



Project evaluation: summary report

Tunisia: Supporting regionalisation

Project no.:	2012.2540.8
CRS purpose Code:	15112 Decentralisation and support to subnational government
Project objective:	The institutional conditions for effective participatory regional development in Tunisia are improved.
Project term:	3.5 years (December 2012 to June 2016)
Project volume:	EUR 4,000,000
Commissioning party:	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Lead executing agency:	Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation (Ministère de Développement, de l'Investissement et de la Coopération Internationale, MDICI)
Implementing organisations (in the partner country):	Directorates for regional development, supraregional development offices for regional development, regional councils, sector ministries
Other participating development organisations:	-
Target groups:	The target group is the Tunisian population, in particular the population in poor and marginalised regions (north-west and central-west).

Project description

January 2011 saw the fall of the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, which resulted from years of underdevelopment, unemployment and the feeling of social exclusion. Even today, Tunisia's inland regions have an unemployment rate that is double that of its coastal regions, leaving the local population feeling politically marginalised. The various (transitional) governments very quickly undertook initial measures aimed at combating regional development disparities. In 2014, a new constitution providing for the sustainable development of the country, equal living conditions in all regions and administrative decentralisation was adopted. In the regions, elected regional councils are set to take responsibility for regional development in future and have at their disposal their own funding. However, below the surface of the initial, visible success, structures have barely changed. The country remains very centralised, the regions have very little scope for shaping development, and the regions' development priorities are in competition with the plans of the strong national ministries. All in all, the requisite institutional conditions for effective participatory regional development in Tunisia are inadequate (core problem).

Against this backdrop, the project on 'Supporting regionalisation in Tunisia' aimed to improve the institutional conditions for effective participatory regional development in Tunisia (module objective).

At the national level, the project supported the Tunisian partners in drafting the international framework for regional development (field of activity 1). It provided demand-oriented support for the development of a legal framework and reform strategies and accompanied the improvement of inter-ministerial coordination. At the regional level, new instruments for regional development were piloted and existing state development structures were strengthened (field of activity 2). In this field of activity, activities were closely coordinated with those at the macro level wherever possible. In addition to conducting activities at the national level, project implementation focused on measures in the seven priority regions/governorates of Tunisian-German cooperation in the northwest and central-west regions (Le Kef, Siliana, Jendouba, Beja, Sidi Bouzid, Kasserine and Kairouan). In these regions, it supported a new approach to regional development planning. 11 further regions (of a total of 24) were supported in elaborating the national five-year plan.

The project used the following instruments: long-term and short-term experts, in particular; procurement of materials and equipment; human capacity development measures.

Two additional fields of activity that were originally planned (regional economic development and a small-scale project fund) were shelved in dialogue with the partners and BMZ because they were taken over by other German TC projects that were about to begin. As such, only two of the original four indicators were retained at the module objective level:

- 1) Advisory content provided by the project has been verifiably included in relevant implementation texts for elaborating the institutional framework for regional development.
- 2) The capacities of the 10 key stakeholders for regional development in the pilot regions have improved by an average of one point on a scale of 1 to 6.

Outcome indicators 3 (five approaches to regional economic development that have demonstrated positive results in the pilot regions are disseminated as best practices by the responsible ministry of regional development) and 4 (10 inter-municipal regional development projects have been implemented with the participation of local civil society and the private sector, of which at least three directly contribute to reducing gender inequality) were shelved after consultation with the lead executing agency and BMZ.

In accordance with the two remaining objectives indicators, the following outputs were formulated:

- 1) The quality of discussions regarding the reform of the institutional conditions for regional development and participation in such discussions have improved.
- 2) Regional development management has improved in terms of efficiency and transparency.
- 3) The supraregional development offices are better able to support the implementation of regional development.
- 4) The new five-year plans are developed in the regions themselves, with the participation of the citizens there.

In addition to the shelving of the two outcome indicators, and the corresponding effects on the outputs, the following additional adjustments were made during the course of the project: After the adoption of the constitution, the project also supported the implementation of decentralisation reforms from 2014 onward. To this end, the project brought on board the Ministry of the Interior, which is in charge of decentralisation, as a new partner and initiated an inter-ministerial dialogue on decentralisation and regional development. Furthermore, the dissolution of the Ministry of Regional Development and Planning in 2013 and the establishment of the Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation (MDICI) led to a change in partners. In light of these political changes and the Tunisian administration's continued weak position on promoting regional development, the project decided in consultation with BMZ to work with the regional councils (output 2), the directorates for regional development (output 3) and – at the request of the partner – to support the elaboration of the five-year plans (output 4).

The project's module objective is realistic given the limitations of a project with such strict time and budget restrictions. This means that the improvement in the institutional conditions for effective participatory regional development in Tunisia can, in fact, be directly attributed to the project measures. At the output level, the project focuses on supporting the elaboration of the five-year plans (output 4), which serve as the basis for improving decision-making by the regional councils (output 2). Furthermore, the capacities of the supraregional development offices are improved in order to strengthen their role as technical consultants for the regional councils and to support the governors in implementing regional development (output 3). At the national level, the project has enriched the quality of discussions about reforming the institutional framework for regional development and given it a broader base thanks to the inter-ministerial dialogue (output 1).

This results logic is very plausible and reflects the change in the structures and capacities of key stakeholders required for sustainable regional development. However, some of the envisaged results are too ambitious (especially output 2 – efficient and transparent management of regional development and output 3 – strengthening supraregional development offices). Moreover, while the project has recognised the correlation between decentralisation and regional development, this is not reflected in the outcome indicators and can therefore not be used as the basis for evaluating project efficiency. All in all, the change in political conditions should have been incorporated into the project's results logic to a greater extent.

In the evaluation team's estimation, the outcome indicators are not SMART, because indicator 1 is not realistic and because no baseline can be established for indicator 2 (lack of specificity and measurability). For this reason, the team adapted the indicators as follows for the purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of the project:

- 1) Proposals for relevant standards or state policies for regional development have been communicated to the political partner based on stakeholder dialogue.
- 2) 70% of the strategic stakeholders confirm that their capacities have improved.

Basis for assessment of the OECD-DAC criteria:	Individual and overall rating of the OECD-DAC criteria:
<p>To determine the project's overall rating, calculate the average of the individual ratings of the five OECD-DAC criteria:</p> <p>14 – 16 points: very successful 12 – 13 points: successful 10 – 11 points: rather successful 8 – 9 points: rather unsatisfactory 6 – 7 points: unsatisfactory 4 – 5 points: very unsatisfactory</p>	<p>Relevance: 14 points - very successful Effectiveness: 12 points - successful Impact: 12 points - successful Efficiency: 11 points - rather successful Sustainability: 10 points - rather successful</p> <p>Overall, the project is rated successful with a total of 12 out of 16 points.</p>

Relevance (Are we doing the right thing?)

The project implements measures in the least developed regions (governorates) of Tunisia. It contributes to solving the target groups' core problems with respect to regional development, i.e. unemployment, low public and private investment, marginalisation of the population during development planning, inefficiency, and a lack of transparency with regard to public investments.

The measures selected by the project are consistent with the module objective of improving the institutional conditions for effective participatory regional development in Tunisia. The project promotes ongoing dialogue with regional development stakeholders at the national and regional levels and strengthens their capacities to plan and manage regional development and elaborate five-year plans. To this end, it maintains ongoing contact with all relevant stakeholders. With its use of interministerial working groups, the project contributes to the elaboration of policy papers on regional development. The capacity development measures also contribute to meeting previously identified needs.

Despite the new constitution adopted in 2014, no national strategies for regional development or decentralisation are in place at present. As a result, the project's response to the needs of the national and regional partners had to be very flexible. Project measures are therefore largely based on these needs. The use of this type of project approach runs the risk of measures being implemented in a manner that is too isolated and too short term.

The project is aligned with BMZ's objectives and guidelines, in particular the strategy for promoting constructive state-society relations (January 2010), Strategy 178 on the promotion of good governance in German development policy, and strategy paper 4/2011e on 'Human Rights in German Development Policy'.

The relevance of the programme is rated **very successful** with 14 points.

Effectiveness (Will we achieve the project's objective?)

Objectives indicator	Target value according to the offer	Current status according to the project evaluation
<p>1. Proposals for relevant standards or state policies for regional development have been communicated to the political partner based on stakeholder dialogue.</p> <p>Baseline value: 0</p>	6	<p>To date, five proposals have been elaborated in collaboration with the partner, in most cases in the context of interministerial working groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDICI policy paper on decentralisation • Methodological basis for elaborating the five-year plan of the Essid government • Cost calculation of the High Commission for Decentralisation and elaboration of a financial strategy on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior • Diagnosis of regional governance in seven governorates on behalf of MDICI and the Ministry of the Interior • Comparative study on the implementation of Article 135, section 3 of the Tunisian constitution on behalf of the Ministry of Finance <p>Preparations are under way for the identification of key questions and scenarios on the supraregional development offices and on the relationship between directorates for regional development and bodies to be elected in future (regional councils, municipal councils).</p>
<p>2. 70% of the strategic stakeholders in the pilot regions confirm that their capacities have improved.</p> <p>Baseline value: 0</p>	70%	<p>In line with the regional focus, the pilot regions were defined as the <i>Nord-Ouest</i> region (governorates of Siliana, Beja, Jendouba and Le Kef) and the <i>Centre-Ouest</i> region (Kasserine, Sidi Bou Zid and Kairouan). The key stakeholders for regional development are the seven directorates for regional development, the responsible development agencies, and the seven governorate administrations and their regional councils. These stakeholders received training in the areas of citizen-oriented needs assessment, participatory regional planning, and evaluation and monitoring in the context of intersectoral cooperation.</p> <p>A survey conducted by the project team among the partners arrived at contradictory findings. In the survey, 87.5% (2015) of the surveyed strategic stakeholders reported that their capacities in the aforementioned areas had improved thanks to the project. However, the percentage of participants confirming an improvement in capacities in thematic sub-areas was lower.</p> <p>Based on the discussions conducted with the project's main partners during the evaluation, the evaluation team nonetheless comes to the conclusion that this indicator will be achieved at least in part by the end of the project.</p>

*The evaluation team comes to the conclusion that objectives indicator 1 will probably be **fully** achieved and objectives indicator 2 will probably be **partly** achieved by the end of the project.*

While no negative results occurred, the project should have placed greater emphasis on the costs and risks of decentralisation and developed a common understanding of regional development with the partner.

The effectiveness of the project is rated **successful** with 12 points.

Overarching development results (impact) (Are we contributing to the achievement of overarching development results?)

The overarching development results (impact) of the project are demonstrated through the reduction of inequality between the country's inland regions and its more prosperous coastal regions. As such, the project contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The project measures focus on the most marginalised regions and contribute to mobilising existing resources in these regions. They strengthen capacities and structures in order to support state regional stakeholders in better representing their interests and needs vis-à-vis national stakeholders. Improved capacities for dialogue can enable the regional stakeholders to, for example, contribute to an open social and political dialogue about regional development and better communicate the regions' economic potential to potential investors.

The project succeeded in incorporating the political lessons learned about regional planning in line with the requirements of the revolution (*PREDD/Plans Régionaux d'Environnement et de Développement Durable*) into a nationwide standard.

All of the project activities were geared to participatory development (especially in the area of plan development) and good governance (in the context of strengthening state stakeholders). The project's contribution to participatory regional planning aimed to promote the needs-oriented steering of state investments. However, the impact of improved infrastructure and state services on poverty alleviation will only be felt in the medium term.

The participatory development of regional plans in Tunisia's inland regions (including conflict-torn regions) has led to agreement on a common development vision, thus reducing the potential for conflict.

The impact of the programme is rated **successful** with 12 points.

Efficiency (Are the objectives being achieved cost-effectively?)

The overall commission value of the project is EUR 4,000,000. An additional EUR 2,000,000 was added to the original commission value of EUR 2,000,000, mainly to cover the costs of supporting regional planning.

Apart from the German team leader, the project team exclusively comprises national experts. This approach enables the best possible use of national expertise. This expertise is also supplemented by international expertise. An appropriate volume of partner contributions was provided.

At the explicit request of the Tunisian Government, the largest share of the project budget was spent on output 4 (elaborating the five-year plans). However, support for the elaboration of the 18 regional development plans contributes only implicitly to the module objective (improving institutional conditions). By contrast, the activities relating to outputs 1 and 3, training courses, capacity development and installation of the SIR regional information system contribute directly to achieving the module objective.

Some of the project measures build on lessons learned from other projects, such as the regional development plans and capacity analysis of the African Development Bank. The project also takes into account existing cooperation arrangements between the regions and the international cooperation organisations.

Coordination with GIZ projects in the Regional Development, Local Governance and Democracy cluster is driven forward wherever possible. However, BMZ's commissioning of multiple projects focusing on regional and municipal development has contributed to a situation requiring a high level of coordination.

Coordination with other GIZ projects is limited to an exchange of information.

The efficiency of the programme is rated **rather successful** with 11 points.

Sustainability (Are the positive results durable?)

The two topics most sustainably anchored in the partner structures at the time of the project evaluation were 'social participation' and 'strategic regional planning'. The SIR regional information system supported by the project will most likely be integrated into the political partner's system. The method for elaborating the five-year plans has also been widely accepted by the partner.

However, the use of these methods and instruments for planning and managing regional development is dependent on ongoing financing, which had not yet been secured at the time of the project evaluation.

The sustainability of the programme is rated **rather successful** with 10 points.

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