budget for the whole cycle of the Cooperation Framework with an update on a yearly basis.

The United Nations will also explore opportunities to mobilize finances for innovative and catalytic programmatic interventions through global United Nations funds, as well as innovative funding and financing mechanisms including private sector and other partnerships. This includes exploring climate finance pathways such as green bonds, climate adaptation funds, and blended finance models that combine public and private investment. These mechanisms will be crucial in scaling up investments for sectoral transitions, including renewable energy projects, sustainable agriculture, and circular economy initiatives.

Furthermore, to strengthen engagement with IFIs and the private sector, detailed strategies will be developed to access climate solutions and sustainability finance at the needed scale. This involves forming partnerships with multilateral development banks, leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, and participating in international climate finance platforms. Additionally, establishing a robust pipeline of bankable projects will attract private investment and ensure alignment with global sustainability standards.

It is also acknowledged that certain elements can be further refined during the Funding Framework development process. This iterative approach will allow for the incorporation of emerging financing opportunities and stakeholder feedback, ensuring a dynamic and responsive strategy.

In line with the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) of the United Nations Development and Resident Coordinator System, the RC will support joint resource mobilization initiatives while United Nations entities will keep the RC informed of their resource mobilization plans.

[64] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

Mobilising Resources for the Cooperation Framework

The United Nations system agencies will provide support to the development and implementation of activities within the Cooperation Framework, which may include technical support, cash assistance, supplies, commodities and equipment, procurement services, transport, funds for advocacy, research and studies, consultancies, programme development, monitoring and evaluation, training activities and staff support. Part of the United Nations system entities' support may be provided to non-governmental and civil society organizations as agreed within the framework of the individual workplans and project documents.

Additional support may include access to United Nations organization-managed global information systems, the network of the United Nations system agencies' country offices and specialized information systems, including rosters of consultants and providers of development services, and access to the support provided by the network of United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes. The United Nations system agencies shall appoint staff and consultants for programme development, programme support, technical assistance, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

Subject to annual reviews and progress in the implementation of the programme, the United Nations system agencies' funds are distributed by calendar year and in accordance with the Cooperation Framework. These budgets will be reviewed and further detailed in the workplans and project documents. By mutual consent between the Government and the United Nations development system entities, funds not earmarked by donors to United Nations development system agencies for specific activities may be re-allocated to other programmatically equally worthwhile activities.

The Government will support the United Nations system agencies' efforts to raise funds required to meet the needs of this Cooperation Framework and will cooperate with the United Nations system agencies including: encouraging potential donor Governments to make available to the United Nations system agencies the funds needed to implement unfunded components of the programme; endorsing the United Nations system agencies' efforts to raise funds for the programme from other sources, including the private sector both internationally and in Bahrain; and by permitting contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations in Bahrain to support this programme which will be tax exempt for the Donor, to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.

3.4 Moving from the Strategic Framework to Programming Instruments

As the primary overarching strategic planning framework against which all United Nations development system entities must contribute, the UNSCDF will inform respective country programming instruments to all United Nations entities operating in Bahrain.

To ensure maximum coherence and coordination across the United Nations system for the delivery of collective results, United Nations entity country programming instruments will integrate verbatim the priorities and outcomes of the UNSCDF.

The RC will engage with United Nations entities on the alignment of their respective country programming instruments to ensure their derivation from and alignment to the UNSCDF in accordance with the UNSCDF Guiding Principles and Guidance and in line with United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/279 (2018).[65] The RC will provide written confirmation to respective United Nations entities' Regional Directors or equivalent that their draft country programming documents are derived from and aligned to the United Nations Strategic Framework.

The signing of the UNSDCF is a prerequisite for United Nations activities to continue even though agreements and financing processes are conducted directly between United Nations entities, Ministries, and Government bodies. The UNSDCF is implemented through the country programme instruments of United Nations development system entities. Since the timelines of the country programme instruments and the UNSDCF time frame do not overlap for the majority of UNCT members, each United Nations entity will adopt and adapt the UNSDCF 2025-2029 to meet the arrangements with their partner Ministries and their own corporate planning and reporting requirements. After which, United Nations entity will finalize their instruments, incorporating feedback from UNCT members, and submit them to their governing body.

[65] United Nations General Assembly Resolution (2018). Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

3.5 Joint Workplans

The United Nations Strategic Framework will be made operational through the development of JWPs, which describe the specific results to be achieved and will form an agreement between the United Nations system agencies (resident and non-resident) and each implementing partner as necessary on the use of resources. To the extent possible, the United Nations system agencies and partners will use the minimum documents necessary, namely the UNSDCF and JWPs, to implement programmatic initiatives. However, as necessary and appropriate, project documents can be prepared using, inter alia, the relevant text from the UNSDCF and JWPs.

The first annual JWP for this UNSDCF will be developed in December 2024-February 2025.

JWPs will be updated on a regular basis to reflect changes in programmatic responses based on the evolving context and changing priorities and needs. Aligned to the priorities and outcomes of the UNSDCF, JWPs will be reflected on the online UNINFO platform for increased transparency and accountability and to facilitate streamlined annual reporting through United Nations Country Results Reports.

3.6 The Business Operations Strategy

The Business Operations Strategy (BOS) for Bahrain is a strategic framework designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations operations, in alignment with the United NationsSecretary-General's reform targets and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The BOS, a collaborative effort among United Nations agencies, primarily focuses on Common Administration services. The strategy aims to enhance the quality, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness of operations, leading to cost avoidance and savings. This is achieved through better resource utilization, eliminating duplication and collective bargaining, resulting from increased service volume.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be established to assess the performance and impact of the BOS, with regular reviews to align with evolving needs and global standards. At the implementation level, the managing agency of each common service will be responsible for achieving yearly planned targets in close coordination and collaboration with the designated working group.

As the United Nations system in Bahrain embarks on implementing the UNSDCF, the BOS implementation will foster a more integrated and efficient operational environment, ensuring that United Nations agencies can deliver their programmes more effectively and sustainably, aligning with the broader goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Chapter 04

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan

Timely and comprehensive monitoring and reporting are essential to assess the impact of programmatic interventions, provide accountability to the people of Bahrain through greater transparency on activities and achievement of results, enable effective resource allocation and promote evidence-driven decision-making. The UNSDCF includes an outcome-level indicator framework to assess progress against the key thematic targets consistent with the achievement of the SDGs (see Annex B).

To the extent possible, and where relevant, the United Nations Strategic Framework draws from the global SDG indicator framework. Where the availability of updated data is challenging, the United Nations identified additional proxy indicators to enable measurement of outcome level progress. Collective implementation against the JWPs will be assessed against a high-level output indicator framework which, to the extent possible, draws from United Nations' global SDG output indicator framework to contribute to the United Nations' global-level reporting on contributions towards the SDG.

Progress on UNSDCF implementation will be assessed on an annual basis, including through joint periodic programme reviews, quality assurance activities, and reporting — including financial reporting — through UNINFO. Specific attention will be given to assessing the impact of interventions on people with vulnerabilities[66]. Disaggregated reporting will be ensured in line with the UNSDG accountability standards for gender equality, youth and disability inclusion.

The United Nations and the GoB will closely work to address data needs, particularly high-quality data disaggregated by disability and migration status, including through implementation of population surveys in compliance with international standards, improving data governance and strengthening monitoring and reporting capacity of non-traditional stakeholders, such as private sector, civil society, academia and voluntary sector.

The United Nations' joint research, monitoring, and evaluation activities are reflected in an integrated and adaptive multi-year Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plan (see Annex C) with the objective of strengthening its results-based management through coordinated and collective monitoring of progress towards the UNSDCF' objectives.

In line with UNSDG requirements, the UNCT will ensure the accurate and effective application of the Gender Equality Marker and Human Rights Marker across the JWP. Accurate usage of the markers will facilitate greater mainstreaming of gender equality and human rights in the implementation of the UNSDCF programme, and support progress towards the minimum benchmark set by the QCPR for investment in programming that either targets or mainstreams gender equality (70 per cent of available resources). The UNCT undertakes to explore enhanced usage of the Sustaining Peace Marker. Several risks to the achievement of the UNSDCF have been identified (see section 2.1). The United Nations will continue to monitor these risks and their potential implications for United Nations programming, including through the MEL and joint analysis with Government partners. The United Nations will integrate risk analysis and contingency planning into programme planning and implementation to mitigate the potential impact on delivery.

Cooperation Framework Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementing Partners agree to cooperate with the UN system agencies for monitoring all activities supported by cash transfers and will facilitate access to relevant financial records and personnel responsible for the administration of cash provided by the United Nationssystem agencies.

To that effect, Implementing Partners agree to the following:

1. Periodic on-site reviews and spot checks of their financial records by the United Nations system agencies or their representatives, as appropriate, and as described in specific clauses of their engagement documents/ contracts with the United Nations system agencies'

2. Programmatic monitoring of activities following the United Nations system agencies' standards and guidance for site visits and field monitoring,

3. Special or scheduled audits. Each United Nations organization, in collaboration with other United Nations system agencies (where so desired and in consultation with the respective coordinating Ministry) will establish an annual audit plan, giving priority to audits of Implementing Partners with large amounts of cash assistance provided by the United Nations system agencies, and those whose financial management capacity needs strengthening.

[66] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

4.1 Annual Performance Review and Country Results Reporting

On behalf of the UNCT, the Results Groups will undertake an annual review of the UNSDCF implementation against joint workplans and the UNSDCF results framework which will inform the production of an annual UNCT Results Report and any additional ad hoc reporting as required. All resident and non-resident United Nations entities implementing in Bahrain will contribute to the Results Report. The Results Report will highlight the impact of the United Nations' collective interventions, as well as achievements, risks and challenges, opportunities, lessons learned, best practices, and key focus areas for the subsequent year of implementation. United Nations entities will endeavour to align their annual reporting cycles to that of the United Nations Strategic Framework so agency-specific reports can be utilized in the compilation of the Results Report.

The United Nations will share the Results Report with the JSC, which will determine whether amendments are required to the theories of change, priorities, and outcomes.

The Results Report will also be disseminated to other relevant national and international partners and stakeholders and made publicly available on the United Nations in Bahrain's website and through the United Nations' various social media platforms.

4.2 Evaluation Plan

A final evaluation of the United Nations Strategic Framework will be conducted by an independent consultant in the penultimate year of the programme cycle. The terms of reference for the final evaluation will ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation team and stipulate the requirements for an inclusive and participatory approach involving all stakeholders. The evaluation will adhere to United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards, follow Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria, and utilize a gender equality and human rights-based approach. The PMT will review the outcome of the evaluation to ensure that it meets the necessary requirements and standards.

Where possible and appropriate, the evaluation design, procurement and process will build on and strengthen the national evaluation capacities, including through the use of national evaluators. Also, United Nations system entities will coordinate and sequence their respective programmatic framework evaluation activities to contribute to the United Nations Strategic Framework evaluation process and reduce transaction costs. Stakeholder consultations for United Nations Strategic Framework and United Nations entity-specific evaluations will be coordinated and, where appropriate, combined to mitigate duplication and consultation fatigue among partners and stakeholders.

The outcomes and the lessons learned from the UNSDCF final evaluation, as well as those of United Nations entity-specific evaluations, will inform the development of a new United Nations Strategic Framework upon the expiry of this document.

Annex A. Legal Annex

This Legal Annex refers to the cooperation or assistance agreements or other agreements that are the already existing legal basis for the relationship between the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and each United Nations organization supporting the country to deliver on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2025–2029).

1. Whereas the Government of Bahrain (the "Government") has entered into the agreements listed below with the United Nations, including its Funds, Programmes and other subsidiary organs, and other organizations of the United Nations system ("UN System Organizations"), which are applicable to their programme activities in Bahrain the "UN Agreements") under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (the "Cooperation Framework");

2. Whereas the UN Agreements, together with the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13 February 1946 (the "General Convention") and/or the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 21 November 1947 (the "Specialized Agencies Convention") as applicable, form the primary existing legal basis for the relationship between the Government and each UN System Organization for supporting the country to deliver on the Cooperation Framework, and are non-exhaustive and without prejudice to any other legal instruments the Government may enter into, including additional agreements with UN System Organizations for the purpose of their activities in the country:

a) With the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), as per United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973, which established the Commission, with the membership of the previous United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut that included the Kingdom of Bahrain.

b) With the International Organization for Migration (IOM) the Cooperation Agreement signed between the Government of Bahrain and IOM on 8 March 2018. An amendment to the Cooperation Agreement came into effect on the 30 April 2019.

c) With the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have entered into a basic agreement to govern UNDP's assistance to the country (Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA)), which was signed by both parties on 3 August 1978. Based on Article I, paragraph 2 of the SBAA, UNDP's assistance to the Government shall be made available to the Government and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of the competent UNDP organs, and subject to the availability of the necessary funds to the UNDP. In particular, decision 2005/1 of 28 January 2005 of UNDP's Executive Board approved the new Financial Regulations and Rules and along with them the new definitions of 'execution' and 'implementation' enabling UNDP to fully implement the new Common Country Programming Procedures resulting from the UNDG simplification and harmonization initiative.

d) With the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government, signed and entered into force on 3 August 1978 (the "Basic Agreement") shall be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UNESCO projects and programmes in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

e) With the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government, signed and entered into force on 3 August 1978 (the "Basic Agreement") shall be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UNFPA projects and programmes in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

f) With the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government, signed and entered into force on 3 August 1978 shall be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UN-Habitat projects and programmes in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and per the Host Country Agreement with the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture for establishing Urban Capacity Centre once it is signed.

g) With the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government, signed and entered into force on 3 August 1978 shall be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UNHCR projects and programmes in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

h) With the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) based on the Gulf Area Programme Document approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in 2018 [UN, ECOSOC, UNICEF Sub-regional programme document for the Gulf Area, 16 July, 2018. E/ICEF/2018/P/L.15] which was subsequently extended to 2025.

i) With the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government, signed and entered into force on 3 August 1978 shall be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UNIDO projects and programmes in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

j) With the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government, signed and entered into force on 3 August 1978 shall be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UNODC projects

and programmes in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Moreover, the Memorandum of Understanding between UNODC and the Ministry of Interior signed on 27 February 2014, and the Memorandum of Understanding between UNODC and the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments signed on 20 October 2014, respectively provide a framework of cooperation and understanding, to facilitate collaboration between the parties to further their shared goals and objectives in the fields of drug control, crime prevention and criminal justice.

k) With the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government, signed and entered into force on 3 August 1978 shall be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UN WOMEN projects and programmes in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as per exchange of letters.

l) With the World Health Organization (WHO), a Basic Agreement for the Provision of Technical Advisory Assistance, which was signed by the Government on 24 July 1972 and by WHO on 30 June 1972.

m) With the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the provisions of the Agreement between the Government of Bahrain and WMO on the legal Status and Functioning of the WMO Subregional Office for Asia in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which was signed by the Government and WMO on 25 November 2004.

3. With respect to all UN System Organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) assistance to the Government shall be made available and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions, decisions, rules and procedures of each UN System Organization.

4. Without prejudice to the above, the Government shall:

i. apply to each UN System Organization and its property, funds, assets, officials and experts on mission the provisions of the General Convention and/or the Specialized Agencies Convention; and

ii. accord to each UN System Organization, its officials and other persons performing services on behalf of that UN System Organization, the privileges, immunities and facilities set out in the UN Agreement applicable to such UN System Organization.

5. United Nations Volunteers performing services on behalf of a UN System Organization shall be entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to officials of such UN System Organization.

6. Any privileges, immunities and facilities granted to a UN System Organization under the Cooperation Framework shall be no less favourable than those granted by the Government to any other UN System Organization signatory of the Cooperation Framework.

7. Without prejudice to the UN Agreements, the Government shall be responsible for dealing with any claims which may be brought by third parties against any of the UN System Organizations and their officials, experts on mission or other persons performing services on their behalf, and shall hold them harmless in respect of any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the Cooperation Framework, except where it is mutually agreed by the Government and the relevant UN System Organization(s) that such claims and liabilities arise from gross negligence or misconduct of that UN System Organization, or its officials, or persons performing services.

8. Nothing in or relating to this Cooperation Framework shall be deemed:

i. a waiver, express or implied, of the privileges and immunities of any UN System Organization; or

ii. the acceptance by any UN System Organization of the jurisdiction of the courts of any country over disputes arising from this Cooperation Framework, whether under the General Convention or the Specialized Agencies Convention, the UN Agreements, or otherwise, and no provisions of this Cooperation Framework shall be interpreted or applied in a manner, or to an extent, that is inconsistent with such privileges and immunities.

ANNEX B: UNSDCF Results Framework

1 People - Enhanced Social Equity and Well-being

Outcome: By 2029, all people living in Bahrain, especially the most vulnerable groups[67], benefit from universal access to quality essential services, sustainable public spaces and enhanced social safety nets, to support Bahrain's commitment to social equity.

Contributing United Nations agencies:

FAO, IOM, UNDRR, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNODC, UN Women, WHO

Key Partners:

The Supreme Councils for Environment, Health and Women; Key ministries and other Government entities; the Labour Market Regulatory Authority; the National Commission for Childhood, the Electricity and Water Authority, the UNESCO National Commission, the Royal University for Women, WHO collaborating centres for Nursing Development and Health Professionals' Educational Development, Government Hospitals, Primary Healthcare Centres and Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA); relevant NGOs universities and individual experts.

Contributing to SDGs:

1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17

National development priorities:

Government Plan 2023-2026: Raising the Living Standard of Citizens to Preserve their Gains, High-quality and Competitive Government Services; Economic Vision 2030: 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5; National Human Rights Action Plan 2022-2026; National Health Plan 2016-2025; Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2023-2026; National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini women 2013-2022; National Water Sector Strategy 2030

Key transitions:

Jobs and social protection; Education

Performance indicators	Disaggregation	Baseline (Year)	Target (2029)	MOV/SOURCE
1.1 Proportion of population covered by at least one social protection benefit (SDG indicator 1.3.1)		86.4 (2022)	TBC	ILOSTAT
a) Children/households receiving child/family cash benefits		7.6 (2022)		
b) Persons with severe disabilities collecting disability social protection benefits		27.8 (2021)		
c) Unemployed receiving benefits	Total Female Male	46.6 (2020) 45.4 (2020) 50.9 (2020)		
d) Employed covered in the event of work injury	Total Female Male	17.8 (2022) 34.1 (2020) 13.3 (2020)		
e) Above retirement age receiving a pension	Total Male Female	46.5 (2022) 55.5 (2022) 39.2 (2022)		
f) People with vulnerability[68] covered by social assistance[69]		72.4 (2021)		
g) Mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits.		18.2 (2022)		

[67] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[68] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[69] Proportion of people with vulnerabilities receiving benefits: ratio of social assistance recipients to the total number of people with vulnerabilities. The latter are calculated by subtracting from total population all people of working age who are contributing to a social insurance scheme or receiving contributory benefits, and all persons above retirement age receiving contributory benefits.

Performance indicators	Disaggregation	Baseline (Year)	Target (2029)	MOV/SOURCE
1.2 Human Development index (related to SDGs 1, 3, 4)	Value Rank out of 191	0.875 (2021) 35 (2021)	TBC	UNDP HDR
1.3 Probability (%) of dying between age 30 and exact age 70 from any cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (SDG indicator 3.4.1)	Total Female Male	16.1 (2019) 15.4 (2019) 16.4 (2019)	TBC	WHO Global Health Observatory
1.4 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex (SDG Indicator 4.2.2 - adjusted net enrolment rate in %)	Total Female Male	71.16 (2019) 70.94 (2019) 71.38 (2019)	TBC	UIS/UNESCO UNDP HDR
1.5 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all (SDG indicator 11.7.1)	National value Southern Governorate Muharraq Governorate Capital Governorate Northern Governorate	17.8 (2018) 21.6 (2018) 19.1 (2018) 16.3 (2018) 15.9 (2018)	TBC	Information & eGovernment Authority, UN-HABITAT

2 Prosperity - Sustainable Economic Transformation

Outcome Statement: By 2029, all people in Bahrain benefit from sustainable livelihoods and decent work in a modernized, knowledge-based, digital, green, diversified, inclusive and resilient economy, supported by robust international partnerships.

Contributing United Nations agencies:

ILO, IOM, ITC, ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, UN Women

Key Partners:

Supreme Councils for Environment, Health, Justice, Natural Resources, Economic Security, and Women; Key ministries; the Bahrain Institute for Public Administration (BIPA), the NIHR, the National Audit Office and Tender Board, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority. From the private sector: Tamkeen, the Bahrain Development Bank (BDB), and Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)

National development priorities:

Government Plan 2023-2026: Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development; Economic Vision 2030: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.3; Economic Recovery Plan 2022-2026; National Labour Market Plan 2023-2027; Fiscal Balance Program; Industrial Sector Strategy; National Water Sector Strategy 2030

Contributing to SDGs:

2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17

Key transitions:

Jobs and social protection; energy access and affordability; digital connectivity

Performance indicators	Disaggregation	Baseline (Year)	Target (2029)	MOV/SOURCE
2.1 a) Labor force participation rate, by gender & age (Related to SDG target 8.5, 8.6)	Total Women Men Youth (15-24)	71,86% (2023) 44,70% (2023) 86,77% (2023) 41,84% (2023)	TBC	ILOSTAT
b) Unemployment rate, by sex and age (Related to SDG indicator 8.5.2)	Female 15+ Male 15+ Youth (15-24)	4,10% (2023) 0,50% (2023) 5,80% (2023)	TBC	ILOSTAT
2.2 Non-oil sector GDP growth (Related to SDG targets 8.1, 8.2)		6.2% (2022)	TBC	2022 Bahrain Economic Report
2.3 Annual growth rate of output per worker (SDG indicator 8.2.1)		2.3 (2024)	TBC	ILOSTATS
2.4 CO2 emission per unit of manufacturing value added (SDG indicator 9.4.1)		0.369 (2019)	TBC	UNIDO, IAEA

3 Peace - Governance for Justice and Human Rights

Outcome Statement: By 2029, all people living in Bahrain benefit from strengthened governance structures with universal access to justice and human rights protection, enhanced capacities to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and other vulnerable groups[70], and a public sector that is evidence-based, innovative and efficiently and effectively responsive to the evolving needs of the people.

Contributing United Nations agencies:

ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women

Key Partners:

Parliament, the Supreme Councils for Environment, Health, Justice and Women; Key ministries; the Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA) and Bahrain Institute for Political Development (BIPD), the National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR), the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority, the Royal Charity and Mumtalakat, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judicial and Legal Studies Institute, and the Royal Academy of Police; Islamic Finance Bodies and other public and private philanthropic bodies.

National development priorities:

Government Plan 2023-2026: Justice, Security and Stability; Economic Vision 2030: 3.4; National Human Rights Action Plan 2022-2026; Digital Strategy 2022

Contributing to SDGs:

5, 8, 10, 11, 16

Key transitions:

All six

Performance indicators	Disaggregation	Baseline (Year)	Target (2029)	MOV/SOURCE
3.1 Gender Inequality index (Related to SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8, 16)	Value	0.181 (2021)	TBC	UNDP HDR\
3.2 Detected victims of human trafficking, by age and sex (number) (SDG indicator 16.2.2)	Total	83 (2021)	TBC	Bahrain SDGs 2030
	For forced labour, servitude, slavery	44 (2021)		
	For sexual exploitation	39 (2021)		
	Females	70 (2021)		
	Males	13 (2021)		
3.3 Worldwide Governance Indicators - Government Effectiveness (Related to SDG target 16.6	Performance -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong)	0.64 (2022)	TBC	WB, Worldwide Governance Indicators
	Rank 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest)	72.17 (2022)		
	Rank 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest)	10.14 (2022)		
3.4 Worldwide Governance Indicators - Rule of Law (Related to SDG target 16.3)	Performance -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong)	0.44 (2022)	TBC	WB, Worldwide Governance Indicators
	Rank 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest)	65.09 (2022)		

[70] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs

4 Planet - Resilient Environmental Stewardship

Outcome Statement: By 2029, all people living in Bahrain benefit from enhanced environmental resilience and sustainability, achieved through targeted climate action, pollution reduction, sustainable management of land use and natural resources, and low-carbon development, ensuring ecological balance and energy security for present and future generations.

Contributing United Nations agencies:

FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNDRR, UN-Habitat, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNEP, WHO, WMO

Key Partners:

Supreme Councils for Environment, Health, Natural Resources, Economic Security, and Women; Key ministries (including the Ministry of Works, Health, Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture (MoMA), the Working Group of the inter-ministerial Food Security Committee, the Electricity and Water Authority, the National Mariculture Centre, and iGA; the Bahrain Defense Forces and National Disasters Response Committee; private sector, universities, volunteer groups, NGOs

National development priorities:

Government Plan 2023-2026: Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development; Economic Vision 2030: 3.5; Bahrain's National Adaptation Investment Plan, National Plan for Afforestation 2022 -2035; COP conferences commitments; National Energy Strategy; Bahrain Natural Strategic Plan 2050; Industrial Sector Strategy; National Water Sector Strategy 2030; National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP)

Contributing to SDGs:

3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Key transitions:

Food systems; climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution; energy access and affordability

Performance indicators	Disaggregation	Baseline (Year)	Target (2029)	MOV/SOURCE
4.1 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources (SDG indicator 6.4.2)	Total	133.71% (2020)	TBC	UN Water
4.2 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (SDG indicator 7.2.1)	Total	0.4% (2021)	TBC	GoB SDGs 2030
4.3 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5) in cities (population weighted) (SDG indicator 11.6.2)	Total	51.82 (2019)	TBC	WHO
4.4 Total greenhouse gas emissions per year (Mt CO2) (SDG indicator 13.2.2)	Per capita	21.5 (2022)	TBC	EU 2023 EDGAR

ANNEX C: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan

Description of Activities	Responsible Groups	Lead UN entity	Timeline						Indicative cost for the five years
			Duration	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Monitoring									
United Nations Joint and individual monitoring missions	PMT	Per agency	Ad-hoc	x	x	x	x	x	
Support to national data collection on SDG for CF outcome data	UNCT	RCO	Ongoing	x	x	x	x	x	
Collection of CF monitoring output data through agency surveys/ reports	PMT	Per agency	Ad-hoc	x	x	x	x	x	
Review and Reporting									
Data entry on M&E and projects into UNINFO for planning and monitoring	PMT, UNCT	Per agency	January-February	x	x	x	x	x	
Reporting of the 1) Programmatic and Coordination Areas and 2) Normative Areas (Human Rights Profile, Gender Equality Scorecard, Youth Scorecard, Disability Inclusion Scorecard, PSEA) in Information Management System	GTG, Disability inclusion TF, UNCT	RCO GTG chairs PSEA TF chairs PwD scorecard – Disab incl TF chairs	October-December	x	x	x	x	x	
Preparation of United Nations annual country results report which includes review of progress towards CF outputs/outcomes/TOC and CF communications and financing strategy	PMT UNCT	RCO	January - March		x	x	x	x	USD 10,000
Cooperation Framework Annual Performance Review based on internal analyses reporting from country results report	UNCT, PMT, JSC	RC, UNCT	February		x	x	x	x	
Business Operations Strategy (BOS) review	OMT	OMT chair	Annually	x	x	x	x	x	
Evaluation									
Independent evaluation of individual United Nations entity country programme instruments, projects and programmes	PMT	Per agency	Ad-hoc		x	x	x	x	
Independent evaluation of Cooperation Framework prepared and published (including the CF Strategies, i.e. communication, financing etc.)	PMT, UNCT FPs, UNCT	RCO	October-December				x		USD 50,000
Learning									
Document and collectively analyze lessons emerging throughout programme cycle	PMT	RCO	Ongoing	x	x			x	
Multi-stakeholder session on main findings of final evaluation to inform way forward for CF	UNCT, PMT	RC	January					x	

ANNEX D: Summary of Consultations

Summary of Stakeholder Consultations for the Bahrain UNSDCF 2025-2029

Introduction

In preparation for the Bahrain UNSDCF 2025-2029, the United Nations in Bahrain undertook extensive consultations with around 100 people (including 40 women) among youth, civil society representatives, workers and employers' unions, and the private sector. The consultations revealed a robust collective desire for a United Nations presence that is not only responsive but also proactively inclusive and strategically aligned with Bahrain's national priorities. Notably, the consultations employed innovative approaches to ensure active participation from youth groups, workers, unions, and populations with higher needs[71], thus reflecting a broad and diverse range of voices in the framework.

People – Enhanced Social Equity and Well-Being: Feedback from the consultations indicated a critical need for comprehensive data management to address social equity challenges effectively. Stakeholders expressed a desire for the United Nations to support capacity-building initiatives that empower local solutions and improve service delivery in health (including mental health), education, and social protection, ensuring that benefits reach all segments of the population.

Prosperity – Sustainable Economic Transformation: Stakeholders underscored the importance of nurturing entrepreneurship and digital skills to meet evolving market demands. There was a strong call for the United Nations to facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building, especially in digital transformation and sustainable business practices. Participants also stressed the need for educational reforms to align more closely with labour market requirements, thereby enhancing economic opportunities for all, particularly populations with higher needs[72].

Peace – Governance for Justice and Human Rights: Participants advocated for stronger policies to protect the rights of expatriate workers and people with disabilities, emphasizing the need for wage protection laws and improved infrastructural accessibility. Feedback highlighted the importance of the United Nations' role in fostering policy reforms, raising awareness of rights among people with vulnerabilities[73], and ensuring inclusivity in governance processes.

Planet – Resilient Environmental Stewardship: Discussion in this area focused on the urgent need for sustainable environmental practices. Participants recommended that the United Nations support efforts to implement guidelines for sustainable construction, promote circular economy initiatives, and enhance education on environmental conservation. There was a strong advocacy for the United Nations to lead by example in facilitating cross-sector collaboration to protect and sustainably manage Bahrain's natural resources.

Leave No One Behind: The consultations highlighted the importance of including the perspectives of people with vulnerabilities[74] to ensure that no one is left behind. Participants noted the role of women and youth as change agents, discussing specific needs and challenges faced by these groups. The issues of the transition of young people into the job market came up repeatedly. Different groups highlighted the needs of individuals on the neurodivergent spectrum, with calls for policies and programs to provide tailored support and enhance their access to educational and employment opportunities. Additionally, stakeholders emphasized the need to address gender disparities, by specific focus on empowering women through entrepreneurship and leadership programmes, and ensuring equitable access to social services for women and girls. The unique challenges faced by expatriate workers, low-income households, and families with children with disabilities were highlighted, advocating for enhanced social protection measures and accessible public services. These detailed discussions have been integral in shaping the strategic priorities of the UNSDCF, ensuring that the framework is responsive to the diverse needs of Bahrain's population.

[71] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[72] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[73] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'
[74] See footnote 1 on page 8 for the definition of 'people with vulnerabilities or higher needs'

ANNEX E: Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BCCI	Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BDB	Bahrain Development Bank
BIPA	Bahrain Institute of Public Administration
BIPD	Bahrain Institute for Political Development
COP	United Nations Climate Change Conference
DCO	Development Coordination Office (UN)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FBP	Fiscal Balance Programme
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GCC	Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GNI	Gross national income
GTG	Gender Theme Group
GoB	Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IBC	Regional Issue Based Coalitions
iGA	Information & eGovernment Authority
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Center

ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
JWP	Joint Work Plan
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MAF	Management and Accountability Framework
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MoFNE	Ministry of Finance and National Economy
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MoS	Ministry of Sustainable Development
MoMA	Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
NIHR	National Institution for Human Rights
NRA	Non-Resident Agency
NREAP	National Renewable Energy Action Plan
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMT	Operations Management Team
PMT	Programme Management Team
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
R&D	Research and Development
PWD	People Living with Disability

SADDD	Data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SCF	Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SSC	South-South Cooperation
TF	Task Force
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations
UNAFPs	United Nations Agency, Fund, or Programme
UNCG	United Nations Communications Group
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements 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
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOCT	United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
UNV	United Nations Volunteers programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VAT	Value-Added Taxes
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

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