



Kingdom of Bahrain

**Decent Work Country Programme
2010–2013**

March 2010

Abbreviations and acronyms

BCCI	Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWPP	Decent Work Pilot Programme
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
EDB	Economic Development Board
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFWTU	General Federation of Workers Trade Unions
HDI	Human Development Index
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
ICATU	International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions
LMRA	Labour Market Regulatory Authority
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCC	Net Contributor Country
NEP	National Employment Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SSN	Social Safety Net
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Introduction

The Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for the Kingdom of Bahrain is a strategic and operational framework for ILO interventions. It expresses a common commitment of the ILO constituency to collaborate on specific objectives aimed at ensuring opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its purpose is to ensure a coherent, comprehensive and integrated approach to reduce decent work deficits in Bahrain, based on a set of identified and agreed priorities between the ILO and its constituents. This document defines the priorities based on an analysis of the labour issues and identifies results to be achieved and strategies for implementation during the period 2010–13.

2. Country context: Main decent work challenges

2.1. Overview

Bahrain is composed of a group of islands with a total area of 716 sq km, a total population of 742,561 and with population growth of 1.45 per cent (2007 estimate).

A National Charter on Political Reforms was approved by the ruler in 2001, launching ambitious plans for democratization. The Charter offers substantive reforms including establishing a bicameral Assembly with an upper house of appointed experts and scholars and a lower house of elected deputies, and a public accountability council.

Bahrain has a vibrant and growing economy based primarily on its petroleum production and refining industries – which accounts for 60 per cent of export receipts and government revenue – and the financial sector, which are the largest employers and the largest contributors to gross domestic product (GDP). In recent years, the Government has concentrated on diversifying the economy and the Kingdom now has significant tourism, industrial-trading, construction and ship-repairing sectors.

Average real GDP growth in Bahrain was 8.1 per cent in 2007, 6.3 per cent in 2008 and 2.0 per cent in 2009. During 2008, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries faced the impact of the global financial crisis in four stages: (a) plummeting financial and real-estate asset prices; (b) the collapse of commodity prices, including energy, metal and food; (c) liquidity shortages, particularly of US dollars, in local and international money markets; and (d) rapidly declining export earnings. Despite the collapse of crude oil prices in the second half of 2008, the GCC countries' external sector performance remained strong on average for the year. The total current account surpluses of the GCC are estimated at US\$236 billion for 2008, up from US\$195 billion in 2007.¹

Bahrain has undertaken several actions and adopted appropriate policies to respond more effectively to the economic crisis. Labour market reforms have been ongoing in the Kingdom, including a review of the sponsorship system governing foreign workers and their status, and the establishment of an Unemployment Insurance Scheme, which has become an example of best practice for other countries in the region.

The country has continuously improved its score on the Human Development Index (HDI) and is now in the "high human development" group of countries, the second highest ranked Arab country in 2007. Bahrain has already met most other global targets relating to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) according to the findings of the UN Country Team Assessment and the MDG report.²

Bahrain has become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and has participated in a number of free trade agreements, such as the free trade agreement with the United States and the Gulf Common Market.

¹ ESCWA: *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region, 2008-2009* (2009).

² UN: *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2007* (2007).

Employment and labour market situation

Bahrain is undergoing labour reforms that support economic liberalization. The country is making efforts to expand its private sector in order to provide employment opportunities for nationals, increase productivity, create modern open market economies, and become less reliant on foreign labour.

There have been indications that the global economic downturn is affecting economic activity in Bahrain. Economic growth is likely to have slowed in 2009, as regional growth moderates and government finances are squeezed. Private consumption growth is expected to slow, with little or no growth in employment and real wages (although expatriate workers, who typically remit much of their earnings overseas, will bear the brunt of job cuts).

Unemployment among Bahraini nationals will remain a concern, with the private sector continuing to depend on expatriate labour. In an effort to boost Bahraini employment in the private sector, the Government will continue to implement “Bahrainization” policies, setting quotas on the number of expatriates who can work in any given sector. In 2008, the Government introduced fees for employing expatriate workers, which will be used to fund training for nationals.

Despite growing concern regarding the economic slowdown, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) of Bahrain stated that the total number of employed persons in Bahrain at the end of 2009 Q3 was 600,143, representing an annual growth rate of 8.7 per cent. Foreign worker employment increased by 44,750 in 2009, reaching 462,139 at the end of 2009. The annual rate of increase has however continued to slow down to 10.7 per cent compared to 16.0 per cent in the previous year. The number of employed Bahrainis was 138,005 in 2009, representing an annual growth of 2.4 per cent compared with the situation a year earlier.³

According to the Ministry of Commerce,⁴ women constituted 19 per cent of the total workforce and 40 per cent of the government workforce. The Government encouraged women to work and was a leading employer. Women accounted for 11 per cent of all business licence registrations.

There are many public and private institutions and organizations providing skills training. However, with a few notable exceptions, these training programmes provide technical skills that do not match the labour market demand. In addition, they rarely prepare the trainee for the other aspects of work – workplace culture or entrepreneurial attitudes and skills for the self-employed. Bahrain is re-examining the targets of its educational programmes, aiming to add more practical, employment-oriented elements and attitudes to the overall curriculum and to special job-training programmes.

Fundamental principles and workers’ rights

Bahrain has ratified a total of nine ILO Conventions, including four of the eight fundamental Conventions:

- the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29);
- the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105);
- the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

Other Conventions:

- the Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14);
- the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81);
- the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 89);
- the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155);
- the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159).

³ LMRA: *Bahrain Labour Market Indicators, 2009*.

⁴ Bahrain Ministry of Commerce, 2007.

Bahrain has made effective strides in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination against women and has endorsed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, there is a fundamental challenge to be addressed with respect to changing concepts and traditional patterns of women's social role, and its importance lies in its negative impact on individual and societal perception of women.

A National Training Seminar organized by the ILO in 2007 with the General Federation of Workers Trade Unions (GFWTU) on the rights of women workers (including migrants) resulted in the following recommendations: the Labour Law should conform to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain in regards to equality between working men and women and should be amended to reflect the following ILO Conventions: the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183); the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); the Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175); the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177); and the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103). The National Training Seminar called on the Government to ratify these Conventions and requested the alignment of rights in the private sector and public sector and the inclusion of domestic workers in the Labour Law.

A women's empowerment strategy has been developed and needs to be mainstreamed. Political empowerment of women has progressed and, in 2002, the decision was adopted by the Government to grant women the right to vote and political rights equal to those of men; the 2006 parliamentary elections witnessed a greater number of women candidates.⁵ In 2001, the Supreme Council for Women was established as an advisory body to assist the Government in formulating gender-related policies. Furthermore, women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bahrain – comprising 11 of approximately 300 NGOs – play a major role in supporting women and in the acknowledgment of their rights.

Bahrain is a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; however, the use of child labour remains an issue since a significant number of children are working, especially in the summer, to cover the extra expenses for schooling and to support their families. Furthermore, Bahrain's ratification of International Agreements and ILO Conventions (particularly Convention No. 182) banning child labour requires enacting comprehensive legislation providing protection to working children. The Ministry of Health formed a committee for drawing up a child protection plan; the plan incorporates three main areas: remedial action, education, and law enforcement and justice.

The minimum age for employment is 16 years. Ministry of Labour (MOL) inspectors enforced child labour laws effectively in the industrial sector; whereas child labour outside that sector was monitored less effectively, although it was not believed to be significant outside family-operated businesses. Even in such businesses, it was not widespread.⁶

Social protection

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain⁷ states that: "The State [the Kingdom of Bahrain] guarantees the requisite social security for its citizens in old age, sickness, disability, orphanhood, widowhood or unemployment, and also provides them with social insurance and healthcare services. It strives to safeguard them against ignorance, fear and poverty".

In accordance with its Constitution, Bahrain is a welfare-oriented State with a large proportion of the population benefiting from government subsidies. Utilities and fuel are highly subsidized. Employees in the public and private sector are covered by pension schemes in the case of old age, disability and death, and an Unemployment Insurance Scheme has recently been introduced (see below in section 2.2).

⁵ UNFPA: *Country Programme for Bahrain, 2008–2011* (2007).

⁶ US State Department: *Bahrain Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2007* (2008).

⁷ Article 5c of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Social dialogue

The current democratic reforms and the political openness provide a platform for social dialogue and the opportunities to bring the social partners closer for promoting broad-based tripartite dialogue on social and economic reform.

Tripartite consultations in Bahrain exist but need further institutionalization. Bahrain adopted reforms that resulted in improving conditions of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. There are still some limitations in the legislation, such as the lack of the right to organize in the public sector and the limitations on strikes. Bipartite (employers' and workers') relations have recently seen some progress and this cooperation resulted in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on social dialogue co-signed by the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and the GFWTU in April 2007. This achievement is the result of several months of efforts of a joint commitment that reflects the real desire of both social partners to reach a stage of constructive relations through coordination, consultation and dialogue in order to serve and defend the interests of both employers and workers. On the other hand, the recent economic and labour market reforms that were adopted by the Government highlight the importance and need for social dialogue and tripartite/bipartite negotiations. Both employers and workers complain that the Government has not taken into consideration their respective opinions and recommendations on several issues related to labour market reform.

2.2. National response and priorities

Labour market reform in Bahrain

A far-reaching initiative for a comprehensive and integrated restructuring of the economy was launched by his Royal Highness Prince Sheikh Salaman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa in 2004. The restructuring programme proposed legal and administrative reforms in three fields: (a) labour market reform focusing on Bahraini nationals' competitiveness versus expatriate labour; (b) economic reform, including land and judicial reforms and promotion of small-scale private businesses; (c) education reform. The Economic Development Board (EDB) commissioned a study carried out by McKinsey,⁸ which analysed the issues of expatriate workers and the Bahrainization programme, and proposed a reform package that addressing labour market asymmetries. The EDB strategy focused on shifting the debate on unemployment away from quick fixes and administrative measures regarding the ratio of expatriate/national labour force to addressing the root causes of the problem. The McKinsey report showed that there are obstacles to implementing the programme, which include inadequate workplace skills among Bahraini jobseekers; their unwillingness to take up unskilled work; and reluctance of some employers to recruit Bahrainis. With the aim of implementing the labour market reform programme, the EDB proposed to establish the LMRA and the Labour Fund.

The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA)

The LMRA is an independent public corporation fully authorized to regulate the labour market in Bahrain, with a view to creating a balanced working relationship that protects both employers and workers. The LMRA issues and regulates licences to workers, labour-importation agencies, employment bureaus and foreign workers doing business in Bahrain. The LMRA ensures that the labour market regulatory decisions and regulations are fairly and appropriately applied.

A Labour Market National Plan was developed by the LMRA in April 2007 with the aim of launching a constructive social dialogue in order to achieve balance and social justice in order to provide momentum for economic development and to support political and social stability. This National Plan represents a comprehensive action programme that covers all aspects of labour market management, employment and training policies. The objectives of the Plan focus on realizing national reconciliation between the labour market tripartite partners; supporting the private sector as the main driving force for growth; creating a balance between the projects' and employers' needs and the foreign labour force; enabling Bahrainis to be the best choice for employment; and eliminating illegal practices in the labour market.

⁸ The McKinsey report, Bahrain 2004.

Intended to bridge the gap between labour costs for expatriates and the local labour force, the LMRA proposed a levy of 200 Bahraini Dinars (BD) (approximately US\$600) every two years for work permits for expatriate workers. The money raised through the proposed labour fees would be collected into a labour fund to be used for specific purposes, including supporting Bahrainis to secure private-sector employment and helping the private sector adjust to the new policies, as well as to spur growth in promising sectors of the economy.

The Government has made several attempts to end the sponsorship system (*Kafeel*) and to adopt another system that takes into consideration the needs and interests of both employers and migrant workers. On 22 March 2006, Parliament approved a new labour market law that eased the constraints of the *Kafeel* system on foreign workers. On 16 April 2009, the Minister of Labour and the Chairman of the Board of the LMRA approved Decision No. 79/2009 regarding the mobility of foreign employees from one employer to another, which is considered a major step towards eliminating the sponsorship system.

The Labour Fund

The Labour Fund was established with the aim of improving the employability of Bahraini youth to support their integration into the labour market through optimizing talent, enabling enterprise growth and improving labour market policies.

The Fund strategy focuses on capitalizing and developing value-added Bahraini talent and skills in rewarding careers; supporting the development and attraction of new and emerging industries; and enhancing and leveraging existing industries. The private sector is currently supported through enterprise development initiatives that enable businesses to overcome their challenges, increase their productivity and improve the employment prospects of Bahrainis by creating value-added jobs, and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by providing easy access to low-interest finance from banks. The Fund also drives human capital development initiatives through several schemes, such as SME leadership development, human resources management certification, and training for career progression.

Education reform

To address workforce education, a comprehensive education reform programme is under way geared toward upgrading primary, secondary and tertiary education. This programme includes upgrading curricula and creating new institutions to ensure that training meets labour market needs and is of a standard high enough to create the capacity to innovate within the economy. Other key components of the programme include quality assurance and extensive teacher training. Labour market reform has significantly reduced market restrictions in an effort to ensure that adequately trained and experienced labour – both Bahraini and foreign – is available to meet market demand.

New systems for skills testing and qualifications are also planned for the registration and monitoring of expatriate employees to ensure the correct skills are being brought into the Kingdom.

The National Employment Project (NEP)

Creative initiatives have been taken to provide employment solutions by integrating jobseekers into the labour market. The NEP aims to employ jobseekers in both the public and private sectors by providing technical and financial support. Based on the analysis of the labour market and the characteristics of the Bahraini unemployed, the NEP is divided into three levels: craft level, technical level and specialist level. The programme is specifically designed to provide jobseekers with information about the labour market, the jobs available and the future of these jobs. It provides an assessment and comprehensive evaluation of the person's capabilities. Based on the results of the assessment, the jobseeker is referred to direct recruitment, on-the-job training or a full training programme to provide the skills needed for the job.

Protection of temporary expatriate contractual workers⁹ and combating trafficking

Bahrain is the first Gulf country to grant licences to NGOs that have been set up to protect the rights of foreign workers, such as the “Migrant Workers’ Protection Society”. In addition, the LMRA has produced a new guide, the *Foreign Employees Guide*, in eight languages, among them Arabic and English, which aims to inform all foreign workers about their rights and obligations under the LMRA Act.

In 2007, the Government passed legislation to ban construction and other outdoor work between noon and 4 p.m. during the summer. The move was backed by a “massive” labour inspection campaign by the MOL to ensure that companies respected the decision.

A new law to combat human trafficking in Bahrain was backed by the Shura Council and the House of Representatives in January 2008. The Government also set up a new Human Trafficking Victims Assessment Commission under the jurisdiction of the Social Development Ministry. A new National Human Trafficking Authority will also be set up under the Interior Ministry. It will produce programmes to combat human trafficking and cooperate with others involved in similar activities.

Unemployment Insurance Scheme

Bahrain has run an Unemployment Insurance Scheme since 2006 in the context of its labour market reform. The scheme covers three categories: civil servants of the public sector; private sector workers; and first-time jobseekers. The ILO has provided technical assistance with respect to the feasibility of such a scheme, supporting its implementation and drafting the legislation. The scheme covers all workers – national and foreign alike – and is financed by contributions of 1 per cent of wages paid by workers, employers and the Government. The Unemployment Insurance Scheme provides two types of benefits to jobseekers who are actively looking for employment: (1) unemployment compensation, which is paid for jobseekers who have fulfilled the minimum contribution period, and which replaces 60 per cent of the insured person’s average wage during the last 12 months of employment up to a maximum of 500 BD (US\$1,326) for a maximum period of six months; and (2) unemployment aid, which is paid for first-time jobseekers and those jobseekers who have not fulfilled the minimum contribution period, which amounts to 150 BD (US\$398) for university graduates or 120 BD (US\$318) for others, for a maximum period of six months.

In December 2009, the Unemployment Insurance Scheme paid unemployment assistance benefits to 12,245 jobseekers. It is important to note that, of this number, the scheme paid unemployment assistance benefits to 2,187 jobseekers – among whom were 996 graduates – for the month of December 2009 only. Reflecting their higher unemployment risks, women are more strongly represented among registered jobseekers, and make up 78 per cent of recipients of unemployment benefits, yet only 49 per cent of those who have found a job.

Owing to the low number of terminations until late 2008, the scheme has so far only dealt with a small number of cases of unemployment compensation. However, in the event that the number of terminations should increase in the future as a result of the financial and economic crisis, a system is in place that provides income security for jobseekers while actively supporting their return into employment by linking cash benefits to participation in training, job-matching and career guidance through employment offices.

Advancing women’s employment

In recent years, Bahrain has observed major political, social and economic reform, which has contributed to a further advance in the status and role of women in society. Since the adoption of the National Action Charter in 2001 and the ratification of a new Constitution in 2002, women have been granted political rights – including the right to participate and vote in municipal and parliamentary elections – and, to a lesser extent, have been granted improved economic rights. In 2001, the Supreme Council for Women was established as

⁹ The term “temporary expatriate contractual workers” denotes the employment of foreign workers in the GCC countries, and is in keeping with the official terminology used in the GCC. For the ILO, these are the workers referred to in the preamble of its Constitution when it set as an objective of the Organization, “the protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own”.

an advisory body to assist the Government in formulating gender-related policies and strategies and to advocate amendments to existing legislation on issues pertaining to women.

Today, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain provides for equality and equal opportunities in healthcare, welfare, education and employment; however, in practice, these laws are seldom enforced. Women endure substantial discrimination in terms of pay and recruitment, comprising just 21 per cent of the labour force in 2000. Women have made substantial gains in education, with female illiteracy falling to 17.4 per cent in 2000 (women now constitute the majority of the nation's students in higher education).

2.3 Social partners

(a) The Ministry of Labour (MOL)

The MOL's vision focuses on "enhancing the national human resources in a sustained and organized labour market". The MOL's mission is: "to actively participate in organizing the Bahraini labour market through creation and development of legislation that enables coping with the continuous changes in the labour market and to achieve active participation of the national workforce in all economic sectors, as well as drawing up national workforce development strategies which can accomplish a successful investment of human resources in the Kingdom of Bahrain".

The structure of the MOL consists of three major departments; Senior Management, the Labour Sector and the Training Sector. In addition to this structure, the Ministry has established five offices that are distributed throughout the Kingdom. The Labour Sector consists of three departments: the Department of Work, responsible for employment services, expatriate employment and labour studies; the Department of Labour Relations, responsible for occupational safety and health (OSH), labour inspection, arbitration, and complaints and labour union affairs; and the Department of Unemployment Insurance. The Training Sector consists of three major departments: Human Resource Development, Training Institute Affairs, and the Bahrain Training Institute.

(b) The General Federation of Workers Trade Unions (GFWTU)

The GFWTU was established in 2002, the same year that the Workers Trade Union Law granted workers the right to organize collectively. Workers in the private and public sectors may join trade unions, including non-citizens, who make up the majority of Bahrain's workforce. In 2002, there were 55 private-sector trade unions in the country. In the private sector, 19 per cent of Bahrainis are union members. In June 2003, the Government confirmed the right of civil servants to form unions.

At the first National Conference of the GFWTU, held in April 2008, 177 elected members representing the different sectors and enterprises in Bahrain elected 15 members to the General Secretariat out of 31 candidates. The election was considered to be very transparent and democratic, and was monitored by the national human rights and transparency committees, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU) and the ILO. Some believe that the new leadership will take a firmer stand on matters relating to the right to organize in the government sector, the right to strike, wages, restructuring, social protection and the price increases on consumer goods.

The GFWTU identified their needs as follows:

- Promoting more freedom of association, social dialogue, collective bargaining and negotiation skills.
- Building capacity of trade union leaders to be able to represent workers, especially the newly elected members.
- Participating in socio-economic decisions related to social security and wage policy.

(c) The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)

The BCCI represents the private sector in Bahrain. The commercial sector dominates the Bahraini economy and the trade sector is the largest. In the last two decades, Bahrain has become an important banking centre for the Gulf region as well as for offshore operations with Asian countries. Business professionals and entrepreneurs are now expected, on the one hand, to create new outlooks and – through their organization – translate them into new policies and strategies in order to activate the private sector and, on the other hand, to develop their role as partners in the social development of the Bahraini society and in the world of work.

The Chamber has a well-established arbitration committee for labour disputes between employers and employees, usually resolving disputes on a case-by-case basis. The Chamber plays the role of judge and its final judgement is legally binding.

The Chamber has been working hard to develop its capacities and to diversify its services in order to better serve the private sector. By law, membership in the Chamber is voluntary yet, in practice, enterprises are obliged to follow certain procedures that require the Chamber's attestation. In order to obtain this service, enterprises are "advised" to become members, particularly those that deal with commerce and trade.

A Businesswomen's Committee was established at the BCCI, together with a Bahrain Businesswomen's Association to support female entrepreneurs.

During the first DWCP programming mission to Bahrain in November 2007, the BCCI identified its priorities in line with the Country Reform Programme as follows:

- Restructuring of the Chamber with the aim of making the BCCI a service provider to all members, with special focus on the Directorates of Labour and International Relations.
- Institutional capacity-building in organizational management to provide better services to its members.
- Training in enterprise development and productivity enhancement with the aim of providing technical support to enterprises in order to develop business operations that generate increased job opportunities.
- Develop the Chamber's capacity in negotiation skills and social dialogue.
- Enhance capacity in OSH in enterprises.

2.4. UN reform in Bahrain

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Bahrain is composed of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Bahrain falls in the category of Net Contributor Countries (NCCs). The UNCT, together with the Government and national stakeholders, initiated a Common Country Assessment (CCA) in 2006, which reviews and analyses five national development areas: economy and employment; governance and human rights; gender and women's rights; social development; and the environment.¹⁰

The UNCT joint assessment identified four underlying factors affecting the development agenda in Bahrain, and addressing them is crucial to success in maintaining development gains and preventing relapse. The factors are: (a) the need for a higher level of transparency and participation; (b) the limited empowerment of women and youth; (c) the need to ensure the sustainable use of water and the fragile natural resources base, and to rectify inequitable economic growth; and (d) a high level of unemployment in a growing population.¹¹

The UNDP provides technical assistance to the Supreme Council of Women in implementing a project entitled "Support to the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Advancement of Bahraini Women". This project addresses the need to build and strengthen national capacity for advocating and mainstreaming

¹⁰ UNDG: *Resident Coordinator Annual Report 2006* (2006).

¹¹ UNFPA: *Country programme document for Bahrain (2008–2011)* (2007).

women's needs into various development processes in Bahrain; thus contributing to the empowerment of Bahraini women.

In line with UN reform and towards ensuring a more coherent and effective approach to the work of the UN system in Bahrain, the UNCT is embarking on the formulation of a United Nations Strategic Plan covering the period 2011–15. A substitute for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF),¹² this Strategic Plan intends to draw on the available range of the United Nation's expertise, including that of non-resident agencies in support of and in alignment with the national priorities as stipulated in Bahrain's *Economic Vision 2030*. Needless to say, such a plan could serve as an excellent vehicle to bolster opportunities for joint programming and coordination.

For the ILO, this is a unique opportunity to actively engage with the other UN agencies in Bahrain and ensure that this DWCP is both well aligned with the envisaged priorities of the upcoming Strategic Plan and that its Decent Work Agenda is mainstreamed.

2.5. Bahrain and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Bahrain is a member of the GCC alongside its neighbours Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which is a member of the GCC technical committees.

Two Plans for Joint Activities were signed during 2006–07 and 2008–09 between the ILO and the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in GCC States and its Executive Bureau. The Plans focus on the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up; employment and labour market information systems; promotion of SMEs; and OSH.

In June 2002, the Bahrain Government issued a decree allowing citizens of the GCC countries to take up dual Bahraini nationality.

3. Overview of results achieved by the ILO in recent years

International labour standards

The ILO implemented the USDOL-funded project "Implementing and Enforcing Internationally Recognized Labour Rights in Oman and Bahrain" during the period 2006–08. The project provided assistance to the Government of Bahrain as well as employers' and workers' organizations to implement and enforce internationally recognized labour rights, such as freedom of association, the right to organize, the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, tripartism and social dialogue. The major outcomes focused on capacity-building through a series of seminars and training workshops for trade unions and employers and others concerned. The internal assessment of the project pointed out that the training provided new union leaders with valuable information and generally helped unions in their efforts to recruit foreign workers. An extension of the project with additional funding was approved by the donor in 2008.

Employment

The ILO assisted in the design of the second labour force survey in collaboration with the MOL and the EDB in 2003.

Social protection

In November 2006, the Government adopted the new Unemployment Insurance Law, which is the first of its kind in the Arab states of the Middle East, and the second within the Arab countries. The objective of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme is to support labour market reform and the accompanying legislation. In

¹² Being a net contributing country with a relatively small UNCT, Bahrain is a non-UNDAF country.

this regard, it is intended to provide incentives to first-time Bahraini jobseekers to enter the labour market and for unemployed workers to return to employment. The ILO has provided technical assistance in the form of a policy outline, an actuarial cost assessment and the drafting of the Unemployment Insurance Law.

Social dialogue

- Technical advisory services were provided to the MOL and the social partners to assist in revitalizing the organization and management of the labour inspection system and settlement of disputes.
- Organizational management and labour and social issues capacities improved within the employers' and workers' organizations in 2006.
- The technical advisory report to the BCCI was drafted following a mission by an international expert; it included an assessment of the performance/capacity of the BCCI as a social partner, recommendations for improvement and elements of a strategy defining their socio-economic role and highlighting their involvement in the labour market reforms.
- Training workshop in 2007 for building the capacity of trade unions in Bahrain. The objectives of the workshop were: to educate the participants on the different types, objectives, roles and services of trade unions; to analyse the situation of workers in Bahrain and identify needs and priorities; and to develop an action plan for the unions, outlining the assistance required.

The Decent Work Pilot Programme (DWPP), 2002–06

The Decent Work Pilot Programme (DWPP) was initiated in October 2000 to pioneer ways in which the concept of decent work could be effectively promoted and applied in ILO member countries. The Pilot Programme aimed at strengthening national capacity to integrate decent work into national policies. Eight countries formed part of the Pilot Programme: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Denmark, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Panama and the Philippines. The lessons of the Pilot Programme countries were used to introduce Decent Work Country Programmes to most ILO member States as of 2005.

The DWPP in Bahrain was established in October 2002 with the objective of operationalizing decent work at the country level. It was managed by a National Policy Group (Policy Integration Department).

The entry point for decent work focused on the reform of the labour market as part of the national policy reform agenda. The policy framework focused on the ability to absorb national youth, developing the capacities of institutions of social dialogue and social protection. Action areas focused on: social development policy, unemployment insurance and social dialogue.

The programme itself began with a series of technical advisory services, awareness-raising and capacity-building with the social partners, during which the DWPP contributed to widening the debate over economic reform and reviewed Bahrain's system and options for reform. The social protection component has benefited from UNDP funding.

Lessons learned from the DWPP

The war in Iraq, the change of Government and the practice of parliamentary democracy brought about by the legislative elections slowed down the implementation of the programme. Different priorities were identified at different stages of the programme by the MOL and the social partners, and the ILO was asked to effect several changes to the priorities of the DWPP. This highlights the need for continued advocacy for engaging the social partners in dialogue and for encouraging policy integration away from segmented approaches.

Implementation of the programme depends largely on the capacity of government institutions and on coordination with other ministries. Concerned departments of the MOL (Senior Management, the Labour Sector and the Training Sector) require support to translate the programme into action plans and establish institutional coordination mechanisms.

4. DWCP priorities and outcomes

Summary of challenges to be addressed and rationale for selection of DWCP priorities

As one of the countries with the most progressive labour laws in the Gulf Region, Bahrain is clearly to be supported in further strengthening the enforcement of fundamental rights and international labour standards (ILSs) as a model for the subregion. The labour reforms have challenged the Government and the MOL to provide adequate responses without the necessary related experience.

Enforcing new labour reforms and ensuring that workers are employed in safe and decent working conditions are among the priorities of the MOL in demonstrating its intent to fulfil its labour commitments. Even though the first phase of the DECLARATION project has resulted in strengthening union leadership, the institutional framework and the capacity of the constituents for social dialogue and collective bargaining to achieve balanced industrial relations have to be improved. Being able to successfully negotiate terms that are beneficial to both employers and workers will be central to avoiding protracted labour disputes that could harm the progress that has been achieved so far. Social dialogue and the enforcement of ILSs in a labour market characterized by a significant foreign labour force will therefore be one of the priorities of the DWCP.

Ensuring income security and social safety nets (SSNs) to mitigate the effects of the financial crisis will be critical in the Gulf countries. The ILO will continue supporting the implementation of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme and will support the development of policies ensuring sustainability of the social security system.

The third priority will focus on improving the integration and the employability of women through enhancing training programmes that increase female participation in the labour market and through encouraging women to engage in the economic development process.

Process for DWCP formulation

The following process was used to ensure the full involvement of constituents and other key stakeholders in the preparation of this DWCP:

- A multidisciplinary programming mission was fielded in November 2007. A tripartite workshop was organized to launch the consultation process and present the DWCP concept and methodology. In addition to the constituents, the mission met with the Social Committee of the Parliament, the EDB, the LMRA, the Labour Fund, the Supreme Council for Women, UNDP and several NGOs.
- An initial DWCP draft was elaborated and discussed with all technical specialists at the Regional Office for Arab States and with ILO headquarters.
- Following the evaluation of the DECLARATION project in 2008 and the approval by USDOL of the second phase of the project, a mission met with the tripartite partners during the third quarter of 2008 to finalize the project workplan and further discuss some of the DWCP components.
- A joint Geneva/Beirut Social Security Department mission was fielded in November 2008 to address implementation issues of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme. The social security component of the DWCP was finalized and approved during this mission.

4.1. Priorities and outcomes, 2010–13

Development goal

Contribute to labour rights protection and decent work for all workers

Priorities and outcomes

I. Promoting and realizing the fundamental principles and rights at work

- (1) Enhanced capacity of the Government and the social partners to implement and enforce ILSs.
- (2) Labour market mobility and protection of temporary expatriate contractual workers¹³ improved
- (3) Improved institutional framework and capacity of the social partners for social dialogue and collective bargaining in line with ILO standards.

II. Enhancing income security

- (4) Increased capacity of the Government and other stakeholders to manage the Unemployment Insurance Scheme and to implement policies ensuring sustainability of the social security system.

III. Improving integration and employability of women

- (5) Increased capacity of ILO constituents to support policies and programmes that advance women's employment.

4.2. Overall strategy and articulation of the programme

The DWCP components will be fully integrated into the national strategies ensuring centrality of ILSs, gender, tripartism and social dialogue. The support and assistance to the Government and its social partners in the priority areas identified – and in achievement of the outcomes of this DWCP – will be through a coordinated multi-component approach and interventions based on current national priorities and the ILO's comparative advantage.

¹³ The term "temporary expatriate contractual workers" denotes the employment of foreign workers in the GCC countries, and is in keeping with the official terminology used in the GCC. For the ILO, these are the workers referred to in the preamble of its Constitution when it set as an objective of the organization, "the protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own".

A coordinated approach to institutional capacity-building will be promoted to enhance the capacities of the MOL, the employers' and workers' organizations, and other stakeholders relevant to the achievement of Bahrain's national development goals in relation to labour and employment issues.

Priority I: Promoting and realizing the fundamental principles and rights at work

DWCP Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of the Government and the social partners to implement and enforce international labour standards

Programme strategy

This outcome will focus on providing technical assistance to the Government of Bahrain as well as employers' and workers' organizations to promote the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, while improving and enforcing legislation in line with the relevant ILSs.

The major outputs will focus on enhancing knowledge and awareness of decision-makers, parliamentarians, the Government and the social partners on ILSs and the Declaration. A capacity-building programme for labour inspectors will be implemented in order to ensure modern labour inspection techniques, including OSH.

The ILO's unique normative role is based on a body of ILSs covering a wide range of work issues. The ILO will promote good governance through integrated approaches, including effective participation of the social partners, better international ILS implementation, labour law and effective labour administration, and sound industrial relations, tripartism and social dialogue. The ILO will provide technical assistance and legal services to address the comments of the ILO supervisory machinery with a view to giving full effect in law and in practice to the ratified ILO Conventions as well as to comply with ILO constitutional reporting obligations and obligations under the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998.

Progress at the national level in implementing the Declaration can come in many forms. Steps include advocacy, codes of practice and incremental changes in law and policies, institutional reform, strengthening law enforcement and empowerment of the social partners. The ILO will therefore focus on strengthening the capacity of the Government and employers' and workers' organizations to develop effective measures to improve governance and the legislative environment in addressing economic, labour and social issues.

The ILO will provide specific support in the application of ILO Conventions Nos. 81, 111, 182, and 159. The ILO will provide legal advice to examine the possibility of ratifying other Conventions to ensure that ILSs cover employment, social protection and social dialogue.

The ILO will assist the tripartite constituents in strengthening their OSH committee to actively involve the social partners and others. The ILO will also support the development of a national OSH profile for Bahrain, upon which an OHS programme outline can be established.

In line with the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the four strategic objectives are inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive. The ILO will encourage the Government and the social partners to ratify Conventions related to each strategic objective, as the failure to promote any one of them would harm progress towards the others.

Outcome indicators	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of labour-related laws amended in accordance with ILSs and endorsed in legislation. – Proportion of ILO-trained labour inspectors that perform their duty according to internationally accepted standards. – Recommendations based on ILO assessment of labour inspection system implemented by the MOL. – At least one new Convention ratified. 	
Outputs	Partners
1.1 Enhanced knowledge and awareness of decision-makers, parliamentarians, the Government and the social partners on ILSs and the Declaration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parliament - MOL - Workers' organizations - Employers' organizations - DECLARATION - NORMES - DIALOGUE
1.2 Improved capacity of the labour inspectorate to effectively perform its mandate.	
1.3 Enhanced capacity of the MOL to translate ratified Conventions into national legislation and follow up on its commitments.	

DWCP Outcome 2: Labour market mobility and protection of temporary expatriate contractual workers improved.

Programme strategy

The ILO will provide advisory services to build the capacity of the Government to develop alternative strategies for expatriate worker employment and for promoting the employment of nationals. The Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration will be promoted by assisting the Government in designing gender-sensitive policies and institutions for better managing the movement and work of temporary expatriate contractual labour in keeping with its non-binding principles and guidelines. Fundamental principles and rights at work of expatriate workers will be promoted, along with the principles and the application of the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and other relevant Conventions.

The ILO will also provide technical advice on developing institutional mechanisms for implementing government initiatives, such as the recent decision to reform the *Kafeel* system. In this regard, it will promote social dialogue to ensure that the interests of the social partners are taken into consideration while respecting the guidelines of the Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration.

Outcome indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recommendations of studies and technical advisory services are reflected in national policies and programmes on the movement and work of temporary expatriate contractual workers. – Number of decisions made to develop policies on the movement and work of temporary expatriate contractual workers that reflect the principles, guidelines or best practices of the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration.

Outputs		Partners
2.1	The knowledge base to support policy formulation for the employment and work of temporary expatriate contractual workers and their mobility in the labour market is enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MOL - Workers' organizations - Employers' organizations - DECLARATION - NORMES - DIALOGUE
2.2	Rights at work of temporary expatriate contractual workers promoted.	
2.3	A "unified" contract reflecting the interests of the social partners developed through social dialogue.	

DWCP Outcome 3: Improved institutional framework and capacity of social partners for social dialogue and collective bargaining in line with ILO standards

Programme strategy

This outcome will focus on strengthening the tripartite institutional mechanisms and capacity of the social partners to engage in social dialogue. Assistance will be provided to support the establishment and proper functioning of tripartite institutions as well as improving dispute prevention and resolution mechanisms. The ILO will assist the Government and the social partners to establish a tripartite labour advisory board, focusing on improving governance in addressing labour issues, promoting and implementing appropriate labour policies and laws, efficient and responsive labour administration, and meaningful and effective tripartism and social dialogue, collective bargaining practices and labour management cooperation.

Building the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations and the Government are essential to developing social dialogue in Bahrain. This includes the ability of the social partners to influence socio-economic and governance policies. The ILO will facilitate the participation of employers' and workers' organizations in policy discussions, and will help them with strategic approaches to policy-making in the following areas: sustainable rights-based development, decent work for women and men on the basis of the Global Employment Agenda; gender-sensitive social protection; gender equality; and the informal economy.

The ILO will provide technical support to restructure the Chamber with the aim of making the BCCI a service provider to all members, and build the capacity of the employers' organizations in management, negotiation skills, safe work, enterprise development and productivity enhancement. The ILO will assist the employers' organizations to attract and retain membership, and to provide quality services to businesses. Direct services, such as networking, training, information and advice have to be timely, relevant and effective. Representational services need to improve economic and social policy in order to create the conditions for enterprises to succeed in competitive markets. The role of employers' organizations in helping to create a positive investment climate for business improvement will be strengthened, and special attention will be given to promote the UN's Global Compact principles. Assistance will be provided to support employers' participation in tripartite institutions, as well as in improved dispute prevention and resolution machinery and processes.

Considerable ILO technical assistance will be provided to establish a national tripartite consultative committee and strengthen the capabilities of the social partners to engage in social dialogue and labour rights. Workers will be trained in representational skills and negotiations to enhance their participation in national institutions, capacity-building in legal, economic and social literacy, to participate in labour inspections, unemployment insurance programmes and ILS reporting. Training will be provided to improve collective bargaining and negotiation skills and dispute settlement mechanisms, including the envisaged body to monitor implementation of the National Development Plan and DWCP.

The work will also focus on increasing the capacities of the trade unions in terms of social dialogue and workers' rights. Strengthened and representative workers' organizations are preconditions for their effective contribution to decent work for all. Building the capacity of the workers' organizations will be the bedrock of activities aimed at consolidating social dialogue and tripartism as a means of delivering the Decent Work Agenda. The representation of women at decision-making levels will be an important aspect of the ILO strategy.

Outcome indicators	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of policy discussions that actively involve workers' and employers' organizations. - Number of new collective agreements signed. - National consultative tripartite committee established and operational (number and frequency of meetings). - Number of common decisions emanated from tripartite institutions that are incorporated into policy or legal frameworks, as relevant. - Number of areas of the Decent Work Agenda that workers' organizations include in their strategic planning. 	
Outputs	Partners
3.1 Strengthened capacity of the enterprise-level unions to engage in collective bargaining and dialogue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MOL - Workers' organizations - Employers' organizations - DECLARATION - NORMES - DIALOGUE
3.2 Increased capability of the BCCI to represent the interests of its constituents and to support the collective bargaining processes at the enterprise level.	
3.3 Establishment of a tripartite committee/Economic and Social Council with an approved governance structure.	
3.4 Improved labour administration and legal basis for collective bargaining and dispute resolution processes.	

Priority II: Enhancing income security

DWCP Outcome 4: Increased capacity of the Government and other stakeholders to manage the Unemployment Insurance Scheme and to implement policies ensuring sustainability of the social security system

Programme strategy

This outcome will focus on the further development of the social security system of Bahrain in line with international social security standards and best practices, with specific focus on the Unemployment Insurance Scheme that was implemented shortly before the onset of the global financial and economic crisis.

In order to support the further implementation of the Unemployment Insurance Law (adopted in 2006), the MOL and social partners requested ILO technical assistance and capacity-building to ensure the implementation of the Law in a fair, effective and efficient way. The ILO will provide technical advice to the Government in the preparation and quality assurance of the first actuarial valuation of the Scheme. The ILO will also support the Government in enhancing monitoring mechanisms and reporting of the Scheme. With a view to adapting the Scheme to new requirements and enhancing its effectiveness and efficiency, the ILO will support the Government in developing and costing policy options for the further development of the Scheme – which should be discussed with the social partners and other stakeholders – and in preparing a revision of the Law. The ILO is ready to provide further technical assistance in: drafting relevant Ministerial Decrees/Regulations and an explanatory commentary to the Law; developing a comprehensive training programme for the staff administering the Scheme; preparing a guide on the Scheme; and organizing workshops for employers and workers on their rights and obligations arising out of the Scheme.

The ILO will support the Government in further developing its social security system through technical assistance in enhancing national statistical capacities to monitor the performance of the different components of its social security system and its wider socio-economic context. This will provide the Government and the social partners with a better knowledge base on social security coverage and possible gaps, and could help to inform future policies. In addition, the ILO stands ready to provide capacity-building and technical assistance supporting the wider social security reform in accordance with ILO standards and principles.

Outcome indicator	
– Number of decisions adopted that, with ILO support, improve the legal framework, general and financial management and/or tripartite governance of social security in line with ILSs.	
Outputs	Partners
4.1 Support for the implementation and monitoring of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MOL - Workers' organizations - Employers' organizations - Social security institutions - Women's organizations - UN organizations
4.2 Support for social security reform through technical assistance and capacity-building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MOL - Workers' organizations - Employers' organizations - Social security institutions - Other relevant ministries and government agencies, such as the LMRA

Priority III: Improving integration and employability of women

DWCP Outcome 5: Increased capacity of ILO constituents to support policies and programmes that advance women's employment

Programme strategy

Like other labour markets in the GCC countries, the Bahraini labour market is characterized by an increasing unemployment rate of women. In fact, although women have made a lot of progress in terms of numbers and

quality in the public sector, their role in the private sector does not measure up to the current challenges. This requires a high level of awareness in the formulation of policies that create equal job opportunities for men and women in the Kingdom's labour market, taking into consideration the citizen's competence and experience without any distinction based on gender, race or colour, and the necessity to adjust and modernize the job structure. To effectively integrate women into the labour market, training programmes should contribute to the expansion of female participation in the labour market and women should be encouraged to engage in the economic development process.

In line with the ILO Resolution concerning the Promotion of Gender Equality, Pay Equity and Maternity Protection, and the Global Report on Discrimination 2007, gender-related concerns will be systematically integrated in the DWCP. The overall strategy to advance gender equality in practice is to mainstream gender concerns in all outcomes. The ILO will propose coordinated activities to mainstream gender issues in all departments (labour inspection, social protection, research and planning).

The UNDP is providing technical assistance to the Supreme Council of Women in implementing a project entitled "Support to the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Advancement of Bahraini Women". Within the framework of this project, UNDP Bahrain and the ILO have initiated discussions in order to assess areas of technical cooperation. Three ILO missions were fielded between December 2009 and January 2010 in order to assess the nature of technical support that could be provided by the ILO. Accordingly, it was agreed that the ILO would contribute to the outcome on *economic empowerment of women* through providing technical support in the areas of business and SME development and training, adapting some of the ILO global tools to the local and national contexts; the ILO would also contribute to the outcome on *social and political empowerment* of women through mainstreaming gender issues in the work of trade unions. An MOU is currently being prepared to outline the activities that will be implemented by the ILO. As a result of all these initiatives, significant progress is expected to be achieved in relation to the economic empowerment of women, including strengthening women's production and economic capabilities. Yet a number of challenges still exist, including: (a) lack of statistical data on women's economic conditions; (b) women's lack of full awareness of their entitlements to family and economic benefits stipulated by legislation; (c) limited access to financial credit; and (d) lack of knowledge of loan management and investment methods.

Equal opportunities for women in the labour market will be promoted, especially in the light of more flexible forms of employment and work organization. Based on training needs assessments conducted with the Bahraini trade unions and business development service providers, targeted training programmes will be delivered to: (a) advance women's self-employment through the use of the relevant ILO Tools for Women's Entrepreneurship Development; and (b) mainstream gender-equality concerns in trade unions in Bahrain.

Outcome indicator	
– Number of study recommendations translated into action plans.	
Outputs	Partners
5.1 ILO tools in advancing female-owned enterprises imparted and adopted by national stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MOL - Supreme Council of Women - Businesswomen's Committee - Workers' Organizations - Employers' Organizations - UNDP
5.2 Trade unions capacitated to mainstream gender and equality considerations in their policies and programmes.	

5. Communication strategy

A communication strategy will be developed to promote the DWCP in Bahrain. The overall objective of the communication strategy will be to highlight the importance of decent work. Communication messages and products will be developed in Arabic to equip policy-makers, the MOL and the social partners with materials to promote decent work.

6. Implementation and management

A detailed implementation plan will be developed and will constitute the main monitoring and reporting tool of the DWCP. It will define the activities, timelines, resources needed and indicators of achievement. It will be updated on a regular basis. The programme will be managed by the ILO Regional Office in Beirut with support and close coordination from different technical departments at headquarters and the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin.

At the national level, the DWCP will be monitored through a tripartite technical committee that will be established. The MOL will appoint a team headed by its Undersecretary to ensure the coordination of activities.

ILO seed money as well as resources from the MOL will be used for the required preparatory work. The Government and the social partners will make available their respective expert staff to review the work to be carried out by the ILO. They will also provide the necessary premises and required logistics support. The tripartite constituency confirmed their commitment to undertake the follow-up activities necessary to achieve the expected results.

7. Performance monitoring and evaluation arrangements

A results-based monitoring system will be established, specifying indicators, targets and data collection methodology, in order to refine and develop the indicators identified in this document. All indicators will be sex-disaggregated. The establishment of this monitoring system will be integrated and will be done within the capacity-building component of the programme for the constituents on monitoring and evaluation.

Country Programme Reviews will be undertaken and the programme will be subject to annual self-evaluations and an independent Country Programme Evaluation, in partnership with the ILO Evaluation Unit (EVAL). Adjustments may be made to adapt to changes, to improve where necessary and to ensure the programme's consistency and responsiveness to national priorities.

An update of the implementation plan and achievements will be prepared every six months in consultation with the social partners and with their support. Lessons learned during the assessment and evaluation process will be used to make adjustments where needed and for planning and programming of future activities. The regional office missions of the ILO experts and their internal reports will be used as part of the monitoring process.