



KUWAIT

THE SECOND VOLUNTARY
NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT

2023

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
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17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



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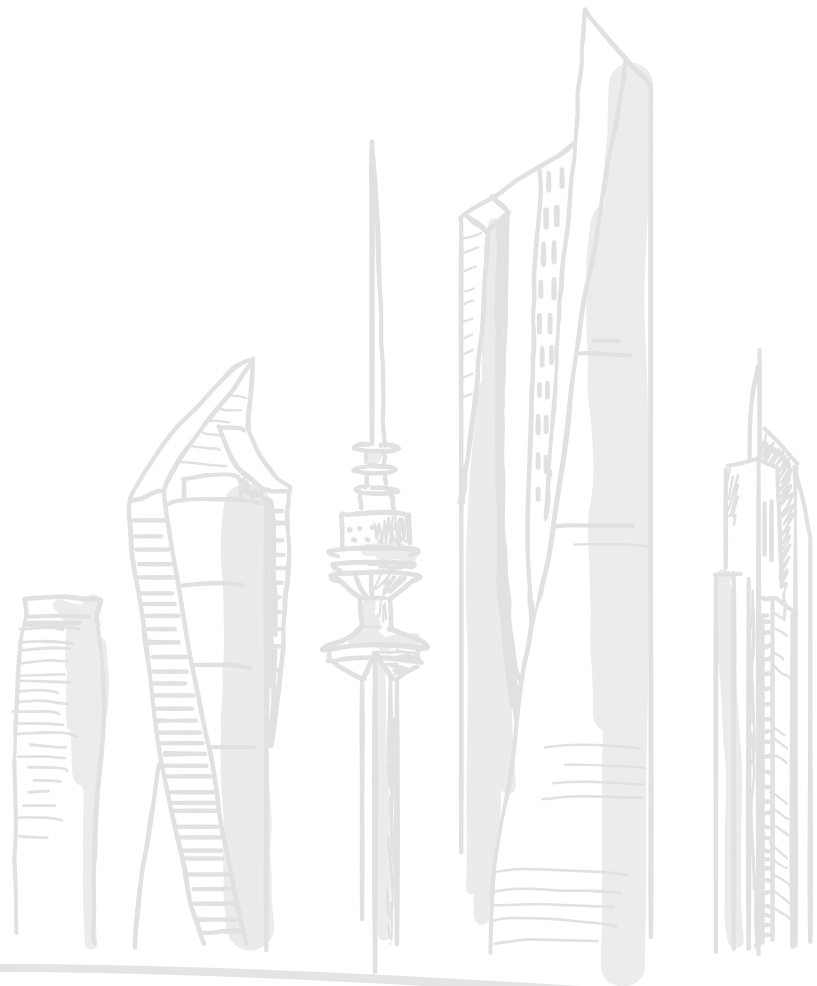
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General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development

State of Kuwait





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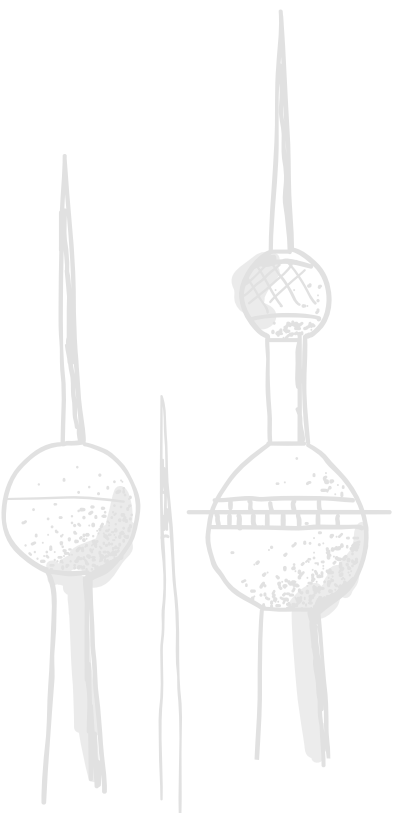




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List of Acronyms

BCD	Biodiversity Conservation Department	MDG	Millennium Development Goals
CCA	Common Country Assessment	MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
COP	Conference of the Parties	MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
CFP	Clean Fuel Project	NBK	National Bank of Kuwait
CSB	Central Statistical Bureau	NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
DCO	Digital Corporation Organization	NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
DDL	Department of Domestic Labour	NIP	National Implementation Plan
DTF	Distance to Frontier	NIS	National Industrial Strategy
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	NN	Nearest Neighbor
EPA	Environment Public Authority	NOSD	National Observatory for Sustainable Development
ETF	Effluent Treatment Facility	NPS	Net Promoted Score
EU	European Union	NSDC	National Sustainable Development Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	PAAET	Public Authority for Applied Education and Training
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council	PACI	Public Authority for Civil Information
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	PAI	Public Authority for Industry
GFS	Government Financial Statistics	PAM	Public Authority for Manpower
GHG	Greenhouse Gas	PAS	The Public Authority for Sports
GNI	Gross National Income	PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
GoK	Government of Kuwait	PV	Photovoltaic
GSSCPD	General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development	RA	Recruitment Agencies
HEI	Higher Educational Institutes	R&D	Research and Development
ILO	International Labor Organization	SAB	State Audit Bureau
IOM	International Organization for Migration	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
IPEZ	International Private Economic Zone	SME	Small & Medium Enterprises
KAP	Kuwait Authority for Partnerships	SWMP	Solid Waste Management Procedure
KCCI	Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry	TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
KWD	Kuwaiti Dinar	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
KDIPA	Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
KIA	Kuwait Investment Authority	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
KISR	Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
KLTT	Livestock Transport & Trading Company (K.S.C)	UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
KMA	Kuwait Metropolitan Area	VNR	Voluntary National Review
KMP4	Kuwait Fourth Master Plan	WBG	World Bank Group
KNPC	Kuwait National Petroleum Company	WCSS	Women's Cultural and Social Society
KPTC	Kuwait Public Transportation Cooperation	WHO	World Health Organization
KU	Kuwait University		
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design		



I. OPENING STATEMENTS

H.H Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Prime Minister, State of Kuwait



The State of Kuwait's unwavering approach reflects its deep belief in the importance of supporting the foundations of international dialogue with a view to addressing global challenges and issues. It aims at expanding international cooperation to build peace, support nations, and work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and to set ambitious goals for environmental conservation, emissions reduction by 2030, and transition towards the use of renewable energy in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

The State of Kuwait pursues ambitious goals to preserve the environment, reduce harmful emissions, and transition towards renewable energy and clean fuels in accordance with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality by 2050.

For decades, the State of Kuwait has been leading extensive efforts to enhance awareness regarding the importance of social and economic sustainability. It has taken concrete measures at the core of its policies and strategies by aligning Kuwait Vision 2035, Kuwait Environmental Strategy 2040, and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 agenda.

These measures have resulted from an interactive dialogue, which has contributed to strengthening international and local partnerships among various public and private sectors, academic and scientific institutions, and civil society organizations, national and international capacities.

This has led to the adoption of best practices and globally recognized standards. Moreover, Kuwait has been at the forefront of providing free education, advanced healthcare, achieving food security, supporting social safety nets, gender equality, and women's empowerment in all fields.

The State of Kuwait also prioritizes energy, water, environmental issues, urban development, and infrastructure, designing major national projects based on governance and transparency in partnership with the private sector. Despite global economic challenges, political and military repercussions, financial crises, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kuwait remains committed to providing international assistance to vulnerable and least developed nations.

The Voluntary National Review document records the State of Kuwait's experience in monitoring and implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, presenting a national vision that showcases achievements and highlights developmental challenges across the three economic, social, and environmental dimensions. It emphasizes the State of Kuwait's commitment to implementing international treaties and agreements it has ratified.

The State of Kuwait's global and regional stance as a global partner is enhanced on peace issues, in sustaining security and stability, and in supporting issues of common interest amongst peoples worldwide.

H.E Mr. Manaf Al-Hajeri

Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, State of Kuwait



All member states of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The SDGs aimed at eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and building peaceful and prosperous societies by 2030. The SDGs, also known as the “Global Goals,” called for action to create a world where no one is left behind.

In line with the State of Kuwait’s belief that sustainable development guarantees growth, development and prosperity for the current and future generations, the country has adopted the global agenda for sustainable development in 2030 and integrated it into the state’s vision of “New Kuwait 2035.” To achieve this vision and its goals, the State of Kuwait implemented the First Development Plan (2010/2011-2013/2014), which focused on establishing the legislative environment for development, the Second Development Plan (2015/2016-2019/2020), which emphasized the necessary infrastructure, and the Third Development Plan (2020/2021-2024/2025), with a primary focus on the private sector. The Fourth Development Plan will concentrate on boosting the knowledge economy, leading to the Fifth Development Plan, with the aim of achieving a smart Kuwait and ensuring a sustainable development of the State of Kuwait.

To achieve the SDGs, the State of Kuwait has implemented a comprehensive and balanced set of economic, social, and environmental policies within its development plans. These policies aimed at fostering growth, diversifying the economy and encouraging the private sector participation. Kuwait has also implemented policies to empower Kuwaiti women

economically, politically, and socially and to promote youth participation in development by providing suitable employment opportunities, fostering creativity, and supporting scientific research through governmental and non-governmental institutions. Additionally, the State of Kuwait is committed to translating its environmental pledges to international treaties and agreements within its development and economic programs.

As part of its commitment to achieving the SDGs, Kuwait’s Permanent National Steering Committee for the Implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development has submitted the Second Voluntary National Review, confirming the State of Kuwait’s commitment to creating a more sustainable world and a better future for humanity. The second Voluntary National Review report showed improvements compared to the first report. It provided a comprehensive and detailed overview of the previous period, supported by strong evidence and data. It confirmed Kuwait’s persistent policies and institutional efforts for implementing all the SDGs despite various challenges, including the negative impacts of COVID-19.

The year 2020, like the rest of the world, witnessed a significant shift in Kuwait’s development priorities due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly disrupted the State of Kuwait’s development agenda and posed a major challenge for both governmental and non-governmental entities. However, Kuwait’s response to the pandemic was comprehensive, effective, integrative, and widely participatory. The second Voluntary National Review highlights the short, medium, and

long-term commitments and decisions made by the State of Kuwait to support the national efforts for sustainability and reconstruction in the aftermath of pandemic.

The second Voluntary National Review also represents a significant qualitative and quantitative advancement in the data provision and statistics, adding substantial value to the analysis and measurement. The limitation of data availability was previously one of the major structural challenges faced by Kuwait.

The report also documents another important institutional development, namely the crucial oversight role of the State Audit Bureau. Through its commitment to enhancing financial integrity and its strong alignment with the SDGs, the State Audit Bureau has partnered with various state institutions and supervised more than fourteen national entities with a view to optimizing resource utilization, achieving financial stability, and enhancing cost-effectiveness. The State Audit Bureau has also succeeded in promoting sustainability through participation in important national policy and oversight meetings at the level of the Cabinet of Ministers, national associations, municipal councils and others.

The second Voluntary National Review report includes an analysis of the remaining challenges before the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by

the end of 2030, but also the many significant achievements that have been made so far in terms of policies, institutions, data collection, monitoring, and tangible positive outcomes under numerous goals and targets.

The report also describes the growing interest in the SDGs throughout the State of Kuwait and highlighted the increasing support from a wide range of stakeholders. It demonstrated how an increasing number of partners and stakeholders including government agencies at the executive and oversight levels, the academia, civil society organizations, the private sector, investors and bankers among others, have integrated and promoted various elements of sustainability and included them in their reporting.

The second National Review Report also affirms the State of Kuwait's ratification of most relevant global and regional environmental agreements. It acknowledges the country's firm commitment to enhancing its regional and international standing in the fields of international human development, promoting sustainable global well-being, and strengthening human rights, diplomacy, and cultural exchange. With the help of God, the diligent efforts will continue to drive the development process and work towards achieving sustainability, ensuring prosperity and well-being for the nation and its citizens.

H.E Dr. Khaled Mahdi

*Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the
Supreme Council for Planning and Development,
State of Kuwait*



The State of Kuwait wholeheartedly welcomed and fully endorsed the adoption of Agenda 2030 in September 2015. The enthusiasm of the State of Kuwait then was not only motivated by the exceptional merit of the SDGs, its unprecedented depth and breadth, and its inspirational and aspirational objective of leaving no one behind. It was also the articulation and the relevance of the different goals and targets and their historical conjunction and concurrence with the seven broad pillars of the New Kuwait – Vision 2035, which the State had just proclaimed the year before, in 2014. Indeed, the structural and thematic integration of the SDGs into Vision 2035 made institutionalization, implementation, coordination and monitoring of the different goals and targets attainable, inclusive, purposeful and effective.

Halfway through the implementation of Agenda 2030, and building on the past experience and the achievements made so far, Kuwait reiterates and confirms its unwavering commitment to the SDGs as a domestic priority for all those who are concerned with public policy making, with national human development and with present and future social, economic and environmental sustainability. The State of Kuwait continues to be committed to promoting the SDGs as a societal objective and as a matter of public concern across all walks of life. It also remains committed to enlisting the support of all constituencies in embracing sustainability as a culture, a conviction and a behavior.

As far as this year's voluntary review report is concerned, Kuwait has opted again for a Whole-of-Nation Approach (WNA)

with the aim of enabling a cross section of national actors and stakeholders at the public, private, the academic and civil society levels, to participate in the Review process and to report on their respective achievements, ongoing programmes, as well as the challenges being confronted. This has made Kuwait's Second National Review Report (VNR2) a true national report, owned by all. Through a well-researched and well-documented account, Kuwait's second VNR has provided a commanding record of many significant accomplishments made so far, and outlined the remaining challenges under the Review and non-Review goals and targets. It has depicted and portrayed with robust and itemised data and substantiation, Kuwait's unrelenting policy and institutional efforts in diligently pursuing implementation of all goals and targets, despite the many challenges, including the adverse effects of COVID-19.

Like so many countries, Kuwait witnessed a significant shift in the development priorities with the spread of the global pandemic. The outbreak exerted an unanticipated pressure on the health system, disrupted the economy and adversely affected all walks of life. VNR2 documented Kuwait's comprehensive, effective and widely integrative response to the pandemic. It recorded the many lessons learned from the pandemic in matters of health, food security, social protection, welfare system, the environment, climate change and others, and highlighted the ensuing short to mid and long-term policy decisions and program engagements that were made, and which aimed at achieving sustainability and building back better. In the wake of the pandemic, Kuwait initiated several mega projects that were designed along integrated, mutually beneficial

sustainable development vectors and policies. Many projects have been completed; others are underway.

One of the structural challenges in the State of Kuwait was the limited availability of data and statistics. As of 2019, sustained investments and capacity development programs have been implemented to overcome the systemic, institutional and technical dimensions of the data limitations. As a result, the data challenges reported in VNR1 have translated into concrete achievements in VNR2. Indeed, significant and persistent progress has been accomplished over the last few years at the institutional, managerial, technical, data gathering and information sharing and dissemination level. Accordingly, authoritative, robust and regular data can now be generated and used for targeting, tracking, and monitoring different goals and targets. VNR2 has provided evidence of this quantum leap in the meaningful and illustrative data and statistics that have been used, and which have added a significant policy and prospective value to the analysis and reporting therein.

VNR2 has also reflected across the different goals and targets the rising interest countrywide in Agenda 2030, and has highlighted the mounting support of a cross-section of national constituencies and stakeholders. It has shown how a growing number of actors, partners and community groups, including

many layers of policy, implementing and oversight government agencies, the academia, civil society and corporate and private sector partners have now significantly engaged in incorporating, defending, promoting and regularly reporting on different components of sustainability. Indeed, sustainability and the three SDGs foundations are increasingly gaining ground in the State of Kuwait, and gradually permeating Kuwaiti public policy making, culture and society.

Through the narrative analysis, pages, figures, and tables and through an in depth and thorough assessment of the 2023 Review and non-2023 Review goals and targets, VNR2 has documented the State of Kuwait's commitment to an all-inclusive, equal opportunity and dignifying human development for all, and to achieving the triple SDG objective of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

This Review report reiterates Kuwait's ratification of most relevant global and regional environmental agreements. It has acknowledged the State of Kuwait's unwavering commitment to furthering its prominent position regionally and internationally, in the fields of international human development, in advancing global and sustainable wellbeing, and in fostering human rights and well-being, diplomacy and cultural exchange.



The traditional work of a cotton worker

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Kuwait builds on a solid history of achieving international development goals and keeping sustainability at the core of its policies and strategies. Eight years ago, at the inception of the SDGs, the government made an all-embracing decision of integrating all 17 SDGs and 169 targets within the State of Kuwait's long-term vision, which had been approved one year prior to the adoption of Agenda 2030. Indeed, Vision 2035 – New Kuwait, consisting of seven broad pillars, fully endorsed and structurally integrated the SDG goals and targets, along with their indicators. Ever since, government has been leading extensive national awareness, implementation and coordination efforts regarding the transformative approach and the added merit of Agenda 2030, focusing on its triple premise of social, economic and environmental sustainability, as well as the ultimate ambition of Leaving No one Behind.
2. Consistent with the policy that was adopted during VNR1, Kuwait has again chosen to proceed with a Whole-of-Nation Approach (WNA) in the preparation of this VNR2. The aim was to enable the range of actors and stakeholders involved in the SDGs at the public, private, academia and civil society sectors, including at the community level, to participate in the review process and report on their respective achievements, ongoing programmes, the challenges being confronted and their prospective strategies; making Kuwait's VNR2 a true national report. Accordingly, and as provided in the 2023 UN VNR Handbook, government organized a series of consultancies and a national sustainability week, with a range of stakeholders across the public and the private sectors and with academia and civil society partners. The wealth of interactions and information sharing gave rise to discussing and accounting for current realizations, determining the remaining challenges, underlining in particular the adverse impact of COVID-19 over the recent years, and outlining the plans for building back better.
3. Sooner after the launch of VNR1 in 2019, Kuwait witnessed a significant shift in the development priorities with the spread of the global pandemic. The outbreak exerted an unanticipated pressure on the health system and challenged its resilience, disrupted the economy and adversely affected all walks of life. Kuwait's response to the pandemic however, was remarkably comprehensive and effective and widely integrative and participatory. The government activated an inter-ministerial Committee for COVID-19, under the guidance of the Ministry of Health. Other actors involved in the public domain took on a significant role too in the response to the pandemic. Critical short to mid and long-term decisions and engagements were made to support the national efforts aimed at sustainability and at building back better in the post COVID-19 era.
4. The unprecedented virus circumstances during 2020 and early 2021 required the reinforcement of exceptional financial control procedures and the development of unusual supportive administrative work procedures. Similarly, many lessons were retained from the pandemic in matters of health, food security, social protection, welfare system, the environment, and climate change. Parallel to the efforts deployed within the State of Kuwait, Kuwait sent emergency aid packages to developing countries and was represented in the virtual GAVI COVAX Advance Market Commitment Summit called "One World Protected". It also enhanced its collaboration with WHO during the critical time of the pandemic and was commended for its leading role in supporting humanitarian work.
5. In the wake of the pandemic, the State of Kuwait initiated several mega projects that were designed along integrated, mutually beneficial sustainable development vectors and policies. Many projects have been completed; others are still underway. These projects are expected to positively impact most if not all 17 SDGs. They have been articulated along eight policy headings and vectors consisting of creating an international private economic zone, promoting a dynamic private sector, enhancing the capacities of citizens and institutions, developing a sound and transparent government, building a coherent infrastructure, fostering environmentally harmonious living areas, advancing health and wellbeing for all, and pledging effective global participation.

6. When it comes to the 2023 Review Goals 6,7, 9 and 11, significant achievements have been made while persistent challenges continue to be systematically and structurally addressed. In terms of clean water and sanitation (SDG6) it is worth noting that access to safe and clean drinking water and access to proper and hygienic wastewater networks have been near universal in the State of Kuwait. A national programme for managing the control over drinking water in Kuwait has been recently designed and is being reviewed before final adoption. Considering the growing demand, Kuwait has been implementing a two-phase “water desalination project” expected to be completed by the end of 2024. In the meanwhile, the government is resorting to procuring cross borders’ ground water and to establishing seawater desalination facilities. In addition, the State of Kuwait launched several projects of sewage networks, water treatments and water desalination stations.
7. In terms of clean and affordable energy (SDG7) Kuwait has been successfully pursuing its new energy strategy, combined with a plan to foster economic diversification and reduce fossil fuel dependency. Energy consumption per capita in Kuwait ranks among the highest worldwide prompting the government to invest in a combined three-pronged strategy of actionable national energy efficiency plans, an incentive and cleaner energy sensitization programme, and subsidy reduction. Consideration is also given to establishing a centre for carbon footprint reduction and recycling applications and for producing blue hydrogen as fuel from natural gas and petroleum, moving to a sustainable energy future. Kuwait is presently implementing Five projects with a view to achieving the above objectives and ensuring a clean and sustainable energy for all. Furthermore, an E-Waste Manifest System has been made available allowing end-users to analyze monthly waste data and to track the performance of each site with respect to waste minimization/recycling process.
8. Of relevance to SDG9, around 30 projects are currently being implemented including the development and construction of new roads and railway systems, ports, and airports. Mechanised control systems have been installed for the purpose of constantly monitoring gas emission in addition to applying systematic environmental impact assessments. A National Industrial Strategy is being implemented with the aim of increasing the shares of the industrial sector in Kuwait’s GDP and generating job opportunities for youth in the private sector. The State Audit Bureau is overseeing the completion of many mega projects. While Kuwait continues to address the challenge of increasing the share of industry in employment and in GDP, it is on track on most indicators under this goal.
9. As to SDG11, Kuwait is promoting the concept of smart cities in new residential areas. It is also constructing new public buildings through the LEED designs, and setting up suburban cooling systems in public buildings in residential cities. Five new smart and sustainable residential areas are being established, away from Kuwait City. A design of automatic waste recycling system has been completed and will be implemented in two pilot cities as soon as the respective laws have been passed. The Environment Public Authority (EPA) has established a system for monitoring primary and secondary air pollutants in the city and the results are published and shared with the public. Plans to monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the quality of air are being implemented involving several government authorities.
10. For the purpose of keeping this Review as a reference for the future, this report accounted for the non-2023 Review SDGs as well. Accordingly, VNR2 has registered under SDG1 Kuwait’s universal social welfare system and its qualitative leap in all aspects of social and human life, with a particular focus on all those in need, and within a framework of social justice and social cohesion. The efforts have been deployed in the fields of childhood and youth, the elderly, women, the family, people with special needs, people with disabilities and others. The aim has been to achieve not only a higher wellbeing of the population but also to make them productive and fulfilled, socially and economically. At the non-governmental level, many community partners have equally been active in the social sector. Globally, Kuwait launched a range of humanitarian and philanthropic initiatives in support of poor countries to the point of earning the title of “Country of Humanitarian Action”.



Kuwait Red Crescent Society distribution of food baskets outside of Kuwait to the poor (Photo by KUNA).

- 11.** On SDG2, Kuwait maintained a commendable rate of undernourishment below 2.5 per cent when the world's rate was fluctuating between 7.6 and 7.8 per cent. The prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years has been rather steady since 2012, whereas the rate of overweight children witnessed a major decrease since 2015. As to the space allocated for productive and sustainable agriculture the records show an increasing trend over the years. Many projects are currently being implemented with a view to reinforcing sustainable agricultural production and a sustainable economic farm with modern technology. Kuwait is considering developing a nutritional program with the promotion of positive social norms regarding health-building habits from early childhood through to adulthood.
- 12.** Kuwait has enhanced the quality of health services while keeping up with the technical developments in this field and ensuring highest and advanced health care for all individuals. Other signs of progress are seen in the dramatic decrease in traffic death rates and the increase in surviving infants who received the two WHO-recommended vaccines. However, the current health system may still be facing a few challenges, particularly in terms of the rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases and the increasing cost of health services. Attention will be given to improving the performance of the organizational structures. The State of Kuwait is working

to secure cutting-edge medicines and technologies to hone the expertise of the health personnel and enlist the needed specialists. It is also considering further investment in information technologies. Of notable progress under SDG3 however, is the wide expansion of the healthy cities' initiative under the leadership of MOH healthy cities office and the WHO.

- 13.** In 2022, Kuwait was awarded the rank of 47th out of 132 countries in the Global Knowledge Index and increased its ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI) from 64/189 countries in 2019, to 50/191 countries in 2022. Government expenditures on Education amounted to 12.2 per cent of the national budget in 2021, 9.3 per cent of which represented the share of the Ministry of Education, and 2.7 per cent the Ministry of Higher Education. Many community groups play an important role in providing education and skills upgrading services in addition to the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), which is implementing several projects under this Goal. With regards to gender, recent data show that the parity index of females to males has always been higher in the public schools in comparison to the private schools. The main challenges however, remain the quality of education, achieving higher values on global indicators of education as well as focusing on science, mathematics and reading subjects for basic primary education.

14. With regards to SDG 5, the national data available show sustained progress across educational, health and social indicators. The prevalence of females who have been subject to physical violence in the State of Kuwait reached zero in 2022 and the number of girls who have been married or engaged before the age of 18 years have been decreasing and reached a mere 2.7 per cent in 2022. As of mid 2022, women's participation in leadership positions amounted to 28 per cent. Kuwait has already ratified many international conventions addressing gender equality. The State has recently established a specialized Women's Committee whose mandate focuses mainly on coordinating and supporting the efforts of government and non-government stakeholders concerned with women's affairs. As to the percentage of women's participation in the Ministerial Council and the National Assembly it increased in 2022 including the appointment of two female ministers in addition to the election of two women to parliament.
15. As of SDG8, Kuwait has endorsed many human rights treaties and ratified many of ILO's 19 conventions. The labour force policy aims at increasing the efficiency of the national workforce with a view to raising productivity and improving the working conditions and employment opportunities. Kuwait is also a host for many contractual foreign workers and provides employment opportunities for approximately 1.5 million workers in the private sector. The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), developed an integrated data system for all workers in the private sector, upholding in the process workers' rights and ensuring their comprehensive safety and security, regardless of nationality. Kuwait has concluded 21 bilateral memoranda of understanding (MOU) with counterpart countries regarding foreign labour mobility and deployment of workers. In addition, Kuwait adopted national legislations to provide a conducive and decent work environment for foreign workers, enabling them to bring their families and children to Kuwait and to allow them to enjoy basic rights such as education, health, freedom of work and movement.
16. SDG10 poses a few challenges in terms of reporting, since data pertaining to some of the targets of this goal are not readily available. However, considering the data available, many targets under this goal register positive developments and narrowing down inequality gaps among different groups. The implementation of the annual development plan for the fiscal year 2021/2022 followed a careful analysis and prediction of revenues taking into account concrete and well premised financial assumptions. Accordingly, Kuwait is expected to be in a position to achieve the political, economic, and social goals set out in the national plan and to raise the standards of living for all. Kuwait provides different groups distinct social care through a number of public institutions.
17. Kuwait has been incessantly implementing action plans for sustainable consumption and production (SDG12) and has incorporated and prioritized them into its national policies since 2016. The State of Kuwait has signed and strived to implement several environmental treaties and conventions. It supported, by various means and security legislations, a range of initiatives that guarantee limiting the spread and accumulation of hazardous and environmentally polluting industrial waste, and has recorded a good performance in terms of recycling solid wastes. A National Plan for Chemical Safety has been designed for eliminating releases of persistent organic pollutants, and will be updated every two years. Many projects have been launched recently including an electronic system for chemicals (licenses-release-exports), an Atlas of Waste Management, the national plan for chemical safety and others.
18. On SDG13, Kuwait committed to reaching carbon neutrality for the oil sector in 2050 and for all other sectors in 2060. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental institutions includes short, medium and long-term strategies to increase strength and resilience in the face of climate challenges, and boost the national anticipation and management capacity to adapt to climate change. The State of Kuwait has ratified and is implementing several global and regional environmental agreements, has been implementing national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and has already implemented policies and strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, educational materials regarding climate change mitigations, adaptation, impact reduction and early warnings have already been integrated within the educational curricula of primary, secondary and tertiary classes. Recently, a National Committee on Preparedness and Response to the Impacts of Climate Change and Environmental Disasters on Health was set up with the aim of strengthening the climate resilience of the health system and protecting the population from the health impacts of climate change.

19. Concerning SDG14, all the economic zones have been managed using environmentally friendly ecosystem-based approaches. The remaining challenges consist in lowering the marine Ph levels which have been closer to the upper acceptable limit and to ensure coverage of protected marine areas. However, Kuwait has made progress in the implementation of international instruments aimed at combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and has applied the legal frameworks that recognize and protect access to small-scale fisheries. The State of Kuwait is fully committed to implementing the environmental marine assessment plans aimed at protecting the marine environment, life, and biological diversity.

20. Kuwait conforms with all regional and international treaties and agreements related to the conservation and protection of biological diversity. It has been implementing the provisions of the Environmental Protection Law with a view to safeguarding the wild environment and preventing violation of encroachments and abuse of greening areas. Accordingly, many projects are being implemented with the aim of rehabilitating degraded areas and coastal environment, and establishing 19 reserves (13 wild nature reserves and 6 marine reserves). Policy provisions are also supported with the triple aim of allocating a minimum 10 per cent area of every major development project for environmental compensation, preserving the environment and biodiversity and increasing the green area in the State of Kuwait. Kuwait is on track on most targets under this goal and is committed to addressing the remaining gaps.

21. Kuwait has registered concrete achievements under many targets of SDG16. It ranked 39th globally and second in the MENA region on the Global Peace Index. The State of Kuwait adopts constitutional, legislative and policy guarantees for public access to information. It established a National Bureau for Human Rights according to Article (4) and Law No. (67) of 2015. Through its Constitution and Domestic laws, Kuwait is keen on working against racism and religious hatred. The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature has developed a strategic plan for the period 2023 – 2028, which is aimed at providing space for youth, supporting cultural diversity, enhancing intergenerational communications, providing a safe environment for writers and journalists, revitalizing cultural activities and investing in cultural diplomacy and other forms of civilized communication. The Public



Kuwait Red Crescent Society distribution of food baskets outside of Kuwait to the poor (Photo by KUNA).

Authority for Sports (PAS), developed a new strategy for 2022 – 2028 with a vision of a sustainable environment for sports. The State Audit Bureau works to reinforce financial integrity and sound implementation of rules and regulations. It has partnered with different entities, and signed an MoU with the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha).

22. As for SDG17, Kuwait has made strides in upholding human rights, improving the wellbeing of all, and boosting its international image as a safe and stable state. It has made significant progress in improving data gathering and statistical analysis and in enhancing its competitiveness in international indicators. The State of Kuwait has made important achievements in implementing audit and oversight policy and systems, and has recently increased non-oil revenues in the GDP. Internationally, it has maintained its official development assistance, augmented its south-south cooperation and increased its foreign investment. Around 99 per cent of residents in Kuwait use the internet and close to 4.05 million use social media. As a result of sustained sensitization and awareness creation efforts, a growing number of stakeholders across diverse constituencies including the private sector and civil society groups, have developed interest in promoting, defending and reporting on different dimensions of social, economic and environmental sustainability. Sustainability and the three SDGs premises are increasingly gaining ground, and gradually permeating Kuwaiti policy making, culture and society.



(Photo by Saleh Taqi)

III. OVERVIEW

Kuwait is a sovereign Arab state, home to 4,216,900 million as of 2022, 66 per cent of them are non-Kuwaiti nationals (59 per cent males and 41 per cent females)¹.

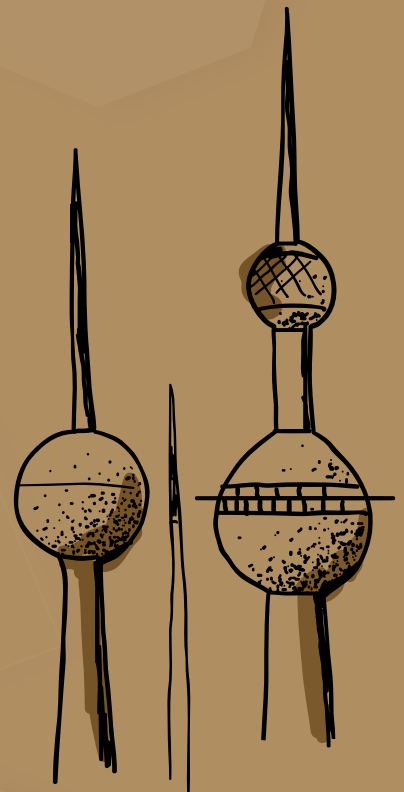
The State of Kuwait's oil reserve of 101.5 billion barrels² and large quantities of natural gas form the basis of a significant economic presence, in the region and globally. Oil extraction and processing account for about 40 per cent of the GDP, 95 per cent of the export earnings, and 84 per cent of the government budget³. As a result, Kuwait's living standards rank among the highest worldwide. As to the total workforce, it amounted to 2,036,990 in 2022, made up of 21.7 per cent of Kuwaiti nationals and 78.3 per cent non-nationals. The bulk of the national labor force is engaged in the public sector with only 4.6 per cent in the private sector⁴.

1 www.csb.gov.kw (CSB, 2021)

2 <https://www.trade.gov/market-intelligence/kuwait-digitalizes-oil-fields>

3 Implementation Towards the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030: Preliminary Chapter. Central Statistical Bureau of Kuwait. (CSB, Kuwait, 2022)

4 Implementation Towards the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030: Preliminary Chapter. Central Statistical Bureau of Kuwait. (CSB, Kuwait, 2022)



IV. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2019 FIRST VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT

Kuwait builds on a solid history of achieving international development goals and keeping sustainability at the core of its policies and strategies. The State of Kuwait had already achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, and recorded concrete accomplishments on goals and targets relevant to poverty, hunger, education, health and water and sanitation among others. Kuwait has also directed significant efforts towards the environment and has been fully committed to regional and international partnerships.

When it comes to the SDGs, there is a meaningful story to be told again in the particular case of Kuwait: a three-pronged story of an integrated vision for i) achieving national sustainable development; ii) mainstreaming national interest in sustainability, broadly in society at large, and across a range of stakeholders and policy influencing quarters and actors (as it will be evidenced throughout this report); and, iii) fostering national alliances and international partnerships for accelerating the pace towards 2030.

The State of Kuwait has been devising and implementing development plans since the 1960s while mobilizing all available resources to achieve them. At the inception of the SDGs in 2015, the government made a strategic and an all-embracing choice of integrating all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets within the State of Kuwait’s Vision 2035, which had been approved one year prior to the adoption of Agenda 2030. Indeed, Vision 2035 – New Kuwait, consisting of Seven pillars, fully and structurally endorsed and integrated the SDG goals and targets, along with their indicators. For that purpose, the government developed an SDGs tracking path in each of the 7 pillars, updating the status and progress made among national government and non-government partners, across all national development policies, strategies, and activities, and along the ongoing and prospective multi-year national development plans.

Figure 1 below shows the Seven pillars of Vision 2035, and table 1 summarizes the alignment of Vision 2035’s pillars with each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



Figure 1: The Seven Pillars of “New Kuwait”⁵

5 Mahdi, K. (March 2018) Kuwait Plan for the Future. International Conference on Innovation and Economic Diversification in GCC’s National Development Plans. Retrieved from: 2019 Kuwait VNR

Table 1: Kuwait Vision 2035's Seven Pillars, Incorporating All Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals⁶

Kuwait Vision 2035 Pillars	Sustainable Development Goal	Aim of the Pillars ⁷
Effective Public Administration	<p>Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries</p> <p>Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p>	<p>This pillar aims at reforming the administrative and bureaucratic practices for the purpose of enhancing standards of transparency, regulatory accountability, and the effectiveness of the government apparatus.</p>
Creative Human Capital	<p>Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p> <p>Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</p> <p>Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education</p> <p>Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p>	<p>This pillar aims at reforming the education system for preparing the young people to become competitive and productive members of the national workforce.</p>
Sustainable Diversified Economy	<p>Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all</p>	<p>This pillar aims at investing in a prosperous and diversified economy with a view to reducing the State of Kuwait's main dependence on revenue from oil exports.</p>
Strong Progressive Infrastructure	<p>Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</p> <p>Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p>	<p>This pillar aims at improving the quality of life for all citizens through a developed and modernized infrastructure.</p>
High Quality Healthcare	<p>Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p>	<p>This pillar aims at improving the quality of services and developing national cadres in the health care system at low cost.</p>
Sustainable living environment	<p>Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all</p> <p>Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable</p> <p>Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p> <p>Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development</p> <p>Goal 15: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</p>	<p>The aim of this pillar is to ensure the provision of housing through environmentally sound resources and plans.</p> <p>It also focuses on meeting sustainability and health objectives by targeting the environmental determinants of health and on propelling the smart/eco-friendly and healthy city initiative.</p>
Exceptional International Positioning	<p>Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels</p> <p>Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</p>	<p>This pillar aims at improving regional and global presence of Kuwait in the diplomatic, commercial, cultural and charitable fields.</p>

6 GSSCPD (2018). The first draft of the first national voluntary report on the sustainable development goals – sustainable development based on people; Retrieved from the 2019 Kuwait VNR.

7 <https://newkuwait.gov.kw/plan.aspx>

of social, economic and environmental sustainability as well as the ultimate ambition of *Leaving No one Behind*. Kuwait's first Voluntary National Report (VNR1) assessing the status and progress of each of the 17 goals and 169 targets in the State of Kuwait in 2019, documented in detail the strategies being implemented, the many achievements that had been made then as well as the remaining challenges. VNR1 therefore represents a substantive and momentous baseline for Kuwait's current 2023 national Review and beyond. Indeed, in reporting on the implementation of Vision 2035 and Agenda 2030 this time as well, Kuwait has again adopted a Whole-of-Nation Approach (WNA) whose aim is to enable the range of actors and stakeholders involved in the SDGs Agenda one way or the other, at the public, private and community and civil society levels, to report on their respective past achievements, ongoing programmes and the challenges being confronted, making VNR2 a true national report.

In matters of ending poverty, fighting hunger, and providing universal health care, Kuwait had already implemented all-inclusive social support and protection programmes, resulting in a significant reduction of income and non-income inequalities, eradication of extreme poverty, a total closure of the hunger gap and ensuring universal access to quality basic health and social services such as safe and clean water, electricity, health care, education, decent labor, transportation, and others.

Indeed, progress made already on each of the seventeen SDG goals in 2019, can be best illustrated and summarized in table 2 below⁸. In terms of mainstreaming Agenda 2030, the 2019 VNR recorded Kuwait's consistent and concrete measures in reaching out to government and non-government partners and stakeholders including civil society, the academia, and the private sector with a view to ensuring their buy-in and obtaining their active endorsement of the sustainable development goals.



(Photo by Saleh Taqi)

Table 2: Status of SDG Goals in 2019

SDGs	per cent Of Achievement
SDG 1: End Poverty	100.0 per cent
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	65.2 per cent
SDG 3: Health and Well-Being	84.8 per cent
SDG 4: Quality Education	74.7 per cent
SDG 5: Gender Equality	55.8 per cent
SDG 6: Clean Water	50.0 per cent
SDG 7: Clean Energy	86.6 per cent
SDG 8: Decent Work/ Economic Growth	77.6 per cent
SDG 9: Industry and Innovation	45.7 per cent
SDG 10: Reducing Inequalities	Ensuring reduced inequalities and higher inclusiveness in society regarding people with disabilities, enhancing gender equality, fighting human trafficking, protecting foreign workers, protecting children's right, upholding the rights of individuals with illegal status, among others
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities	44.6 per cent
SDG 12: Production and Consumption	28.9 per cent
SDG 13: Climate Change	43.8 per cent
SDG 14: Life Below Water	37.4 per cent
SDG 15: Life on Land	55.0 per cent
SDG 16: Promoting Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	73.9 per cent
SDG 17: Partnership/ Means of Implementation	52.9 per cent

Kuwait has ever since committed to enhancing the policy, advocacy, and tracking capacity of its institutions to effectively and efficiently steer and monitor the orderly implementation of the SDGs. It did so on the one hand, by forming a National Sustainable Development Committee (NSDC), with representation from a cross-section of government and non-government stakeholders with the active and constant participation of the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB). On the other hand, it created a National Observatory for Sustainable Development

(NOSD), which became the SDGs monitoring arm of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD). At the time of drafting VNR2 and on the occasion of the Mid-Term Review of the implementation of Agenda 2030, the State of Kuwait renews its commitment to an all-inclusive, equal opportunity and dignifying human development for all, to the triple SDGs objective of economic, social, and environmental sustainability, and to upholding its international stand on sustainable human development for all.

9 The Permanent National Steering Committee for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda (2018). A working paper on the efforts of the State of Kuwait in the field of sustainable development



(Photo by Saleh Taqi)

V. BRIDGING THE 2019-2023 SDGs IMPLEMENTATION GAP: PRIMARY VECTORS & POLICIES

Vision 2035 has been implemented through annual and pluri-annual national plans, along proper institutional mechanisms for tracking and monitoring progress, identifying challenges and devising, and implementing remedying and corrective strategies. For the years 2020 – 2021, more than 43 government and non-government stakeholders including

national committees, ministries, the private sector under a close coordination and follow-up from the GSSCPD, partnered in the implementation of different plans and projects with an estimated budget of KWD 2,097.5 million¹⁰. As for the 2021-2022 annual plan, the estimated budget amounted to KWD 1,812.8 million¹¹.

Table 3: SDGs Implementation Policy and Programme Components in 2020. GSSCPD, 2021

Program	Targeted Policies	Legislative Requirements	Number of Projects	Estimated Budget 2020/2021 (KWD)
Building an international private economic zone	1	1	1	–
Promoting a dynamic private sector	6	6	24	507,056,750
Enhancing the capacity of citizens and institutions	4	9	12	213,716,718
Develop a coherent and transparent government	4	12	17	26,104,246
Building a coherent infrastructure	6	2	41	901,240,126
Creating environmentally harmonious living areas	4	-	12	161,538,390
Promote health and well-being to all	5	1	22	282,177,025
Active participation in the global community	4	2	6	5,635,720
Total	34	33	135	2,097,468,975

¹⁰ GSSCPD (2020). The annual development plan 2020/2021.

¹¹ Op. cit.

Table 4: SDGs Implementation Policy and Program Components in 2021. The Annual Development Plan 2022/2023. (GSSCPD, 2022) New Kuwait, 2020

Program	Targeted Policies	Legislative Requirements	Number of Projects	Estimated Budget 2020/2021 (KWD)
Building an international private economic zone	1	1	1	–
Privatization	2	2	7	0
Promoting a dynamic private sector	5	2	13	206,918,000
Enhancing the capacity of citizens and institutions	4	9	12	166,100,400
Develop a coherent and transparent government	4	11	16	39,198,578
Building a coherent infrastructure	6	2	41	1,070,584,821
Creating environmentally harmonious living areas	4	-	14	18,360,100
Promote health and well-being to all	5	-	22	306,706,703
Active participation in the global community	4	2	6	4,940,000
Total	35	29	132	1,812,808,602

The annual plan for 2022 – 2023 anticipated the contribution of 42 government and non-government stakeholders and a budget of KWD 1,707,009,780 for implementing up to 130 SDGs-related projects, and ensuring participation of the government's social and economic institutions on sustainable development aspects, achieving the SDGs. These projects target all the 7 pillars of Vision 2035 in an integrated and mutually supportive way (GSSCPD, 2022). The annual plan for 2023-2024

anticipates the contribution of 41 stakeholders and a budget of KWD 955,429,033 million, for implementing up to SDGs-related 129 projects.

Between 2019 and 2020, 135 SDGs-related Government projects were either fully or partially implemented with an initial budget of KWD 3.2 billion and a total spending of KWD 2,188.8 million.

Table 5: SDGs Related Projects Implemented During 2019-2020. New Kuwait, 2020

Type of Project	Advanced Projects		On-Schedule Projects		Delayed Projects		Total
	Continuing	New	Continuing	New	Continuing	New	
Development	2	0	26	1	23	7	59
Infrastructure	0	0	19	5	44	3	71
Partnerships	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Contributing Companies	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	2	0	46	6	71	10	135

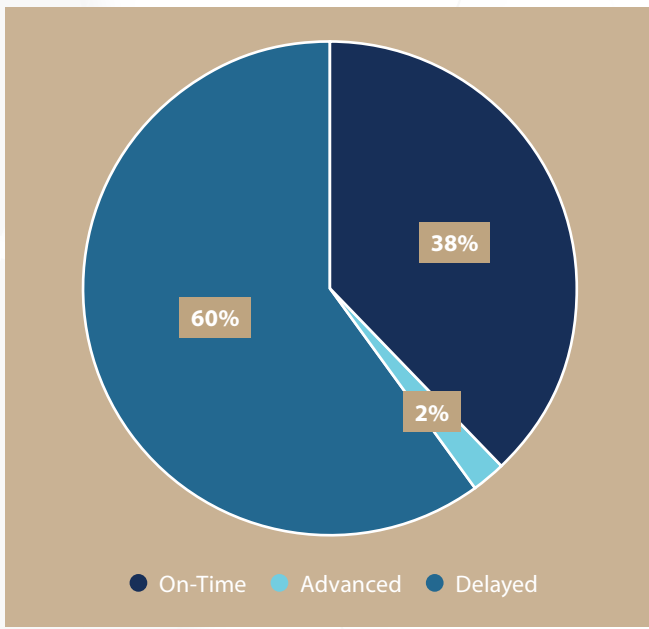


Figure 2: Progress Status of Projects During 2019-2020. New Kuwait, 2020

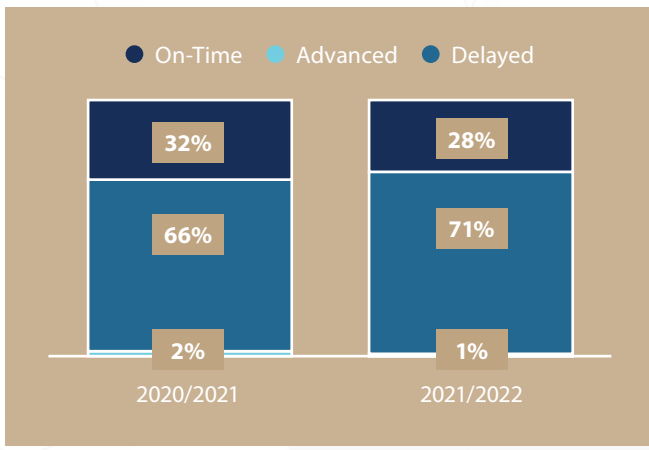
During 2021, more than 130 SDGs-related Government projects were planned and conducted. However, 70.8 per cent (mostly in the infrastructural sector) were delayed (primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic), while 28.5 per cent were on schedule¹².

The table below summarizes the progress made and the current status of projects being implemented under each of the SDGs-englobing Seven pillars of Vision 2035.

Table 6: Status of Projects Implemented during 2020-2021. New Kuwait, 2022

Year	Status										Total
2021/2022	Advanced	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	On-Time	6	8	9	2	3	6	3	3	3	37
	Delayed	5	13	30	12	13	16	3	3	3	92
	Total	11	22	39	14	16	22	6	6	6	130
2020/2021	Advanced	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	On-Time	3	11	10	5	5	3	3	3	3	40
	Delayed	6	12	22	10	12	16	4	4	4	82
	Total	10	24	32	15	17	19	7	7	7	124
2019/2020	Advanced	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	On-Time	6	11	8	7	7	10	3	3	3	52
	Delayed	5	14	18	9	12	17	4	4	4	79
	Total	12	26	26	16	19	27	7	7	7	133

¹² Source: New Kuwait 2021 – 2022, retrieved from http://www.newkuwait.gov.kw/projects_r2.aspx



In the first quarter of the reporting year 2022/2023, 129 SDGs-related projects were either fully or partially implemented. Most of these projects are mutually supportive and aimed at promoting a dynamic private sector (18 projects), enhancing the capacity of citizens and institutions (16 projects), building a coherent infrastructure (41 projects) and promoting and enhancing the effectiveness and efficacy of other sectors, summarized in the graph below:

Figure 3: Status of SDGs Projects Implemented in 2021-2022. New Kuwait, 2022

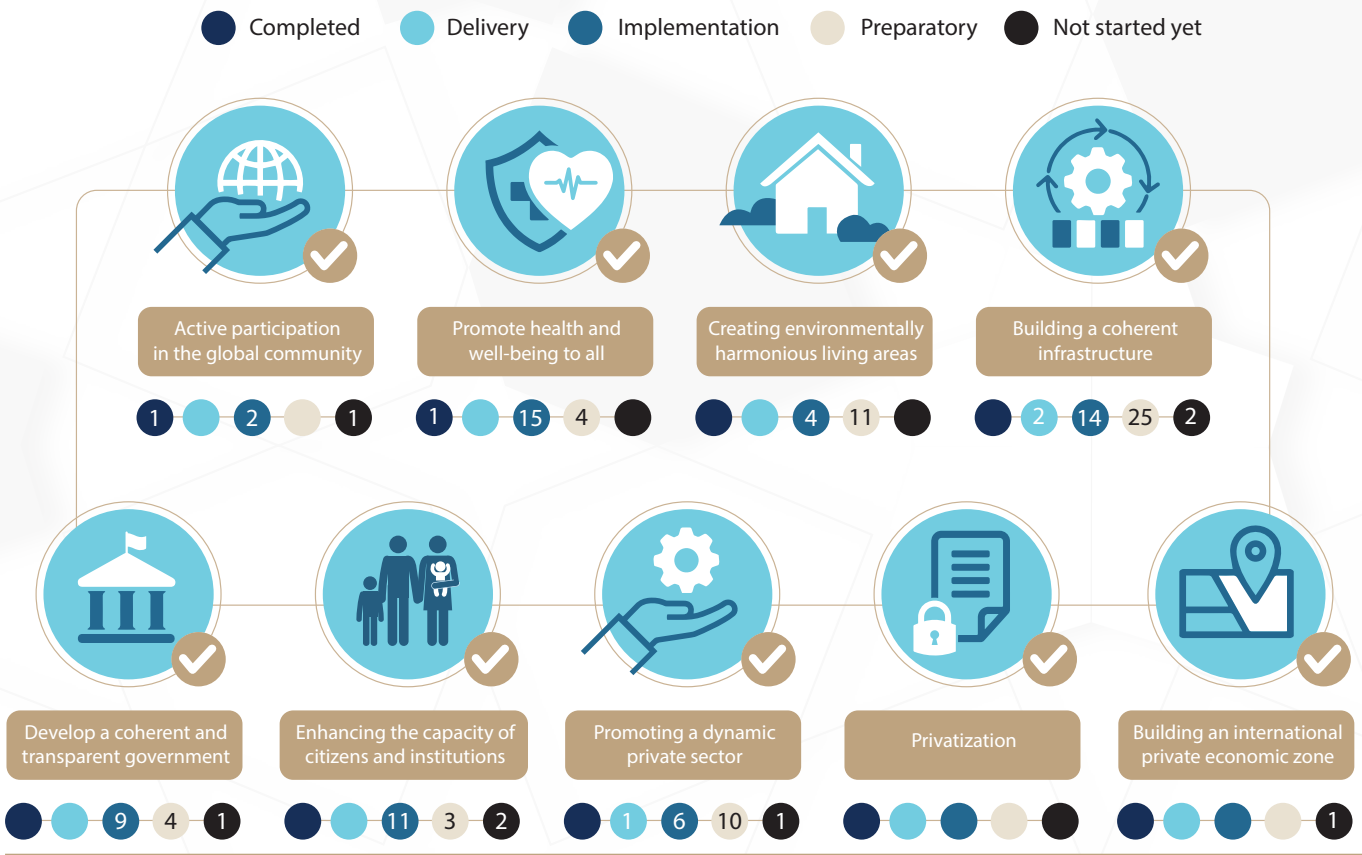


Figure 4: Implementation Status of Projects, Annual Plan 2022-2023. 1st Quarter. CSB, Oct 2022.



The State of Kuwait sponsored the “Industry Day” to attract foreign investors

The above national mega projects have been designed along integrated, mutually beneficial and complementary sustainable development vectors and policies, which concurrently serve the purpose of Vision 2035 and Agenda 2030. These sustainable development vectors and policies have been articulated under the eight headings outlined below:

a. Creating an International Private Economic Zone (IPEZ)

This development sector is expected to impact all 17 goals of agenda 2030. Through favorable laws and regulations and an independent structure, IPEZ aims at attracting global investment and encouraging innovation and sustainability while ensuring transparency in management of financial resources. The primary objectives pertain to setting up a legal framework aimed at facilitating investment, an independent institutional structure and pivotal strategic projects. The policies involve i) developing a framework for a world-class sustainability-friendly business environment aligned with international partners; ii) ensuring independent and transparent governance and monitoring; iii) ensuring projects compliance with the comprehensive master plan to maximize sustainable development impact; and, iv) investing in priority initiatives in order to accelerate investment and development projects¹³.

Privatization has a definite impact on many SDGs including 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16 and 17. In order to overcome the challenges associated with its promotion, a number of objectives have been devised for this vector. They aim at enlisting people’s support for, and interest

in privatized properties, with a view to gradually privatizing operational sectors and conducting fiscal restructuring. A number of policies are being considered to that effect such as i) developing legislative and regulatory frameworks to increase citizen’s ownership in prospective privatization companies and to support regulatory reform and competitiveness in the respective sectors; ii) establishing partnership companies in the targeted sectors considering the distribution of shares allocated to the population in educational and health institutions at a reasonable and affordable price; iii) developing an umbrella for social protection in the form of educational and health insurance vouchers when allocating the operating sectors; and, iv) reducing the budget deficit by setting a ceiling (not exceeding 5% of the budget’s current expenditures) and investing surplus shares from privatization while ensuring a fair redistribution of the returns gained among the population¹⁴.

b. Promoting a Dynamic Private Sector

Complementary to the above, this vector primarily impacts SDGs 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 17, through transforming Kuwait into an attractive sustainability-friendly environment for investment led by the private sector through an easy business environment, fair competition, and smooth government procedures, within an orientation towards innovation and advanced technology in various fields. The objectives of this initiative aim at i) increasing the private sector contribution to the GDP; ii) creating a favourable and fair business environment; and, iii) establishing a pool of specialized professionals capable of competing at the global level. Concurrently,

¹³ General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (2021). The Annual Development Plan 2021/2022
¹⁴ General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (2021). The annual development plan 2021/2022

eight policies are expected to be implemented as follows: i) transforming activities from the public to the private sector through the privatization programme; ii) increasing the projects that are financed through public-private partnerships; iii) developing large-scale production economies with the purpose of developing high-priority economic sectors; iv) providing equal opportunities for all by promoting and strengthening the competition framework; v) facilitating business environments to establish, operate, and expand companies and enterprises; vi) supporting and promoting direct foreign investments by facilitating entry to the national economy; vii) developing innovative products and services through an integrated environment for technology, innovation and knowledge; and, viii) increasing the impact of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) through funding, sponsoring and expanding them¹⁵.

c. Enhancing the Capacities of Citizens and Institutions

This human resource vector aims at providing individuals with adequate knowledge, skills, and capabilities for innovation and a competitive workforce. This programme affects SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16. It aims at investing in a skilled workforce with high competencies, an educational curriculum in compliance with global levels, and an inclusive and sustainable social protection system. The ensuing policies that have been retained under this vector consist in i) promoting work in the private sector; ii) establishing a smart system for accepting highly skilled foreign workers; iii) aligning the outputs of the educational curriculum with labour market needs in order for students to be well equipped with market-relevant skills and knowledge; iv) developing a national workforce skills system with appropriate methods to support the transition to a knowledge economy; v) improving the national educational system including curricula, teachers' skills and teaching methods; vi) improving and developing early childhood education with the purpose of improving readiness to school; vii) supporting the social, economic and political participation and integration of young people, women and persons with disabilities, the elderly; and other groups that may be left behind, and, viii) moving towards a sustainable, responsive and all-inclusive social protection safety net¹⁶.

d. Developing a Sound and Transparent Government

This vector affects SDGs 8, 9, 12, 16 and 17. It aims at restructuring and invigorating the government apparatus creating an interactive and agile one, promoting integrity and transparency, supporting the private sector and digital transformation, and working to raise performance to meet the needs and aspirations of all the population. The policies under this heading consist in i) restructuring the government's apparatus to simplify the structures and governance modalities; ii) enhancing performance management and civil service reforms across all government sectors; iii) promoting digitalization for all government operations and services; iv) expanding the role of the private sector in providing governmental services; v) enhancing integrity and combatting corruption in government agencies; vi) shifting to budget and performance monitoring software; and, vii) implementing an appropriate tax system¹⁷.

e. Building a Coherent Infrastructure

This vector supports the achievement of SDGs 4, 9 and 11. The policies adopted consist in i) improving land and facilities management through implementing the Fourth Structural Plan, which includes zoning and geographic information systems; ii) devising sustainable alternatives to the current housing system thus ensuring a collective access to decent housing for all; iii) improving the efficiency of land transport infrastructure by introducing new means of sustainable public transportation and enhancing the existing transportation system through smart and environmentally friendly technologies; iv) improving the efficiency of air transport infrastructure; v) improving the efficiency of the port infrastructure to facilitate import and export procedures; and, vi) enhancing the educational process and providing employment opportunities for all individuals in the society¹⁸.

f. Fostering Environmentally Harmonious Living Areas

This vector supports the achievement of SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, rationalizing the use and optimization of natural resources with a view to ensuring sustainability of resources available, curbing pollution, and contributing to a better quality of life for all. The primary policies under this heading consist in i) improving

15 Op. cit.

16 Op. cit.

17 General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (2021). The annual development plan 2021/2022

18 Op. cit.



Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital is the largest hospital in the Middle-East region 2018

the efficiency and management of water resources; ii) building environmentally friendly cities through green buildings, green infrastructure and smart technologies; iii) supporting innovation in low emission technologies and promoting and applying fuel efficiency standards; iv) increasing the production of renewable energy from renewable energy sources; and v) improving the performance of the solid waste management system¹⁹.

g. Advancing Health and Wellbeing for All

This vector supports the achievement of SDGs 2, 3, 5 and 11. It aims at improving the quality of health care services in accordance with best international standards, promoting healthy, age and gender sensitive lifestyles among all groups focusing on public health and healthy cities, and improving national capacities. The retained policies under this vector consist in i) improving health among young people, women and the elderly by combating drugs, reducing the incidence of road injuries, and supporting sports initiatives and activities; ii) increasing the number of healthy cities, iii) promoting community development, health and well-being at the individual level; iv) strengthening the health information technology

systems and launching a national health and nutrition survey; v) improving the capabilities of the health teams; vi) improving the national health insurance services and ensuring the financial sustainability of the health care systems; and vii) upgrading public health education and literacy²⁰.

h. Pledging Effective Global Participation

This vector aims at furthering the position of the State of Kuwait regionally and internationally in the fields of international sustainable development, trade, diplomacy and cultural exchange, as well as charity work. It supports, and is in harmony with most if not all the SDGs. The retained policies consist in i) promoting economic diplomacy and international sustainable development; ii) improving cultural and historical sites, and sustainably manage them and facilitate accessibility; iii) increasing the attractiveness of Kuwaiti arts and culture; iv) enhancing Kuwait's status and role in hosting and participating in international events and conferences; and, v) promoting Kuwait's national identity, achievements and distinct contributions, in the region and worldwide²¹.

19 Op. cit.

20 Op. cit.

21 General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (2021). The annual development plan 2021/2022



VI. THE DISRUPTIVE DENT OF COVID-19

A. Kuwait's Vigorous Response

As was the case in all countries across the world, the year 2020 witnessed a significant shift in the development priorities in Kuwait with the spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic. This unforeseen occurrence and the associated confinement measures, seriously disrupted the schedule of the development priorities in the State of Kuwait and added a significant challenge to the work and plans of different government and non-government actors. The outbreak exerted an unanticipated pressure on the health system and challenged its response ability and its resilience. It prompted a diversion of a significant chunk of budgetary and human resources away from the initial plans, and imposed an important adjustment of earlier programme delivery modalities and a significant reordering of earlier development, economic, social and health priorities.

Indeed, Kuwait's response to the pandemic has been remarkably comprehensive, widely integrative and participatory and in tune with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO)²². As soon as COVID-19 was announced as a global concern and as a pandemic, the government activated the Ministerial Committee for COVID-19 related emergencies. The Committee consisted of several relevant ministries including the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Health, Education, Finance and several others. In order to ensure a wider and comprehensive approach, the response included the private sector as well as community based, civil society and non-governmental organizations.

The Committee worked closely under the guidance of the Ministry of Health to ensure consistency and an effective, efficient and immediate response. Of particular relevance was the rapid government decision to increase the annual budget of the Ministry of Health by KWD 500 million, with a KWD 10 million contribution from local banks through a Special Fund for supporting government efforts in facing the pandemic. Add to that, the Donations Fund that was established by the Council of Ministers to receive individual and corporate

financial and other contributions for the same purpose. Furthermore, the National Assembly took an active stand to ensure that relevant legislations are passed and that the government authorities are kept accountable in matters relevant to the comprehensive support such as mental health services, public health, agricultural support, safety at prisons and for ensuring that persons at high risk are given priority across all interventions. The government also initiated complementary actions to check and prevent any emerging domestic violence and to provide adequate and timely social protection for the victims who required it. In addition, the government enacted law 6/2020 to postpone and ease the disbursement of all loans and other payments for banks and local companies. As to the Ministry of Social Affairs, it implemented several initiatives and projects with a view to responding to the pandemic including providing social assistance and support to those in need on a regular basis. It also developed/established a hotline to ensure a timely and effective response²³.

It is important to mention that community groups in Kuwait, also mobilized their resources in the response to COVID-19. They did so by providing available relief services reaching those most affected and workers in several constituencies through coordination and partnerships. Other associations also provided awareness services to the population about the virus itself and its transmission and prevention methods. On media and information management, many played a significant role through monitoring inaccurate information and limiting its spread-out, promoting a better communication strategy that addresses the population directly through volunteers in all governorates²⁴. Thanks to these efforts more than 1,833,923 individuals benefitted one way or the other, from these services during the pandemic²⁵.

In addition to government ministries and legislators, other actors involved in the public domain took on a significant role in the response to the pandemic. For instance, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) actively contributed to spreading public awareness about the pandemic, the modes of transmission and means of protection.

22 Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kuwait. An Analytical Study of the Kuwaiti National Response to COVID-19: Evaluation of Policies and Procedures, 2020

23 Ministry of Social Affairs, 2020

24 Social Reform Association (2020). Fourth Sustainability Report 2020. Social Reform Society Planning Office. (Al-Eslah Society, 2020)

25 Al Eslah Society Bureau of Planning 4th Sustainability Report |2020 p.12

It launched communication campaign channels through four stages, which primarily focused on i) the humanitarian aspects in dealing with the pandemic; ii) disseminating information on the measures that the Government took in line with providing economic support during this period; iii) publicizing the economic stimulus package in Kuwait; and finally, iv) highlighting the available opportunities before the public. Additionally, Several KDIPA licensed investment entities, utilizing their corporate social responsibility (CSR) supported the national health efforts, provided medical supplies and made exceptional material and special services available for the local community in the face of the unique pandemic circumstances²⁶.

As a result of the pandemic, the participation rate of licensed investment entities dropped in the first quarter of 2020 from an average of 73 per cent to 18 per cent²⁷. In order to mitigate the financial repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on investments, KDIPA also resorted to several remedying strategies including reducing all service fees by 50 per cent till December 31, 2020; extending the expiry date for investment licenses for companies and branches expiring after April 1, 2020 and till December 23, 2020; granting exceptional tax and customs exemptions to existing and new investment entities; and, extending the duration for commencement of operations for all the investment entities till January 1, 2021²⁸. At the studies level, KDIPA took part in 5 international surveys, whereas at the legislative level, several draft laws were approved by the Council of Ministers and submitted to the National Assembly (Parliament). Among the latter it is worth mentioning i) the draft law aimed at securing guarantees for local banks to provide financial assistance to clients whose businesses were affected by the pandemic; ii) the draft law aimed at postponing the collection of instalments for loans and for easing adverse impacts as a result of the spread of the pandemic; iii) the draft law amending provisions of Law 17 of 1960 regarding legal procedures and penal trials; iv) the draft law pertaining to real estate financing for private housing; v) a further draft law regarding the third medium-term development plan (2020/2021-2024/2025); and, vi) approval of the draft law regarding the convention for establishing Digital Corporation Organization (DCO)²⁹.

In addition, immediate partnerships and coordination took place between private and public hospitals to divide tasks

and to ensure the sustainability of medical and health services provided without exposing any patient to unnecessary risk. The private sector and the oil sector also played a significant role in the efforts made during the pandemic. Different companies coordinated with the government in order to extend much needed sustenance to the health system such as support to hospitals, provision of quarantine locations, provision of vaccination areas, provision of health volunteers, creation and launching of electronic applications to track cases and raise awareness on the virus, as well as launching several media campaigns. The Ministry of Health coordinated closely with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) with a view to updating the demographic data and to prioritizing vaccination for high-risk groups, while the government undertook to provide all the needed support to migrant workers and unregistered foreign workers to travel back safely to their home countries, without enforcing any penalty fees. Special advocacy efforts and mobile clinics were also provided to people living in over-crowded areas with little or no access to public transport, health services or other basic needs.

B. Building Back Better

Several short to mid and long-term decisions were made to support national efforts aimed at sustainability and building back better in the post COVID era. The Government Work Programme for the 16th Parliamentary Session under the title “Sustaining Social Safeguards despite the Challenges”, focused on enhancing economic growth, financial sustainability, social development, and healthcare through reform programmes and national strategies, in order to mitigate the challenges triggered by the pandemic. The government entities were requested to i) rationalize spending and reduce expenditure by 10 per cent of their respective budgets for the fiscal year 2021/2022; ii) improve the efficiency of collecting the government dues; and, iii) limit the number of exhibitions, local and external gatherings, external training, official missions, and medical treatment abroad.

The Ministerial Committee adopted a fast-track system to expedite the implementation of major developmental projects and to address the economic repercussions resulting from the pandemic. It added this subject matter as a standing agenda item on the Council of Ministers’ meetings. Government held special sessions dedicated to “Kuwait Post Pandemic” and discussed new paths to implement the

²⁶ Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2020). Annual report 2019-2020. (KDIPA, 2020)

²⁷ Op. cit.

²⁸ Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2021). Annual report 2020-2021. (KDIPA, 2021)

²⁹ Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2022). Annual report 2021-2022. (KDIPA, 2022)

Government Work Programme and expedite the implementation of the developmental projects that would help accelerate the realization of Agenda 2030 and Vision 2035. Early priorities included focusing on digital transformation and adopting electronic government services³⁰. As for the Ministry of Justice, several projects to support this electronic shift are presently either being implemented or in the pipeline. These projects included, among others, i) the adoption of an electronic government to support the justice sector (68 per cent has already been achieved); ii) phase 3 of the sub-project for “Electronic imaging System for documents and files”, which has been fully completed; iii) restructuring and developing the marriage and divorce electronic system (with an 85 per cent completion and still ongoing); and, iv) the establishment of a single window project for real estate registration management (with 60 per cent already completed and still ongoing)³¹. The General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) was tasked with the development of an index that measures imbalances in programme implementation, and which consequently enhances the ability to handle economic shocks in the future, drawing on the Central Bank of Kuwait’s study of “Economic Recovery Indicator from the Impact of (Covid-19) Pandemic”³².

As for KDIPA, it has enhanced use of information systems and e-applications as part of its digital transformation and cyber security consideration in various technical fields with a view to developing and applying the highest international standards. It provided all its divisions with appropriate services, systems, equipment, and operating devices and conducted the required training for KDIPA’s employees. This aimed at ensuring a post COVID-19 work environment that can advance the operations and safeguard the proper measures in case of any emergency that might cause data loss or system failure in the future. This was accompanied with an emergency plan to enable smooth digital operations in the face of a possible recurrence of this or other variants of the pandemic³³.

Among other public entities, the State Audit Bureau (SAB) has also been concerned with the COVID-19 pandemic. Being a supreme independent body mandated to manage public funds, it assumed the highest responsibility for

implementing the proper and efficient measures. The Bureau partnered with other state institutions with a view to achieving financial stability and promoting it by protecting public funds and controlling expenditures in order to prevent adverse economic consequences. The unprecedented circumstances during 2020 and early 2021 required the reinforcement of exceptional financial control procedures and the development of unusual supportive administrative work procedures³⁴.

As to the Al Eslah Society, it did contribute to the preparation of shelters and to providing healthy meals for medical staff working in quarries, sanatoriums, and health centers, in addition to providing cold water bottles and meals to the most affected groups including in prisons, and to airport workers. In terms of community service programmes and support for those affected, the Society covered isolated areas, distributed food baskets and breakfast meals during Ramadan seasons, provided volunteer service programs to the crews of the National Voluntary Committee in all the governorates, and supported cooperative societies in delivering food and medical needs, which helped to mitigate the repercussions of the pandemic on families. In addition, it published more than 52 awareness clips on social media, activated “online” psychological support and community guidance services with a view to raising awareness and enhancing resilience, distributed 221,440 meals to 36 quarantine centers, and distributed 237,918 protective bags in partnership with associates. More than 6000 volunteers were mobilized during the pandemic, with direct expenditures amounting to K.D 3,997,837³⁵.

Considering that the economy started to slowly recover with an estimated growth rate of 1.3 percent in 2021 and was expected to reach a high of 8.7 percent in 2022, it was critical to devise a monitoring Index for tracking the quality of the recovery across various dimensions and sectors. The index to be informed by Kuwait’s Vision 2035 and the National Development Plan (2020-2025) would help to ascertain the post-pandemic policy response as the State of Kuwait is back on a positive trajectory and to position Kuwait’s recovery pace against benchmarking countries³⁶.

30 GSSCPD and Council of Ministries

31 Ministry of Justice (n.d.). Progress on Sustainable Development Goals.

32 Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2022). Annual report 2021-2022.

33 Op. cit.

34 State Audit Bureau, 2020, Accomplishments of the State Audit Bureau to achieve sustainable development goals. Annual Book, 12th edition

35 Al Eslah, Social Reform Association (2020). Fourth Sustainability Report 2020. Social Reform Society Planning Office

36 Kuwait COVID-19 Recovery Index (KRI)



Exerted Efforts of the Kuwaiti medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic (Photo by Mohamed Al Salem)

C. Lessons Learned from the Pandemic

a) In the Education Sector

One of the lessons learned in this sector is that building a knowledge-based economy necessitates a highly productive and skill-intensive workforce beyond the oil and banking sectors. It requires a) devising and implementing policies that lead to the creation of competent and competitive human capital; b) accelerating the pace of online education and other education and learning reforms; and, c) investing in lifelong learning policies and programmes that can prepare Kuwait's existing workforce for a digital economy and can equip it to better manage the subsequent associated risks of changing employment conditions and disruption, as well as preparing them for future automation. The Government is therefore considering adopting reskilling and upskilling strategies for older workers in addition to the existing workforce. As to the existing higher education system in Kuwait, further incentives, financial support and appropriate skills-to-market adequacy policies and programmes will be essential for continued education. It is important to establish appropriate incentives for Kuwaitis to pursue and invest in their own continuing education and to reskill themselves for the work of the future and to encourage them to explore employment opportunities outside the public sector³⁷.

During COVID-19, teaching at Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) had shifted online. When the situation went back to normal however, learning moved back at a full speed to an in-person mode. In fact, one of the major challenges in Kuwait remains the absence of an e-learning policy and the limited adoption of digital technologies to enhance education³⁸. As it happens, digital learning platforms, which contain curriculum aligned resources and learning tools to support students in their learning are not compulsory. Some Kuwait University professors have been using digital platforms in their classes, but there is no formal obligation imposed by the public HEIs. Most private HEIs on the other hand, mandate the use of education technology platforms amongst their student population (e.g., Moodle, Blackboard, etc.) to support students in their learning³⁹. The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) also faced similar challenges in terms of transferring its curricula to a virtual online one. They started by creating committees and developing plans that include uploading the educational material online, train the academic cadre on effective use of virtual platforms, providing technical support, ensure legal aspects are in check, and others⁴⁰.

37 United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait (2021). Kuwait Common Country Analysis (CCA): One UN Kuwait Approach to CCA for SDGs Joint Programming. UNRCO. (UNRCO Kuwait, Nov 2021)

38 The NBAQ does not have at present standards to oversee the quality of e-learning

39 KNPC & UNDP (n.d.). Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Kuwait National Petroleum Company. (KNPC & UNDP, n.d.)

40 The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training 2021

b) In the Health Sector

The commendable efforts of all concerned during COVID-19 notwithstanding, the pandemic has revealed structural challenges in the healthcare system that required further attention. In a phased approach and as part of the health system recovery, the Ministry outsourced medical teams from friendly countries to ensure an appropriate medical response. Accordingly, priority areas that are presently being considered for the future consist in i) enhancing the emergency preparedness and response capacities to address emerging health security threats and future pandemics; ii) devising a comprehensive healthcare workforce plan and management system and implementing a healthcare competency and performance management process; iii) enhancing mental health and community-based services with special attention given to the most vulnerable segments; and, iv) introducing healthcare system reforms to improve healthcare governance, access to services, improvements to healthcare funding, and insurance to ease access to healthcare for vulnerable groups and the overall operational healthcare capacity. Consideration should also be given to expanding the role of the private sector and enabling a transition to e-health and health innovative technologies. As to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), they did receive increasing attention during the pandemic, but they too would need to be addressed within a thorough, cross-sectoral framework in the future.

It is worth noting at this juncture that Kuwait sent emergency aid packages to developing countries (such as India, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and Iraq), which included oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators, ventilators, and other medical supplies, in order to mitigate the massive impact of the spread of the virus. Kuwait was also represented in the virtual GAVI COVAX Advance Market Commitment Summit called “One World Protected”, and which was hosted by the Government of Japan and GAVI the Vaccine Alliance on June 2, 2021. The Summit raised up to US\$ 9.6 billion aid for securing the procurement of 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine for lower-income countries and economies. In addition, Kuwait enhanced its collaboration with WHO during the critical time of the pandemic and was commended for its leading role in supporting humanitarian work and for being one of the highest contributing countries to WHO work, and one of the first countries to respond positively, effectively and generously to the pandemic⁴¹.

c) In Food Security

Kuwait has demonstrated a strong commitment to containing the virus and to mitigating its impact particularly in matters of food security. To that end, exceptional measures were introduced to ensure food availability for all by focusing on markets, consumer needs and preferences and by mobilising the private sector. The Ministerial Corona Virus Emergency Committee provided facilitations to issuing entry visa for activities related to food security including work permits, commercial visit visas for farms, restaurants, food supplies, bakeries, fishing, poultry and cattle raising, dairy production, food factories and suppliers, shopping centers, water and soft drinks bottling companies; all of that while ensuring compliance with all necessary precautionary health measures. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry conducted a study on the possibility to manage, organize, and supervise the strategic food storage areas to enhance the food security in the State of Kuwait; while the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) ascertained the feasibility of creating a state enterprise to establish, manage, and operate the food storage areas. The Government Performance Follow-Up Authority prepared a final report regarding allocation for the strategic food storage areas⁴².

Between March and May 2021, Kuwait organised two stages of the National Food Systems Dialogue in response to the United Nations Secretary General’s call. The talks were organised by the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition targeting stakeholders from across public, private and non-governmental entities. The dialogues highlighted the importance of creating a national food system roadmap to improve the nutritional status of school-aged children and to manage food loss and waste.

d) In the Social Protection and Welfare System

The occurrence of COVID-19 has revealed some pockets of fragility in Kuwait’s social protection system. For instance, expatriates who lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic, or those whose salaries were delayed or those who lacked the means of earning an income during subsequent lockdowns, found themselves stranded with no food or basic necessities. Many were also left without any means for traveling back to their home countries. Thanks to civil society, business and charity partners and institutions it was possible to address the basic needs of those who were in precarious situations, and secure the provision of food supplies, healthcare services and other types of social support. This, however, has revealed a structural underperformance of the social security system in Kuwait and prompted a discussion in government of the need to identify

41 Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2022). Annual report 2021-2022.

42 Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2022). Annual report 2021-2022.

the policy gaps in the social protection system and introduce the necessary remedies. This would eventually translate into introducing the prompt and needed adjustment in Kuwait's social safety net with a view to safeguarding and sustaining social cohesion and inclusion in the future.

e) In the Environment and Climate Change

Notwithstanding the above challenges, the pandemic was also an opportunity to generate an interest in a "green recovery" by integrating climate action, sustainable energy, and nature-friendly solutions into the national response plans. This included i) taking climate-relevant action to generate the possible co-benefits for community resilience and recovery; ii) harnessing solar based solutions to achieve sustainable economic recovery and energy security; iii) advancing a more sustainable use of natural assets with a view to reducing future risks; and, iv) developing and using polymerization methods to produce value-added sulphur-containing polymers economically. Additional concerns for Government's consideration would pertain to the strategic choice of integrating low-carbon and climate resilient growth in the post-Covid recovery agenda, and to using economic diversification lens when considering future climate change policies.

The Minister of Health issued a ministerial decree as part of the COVID response to look into the health impacts of climate change, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs disseminated the State's intention to work towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 through a national strategy based on a circular economy, in reference to the statements of the Kuwait delegation at the COP27 Summit in Egypt (2022)⁴³.

As for the banking sector, it is expected to play a major role in financing development projects in line with Kuwait 2035's focus on economic diversification through the financing of renewable and alternative energy sources, along with clean technology⁴⁴. Similarly, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development is funding several regional and international projects including a contribution of KWD 4 million (equivalent to U.S.\$ 13.2 million) to finance the Improved Resilience to Transboundary Sand and Dust storms in Kuwait and Iraq Project, which will be administered by UN Habitat, and a grant in the amount of 2.5 million US Dollars in support of the renewable energy for improved health services project in the Republic of Yemen.

D. Operationalizing SDGs in the Aftermath of COVID-19

As Kuwait resumes its strategic plans towards achieving Agenda 2030 and Vision 2035 in the aftermath of COVID-19, the public authorities have adopted two post-pandemic normative frameworks to inform the prospective sustainable development strategies:

- i) A renewed long-term development outline to guide the State of Kuwait's balanced pursuit of economic prosperity, socially equitable growth, and inclusive and gender-balanced social development and environmental sustainability, without compromising the ability of future generations to pursue the same goals and to lead an equally high and sustained wellbeing; and,
- ii) An operational and context-responsive development framework that aims at incorporating geographical and sectoral changes in resource allocation, while moving away from traditional patterns, including evolving out of a fossil fuel-based economic growth.

As part of the development of Kuwait National Development Plan 2020-2025, and through a collaborative effort with the UN system in Kuwait, a Common Country Assessment (CCA) identified five strategic programming themes for the implementation of the above framework as follows: 1) socio-economic resilience; 2) quality education, continuous learning, and human capital; 3) health and well-being; 4) environment and climate change; and, 5) governance, partnerships, institutional strengthening, and global positioning.

Keeping in synergy with the SDGs and the development vectors and policies of Vision 2035 that were captured in the earlier part of this report, several complementary policy areas have been suggested as a way of fulfilling the above five themes of the CCA strategic programming. In total, there are twenty-two policy areas divided across the five themes⁴⁵. The CCA approach used available data and evidence-based analysis to frame the interlinkages among the SDGs goals and targets in Kuwait, identify the root causes of vulnerabilities, inequalities and disparities as well as using the human rights and equal opportunity values that sustain the above framework and to suggest policy options building on previous achievements.

43 <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news/2388715-cop-27-kuwait-pledges-net-zero-emissions-by-2060>

44 <https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/articles-interviews/managing-risks-basel-al-haroon-governor-central-bank-of-kuwait-on-the-countrys-ability-to-weather-potential-financial-crises-interview/>

45 Kuwait Common Country Analysis (CCA), One UN Kuwait Approach to CCA for SDGs Joint Programming, RCO Kuwait, November 2021



Sustainable Development Goals

VII. PROGRESS ON THE FOUR 2023 REVIEW SDGs

A Policy Brief was prepared by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) in Kuwait in 2022. The Brief offered a conjectural forecast on the potential achievement of each SDG in the State of Kuwait by 2030⁴⁶. In summary, the forecast concluded

that Kuwait's overall SDG score in 2021 was 60.5, expected to reach 61.3 per cent by 2030. The graph below summarizes the findings of this exercise.

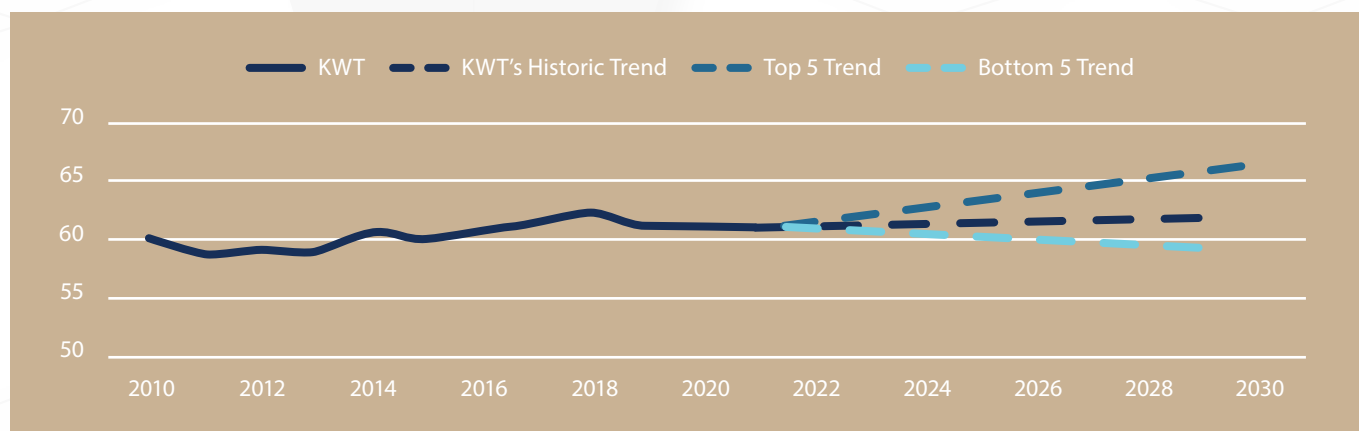


Figure 5: Kuwait's Historical and Forecasted Overall SDG Score with Top 5 and Bottom 5 NN. United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait (2022).

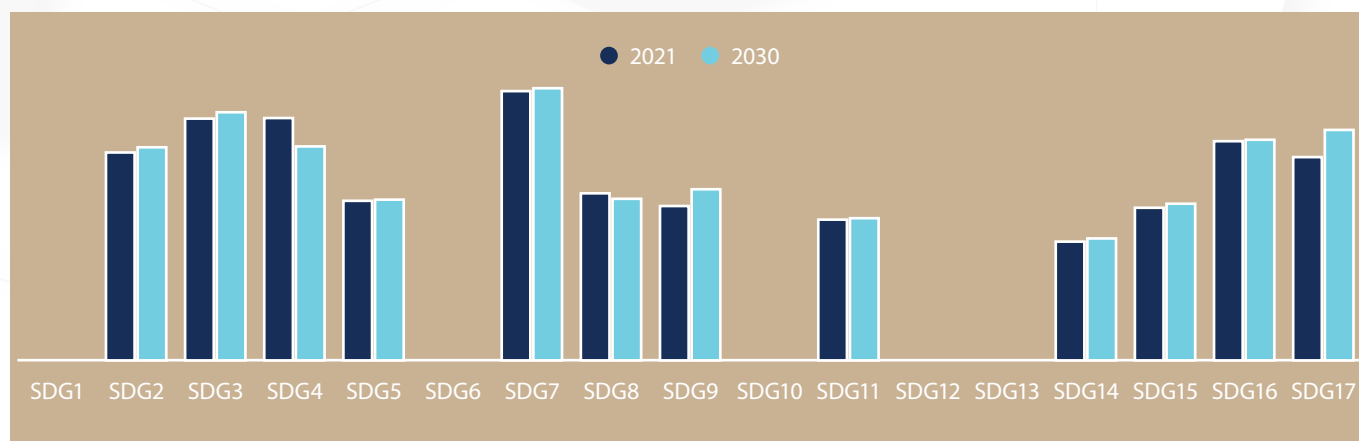


Figure 6: Forecasting Kuwait's Sustainable Development Goals Policy Implications for the 2023 Voluntary National Review. (UNRCO Kuwait, 2022)

⁴⁶ For further information see: United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait (2022). Forecasting Kuwait's Sustainable Development Goals: Policy implications for the Voluntary National Review 2023 process (A Policy Brief).

Regarding the “2023 Review Goals”, and as it will be shown below in detail, Kuwait had already made significant progress in 2019 on SDG 6 where access to safe and clean drinking water and access to proper and hygienic wastewater networks were near universal in the State of Kuwait. Equally on SDG 7, and as of 2016, more than 80 per cent of residents in Kuwait had enjoyed and benefited from clean energy and technology. However, in order to address prospective energy consumption level, Government had devised plans to increase investment in a combined strategy of i) actionable national energy efficiency plans; ii) an incentive and cleaner energy sensitization programme; and, iii) subsidy reduction. On SDG 9, the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) drafted in 2019 the National Industrial Strategy (NIS) with the primary objective of increasing shares of the industrial sector in Kuwait’s GDP and generating jobs for youth in the private sector and has been implementing it successfully ever since. On SDG 11, Kuwait was then reported to be free of slums and shantytowns already. During the 2019 assessment, all urban dwellers universally lived in houses

and decent living, and enjoyed a free access to quality social services including healthcare, education, safe and clean public water, wastewater, electric networks, and others. In terms of accessing safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all, Kuwait Public Transport Company (KPTC) provided extensive public transport services, which also covered transportation from the mainland to Kuwaiti islands. In 2019, the government drafted the Kuwait Fourth Master Plan (KMP4), which set out the future urban policies regarding land usage within a specified period (25 to 30 years).

As for Partnerships, (SDG 17), Kuwait ranked rather high on all indicators. A UN house had been established in the State of Kuwait’s capital in 2009, enhancing the coordination and presence of all UN agencies. In addition, the State substantially increased its voluntary contributions to several UN programmes, councils and funds, and assumed one of the lead roles and responsibilities in the continuous cooperation and partnership between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).



SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Recent data made available on the different targets of SDG6 by Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau provide evidence that since 2016 and up until 2022, a universal value of 100 per cent of the population have continued to benefit from safely managed and quality protected drinking water services (**target 6.1**)⁴⁷. The same observation applies to **target 6.2**, which is the proportion of population using properly managed sanitation services, including hand-washing facilities with soap and water up until 2022⁴⁸. Similarly, data provided by the World Health Organization in 2022 and by the Ministry of Public Works in Kuwait provide evidence that 100 per cent of Kuwait's wastewater is being treated safely (**target 6.3**)⁴⁹. Kuwait has also scored high on the integrated resource management implementation indicator, with a progressive increase since 2016, starting with 80 and reaching 94 in 2020 (it is expected that the target will reach 100 by 2030).

In terms of financial resources and government commitment, and with reference to **target 6.a**, the support that Kuwait provides to the water and sanitation sector through loans has been rather fluctuating over the years. It started with a total amount of 138.7 million KWD in 2016, but went down to 56 million KWD in 2017. However, the figure increased tremendously again to reach 126.5 million KWD in 2018, but went down again to a significantly low value of 5 million KWD in 2019. The latest data available provided in 2020, showed a figure of 99.0 million KWD⁵⁰. The analysis that has been carried out of the fluctuations of the above figures has not been conclusive so far, and may still require further research and a closer examination.

In terms of governance in the water sector, the Environment Public Authority (EPA) is the government department that is responsible for monitoring the performance of the different departments concerned and for ascertaining and checking the extent of compliance with the 2014 Environment Protection Law No. 42, and its executive regulations. EPA also plays an important overseeing role in coordination, follow-up and development pertaining to the works, procedures, executive regulations, and the decisions issued by the departments concerned, and which have a direct link to environmental affairs and an impact on the components of the environment, health and safety. Cooperation between the EPA and other state agencies has been attested by the continuous work and constant development through EPA's supervisory and

47 Considering the extensive narrative of the SDG goals and targets, target names will be used rather selectively in this report in order to keep the flow of the writing smooth and fluid. For reference to all SDG Goals and Targets, see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

48 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 6 – Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. CSB of Kuwait. & Ministry of Electricity and Water

49 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 6 – Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

50 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 6 – Op. cit.

coordinating role, particularly in matters related to the work of State Agencies⁵¹.

Based on Article 89 of the 2014 Environmental Protection Law No. 42 and its amendments, EPA has recently produced the final version of the national programme for managing the control over drinking water in Kuwait, in coordination with the departments concerned in the State of Kuwait. The programme defines the roles and responsibilities of the authorities and the actors involved and the modes of coordination and reporting. Furthermore, EPA has recently called on Members of the National Committee for the Control of Drinking Water to review the final version of the programme and provide their views and comments for its ultimate adoption. Additionally, EPA plays a significant role pertaining to SDG 6, particularly in terms of conducting chemical analysis on a monthly basis for nutrients, concentrations of trace metals, organic materials, and other indicators in sea water that may be of relevance to sea water quality standards as per Resolution No. 12 of 2017 for the executive regulations. The aim is to ensure the highest protection of the water and coastal environment from pollution. Other EPA roles consist in the systematic chemical and bacterial analyses of treated wastewater, which are conducted according to the standards of water meant for irrigation purposes⁵².

Notwithstanding the unwavering commitment of the Government to providing all residents with clean and affordable water on a sustainable basis, Kuwait has been increasingly experiencing the challenge of low levels of ground water with a renewal rate of less than 70mm/year. The recent growing demand has been even more exacting over the years considering the population growth and the increased number of users in the State of Kuwait. Accordingly, Government has resorted to procuring cross borders' ground water and to establishing seawater desalination facilities. In order to meet the increasing demand, Kuwait has been implementing a two-phase "water desalination project" as follows:

i) The first phase consists of setting up the "supply, installation, operation and maintenance of the Doha seawater reverse osmosis desalination" plant, with technical provision to increase the alkalinity of the produced water. So far, 90 per cent of Phase I has been successfully completed.



Al-Zour North Independent Water and Power Project (IWPP)

ii) The second phase aims at producing potable water for all consumers of the State of Kuwait. The main aim is to produce around 60 million imperial gallons per day of fresh water and to ensure that water is available in adequate quantities to meet the increasing demand by both the industrial and the urban sectors.

Both phases are expected to be completed by the end of 2024⁵³.

The State of Kuwait has made serious efforts to achieve an effective management of water resources with a view to enhancing water quality, providing a sustainable management mechanism and developing and monitoring the quality of services. The State of Kuwait has launched several projects of sewage networks, water treatments and water desalination stations. The projects included the construction of purification plants, seawater desalination plants by reverse osmosis, water desalination centers using renewable energy, purification plants and mineral water factories⁵⁴. The supervisory role of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) is complementary to Kuwait's efforts in this field as it endorses such projects in terms of national capacity building in the environmental field, particularly in matters of water supply and water quality protection. SAB also supports water management and services projects and contributes to the enhancement of their performance, usage

51 Environment Public Authority, Second Voluntary Report on Sustainable Development Goals 2022

52 Op. cit.

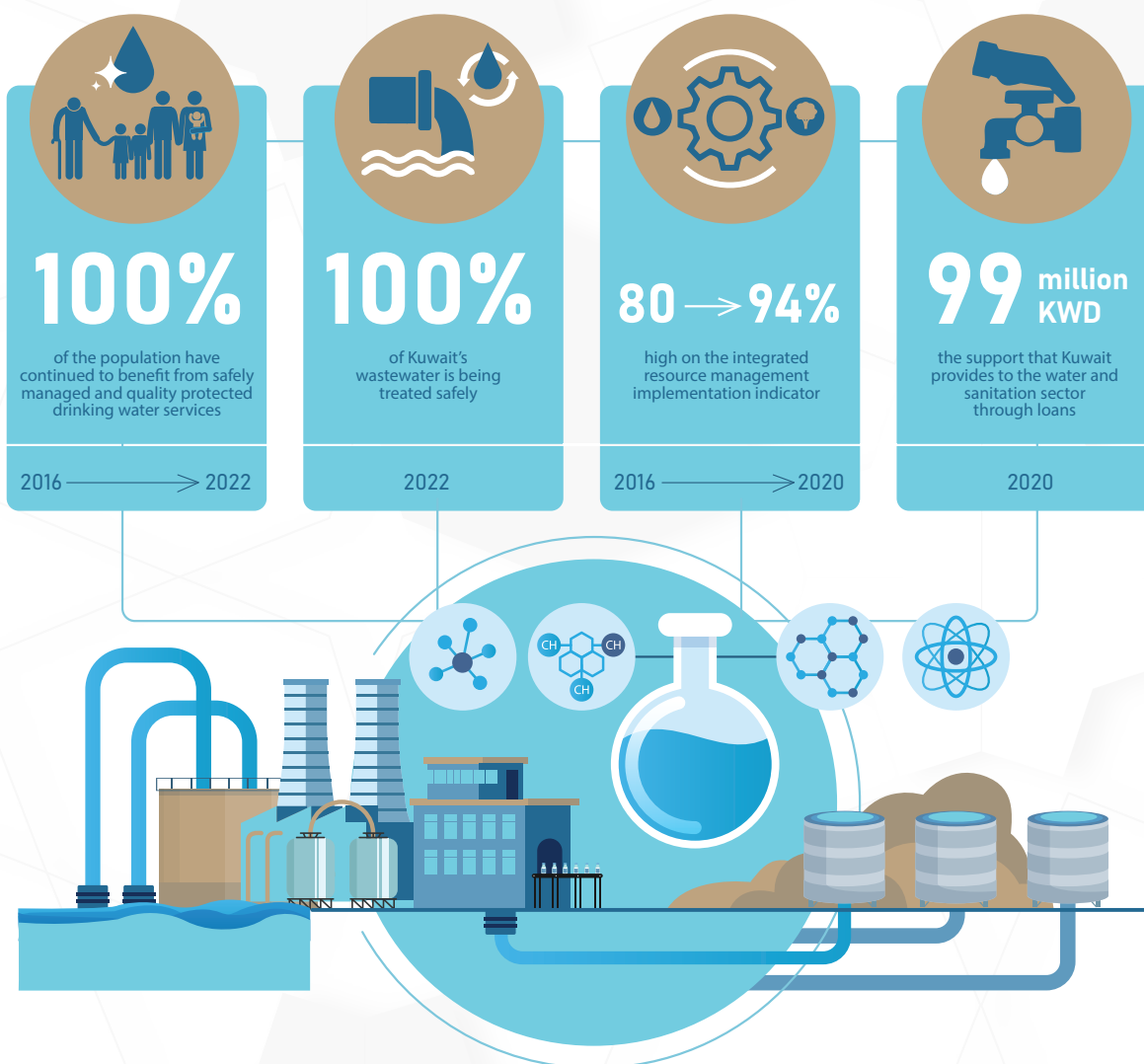
53 http://www.newkuwait.gov.kw/projects_r2.aspx

54 State Audit Bureau (SAB), Accomplishments of SAB to Achieve SDGs, Annual Book, Twelfth Edition, 2020

and management of water. It also takes charge of accounting and auditing projects supervised by the state's institutions such as the Renewable Energy Water Desalination Center and Kuwait's Institute for Scientific Research⁵⁵. Finally, Kuwait is presently looking into other countries' experiences in matters of WASH programmes and policies with a view to drawing

lessons and devising options that might offer an added benefit in the particular context of the State of Kuwait⁵⁶.

SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation



55 State Audit Bureau (SAB), Op. cit.

56 As part of the CBOs work towards SDG 6, it is worth noting the roles and activities carried out by Al Eslah Society including organizing youth groups to plant wild trees in natural reserves, educational awareness sessions in schools about clean water, sustainable agriculture and waste management, and other environmentally important topics. Social Reform Association (2019). Third Sustainability Report 2019. Social Reform Society Planning Office

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



SDG 7:

AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Kuwait relies heavily on the energy sector, which includes oil products, natural gas and desalination of water. As it was just mentioned above, the State of Kuwait has a limited natural fresh water at a time when it continues to witness a population growth and an increased consumption of water and energy. Accordingly, desalination accounts for more than 90 per cent of Kuwait's water consumption, while the oil sector accounts for almost 90 per cent of export revenues (\$ 46 billion in 2017, close to 40 per cent of GDP). The 2019 VNR had recorded Kuwait's plans for formulating a new energy strategy, combined with a plan to foster economic diversification and reduce fossil fuel dependency. Energy consumption per capita in Kuwait ranks among the highest worldwide, as a result of primarily three sources of demand for energy 1) residential demand for electricity, 2) near universal use of personal passenger cars, and 3) energy subsidies.

Concerned about evolving a new energy strategy, the Government is increasingly conscious that in order to address the above energy consumption level, improvement in energy efficiency would require additional investment in a combined three-pronged strategy of i) actionable national energy efficiency plans; ii) an incentive and cleaner energy sensitization programme; and, iii) subsidy reduction. Consideration is also given to establishing a centre for carbon footprint reduction and recycling applications and for producing blue hydrogen as a fuel from natural gas and petroleum to move on to a sustainable energy future.

Indeed, government had already passed a law in 2016, which went into force in 2017, raising the tariffs for electricity and water consumption. In addition, and considering the State of Kuwait's significant solar and wind resources, one of Kuwait's updated targets has recently been to increase the share of the renewables in the electricity generating a capacity mix from the current level of 1 per cent to 15 per cent by the year 2030⁵⁷. As a result, Kuwait is presently implementing Five projects with a view to achieving the above objectives and ensuring a clean and sustainable energy for all. One of the latter has been the first phase of the "Shaqaya Complex for Renewable Energy" project, which was completed in 2018 with a capacity of 70 megawatts. The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research designed, implemented, and operated the first phase of the project. The partnership authority with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) will complete the second phase with a capacity of 4000 megawatts. The second and third phases are expected to be completed in 2025. The remaining four projects are expected to be completed between 2024 and 2025,

although they are all in the preparatory phase, and some have been delayed, primarily due to the pandemic⁵⁸.

Worth mentioning the critical role that the State Audit Bureau (SAB) plays in the assessment and activation of Renewable Energy Projects in the State of Kuwait, either through giving ad-hoc technical remarks and observations or through auditing and monitoring the status and progress of projects such as the advanced photovoltaic panels installation on the roofs of the parking of cooperative society stores”, “the solar panels project of the oil sector’s parking”, and many others. Moreover, SAB employed its professional expertise and research skills to replace oil energy with renewable energy and diversifying the sources of income. A recent study has been prepared by the electrical engineering team and the communications supervision of the SAB’s Technical Support Department under the title of “Solar Radiation in Kuwait, Promising Prospects or Limited Capabilities”. The study reconfirmed the importance of solar energy and the capabilities of energy usages in Kuwait in terms of its geographical location and the annual duration of high solar brightness⁵⁹.

Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) has devised additional projects that address the targets under SDG 7 on clean energy, covering several dimensions. The first project is the Clean Fuel Project (CFP), which is a mega initiative that revamps, upgrades, and expands existing KNPC refineries while maintaining and fully complying with the highest environmental standards. The main objectives of this project aim at i) ensuring a better fuel quality; ii) promoting low NOx heaters and boilers; iii) achieving significant waste reduction; iv) removal of sulfur; and, v) less contaminated water. The second project under KNPC is the Effluent Treatment Facility (ETF), which treats contaminated water generated from refinery, at a time when the final outlet is currently being used for irrigation. The third project is a Solid Waste Management Procedure (SWMP), which is KNPC’s very own procedure in line with the company’s overall environmentally sound strategy. The procedure is implemented across all KNPC sites and is closely and constantly monitored. The main concept is the “3Rs” i.e., “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” waste. Furthermore, an E-Waste Manifest System has been recently made available allowing end-users to analyze monthly waste data and to track the performance of each site with respect to waste minimization and recycling process, in addition to a “Green Buildings” project that was lately adopted by KNPC for all its buildings. Accordingly, all newly constructed buildings are

required to comply with the LEED code⁶⁰ and standards, during design and construction phases⁶¹.

Box 1 – The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR)

The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) seeks to find applied solutions to raise energy efficiency in buildings. The Institute cooperated with the South Korean government to build a model house where a technology for automatic control of the air conditioning system, lighting system and window blinds was developed and evaluated. The design of the house also employed the use of solar energy through the technology of solar panels on the roof and the facade. A saving of 20% of the annual energy consumption of the house has been achieved. The Institute worked on the oil sector complex to obtain the gold certificate for existing buildings in the operation and maintenance category (LEED), from the American Green Building Council. This 750,000-square-foot building is one of the first government facilities to receive this award in the field of sustainability. It also sought to protect the solar house affiliated to the Energy and Building Research Center and include it in the Kuwait Register of Historic Buildings “KHBR”, by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, considering its historical importance that embodies the heritage of the scientific and technical product. Worth mentioning the energy consumption reduction in the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science building by controlling the consumption of electricity and water, with 25% and 18% of the annual water and electricity consumption saved, respectively.

Producing renewable energy using Photovoltaic (PV) panels, micro-winds or bio-gas plants on the one hand, and benchmarking energy-efficient, waste-to-energy plants and design to process a significant portion of the State of Kuwait’s hazardous waste on the other hand, remain options for policy consideration by the State of Kuwait. Indeed, population with access to electricity and population with access to clean fuels

58 http://www.newkuwait.gov.kw/projects_r2.aspx

59 KNPC (n.d.) Sustainability Applications at KNPC. Environment Division, Health, Safety and Environment Division. (KNPC, HSE, n.d.)

60 LEED stands for “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design”, which is the world’s most widely used green building rating system in the world.

61 KNPC (n.d.) Sustainability Applications at KNPC. Environment Division, Health, Safety and Environment Division.

and technology for cooking have shown some of the best results. Moreover, the CO₂ emissions from fuel combustion for electricity and heating per total electricity output (MtCO₂/TWh) have decreased. These indicators undoubtedly contribute to the positive trend growth rate⁶².

As far as **target 7.1** is concerned (i.e., ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services), Kuwait has recorded 100 per cent achievement ever since 2016, with 100 per cent of the residents having full access to, and abundantly benefiting from electricity with 100 per cent of residents relying primarily on clean fuels and clean technology⁶³.

On **indicator 7.2.1** (i.e., substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030), data provided by the Ministry of Electricity and Water, and that generated by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation show a net increase in the share of renewable energy as part of the total

energy consumption, from 0.006% in 2016 to 0.256% in 2021⁶⁴. The same positive mounting trend applies to **indicator 7.3.1** where it was 7.1 in 2015 reaching 7.4 in 2019. It is worth mentioning that the value in 2019 was equal to the initial 2010 energy density level – Energy Intensity Measured in Terms of Primary Energy and GDP⁶⁵.

In terms of Kuwait’s Overseas Development Aid (ODA) contribution under this heading, it is worth recording that up to 166 countries across many continents have benefited from Kuwaiti loans, with a 23.9 per cent of financial flows directed towards the energy sector from the Kuwait Fund for Development. Data provided for the years 2021 and 2022 reflect an evident increase in the percentage of financial support provided, 24 per cent and 42 per cent respectively (see figure below)⁶⁶.

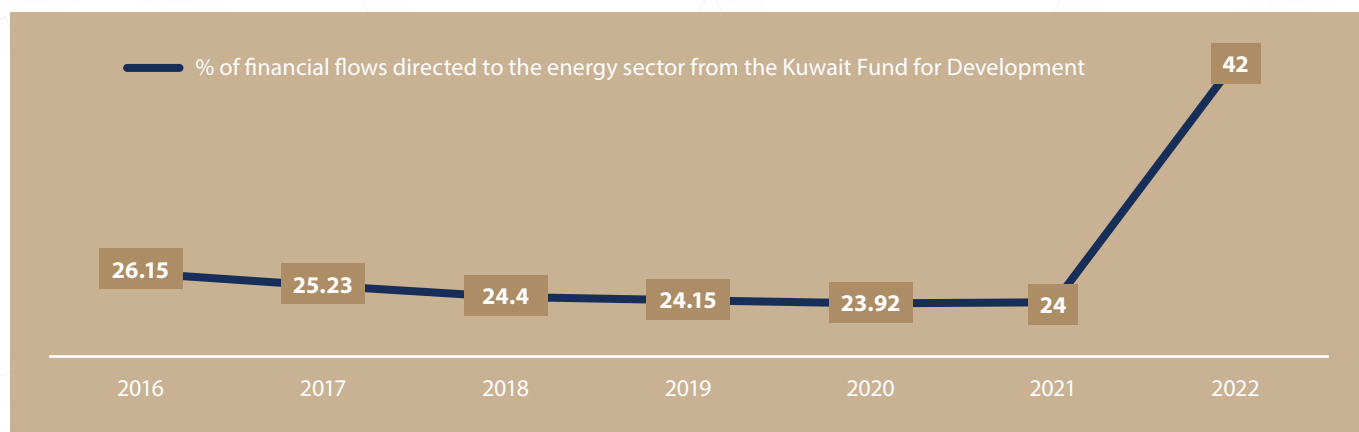


Figure 7: Percentage of financial flows directed to the energy sector from the Kuwait Fund for Development: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development – CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 7 – Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

62 United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait (2022). Forecasting Kuwait’s Sustainable Development Goals: Policy implication for the Voluntary National Review 2023 process (A Policy Brief).
 63 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 7 – Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
 64 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 7 – Op. cit.
 65 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 7 – Op. cit.
 66 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 7 – Op. cit.



Al Shagaya renewable energy complex project (Photo by KUNA).

SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy



KUWAIT Since 2016 Kuwait has recorded **100%** of the residents having full access to, and abundantly benefiting from electricity

5 PROJECTS
TO ACHIEVE CLEAN AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL

PROJECT SHAQAYA COMPLEX FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY	
1 PHASE	2018
The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research	
70^{MW}	
2 PHASE	2025
The partnership authority with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR)	
4000^{MW}	
3 PHASE	2025

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



SDG 9:

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital medical team assisted by a robot during surgery

SDG 9 is one of the main pillars, “Advanced Infrastructure”, of Kuwait’s Vision 2035. Under this pillar, around 30 projects are currently being implemented including the development and construction of new roads and railway systems, ports, and airports. In order to support sustainability and provide the technical and engineering foundations for the successful implementation of urban expansion projects, which are aimed at enhancing the centre of global competitiveness and raising its special indicators, the Supreme Council for Planning and Development funded the initiative “Establishing a Center for the Development of Sustainability Technologies in Facilities and Infrastructure”. The Project is supervised by the Research Institute for the amount of implementation and operation. It exceeds 10 million Kuwaiti dinars⁶⁷.

In the digital domain, Kuwait is developing a broadcasting and a digital archiving web, in addition to an optical fiber network. As for the industry of power supply, and as a continuation to government’s work on measuring the air quality in the south regions (an activity hinging on SDG 6, SDG 7 and SDG 13), two projects were finalized in 2021 resulting in the increase of the production capacity of two Electric Power and Water Distillation stations⁶⁸. The government also installed mechanised control systems for the purpose of constantly monitoring gas emission. It has equally implemented measures according to which, all industrial enterprises are requested by law to conduct an environmental impact assessment (EIA) with a view to reducing their environmental impacts, including emissions of gaseous pollutants⁶⁹.

The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) was established in 1997, as a public body being legally independent and supervised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. At the time of

67 KISR 2022

68 Al Zour Refinery Project and Al-Sebyiyya Electric Power Station and Water Distillation

69 UNRCO Policy Brief, Kuwait, 2022

reporting on the 2019 VNR of Kuwait, PAI drafted the National Industrial Strategy (NIS), whose primary objective was to increase the shares of the industrial sector in Kuwait's GDP and to generate job opportunities for youth in the private sector. It is worth mentioning a critical governance realisation at this juncture, under a dedicated role of the State Audit Bureau (SAB), which has the mandate to inspect the work of entities involved in the supervision and implementation of infrastructure projects. SAB's work includes projects such as the completion, operation and maintenance of the infrastructure of the Al-Shadadiya Industrial Zone and the follow-up project of developing the Crafts Area in Western Abu Fatira, in addition to other projects which are examined by the Bureau, such as the infrastructure of the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company Liquefied Gas Filling Plan in Umm Al Aish and the Kuwait Gulf Oil

company's new main building implementation and maintenance, land, marine and air transport system projects⁷⁰.

In 2020, Kuwait's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), amounted to KWD 36,006 million and KWD 8,064.9 per capita national income (GNI). Although Kuwait does not have a diversified economy, with petroleum accounting for more than 84 per cent of its exports in 2020/2021, it still ranked 13th in the world per capita GNI with an equivalence of 25,990 thousand USD⁷¹.

On **target 9.C.1**, and for all 4 related indicators, there has been an almost 100% achievement for Kuwait in 2021, as it has been illustrated in the table below.

Table 7: Proportion of Population Covered by a Mobile Network, by Technology⁷²

Proportion of Population Covered by a Mobile Network, by Technology (2016 – 2021)								
Technology Type	Unit	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Target by 2030
Those who have a mobile network of at least 2 GB	Percentage	100	100	100	100	100	100	Increase
Those who have a mobile network of at least 3 GB	Percentage	100	100	100	100	100	100	Increase
Those who have a mobile network of at least 4 GB	Percentage	100	100	100	100	100	100	Increase
Those who have a mobile network of at least 5 GB	Percentage	NA	NA	NA	NA	97	92	Increase

As far as **target 9.2** is concerned, i.e., "promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and significantly increase the share of industry in employment and in GDP", Kuwait continues to face some challenges. For instance, with respect to **indicator 9.2.1**, the percentage of transformational added value of GDP at constant prices in Kuwait has decreased from 7.4 per cent to 5.5 per cent between 2017 and 2020⁷³. While this drop is likely to be due to the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, further analysis may still be required to explain the

reasons behind it and to devise the remedying strategies required, considering that the numbers had reached a peak of 7.5 per cent in 2019. On **indicator 9.2.2**, the percentage of employment in the manufacturing industry out of the total employment had witnessed a slight increase from 13.5 per cent in 2016 to 13.7 per cent in 2021. However, it recorded a drop to 9.1 per cent after that, in 2022⁷⁴. This target could still be categorized as being on track. However, resources should

70 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition. Op. cit.

71 CSB of Kuwait (2022). Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Progress Report 2022. (CSB, 2022)

72 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

73 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

74 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 9 – Op. cit.

be further mobilized in this context, if the value of the 2016 target is to double in percentage as expected, by 2030.

Target 9.4 is recorded to be on track and is expected to be achieved by 2030 given that the CO2 emissions per unit of value-added manufacturing have been constantly decreasing since 2016. The latest updated data provided in 2019 recorded a 0.43 percentage point⁷⁵.

As for **indicator 9.5.1**, “enhance scientific research and upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors”, it amounted to 0.2 % between 2016 and 2020. Furthermore, it has been noted that between 2021 and mid 2022, there was a slight decrease in the research employed personnel (Full Time Equivalent) from 15,385.5 in 2021 to 15,199 in mid 2022 (**indicator 9.5.2**). Kuwait is expected to show an increase in these numbers if it were to achieve this target by 2030⁷⁶. Rightfully so, a policy that addresses higher education and scientific research has been developed and will prioritize scientific research and research and development in Kuwait.”

As for **Target 9.a**, which consists in facilitating the creation of sustainable and resilient infrastructure in developing countries, and which is measured by **indicator 9.a.1**, the records show a successful achievement. Indeed, Kuwait’s total official international support that is reserved for infrastructure was 313,700,000 KWD in 2016. This contribution decreased tremendously to reach 50,000,000 KWD in 2021⁷⁷. On the contrary, the trend applying to **indicator 9.b.1** recorded an increase in the share of the medium and advanced technological industry from 30.56 per cent in 2012 to 38.83 per cent in 2019⁷⁸.

In terms of innovation, one licensed investing Entity has promoted environmental sustainability, waste management and green building systems. Additionally, there are 3 licensed investment entities that have provided corporate social responsibility (CSR) services supporting youth skills and women’s empowerment, including i) the second edition of the “ICT skills competition”; ii) the second edition of the “Kuwait Engineering Design Challenge”; and, iii) the sponsoring of the “Women’s Social Entrepreneurship Forum” and its related activities⁷⁹. Similarly, the Direct Investment Promotion Agency approved a project aimed at supporting the waste-tire recycling project and the production of resources to improve the asphalt



The export of the first shipment of high-quality low-sulphur fuel oil produced by Al-Zour Refinery to Singapore

industry, the construction of sports stadiums, the manufacture of sports shoes, the tire industry and many plastic industries.

Under the patronage of the Prime Minister, and in cooperation with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the World Bank Group (WBG), KDIPA organized (in 2019) the “Kuwait Forum on Business Environment Reforms in the Arab World”, with the participation of Arab delegations from Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. The Forum was an opportunity to expand the scope of regional interaction in this field, for participating countries to present and share their experiences, and for the private sector to share their latest work on business advancement. Nationally, KDIPA organized the “Open Dialogue” between the public and private sectors on the business environment in the State of Kuwait” in its Sixth edition, hosted by the Kuwait Economic Society at its headquarters⁸⁰.

In terms of endorsing sustainability, KDIPA continued to work within the main principles of the investment policy framework for sustainable development, which was set by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as well as UNCTAD’s Global Action Menu for Investment Facilitation, endorsing the social, economic, environmental, and good governance dimensions of sustainability. Through the execution of its first strategy, KDIPA was able to contribute to four out of seven of the main pillars of Vision 2035, with a

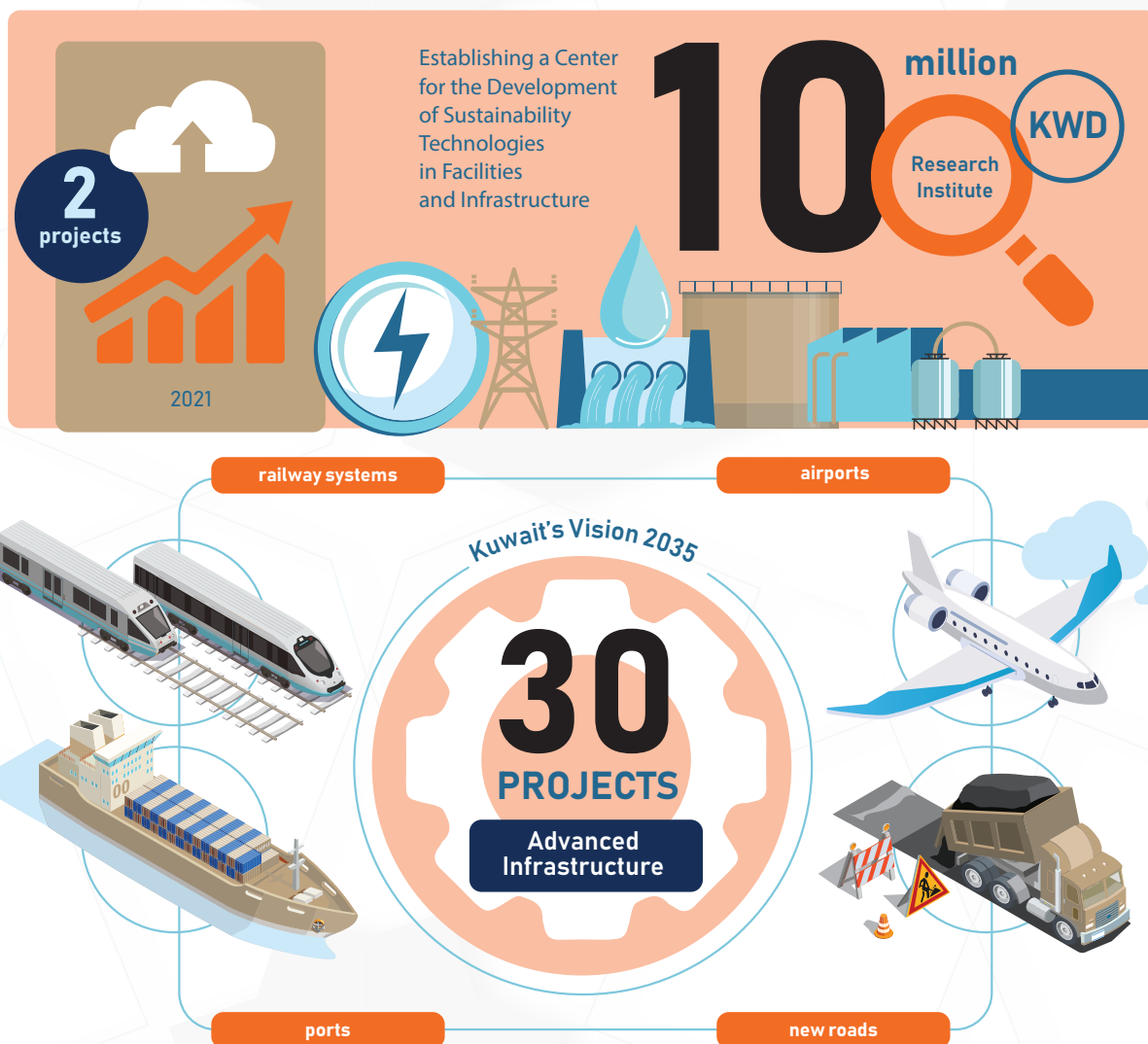
75 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
76 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 9 – Op. cit.
77 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 9 – Op. cit.
78 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 9 – Op. cit.
79 Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2019). Fourth Annual Report 2018-2019
80 Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2020). Annual report 2019-2020

particular focus on the pillar addressing a sustainable and diverse economy, since sixteen out of the twenty-nine projects within its first strategy have addressed this pillar. The Authority continues its regular contribution to the National Programme for Economic and Fiscal Sustainability (Istidama⁸¹). KDIPA identified four out of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015-2030) with relevant targets and indicators relating to its core work⁸². Currently, it is launching its interim strategy

for 2021-2023 that consists of fifteen projects whose KPI's fall under three strategic directions: strengthening investors trust, adopting digital transformation in operations, and enhancing KDIPA's resilience and agility in the wake of the (Covid-19) pandemic⁸³.

SDG 9

Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure



⁸¹ A literal Arabic translation of the word "sustainability"

⁸² Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2019). Annual report 2018-2019

⁸³ Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2020). Annual report 2019-2020



SDG 11:

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

The State of Kuwait has long been faced with the inherent challenge of achieving sustainable urban development, particularly that the State of Kuwait is primarily urban, or as it is commonly known as a “city state”. More than 98 percent of the total population reside in urban agglomerations, with concentration in the Kuwait Metropolitan Area (KMA), covering only eight percent of the State of Kuwait’s land area. This has represented a serious challenge in terms of planning and sustaining quality and affordable social, economic, and environmental development for all. Coping with this demographic reality, Kuwait has designed policies to develop new cities and rural town areas in the northern, north-eastern, western, and south-eastern parts of the State of Kuwait in an effort to redistribute the rapidly growing population⁸⁴.

At the time of reporting on the 2019 VNR, the State of Kuwait was finalizing The Kuwait Master Plan IV (KMP4). KMP4 set out the objectives and future urban policies reflecting the vision, objectives, and plans of the political, economic, social, and environmental state regarding land usage within the framework of 25 to 30 years. The current Kuwait Master Plan covers the period from 2007 to 2030. It aspires to achieve a balance among the elements of urban development, in order to absorb the expected population growth and distribute them homogeneously, within and outside the urban area. The Plan aims at creating an attractive and encouraging investment, based on diversification of national income sources, not relying on oil as a main source, and maintaining natural and ecological resources in a balanced manner with future urban development plans⁸⁵.

The pillar of “Sustainable Living Environments” under Vision 2035, directly addresses SDG 11. Under this pillar, five new smart and sustainable residential areas are being established, away from Kuwait City. The Public Utilities Committee of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development has also supported innovative solutions for rapid, economical, and efficient engineering construction that saves materials, labor force, and energy, using construction by 3D printing. Workers’ cities and multi-purpose cities are sustainable and cost-effective⁸⁶. The project aims at establishing these residential areas in a smart and sustainable manner, providing more than 89,000 residential units, aimed at accommodating and meeting the residential needs of urban dwellers. This is a significant step forward towards absorbing residents homogeneously

84 Government of Kuwait (2019). Kuwait’s First Voluntary Report on the Progress of the Implementation of the Global Compact Goals for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

85 Government of Kuwait (2019). Kuwait’s First Voluntary Report on the Progress of the Implementation of the Global Compact Goals for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

86 KISR



Al Argan Business Park in the Free Trade Zone

within and outside the urban area⁸⁷. Worth mentioning under **target 11.3.2**, the projects that are aimed at developing smart cities in new residential areas, designing and constructing electric vehicle charging stations in buildings, as well as within infrastructure networks, constructing new public buildings through the LEED designs, and setting up suburban cooling systems in public buildings and within the networks in residential cities. As to Al Eslah Society, it launched initiatives through awareness campaigns and qualitative partnerships with state institutions and voluntary teams, the last of which was the planting of 5000 seedlings in Al-Mutlaa desert. The number of participating volunteers amounted to 400 volunteers⁸⁸.

According to the high directives of His Highness, the Emir of the State of Kuwait, may God protect and preserve him regarding privileging the business environment in Government's priorities, Kuwait featured for the first time in the list of the top 10 improvers in business environment in the world, recording an increase of 4.8 percentage points in its distance to frontier (DTF), moving from 62.6 in 2019 to 67.4 in 2020, in addition to a significant upgrade of 14 places in its ranking in 2020, compared to that of 2019⁸⁹.

As far as **target 11.6.1** is concerned, a design of automatic waste recycling system is being implemented. The design has already been completed in the southern city of Saad Al-Abdullah and the studies necessary to implement the system have been completed in Al-Mutlaa and South Sabah Al-Ahmad residential cities. However, it is important to mention that a full implementation of the system is pending the enactment of the respective legislative laws, which is under the mandate of the competent authority responsible for operation, maintenance and system management⁹⁰. Of relevance to **target 11.6.1** still, is the fact that the Kuwait Authority for Partnerships (KAP) tendered the Municipal Solid Waste Treatment Project in the Kabd site. The State Auditory Bureau's pre-audit department conducted its assessment in 2020. SAB then confirmed that the project could be included in the Ministry of Finance's budget, and a recommendation was made by SAB that the Ministry of Finance, the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects and the Kuwait Municipality would be fully responsible over this project in terms of defects and expenses⁹¹.

The Environment Public Authority (EPA) has established a system for monitoring primary and secondary air pollutants in the city, which contains 15 stations for direct monitoring, in

87 NewKuwait.gov.kw

88 Social Reform Association – Leadership Sustainability Report 2021

89 Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2020). Annual report 2019-2020

90 Department of Modernizing and Reporting Achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals (2022). Goal 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

91 State Audit Bureau of Kuwait (2022). The most significant indicators, regulatory phenomena and developments regarding the Supreme Council for Privatization – 2021-2022, first edition. State Audit Bureau

addition to 13 stations affiliated to the Kuwait Oil Company. These stations cover all governorates in the State of Kuwait, and are located in residential areas with high population density. Accordingly, the results are published and shared with the public as indicators of atmospheric air quality through the Environment Public Authority website (BEATONA.ORG), with warnings highlighted if the concentration of fine particles exceeds the national standards that guide the State of Kuwait. As to the atmospheric air quality indicators, they have been linked to five Stations with the global site of air quality indicators (AQICN.ORG). It is important to note that the levels of fine particles (dust) are considered high in the cities because of the frequent sand and dust storms that take place throughout the year. Moreover, most of the sandstorms to which the Kuwait is exposed, are from outside its borders (from neighbouring countries). Kuwait has recently concluded agreements with both the Republic of Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran for cooperation and coordination with a view to reducing this phenomenon and addressing the sources of dust emission from the origin in a way in which, to reduce the environmental and health impact thereof through bilateral scientific and field studies and cooperation in early warning between countries in the event of dust storms⁹².

Considering the sustained records on the increasing levels of air pollution in Kuwait, SAB implemented a plan to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the quality of air in Kuwait in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority, the Public Authority for Industry and the Ministry of Electricity and Water. As a result, it highlighted the importance of adopting environmental inspection plans and programmes to monitor air quality and to measure the extent of the industrial facilities' adherence to environmental requirements. SAB also recommended to accelerate the preparation of the National Strategic Plan for Air Quality Management by the Environment Public Authority, while approving their annual implementation plans at the level of the departments of Air Quality Monitoring to enforce the Environment Protection Law. Finally, SAB recommended the necessary adherence of the Ministry of Electricity and Water to the permissible emissions limits approved by the Environment Public Authority⁹³.

The Environment Public Authority⁹⁴ is currently working in cooperation with the Kuwait City Municipality on a number of technical and administrative development initiatives to serve the sustainable development goals related to environmental affairs and to the health and safety of the population, in

addition to optimal adherence to regulations, laws and decisions. Kuwait City Municipality is considered one of the most important partners, as many of its activities are linked to the competence of the EPA. Accordingly, the following are the latest developments in terms of cooperation between the two parties:

- 1 Work and coordination are underway between the Environment Public Authority and the Kuwait City Municipality to review and update the hygiene regulations to keep pace with environmental laws and legislation;
- 2 Completion of the preparation of the terms of reference booklet for the rehabilitation of municipal solid and construction waste transport vehicles and asbestos waste through the work of the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Waste Transport Companies and Institutions of the Kuwait Municipality;
- 3 Follow-up and coordination regarding complaints and reports related to waste, its removal, transportation and disposal according to the requirements of the Environment Public Authority;
- 4 The Environment Public Authority has developed a number of control plans related to the competencies of the Kuwait City Municipality in terms of municipal waste management, which are: i) electronic applications that contributed to a more comprehensive monitoring of the collection, transportation, and disposal of municipal waste, data exchange, and facilitating follow-up for decision-makers; ii) establishing an environmental database



Eastern runway development project in Kuwait International Airport

92 Environment Public Authority (n.d.). Secondary Voluntary Report for Sustainable Development

93 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

94 Environment Public Authority (n.d.). Secondary Voluntary Report for Sustainable Development

Box 2 – The Environmental Compliance Platform

The Environmental Compliance Platform is an electronic platform that aims at speeding up the procedures for services provided by the environmental control sector, in cooperation with the concerned authorities in the State of Kuwait, the most important of which are the General Administration of Customs, the Ministry of Interior and the Public Authority for Industry. The platform works to reduce the documentary cycle, cancel paper procedures, as well as cancel direct dealings with the public, in compliance with the decision of the Council of Ministers in this regard.

This system enhances the ability of relevant authorities to measure the degree of compliance with the international community with regards to the international environmental agreements, including the Rotterdam Convention, the 1985 Vienna Convention and its 1987 Montreal Protocol for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, and the 2030 Global Agenda that embraces the goals of sustainable development.

Annex 1 – The electronic system for chemicals, licensing, releases and export

for the waste sector; iii) publishing data on the waste sector through EPA's environment portal; and, iv) electronic link between the Environment Public Authority and Kuwait City Municipality.

- 5 The Environment Public Authority, represented by the Waste Management Department of Municipal Waste, submitted a proposal to Kuwait City Municipality to mandate all contractors working on construction sites to use special containers for the collection of municipal and construction waste before starting work inside the plots, as a condition for starting construction work in each plot. The proposal has since been approved by the Kuwait City Municipality.

It is important to mention that there are no urban populations living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housings in Kuwait (Zero per cent since 2016) **indicator 11.1.1**⁹⁵. The Public Authority for Housing Welfare provides housing and social care, and distributes or rents housing units at a nominal price. It has distributed approximately 163,667 housing units since 1956, allocating 9,696 housing units and 564 apartments for rent⁹⁶.

Similarly, 100 per cent of the population have access to appropriate public transportation (**indicator 11.2.1**). As to target 11.3, the average population growth rate that has been recorded between 2015- and 2022 was 1.70 (**indicators 11.3.1**), and 100 per cent of the cities in Kuwait have a structure that allows civil society to participate directly in urban planning, which is operated regularly and managed in a democratic manner (**11.3.2**)⁹⁷. On **target 11.5**, Kuwait has recorded Zero cases of persons dead or missed due to a direct effect of disaster since 2016 (**indicator 11.5.1**) and maintained a level of Zero KWD loss for rehabilitating critical infrastructure, or for disruption of basic services due to serious damage from disasters⁹⁸.

As for **target 11.6, indicator 11.6.1**, regarding the "percentage of cities' solid waste that is collected regularly and adequately emptied out of the total solid waste of cities", it has been progressively increasing since 2015, reaching a 99.2 per cent in 2021⁹⁹. Moreover, Kuwait has recorded Zero cases of physical and sexual harassment for both males and females across all age categories since 2016¹⁰⁰ and has also recorded full achievement on all **indicators 11.a.1, 11.b.1 and 11.b.2**¹⁰¹.

95 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

96 Department of Update and Achievement Report for the Sustainable Development Goals (2022). Goal 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

97 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Kuwait City Municipality – Environment Public Authority

98 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 11 – Op. cit.

99 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 11 – Op. cit.

100 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 11 – Op. cit.

101 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 11 – Op. cit.

SDG 11

Sustainable Cities and Communities



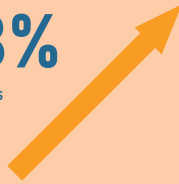
10

the top
10 improvers
in business
environment
in the world



4.8%

points in its
distance
to frontier
(DTF)



62.6% to 67.4%

2019

2020



89,000

residential units,

aimed at accommodating
and meeting the residential
needs of urban dwellers



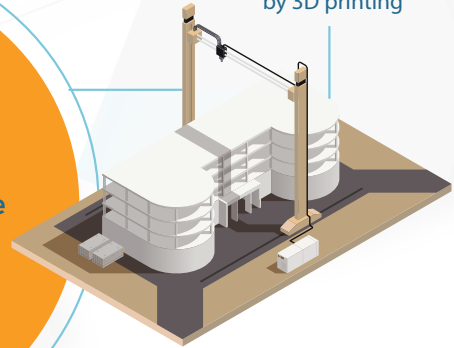
Kuwait's Vision 2035



5

new smart
and sustainable
residential
areas are
being
established

Construction
by 3D printing





VIII. STATUS AND PROGRESS REGARDING NON-2023 REVIEW SDGs



SDG 1: NO POVERTY

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Kuwait has had a pioneering experience in the field of welfare and social protection. Social solidarity was already imbedded in the 1960 Constitution, which was premised on the principle of wellbeing for all. The social welfare system has for long, focused on achieving a qualitative leap in all aspects of social and human life, with a particular focus on all those in need, within a framework of social justice and social cohesion. The government efforts have been deployed among others, in the fields of childhood and youth, the elderly, women, the family, people with special needs and people with disabilities. The aim has been to achieve not only a higher wellbeing of the population but also to make them productive and fulfilled, socially and economically¹⁰².

Worth noting at this juncture that the Ministry of Social Affairs has adopted a universal insurance system for individuals providing social development and care, which is a core priority of the Ministry. The system is linked electronically with state agencies that are responsible for poverty eradication.



Kuwait Red Crescent Society intensifying efforts to support families in need within the State of Kuwait

102 International Organization of Migration (2022). The Future of Migration in the Gulf Region: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration – Towards a Common Approach. International Organization of Migration. (IOM, 2022).

As of 2021 already (which refers to the latest National Household Income Survey), the individual average monthly expenditure amounts to KWD 602 for Kuwaiti nationals, and to KWD 267 for non-nationals. This implies the equivalent of a daily expenditure of 66 USD for a Kuwaiti national, and 29 USD for a non-national, leading to Kuwait exceeding the global poverty line¹⁰³. In addition, the Government allocates

resources directly to the national Poverty Reduction Program in percentage of the Gross National Income¹⁰⁴. The latest figures of the GDP per Capita, the GDP at current prices and the proportion of the national resources that are directly allocated to the national Poverty Reduction Program, have been reflected in the figures below.

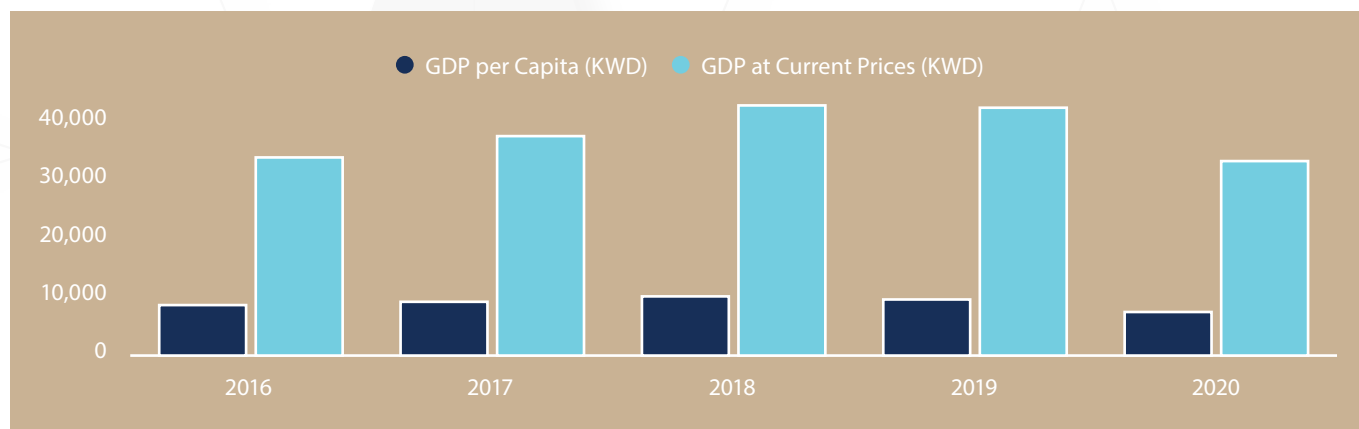


Figure 8: GDP Per Capita and GDP at Current Prices between 2016 and 2020. CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere

The following two charts also show i) the number of families who have been benefiting from social assistance across the years since 2016, averaging a rate of 10.2 per cent for the whole period (the highest rate being recorded in 2018 and

2017 with a 10.7 per cent and the lowest in 2019 with a 9.8 per cent), and ii) the proportion of Locally Generated Resources that the government allocates directly to poverty reduction programs (Social Protection Programs) in percentage of GNI.

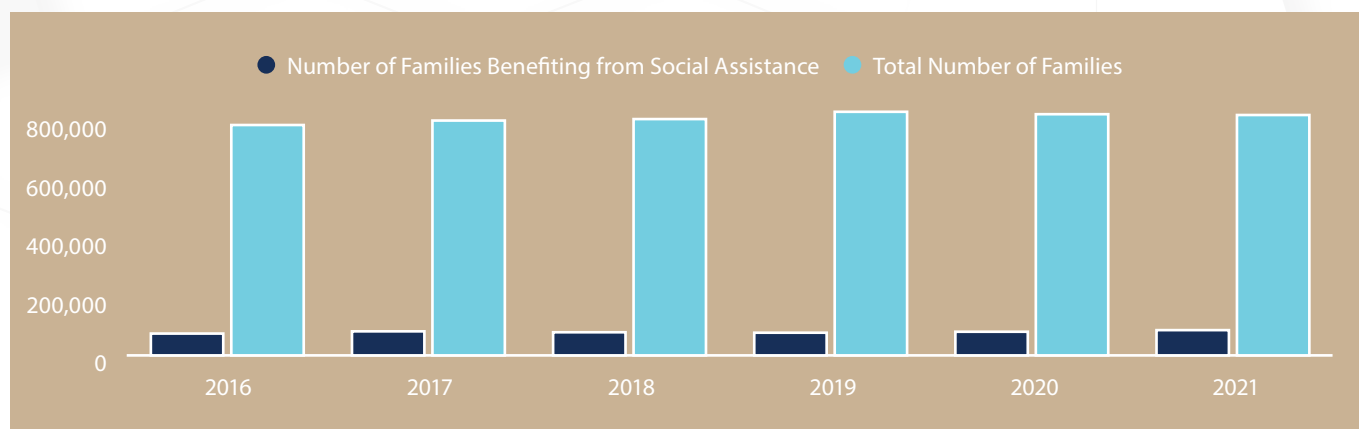


Figure 9: The Number of Families Benefiting from Social Assistance, CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere

¹⁰³ CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
¹⁰⁴ CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 1 – Op. cit.

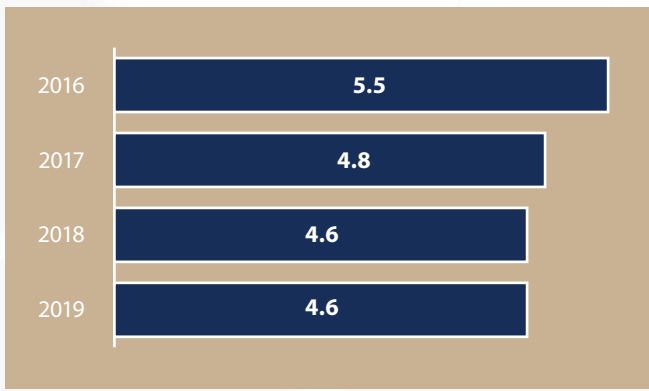


Figure 10: Proportion of Locally Generated Resources that the Government Allocates Directly to Poverty Reduction Programs (Social Protection Programs) in percentage of GNI. CSB, SDG1, 2022

At the non-governmental level, many partners have equally been active in the social sector. For instance, the Women’s Cultural and Social Society, which was established in 1963, and which is presently represented in the National Sustainable Development Committee (NSCD), has been an active partner in the social protection sector. In addition, a “Zakat Committee”,

which was established in 1981, has been providing support to all those who at times, find themselves unable to provide for their families due to several reasons including unemployment, illness, absence of a household breadwinner, and others. The Committee, which is funded through Zakat, supports more than 1000 families presently, and conducts status follow ups with the families it supports with a view to replacing the ones that are no longer in need¹⁰⁵. “Al Eslah Society”, is another community partner in the social sector, who provided more than 4,837 meals to people in need during the pandemic in 2020, distributed three million bottles of water during the heat of the 2020 summer, sponsored 1000 orphans, and distributed Adahi (food supplies) to more than 6000 families¹⁰⁶. The Association’s work was not only limited to the response to COVID-19. In 2019 it provided more than 17,000 support activity across the State of Kuwait amounting to KWD 2.2 million directed towards families in need¹⁰⁷.

In terms of target SDG 1. a, (the total official development assistance grants from donors that focus on poverty reduction as a share of the recipient country’s gross national income), Kuwait has launched a range of humanitarian and philanthropic initiatives in support of poor countries¹⁰⁸ to the point of earning the title of “The Country of Humanitarian Action”¹⁰⁹.

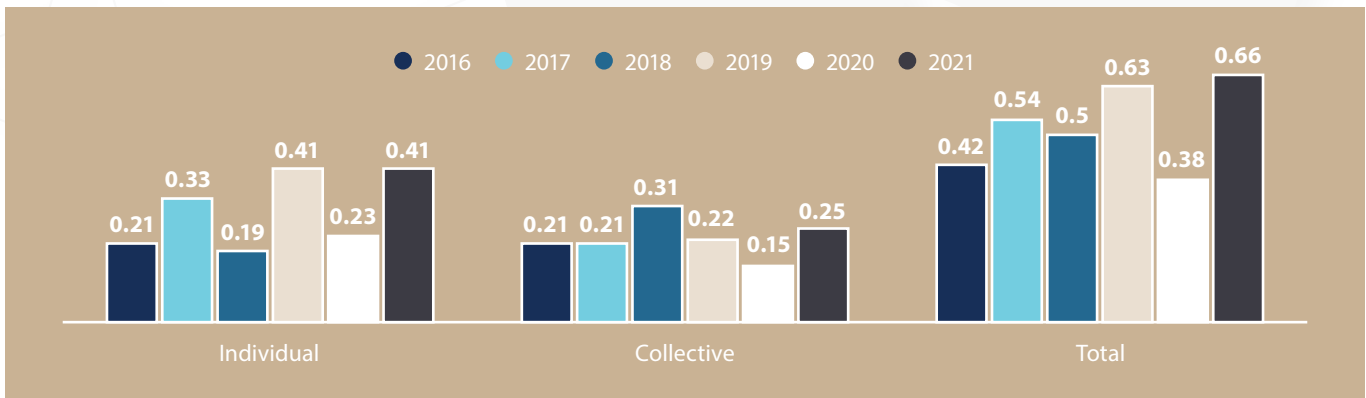


Figure 11: Percentage of the population who have guaranteed rights (Comprehensive Ownership Including Land), CSB, SDG1, 2022

105 Women’s Social Cultural Association (2022). The activities and projects of the Women’s Social Cultural Association related to the sustainable development goals for the years 2020-2021-2022. (Women’s Cultural & Social Society, 2022)

106 Social Reform Association: Fourth Sustainability Report 2020. Social Reform Society Planning Office (Al Eslah Society, 2020)

107 Social Reform Association: Fourth Sustainability Report 2020. Social Reform Society Planning Office (Al Eslah Society, 2019)

108 The State Audit Bureau has offered donations for building a medical clinic and digging a water well in India 2020.

109 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

Finally, with reference to SDG 1.4.2, (proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure), the figure and the

table below show a 14 per cent increase for men and 8 per cent increase for women of those who have been guaranteed ownership and property rights between the year 2016 and 2021.

Table 8: Population who have guaranteed rights (Comprehensive Ownership Including Land), CSB, SDG1, 2022

Sex	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	1,868,014	1,983,182	2,097,943	2,229,443	2,241,682	2,142,086	2,048,115
Female	1,205,014	1,221,474	1,230,068	1,267,047	1,300,419	1,301,686	1,301,984
Total	3,073,028	3,204,656	3,328,011	3,496,490	3,542,101	3,443,772	3,350,099



SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



The State of Kuwait is the first Gulf country to introduce the soilless cultivation system

As per recent Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) records pertaining to the prevalence of undernourishment, Kuwait maintained a commendable rate of below 2.5 per cent between 2016 and 2019 when the world's rate was fluctuating between 7.8 and 7.6 per cent, reaching 8 per cent in 2019. In 2020, the world's rate went even up to 9.3 per cent, when Kuwait's rate increased only by a two fraction points to 2.7 per cent, most likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which put significant resources under pressure then, including food and livelihood (see figures 12, 13 14 below).

On **target 2.1**, it is worth mentioning the work of Al Eslah Society in 2020 considering their distribution of food supply during the pandemic and thereafter (meat, bread and food baskets), which benefitted more than 1,612,857 persons¹¹⁰. On **indicator 2.2.1**, the prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years has been steady since 2012 at a rate of 5.8 per cent. It increased slightly however, to 6.0 per cent in 2020¹¹¹.

110 Social Reform Association (2020). Fourth Sustainability Report 2020. Social Reform Society Planning Office

111 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

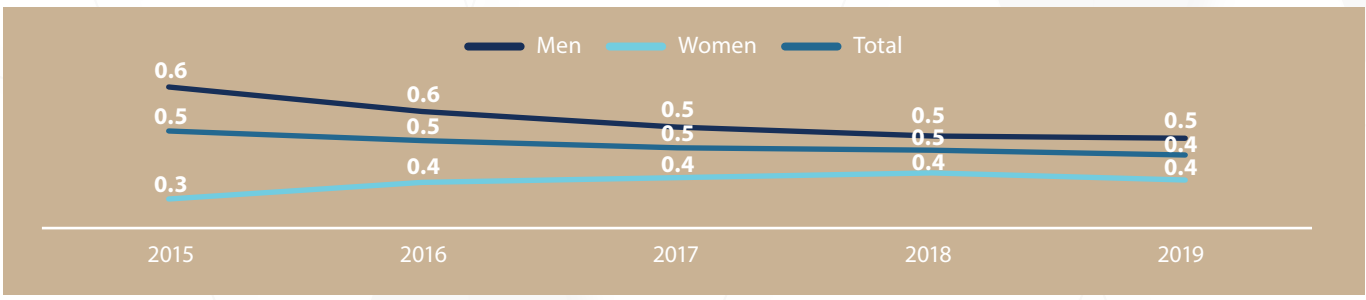


Figure 12: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. SB, SDG2, 2022

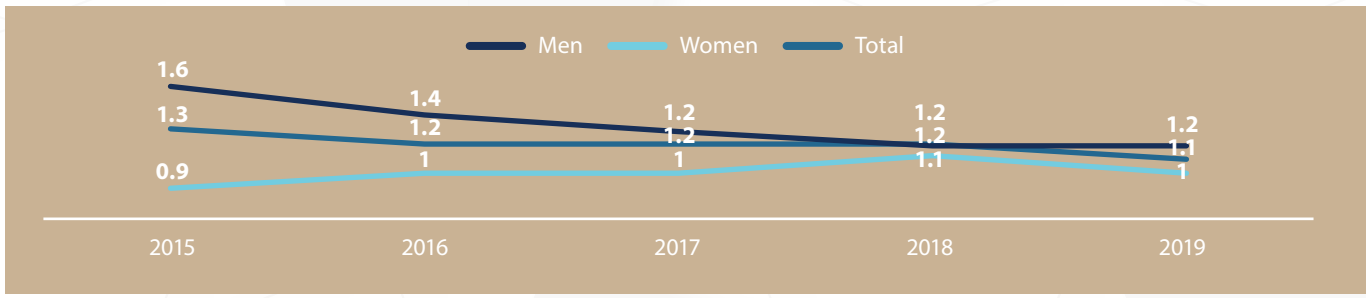


Figure 13: Prevalence of Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity Among Adult Populations (≥15 years) CSB, SDG2, 2022

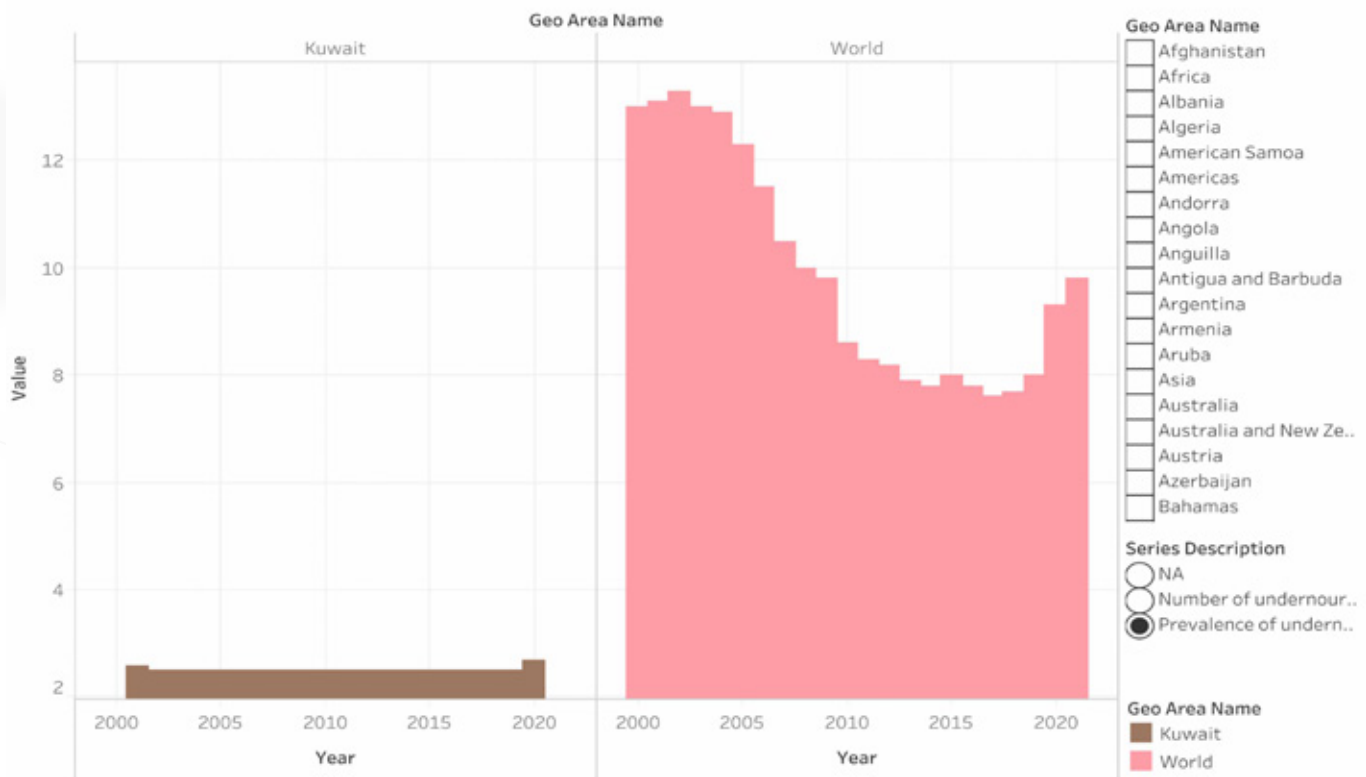


Figure 14: Prevalence of Severe Food Insecurity Among the Adult Population (≥15 Years). CSB, SDG2, 2022

On **indicator 2.2.2**, the difference in the rates is significant between the prevalence of wasting among children under 5 years of age (2.5 per cent in 2020) and the prevalence of overweight among children in the same age group (7.1 per cent). However, it is important to note that the rate of overweight children witnessed a major decrease since 2015, where it recorded 8.7 per cent¹¹². Data on the prevalence of anemia among women of childbearing age (**indicator 2.2.3**), became available only in 2019 when the rate recorded 23.7 per cent. Monitoring this rate in the near future would enable ascertaining evolving trends and would inform appropriate policies. As for **target 2.4**, measuring the agricultural area allocated for productive and sustainable agriculture, the records show an increasing trend over the years, starting with 40.8 per cent in 2013 and reaching 43.7 per cent in 2019, however there has been a slight decrease between 2017 and 2018 reaching 43%¹¹³.

As for **indicator 2.a.1**, the percentage of government's expenditure on the agricultural orientation index has been slightly increasing over the years from 0.36 per cent in 2016 to 0.46 per cent in 2020. Alternatively, the development assistance percentage provided by the Kuwait Fund for Development to the agricultural sector (**indicator 2.a.2**) has slightly decreased from 10.34 per cent in 2016, to 9.66 per cent in 2020. It is worth mentioning that no development loans were reported for the agricultural sector in 2021. Finally, on **indicator 2.c.1**, the food prices index moved up from 0.19 per cent in 2016 to 7.48 per cent in 2022¹¹⁴, most probably due to the pandemic, the closure of many borders and the disruption of exports and imports.

On support to livestock, the State Audit Bureau supervisory work covers the Livestock Transport & Trading Company (KLTT), which is a Kuwait based shareholding company aimed at operating the production and trade of meat¹¹⁵. The Bureau supervises KLTT to guarantee price stability and prevent market fluctuations. This is manifested through a) opening the biggest livestock market in the Middle East; b) opening new markets for the import of sheep from Romania, South Africa, Djibouti, Iran, and Jordan; and, c) founding Al-Mawashi Subsidiary company in South Africa. The company made sure to provide the population with their needs during lockdowns by

delivering products to the houses while maintaining the prices unchanged¹¹⁶. Other development projects implemented by SAB are i) the National Laboratory Center, ii) the Mobile Labs for food inspection, iii) establishment of facilities for the development of modern and integrated agricultural systems to reinforce sustainable agricultural production, and iv) a sustainable economic farm with modern technology¹¹⁷.

Some of the recommendations that are being considered to achieve a better performance under this goal are as follows: i) developing a nutritional program with the promotion of positive social norms regarding health-building habits from early childhood through to adulthood; ii) encouraging exclusive breastfeeding; iii) developing a knowledge promotion platform to enhance the health of adolescent girls; and, iv) implementing a national strategy for food security and nutrition that takes into consideration the nutritional needs for children and incorporates nutrition education in schools¹¹⁸.



Abdulhafiz Marafie Farm is the first farm in Kuwait managed by solar energy and operating on nano system

112 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 2 – Op. cit.

113 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 2 – Op. cit.

114 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 2 – Op. cit.

115 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

116 State Audit Bureau (2020). Op. cit.

117 State Audit Bureau (2020). Op. cit.

118 UNCT of Kuwait (2020). United Nations Country Team Comments on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Kuwait. The United Nations Country Team of Kuwait.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



The success of the national campaign to vaccinate against the Corona virus by achieving herd immunity in the State of Kuwait

Kuwait has recently witnessed a positive development in the field of health services and care (see section on COVID-19 and Building Back Better¹¹⁹). It has enhanced the quality of health services provided through numerous projects while keeping up with the technical developments in this field, boosting the level and outreach of public health and ensuring highest and advanced health care for all individuals¹²⁰. Other signs of progress are seen in the dramatic decrease in traffic death rates and the increase in surviving infants who received the two WHO-recommended vaccines. The slight drawback, however, is due to the increase of tuberculosis incidence from 25 per 100,000 in 2012 to 28 per 100,000 in 2017. Official data on new HIV infections and on age-standardized death rates due to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases in adults aged 7 to 30 years are rather lacking for now while efforts are underway to close this data gap in near future. With respect to TB, WHO 2022 reports a case incidence rate of 17.1/100,000 in 2021 versus 18.8/100,000 in 2019¹²¹.

However, Kuwait's current health system may still be facing a few challenges, particularly in terms of the rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases as a result of unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyles and exposure to pollution, and the increasing cost of health services. In addition, life expectancy at birth has decreased in recent years and the prevalence of diabetes has become one of the world's highest, despite slight improvements in the most recent assessment. Attention will therefore be required to improve the performance of the organizational structures considering the persistent challenges including the inadequate structure of administrative organizations, the competition between departments, the shortage of needed

119 As it was mentioned in the COVID-19 Section above, significant efforts were made to ensure equal and adequate access to quality health care for All.

120 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

121 <https://rho.emro.who.int/sites/default/files/booklets/EMR-HIS-and-core-indicators-2020-final.pdf>

specialists and the dependence on foreign experts, and the limited health promotion laws, policies, and programmes.

Kuwait is working to secure cutting-edge medicines and technologies to hone the expertise of the health personnel and enlist the needed specialists. The State of Kuwait is considering further investment in information technologies with a view to automating data and making it available for use throughout the health system. As the current system emphasizes a treatment-oriented approach and puts a focus on infrastructure, such as hospitals, there is a gap between the goal of improving the health and well-being of the residents and the outcomes resulting from the current system. Priority would therefore be primarily given to ensuring good governance and planning, validating policies with evidence-based measures of progress, adopting a sustainable financial framework, nurturing new technologies and knowledge industries, creating a modern and comprehensive information system¹²² and enhancing the health workforce¹²³.

On SDG target 3.8 i.e., “achieve universal health coverage, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all”, Kuwait has a commendable record to show, in partnership with a number of national and UN partners. Furthermore, by virtue of funds received through private sector contributions, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) procured and disseminated PPE kits for more than 4,000 vulnerable foreign laborers who continued to perform their daily functions despite the associated health hazard. The support covered six governorates in the State of Kuwait, reaching out to residents at government-run shelters and servicing female foreign workers in particular, together with psychosocial support workshops¹²⁴. An expatriate workers’ awareness campaign for the prevention of COVID-19 was also launched and made available into 12 languages. (IOM, 2022).

In addition to the COVID-19 related government achievements, many efforts were deployed by non-government partners to fully meet SDG 3. For instance, the Women’s Cultural and Social Society implemented several initiatives including an awareness programme on Alzheimer (considering its relative high prevalence). A “Hope Club” (نادي الأمل) has also

been providing moral and financial support to cancer patients since 1987, and another “Hope Fund” (صندوق الأمل) providing financial support to sick people with financial difficulties. As to the issue of overweight prevalence, the Women’s Cultural and Social Society has set up an “AquaTots” swimming school (the first branch of a US-based school in the GCC) to provide swimming lessons for boys and girls, aged between 6 months and 12 years, and to persons with disabilities and the elderly. The Society also set up a fitness center (Fitnessity), providing fitness sessions to women and girls of all ages, in addition to a number of awareness and sensitization sessions on health-related topics regarding breast cancer among others¹²⁵.

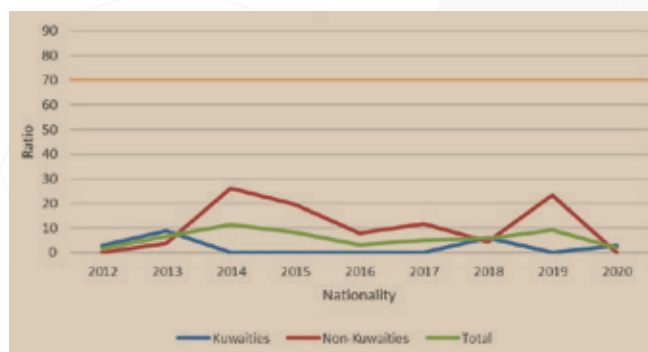


Figure 15: Maternal Mortality Ratio / 100,000 Live Births by Nationality, 2012–2020. CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

On **indicator 3.1.1**, Kuwait has been recording a significantly low maternal mortality ratio (MMR) between 2012 and 2020, both for nationals and non-nationals. Despite the relative dents in 2014 and 2019, 2020 recorded a near Zero (MMR).

As to births attended by a skilled health personnel, the indicators have recorded a near universal (more than 99.99 per cent) rate between 2012 and up till 2020 for both, nationals and non-nationals. The latest data recorded regarding **indicators 3.2.1** and **3.2.2** can also be reported to have been fully achieved given that the current records have significantly

122 Worth noting in this context that Kuwait has recently piloted ICD-11 in Farwaniya hospital in partnership with WHO, thus being amongst the first in the world to do so, which paves the way for improving the quality of mortality and morbidity statistics.

123 KPPC, Policy Paper for the Health Pillar. Overview of Gaps, Challenges, and Way Forward in Kuwait National Development Plan 2015-2020, 2019; White Paper for the Health Pillar National Health Policy Framework: Ensuring Healthy Lives and Wellbeing

124 International Organization of Migration (2021). IOM Kuwait Newsletter: A Year in Review. Retrieved from https://mailchi.mp/e68a34033f64/january-to-december-15749513?fbclid=IwAR2a83zvtu2gY5-RH8mEzN3WIRf_fJfa3VBafVHOQIodCFLfBI8ywlomx3E

125 Women Cultural and Social Society, 2022

surpassed the target set for 2030¹²⁶. As for most components of **targets 3.3**, they are all on track to be achieved by 2030 as per the CSB data in 2022. **Indicator 3.3.3** is not relevant, since Kuwait is free from Malaria, when only very minor imported cases may be found, primarily among expatriates coming from endemic areas. The same applies to **indicator 3.2** (see figures below provided by CSB¹²⁷).

Lending its support to the health sector as well, Al Eslah Society launched in 2021 the “Compassion for the Treatment of Rheumatoid Patients” project, “Boshrakum Sclerosis” and the “Hope” project for the treatment of cancer patients inside the State of Kuwait. It equally launched its medical convoys and quality projects outside and from Kuwait Convoys of eye operations and medical clinics. In terms of curative health programs, Al Eslah Society spent 314,300 dinars on 213 patients with types of cancerous tumors and sclerosis, with high costs that those who benefited from were unable to cover their expenses¹²⁸.

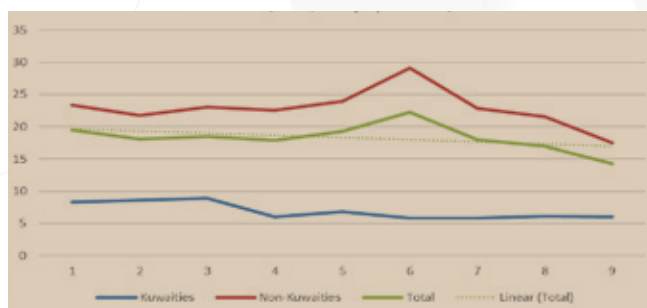


Figure 18: TB Incidence Rate, CSB, SDG3, 2022

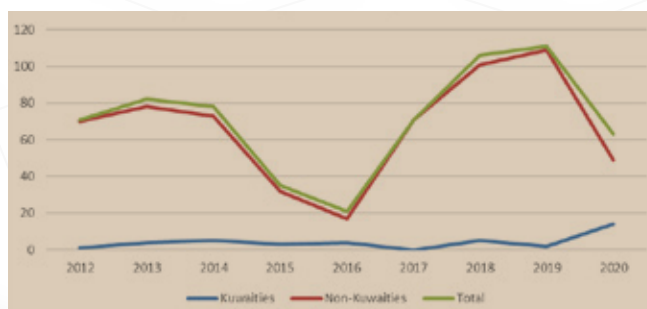


Figure 19: Number of People Requiring Interventions against neglected tropical diseases, CSB, SDG3, 2022

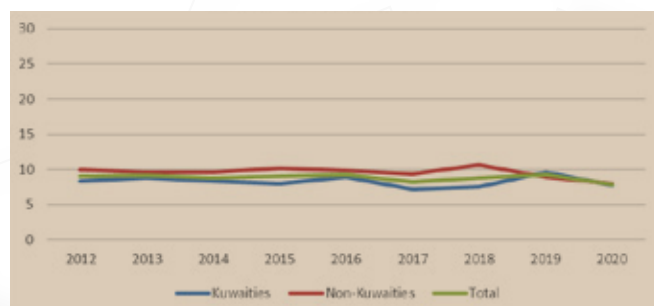


Figure 16: Under five-mortality rate, CSB, SDG3, 2022

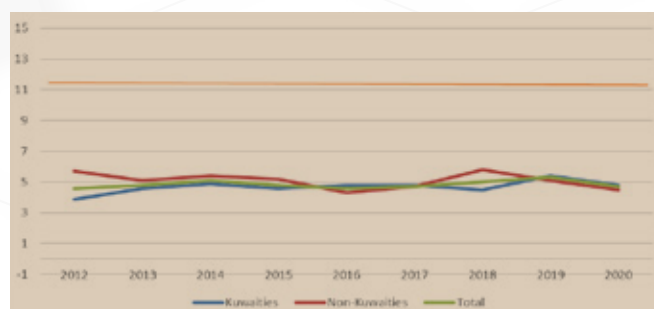


Figure 17: Neonatal Mortality Rate, CSB, SDG3, 2022

As for **target 3.4**, the data provided reflect a fairly stationary line. While **indicator 3.5.2** is not applicable in Kuwait, recent data show that **indicator 3.5.1** has already been fully achieved. Moving to **target 3.6**, i.e., “mortality rates due to road traffic accidents”, recent data show a gradual decrease over the years for both nationals and non-nationals with a rate of 12.8/100,000 (2012) and 7.7/100,000 (2020) respectively, whereas the target to be achieved by 2030 is 8.7/1000¹²⁹. In terms of **target 3.7**, both 1 and 2, recent data support the prospects of full achievement in 2030. It is important to mention that the mortality rate associated with road traffic injuries was estimated at 15.4/100,000 in 2021, as road traffic injuries continue to pose a public health challenge in Kuwait¹³⁰.

- 126 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- 127 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 3 – Op. cit.
- 128 Social Reform Association – Leadership Sustainability Report 2021
- 129 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- 130 WHO, Monitoring health and health system performance in the Eastern Mediterranean Region 2021, 2022 Reports

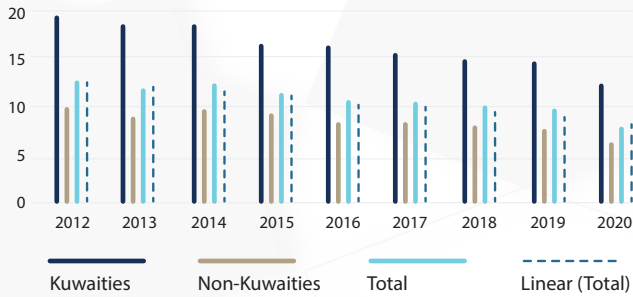


Figure 20: Mortality Rate from Road Traffic, Injuries/100 000 Population by National / Non-National, CSB, SDG3, 2022

Indicator 3.8.1, relates to the whole spectrum of health protection, promotion, prevention, treatment and care. Accordingly, and as per the records of the Ministry of Health, it is reported to be rather stationary¹³¹. Furthermore, mortality rates due to unsafe WASH services or unintentional poisoning (**target 3.9**) are reported to be decreasing over the years, and the target is reported to be on schedule to be achieved by 2030 in spite of a passing occasional dent (CSB SDG3, 2022). When it comes to immunization prevalence, the figures for Kuwait are relatively high and are on track to be fully achieved by 2030 (**indicator 3.b.1**). The same observation applies to the density and distribution of health workers, which have been increasing throughout the years and are therefore on track to be fully achieved by 2030 (**indicator 3.c.1**).

The State Audit Bureau lends consistent support to government efforts aimed at enhancing the quality of health care services, through auditing and evaluating projects that are designed to enhancing health services. This has been the case in projects such as i) the Natural Medicine Building Project; ii) Kuwait Medical City Company; and iii) field and monitoring visits to different medical centers and hospitals¹³².

Of notable progress under SDG3 is the wide expansion of the healthy cities' initiative under the leadership of MOH healthy

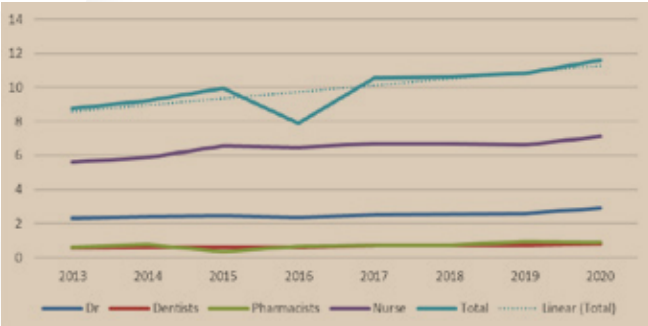


Figure 21: Health Worker Density and Distribution/1000 Population by Category and Ownership, CSB, SDG3, 2022

cities office and the WHO. Yarmouk City, Dhahiyat Abdullah AlSalim and AlShamiya have all been designated as WHO Healthy Cities and work multisectorally to sustain this designation. Other cities have registered to the national network and working towards this designation.



Yarmouk Healthy City The first healthy city in Kuwait by World Health Organization

131 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
 132 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.



SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

In the human development index, Kuwait ranked 52nd out of 191 countries in 2022, placing it among the high human development levels¹³³. In 2022, it also ranked 47th out of 132 countries in the Global Knowledge Index¹³⁴. Government expenditures on education amounted to 12.2 per cent of the national budget in 2021, 9.3 per cent of which represented the share of the Ministry of Education, and 2.7 per cent the Ministry of Higher Education¹³⁵. Kuwait's expenditures on Research and Development (R&D) however, amounted to 0.19 per cent of GDP in 2020, which is rather low compared to the average ratio in the GCC region¹³⁶. It has also been subject to fluctuations from 0.43 per cent of GDP in 2014 to 0.06 per cent in 2018. Most challenges of the limited funding for research are the result of the triple absence of i) a government funding body for research and development, ii) a research and performance-based budget, and, iii) a high-level governance authority to provide national direction and guidance on R&D. Further attention will therefore be given to promoting research, particularly one that is tied to the SDGs and to Vision 2035¹³⁷.

The enrolments of students in the public Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in the 2020/2021 academic year, amounted to 126,023 students and as such exceeded the enrolments of 22,947 students in the private HEIs, displaying a high reliance on public institutions. The HEI landscape consists of four public entities (including one operational university, one technical and vocational training institute (PAAET)¹³⁸, and one scientific research institute (KISR)¹³⁹, in addition to fully functional 15 private HEIs. Kuwait University traditionally admitted Kuwaiti nationals. However, a new regulation was passed recently enabling foreign students to enrol in it. Private HEIs, on the other hand, have no enrolment restrictions. The government supports the private HEIs, provides them with land and grants scholarships to their Kuwaiti students. Kuwait University ranked in the 801-1,000 category in the Times' Higher Education rankings and was the only Kuwait based university present in the ranking. In QS rankings¹⁴⁰, it was present in the 1,001-1,200 range. With respect to the private HEIs, two were present in the QS rankings – the American University of the Middle East (701-750) and Gulf University for Science and Technology (801-1,000) (UNDP & KPPC).

- 133 UNDP Human Development Index. <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>
- 134 The Knowledge Project. Global Knowledge Index 2022. <https://www.knowledge4all.com/ranking>
- 135 CSB of Kuwait (2022). Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Progress Report 2022
- 136 The Blue- Ribbon Report (Mahdy Al-Jazzaf, 2007) had recommended that R&D expenditure be raised to 1.0 per cent of the GDP in five years (by 2012) and 2.0 per cent of the GDP in 10 years (by 2017).
- 137 United Nations Development Programme and Kuwait Public Policy Center, Current State and Benchmarking: White Paper on Kuwait Higher Education and Research Policy: Roadmap to Align Kuwait's Higher Education & Research Policy Towards a Knowledge Economy. UNDP & KPPC. (UNFP & KPPC)
- 138 Public Authority for Applied Education and Training
- 139 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research
- 140 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) is a British company. It appraises higher education institutions around the world

At the community level, Women’s Cultural and Social Society (WCSS) has been implementing several initiatives under SDG 4. It established daycare for pre-school children with hearing and speech impairment (this initiative has been running uninterrupted since 1997)¹⁴¹. Other initiatives relate to enhancing the Arabic language among children, providing after-school support to primary and intermediary classes of math and sociology, in addition to a number of awareness sessions and workshops on a variety of useful topics¹⁴². In 2015, it established a committee for providing educational grants for people of all nationalities, who are unable to pay their education fees¹⁴³. As a result of the pandemic, many children ended up with educational loss. In response, WCSS set up a programme to support teachers and parents, adding rehabilitation sessions along with education material from grade 3 to grade 7. Equally, and in response to the pandemic, the AlEslah Society diverted resources to SDG 4 and launched a series of programmes and activities in the fields of entertainment, health awareness, culture, and skills development. The programmes aimed at creating a non-toxic environment during the unstable times of the pandemic, motivating people to invest their time in useful and interactive activities¹⁴⁴.

In addition, Al Eslah Society launched many educational projects including “Teach Me and to you my Reward” for primary education and the university student project to support university students to achieve a distinctive quality education. Al Eslah Society had also a distinguished experience in the field of caring for orphans who are unable to be followed – up academically, as it established several orphanages that accommodate and provide educational and learning programs in the elementary stages. The sponsorship in Al Eslah Society is divided into two types: the first is Partial Sponsorship, which is “monetary guarantee” granted to the orphan residing with his family, while the second is Comprehensive Sponsorship, which is in the orphanages that are supervised by the society through Namaa Charity. The society provided 409 university students with comprehensive study guarantees to ensure their academic stability and the completion of their educational attainment. The Society helped 1386 students in other educational stages with a total expenditure of more than KWD 165,000¹⁴⁵.



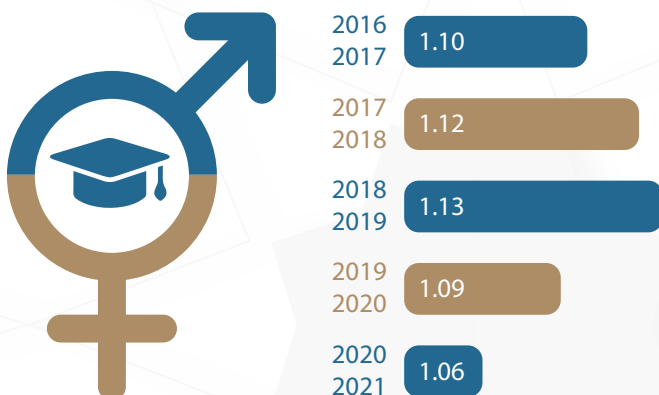
Part of an educational activity for school students on the 52th anniversary of the Constitution of the State of Kuwait (Photo by KUNA)

On **indicator 4.1.1**, the literacy rate among people of 15 years and above have been progressively increasing over the years with a rate of 96.2% in 2016/2017, reaching 96.8 in 2020/2021 for both males and females, with numbers slightly higher among males. The literacy rate among people between 15 and 24 has been following the same trend, recording higher rates with 99.3% and 99.6% between 2016/2017 and 2020/2021, respectively, for both males and females, with numbers slightly higher for females¹⁴⁶.

On **Indicator 4.1.2**, the table below shows the completion ratio of females to males in matters of basic and higher education combined.

141 Al Bustan Nursery for the hearing and speech impaired
 142 Women’s Cultural and Social Society, 2022
 143 Knowledge Seeker’s Committee
 144 Social Reform Association (2020). Fourth Sustainability Report 2020. Social Reform Society Planning Office. (Al-Eslah Society, 2020)
 145 Social Reform Association – Leadership Sustainability Report 2021
 146 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Table 9: Ratio of females to males – Gender Equality Index (Total basic education + higher education) CSB, SDG4, 2022



On **indicator 4.2 (target 4.2.1)**, Kuwait is recording an increasing number of the expected study years, from 14 years in 2015, to 14.2 in 2019 reaching 15.3 in 2022. Additionally, Kuwait increased its ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI) from 64/189 countries in 2019, to 50/189 countries in 2022¹⁴⁷. On **target 4.2.2**, The State of Kuwait has reported fluctuating rates on the Net Enrollment in primary school, starting with a total of 83.4% in 2012/2013, peaking at 83.9% in 2017/2018, and recording a gradual drop after that to reach 79.8% in 2020/2021. Of relevance to the same indicator, and in reference to the participation rate in organized learning, Kuwait has been reporting fluctuating numbers with a decreasing trend starting with a total of 93.5% in 2012 reaching 69.3% in 2020, with a lowest rate recorded in 2018 at 65.2%¹⁴⁸.

As for **target 4.3**, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) offers technical education through its five colleges and eight training institutes. It provides 2-year and 4-year degrees across its colleges. PAAET's emerging value resides in the prospects associated with programmes/certifications that tally with the labor market demands, and which are communicated either through government entities or private companies. Further attention is still required however,

to enhancing the communication between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and PAAET, with a view to better defining and better meeting the emerging needs of the labour market¹⁴⁹. On **indicator 4.3.3**, the available data pertain only to males, with no consistent data for effectively assessing the upcoming trend. However, available records show that 17 per cent of the total population aged between 15 and 24 were enrolled in TVET¹⁵⁰ education in 2022¹⁵¹. Most challenges under this heading concern i) the perceived lower status of the skill-based labour; ii) the limited English proficiency of TVET students; iii) the restricted perspectives of the PAAET programmes; and, iv) the mismatch between TVET and the labour market needs (UNDP & KPPC).

With regards to gender disparities in the educational system (**target 4.5.1**), CSB data show that the parity index of females to males has always been higher in the public schools in comparison to the private schools, with a ratio of 1.06, 1.11, 1.09 in the primary, intermediate and secondary classes among public schools, in comparison to 0.78, 0.75 and 0.75 respectively in the private school during educational year 2016/2017. This ratio kept on increasing in the public school from educational year 2016/2017 until 2020/2021 to reach 1.1, 1.08, and 1.17 respectively, despite reaching its highest ratio in 2019/2020. Likewise, the ratio in the public schools has more or less fluctuated among the years to reach 0.83, 0.79 and 0.69 respectively during educational year 2020/2021. Nonetheless, the ratio is much higher in higher education in comparison to primary, intermediate and secondary education, where the ratios are at 1.64, 3.09 and 1.54 among the vocational schools, the University of Kuwait, and the private universities during educational year 2019/2020¹⁵².

On illiteracy rates (**indicator 4.6.1**), Kuwait is on the right track, especially among Kuwaitis (15 years and above). For males, the State of Kuwait has recorded Zero per cent illiteracy rates since 2019. As for females, the rate has been steady at a mere 0.11 per cent since 2019. For non-nationals (15 years and above), the rate has been decreasing slightly moving from 3.39 per cent in 2019 to 3.34 per cent in 2021 for males, and from 4.49 per cent to 4.30 per cent for females, for the same period¹⁵³. On **indicator 4.7.1**, and while it is not possible to

147 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 4 – Op. cit.

148 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 4 – Op. cit.

149 KNPC & UNDP. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Kuwait National Petroleum Company.

150 Technical Vocational Education and Training

151 Kuwait university and the CSB

152 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

153 This indicator is about proficiency levels in basic literacy and numeracy and is usually obtained through Literacy assessment and not through Census data. The data used above however, derives from the CSB.



The Launch of the Safe Education Project in schools during COVID-19 pandemic to prevent and combat the virus

compute the respective scores due to lack of data, available information reveals that Kuwait provides comprehensive education for sustainable development including gender equality and human rights, at different levels of the education system and for all residents.

The adult literacy rate for those aged 15 years and above has increased from 96.17 per cent in 2016/2017 to 96.77 per cent in 2020/2021, whereas the literacy rate among the younger persons aged 15 to 24 years recorded a near universal value moving from 99.32 per cent in 2016/2017 to 99.59 per cent in 2020/2021¹⁵⁴. The figures below summarize the rates disaggregated by gender, showing a relatively higher increase of literacy rates among women aged 15 to 24 compared to those among men in the same age group.

With regards to the educational levels of those aged 10 years and above, 20.6% of non-Kuwaiti individuals among the households have not exceeded primary education, and only 27.3% have completed their higher education, whereas 43% of

Kuwaiti individuals within households have completed their higher education respectively¹⁵⁵.

Kuwait's main challenges however, remain the quality of education, achieving higher values on global indicators of education as well as focusing on science, mathematics and reading subjects for basic primary education (CSB, Kuwait 2022).

As for **indicator 4.a.1**, 100 per cent of schools have universal access to all basic logistics such as electricity, internet, drinking water, computers, inclusive infrastructure, separate bathrooms, and handwashing facilities. It is important to mention that Kuwait has maintained this rate since 2016 until now (latest data received – CSB¹⁵⁶). The government also provides scholarships to Kuwaiti students (target 4.b). With respect to student allowances, all Kuwaiti undergraduate students who register for it and meet the necessary criteria (e.g., not receiving any additional allowances / grants from other entities) receive a monthly allowance of KWD 200. Allowances for students that study abroad and are on scholarships are also granted,

154 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 4 – Op. cit.

155 Household Income and Expenditure Survey for the State of Kuwait 2019-2021

156 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

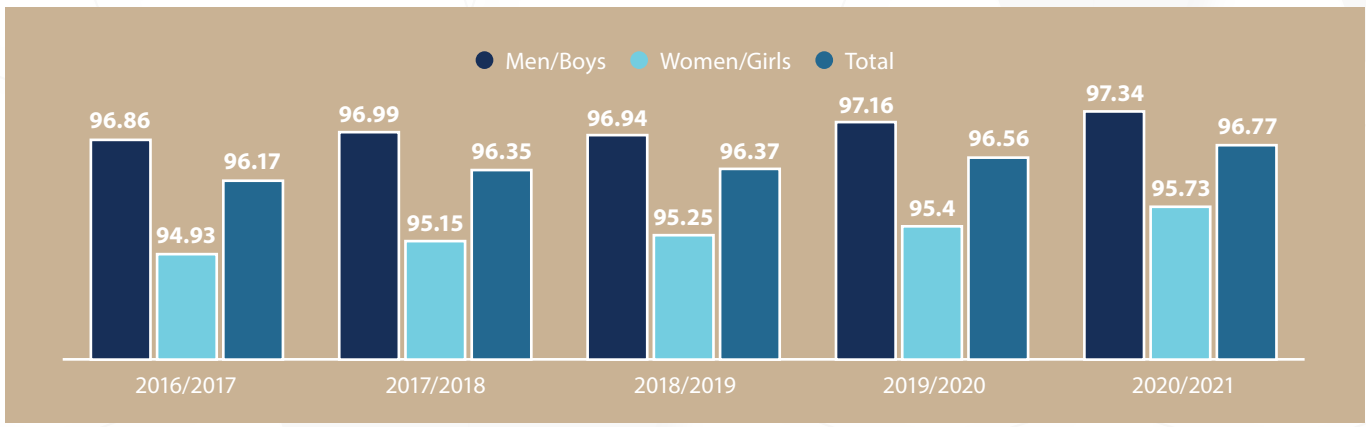


Figure 22: Adult Literacy Rate 15 years and above, CSB, SDG4, 2022

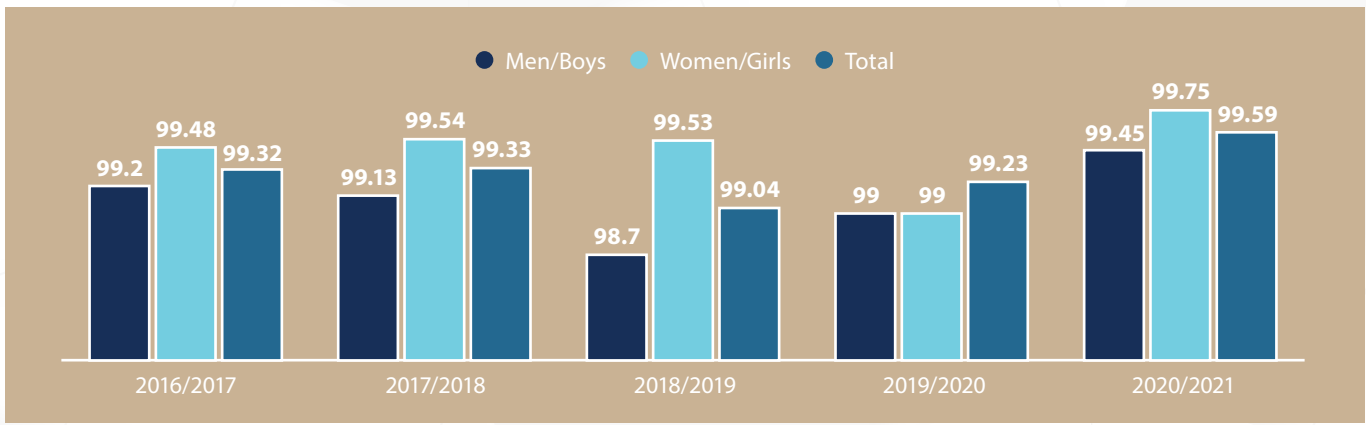


Figure 23: Adult Literacy Rate (Between 15 & 24 Years), CSB, SDG4, 2022

but vary based on the geography and the type of scholarship (e.g., merit or conventional / non-merit). For instance, students in the United States who are on a conventional / non-merit scholarship receive USD 2,600 per month while those on merit scholarships receive USD 3,900 per month. Students on external scholarships are also offered health insurance and are eligible to receive other allowances / incentives provided they meet the requirements (e.g., pre-travel allowance and other related expenses, books allowance, computer allowance, etc.). The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has its own scholarship programme for its researchers and employees. As to PAAET, it has selective scholarship for students to pursue their postgraduate degrees from foreign universities (UNDP & KPPC).

It is important to mention at this juncture, that KISR has implemented a set of projects that are of particular relevance to SDG 4 directly, but which also contribute indirectly to many other goals¹⁵⁷. Among these, suffice it to mention i) establishing research and development centers to support the private sector; ii) designing facilities specialized in development and testing intensive production techniques for seeds and desert plants; iii) establishing specialized facilities to develop integrated and advanced agricultural systems to enhance production in sustainable agriculture; iv) establishing the economic and sustainable farm using modern technologies; and, v) designing and establishing facilities specialized in research for desert and urban development, in addition to many other projects¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁷ Such as SDGs 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17

¹⁵⁸ Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). The most important achievements of the development projects 2021



Graduation ceremony of students from Kuwait University

The State Audit Bureau (SAB) allocates significant number of investments on education and training of its employees, with a view to ensuring their high skills and up-to-date knowledge and expertise. The Bureau implements integrative training plans that are applied at a high level of training and which are conducted by certified trainers. SAB also has a vocational training program for its newly recruited employees, which is divided in three stages: i) a Theoretical Foundation Training; ii) Sector Rotations where employees are trained on different technical sectors through field visits; and, iii) Qualification of New Employees in their worksites. The trainings provided by SAB are made available to its own employees as well as to students from academic institutions such as Kuwait University, private universities or PAAET¹⁵⁹.

On **indicator 4.b.1**, Kuwait recorded a significant increase in the volume of ODA flows for scholarships by sector and type of study (Grants Provided by the State as Scholarships) recording a peak of 46.42 million KWD in 2020, decreasing to 22.90 million KWD in 2021¹⁶⁰.

On **indicator 4.c.1** Kuwait has upheld sustained partnerships through its public, private and development entities, regionally and globally (Qatar, Egypt, US, UK, Harvard University, MIT, etc.). The remaining challenges consist in addressing the lack of accreditation within TVET, the limited teaching in English, the limited number of international students and the limited collaboration between private and public entities when it comes to research and development (UNDP & KPPC).

159 State Authority Bureau, 2020

160 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all & Kuwait Fund for Development 2022



SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

With regards to SDG 5, the national data available show sustained progress. On **indicator 5.1.1**, the State of Kuwait assumes a significant policy and legislative role with the aim of bridging the gender gap in the State of Kuwait. The National Constitution guarantees an equal status to Kuwaiti men and women, especially through article 29 affirming equality between the two sexes¹⁶¹. Many policies, regulations and laws have been passed to guarantee that Kuwaiti women should receive due attention and care to support their individual, social and family roles, while fully upholding their social, economic, and political rights¹⁶². At the legislative level, close to 13 laws and decrees have been passed with a view to supporting women in different sectors including education (1956/1), civil and labour law (2010/6), rights of persons with disabilities (2010/8) and others. Kuwait has also ratified many international conventions addressing gender equality such as CEDAW and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The State has recently established a specialized Women's Committee affiliated with the Council of Ministers. The Committee is mandated to work on women's issues focusing mainly on coordinating and supporting the efforts of government and non-government stakeholders concerned with women's affairs. The Committee is mandated to represent Kuwait in Arab and international fora addressing women, children and family issues, generate relevant publications and hold gender related seminars and discussion groups.

On **indicator 5.2.2**, the reported 0.02 per cent prevalence of females who have been subject to physical violence in the State of Kuwait in 2022 is very close to the Zero-target set for 2030. As for the girls who have been married or engaged before the age of 18 years (**indicator 5.3.1**), the numbers have been decreasing since 2016, and reached a mere 2.7 per cent in 2022. As for female circumcision (**indicator 5.3.2**), Kuwait has already achieved this target with Zero cases since 2016. The State of Kuwait has also achieved **target 5.6** regarding the percentage of



On International Women's Day, Boursa Kuwait rings the bell for women's empowerment

161 "People are equal in human dignity and are equal before the law in public rights and duties, without discrimination between them on grounds of gender, origin, language or religion." In The Constitution of Kuwait

162 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. CSB.



Kuwaiti women appointed as judges in 2020 - A new step towards women's rights

women between 15 to 49 years of age who make informed decisions for themselves regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health, where the rate achieved has also been 100 per cent since 2016. Additionally, the State has laws and legislations to ensure that women and men aged 15 years and above have full and equal access to information, education services and care in the field of sexual and reproductive health as this has been applicable since 2016¹⁶³.

Other data available show progress on four critical indicators under SDG 5, namely i) demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods (females aged 15 to 49); ii) ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received; iii) ratio of female-to-male labour force participation rate; and, iv) seats held by women in national parliament. As of mid 2022, women's participation in leadership positions amounted to 28 per

cent, with female Kuwaitis accounting for 21 per cent and 7 per cent for non-Kuwaitis. Some SDG 5 indicators however, still fall short of the prospective 2030 targets¹⁶⁴. Indeed, regarding the number of seats occupied by Kuwaiti women in the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly (**indicator 5.5.1**), they had gradually increased for a while, but then suffered a drop in 2020 and 2021.

However, in 2022, the percentage of women's participation in the Ministerial Council and the National Assembly increased. This included among others the appointment of a Minister of Social Affairs and Community Development – Minister of State for Women and Childhood Affairs, and a Minister of Public Works – Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, in addition to the election of two women to parliament¹⁶⁵. (see the figure below).

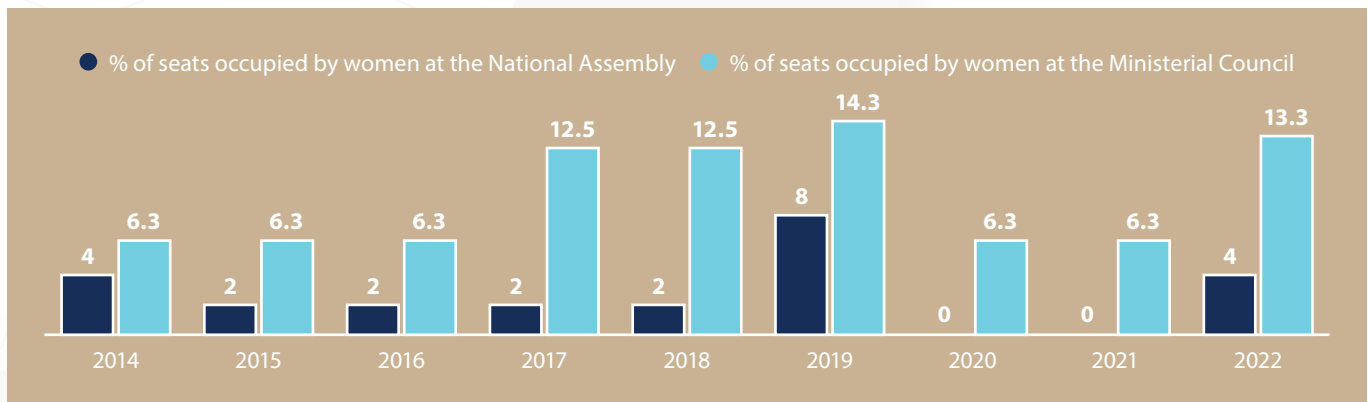


Figure 24: The Share of Seats Occupied by Kuwaiti Women in the Ministerial Council and the National Assembly, CSB, SDG5, 2022

163 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
 164 The 2022 UNRCO Report suggests that Kuwait would score 55.7 on SDG 5 in 2030, compared to 55.3 in 2021.
 165 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 5 – Op. cit.

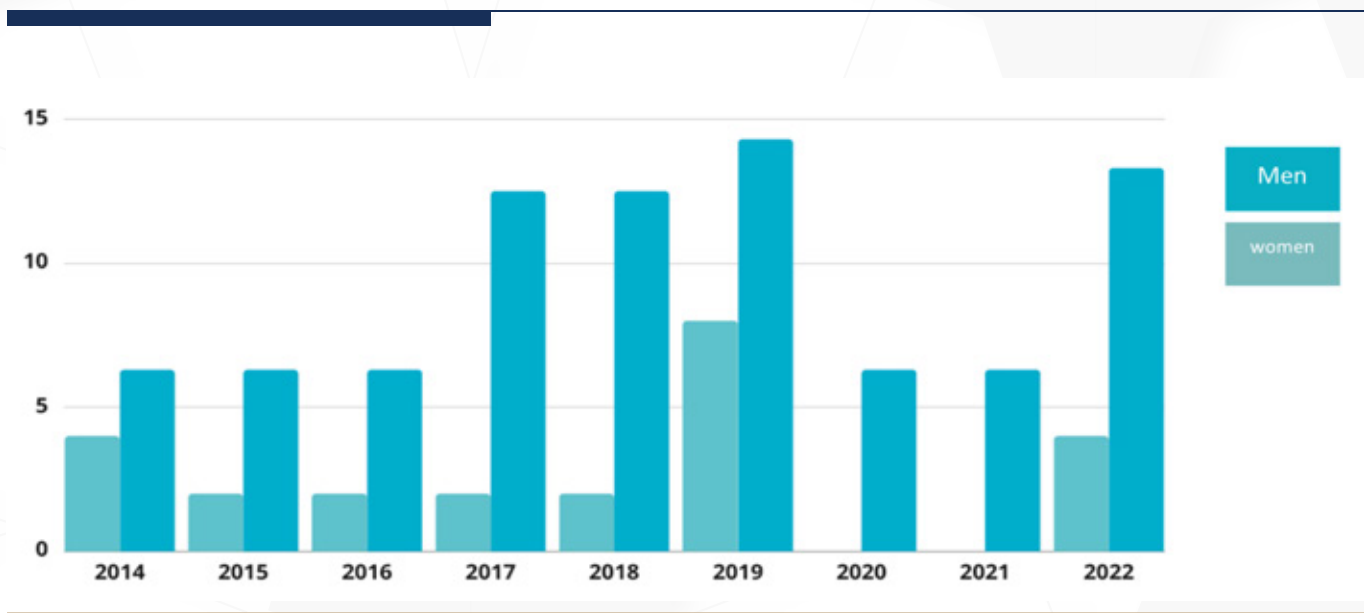


Figure 25: Percentage of seats held by women in national parliaments (Majlis al Umma) - Percentage of seats held by women in the Ministerial Council



Figure 26: Proportion of women in management positions in the government sector (CSB, Kuwait 2022)

The persistent challenge faced under SDG 5 is to increase women’s participation in various decision-making sectors of the public life, such as ministerial and municipal councils, parliament, the judiciary, and other relevant areas. Achieving full women’s empowerment remains a critical priority for the government of Kuwait (CSB, Kuwait 2022).

Regarding livelihood and gender equality, data on **indicator 5.a.1** show 23 per cent the share of women who own agricultural land or have secured rights to agricultural land against 76.9 per cent for men in 2016, the only available data. As for the legal aspect including customary law, the State guarantees women’s equal rights to own and/or control land (**indicator 5.a.2**). On **indicator 5.b.1**, around 99.8 per cent of women

in the State of Kuwait had already a near universal access to mobile phones in 2020 against 98.9 per cent for men¹⁶⁶.

It is worth mentioning that with respect to the social development projects, Kuwait gives serious priority and importance to women's empowerment and thus implements several projects that aim at building women capacities to become future SME owners, and helps them and their families financially¹⁶⁷. Worth mentioning as well, the Public Allowances Law No. 12 of 2011, which confirms the role of the Ministry of Social Affairs in achieving equality between women and men. The provision applies particularly with regards to women's right to obtain social assistance up to a monthly amount of KWD 559, with possible rent allowances where required, with a view to alleviating their suffering, especially for those who experience difficult financial conditions or whose earnings are below the minimum wage, or in cases of housewives, divorcees, or elderly women in need. This temporary income is discontinued at the end of the justifying circumstances.

The State Audit Bureau (SAB) is conscious of its roles in and contribution to gender equality and to enhancing the leading and decision-making roles of female employees. In 2020 already, 51.6% of SAB's employees were females and 35 out of 72 supervisory roles were taken on by women. Indeed, SAB encourages the effective involvement of women and their active and resourceful participation in official representations in all meetings, events and public activities, including those involving leadership and directorial roles and responsibilities¹⁶⁸.

At the community level, Kuwait's Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS) has devised several programmes that aim at enhancing the status of Kuwaiti women and empowering them with knowledge and skills to take on leadership roles. For instance, the "Girls4Girls" initiative, which is a six-week Harvard Awareness Creation Programme that Kuwait was the first Arab country to implement, aims at empowering women to assume positions of leadership. The "Girls Club" initiative that was established in 2021, and which operates during summer, aims at empowering young girls, boosting their self-confidence and enhancing their understanding of national identity, citizenship, gender equality and equal rights and duties so that they may assume positions of leadership in society and lead a life of their choice. The main topics covered under this

initiative are women's rights in family and marriage, women's rights in citizenship, nationality and political participation, protection against violence, and enhancing women's economic rights. The project has been up and running since 2012. Add to that, the work of the Women's Society and Youth Association, which was created in 2015 and which has been actively working with youth with a view to enhancing their awareness about gender equality, legal issues and educational opportunities and to ensuring their equal opportunity and smooth social and economic insertion and full integration in society (WCSS, 2022).

Al Eslah Society has also allocated a significant part of its efforts for women's inclusion through the healthy sports day for girls between the age of 15-18, with the aim of raising awareness about healthy daily lives among girls. A humanitarian event was conducted last year during the holy month of Ramadan, entitled "لأجلها" (*for her*) to shed lights on all the challenges and the suffering women face, and which are caused by war repercussions and the different crises in the area. Additionally, the Women's Action Secretariat in cooperation with the Al-Rasikhon Center implemented nine courses in educational development in addition to four other qualifying programmes for selected specialists bridging many training gaps that make women more assertive and productive in society (*AlEslah Society, 2019*).

KDIPA too has several licensed investment entities, which launched several projects to empower women in engineering; organized scientific seminars for female engineers, and set up an engineering training laboratory for women. It has launched educational competitions with a view to motivating women and youth and to encouraging innovation, and organized for them field visits to technology centers for increased exposure¹⁶⁹.

In addition, there are several international movements and international organizations working on Women's empowerment in Kuwait. Among them is Soroptimist Kuwait, which is a global volunteering club that works towards women's empowerment in multiple sectors. Soroptimist works to empower, educate and enable women through multiple projects and initiatives. It holds a consultative capacity with the United Nations allowing it to be a platform to properly address women's challenges and needs in the State of Kuwait¹⁷⁰.

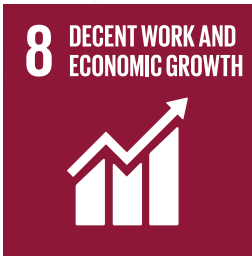
166 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

167 Ministry of Social Affairs

168 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

169 Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2020). Annual report 2019-2020

170 Soroptimist Kuwait, 2022



SDG 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

At the macroeconomic level, the global fluctuations in oil prices and the persistent instability in the region has had an adverse effect on Kuwait's ranking in the overall Global Competitive Index, where it ranked 46th out of 141 countries in 2019. Indeed, the State has been devising policies and mobilizing the necessary resources to diversify the structure of the national income and to soften the reliance on oil proceeds, which as of 2020, represented 84 per cent of all revenues. This is part of Vision 2035 and is expected to further materialize in the Third National Development Plan (2020/2021 – 2024/2025). One of the national priorities presently, is to seek and work towards securing viable alternative sources of income preparing for the post-oil phase, with a view to attaining financial sustainability for future generations in due course¹⁷¹.

Kuwait is a host for many contractual foreign workers. On 31/12/2022, the total number of workers reached 2,790,287, 15.9 per cent of whom were Kuwaiti nationals and 84.1 per cent non-nationals. The largest part of the national workforce that is 79.8 per cent, work in the public sector, while 4.6 per cent of them work in the private sector¹⁷².

The Government of Kuwait established in 2013 the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) as a public body under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. PAM had a separate legal personality and a separate budget. Its mandate consisted in i) supervising the workforce in the



Kuwaiti Youth Project COFE app Winner of the Technological Excellence Award for Start-ups

171 CSB, Kuwait 2022.
172 CSB, Kuwait 2023.

private and oil sectors; ii) issuing regulations on the rules and procedures for granting work authorization/permit and on foreign labour mobility; and, iii) registering workers in the private and oil sectors and preparing a database to account for temporary contractual expat workers. The Authority was solely responsible for recruiting foreign workers in the private and oil sectors and benefited from the technical and advisory support of international organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)¹⁷³. As such, PAM developed an integrated data system for all workers in the private sector including applying for, and issuing work permits / licenses and securing all associated legal requirements. As to the cancellation of work permits and the departure of the workers, this operation is done through an automated system used by the Authority. For the purpose of upholding workers' rights and ensuring a comprehensive safety and security regardless of nationality, PAM empowered workers to file complaints in case of any work-related abuse (the Authority has a public website with an e-complaint filing mechanism, available to all).

For the last decade or so, Kuwait has been implementing a two-pronged balanced and market sensitive labour force policy. On the one hand, the policy aimed at developing and increasing the efficiency of the national workforce with a view to raising productivity, improving the working conditions and employment opportunities for national workers in the private sector and focusing on raising the technological level of the private sector. This was pursued through amending the necessary legislations regarding creating an appropriate environment for the private sector employment and legislation in small and medium-sized enterprises, reducing employment in the government sector, reorienting Kuwaiti nationals to private sector employment and promoting capital-intensive economic activities, particularly in the private sector. On the other hand, the Government of Kuwait concluded 21 bilateral memoranda of understanding (MOU) with counterparts regarding foreign labour mobility and deployment of workers in both the private and domestic labour sectors. The MOUs aimed at facilitating the procedures related to the mobility of workers and overcoming any ensuing problem, litigation or challenge involved during any stage of the three recruitment phases as described below:

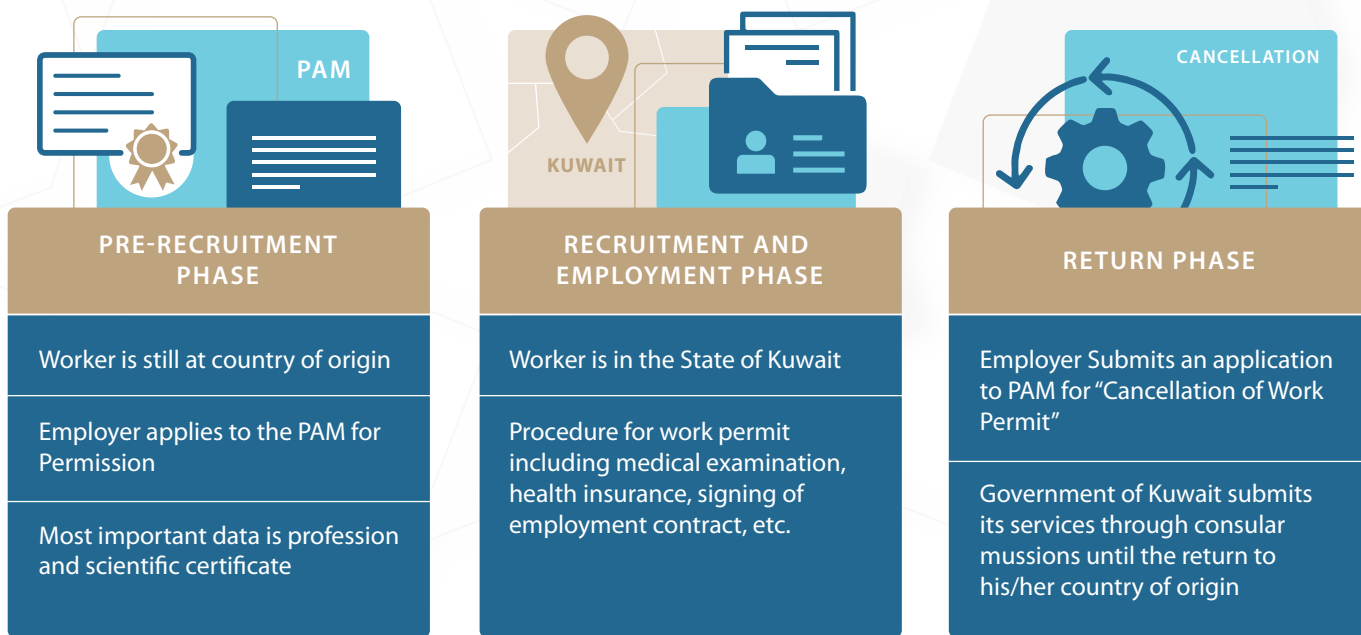


Figure 27: Labour Recruitment Stages (IOM, 2022)

It is worth mentioning that the above twin-policy has been integrated with various other national policies aimed at developing the education system and increasing its efficiency, as well as improving the school environment in general with the aim of achieving compatibility between the educational outcomes and the objectives of Vision 2035. This has been

pursued through directing the education and training processes towards the productive economic sectors and the development of new disciplines in line with the requirements of the labor market¹⁷⁴. The table below provides a summary of policies adopted and their objectives:

Table 10: Labor Market and Employment Objectives and Policies in the Second Development Plan 2015-2016 / 2019-2020

Category	Policies & Objectives
Reforming imbalances of the Kuwaiti component in the labour market	Encourage capital-intensive economic activities through expanding high-tech projects which increase productivity and reduce the need for foreign workforce
	Adopt work values in government institutions that increase productivity and reduce redundancy
Increasing the contribution of the Kuwaiti workforce to the private sector	Increase the ratio of Kuwaiti workforce to the total workforce by encouraging employment programs for nationals in the private sector
	Calibrate the workforce in government by adjusting its numbers to international standards, regulate employment standards through conversion programs, and encourage young people to work in the private sector
	Improve the working environment in the private sector to attract additional national workforce. Achieve a balance in the working conditions between the public and the private sector in terms of working hours, salaries, grants, and other benefits and enlist Kuwaitis to work in the private sector through specialized training programs
Reducing Unemployment	Support Kuwaiti artisans [vocationalists] and provide incentives that make them competitive
	Support SMEs by i) addressing operational constraints, ii) providing financial support and management facilities, iii) ensuring the sustainability of small enterprises, and iv) attracting young people and newcomers to the labor market
Developing the labour market information system and recruitment mechanisms for foreign temporary, contractual workers	Implement the system of professional qualifications, conduct professional tests on current and new employment inside and outside Kuwait with a view to ensuring a higher level of labor productivity in Kuwaiti markets
	Control the process of licensing commercial investment activities by linking them to the scientific qualifications necessary for such activities
	Develop a system that allows a time-bound registration of employment in a private sector project, for a period not exceeding the duration of the implementation of the project, and with no visa transferability during the life of the project
	Establish companies specialized in providing various domestic, household and family services system while legally reducing the direct recruitment of domestic workers through individual citizens

Worth noting here the role of the Ministry of Social Affairs, in cooperation with the General Secretariat of Awqaf, in training women who benefit from social assistance, in craftsmanship and professionally, by providing them with free training courses. The Ministry also facilitates their reintegration into the labour market, and supports their small income-generating projects through 33 boutiques, with a view to marketing and promoting their products. It equally provides consultations and organizes commercial exhibitions for the owners of craft projects, holds seminars to raise their efficiency, and enrolls them in specialized social and commercial courses with the aim of facilitating their reintegration into the sustainable production process.

The State Audit Bureau (SAB) has carried out several assessments of relevance to SDG 8. These included i) the Evaluation of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Performance of the Recruitment System in the Civil Service Commission, and ii) evaluation of SAB's role in reinforcing economic growth, in activating its projects, and in supporting its goals and orientations. SAB has also devised a plan in 2020 to evaluate the performance of the National Fund for SME Development, and its compliance with Agenda 2030. The plan included i) provision of information on different sectors; ii) designing initiation and guidelines to work on transformative craft programmes in the agricultural sector and other economic sectors that are associated with Agenda 2030 such as renewable energy and food security, and activating a financing program on "micro loans"; iii) developing an entrepreneurial ecosystem through creating electronic linkage systems with government agencies related to the Fund's work and revisiting the MoU with 20 local bodies; iv) reviewing legislations related to small and medium enterprises and adapting them to the changing economy; v) building strategic corporation with public sector institutions and parallel bodies, particularly in the GCC countries; vi) enhancing market penetration through designing and developing commercial opportunities programs connecting small and medium enterprises with well-established companies in the State of Kuwait, as well as designing government's engagement programs to offer small and medium enterprises a percentage of government contracts; and finally, vii) acquiring a membership for the Fund in the European Commission to facilitate entry of the SMEs into the European market¹⁷⁵.

With reference to **target 8.5**, "Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value", national legislations have been passed to provide a conducive and decent work environment for foreign workers, enabling them to bring their families and children to Kuwait and to allow them to enjoy basic rights such as education, health, freedom of work and movement. All labour in Kuwait came in accordance with documented and official employment contracts through a cooperation between the State of Kuwait of origin and the State of Kuwait of destination. The contract must be in writing, where working hours and rest periods are well defined and wages outlined and respected. Article (38) of the regulations and procedures for granting work authorization issued by the PAM under the 2021 Administrative Decision 27, prohibits employers in the private and oil sectors from withholding travel documents of their employees". Article 12 of Law No. 68 of 2015 on domestic workers already stipulates that the employer is prohibited from keeping any personal ID documents or proof documents of the personality of the domestic worker, such as a passport or civil ID card, unless the domestic worker consents otherwise¹⁷⁶."

On **target 8.7** "Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms", Kuwait has incrementally adopted several national legislations criminalizing forced labour and servitude. Article (42) of the Constitution provides that "no forced labour may be imposed on anybody¹⁷⁷". Other legislations such as Law No. 6 of 2010 on employment in the private sector, Law No. 91 passed in 2013 sanctioning trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants and law No. 68 of 2015 on domestic labour are all legal provisions to ensure full protection against any exploitation or abuse¹⁷⁸.

175 State Authority Bureau, 2020
176 IOM, 2022
177 IOM, 2022
178 IOM, 2022

On **target 8.8** “Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment”, Kuwait has passed several policies and regulations aimed at securing a decent workplace specifically for foreign labour on precarious contracts. To that end, PAM established a specialized department (the Department of Domestic Labour DDL) with the competence to address domestic labour queries and deal with the ensuing complaints. DDL has so far handled more than 2,485 complaints¹⁷⁹. Indeed, starting with recruitment agencies (RA), the enactment of Law No. 68 of 2015 on domestic workers included support for vulnerable domestic workers granting several benefits¹⁸⁰.

Additionally, Kuwait has also devised Child Labour prevention measures and incorporated them within its policies and regulations. The labour law in the private sector No. 6 of 2010 prohibits child labour or the employment of those under the age of 15, with stringent restrictions on the work of juveniles aged 15 to 18 years.

Kuwait has endorsed many human rights conventions, which are considered national laws in accordance with Article (70) of the Constitution and has ratified many of ILO’s 19 conventions including the 7 key Conventions on Human Rights as provided in the table 11 below.

Table 11: List of Human Rights and ILO Conventions to which Kuwait has been a signatory

Human Rights Conventions	ILO Conventions
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.	Convention (87) on freedom of assembly and collective bargaining (1961)
The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.	Conventions (29) (105) on forced labor and forced servitude (1968 – 1961)
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.	Convention (111) on the elimination of discrimination in employment (1966)
Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women	Conventions (138) and (182) on the prevention of the use of children and minors (1999 – 2000)
Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.	The Convention (98) on the right of trade union organization and collective bargaining (2007) in addition to other Arab labor agreements, and the articles of these agreements were reflected in national legislation, whether by law, regulation [by-laws], administrative or organizational decision.
The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the “Optional Protocols attached to the Convention on the Rights of the Child” on the participation of children in armed conflicts, the sale of children, and the exploitation of children in prostitution and pornography	
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	

179 456 complaints were resolved amicably and 120 complaints were referred to the judiciary for adjudication

180 These include among others i) preventing recruitment offices and employers from making any deductions on workers’ salaries/wages, ii) commanding employers to pay the worker’s food, clothing, treatment expenses, nursing and accommodation, iii) preventing household employers from assigning domestic workers acts that pose a danger to their health or an insult to their human dignity, iv) applying a cap in the contract on working hours and weekly rest times, and provision for adequate protection in the event of disagreement/conflict between domestic workers and employers

Targets 8.1 and **8.2**, have recorded negative growth since 2016 and up to 2020. These targets have been labeled as underachieved by Kuwait’s Central Statistical Bureau¹⁸¹. On the other hand, Kuwait has achieved Zero per cent informal workers out of total employment (in non-agricultural employment) – **target 8.3, indicator 8.3.1** – and has maintained this achievement since 2016.

The average monthly income in Kuwait varies widely between sectors, gender, and nationality. On **target 8.5** data shows that the highest paid category is a Kuwaiti male working in the public sector. It is important to note that females in the

same group (nationality and sector) are reported to being paid less than their male colleagues. It is not clear however, if this difference in pay scale is due to gender differences or due to female prevalence in less senior jobs as opposed to their male colleagues since the relevant data is not available. It is also important to note that the difference in income between men and women among non-Kuwaitis in the public sector is less than that of Kuwaitis in the same sector. As for the unemployment rate (**indicator 8.5.2**), Kuwait has already achieved this target with a total unemployment rate of 1.1 per cent in 2021 (Kuwaitis, non-Kuwaitis, males, and females)¹⁸².

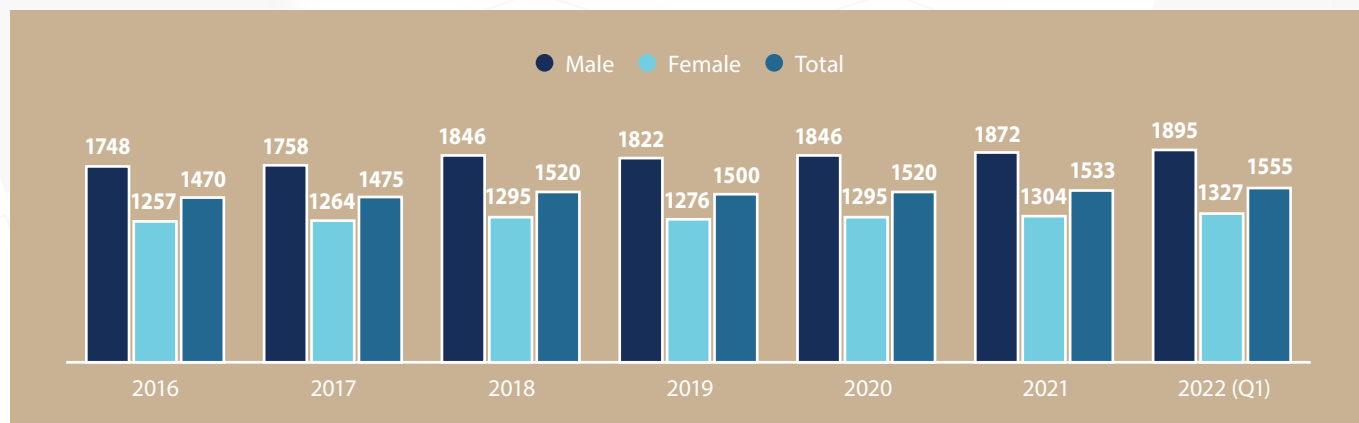


Figure 28: Average Monthly Income for Kuwaitis in the Public Sector (KWD), CSB, SDG8, 2022

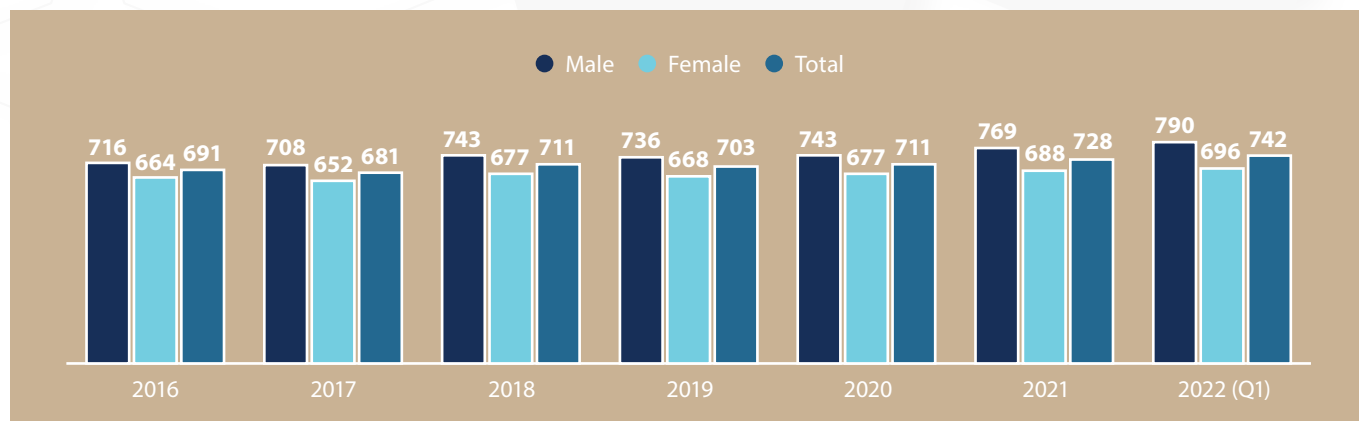


Figure 29: Average Monthly Income for Non-Kuwaitis in the Public Sector (KWD), CSB, SDG8, 2022

181 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
 182 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

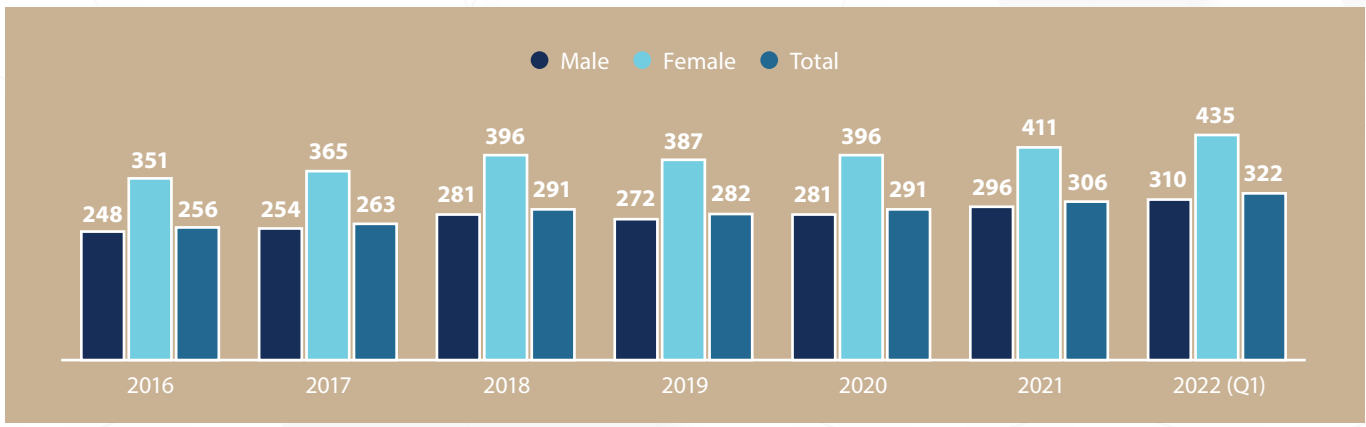


Figure 30: Average Monthly Income for Non-Kuwaitis in the private Sector (KWD), CSB, SDG8, 2022

Kuwait's figures on target 8.6, report a negative progress towards 2030, while **indicator 8.6.1's** aim is to decrease the percentage of youth (between 15 and 24 years) that are outside

education, employment, and training. However, the numbers so far are rather increasing, as per the chart below.

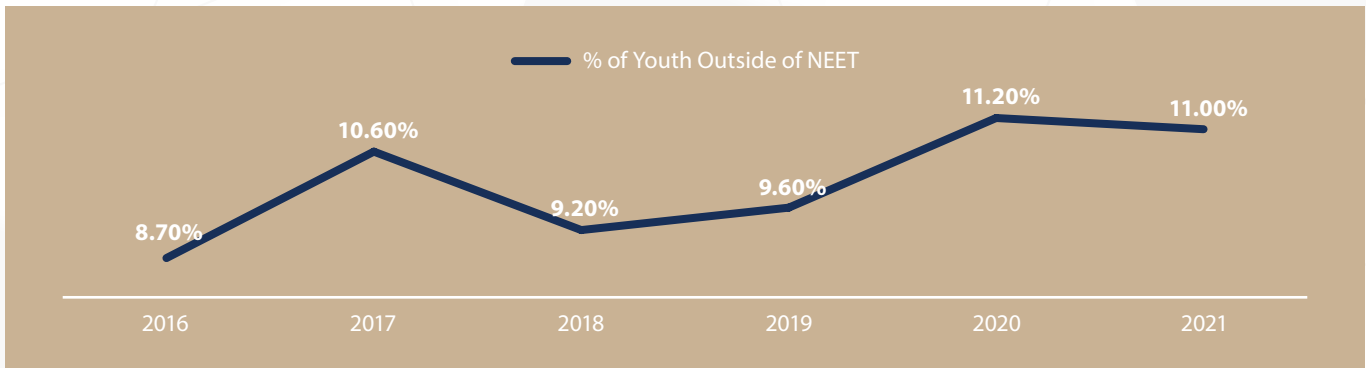


Figure 31: Percentage of Youth (between 15 and 24 years old) Outside Education, Employment and Training (2016-2021), CSB, SDG8, 2022

On Child labour, **indicator 8.7.1**, Kuwait has recorded Zero per cent of children engaged in child labour since 2016 (for boys and girls aged 5-17 years)¹⁸³. On occupational health and safety Kuwait's numbers are reporting a significant decrease, between 2016 and 2020, reaching 676 accidents down from 3,013 serious injuries reported. However, more data is required to ensure that this drop is not related to lack of reporting and is indeed a reflection of decrease in accidents.

183 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

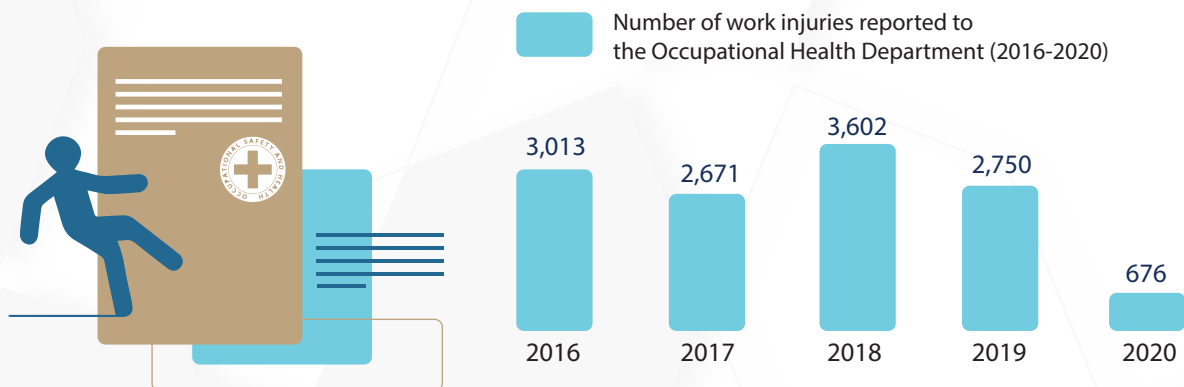


Figure 32: Number of Work Injuries Reported to the Occupational Health Department (2016-2020), CSB, SDG8, 2022

On **target 8.7** “Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms”, the Public Authority for Manpower is in the process of completing its national plan on combating trafficking in persons, which comes under two thematic pillars: prevention and protection. On that, several projects have already been put in place¹⁸⁴.

On **indicator 8.10.1**, regarding a) the number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults, and b) the number of

automated teller machines per 100,000 adults”, Kuwait has recorded a fluctuating increase since 2016¹⁸⁵.

Finally on **target 8.a.1**, Kuwait is recording a decrease in the aid for trade-related obligations and payments from KWD 140,457,393 in 2016 to KWD 140,420,933 in 2020. As for **target 8.b.1**, Kuwait has had a national strategy for youth employment since 2016, as a stand-alone and as a component of the national employment strategy. Both components are expected to be integrated in the prospective national development plan¹⁸⁶.

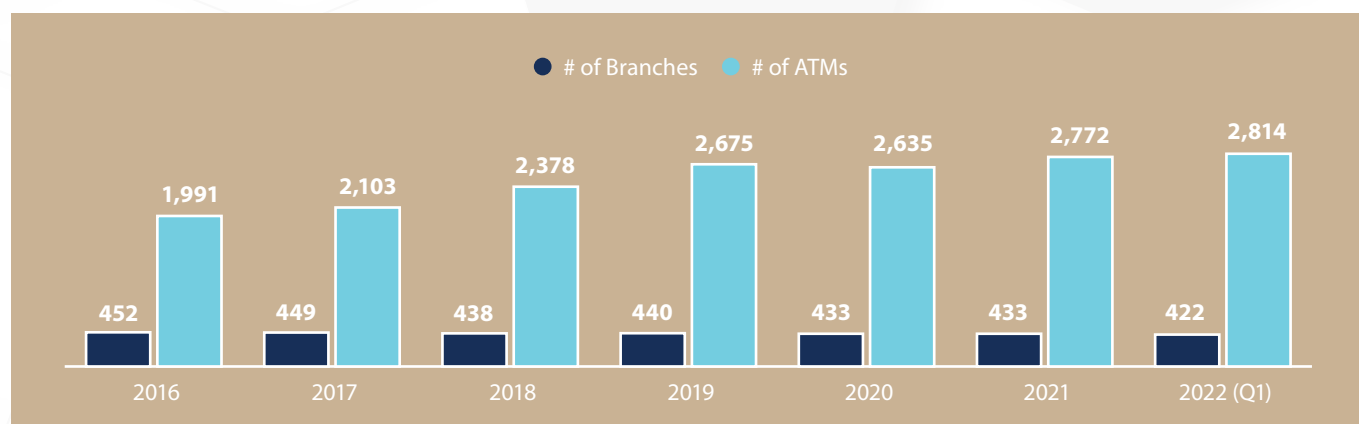


Figure 33: The Number of Commercial Bank Branches per 100,000 adults, and the Number of Automated Teller Machines per 100,000 adults (2016-2022), CSB, SDG8, 2022

184 For more details see International Organization of Migration (2022). Migration, Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda (DRAFT). Retrieved from: <https://www.iom.int/migration-sustainable-development-and-2030-agenda> (IOM, draft, 2022)

185 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

186 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 8 – Op. cit.



SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequality within and among countries

Through several policies, legislations and specialized institutional frameworks, under the responsibility of several line ministries and government departments, and through persistent and complementary collaboration with civil society and non-government actors including private sector partners, Kuwait systematically worked to enhance inclusiveness across a range of interest groups such as people with disabilities, women, children, the elderly, foreign and domestic workers, residents with illegal status and others. Still, Goal 10 poses a few challenges in terms of reporting, since data pertaining to some of the targets of this goal is either not readily available or dates back to 2013 or earlier, while significant data can be completely missing for others.

Considering the data available, it is worth referring to the records of the Ministry of Justice for instance regarding **indicator 10.3.1**, as they show Zero per cent discrimination or harassment since 2016 and up until 2021¹⁸⁷. As for the fiscal, wage, and social protection policies that have been adopted by Kuwait to progressively achieve greater equality (**target 10.4**), the State of Kuwait has clear positive records to show. Indeed, for **indicator 10.4.1**, there was a positive increase in the Labor share of GDP, including wages and social protection payments since 2012, which reached its highest value in 2020 of 22.9 per cent. As for the formulation of the national budget (**indicator 10.4.2**), some achievement can be recorded particularly that the national budget of fiscal year 2021/2022 was prepared in accordance with the “Guide to Budget Codes and Classifications (Monetary Basis)” issued in Circular No. (4) of 2015, as the classification was made in accordance with internationally agreed concepts and definitions following the Government Financial Statistics Guide (GFS 2001), which was issued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The implementation of the annual development plan for the fiscal year 2021/2022 will follow a careful analysis and prediction of revenues taking into account concrete and well premised financial assumptions. Accordingly, Kuwait is expected to be in a



Increasing opportunities for empowering Kuwaiti women by joining the military

187 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries & Ministry of Finance Kuwait. Investing in Kuwait – A Guide for Investing Opportunities in Kuwait: Appendix 5.

position to achieve the political, economic, and social goals set out in the national plan and raise the standards of living for all, while transforming the State of Kuwait into a conducive and promising financial and commercial center that is likely to attract local and foreign investments¹⁸⁸.

Kuwait provides different groups with distinct social care through a number of public institutions. The State Audit Bureau (SAB) contributes to this obligation by auditing the work of specialized government entities with a view to enhancing the standards of social integration and achieving social equality for all groups in Kuwaiti society. SAB carries out follow-up reviews of the services provided through field visits¹⁸⁹. For instance, in the most recent assessment that SAB completed with the Public Authority of the Disabled to measure their preparedness for implementing relevant SDGs provisions, it was revealed that despite the approved internal instructions, the institution lacked the sufficient means to properly implement relevant targets of the SDGs. Kuwait is currently working on the preparation and provision of a database that accounts for the SDG indicators associated with persons with disabilities¹⁹⁰.

In terms of the recruitment cost, which is borne by the employee as a percentage of the monthly income in the State of Kuwait of destination (**indicator 10.7.1**), it was reported to have been Zero since 2012. Pursuant to the provisions of Article No. (10) of Law No. 6 of 2010 regarding work in the private sector (6/2010), the employer has been prohibited from employing foreign workers unless they are authorized by the competent authority to work for them, and the ministry issues a decision regarding the procedures, documents and fees that must be collected from the employer's work. By law, the employer bears the expenses of workers' return to their country, and if the worker ceases to work and joins work with a third party, the latter shall bear the expenses of the worker's return to their country, after submitting a notification of the worker's absence from the original sponsor¹⁹¹. As for **targets 10.b** and **10.c**, records provided by the CSB indicate that achievements have been either made or are on the right track towards achievement.

Other actors working in the public domain have been acknowledged to contribute to reducing inequalities among different groups in different capacities. For instance, KDIPA has been working on promotional campaigns targeting

international investors attracting them to consider Kuwait as a potential location to settle and expand their investments, as well as introducing a host of promising investment opportunities in vital sectors. With a view to nurturing an equal opportunity environment for all, KDIPA also launched a communication campaign with 140 international companies. Additionally, it strengthened coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to activate economic diplomacy; attended 14 coordination and periodic meetings of bilateral committees with seven countries including Japan, Iraq, Indonesia, Turkey, Belgium, China, and Hungary; continued to participate in the United States-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue; the UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group; and the experts' meeting on the proposal for a new Arab investment agreement project; signed three MOUs within the framework of the bilateral relations of the State of Kuwait, two of them with the Republic of Korea and one with the Arab Republic of Egypt; and continued to follow up and implement international agreements and signed MOUs with six relevant government entities to enhance mutual coordination and an equal opportunity environment for all (KDIPA, 2020).

As for Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS), it also works on enhancing women's role in public and private institutions. Through the Women and Business Affairs Committee, it has documented cases of discrimination against women in a shadow report with a view to submitting it to the relevant judiciary committees for their consideration and for their appropriate actions and sanctions as the case may be¹⁹².



On International Day of Persons with Disabilities "Empowering people with disabilities"

188 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 10 – Op. cit.

189 SAB has an oversight role over the loans and donations that the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development grants to Arab and non-Arab developing countries

190 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

191 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries & PAM, Labour Law

192 Women's Cultural and Social Society, 2022



SDG 12:

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Considering the data available to date, Kuwait has been incessantly implementing action plans for sustainable consumption and production and has incorporated and prioritized them into its national policies since 2016 (**indicator 12.1.1**). As part of its commitment to this goal, the State of Kuwait has signed and strived to implement several environmental treaties and conventions including i) the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal; ii) the Stockholm Convention on Hazardous Wastes; iii) the Rotterdam Convention on Hazardous Wastes; and, iv) the Minamata Convention on Issues Relating to Mercury Pollution in Air, Soil and Water, and has yet to join the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer¹⁹³. In this regard, Kuwait has supported, by various means, methods, and legal, judicial and security legislation, a range of initiatives that guarantee limiting the spread and accumulation of hazardous and environmentally polluting industrial waste, which directly affects the public health of humans, wildlife and marine life. For instance, in the year 2019, the Environment Public Authority closed the waste dumps of damaged rubber tires and transferred them to safe areas to be recycled in the fields of manufacturing that serve the plastic and rubber industries, as well as the road industry and the improvement of paving and asphalt that are important for urban expansion and linking transport and communication networks between cities. The State of Kuwait has also been keen on supporting the national committees for building codes and the standard specifications sector. This would update and develop building and materials systems in a way that guarantees and legitimizes the exploitation of innovative materials and applications of modern technologies in construction, urbanization, monitoring and control¹⁹⁴.

Additionally, a Ministerial Decree No. 20 of 2021 was issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in line with the Basel Agreement to regulate the export of recyclable waste¹⁹⁵. In terms of **indicator 12.4.1**, Kuwait is one of the 186 countries that ratified and adopted the Stockholm convention and one of the 190 countries who ratified Basil Convention¹⁹⁶. On **indicator 12.4.2** an emerging challenge consisted in the surge in medical wastes, which were generated over the years to peak in 2020 at 10,693 tons, most likely, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the hazardous industrial solid waste has reached its lowest in 2020 at 60,316 tons, which could have also resulted from the pandemic, when most of the industrial work and other activities came to a total halt due to the lockdowns¹⁹⁷.

- 193 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. CSB
- 194 KISR
- 195 Imdad (2016). Energy for the future (Brochure). Retrieved from www.imdadkw.com
- 196 Ministry of Environment – 2022
- 197 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Box 3 – The Kuwait Finance House (KFH)

The Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is considered a pioneer in Islamic Finance. The bank has expanded beyond Kuwait and established its presence in six additional markets in the region and worldwide. It has managed to realize a net profit of KWD 148.4 million during the year 2020. Today, KFH has heightened its commitment by restructuring its sustainability long-term vision and identifying economic, environmental, social, and governance (EESG) objectives across all partnering capitals. In addition to contributing to **Kuwait 2035 Vision**, KFH also contributes to **SDG goals**. Being globally acknowledged as an Islamic bank market leader with a wide-spread network, KFH contributes to the strategic pillar of Kuwait “Global Positioning” and **SDG goal #17**. Through the banking and financing services KFH aligns with Vision 2035’s “sustainable diversified economy”, and the “sustainable living environment” pillars, in addition to **SDG goal #8**. KFH Takaful service, especially the medical insurance that is geared toward ensuring good health and well-being of the clients, directly contributes to **SDG goal #3** and in line with Vision’s 2035 “high quality health care” pillar. KFH also provides financing for the construction and real estate sectors that supports **SDG goal #11**.

KFH promotes **Inclusive Working Environments** through promoting equal opportunities, as it is clearly stated in its HR policy, free of any kind of discrimination. It also promotes **Diversity and Inclusion in the Work Force** through gender diversity, retaining a steady presence of 22 per cent female employees in its total workforce. Additionally, KFH promotes gender diversity, parental leaves, wellness programmes and flexible remote working. **Training** is a very important component in KFH culture, where in 2020 the bank tripled its training hours from 2019, reaching 44,193 hours, targeting new and retained hires. KFH also exerts specific efforts to provide benefits relevant to a) **Medical and Health Care Services**, b) **Education and Development of Youth** and c) **Social Development and Inclusion**; with specific focus on a well-developed **Grievance Mechanism** covering performance management grievances and disciplinary grievances. Finally, KFH gives significant attention to the **environment**, where it works to achieve a higher environmental commitment in energy and water consumption and in dealing with solid waste.

Kuwait Finance House (2020). The Islamic Impact of Equity. Sustainability Report 2019-2020

The Ministry of Environment had created an online application where they can receive requests to get rid of asbestos waste which can also be used to better understand the percentage of asbestos that is being treated¹⁹⁸, please refer to table 12 for more details on the amount of hazardous waste that has been treated between 2019 and 2022 respectively. In 2015, Kuwait recorded a good performance in terms of recycling solid wastes (**indicator 12.5.1**), achieving recycling of 2.94 per cent of the total solid waste generated. This effort however, requires further boosting, as the percentage went down to 0.76 per cent in 2021, the lowest rate recorded¹⁹⁹ (Environmental Statistics 2020).

As for target 12 (**indicator 12.6.1**), the Environmental Public Authority (EPA) has submitted in June 2021 its National Plan for Chemical Safety, which is Kuwait’s national implementation plan under the Permanent Committee, to eliminate releases of persistent organic pollutants, or limit stocks of persistent organic pollutants containing waste and polluted sites that pose risks to human health and the environment.







Kuwait Finance House (KFH)

198 Ministry of Environment – 2022

199 CSB of Kuwait (2022), SDG 12 – Op. cit.

Table 12 – Waste Generation per Year in Kuwait²⁰⁰

	 DOMESTIC WASTE (PER KG)	 MEDICAL WASTE (PER KG)	 FLUID WASTE (PER GALLON)	 INDUSTRIAL WASTE (PER TON)
2019	1,857,840	6,625,095	413,333,500	96,712.000
2020	1,759,844	10,692,729	486,109,200	74,509.245
2021	1,982,769	10,751,381	459,469,250	80,625.650
2022	1,823,949	10,578,549	395,029,000	74,147.00

The plan is expected to be updated every two years with new pops²⁰¹. The current National Implementation Plan (NIP) has carried out the evaluation of the 28 persistent organic pollutants registered through 2017 (COP8) including Dicofol POP 29 enlisted in the COP9 – 2019, where it was already banned in Kuwait. PFOA is the only listed organic pollutant in 2019 that has not been assessed because no country has undertaken the assessment yet, and the inventory guidance has not been published by the Stockholm Convention Secretariat (*National Plan for Chemical Safety, 2022*).

The main achievements of the EPA under this goal are i) the electronic system for chemicals (licenses-release-exports); ii) the signing of an agreement to implement the plan between the Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment with regards to the national scheme of the Stockholm Convention POP; and, iii) development of the Atlas of Waste Management in the State of Kuwait (EPA, 2022). As to the main projects that have been implemented through EPA so far, they are i) the sustainable production and consumption project in Kuwait, which started in 2021; ii) the national plan for chemical safety, which has been adversely affected and delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic; and, iii) the proposal for the preliminary evaluation project for the Minamata Convention in the State of Kuwait²⁰².

The State Audit Bureau (SAB) works on an effective oversight that supports sustainable production and activates liable consumption. SAB has made several direct recommendations in this regard specifically towards the Kuwait Oil Company, including the limited number of studies, the insufficient coordination between major project groups, the absence of a financial system that separates the costs of shared networks, and others. Moreover, SAB's audit work aims at securing the optimal use of natural resources through providing regulations, mechanisms of use and direct environmental impact measuring standards²⁰³.

Kuwait has been promoting, advocating, and encouraging sustainability through comprehensive education to residents since 2016 and across different sectors including national educational policies, academic curricula, training of teachers, and evaluation of students (**indicators 12.8.1**)²⁰⁴. On **indicator 12.a.1** Kuwait has reported a significant increase in installing renewable energy generation capacity in developing countries from 1.46 watt per capita in 2015, to 24.76 watt per capita in 2020, reaching 100 watt per capita in 2022²⁰⁵.

²⁰⁰ Ministry of Environment – 2022

²⁰¹ The Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment Program (2022). An agreement to prepare a national chemical safety plan for the State of Kuwait between the Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment Program.

²⁰² The Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment Program (2022). Op. cit.

²⁰³ State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

²⁰⁴ CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

²⁰⁵ CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 12 – Op. cit.

Box 4 – Kuwait National Petroleum Company

The Kuwait National Petroleum Company has been very much aware and in line with the Social Development Goals and Agenda 2030. KNPC is in line with the majority of SDGs as per the following.

- Goal 1:** KNPC involves international contractors & suppliers in all its projects, resulting in thousands of Jobs.
- Goal 2:** Yearly, during the Holy month of Ramadan, KNPC provided Thousands of free meals in Ahmadi City (KNPC Ramadan Tent).
- Goal 3:** KNPC conducts the largest blood donation campaigns in Kuwait, provides free medical checks and medications at all KNPC clinics, and conduct the periodical medical exams to all its employees for free.
- Goal 4:** KNPC provides quality in-house HSE training courses to all its employees and contractors as well as nominating its employees to a recognized international certifications provider.
- Goal 5:** KNPCs code of conduct is gender sensitive, in addition to the fact that all KNPC staff females and males are involved in all sites (offices and fields).
- Goal 6:** Effluent treatment facilities (ETFs) at KNPCs refineries (treating industrial wastewater); KNPC conducts quarterly drinking water quality sampling for all KNPC facilities; finally, KNPC conducted ground water studies at MAA and MAB.
- Goal 7:** Solar energy projects at KNPC Petrol Filling Stations, and a roadmap for further Renewable energy projects.
- Goal 9:** KNPC has an innovation team, they have Patent Registration Program, and 6 sigma projects.
- Goal 11:** Green Building Certifications (GSAS) and develops sustainability reports.
- Goal 13:** Green House Gases Strategy, Clean Development Mechanism, and two registered projects at MAA & MAB.
- Goal 14:** KNPC supports Kuwait's diving team – Marine Sanctuary, Supports KISR Fish Farming Projects, and KISR Marine Survey & Dispersion Modeling.
- Goal 15:** KNPC natural reserve project – Al-Wafrah; and KNPC's guidelines on Management of Wildlife Habitat.
- Goal 16:** KNPC's Grievance and Welfare.
- Goal 17:** Consultancy Services

KNPC, SDGs.



Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC)



SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



Representing the Amir of Kuwait, the Crown Prince, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, delivered the speech of the State of Kuwait at the Green Middle East Initiative Summit

Kuwait announced at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, that the State of Kuwait expects to reach carbon neutrality for the oil sector in 2050 and for all sectors of the country in 2060. Indeed, Kuwait's Environment Public Authority (EPA) is seeking to implement in the near future, a number of projects that will be the outputs of the long-term national strategy for low carbon development for 2050. At the same time, there will be preparation of the Third National Communication on Climate Change, and of the second biennial update report on climate change²⁰⁶. In addition, Kuwait has committed to implementing the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental institutions. NAP includes short, medium and long-term strategies to increase strength and resilience in the face of climate challenges, and to increase the national anticipation and management capacity to adapt to climate change. It also includes a description of the state of the environment, the most important sectors affected by climate change and a climate change risk assessment. Several stakeholders have been identified according to each sector and the relative risks involved. Some of the recent achievements of EPA have been the submission of the "Second National Communication of the State of Kuwait on Climate Change in 2019", the submission of the "First biennial Update Report of the State of Kuwait on Climate Change in 2019", the submission of the updated document for the "Nationally Determined Contributions of the State of Kuwait (NDC)" with an increase in mitigation ambition by 7.4% in 2035²⁰⁷.

Kuwait seeks to transition to a low carbon economic system following the principles of the circular carbon economy. It plans to pass laws with the purpose of mitigating the effects of climate change based on the prospective emission projections between 2015-2035, and aims at lowering up to 4.7% of its total emissions by 2035, through voluntary national efforts. Concerning the contribution of the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), it has already significantly reduced the gas flaring in crude oil extraction facilities from 17% to 1% over a period of 12 years. Indeed, the annual reduction amounted to 219,762 tons in 2019 during the second phase of

206 Environment Public Authority. Secondary Voluntary Report for Sustainable Development
207 Environment Public Authority. Op. cit.

this plan and to 351,791 tons in 2020 during the third phase of the plan²⁰⁸. However, more awareness regarding the rationalized use of natural resources is still required with a view to prompting the population to adopt a more sustainable behavior in the future.

Kuwait has ratified most relevant global and regional environmental agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC Rio), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. As part of the UNFCCC, Kuwait committed to joining a global coalition to limit global warming by 2020 to below 2 °C (preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius) in the world's climate from pre-industrial levels. In its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), Kuwait expects to increase in mitigation ambition by 7.4% in 2035 through plans aimed at developing a long-term low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions strategy, based on the circular carbon economy (in compliance with the Paris Agreement, Article 4.19). However, efforts will concentrate on business-as-usual emissions in 2020-2030, and on diversifying the State of Kuwait's energy mix with a view to avoiding increases in GHG emissions by 2035.

The State Audit Bureau here again ensures incorporating the climate preventive measures within its policies, strategies, and work plans. It invests in enhancing the intellectual and professional skills of its employees through participating in events such as "The Impact of Climate Change on Sustainable Development", and "The 18th Annual Meeting of EUROSAl Working Group on Environmental Audit. This skills enhancement of SAB's staff and professionals is a critical capacity development investment for an effective and efficient implementation of SAB's plans and programmes and for enabling the Bureau to play an active role in managing and influencing factors and anticipate with more rigor and effectiveness, their implications, and requirements²⁰⁹.

Using the data available under this SDG, it is worth noting that with reference to **target 13.1.1**, Kuwait has maintained Zero cases of death or missing of people directly affected by disasters since 2016. As to **indicator 13.1.2**, Kuwait has been adopting and implementing national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, since the adoption of these strategies. Additionally, **indicator 13.1.3**, has been reported to be fully achieved since 2016, with a 100 per cent adoption and implementation of local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies (2016-2022)²¹⁰.

With regards to policies and strategies that increase the State of Kuwait's ability to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (2016-2019), the State of Kuwait has already achieved this indicator (**13.2.1**). In addition, many institutions and individuals concerned with **indicator 13.3.1** have provided indications regarding their capacity to adapt to and to transfer technology since 2016. This was the result of the successful development plans that aimed at building the capacities of the relevant institutions and individuals to adapt and transfer technology²¹¹. Indeed, specialized knowledge and information regarding climate change mitigations, adaptation, impact reduction and early warnings have been integrated within the educational curricula of primary, secondary and tertiary classes and have become part of the established formal curriculum (**indicator 13.3.1**)²¹².

It is worth noting that the World Health Organization (WHO), has initiated actions on the climate front such as the Boost Initiative that has been supporting the 'National Committee on Preparedness and Response to the Impacts of Climate Change and Environmental Disasters on Health' since September 2022. The National Committee consists of a multidisciplinary team, led by the vice-minister of the Ministry of Health (MoH), with the participation of several other MoH departments, EPA, KISR, KU, and Met Services. A key priority of the National Committee is to strengthen the climate resilience of its health system, protecting the population from the health impacts of climate change. The Committee has been supported by WHO to develop and adopt a National Action Plan on Climate Change and Health. As a result of WHO's support, the Committee nominated a focal point from MoH to participate in the WHO COP26 Health Initiative/Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health (ATAACH), with more than 60 countries participating in the Alliance. Moreover, the WHO has been providing ongoing technical support to conduct a health vulnerability and adaptation assessment, developing a Health National Adaptation Plan. It is important to mention that the Ministry of Health joined the Kuwait delegation at COP27.

The above notwithstanding, it is important to mention the project that was carried out in EQUATE (from one of the units in their facilities), and which aimed at capturing carbon dioxide emissions as well as the project aimed at the production of biofuels that started in 2019. Future similar projects are expected to be launched in relation to capturing carbon dioxide emissions from oil refineries²¹³.

208 Environment Public Authority – The first yearly report of the State of Kuwait of to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, September 2019, (to be updated every two years). Environment Public Authority (EPA), Specific Contributions at the National Level, Update of the First Contribution, October 2021

209 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

210 CSB, take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

211 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

212 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 13 – Op. cit.

213 IMDAD



SDG 14: LIFE BELOW WATER

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



Underwater life on the island of Qaruh

Ever since 2016, all the economic zones (100 per cent) have been managed using environmentally friendly ecosystem-based approaches (**indicator 14.2.1**), which is a commendable achievement under this target. However, the marine Ph levels have been closer to the upper acceptable limit at 8, while the range is between 6.5 and 8.3. This level has been maintained since 2012, with no significant declining trend so far²¹⁴. Additionally, efforts are being exerted to achieve **indicator 14.5.1**, (coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas / exclusive economic zones) where the target to be achieved by 2030 is 100 per cent at a time when Kuwait has been at a constant 6.63 per cent since 2016. However, Kuwait has made progress in the implementation of international instruments aimed at combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (**indicator 14.6.1**) as this has been ongoing since 2016 as well²¹⁵. Additionally, the State of Kuwait has been keen on the application of legal frameworks that recognize and protect access to small-scale fisheries (**indicator 14.b.1**) as well as making progress towards ratifying ocean-related instruments that implement national legal, policy and institutional frameworks, as contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (**indicator 14.c.1**)²¹⁶.

The UNRCO Policy Brief (referred to it earlier) projected a score of 42.3 in 2030 for SDG 14, up from 41.2 in 2021. The trend growth rate would result from the particular improvement in one indicator, i.e., the mean area that is protected in marine sites, and which is important to biodiversity. The Brief is rather uncertain however, as to whether Kuwait could sustain its

214 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

215 It is important to mention that the Environment Public Authority, in coordination and cooperation with the relevant authorities, is issuing decisions aiming at protecting biodiversity and fish wealth and conducting inspection campaigns to ensure its proper implementation on the field. Among these decisions, but not limited to, suffice it to mention those related to organizing recreational fishing and preventing back-trawl fishing in territorial waters, in addition to its efforts in creating an electronic platform to issue special permits for picnic hunting in Kuwait Bay, due to the specificity of the area in terms of the environment, while commercial hunting is prohibited in it.

216 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.



Jaber Sea Reservation

historical trend growth rate because the indicators of “Ocean Health Index”, “Clean Waters” score and “Fish caught by trawling or dredging” show little sustained positive trends²¹⁷. However, in 2017, a decree number 1630 was issued aiming at prohibiting the back-trawl fishing in territorial water²¹⁸.

UNEP’s 2021 analysis evaluated the aquaculture production in Kuwait at 197 metric tonnes and fisheries production at 2,817 metric tonnes, with a 2.95% of marine protected areas from the total area²¹⁹. That notwithstanding, Kuwait is fully committed to implementing the environmental marine assessment plans associated with the management of this resource with a view to finding long term and sustainable solutions aimed at protecting the marine environment, life, and biological diversity²²⁰.

The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) is implementing 2 different projects that promise to achieve progress towards SDG 14.

- Project 1: Building and operating a complex for economic production for fish and shrimp using advanced

techniques. This project is implemented over the course of 10 years (2019 – 2029) but is currently in the preparatory phase. Its main objectives are to enhance food security and promote economic development.

- Project 2: Designing facilities specialized in Research for Sea and Sea resource management. This project is currently in the execution phase. It started in 2011 and is expected to be completed by 2027. The project aims at i) enhancing food security, ii) promoting economic development, iii) improving the quality of life in Kuwait, iv) preserving the marine environment, and v) managing vital marine resources and developing and preserving their sustainability²²¹.

Other projects implemented under KISR of relevance to SDG 14 consist in establishing research and development centers to support the private sector, and developing the production units of Salmon and Seabass fingerlings²²².

217 United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait (2022). Forecasting Kuwait’s Sustainable Development Goals: Policy implication for the Voluntary National Review 2023 process (A Policy Brief).

218 <https://www.csb.gov.kw/Pages/Statistics?ID=43&ParentCatID=4>

219 The Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment Program (2021). Report on the evaluation of sustainable consumption and production policies in the State of Kuwait. (EPA & UNEP, 2021)

220 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

221 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research. The most important achievements of the development projects of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research

222 Op. cit.



SDG 15: LIFE ON LAND

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Up until 2022, a mere 0.35 per cent of Kuwait's land had consisted of trees; a percentage that has been maintained since 2015 (**indicator 15.1.1**), at a time when 11.6 per cent of the State of Kuwait consists presently of protected terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity areas. The latter percentage has been gradually increasing over the years, from 10.2 per cent in 2013 (**indicator 15.1.2**)²²³. With regards to the Red List Index (**indicator 15.5.1**), Kuwait is still below the upper limit (1), but significantly above the lower limit (0), with an index of almost 0.85 that has been sustained since 2010²²⁴. Moreover, Kuwait is among the countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits, and thus this target and its indicator (**indicator 15.6.1**), have been marked as achieved²²⁵. Additionally, Kuwait is among the countries that have been adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention and control of invasive alien species (**indicator 15.8.1**)²²⁶.

The Environment Public Authority (EPA), in coordination with the relevant departments and partners in the State of Kuwait, has been implementing the provisions of the Environmental Protection Law with a view to safeguarding the wild environment and preventing violating encroachments and abuses of greening areas²²⁷. EPA is endeavoring to achieve the objectives of the Aichi Convention on Biological Diversity. With respect to **target 15.9.1**, a 30-month project has been recently launched. It aims at i) documenting the components of biodiversity in the various environments outside the natural reserves, including fungal organisms of various kinds and migratory and resident plants and animals, and tracing their distribution in the various ecosystems in the State of Kuwait; ii) using electronic linking of



A young pharaonic owl in a rocky areas of Kuwait by Mohammed Murad

- 223 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss & Environment Public Authority
- 224 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 15 – Op. cit.
- 225 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss & EPA & UNEP, 2021
- 226 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 15 – Op. cit.
- 227 The Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment Program (2022). An agreement to prepare a national chemical safety plan for the State of Kuwait between the Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment Program.

biodiversity databases in different environments in the State of Kuwait with the government's research and educational institutions; iii) preparing the Red List of Endangered Species; and, iv) following up on the implementation of Kuwait's obligations towards regional and international treaties and agreements related to the conservation and protection of biological diversity²²⁸. It is worth mentioning that 11 bird species, 7 mammal species and 37 fish species and 4 reptile species are reported to be threatened in the State of Kuwait, which is the subject of the imminent attention of the authorities concerned according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature²²⁹ (IUCN).

Further projects of direct relevance to SDG 15 have been implemented by the EPA. They are as follows:

- a) Rehabilitation of degraded areas to increase the vegetation cover in the wild environment and to reduce the phenomenon of desertification, sand encroachment and dust storms. This is done through the rehabilitation project of the North of the Jahra Reserve. Recently, 15,000 Sidr trees have been planted with more trees that are planned to be planted in the near future, in addition to identifying appropriate areas for further improvement;
- b) Rehabilitation of the coastal environment by cultivating mangrove seeds in different regions of the State of Kuwait in cooperation with the Sultanate of Oman, which provided the seeds of the mangrove plant. Approximately 1,000 seeds have been grown annually in the laboratories of the Biodiversity Conservation Department (BCD) and transported as seedlings for cultivation in their natural environment. As of 2021, 4,000 seedlings have been cultivated in the Jahra Reserve, Bubiyan Island, the Sabiya area, and Barr Qadi in cooperation with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and a group of volunteering teams. The plans are to keep this running until 2035, when approximately 18,000 seedlings will have been cultivated;
- c) Establishment of 19 reserves, 13 of which are wild nature reserves, and 6 are marine reserves; where the establishment of reserves, gardens and fences aims at improving the environment, protecting wild and marine life in the State of Kuwait, reducing the deterioration of natural habitats and curbing the loss of biodiversity in addition to promoting ecotourism;

- d) Approving a policy provision with the triple aim of i) allocating at least 10% of the area of any of the major development projects for environmental compensation whether fencing, gardening, protected areas, or other environmental activities that are integrated into the project; ii) helping to preserve the environment and biodiversity; and, iii) increasing the green area in the State of Kuwait in addition to promoting eco-tourism and meeting Kuwait's regional and international commitments; and,
- e) Re-settlement of mangrove trees in the Kuwait Bay after their extinction and increasing the protected areas from 1.89% to 11.64% (this has been going on since 2000 and up to 2021). Additionally, EPA follows up on the wild environment rehabilitation projects implemented by the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources in its natural reserves. These initiatives have been funded by environmental compensation and supervised by the National Focal Point for Environment Projects. They aimed at planting several tall tree species, which in due course, reduces the phenomenon of desertification and limits the dust storms²³⁰.

In terms of desertification, it is a fact that Kuwait is located within the desert geographical region. As such, it is exposed to periods of drought where the average rainfall is often below 113 ml / year, over successive years. When the rain is higher than the normal rates, it increases the rates of water erosion of the soil. Furthermore, the prevailing of North-westerly winds usually result in an increase in the rate of evaporation and the spread of dust and sandstorms.

Out of the two available indicators, i.e., the mean area that is protected in terrestrial sites and which is important to biodiversity, has increased constantly from 31 per cent in 2010 to 52 per cent in 2019. Meanwhile, the Red List Index of species survival (worst 0 – best 1) decreased from 0.9 in 2010 to 0.8 in 2020 (UNRCA Kuwait, 2022). Kuwait has no trafficked wildlife cases that could have been illegally caught or traded; a rate of Zero has been recorded and maintained since 2016 onward. However, 474 legitimate trades of wildlife have taken place between 2016 and 2021, with the peak being in 2016 with 228 trades – mainly bustards, followed by the falcons with 141 trades²³¹.

228 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 15 – Op. cit.

229 <https://www.iucnredlist.org/statistics>

230 The Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment Program (2022). An agreement to prepare a national chemical safety plan for the State of Kuwait between the Environment Public Authority and the United Nations Environment Program.

231 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss & Environment Public Authority, 2021



SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



Awarding the State Medal for Sacrifice to the Kuwaiti search and rescue team in appreciation of Kuwait humanitarian role in the rescue operations of the victims of the earthquake in the Republic of Turkey

Considering SDG 16 through the lens of **target 16.1, indicator 16.1.1** shows a decrease in the number of victims of premeditated crime from 65 cases in 2016 down to 36 cases in 2022²³². As for **indicator 16.1.2**, Kuwait has recorded no significant conflict for a long while. It is worth mentioning however, that the number of reported cases of violence have been slightly mounting over the years (**indicator 16.1.3**), where figures (for all nationalities, ages and sexes) have registered an increase from 1,186 cases in 2016 to 3,096 cases in 2022. Similarly, on **indicator 16.3.1**, there has been a slight increase in victims of violence who reported cases of abuse to the competent authorities or other officially recognized dispute resolution mechanisms (see table below).

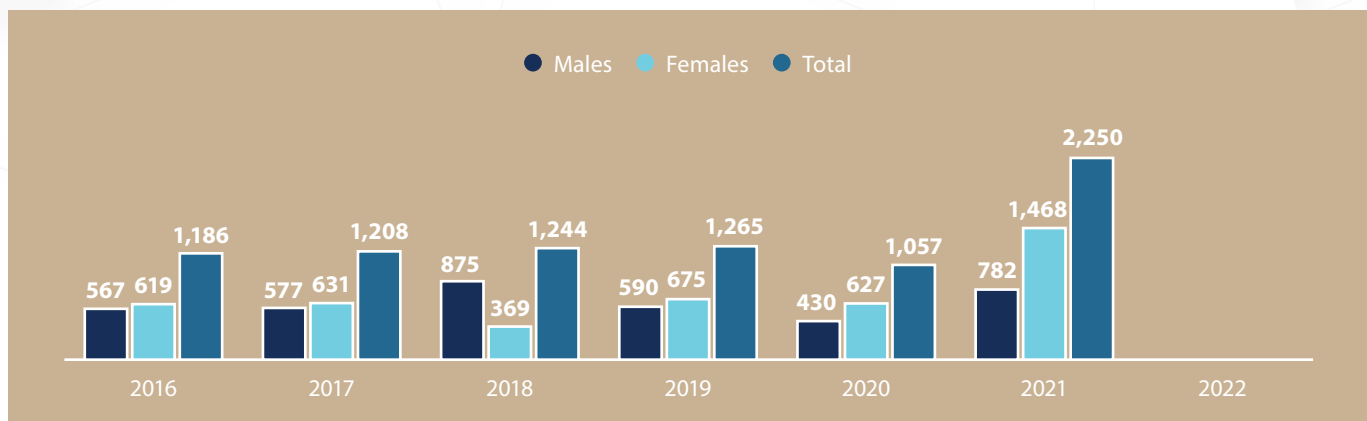


Figure 34: Number of Violent Cases for Kuwaiti and Non-Kuwaiti, All Ages. CSB, SDG16, 2022 & Ministry of Justice

²³² Ministry of Justice & CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

In 2022, Kuwait ranked 39th globally and second in the MENA region on the Global Peace Index. In addition, 100 per cent of residents (both males and females) reported feeling safe when walking around alone in their area of residence (**indicator 16.1.4**)²³³. Moreover, Kuwait has reported Zero cases of human trafficking since 2016, for all ages and sexes (**indicator 16.2.2**)²³⁴. As to the number of bribery cases (**indicator 16.5.1**), it has been decreasing since 2016, reaching only 15 cases in 2022, which is rather a percentage close to Zero²³⁵.

On **indicator 16.10.1**, there has been Zero cases of verified murders, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, and torture of journalists, media workers associated, trade unionists, or human rights defenders reported since 2016²³⁶. Regarding the proportion of unsentenced detainees in the total prison population, it has been more or less stable since 2016 with a 0.4 per cent, slightly decreasing in 2017 to reach 0.3 per cent²³⁷.

The State of Kuwait adopts constitutional, legislative and/or policy guarantees for public access to information (**indicator 16.10.2**). Additionally, a National Bureau for Human Rights was established according to Article (4) and Law No. (67) of 2015. The establishment of these entities comes as part of a voluntary decision in the context of the universal periodic review of the human rights situation before the International Human Rights Council (May 2010), and in tune with Kuwait's commitment to establishing an independent and authoritative national human rights entity. This is also in accordance with the Paris Principles, which supports efforts to protect human rights and freedoms and strengthens national cooperation mechanisms in order to achieve the requirements of this protection²³⁸. Kuwait has also worked extensively on respecting and recognizing minorities, where it is evident in the number and diversity of foreign and Arab schools, the freedom of minorities in organizing activities and events in coordination with the Ministry of Education, the Diwan Amiri, and the Supreme Council of the Arts²³⁹.

On **target 16.b** (promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development), several policies and laws have been put in place and enacted. Through its Constitution and Domestic laws, Kuwait is keen to work against racism and religious hatred. It has been implementing Law No. 19 of 2012 on the protection of national unity. Article (2) of this law states that, while no harsher punishment is imposed under another law, anyone who commits an act contrary to the prohibition under Article (1) of this law shall be sentenced to imprisonment of not more than seven years and a fine of not less than 10,000 Dinars and no more than 100,000 Dinars or one of these penalties, and the confiscation of the means, funds, tools, newspapers and publications used in the crime. The penalty is doubled if the violation is reiterated.

It is worth mentioning at this juncture the work of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature. Through a participatory approach, the Council has developed a strategic plan for the period 2023 – 2028. The strategy was developed with more than 960 partners representing different groups in the community more than 70% were women, and taking into account the opinions of artists, workers, stakeholders, youth, academics, journalists and others. This strategy aims at i) providing space for Kuwaiti youth, acknowledging their ability to use creative opportunities and enhance the climate of research and learning in light of the changes and global acceleration; ii) supporting cultural diversity, and enhancing collective awareness to improve interdependence and inter-generational communications; iii) protecting the population culturally, and providing a safe environment for writers, journalists and artists through valuing and maintaining their free and democratic participation; iv) revitalizing cultural activities through systematic mechanisms and efforts to enrich the creative human capitals in the field of culture²⁴⁰; and, v) investing in cultural diplomacy and other forms of civilized communication with neighbouring countries for the sustainability of resources and the development of revenues. It is

233 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 16 – Op. cit.

234 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 16 – Op. cit.

235 Ministry of Justice & CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 16 – Op. cit.

236 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

237 Ministry of Interior & CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

238 National Bureau for Human Rights & CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

239 The Opera House has been hosting painting exhibits embodying various cultures and minorities in addition to bookfairs in diverse languages (IOM, 2022)

240 It is worth mentioning in this context the recent experience of the American University of Kuwait, which hosted the IOM Global Migration Film Festival, screening a short documentary film called "Psychology of Migration", that was attended by more than 130 students (International Organization of Migration (2021). IOM Kuwait Newsletter: A Year in Review. Retrieved from https://mailchi.mp/e68a34033f64/january-to-december-15749513?fbclid=IwAR2a83zvtu2gY5-RH-8mEzN3WIRf_fJfa3VBafVHOQIOdCFLfBl8ywlomx3E

important to mention that this strategy is fully in line with Vision 2035²⁴¹.

The Public Authority for Sports (PAS), developed a new strategy for 2022 – 2028 with a vision of a sustainable environment for sports and one that motivates achievement. The Authority plans to implement the State’s national policy in the field of sports and to organize the work environment in partnership with relevant national and international partners. Additionally, the Authority works towards expanding opportunities of teamwork, unleashing the capabilities of youth in sports and contributing to raising the name of Kuwait in international fora. The strategy aims at i) supporting sports development towards change, increasing awareness and its positive significance in lifestyles; ii) providing a safe and supportive environment that enhances opportunities for practicing sports; iii) providing access to high-quality sports infrastructure for all; iv) supporting best practices for the sustainability of facilities; v) improving competitiveness and developing Kuwaiti sports talents; and, vi) enhancing and empowering the role of women in all sports and across all ages (Public Authority for Sports, 2022).

The State Audit Bureau has a significant share in contributing to SDG 16 too, whether through its mandate of reinforcing financial integrity and verifying the implementation of rules and regulations, or through its efforts and the projects it implements. SAB’s efforts in this regard can be categorized into two main headings: i) the Technical Structure Projects, which include the implementation of the Project of Safety Procedures of Disasters and Emergencies, the SAB Network Infrastructure Update Project, and The Files Audit Program Installation Project; and ii) the Automated Systems Development and Integration Projects, which include SAB’s mobile application and the Electronic Websites Development Project (E-gate-SAB Official Website). It is worth mentioning that SAB has a crucial role in combatting corruption through partnering with different entities, signing an MoU with the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), and through educating and training its employees on tracking and combatting corruption²⁴².

The figure 35 below details the initial government expenditures as a percentage of the original approved budget, by sector (indicator 16.6.1).

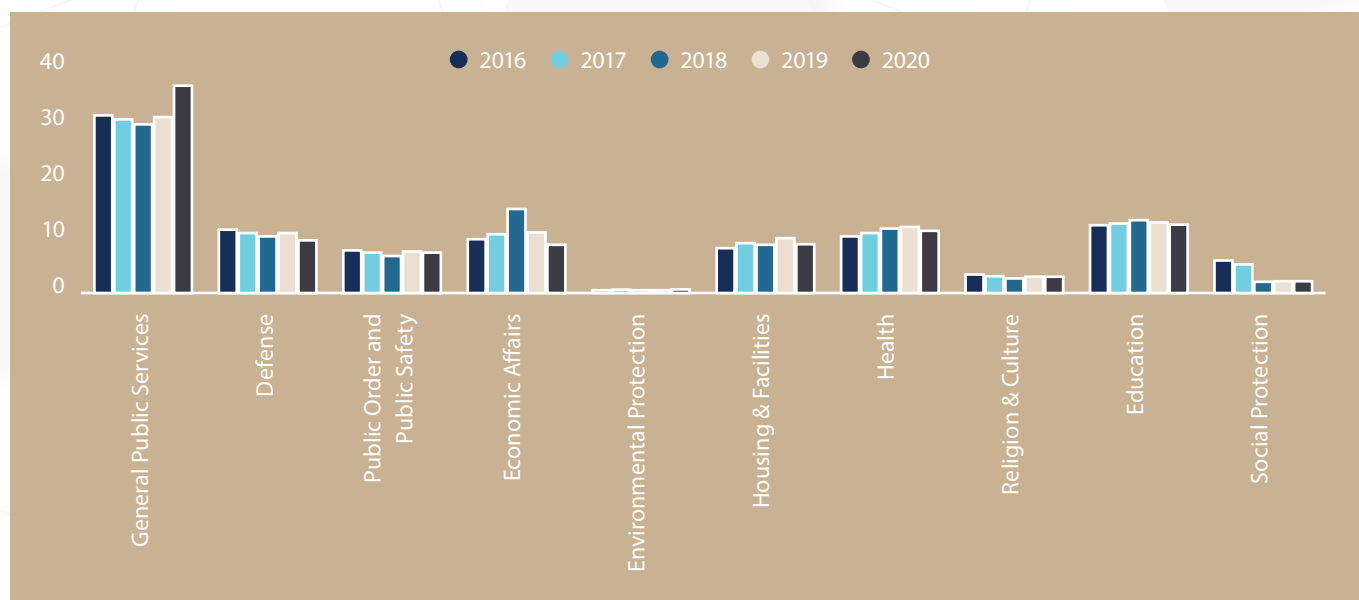


Figure 35: Government Expenditures as a Percentage of the Original Approved Budget, by budget line (2016-2020), CSB, SDG16, 2022 & Ministry of Finance

241 The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature and the Central Administration for Statistics (2022). The 2023-2028 strategy is participatory, consensual, and realistic. (The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, 2022)

242 State Audit Bureau (2020). Achievements of the State Audit Bureau towards achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – Annual Report, Twelfth Edition.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development



Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development

Ever since Kuwait joined the United Nations and acquired full membership in 1963, significant and sustained efforts have been made towards achieving national, regional, and international effective and mutually supportive partnerships, in the region and worldwide. The State of Kuwait has always expressed commitment to fostering human rights, and to advancing global and sustainable wellbeing. To that end, it has long earmarked special resources in support for regional and international development across countries and continents.

The UNRCO Policy Brief (mentioned earlier) confirms that “SDG 17 is one of the highest SDGs upon which Kuwait is performing²⁴³. Unequivocally, many projects are being successfully implemented under Vision 2035 and in achieving SDGs goals and targets, with a view to enhancing Kuwait’s international distinctive standing: from enhancing the government’s role in human rights, improving its data recording and statistical analysis to enhancing its competitiveness in international indicators, improving the wellbeing of all Kuwaitis as well as the international image of Kuwait as a safe and stable state²⁴⁴.

One of the major challenges that faced Kuwait under this goal in the preparation of the earlier VNR was the limited availability of data and statistics, which were required for guiding development and sustainability policies and programmes, and for monitoring the agreed SDG indicators. Indeed, as of 2019, GSSCPD together with the CSB have been devising and implementing policies and plans to overcome most systemic, institutional and technical dimensions of the data challenge. As a result of the persistent investment in that regard, significant

243 United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Kuwait (2022). Forecasting Kuwait’s Sustainable Development Goals: Policy implication for the Voluntary National Review 2023 process (A Policy Brief).

244 Kuwait has recently participated in international efforts to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The participation is of relevance as the country receives foreign workers, in accordance with legislative rules governed by domestic laws within the scope of regular procedures represented by employment contracts. Kuwait adopts the goals of this global compact within the terms of its Constitution and domestic laws and in the context of its implementation of the National Plan 2035 (IOM, 2022).

and sustained progress has been achieved over the last few years at the institutional, managerial, technical, data gathering, information sharing and dissemination level in a way in which, authoritative, reliable, robust, and regular data can now be generated and used for targeting, tracking, and monitoring different goals and targets. Mere evidence of the above, is the load of the meaningful and illustrative data and statistics that have been used in the present Review Report, and which have added an invaluable policy and prospective merit to the analysis and reporting therein.

In addition to the above, the State Audit Bureau portrays yet another overarching important role in partnerships and collaborations. SAB has been conducting regular oversight meetings and follow ups with more than fourteen national bodies that come under its control, including ministries, government departments, directorates, various national authorities and secretariats, Al Diwan Al Amiri and others. SAB has also effectively and widely been participating in critical national policy and oversight meetings at the level of the Council of Ministers, national assemblies, municipal councils and many others and has covered a large number of SDG goals and targets. A good illustration of the distinct and valuable contribution of SAB in this domain, is the effective and opportune support it provided to the government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, through technical inputs and inter-agency collaboration and contributions²⁴⁵.

On **target 17.1** “promote domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing

countries, to improve domestic capacities in the collection of taxes and other revenues”, available data show a significant increase in the percentage of non-oil revenues in the GDP reaching 5.33 per cent in 2020, while that from oil revenues have been decreasing to reach 27.09 per cent. The chart below provides a detailed trend on the progress made so far (**indicator 17.1.1**).

Kuwait has also increased its net official development assistance (paid) (**indicator 17.2.1**), from 390 million KWD in 2016, to 435 million KWD in 2020. The Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the least developed countries (paid) as a percentage of gross national income (GNI) has recorded a slight decrease from 1.2 per cent in 2016 to 0.9 per cent in 2019 – with no available records for 2020²⁴⁶. However, Kuwait is recording a positive increase towards achieving indicator 17.3.1, with an increased foreign investment abroad, and an increased south-south cooperation²⁴⁷.

As for **indicator 17.5.1**, Kuwait has used and implemented investment promotion systems for the benefit of the least developed countries since 2016 and constantly up until 2022. On telecommunications, (**indicators 17.7.1**), there has been a decrease in the percentage of loans out of the total loans provided by the Kuwait Development Fund where it recorded 1.73 per cent in 2016 and decreased gradually to reach 1.51 per cent in 2020²⁴⁸ (Kuwait Development Fund). However, as for **indicator 17.9.1**, the value of the financial and technical assistance for developing countries from the Kuwait Development

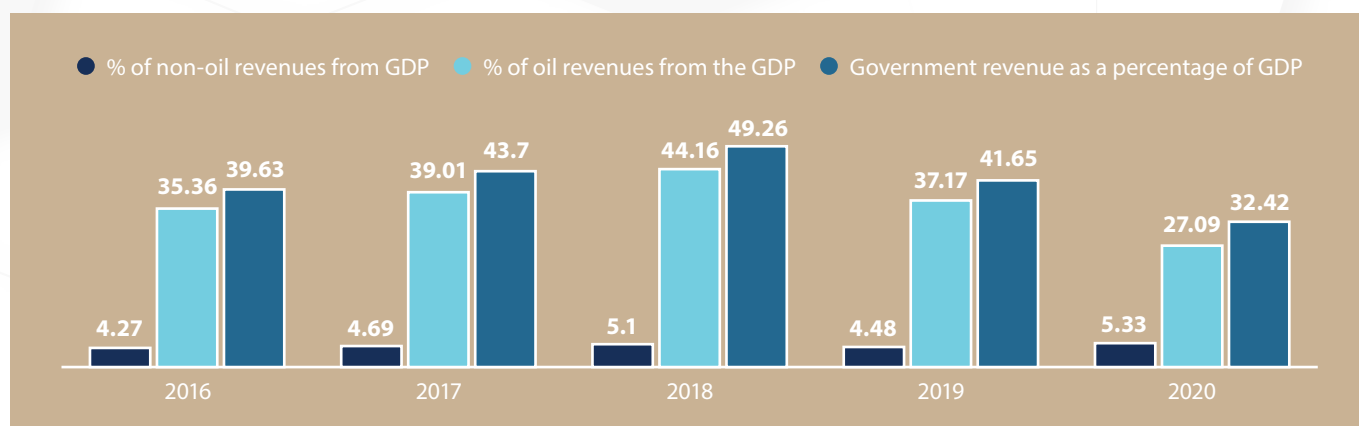


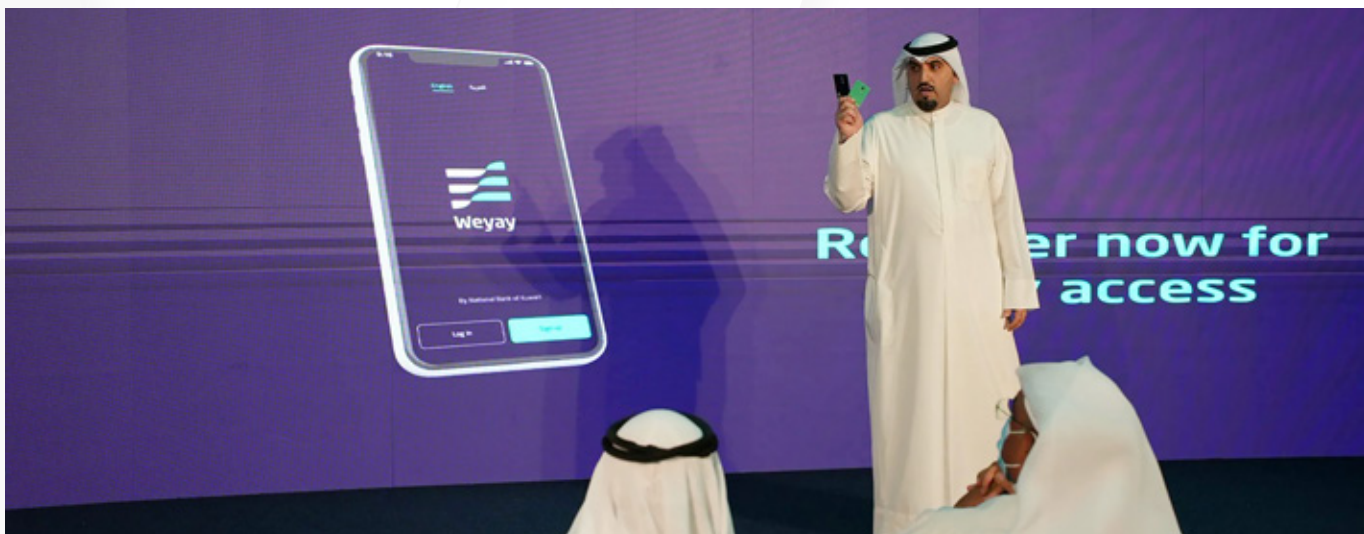
Figure 36: Percentage of oil and non-oil revenues from the GDP and government revenues as a percentage of GDP. CSB, SDG17, 2022 & Ministry of Finance

²⁴⁵ Worth mentioning in this context SAB's contribution in the form of INTOSAI's Benchmarks on International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI 5500) and other working papers on financial audit, commitment audit, and performance audit (State Audit Bureau, 2020).

²⁴⁶ CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

²⁴⁷ CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 17 – Op. cit.

²⁴⁸ CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 17 – Op. cit.



The National Bank of Kuwait launches “Weyay”, the first fully digital bank in Kuwait

Fund (including North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation), has been increasing gradually, from 739 million USD in 2016 to 1,148 million USD in 2020²⁴⁹. On the contrary, the share of developing and least developed countries in world exports (**indicator 17.11.1**) has decreased significantly in 2020 and increased in 2021, 39,935,616 USD and 68,291,805 USD (respectively) (most likely due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic then)²⁵⁰.

Regarding the topic of telecom and internet connection, around 99 per cent of residents in Kuwait use the internet (**indicator 17.8.1**). In 2022, there was around 4.05 million users of social media in the State of Kuwait, with the highest users share for YouTube (3.62 million) and the lowest for Twitter (1.45 million); Facebook, Instagram and TikTok recorded close numbers at 2.05 million, 2.4 million and 2.47 million users respectively²⁵¹.

On **target 17.18**, (statistical capacity index for monitoring the SDGs) Kuwait has significantly improved its reporting capacity recently, and is currently diligently pursuing the implementation of a national statistical plan that is fully funded²⁵². As to **indicator 17.19.2**, Kuwait has been fully registering all newborns and all deaths at a universal converge rate of 100 per cent since 2016²⁵³.

On the investment indicator, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) has reported an amount of 1,309,864,786 KWD between January 2015 and March 2022 concerning 67 investment entities from 25 different countries. The cumulative direct investments from the continent of Europe had the most share of 64.9 per cent, followed by Asia 23.7 per cent, North America 10.1 per cent, Africa 1.2 per cent, and Oceania 0.1 per cent. 76.1 per cent of the cumulative approved direct investments, covered established Kuwaiti companies while the remaining ratio covered branches of foreign companies in Kuwait (22.4 per cent) in addition to non-commercial activities (1.5 per cent) (KDIPA, 2022). On **target 17.H**, KDIPA has conducted seven national and international partnerships since 2019, namely with Citibank, The Oil & Gas, Business Year, Oxford Business group, Kuwait Petroleum Cooperation, the Public Authority for Civil Information, and the Environmental Public Authority²⁵⁴.

It is worth noting that as a result of a sustained and systematic sensitization and awareness creation efforts ever since Kuwait integrated Agenda 2030 into Vision 2035 in 2015, a growing number of stakeholders across different constituencies have developed interest in promoting, defending and reporting on different dimensions of social, economic and environmental sustainability.

249 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 17 – Op. cit.

250 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 17 – Op. cit.

251 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development & Individuals Questionnaire – Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority

252 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

253 CSB of Kuwait (2022). SDG 17 – Op. cit.

254 Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (2021). Annual report 2020-2021

For instance, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), provided several sustainability highlights for the year 2021 including fostering workforce development and engagement through a 71 per cent increase in its training investment since 2020 (totalling KWD 1,021,277), with 41,037 training hours – excluding Digital Mindset training. On the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), NBK scored 94 per cent, 56 per cent on Net Promoted Score (NPS) and an average of 4 days to resolve complaints – recording a 20 per cent improvement since 2020. NBK is the first bank in Kuwait to launch a digital bank (Weyay Bank) and has gained the merit of innovation in Digital Banking Award in the Middle East. On NBK’s environmental impact, the Headquarters building is LEED Gold certified. The institution has achieved a 100 per cent paper recycling and decreased plastic consumption by 64 per cent. Finally, NBK has an evolving social impact where it contributed to over KWD 17,705,000 in total community investments and had 59 employee volunteers²⁵⁵.

The Gulf Bank on its part, launched its first sustainability report in 2021, highlighting i) their work on training, which has been increased by 26 per cent since 2020 including 1800 employees; and, ii) their work on supporting women’s rights, persons with disabilities and young graduates where it was noted that there has been a 57.5 per cent increase in the employment of fresh graduates. The “Kuwaitization” of jobs has also increased reaching a 75.3 per cent bank-wide and 53.2 per cent in senior management. As part of the Bank’s efforts to preserve the environment, the bank has reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 41 metric tons, and reduced paper waste by 1 million papers, water consumption by 107,000 gallons and energy by 37,220 KWh²⁵⁶.

The Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC) also reports on sustainability through updating its 2020 strategic directions in order to outline the objectives of the Kuwaiti Oil Sector and its aspirations for the next phase until 2030. KPC has developed a new set of strategies to align the Kuwait Oil Sector with global developments and future movements in the oil market. Some of these strategies include sustainable work on the domestic and international upstream and downstream, pursuing growth in the petrochemical nationally and internationally, maximizing the value of the Kuwaiti hydrocarbons in secure,

long-term and diverse outlets, achieving world class HSSE, and maximizing corporate social responsibility and many others²⁵⁷. As to Boursa Kuwait, it also took a sustainability aspect in its planning and framework through empowering women, supporting the efforts of the Kuwaiti Association for the Care of Children in Hospitals, supporting national cadres, virtual trainings through LinkedIn, Kuwait Stock Exchange Academy, and reducing and rationalizing the energy and water resources, in addition to other environmental initiatives²⁵⁸.

Other private corporations have followed suit in launching sustainability reports. KDD for example launched its first sustainability report in 2020. KDD aims at strengthening its position as a leading food and beverage company by 2030, with a holistic approach to human wellness, environmental health and a thriving society focusing mainly on people, planet, and nutrition. In KDD’s strategy, the focus is diverted towards employee development, engagement, safety, and retention, equality between men and women who are equally provided with remunerations and equal pay and benefits for equal work. Women’s participation in the institution has doubled in 2020 and diversity has included more than 58 different nationalities. Another important section under KDD’s sustainability report is the environment, which has been a trend across different sustainability reports in different sectors. It started with acquiring environmental certifications (ISO14001) and moved to reducing CO2 emissions, being mindful of water and electricity consumption and plastic use²⁵⁹.

Within the framework of partnership to which AIEslah society committed itself for the years 2021-2025, it offered to participate in the “Civil Society Coordination” which is a committee of 12 civil society institutions. This committee has so far held 12 meetings and working groups to partner on common projects and initiatives. The “Partnership” committee has made strides in the Union of Charitable Societies. AIEslah participated in 22 meetings to discuss the consistency of policies with the provisions of the Voluntary Work Law proposed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor as a reference for civil society institutions. The society’s activities were also celebrated with partnerships from the relevant state institutions and the private sector in dozens of events and occasions²⁶⁰.

255 (National Bank of Kuwait (2021). 2021 Sustainability Report: Strategic Growth towards a Sustainable Future. National Bank of Kuwait).

256 Gulf Bank (2021). Gulf Bank Launches its First Sustainability Report. Retrieved from: Gulf Bank Launches its First Sustainability Report | News | Media | About Us | Gulf Bank (e-gulfbank.com)

257 Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and subsidiaries (2015/2016). KPC & Subsidiaries’ 2030 Strategic Directions. KPC’s Strategic Initiatives Progress Report for Q1 2015/2016

258 Kuwait Stock Exchange. A comprehensive vision for a sustainable future. Guide to preparing reports of governance, social and environmental responsibility

259 KDD (2020). KDD 2020 Corporate Sustainability Report

260 Social Reform Association - Leadership Sustainability Report 2021



IX. CONCLUDING REMARKS



إدارة حكومية فاعلة
Effective Public Administration



اقتصاد متنوع مستدام
Sustainable Diversified Economy



بنية تحتية متطورة
Developed Infrastructure



بيئة معيشية مستدامة
Sustainable Living Environment



رعاية صحية عالية الجودة
High Quality Health Care



رأس مال بشري إبداعي
Creative Human Capital



مكانة دولية متميزة
Global Positioning



Kuwait's second voluntary national review report (VNR2) has narrated with evidence, the State of Kuwait's firm commitment to the SDGs and its foresightedness when, in 2015, it strategically and sensibly incorporated Agenda 2030 in its one-year older Kuwait's **Vision 2035** (New Kuwait). Better than VNR1, VNR2 has depicted and portrayed this time, with robust and itemised data and substantiation, Kuwait's unrelenting policy and institutional efforts in diligently pursuing implementation of all SDGs goals and targets in spite of the many challenges, including the adverse effects of COVID-19.

Indeed, as was the case in all countries across the world, the year 2020 witnessed a significant shift in the development priorities with the spread of the global pandemic. This unforeseen occurrence and its associated lockdown and confinement measures, seriously disrupted the schedule of the development priorities in the State of Kuwait during the past period, and added a significant challenge for different government and non-government actors. Kuwait's response to the pandemic however, has been remarkably comprehensive and effective and widely integrative and participatory. The report has revealed how many short to mid and long-term decisions and engagements were made to support national efforts aimed at sustainability and building back better in the post COVID-19 era, as well as the many lessons learned from the pandemic in matters of health, food security, social protection, welfare system, the environment, climate change and others.

One of the structural challenges that faced Kuwait earlier was the limited availability of data and statistics, which were required for guiding development and sustainability policies and programmes, and for monitoring SDG indicators. Indeed, as of 2019, GSSCPD together with the CSB have been devising and implementing policies and plans to overcome the systemic, institutional and technical dimensions of the data challenge. As a result, significant and persistent progress has been achieved over the last few years at the institutional, managerial, technical, data gathering and information sharing and dissemination level in a way in which, authoritative, reliable, robust, and regular data can now be generated and used for targeting, tracking, and monitoring different goals and targets. VNR2 has provided evidence of this quantum leap in the load of the meaningful and illustrative data and statistics that have been used, and which have added a



Sustainability Week

significant policy and prospective value to the analysis and reporting therein.

The Report documents another significant institutional development, which has been portrayed in the critical oversight role of the State Audit Bureau. Through its mandate of reinforcing financial integrity, and its asserted commitment to the SDGs agenda, the Bureau has partnered with many state institutions and more than fourteen national bodies that come under its supervision, including ministries, government departments, directorates, various national authorities and secretariats, Al Diwan Al Amiri and others, with a view to optimizing use of resources, achieving financial stability and promoting cost-effectiveness. SAB has also successfully promoted sustainability while participating in critical national policy and oversight meetings at the level of the Council of Ministers, national assemblies, municipal councils and many others.

The presentation of VNR2 to the UN High Level Political Forum in July 2023 is also strategic in that it takes place half way through the implementation of the SDGs, on the occasion of the Mid-Term Review of Agenda 2030. As such, and with a candid, well-researched and well-documented account, VNR2 has provided an authoritative analysis of the remaining challenges before the full implementation of SDGs, in the second half of the period, as well as the many significant accomplishments made so far, at the policy, institutional, data gathering and monitoring, and above all, at the level of concrete positive outcomes in a number of goals and targets.

As to mainstreaming Agenda 2030 and promoting sustainability as a self-induced collective culture and embraced behavior at the national level, VNR2 has described the rising interest countrywide in the SDGs, and thrown lights on the mounting support of a cross-section of national constituencies. It has shown how a growing number of partners and stakeholders, including all layers of policy, implementing and oversight government agencies, the academia, civil society, corporate and private sector partners, investors and bankers to mention but a few, have now engaged in incorporating, defending, promoting and regularly reporting on different components of sustainability. Through the narrative analysis, pages, figures, and tables and through an in depth and thorough assessment of the 2023 Review and non-2023 Review goals and targets, VNR2 has documented the State of Kuwait's commitment to an all-inclusive, rights-based, equal opportunity and dignifying human development for all, and to achieving the triple SDGs objective of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Finally, VNR2 reiterated Kuwait's ratification of most relevant global and regional environmental agreements. It has acknowledged the State of Kuwait's unwavering commitment to furthering its position regionally and internationally, in the fields of international human development, and in advancing global and sustainable wellbeing, and fostering human rights, diplomacy and cultural exchange.

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