

The Healthy Cities Programme was first implemented in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region in 1990 to facilitate commitment on health and well-being at the highest level, and to unify vision and commitment to public health development for healthier and sustainable environments where people live, work, and thrive. A healthy city strives to create an environment that cares for the physical, mental, and social well-being of its inhabitants and places equity, inclusion, and sustainable development at the centre of local policies, strategies, and programmes.

Bahrain was among the first countries in the Region to implement the Healthy Cities Programme, with Umm-Al-Hassam being the first city to be designated as a Healthy City in 2018, followed by Manama in 2021 — the first capital in the Region to earn the Healthy City distinction. More recently, in 2022, WHO awarded the Healthy City status to 2 additional Bahraini cities, Busaiteen/Al-Sayah in the Muharraq governorate, and A'ali in the Northern governorate, bringing the total number of healthy cities in the country to 4.

Building on these achievements, the Healthy Cities Programme has recently gained momentum with 3 out of Bahrain's 4 governorates pledging to expand the implementation of the initiative beyond individual cities to the entirety of their respective governorates. This commitment is indeed a testament to the nationwide dedication to the Healthy Cities Programme as a strategic vehicle for health development in urban settings, under the leadership of the Ministry of Health in Bahrain.

On 24 July 2023, the Capital governorate, under the patronage of the Ministry of Interior, organized an event to launch the process for the governorate to be recognized as a Healthy Governorate as part of the Healthy Cities Programme, the signing ceremony was attended by H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior, H.E. Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, Lieutenant-General Tariq Al Hassan, Chief of Public Security, H.E. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Governor of the Capital Governorate, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain.

During the launch event, Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Governor of the Capital governorate, described the project as a milestone in the journey of the governorate and the Ministry of Health to achieve sustainable environments and reinforce public health.

After the launch event, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain signed a letter of collaboration with the Capital governorate to initiate the implementation scale-up of the Healthy Cities initiative at a governorate level.



H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior, H.E. Dr Jaleela bint ALSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, Lieutenant-General Tariq Al Hassan, Chief of Public Security, H.E. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Governor of the Capital governorate, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative of Bahrain during the launch of the process of being recognized as a Healthy Governorate as part of the Healthy Cities Programme, 24 July 2023, Manama, Bahrain. Credit: Capital governorate







WHO EMRO | Healthy Cities initiative expands to governorates in Bahrain







Dr. N. Al-Hamad, WHO EMRO Regional Director, (left) and Dr. A. Al-Hamad, Bahraini Minister of Health, (right) during the signing ceremony of the MoU between WHO and the Ministry of Health of Bahrain, 2018.



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