

Digital Municipalities in Tunisia :

transparent, citizen-oriented and efficient

The challenge

Tunisia's rapidly growing towns, cities and municipalities are often characterised by a housing shortage, informal development, environmental pollution and social tensions. And since the 2011 revolution, the country has been undergoing an extensive democratic transformation. The population expects municipal authorities to be transparent, accountable and citizen-oriented, with opportunities for participation. However, in the structurally weak interior regions in particular, democratic change has barely made an impact. Moreover, women and young people have so far made only scant use of their political and civil rights.

Citizen-oriented and efficient municipalities and a constructive relationship between administrative authorities and citizens based on trust are therefore of vital importance for the country's further development. The first free municipal elections, held in May 2018, were a significant step towards stronger municipal self-government. A new local Authorities Code that governs the decentralization process also gave municipalities new powers. This offers huge opportunities but also poses new challenges for local democracy.

Our approach

The project supports employees from ministries, municipal associations and local authorities in establishing service- and citizen-oriented and transparent working practices.

It also advises representatives from women's and young people's organisations on how they can make their demands and ideas heard more effectively and thus help shape political decisions, giving women and young people a greater say in local politics

and, as a result, building trust between citizens and municipal authorities.

Citizens' offices are being set up in selected municipalities to improve municipal services. The project also promotes the efficient organisation of municipal administrative processes through in-service training and supports initial and continuing training for municipal employees.

Project title	Initiative for Municipal Development
Commissioning party	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implementing organisation:	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project region	Selected municipalities, focusing on structurally weak interior regions
Lead executing agency	Tunisian Ministry of Local Affairs (MinAL)
Implementing partners	Federation of Tunisian Cities (Fédération Nationale des Villes Tunisiennes (FNVT)), MinAL
Overall term	July 2015 to June 2023
Funding volume	EUR 10.64 million



Photo de gauche : Les jeunes et agents municipaux s'impliquent avec enthousiasme dans la formation « Participation des jeunes dans les municipalités ».

Photo de droite : Budget Participatif : Lors d'un forum citoyen à La Manouba, une jeune femme vote pour choisir quels projets d'infrastructure sa commune mettra en place.

Philipp Schwörer
philipp.schworer@giz.de

Results in figures...

For the first time in Tunisia's history, 29 municipalities have launched municipal youth action plans, which they have developed in collaboration with committed young people and local associations. The plans include the introduction of youth community councils where young people can add their input to local politics.

Women's networks have also been set up in five towns and cities. 150 women have been recruited as multipliers to encourage other women to participate in municipal elections. Working with the Federation of Tunisian Cities, the project is promoting the development of a network for women in local politics.

Eight municipalities have incorporated elements of a citizens' budget into their budgetary planning for the period from 2015 to 2018. More than 3,500 citizens voted in a total of 34 forums on priority improvement measures in their district.

New citizens' offices have opened in 12 municipalities to date, potentially benefiting approximately 734,000 people. Citizens' satisfaction with the services in their municipalities is increasing and access is becoming easier. A further 10 citizens' offices are in the pipeline.



Bechir Bel Kilani takes a ticket at the citizens' of-fice; the number on the ticket shows him that he is next in the queue. © GIZ/ Ramla Ayadi

... and faces

« 'I came here to get a birth certificate,' explains Bechir Bel Kilani in the citizens' office of his home town, Menzel Bourguiba. This point of contact offers citizens a one-stop shop for municipal services, ensuring greater efficiency and transparency and cutting back on lots of lengthy appointments. 'Another time, I came with my cousin, who had applied for a building permit. It was nice and easy to be able to hand over all the required documents at a single counter,' says Bel Kilani. Previously, the long waiting times at the local administration office and the many closed doors meant people getting annoyed and frustrated. Today, you can feel the sense of space in the citizens' office: the walls have come down in favour of glass. Bel Kilani likes it: 'Communication with the officials is a lot better'. »

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Postal address of the BMZ offices
BMZ Berlin | Im Europahaus
Stresemannstraße 94
D-10963 Berlin, Germany
T: +49 (0)30 18 535-0
F: +49 (0)30 18 535-2501

BMZ Bonn
Dahlmannstraße 4
D-53113 Bonn, Germany
T: +49 (0)228 99 535-0
F: +49 (0)228 99 535-3500

poststelle@bmz.bund.de
www.bmz.de

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Northern Africa Division

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
D-65760 Eschborn, Germany
T: +49 61 96 79-63 39
F: +49 61 96 79 80-63 39

www.giz.de

Authors

Franziska Loibl, Luca Eckermann and Lukas Marx

Design

GIZ

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