

المؤسسة الملكية  
للإنقاذ والسلامة المائية  
**ROYAL  
LIFE SAVING  
BAHRAIN**



# WATER SAFETY STRATEGY

Developed in Bahrain for promoting safe enjoyment of water, building cohesive communities, enabling economic development and saving lives.

# MESSAGE FROM ROYAL LIFE SAVING BAHRAIN



**The launch of the Water Safety Strategy is a crucial step to making the surrounding waters of Bahrain safer for citizens and visitors alike.**

As an island nation, water is integral to our national heritage. We must embrace this legacy by providing opportunities to learn basic swimming and safety skills, whilst utilising our natural water assets to improve public health, drive tourism and create employment opportunities for all Bahrainis.

The Board of Royal Life Saving Bahrain is committed to ensuring our organisation succeeds in broadening awareness of the value of water and the environment, improving safety standards and supporting development of recreational facilities across our 130 kilometre coastline.

As a newly established organisation, Royal Life Saving Bahrain will work to unite our communities, institutions and local leisure industry under a shared objective: to educate and advocate a safer aquatic environment for residents and tourists in line with international standards.

Together, we can – and are committed to – protecting future generations and our environment.

**H.H Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa**  
President



**One hundred and thirty kilometres of coastline, a maritime area 11 times larger than the land mass, 8 current and upcoming public beaches and sadly an average of 15 drowning deaths per year.**

Whether it's a 2, 15, or 45 year old, drowning has been responsible for taking their lives in this year alone. If we think carefully, each one of us will remember a fatal drowning or a near drowning incident that affected our families, our friends or us. It is more common in Bahrain than we think. It only takes 20-60 seconds and a few centimetres of water for a child to drown and 3 minutes for an adult to drown.

Every life is precious and as the Quran teaches us "the saving of one life is like the saving of mankind." It is with this responsibility in mind that Royal Life Saving Bahrain was founded. Royal Life Saving Bahrain aims to develop a culture of swimming and enjoyment of water, promote volunteerism, reduce water-related death and injury, enhance the appeal of water-related tourism and finally foster respect for coastlines and marine habitats.

These goals will be achieved by working together with the community, government and industry. After all, the community as a whole is responsible for saving a life. No matter what profession we are in, we can all make a difference as individuals. The Water Safety Strategy was devised in line with international best practice and it outlines the steps that need to be taken in order to achieve our goals.

Our Islamic heritage tells us to teach our children swimming, archery and horse riding and it's our responsibility to do so. Water is an intricate part of our heritage, our present and our future. As a mother, a swimmer and a citizen of Bahrain, I would like our country to develop a healthy beach culture, safe waterways, promote the enjoyment of water and strengthen our communities.

**H.H Shaikha Nayla bint Hamad bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa**  
Chairperson & Founder

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”علموا أبناءكم السباحة  
والرماية وركوب الخيل“

التراث الإسلامي

“Teach your children swimming,  
archery and horse riding”

Islamic Heritage

”ومن أحيائها فكأنما  
أحيا الناس جميعا“

المائدة: ٣٢

“The saving of one life is like the  
saving of all mankind”

Al-Maeda: 5vs32

# ABOUT ROYAL LIFE SAVING BAHRAIN

Royal Life Saving Bahrain was established in October 2016.

## Our Vision

To prevent drowning related death and injury and prosper from our waters

## Our Mission

To promote safe enjoyment of recreation in water, build cohesive communities, enable economic development and save lives



We will partner with Government, industry and the community to achieve our vision and mission.

Royal Life Saving Bahrain (RLSB) is a charity registered under the Ministry of Social Development. RLSB is supported by Life Saving Bahrain Management WLL (commercial registration number 102436-1), which has been incorporated to undertake commercial activities related to RLSB.

# BOARD MEMBERS



**Shaikh Ahmed bin Isa Al Khalifa**

*Vice President*

**H.H. Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa**

*President*

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Isa bin Salman Educational and Charity Fund

**Mrs. Hala Ali Husain Yateem**

*Secretary*

Business Woman

**H.H. Shaikha Nayla bint Hamad bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa**

*Chairperson*

Chairperson & Founder of Royal Life Saving Bahrain

**Mr. Mohamed Khalil Ahmed Nass**

*Treasurer*

Captain at the Ministry of Interior

**Mrs. Nirvana Abdulla Akbar Alireza**

Business Owner

**Mrs. Sawzan Ali Abdulla AlShaer**

Media Advisor

**Ms. Noora Hasan Al Nusuf**

Head of Corporate Affairs and Brand & Marketing - Standard Chartered Bank

**Dr. Husam Abdulaziz Mohamed Noor**

Consultant Cardiologist

**Ms. Haifa Salahuddin Abdulrahman Khonj**

Lawyer

# OUR LIFE WITH WATER

As an island nation, our lifestyles and interests drive us to develop beaches, swimming pools, water parks and other environments where we can enjoy water-based recreation. We engage in boating and other activities that take us beyond the shores. Our life with water is part of our heritage, our history and our future.



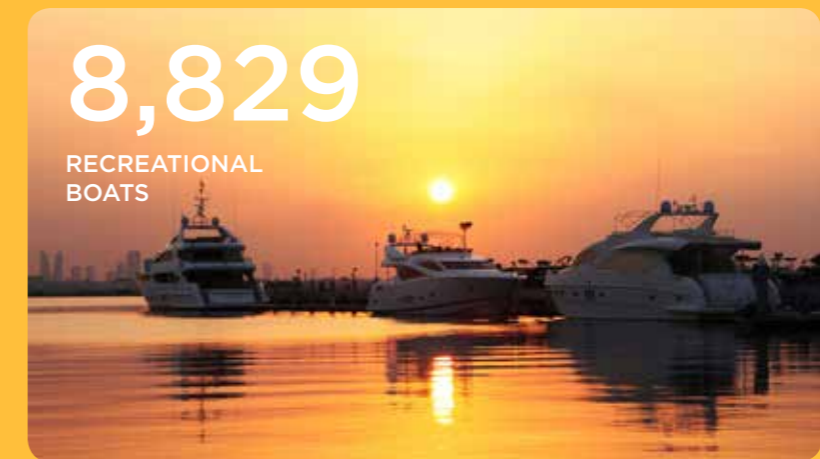
OUR HISTORY OF PEARLING



OUR HERITAGE AS A TRADING NATION



OUR MODERN DAY WATER SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES



# CHALLENGES WE FACE

As a nation, we endeavour to develop and sustain our life with water for generations to come, while harvesting value today for individuals, communities businesses and Government. Our endeavour brings to light a number of challenges that need to be addressed. Each challenge also presents an opportunity for development which will contribute to the Bahrain 2030 Vision.

The challenges we face include:

- ① We lose many lives to drowning
- ② We have a limited focus on monitoring and analysing drowning-related death and injury
- ③ Our people have limited opportunities to learn basic swimming skills
- ④ Our children don't learn basic swimming in Government schools
- ⑤ Our people have minimal understanding of how to be safe in, on and around water
- ⑥ Our people have minimal first aid knowledge for dealing with emergencies around water
- ⑦ Our visitors from the region often lack skills and knowledge for safe recreation in water
- ⑧ Our watercraft users lack understanding and respect for safety
- ⑨ Our public beaches have no lifeguard services or other safety measures
- ⑩ Our hotels lack a standardised approach to managing safety in swimming pools and at beaches
- ⑪ We have a number of private pools, with and without licences, where safety needs to be improved
- ⑫ Our youth have limited opportunities for employment in water-related fields
- ⑬ We need to provide more care and respect for our beaches and water environments

# GOALS TO ACHIEVE

We have identified goals that we need to achieve to address the challenges we face:



## DEVELOP A CULTURE OF SWIMMING AND ENJOYING WATER

Where everyone has the opportunity to learn basic swimming, a vital skill that could one day save a life, While enabling lifelong enjoyment of water.



## PROMOTE VOLUNTEERISM AND SOCIAL COHESION

Where people from diverse backgrounds come together with a shared national identity and responsibility to develop the community and prosper together.



## REDUCE WATER-RELATED DEATH AND INJURY

Where there are more people participating in and enjoying water-based recreation with a greater focus on safety, resulting in fewer drowning-related deaths and injuries.



## ENHANCE THE APPEAL OF WATER RELATED TOURISM

Where beaches, swimming pools, water parks and water activities are made more appealing and safer for tourists and are marketed as distinct destination value propositions.

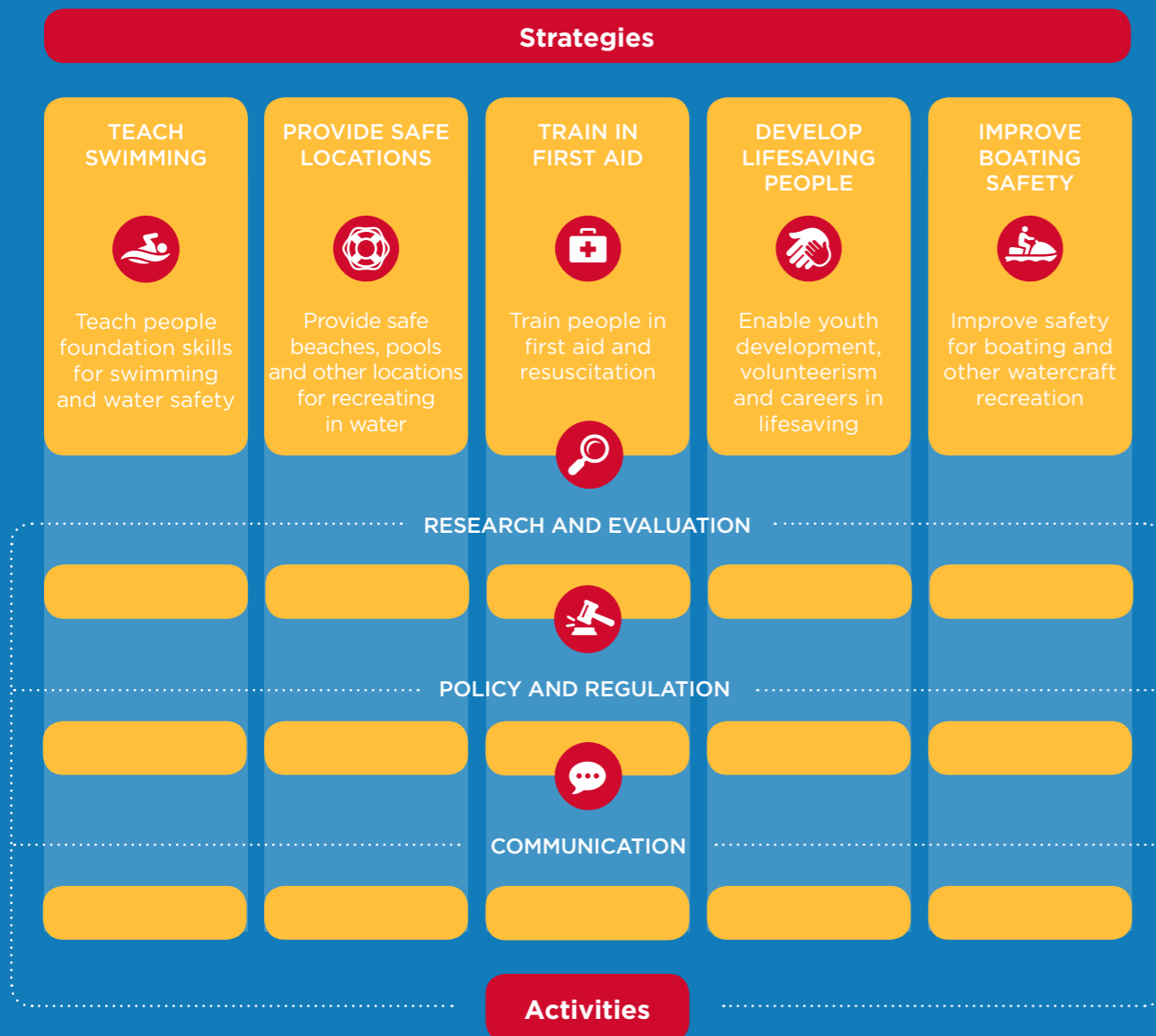


## FOSTER RESPECT FOR COASTLINES AND MARINE HABITATS

Where people take pride in and value natural and man-made water environments and take ownership of caring for and sustaining them.

# OUR STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT

We have identified strategies that we need to implement to achieve our goals. These strategies are based on a combination of international best practice and local context. There are five independent strategies and three activities that span all strategies. Each strategy and activity is detailed in the following sections.



# TEACH PEOPLE FOUNDATION SKILLS FOR SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY



## Overview:

A person with foundation skills in swimming and water safety can experience lifelong safe enjoyment of the water and is equipped with basic skills to keep themselves and others safe. These skills are essential for children and adults alike – see Example of Foundation Skills.

In addition to increasing one's safety in water, having foundation skills in swimming enables an individual to access a range of water-based recreation and competition opportunities that can contribute positively to their health and well-being. As we develop more youth with foundation skills in swimming, there is potential for more youth to progress further and achieve excellence in sports – see Progression Pathway.

Not only will these skills provide the people of Bahrain a broader range of ways to enjoy the best our island nation has to offer, it will encourage a greater respect for the natural environment and instil a desire to maintain clean, healthy spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Increasing the swimming capability of the population is essential for realising the economic and tourism benefits that flow from developing water safety in Bahrain.

## Example of Foundation Skills:

A person with foundation swimming and water safety skills should be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge associated with safety in, on and around water.
- 2 Float, scull and tread water continuously for 1 minute
- 3 Swim continuously for 50 metres on front and/or back
- 4 Perform a talk, reach and throw rescue
- 5 Perform a survival sequence\*
- 6 Demonstrate basic emergency response skills
- 7 Demonstrate knowledge of responsible use of water environments

*\*Survival sequence is the ability to recover from a fall into water in clothes by a) rotating from lying face down to lying on back b) floating, sculling and treading water for one minute c) swimming 25 metres to a point of safety and d) securing oneself, climbing out and exiting.*

## 12 LESSONS

12 lessons of an hour each is an indication of the time it takes to learn foundation skills in swimming and water safety.

## Our actions will include:

- 1 Conducting a feasibility study that will: assess the current level of foundation skills in swimming and water safety in Bahrain; identify any barriers and opportunities for learning these skills; run pilot swimming programmes; and make relevant recommendations.
- 2 Establishing a national programme for teaching foundation swimming and water safety skills, tailored specifically to meet Bahrain's needs with a focus on respecting the environment.
- 3 Incorporating the national programme into the primary school curriculum for delivery to all students.
- 4 Developing a market solution where the national programme is affordable and widely available to the public and visitors.
- 5 Utilising existing public swimming pools, hotel pools, private pools, proposed swimming pools in youth centres and demarcated beach areas as venues for conducting programmes.
- 6 Developing and promoting pathways that progress students from learning foundation skills through to recreational swimming, water-related activities and lifesaving programmes.



SCHOOLS ARE IDEAL SETTINGS FOR ENGAGING CHILDREN IN FOUNDATION SWIMMING.



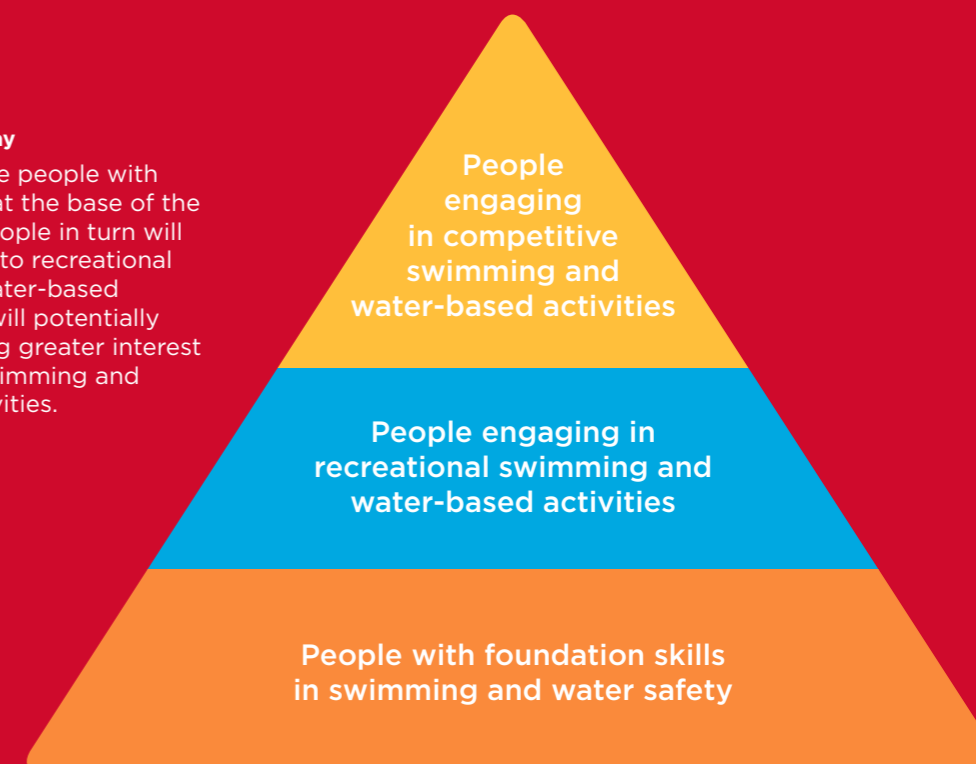
ADULTS ARE NOT IMMUNE FROM DROWNING AND SHOULD ALSO BE TAUGHT KEY FOUNDATION SWIMMING AND WATER-SAFETY SKILLS.



FOUNDATION SWIMMING AND WATER-SAFETY SKILLS CAN BE TAUGHT IN DEMARCATED BEACH AREAS.

## Progression Pathway

By providing more people with foundation skills at the base of the pyramid, more people in turn will potentially go on to recreational swimming and water-based activities, which will potentially lead to developing greater interest in competitive swimming and water-based activities.



# PROVIDE SAFE BEACHES, POOLS AND OTHER LOCATIONS FOR RECREATION IN WATER



## Overview:

Bahrain's climate is perfect for year-round recreation in water. Providing safer venues will maximise the appeal of water-based activity for everyone, whether residents or tourists and particularly for people who are less confident or familiar in water.

Bahrain's beaches can be made safer with lifesaving services where lifeguards with rescue equipment mark areas for swimming and keep a watchful eye on patrons. Signs can be placed on beaches to communicate safety information to patrons. Lifeguards can also give patrons advice on safety and provide real-time beach information to other agencies such as the Coast Guard.

Lifesaving services at beaches can be standardised throughout Bahrain to provide a consistent service for visitors. Information on lifesaving service locations and hours can be communicated on-site and through tailor-made apps, social media and traditional media.

Safety at commercial swimming pools can be managed similarly through standardised lifesaving services. Safety guidelines can be set for pool operators, which include safety assessments that are conducted to determine site-specific safety measures for each facility.

International standard safety equipment and lifeguard training can be made available in Bahrain. Youth can be provided employment opportunities through training in beach and pool lifeguarding and volunteer opportunities can be created for members of the community as trained beach lifeguards.

Safety at home or in private swimming pools is also crucial, particularly for children aged under five. These areas can be managed by providing owners and renters with guidelines and tools for managing safety. This includes the need to restrict access to pools through appropriate fencing and gates and for active supervision.

## Our actions will include:

- 1 Establishing national guidelines for safety at beaches, pools and other water recreation locations and requiring all waterway operators to comply with the guidelines.
- 2 Providing services where waterway operators can access advice and support on complying with national safety guidelines, lifeguard services, lifesaving training and equipment.
- 3 Ensuring compliance among operators by using guidelines, independent assessments and enforcement protocols.
- 4 Developing innovative market solutions where private pools are made safer while providing benefits to owners and the community.
- 5 Including water safety practices, accomplishments and other related information in destination marketing strategies for tourism.
- 6 Providing swimming and other water safety related programmes for tourists with a focus on visiting families from Gulf Cooperation Council states.



LIFEGUARDS IN BAHRAIN CAN BE TRAINED TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.



APPS ARE USED TO SHARE INFORMATION ON BEACH SAFETY FOR RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS.



LIFEGUARDS KEEP BEACHES SAFE BY IDENTIFYING SAFE PLACES TO SWIM, EDUCATING VISITORS AND PERFORMING RESCUES AND FIRST AID.



POOL SAFETY CAN BE IMPROVED BY PROVIDING GUIDELINES ON THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES IN AQUATIC FACILITY OPERATION.



# TRAIN PEOPLE IN FIRST AID AND RESUSCITATION



ANYONE CAN BE AN EVERYDAY LIFESAVER IF THEY HAVE THE SKILLS TO ACT QUICKLY AND SAFELY TO PREVENT INJURY OR PROVIDE FIRST AID TO SOMEONE IN NEED.



A FIRST AID APP TAKES THE GUESSWORK OUT OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS TO MAXIMISE THE OUTCOME FOR A SICK OR INJURED PERSON.



AN APP WILL BE DEVELOPED THAT PROVIDES A MAP OF THE LOCATIONS OF ALL PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATORS.



THE EVERYDAY LIFESAVER APP BRINGS WATER SAFETY AND RESUSCITATION EDUCATION TO THE CLASSROOM.

## Overview:

It is a reality anyone may require first aid and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) assistance anywhere and at any time, on land or in water. Providing people with global best-practice skills in first aid and resuscitation will vastly improve the safety of people across Bahrain.

First aid and CPR are two of the most commonly delivered emergency care courses worldwide. Each course is carefully designed to equip people with the knowledge and skills required to provide assistance to a sick or injured person until professional medical help arrives.

By creating interest in and understanding of the importance of learning emergency response skills, it is hoped that more people will engage in first aid and CPR training to become Everyday Lifesavers.

Recognition that anyone can be an Everyday Lifesaver and the role an individual can play in an emergency could mean the difference between life and death. A community equipped with these skills will be more resilient as a result of shared responsibility, empowerment and self-reliance.

Training people in first aid and CPR should be supplemented by making Automated External Defibrillators (AED) available in public locations. An Everyday Lifesaver with access to an AED can improve the chance of survival of cardiac arrest by 60%.

It is important to identify key target groups and prioritise these groups for training in first aid and CPR. Target groups may include women, people working in child care, retail and public spaces such as airports, malls and stadiums.

## Our actions will include:

- 1 Establishing nationally recognised qualifications in first aid and resuscitation and requiring these qualifications to be held by targeted job types in the labour market.
- 2 Incorporating basic first aid and resuscitation education in the school curriculum and delivering it to all students through innovative programmes.
- 3 Developing a market solution where learning first aid and resuscitation is attractive, affordable and widely available to the public.
- 4 Creating a system where people who assist in emergencies are recorded and recognised as Everyday Lifesavers.
- 5 Developing innovative resources that can be used by the public to help in emergencies.
- 6 Providing access to Automated External Defibrillators in targeted locations.

# ENABLE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, VOLUNTEERISM AND CAREERS IN LIFESAVING



## Overview:

Bahrain's lifesaving services will require lifesaving volunteers and employees to ensure the ongoing safety of our beaches, pools and other water locations.

A lifesaving volunteer can take many roles and anyone can become involved. Volunteers can be trained lifeguards, assist in support roles such as communications and coordination, or provide general support as required.

The benefits of being a lifesaving volunteer are far-reaching. It is an opportunity to learn new skills, create close community linkages, improve fitness and develop friendships.

There are also fantastic benefits for young Bahrainis to become involved in lifesaving. Developing young lifesaving volunteers will contribute to improving the national identity of Bahrainis and provide opportunities for nurturing leaders in the community.

Lifesaving also provides exciting youth careers pathways, leading to increased job opportunities for Bahrainis locally and internationally. For example, students may choose to work as lifeguards while completing tertiary studies or gain employment as lifeguards in the tourism sector.

The development and standardisation of lifesaving services for commercial pools will result in further employment and career opportunities for Bahrainis in lifesaving and water-related recreation.

## Our actions will include:

- 1 Recognising lifesaving qualifications in the national qualifications framework and lifesaving job types in labour market classifications.
- 2 Aligning and synergising lifesaving qualifications, volunteer roles and career pathways in the National Youth Development Strategy.
- 3 Developing a volunteer training, resourcing and deployment programme at beaches with lifesaving services.
- 4 Creating a system where volunteers are recorded and recognised as Everyday Lifesavers.
- 5 Creating an entry level to management lifesaving career pathways in the tourism and emergency service sectors.
- 6 Developing international exchange programmes that bring international lifesaving personnel to Bahrain and send Bahrain life saving personnel overseas.



VOLUNTEERS ARE TRAINED TO MEET NATIONAL LIFESAVING QUALIFICATIONS.



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO VOLUNTEER. PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT SKILLS CAN HELP IN DIFFERENT WAYS.



LIFEGUARD EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERING PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS.



# IMPROVE SAFETY FOR BOATING AND OTHER PERSONAL WATERCRAFT-BASED RECREATION



## Overview:

Bahrain's warm waters invite residents and visitors alike to enjoy a vast array of watercraft-based recreation. Bahrain's warm waters invite residents and visitors alike to enjoy a vast array of watercraft-based recreation.

From boating or sailing with family and friends to wakeboarding, jet skiing and windsurfing along the beach, Bahrain's coastline provides easy access to water-based activities. There is something for everyone.

While participation in boating and other watercraft-based recreation is encouraged, there are also associated inherent risks. Therefore, it is important that uniform safety standards for boat and other watercraft operation and waterway management are embraced and upheld.

With the nation's waterways often busy with a variety of different watercraft and activities, it is important that everyone using watercraft has knowledge of rules and regulations to ensure everyone's safety. Requiring recreational boat and personal watercraft users to obtain appropriate licences will ensure that before operating a vessel on the water, people have appropriate knowledge of the legal responsibilities for safe operation, necessary safety equipment and what to do in an emergency.

Of particular importance is the need to enforce lifejacket wear among recreational boaters and watercraft users. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of lifejackets in saving lives when boating. Regulating their use is therefore of paramount importance for making Bahrain safer.

## Our actions will include:

- 1 Supporting the Coast Guard to increase public awareness of boating and personal watercraft safety.
- 2 Embedding safety messaging about boating into all lifesaving programmes.
- 3 Engaging in dialogue and advocacy to develop safety measures for water-related recreation and sporting activities.
- 4 Enabling lifeguards at beaches to communicate safety related information to Coast Guard and other agencies.



ENFORCING LIFEJACKET WEAR HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO VASTLY IMPROVE SAFETY AND PREVENT BOATING-RELATED DROWNING DEATHS.



# OUR ACTIVITIES



## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

We recognise the importance of research to provide an evidence base to continually inform our goals and strategies. Evaluation of each goal, strategy, programme and initiative within each strategy will also ensure ongoing improvement and will inform decision-making.

Research and evaluation will be used to prioritise the actions within each strategy, identify which partners are best placed to implement each action and identify the effectiveness of programmes and initiatives implemented. The learnings from the evaluation will be used to help improve existing programmes and initiatives and develop the next steps in the Bahrain Water Safety Strategy. Our priority for this, our first Bahrain Water Safety Strategy, is to put in place the appropriate systems to capture the most accurate data and establish a benchmark upon which we can monitor and evaluate each action within our strategy.

### Examples include:

- Developing a database for collection of drowning and other water-related injury incidents.
- Conducting a feasibility study to determine the current status of foundation skills in swimming and water safety in Bahrain.
- Monitoring and reporting on compliance of operators with national guidelines for safety at beaches, pools and other water-recreation locations.
- Monitoring and reporting the uptake of qualifications in first aid and resuscitation as well as incidents where people have assisted in emergencies, including the used of automated external defibrillators in targeted locations.
- Developing a system to monitor rescues and first aid conducted by volunteer lifesavers and paid lifeguards at beaches and swimming pools.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns on water safety, first aid and resuscitation and boating safety.



## POLICY AND REGULATION

Policy and regulation are important components to move from changing beliefs, attitudes and intentions to behaviour change. We recognise that long-term behaviour change is most likely when potential constraints as well as costs and benefits are evaluated to ensure the most appropriate, sophisticated and comprehensive policies and regulations are put in place.

### Examples include:

- Incorporating the foundation skills in swimming and water safety into the primary school curriculum for delivery to all students.
- Establishing national guidelines for safety at beaches, pools and other water-based recreation locations.



## COMMUNICATION

Effective communication at all levels, internally and externally, is key to successful implementation of the Bahrain Water Safety Strategy. We recognise the need for regular, clear communication throughout the various stages of the strategy. Throughout the process there will be opportunities for stakeholders at all levels to provide input and ensure communication is a shared process. Key priorities are to communicate the overall strategy and why there is a need for Bahrain to have a Water Safety Strategy along with the development of communications plans for relevant actions.

Creating awareness is therefore the first step, followed by targeting behavioural change. Key factors for success are ensuring communication is multi-focused and multi-organisational with a combination of broad and targeted communications including: general public awareness promotion, targeted programmes and service development using a collaborative approach between government ministries, organisations and the community.

Different communications strategies will be employed including advertising, public relations and multilingual communication. Evidence-based research will be used to guide communication plans and to help identify priorities, key target groups or stakeholders, inform actions, or to review or evaluate strategies.

### Examples include:

- Public awareness raising to promote pathways to progress students from learning foundation skills to recreational swimming, water related activities and lifesaving programmes.
- Communicating with stakeholders to develop national guidelines for safety at beaches, pools and other water-recreation locations
- Communicating new requirements regarding compliance with national guidelines as well as services that provide stakeholders with access to compliance-related advice and support.
- Public awareness campaigns about water safety and related information in destination marketing for tourism.

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