

# Sustainable Development in light of the Bahraini National Action Charter "An analytical study"

Ali M. Aldada, R. Alrasheed, and M. Khalifa\*

Department of Political Science, College of Administrative Sciences, Applied Science University, Bahrain

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**Abstract:** The objectives of the National Action Charter of Bahrain include improving the quality of life, encouraging investment in the green economy, providing job opportunities, developing skills, promoting environmental management, protecting the environment and biodiversity, developing civil society, and encouraging women's participation in economic and political life. The National Action Charter has achieved great success in achieving the goals of sustainable development in Bahrain, as it contributed to improving the quality of life, providing job opportunities, protecting the environment, and raising awareness of the importance of sustainable development. In order to sustain this success, the National Action Charter requires a commitment to promoting economic diversification, improving environmental management, supporting civil society, and encouraging women's participation in economic and political life. Despite Bahrain's challenges, it is committed to achieving sustainable development goals and strengthening its position as a model for sustainable development in the world.

The study also raises a major question, which is what is the role of the Bahrain National Charter in achieving the goals of sustainable development? In order to answer the study question and test the hypothesis, the researchers will review previous studies in the field of sustainable development, and study the basic concepts of sustainable development and its role in comprehensive development. As well as studying the history and work of the Bahraini National Charter and how to apply it on the ground, and analyzing the challenges Bahrain faces in achieving sustainable development and how to overcome them. In addition to studying the sustainability practices adopted in Bahrain.

: It was proven to us that the hypothesis from which the study was based was correct, which was based on the fact that the Bahraini National Charter includes a number of procedures and policies that aim to achieve sustainable development in Bahrain. It has become clear to us that the National Charter plays a vital role in directing efforts towards achieving the goals of sustainable development, and it is one of the main tools used by Bahrain in achieving these goals, by encouraging innovation and green technology, the transition to a low-carbon economy, and improving the quality of air, water and soil. Protecting the environment and promoting biodiversity. The Bahrain National Charter also works to promote the sustainability of economic growth, the environment and society. In order for this success to continue, the Bahraini National Charter requires commitment to promoting economic diversification, improving environmental management, supporting civil society, and encouraging women's participation in economic and political life. Despite the challenges facing Bahrain, it is committed to achieving the goals of sustainable development and strengthening its position as a model for sustainable development in the world.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, National Action Charter, Economic AchievementS, Development policy, Bahrain

## 1 Introduction

The National Action Charter provides a general framework for the reform project of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. In this framework, and in implementation of the philosophy of the Charter and its foundations, principles and objectives, other basic reform documents, the most important of which are the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Economic Vision 2030, which outline features of the next stage and the processes it carries for renaissance and comprehensive reform in various fields.

Bahrain is one of the developing countries that strives to improve the reality of development, and adherence to the Bahraini National Charter is crucial to achieving sustainable development in Bahrain. From here, the study aims to determine the actual impact of the Bahraini National Charter on the goals of sustainable development in Bahrain, through analysis of the charter. As well as identifying the challenges facing Bahrain in achieving sustainable development and how to overcome them, in addition to analyzing the effectiveness of the sustainability practices adopted in Bahrain and their impact on progress in sustainable development indicators. The study also raises a major question, which is what is the role of the Bahrain National Charter in achieving the goals of sustainable development? And proceeding from the premise that the Bahraini National Charter includes a number of procedures and policies aimed at achieving sustainable development in Bahrain.

\*Corresponding author e-mail: [mahmoud.khalifa@asu.edu.bh](mailto:mahmoud.khalifa@asu.edu.bh)

In order to answer the study question and test the hypothesis, the researchers will review previous studies in the field of sustainable development, and study the basic concepts of sustainable development and its role in comprehensive development [1]. As well as studying the history and work of the Bahraini National Charter and how to apply it on the ground, and analyzing the challenges Bahrain faces in achieving sustainable development and how to overcome them. In addition to studying the sustainability practices adopted in Bahrain. This will be done using the analytical descriptive approach, by collecting the necessary data and information, analyzing this information, and formulating the results of the analysis in an accurate and systematic manner. On this basis, it will first: Address the challenges of achieving sustainable development in Bahrain. Secondly: the role of the Bahraini National Action Charter in achieving the goals of sustainable development.

## 2. The Challenges of Sustainable Development in Bahrain

Sustainable development is a major goal of governments and societies around the world, and is based on providing for the needs of current generations without harming the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In order to achieve this goal in Bahrain, the government faces many challenges in achieving sustainable development, including [2]

1. Sustainable economic development: Bahrain seeks to achieve economic development without affecting the environment and the cultural heritage of society.
2. The environment and climate change: as environmental pollution affects the quality of air, water and soil. This requires strong action to protect the environment and encourage environmentally friendly practices. Climate change is one of the most important challenges facing Bahrain in achieving sustainable development, as rising temperatures lead to an increase in energy and water consumption, and this negatively affects agricultural crops and fisheries. To overcome this challenge, Bahrain is working to encourage the use of renewable energy sources and the adoption of environmentally friendly practices.
3. Natural resources: Bahrain relies heavily on the oil and gas industry, and this leads to the depletion of natural resources and excessive reliance on them. In order to achieve sustainable development, the government seeks to promote economic diversification and encourage investment in other sectors.
4. Poverty and unemployment: Bahrain seeks to encourage investment in sectors that provide job opportunities, and to support social and educational programmes.
5. Human development: Human development efforts in Bahrain include improving the education system and providing vocational training and continuing education opportunities for workers in the public and private sectors. The government is also working to enhance the capabilities of youth and enable them to participate effectively in achieving economic and social development in Bahrain.

## 3. The role of the Bahraini National Action Charter in Achieving the Goals of Sustainable Development

The National Action Charter, for the year 2001 AD, is an integral part of the reform project led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. This reform project enhanced the constitutional principles, which uphold the value of the citizen and his national participation, and the charter contributed to strengthening Bahrain's position on the political map [3]. Bahrain has succeeded in reducing environmental pollution rates, enhancing biodiversity, improving the quality of life, providing job opportunities and improving the professional skills of workers in the private sector. [4]

**Table (1) Some of the Contents of the Bahraini National Action Charter Related to Sustainable Development**

Section	The information
Strategic Plan	National Action Charter
Strategic Plan	Drawing a bright future for Bahrain
Economy	Achieving decent standards for the people
Economy	Building the Bahraini economy
Economy	Bahrain's status as an important regional financial center
Human Development	The wealth owned by the State of Bahrain is the Bahraini citizen
Human Development	Continuous training
Social Development	Quality of life
Economy	Investing in the green economy
Environment and Sustainable development	Environmental protection and biodiversity
Social Development	Enhancing Bahrain's capabilities to provide job opportunities for young people
Social Development	Promote social responsibility

The charter lays down the economic foundations that Bahrain must adhere to, which is confirmed by the economic vision of the Kingdom of Bahrain 2030, and among the most important of these foundations and procedures [5]

The values of freedom, economic justice and respect for private property: the economic system in the state is based on respect for private

property, for each individual has the freedom to dispose of his property in accordance with the law, as well as respect for individual initiative and freedom of capital in investment and confirm the role of the private sector, and achieve economic openness accompanied by the transformation of public administration into more Transparency, integrity, equal opportunities, simplification of procedures, improvement of performance levels, and avoidance of overlapping responsibilities. The investment sector has prepared and implemented a set of regional and international agreements to promote huge investments with international bodies and institutions. The Ministries of Commerce and Industry and Finance concluded several commercial and financial agreements between the Bahraini Stock Exchange and the British Stock Exchange [6].

**Table (2) Economic Achievements in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

Commercial Companies Law of 2001
Decree-Law No. (41) of 2002 regarding privatization policies and controls
The telecommunications market was fully liberalized in 2004 under the Telecommunications Law of 2002
Establishment of Mumtalakat Company in 2006 to own and manage government assets in the non-oil sector
Establishment of the Central Bank of Bahrain, the General Corporation for Sea Ports and the Bahrain Bourse Company
Regulating the real estate sector
"Sijilat" system
Electronic Communications and Transactions Law of 2018
Signing free trade agreements with 23 countries
Signing 35 agreements to protect and encourage investment, and 41 agreements to avoid double taxation
Establishing the Supreme Council for the Environment in 2012 and the Center for Sustainable Energy in 2019
Establishing the Office of Financial and Administrative Control in 2002 and expanding its powers in 2010
Establishment of the Tender Board in 2002
Approval of the Financial Disclosure Act of 2010

Achievements that embody the Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment to sustainable development and enhancing investment attractiveness. Within the framework of the economic recovery plan and overcoming the repercussions of the (Covid-19) virus pandemic, the Kingdom is continuing to work on implementing a package of major development and strategic projects worth more than \$30 billion in partnership between the government and private sectors, and facilitating legislation and commercial procedures to attract investments exceeding \$2.5 billion by 2018, 2023, and the launch of the electronic investment platform, while making the citizen the first choice in the labor market within the framework of the national program, to employ 20,000 Bahrainis and train 10,000 annually until 2024, and launch the golden residency license to enhance the investment environment, enhance economic stability and achieve financial balance by 2024, Diversifying sources of income and developing non-oil economic sectors after increasing their contributions to the gross domestic product from 58% in 2002 to 81% in 2020, and continuing its pioneering projects[7].

The Kingdom of Bahrain has sought to open the economy to private investment, reduce the size of the public sector that dominates the main economic activities, and involve the private sector in these mega projects more effectively [8]. In addition to the development of banking business, and the liberal policies that regulate foreign banking business, foreign investment restrictions in land banking services have reached 49% for non-GCC citizens, and 100% for GCC nationals, in addition to interest in the telecommunications and transportation sector [9].

**Table (3) Major Development and Strategic Projects in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

Create five new cities
King Hamad Bridge and Bahrain Metro project
Tourism, hotel, industrial, educational and health projects
International Exhibition and Convention Center
Sakhir Sports City Project
King Abdullah Medical City
Mall of Dilmunia and King Hamad Hospital
Facilitate commercial legislation and procedures
Launching the electronic investment platform
The national program to employ 20,000 Bahrainis and train 10,000 annually

Golden residence permit
Achieve fiscal balance by 2024
Diversifying sources of income and developing non-oil economic sectors
Bahrain Fintech Bay
Bapco Refinery Modernization
Alba's sixth line
Bahrain International Airport Modernization Program
Providing 40,000 housing units

- 1- Diversifying economic activity and sources of national income: The Kingdom of Bahrain's economic vision until 2030 confirmed the Kingdom's endeavor to move from an economy based on oil wealth to a productive economy capable of competing globally, the government draws its features and the private sector undertakes its implementation, in order to integrate the private sector in the modernization and development programs set by the Kingdom. This vision emphasized the special importance of advancing development, in a way that expands the participation of the middle class of citizens, in investing in higher education, especially investing in the various sectors of the state[10]

**Table (4) Initiatives and Measures to Achieve Sustainable Economic Development in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

Training and qualifying the Bahraini citizen and raising the level of his performance and capabilities
Create a solid foundation for economic development
Providing new job opportunities
Achieving economic stability
Integration of the private sector in modernization and development programs
Increasing investments in higher education
Encouraging investments in the various sectors of the country
Diversifying the country's economy to reduce dependence on oil
Enhancing investments in tourism and financial services
Achieving environmental sustainability
Encouraging the use of renewable energy

- 3 Protecting natural wealth and resources and public money: adopting legislation, procedures and strategies that ensure this, including the establishment of a system of natural reserves, preserving the diverse natural environments and wildlife, and respecting the sanctity and maintenance of public money [11]. The Bahraini government is working on implementing environmental protection policies such as: increasing the use of renewable energy, improving air and water quality and waste management. According to the Global Environmental Performance Index, Bahrain ranks 132 among 180 countries in the Environmental Governance Transparency and Public Health Ranking. Statistics indicate that about 1.7 million tons of solid waste were produced in Bahrain in 2019, and the Bahraini government is implementing plans for the safe disposal of this waste.

**Table (5) Legislations, Procedures and Strategies to Protect the Environment in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

Establishing a system of natural reserves
Protecting diverse natural environments and wildlife
Respecting and preserving the sanctity of public funds

Increase the use of renewable energy
Improve air and water quality
Waste management
Safe disposal of waste
Implementation of environmental protection policies
Organizing efforts to protect the environment
Achieving sustainable development

Among the objectives of these plans is to enhance environmental awareness among citizens and residents in the country, and to motivate them to actively participate in protecting and preserving the environment. The plans also aim to improve air, water and soil quality, protect biodiversity, and properly deal with solid and liquid waste.

**Table (6) Economic and Environmental Indicators in the Kingdom of Bahrain in the year 2020-2021**

year	statistic	the field
2019	\$33.7 billion	gross domestic product
2020	19,500 GWh	energy use
-	Ranked 132 out of 180 countries	environmental sustainability
2019	1.7 million tons of solid waste	Waste
-	Desalinated water usage rate 99%	water
2020	Poverty rate 4.5%	poverty

Human development: The Kingdom has placed at the forefront of its priorities the advancement of the Bahraini human being, as it is the focus and goal of comprehensive development in accordance with the constitution and the principles of the National Action Charter, strengthening its position among countries with “very high human development”, according to the United Nations Development Program, and its distinction in raising the level the standard of living for citizens, and its classification among the countries with high performance in achieving the goals of education for all, and its enjoyment of advanced health facilities and medical services, reinforced the success of the Bahrain team, led by His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, in facing the (Covid-19) pandemic, and the completion of its plan to launch a package Financial and economic projects worth more than 4.5 billion Bahraini dinars, which reflected positively and civilly on protecting the health and safety of citizens and residents, the effectiveness of the national vaccination campaign, and the guarantee of economic and social rights for all [12] .

**Table (7) Human Development Achievements and Development Policy in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

Section	the information
Human Development	Ranked first in the Arab world in indicators of labor rights and women's empowerment
Human Development	Ranked ninth among the most optimistic countries in 2009
Human Development	Maintaining the Kingdom's position in the category of high human development countries
Development Policy	The Kingdom is adopting an integrated and balanced development strategy
Development Policy	It takes into account the advancement of the infrastructure sectors, the establishment of new cities, and the renewal of cities and villages
Development Policy	Striving to achieve sustainability, raise the pace of development and its returns, and combine economic achievements, political stability and social justice in Bahrain

Through the efforts and visions formulated in the documents of the reform project, the Kingdom has achieved non-stop achievements, which have become distinctive of Bahrain's experience in human development [13]. The Kingdom also adopts an integrated and balanced development strategy, in which the advancement of the infrastructure sectors and the establishment and renewal of cities are taken into consideration [14].

**Table (8) Indicators of the Environment, Health, Education and Economy in the Kingdom of Bahrain for the year 2021**

The field	Statistics	Value
Energy	Percentage of renewable energy	5%
Water	Average water consumption per person	200liters/day
Water	Coverage percentage of potable water services	99%
Carbon emissions	Greenhouse gas emissions	28.9million tons of carbon dioxide
Poverty	poverty rate	4.5%
Employment	Unemployment rate	3.7%
The health	Infant mortality rate	4deaths/1000 births
Education	Proficiency rate in reading and writing	98.8%
Education	Percentage of private schools	50%

- 1- Energy: Statistics indicate that the rate of reliance on renewable energy in Bahrain amounted to about 5% in 2019.
- 2- Water: Statistics indicate that the average per capita water consumption in Bahrain amounted to about 200 liters per day during the year 2020, and the statistics also indicate that the coverage rate of potable water services in Bahrain exceeds 99%.
- 2- Poverty: The Kingdom's economic policy has tended towards adaptation and integration with the surrounding environment, with the rate of oil price rise, and interest in the economic and financial services industry, so that the Kingdom has become an industrial platform in the Arab region [15] The Kingdom has embarked on implementing economic reforms aimed at further diversifying the economy and raising economic growth, to accommodate a growing population. The kingdom's program sought to address unemployment rates among Bahrainis and raise private investment [16]. The Bahraini government is working to provide social and economic support to the needy and poorest groups, through government programs aimed at improving their lives. According to the official statistics of Bahrain, the poverty rate is about 4.5% in Bahrain in 2020.
- 3- Employment: Statistics indicate that the unemployment rate in Bahrain was about 3.7% in the first quarter of 2021, and this rate is relatively low at the regional level.[17]
- 4- Statistics indicate that the infant mortality rate has declined significantly in recent years, reaching about 4 deaths per 1,000 births in 2020.[17]
- 5- Education: Statistics indicate that the rate of proficiency in reading and writing reached about 98.8% in 2019. Statistics also indicate that the percentage of private schools in Bahrain exceeds 50%.

## Conclusion:

The study answered its main question, which revolved around what is the role of the Bahraini National Charter in achieving the goals of sustainable development? We have found that the Bahraini National Charter represents a successful model for achieving sustainable development, as it works to achieve a balance between the economy, the environment and society, and to ensure the sustainability of Economic growth, preserving the environment, and improving the quality of life for present and future generations. Over the past years, Bahrain has succeeded in achieving some of these goals, such as reducing environmental pollution rates, enhancing biodiversity, improving the quality of life, and providing job opportunities. It was also proven to us that the hypothesis from which the study was based was correct, which was based on the fact that the Bahraini National Charter includes a number of procedures and policies that aim to achieve sustainable development in Bahrain. It has become clear to us that the National Charter plays a vital role in directing efforts towards achieving the goals of sustainable development, and it is one of the main tools used by Bahrain in achieving these goals, by encouraging innovation and green technology, the transition to a low-carbon economy, and improving the quality of air, water and soil. Protecting the environment and promoting biodiversity. The Bahrain National Charter also works to promote the sustainability of economic growth, the environment and society. In order for this success to continue, the Bahraini National Charter requires commitment to promoting economic diversification, improving environmental management, supporting civil society, and encouraging women's participation in economic and political life.

Despite the challenges facing Bahrain, it is committed to achieving the goals of sustainable development and strengthening its position as a model for sustainable development in the world.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict regarding the publication of this paper.

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