



# Gulf Sustain

Responsible business for people and planet

## STRATEGY OVERVIEW 2023-2027

### BACKGROUND AND VISION

The Institute for Human Rights & Business (IHRB) is renowned as a trusted and independent thought leader on business and human rights. It is recognized for its ability to catalyse stakeholders to promote a responsible business agenda and promote collaboration towards improved policy and practice.

In 2022, IHRB launched the Gulf Sustain initiative with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to work towards a green transition framework that considers the intersection of economic diversification, worker welfare and sustainable development in the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations.<sup>1</sup> [Gulf Sustain](#) aims to develop knowledge, drive dialogue, and promote stronger policies, accountability, and collaboration on an integrated approach to achieving net-zero commitments while advancing the welfare of all workers in GCC countries' economic diversification plans. IHRB's aspiration and approach are to deliver impact by building leverage through collective action.

By supporting and convening the private sector, governments, financial actors, and local, regional, and international organizations across the fields of climate action, renewable energy, economic diversification, and worker welfare, Gulf Sustain seeks to contribute to the development of a green transition framework that will drive social change in the GCC and beyond. The initiative aims to contribute to GCC countries becoming strong drivers in transitions towards environmentally sustainable and equitable economies with the rights of workers and vulnerable groups at the centre.

<sup>1</sup> Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

To this end, Gulf Sustain will seek to:

- **Drive Engagement:** We bring together key stakeholders to ensure a multi-level approach and include diverse voices in green transition and economic diversification processes.
- **Produce Knowledge:** We develop research and create evidence to support the inclusion of all workers in transition processes.
- **Collaborate & Co-create:** We partner with local and regional stakeholders to develop actionable solutions and expand networks working in the fields of green transitions, sustainable development, the environment and worker welfare.

### PARTNERSHIPS

A central component of the Gulf Sustain approach will be partnering with local stakeholders and experts in three ways: (i) through the establishment of a multi-stakeholder working group at the national level to represent different perspectives, identify champions of worker welfare and co-create actionable tools that are applicable within their respective contexts; (ii) through signing letters of intent or Memorandums of Understanding with key local entities; and (iii) by hiring local advisors responsible for stakeholder engagement, as well as engaging academia through a fellowship program.

A multi-stakeholder working group is established at the national level to act as a steering group, providing technical advice and direction throughout the implementation of Gulf Sustain and ensuring the delivery of project outputs. The role of the Gulf Sustain team will be to act as a secretariat for convening each technical working group and a facilitator for meeting the objectives and strategy set out by each group.

## COUNTRY-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

As of September 2023, Gulf Sustain has been launched in the UAE and Qatar, with plans to launch in Saudi Arabia next. Expansion into Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman is expected in 2024 and 2025.

In the first year of operation within each country, Gulf Sustain will seek to achieve the following:

**Launch:** The initiative will be launched through a closed-door event with multiple stakeholders from the private sector, government, national and international specialised agencies and other entities.

**Partnerships:** To form partnerships and establish lines of collaboration with like-minded local organisations and international entities operating within the country. Collaboration will include, but not be limited to, co-creating research outputs, communication and dissemination strategies, joint events or technical workshops, and the validation of tools, sets of recommendations etc.

**Conduct a national analysis:** Two to three academia and think tanks will be contracted to conduct an in-depth analysis assessing the landscape of sustainable development, environment and climate change, worker welfare, and economic diversification within the country to identify gaps and opportunities.

**Establish a multi stakeholders' working group:** Each national multi-stakeholder working group will be made up of diverse members representing government, the private sector, academia/think tanks, and other specialized agencies, with a rotating chair and co-chair; the group will meet 2-3 times a year. The working groups will create a roadmap defining Gulf Sustain's priorities and activities at the country level, and will continue to guide and contribute to any tools, publications or sets of recommendations created through the initiative in that country.



Pareekshith Indeever / Pexels