

## TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Tunisia is a unitary republic with two tiers of subnational government: 24 governorates (regional level), and 350 municipalities. The first free and competitive municipal elections in the country's history, after the revolution in 2011, were organized in 2018, resulting in more than 7,200 local elected representatives who took part in the 350 municipal councils.<sup>1</sup>



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Review (VNR).<sup>2</sup>

## 1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

SDG implementation began with the **2016-2020 five-year development plan (PQD)**, which includes 80% of the SDG targets.<sup>3</sup> The Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Investment Support (MEFAI) is responsible for the preparation of the new 2021-2025 development plan.

### 1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Steering of the SDGs is shared between the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAEMTE)**, which is responsible for diplomatic leadership, and the **Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Investment Support (MEFAI)**, responsible for the national coordination and technical leadership. A **national steering committee (COFIL)** has been set up. It is interministerial and multi-stakeholder: it brings together more than 100 persons (representatives of parliament, ministries and public institutions, civil society, the national federation of Tunisian municipalities, national organizations such as UGTT - UTICA - UTAP - UTSS - UNFT, etc). Since 2018, focal points in each ministry have been appointed to support MDICI's activities. **17 National Commissions**, one per SDG, bring together different ministries, civil society and the UN agencies.

### 1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The 2019 VNR process was led by the COFIL. It included the focal points of ministries and national administrative structures, representatives of the civil society, of national organizations, of the National Institute of Statistics, of the private sector and academia. With the support of the United Nations system and the experts, three workshops were organized in order to ensure better involvement of regional actors (citizens and LRGs), civil society actors and students. As in 2019, the **COFIL** led the 2021 VNR process. The 17 National Commissions organized a series of meetings to collect data, ensure synergy and transversality between the SDGs and contribute to the preparation of the report. The Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Investment Support (MEFAI) organized consultations. Participants could read and revise the first draft of the report.

### 1.3 MONITORING

The National Statistics System (SNS) comprises: the National Statistics Council (CNS), the National Statistics Institute (INS), the Specialized Public Statistical Structures (SSP) of various ministries, **local authorities**, public establishments and public enterprises, and Statistical Training Institutions. However, the mechanism for monitoring and evaluation is not clear enough and mastered by LRGs, and the indicator information system is obsolete, which does not allow a clear assessment of the performance of the municipalities. Lack of reliable and disaggregated data is a critical gap in achieving the SDGs.

1. See: [https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI\\_2019\\_report\\_country\\_profiles\\_DEC2019\\_UPDATES.pdf](https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf)

2. See: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23372Rapport\\_National\\_Volontaire\\_2019\\_Tunisie.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23372Rapport_National_Volontaire_2019_Tunisie.pdf) (2019); [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/279442021\\_VNR\\_Report\\_Tunisia.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/279442021_VNR_Report_Tunisia.pdf) (2021)

3. 58% are perfectly aligned and 42% are partially aligned. Tunisia reiterated, in 2018, its commitment to the 2030 Agenda through the adoption of the MAPS approach materialized by the signing of the Joint SDG Program between the Tunisian government and the UN for "Support for integration and implementation of a monitoring, evaluation and reporting system for the SDGs". The ten SDGs identified as priorities by the government are as follows: 1; 3; 4; 5; 6; 8; 10; 13; 16 and 17

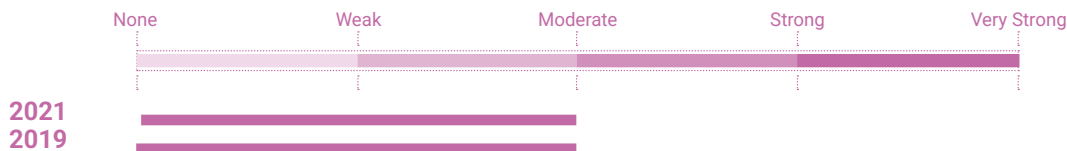
## 2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The **decentralization** process is still very recent and requires more time to be implemented, especially with the new territorial division materialized by the creation of new municipalities and the extension of certain municipalities;<sup>4</sup> along with very limited technical and financial support from the central government. These obstacles hinder effective and efficient implementation of the SDGs. Overall, the participation of LRGs in national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation is limited: municipalities are not involved in the COPIL.<sup>5</sup>

Municipalities are aware of the SDGs (68%) and apply them, but often without necessarily naming them in their plans. Some of them have set up specialized **commissions on sustainable development** (for instance, the municipalities of **Sidi Jedidi** (governorate of Nabeul) and **Msaken** (governorate of Sousse)). Other municipalities apply different SDGs within the same commission. The main targets prioritized by the Tunisian municipalities concern SDGs 6, 11 and 12 (in particular, waste management, drinking water, renewable energy and reduction of environmental impact, preservation of cultural heritage, etc.).<sup>6</sup> As part of the 2019 VNR process, regional workshops were organized to involve the 24 governorates. For the 2021 VNR, municipal councillors participated in the workshops organized by the MEFAI. In addition, as part of the VNR process presentation, the report mentions one specific consultation, organized on April 20, 2021 by the MEFAI, with the presidents of the 18 municipalities of the governorate of Sousse. Issues discussed were related to the SDGs (energy, environmental pollution, town planning and the development of anarchic constructions).

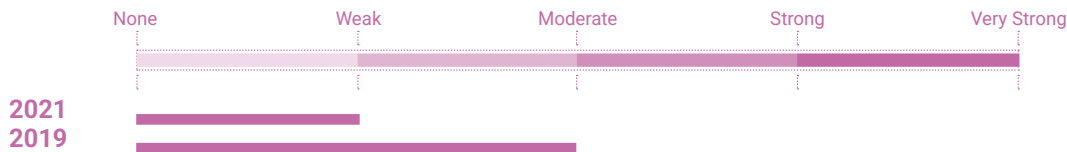
### 2.1 VNR REFERENCES

#### ► In the VNR process



Comments: According to the 2021 VNR, consultations were organized with municipal councillors. Sfax occasionally participated, while Nabeul didn't (GTF Survey 2021). The VSR is not taken into account in the VNR.

#### ► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: Sfax is involved through punctual and ad hoc participation. Nabeul doesn't participate. (GTF Survey 2021)

The 2021 VNR states that the FNCT is part of the national steering committee (COPIL). However, the FNCT affirms it doesn't participate in any national coordination mechanisms (as stated in its VSR).

This assessment is based on the information collected in the VNRs and in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' annual survey on the localization of the SDGs.

### 2.2 VNR REFERENCES

There are a few references to LRGs throughout the 2019 report. In the 2021 VNR, there is a very brief subsection on the local integration of the SDGs, in the section on the alignment of the Constitution and the planning framework with the SDGs (see VNR, 2021, p. 33) - but there is no reference to specific mechanisms. As part of the description of the VNR methodology, there is a section on consultations with local elected officials (see VNR, 2021, p. 60-61). It also mentions the importance of municipalities and the local level in implementing the SDGs. There is a subsection "The 2030 Agenda, from global to local" (see VNR, 2021, p. 70), on municipalities' responsibilities and on SDG localization. The National Federation of Tunisian Municipalities (FNCT) is mentioned there. Finally, a section on SDG integration at the local level presenting the Madinatouna project and the sustainable development strategies (SDV) of 2 cities: **Jendouba** and **Msaken** (see VNR, 2021, p. 75-77).

4. The 2014 Constitution marks a new era in the decentralization process. It takes into account the principles of electing local councils, independent administration, and the functional and financial local autonomy. The constitutional provisions are reinforced with the 2018 Code of Local Self-Government and the local election held the same year. The territorial reforms between 2014-2018 resulted in the creation of 86 municipalities, bringing the total number of municipalities to 350. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

5. See: [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/tunisia\\_2021](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/tunisia_2021).

6. See: [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/tunisia\\_2021.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/tunisia_2021.pdf)

## 2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

▶ With the support of different partners, the **National Federation of Tunisian Municipalities (FNCT)** is leading a project to develop strategic plans to contribute to localizing the SDGs (e.g. **Madinatouna project**)<sup>7</sup> and a programme on waste management (Wama-net), involving 20 Tunisian cities. The FNCT organized training labs for its members (Lab'baladiya). A first PRIHQ1 programme for neighbourhood upgrading was implemented in 65 municipalities; a second programme will involve 121 municipalities. The Tunisian association in collaboration with GIZ also launched the 'Citizen Space' initiative to restore trust between the citizens and the municipalities while increasing transparency and accountability at the local level.<sup>8</sup>

▶ As part of the Madinatouna project, the experience of the **Medenine governorate** constitutes a pilot project for the appropriation of the SDGs by local communities. As part of the 2016-2020 PQD, the governorate drew up its five-year regional development plan (PQR) adopting a participatory approach involving more than six hundred representatives of the public sector, civil society, the private sector, academics and professional organizations. This first initiative resulted in the identification of specific and relevant targets and indicators for monitoring and implementation of the SDGs at the regional level.

▶ The municipalities of **Mahdia** and **El Mourouj** have promoted a more integrated and participatory approach to sustainable urban development, through the SymbioCity framework, supported by the international agency of the Swedish Association of Municipalities (SKL International).

▶ The city of **Sousse** has also been active in setting up projects in the fields of citizen participation, energy efficiency, sustainable environment, urban mobility and migration, with support from national and international experts.

▶ The consultation of the presidents of the communes of the governorate of Sousse showed that they are already working on the SDGs at the commune level.

Some examples from the VSR published in 2021 (see below):

▶ The municipality of **Kalaat el Andalous** follows a climate-smart city model to support coastal resilience.

▶ The municipality **Sidi Alouane** fights against gender inequalities in early school leaving through vocational training programs dedicated to girls who have dropped out of school.

▶ The municipality of **Hergla** formed a committee with civil society and the Coastal Protection and Planning Agency to ensure the sustainability of facilities focused on coastal protection.

## 2.4 VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL REVIEWS (VSRs / VLRs)

The **National Federation of Tunisian Municipalities (FNCT)** developed a VSR in 2021.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The resources of the municipalities are insufficient<sup>10</sup>: they represent only 4% of the state budget and the ordinary income of the municipalities in 2020 has declined by 3% compared to 2019. However, local funding is expected to increase gradually over the next few years (until it reaches 21% of the state budget in nine years).<sup>11</sup> A new **support fund for decentralization, equalization and solidarity between municipalities** was created under the 2021 finance law.<sup>12</sup> With regard to human resources, insufficient at the local level, a functional mobility program of central government to local government was launched.

The 2021 VNR acknowledges that "the development of the regions still depends on decisions taken at the central level, especially in terms of the allocation of financial resources". With the exception of large cities such as **Tunis, Nabeul, Sfax**, or **Sousse**, the financial resources of municipalities are limited and the level of qualification of local administrative officers is low, particularly in the interior of the country.

7. With the support of UNDP, Cities Alliance, GIZ, VNG International and Medcities, the FNCT has helped eight cities to align their strategic development plans with the SDGs. The cities of **Beja, Gabes, Jendouba, Kairouan, La Soukra, Medenine, Monastir, Sidi Bouzid** and **Tataouine** have already aligned their development strategies for 2030 with the global agendas.

8. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

9. See: [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/tunisia\\_2021.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/tunisia_2021.pdf)

10. Technical and financial support is not adapted to the powers attributed to municipalities by the Code of Local Public Authorities.

11. See: [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/tunisia\\_2021.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/tunisia_2021.pdf)

12. The resources of this fund will benefit at the rate of 70% to the municipalities, 20% to the regions and 10% to the districts and will be distributed taking into consideration the criteria relating to the number of inhabitants, unemployment rate, fiscal capacity, the index development and debt capacity. This does not prevent local authorities from also needing to acquire fiscal autonomy.

## 3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

**General comments: Disparities among regions** are taken into account in the 2019 VNR. This principle has been enshrined in Tunisia's new 2014 Constitution. Article 12 states "the state acts to ensure social justice, sustainable development and balance between regions, taking into account development indicators and the principle of positive discrimination". In addition, the fourth axis of the PQD 2016-2020 aims to apply the principle of positive discrimination, (ii) decentralization, and (iii) reduction of disparities among regions. Positive discrimination for regions is retained as the guiding principle of arbitration for investment where 2/3 of public projects are allocated to half of the population in regional development zones (the least ranked governorates according to the Regional Development Index (RDI)).

Municipalities have so far not had an established responsibility for disaster risk reduction and intervention, a responsibility dictated by their role as front-line provider with populations, in particular to prevent, respond to and manage crisis situations such as the pandemic. This responsibility remains at the central power, deconcentrated regional authorities and designated national and regional commissions. It has not yet been aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

### 3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Tunisia is among the countries in Africa that have created legal provisions and platforms for citizen and community participation in local government, with a particular focus on gender equality.<sup>13</sup> There is no reference to women participation in local councils in the 2021 VNR.

### 3.2 COVID 19

No reference.

## 4. SDG INDICATORS<sup>14</sup>

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		48.5 (2018)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	84 (2020)
	Rural	69 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	89 (2020)
	Rural	63 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		8.2 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		100 (2008, Sousse)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		33.3 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

13. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

14. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/IndDatabasePage>. More information on the country's progress towards the SDGs here: <https://country-profiles.unstatshub.org/tun>