

2017-2021 Plan of Action

Pursuant to the U.S.-Bahrain Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Cooperation

The Governments of the United States of America and the Kingdom of Bahrain (“the Governments”), recognizing the importance of protecting the environment while promoting sustainable development in concert with the expanded bilateral trade and investment ties accompanying the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (“FTA”), have developed the following Plan of Action (“Plan”) pursuant to the United States-Bahrain Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Cooperation (“MOU”) signed on September 14, 2004. This Plan revises and updates a previous Plan signed on October 1, 2006 that covered the period 2006-2008. The objectives and activities set forth in this Plan may be updated and modified by future consultations between the Governments, and the implementation of activities is contingent upon the availability of funding and other resources from the Governments and other sources.

I. BACKGROUND

Recognizing the importance of strengthening capacity to protect the environment while promoting sustainable development in concert with the trade relationship established under the FTA, the Annex to the MOU identifies certain priority subject areas for environmental cooperation (“Annex Priorities”) between the United States and Bahrain.

II. MUTUALLY IDENTIFIED GOALS

In accordance with the MOU, the Governments have identified the following goals and activities that the Governments intend to pursue during 2016 through 2020, noting that bilateral and regional environmental cooperation efforts may complement each other in many cases. Below each of the Annex Priorities are illustrative examples of activities that are currently underway, in the planning stages, or proposed:

a). Strengthening the Capacity to Develop, Implement and Enforce Environmental Laws and Regulations

- Conduct bilateral and regional technical exchanges on effective enforcement of environmental laws and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements to which both countries are party, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.
- Promote bilateral and regional involvement in environmental compliance and enforcement networks.
- Conduct and participate in bilateral and regional training and technical exchanges for investigators, prosecutors, police, customs officials, and judges on investigating and prosecuting wildlife trafficking cases.

- Engage in technical exchanges on all facets of protected area management.

c). Encouraging the Development of Incentives and Voluntary Mechanisms to Contribute to the Achievement and Maintenance of High Levels of Environmental Protection

- Encourage regional cooperation on pollution prevention and cleaner production.
- Share U.S. and Bahraini domestic and international natural resource management experiences in the use of tools that monitor land use - land change, methods to protect and sustainably use groundwater resources, and ways to monitor and protect ecosystems.
- Promote green growth and green jobs through research and development and public-private partnerships.
- Share experiences and information and conduct technical exchanges on the use of compensatory mitigation in natural resource management.

d). Promoting Opportunities for Public Participation in Environmental Protection Efforts and Improving Public Access to Information and Access to Justice on Environmental Issues

- Participate in regional workshops and training that advance the understanding of the science behind water issues, covering topics that include water scarcity and the importance of engaging all appropriate stakeholders in environmental decision-making.
- Pursue joint U.S. and Kingdom of Bahrain public environmental engagement opportunities through respective embassies, encouraging bilateral professional and student exchanges and speaking engagements.
- Share information concerning environmental education programs, trainings, and workshops in the United States and regionally, covering topics including natural resource management, sustainable tourism, outdoor tourism, and nature reserves.

e). Developing Projects and Programs to Improve Air Quality and Reduce the Adverse Health Impacts of Air Pollution

- Pursue technical exchanges and information sharing on air pollution management and technologies.
- Participate in programs, such as the U.S. Embassy Air Quality Monitoring Fellowship, involving collaborative air monitoring technical and/or policy support to enhance the availability of continuous air quality data.
- Collaborate in air quality management research, modeling, and data-gathering related to air quality.
- Encourage site visits of air pollution research centers.

f). Protecting Coastal Environmental Zones and Estuaries and Preventing the Over-exploitation of Living and Non-living Marine Resources

- Participate in regional marine workshops, fostering research and data-gathering collaboration related to marine wildlife and protection efforts.
- Increase cooperation on ocean conservation and sustainable management of marine resources, including through the Our Ocean conferences, and cooperate in related international and regional marine initiatives and programs.

g). Strengthening the Capacity to Protect Endangered Species

- Share U.S. experiences in implementing CITES and assist Bahrain with its efforts to develop and implement legislation to protect endangered species.
- Cooperate with CITES capacity-building activities, and support global and regional anti-trafficking initiatives, including efforts to combat the trafficking of cheetahs and implementing the global ban on the African elephant ivory trade.
- Conduct information exchanges and enter into dialogue about effective wildlife management.

h). Promoting the Growth of the Environmental Technology Business Sector

- Exchange information on innovative environmental and renewable energy technologies.
- Support exchanges between Bahraini and U.S. universities and engage businesses to promote the growth of the environmental business technology sector.

III. BENCHMARKS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Governments have established a Joint Forum on Environmental Cooperation (Joint Forum) to broaden and deepen effective cooperation on environmental issues. Through participation in the Joint Forum, the Governments intend to seek and consider input from relevant local, regional and international organizations regarding relevant environmental conditions and indicators and views on the utility of the cooperative activities undertaken through this Plan. The Governments also plan to encourage public participation in setting goals for and implementing environmental collaboration, and to make information on activities carried out under the MOU available to the public on a regular basis. As part of the regular work of the Joint Forum under the MOU, the Governments plan to establish benchmarks and indicators in order to evaluate progress toward meeting the goals established under this Plan. To the degree that the Governments use independent sources of monitoring data and evaluation to assess progress, they intend to collaborate with those other sources in identifying suitable performance indicators and benchmarks.