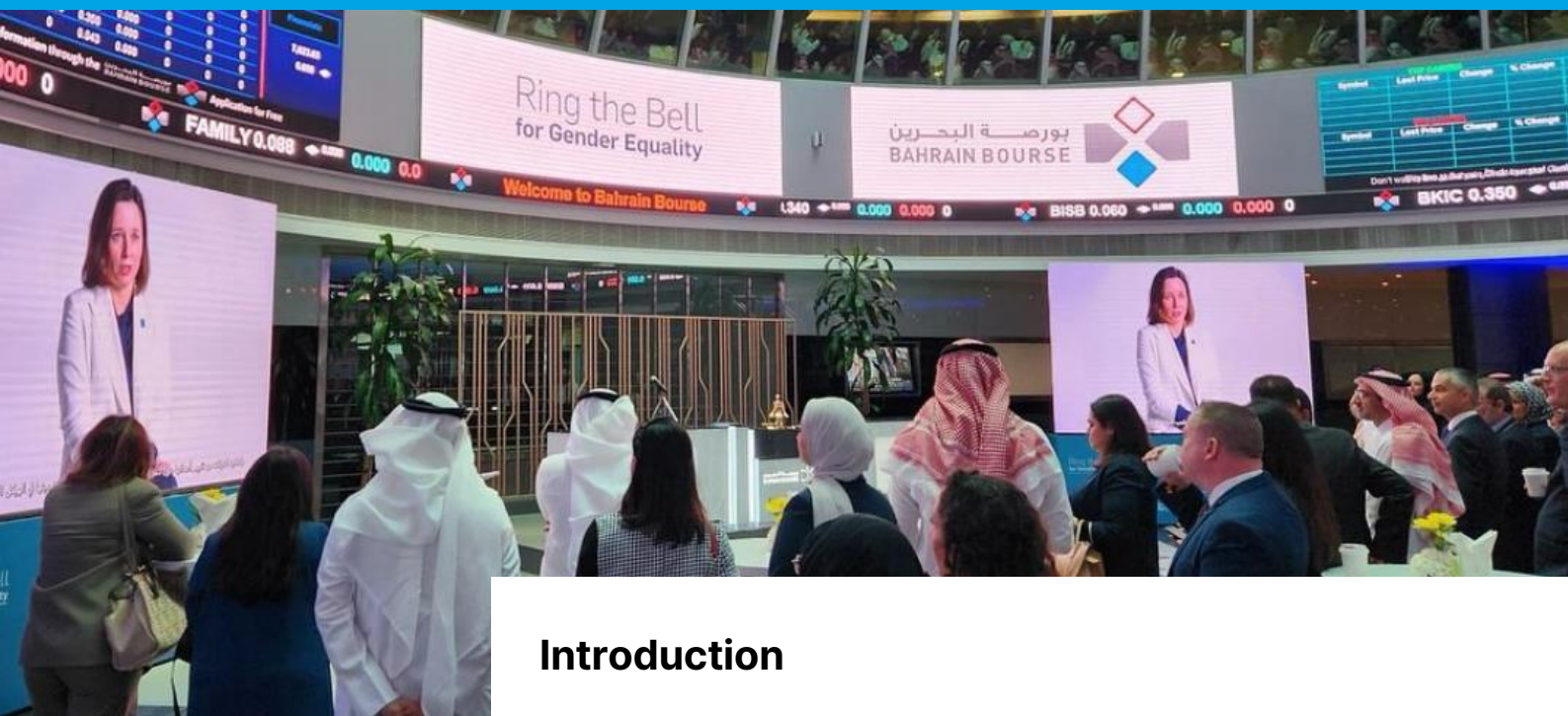


UNCT

Gender Theme Group

2024 Annual report

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Introduction

In 2023, the Bahrain United Nations Country Team (UNCT) established for the first time a Gender Theme Group (GTG), with the aim of strengthening collective results for gender equality and women's empowerment in Bahrain. In line with the United Nation Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Standards and Procedures, the Bahrain GTG was established to facilitate inter-agency, gender-responsive, programmatic, technical and policy advice to the UNCT at all stages of the United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) cycle.

In its second year of operations, the GTG has laid solid foundations for advancing gender equality through the UNCT's joint work. The GTG has focused on collaboration, strengthening UNCT capacities to build strategic planning and stronger inter-agency coordination, and more robust gender mainstreaming efforts across the UNCT's work in Bahrain. Consequently, the Bahrain UNCT is well-positioned to implement the UN Gender Equality Acceleration Plan and its key measures to advance country-level UN accountability for gender mainstreaming.

Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GEM	Gender Equality Marker
GES	Gender Equality Scorecard
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GTG	Gender Theme Group
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JWP	Joint Work Plan
OHCHR	Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights
TOR	Terms of Reference
QA	Quality Assurance
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RCO	Resident Coordination's Office
ROAS	Regional Office for the Arab States
SCW	The Supreme Council for Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCT-SWAP GES	UNCT-System Wide Action Plan Gender Equality Scorecard
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNIC	United Nations Information Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UN Women	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
WHO	World Health Organization

Terms of Reference

The Bahrain UNCT GTG is responsible for coordinating gender mainstreaming through UNCT joint work, in the areas of Programme Support and Policy Dialogue and Support. The principal activities of the GTG are determined on an annual basis, and focus on three key areas to increase gender mainstreaming, aligned with the UNSDG Standards and Procedures for Gender Theme Groups:

- Support the implementation of the UNCT-System Wide Action Plan Gender Equality Scorecard (UNCT-SWAP GES) action plan and serve as the inter-agency task team for subsequent comprehensive assessment (next due in 2025);
- Support UNCT efforts to increase investments in gender-responsive programming, as tracked by the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) 2 and 3 coding in the Joint Workplan; and
- Serve as the dedicated forum for UNCT members to share knowledge, data and analysis on GEWE issues in Bahrain, including in contribution to gender mainstreaming in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) cycle.



Membership

Membership of the Bahrain GTG is open to all gender focal points of all agencies that are members of the UNCT. In 2024, the membership included: UN Women, UNFPA (co-chairs), IOM, OHCHR, RCO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIC, UNIDO, UN-Habitat, UNHCR and WHO.

2024 annual work plan and key results

The 2024 Annual Work Plan (AWP) was aligned with the action plan of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard (GES) 2021 Comprehensive Report and the 2023 Annual Report to accelerate the achievement of the UNCT-SWAP GES minimum requirements. To ensure effective implementation and monitoring, the GTG met four times in 2024: on 27 Feb, 28 May, 7 August, and during a two-day retreat on 9-10 October. These meetings provided a platform for tracking progress of the AWP and the related GES action points.

OBJECTIVE 1

The joint implementation of the UNSDCF facilitates achievement of greater results for women and girls in Bahrain.

Significant advancement was made towards achieving this objective in 2024, contributing to greater capacities and accountability of the UNCT to achieve results for women and girls in Bahrain this year and into the next UNSDCF cycle.

Output 1.1

The Bahrain UNCT has strengthened capacity to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) across the CCA/UNSDCF cycle.

This year the Gender Theme Group took stock of progress made to date and considered how to strengthen our collective performance for gender mainstreaming, through a time and cost analysis. The exercise aimed to measure the return on investment of agencies' participation in the GTG activities, with each participant dedicating 9.5 working days to the implementation of the workplan in 2024. This relatively small investment of time by each agency led to significant progress being made on the implementation of global gender mainstreaming standards for UNCTs.

In collaboration with the Regional Coordination Office (RCO), the GTG held its first two-day strategic workshop on 9-10 October 2024 to enhance the integration of a gender perspective into the UNCT joint work. The workshop reviewed progress in implementation of the 2024 GTG workplan. GTG members identified the five performance indicators of the UNCT-System-Wide Action Plan Gender Equality Scorecard concerning gender mainstreaming in the UNCT's joint work to draft the 2024 UNCT-SWAP GES annual report. The workshop also introduced the GTG cost study developed by UN Women to quantify contribution to the GTG. Additionally, training sessions were delivered, including a refresher session on the Gender Equality Marker (GEM), an introduction to gender mainstreaming and training on gender-based monitoring and reporting. The discussion and insights from the retreat informed key actions included in the 2025 workplan.

The GTG conducted regular monitoring of the GES action plan implementation throughout the year to measure progress towards achieving the GES performance indicators. Progress was demonstrated and reported across the following five performance indicators:

UNCT-SWAP GES PI and assessment	Inputs of the Gender Theme Group in 2024
PI 2.3 UNSDCF monitoring, evaluation and learning measures progress against planned gender equality results	In 2023, the GTG supported the UNCT in gathering gender-related data for the review of the UNCT Common Country Assessment (CCA). This consolidated data was then used to support the identification of indicators in the UNSDCF 2025-2029, developed in 2024.
Meets minimum requirements	
PI 3.1 UNCT collaborates and engages with government on gender equality and empowerment of women	The Supreme Council for Women (SCW), the national women's machinery, participated in the January 2024 strategic prioritization workshop for the UNSDCF 2025-2029, reinforcing the integration of gender perspectives in the framework. The GTG supported the coordination of the SDG 5 data roundtable organized by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, RCO and UN Women, as part of a series of roundtables to strengthen the localization of the SDGs in Bahrain.
Exceeds minimum requirements	
PI 3.2 UNCT collaborates and engages with women's/gender equality civil society organizations	UNFAP, as co-chair of the GTG, supported the RCO to ensure that GEWE CSOs participated in the UNSDCF 2025-2029 consultations, which aimed to ensure gender perspectives through the framework.
Approaches minimum requirements	
PI 5.2 UNCT has adequate capacities developed for gender mainstreaming	During the GTG retreat in October, UN Women as GTG co-Chair delivered capacity-building sessions including a GEM refresher, orientation on gender mainstreaming in UN programming, and an interactive training on gender-responsive results-based monitoring and reporting.
Meets minimum requirements	
PI 6.1 Adequate resources for gender mainstreaming are allocated and tracked	The GTG conducted quality assurance for the JWP 2023 – 2024 to ensure that the GEM was coded accurately for all sub-outputs and included the use of the narrative column. Refresher training on the GEM was provided in October 2024 during the GTG retreat. The roadmap to increase financial allocation for GEM 2 and 3 to meet the global threshold was developed in 2023.
Meets minimum requirements	

GTG Workplan Output 1 indicator results

Output indicator	Results
Indicator 1.1.A: 2024 annual report demonstrates improvements in five GES indicators.	Target met. The 2024 UNCT-SWAP GES annual report demonstrated progress in five performance indicators: PI 2.3: Cooperation Framework M&E PI 3.1: Engagement with Government PI 3.2: Engagement with GEWE CSO PI 5.2: Gender Mainstreaming Capacities PI 6.1: Resource Allocation & Tracking
Indicator 1.1.B: Gender equality and the empowerment of women is mainstreamed across all UNSDCF outcomes in line with SDG priorities including SDG 5.	Target not met. While outcome 3 is visibly mainstreamed, the other outcome areas lack a gender perspective.
Indicator 1.1.C: Between one-third and one-half (33-50 per cent) of UNSDCF outcome (and output) indicators measure changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women in line with SDG targets including SDG 5.	Target met. The UNSDCF 2025-2029 consists of 18 indicators that cover 4 outcome areas, with 8 indicators (44%) tracking data related to gender equality. Indicators measure sex-disaggregated data, as well as counts of women beneficiaries and positioning on the gender inequality index.

Output 1.2

The Bahrain UNCT has strengthened capacity to increase Gender Equality Marker 2 and 3 coding in the JWP.

To follow-up on the comprehensive training conducted in October 2022, the GTG conducted a refresher session on GEM coding in the October 2024 retreat, looking ahead to the development of the next JWP in Q1 2025. The session focused on the linkage between the GEM and GES standards for UNCT gender mainstreaming and presented insights gained from the regional coding analysis. Bahrain was among several UNCTs in the Arab States region to have reached 100% accuracy in current GEM coding due to conducting a comprehensive QA process prior to finalization and system entry.

However, the financial allocation coded GEM 3⁽¹⁾ and GEM 2⁽²⁾ fell below the 70% global target set by Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) indicator 1.4.18. The group engaged in discussions on key actions outlined in the GEM roadmap to leverage gender investment, identifying practical steps and low-hanging fruits for improvement.

Output Indicator	Results
Indicator 1.2.A: The UNCT meets UNCT-SWAP GES PI 6.1 (per 2023 guidance).	Target met. With the 2023 updated GES guidance, the UNCT successfully met the minimum requirement for PI 6.1. In 2023, the GTG carried out a comprehensive quality assurance for the JWP, ensuring accurate coding with narrative column.
Indicator 1.2.B: % of participants who report feeling more confident to apply the GEM accurately following the refresher (pre and post session mentimetre)	Some progress made. A review session will be included in the comprehensive markers training in 2025.

Output 1.3

Public awareness of key GEWE issues related to the Bahrain Economic Vision and the UNSDCF is supported.

GTG members participated in the Ring the Bell event organized by the Bahrain Bourse to celebrate International Women's Day in March. A video featuring 17 women from government agencies, CSOs, and private sector highlighted Bahrain's efforts to achieve equal opportunities for women and girls. Speaking in the video, the co-chair of the GTG highlighted the Women's Empowerment Principles developed by UN Women and the UN Global Compact to support the private sector in creating inclusive working environments.

Due to the humanitarian crisis in the region at the time, it was not possible to launch the advocacy campaign for the 16 days of activism and Bahraini women's day in 2024.

Web stories published on the occasion of IWD 2024:

[Fatema Haider: The power of investing in women and advancing women in tech](#)

[| United Nations in Bahrain](#)

[The Journey of Bahrain's First Female Muay Thai Fighter | United Nations in Bahrain](#)

[Why investing in women is a human rights issue | United Nations in Bahrain](#)

(1) Gender equality and the empowerment of women is the principal object of sub-output.

(2) Gender equality and the empowerment of women is the significant object of sub-output.

Video for Ring the Bell 2024:

<https://youtu.be/ahAF7b2hsCk?si=DnNfbB1ICAYdEJrg>



Over the summer, the GTG implemented a social media campaign, Summer Reading List for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. The campaign aimed to encourage awareness on gender equality and highlight the importance of achieving SDG 5 by recommending interesting and informative reading on the subject. UN Women, UNFPA and OHCHR contributed to the campaign.

Social media posts for summer reading lists campaign:



2025 key steps

In 2025, the GTG will aim to mobilize the UNCT to strengthen accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of the roll-out of the next UNSDCF 2025-2029. Initiatives in 2025 will include the following:

1 Support the UNCT to prepare for the **UNCT-SWAP GES comprehensive report**

Following the initial Comprehensive Report conducted in 2021, the GTG will support the UNCT to conduct the next Comprehensive Report assessing progress across all 15 performance indicators. In preparing for the Comprehensive Report, the GTG will focus on taking forward the recommendations of the 2024 annual report in alignment with the UN Gender Equality Acceleration Plan.

2 Support in following the **GEM roadmap for the JWP 2025-2026**

Building on the GEM roadmap developed in 2023 to increase financial allocation for GEM 2 and 3, the GTG will facilitate technical discussion with UNCT members to implement the recommendations of the GEM roadmap, aiming to accelerate progressive realization of the 70% global target. The GTG will provide quality assurance to the coding by UNCT members, ensure accurate coding in accordance with the GEM guidance and the UNCT-SWAP GES PI 6.1.

3 Advocacy on the outcomes of the **Beijing+30 process**

2025 will see the global review of the Beijing Platform for Action, the most comprehensive gender equality normative framework adopted by the UN member States. The GTG will support increased public awareness around Bahrain's commitments and progress in implementing the Beijing Platform, linked to Sustainable Development Goal 5 achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



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