

Towards a sustainable Tozeur: implementing a Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS)

Sustainable development strategy

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to balance the economic, social, and environmental requirements of present and future generations. They are based, among others, on integrated approaches that promote the conservation of natural resources, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the promotion of social inclusion and the creation of resilient economies. Countries are encouraged to integrate their economic, social and environmental objectives into a strategic action plan. At local level, the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) helps municipalities in identifying, utilising, and exploring the resources, skills and dynamic capacities linked to the natural environment. In Tozeur, Tunisia, the participatory development of an SDS has strengthened the municipality's commitment to sustainable development.

The regional project "City-to-City Cooperation Maghreb-Germany" (KWT II), commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), was implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in cooperation with the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) of Engagement Global gGmbH, from March 2020 to February 2024. Among other activities, the regional project supported project partnerships between German and Maghreb cities. The good practices highlighted in this factsheet have been developed by the partner cities of Tozeur and Geestland. These practices will be scaled up as part of the follow-up regional project "Urban Adaptation to Climate Change in the Maghreb", running from March 2024 to February 2027.



Drawing up a Sustainable Development Strategy for the city of Tozeur

In Tunisia, the regional project KWT II was implemented in collaboration with the Directorate-General of External Relations and Decentralised International Cooperation within the Ministry of the Interior.

Tozeur is known as a green oasis town and tourist destination, renowned for its date production in a sustainable oasis ecosystem. In 2019, the Tunisian government has decided to develop Tozeur as an environmentally friendly governorate. In this context, the municipality of Tozeur has asked for technical support from the regional project KWT, in its first phase, to draw up its Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) in a participatory way and promote exchanges of experience with its partner city, Geestland, winner of the German Sustainability Prize in 2018.

The aim was to put in place a specific SDS for Tozeur, which would be broken down into actions to benefit the city's residents in the short, medium and long term.



Approaches and actions

A visit by the Geestland delegation to Tozeur in 2018 marked the starting point of the cooperation between the two cities, and the beginning of the work to elaborate the Sustainable Development Strategy. The visit provided an opportunity to analyse the local situation, assess the potential and identify the key players to be involved. In March 2019, a delegation from Tozeur visited Geestland, providing an opportunity for around ten stakeholders from the Tunisian city to acquire skills, learn about the SDGs and develop a plan for a participatory SDS in Tozeur. From 2019 to 2024, a series of virtual exchanges made it possible to monitor progress, update the strategy and implement concrete projects.

The methodological approach for the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the city of Tozeur can be summarized in six (6) phases, as described in diagram 01 below:



Consulting the citizens - Proposals for visions for the city of Tozeur, presented by the citizens, highlighting the values of sustainability, innovation and well-being.

Entries on the flipchart - In green: Tozeur, a city of dialogue, awareness and innovation; a city that respects the environment, makes the most of its resources and is attractive for investment.

In blue: Tozeur, towards sustainable growth ... and a good life.

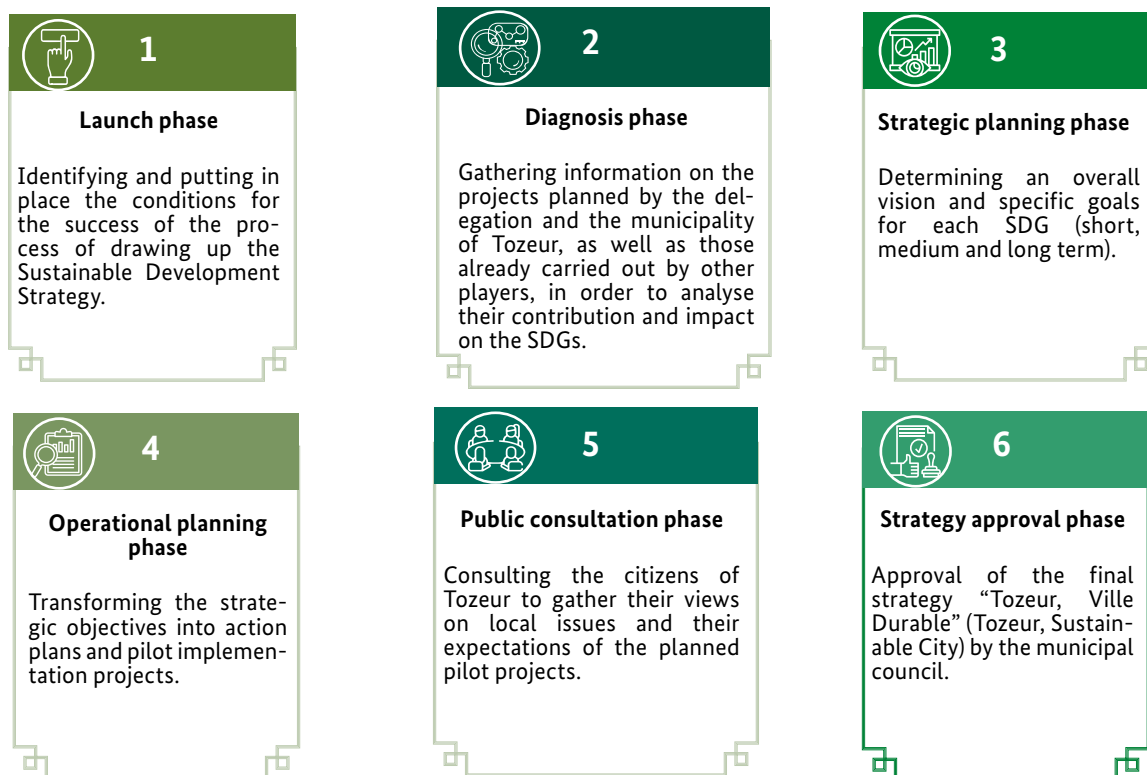


Diagram 01: Methodological approach. © GIZ



Achievements

Setting up the concerted SDS in the City of Tozeur has led to tangible results, in particular by implementing concrete projects, activities and priority actions, thus contributing to the achievement of the SDGs, as follows (diagram 02):



INAUGURATION OF THE "GEESTLAND SQUARE" IN TOZEUR AND CONCLUSION OF A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN TOZEUR AND GEESTLAND (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACHIEVING THE GOALS): On March 3, 2022, Tozeur inaugurated a square called "Place de Geestland" (Geestland Square), symbolising the connection between the two cities. This event marked a significant moment in the partnership between the two cities, strengthening the ties between them. The partners formalised their commitment to work together to achieve common goals in terms of sustainable development, economic and cultural cooperation and strengthening links between their respective communities.



INSTALLATION OF PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 7: CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY): With the support of the regional project KWT II, a pilot system of photovoltaic panels was installed on the roof of the Town Hall of Tozeur. This installation has a capacity of 15 kWp, which covers around 50% of the town hall's annual electricity consumption. This project is helping the town to make the transition to cleaner, more affordable and more resilient energy, and is setting an example of modern, environmentally friendly administration.



SUPPLY OF A HIGH-PRESSURE CLEANER (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION): This measure has helped to maintain the cleanliness and hygiene of public spaces in the municipality, promoting a healthy environment for residents and citizens.



SUPPLY OF A SOLAR-POWERED TRICYCLE PRODUCED BY A TUNISIAN START-UP (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 7): This solar-powered vehicle has played an important role in local mobile vaccination efforts and has also promoted more sustainable mobility and access to basic healthcare for people living in remote areas.



SUPPLY OF A 10L OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR AND A MOBILE VACCINATION CONTAINER (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING): 11 oxygen concentrators and a mobile vaccination container were supplied to the city of Tozeur during the COVID-19 pandemic. The container enabled 14,800 people to be vaccinated until 2023, providing a comprehensive solution tailored to the community's needs in the fight against the pandemic.



COMPETITION FOR MINI-PROJECTS TO PROMOTE THE SDS OF TOZEUR (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES; SDG 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION, AND SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE): The competition, supported by the regional project KWT II and the German partner Geestland, provided a platform to encourage innovation and creativity to solve the environmental and social challenges facing the city of Tozeur. The following winning projects were selected for their ability to contribute to the SDGs of the city of Tozeur by 2030:

- A composting and waste sorting system in a primary school and a university restaurant. This project is run by the association "Femmes Oasiennes" and contributes to SDG 12.
- Production of urban waste bins from recycled palm. This project contributes to SDG 11 by improving urban waste management. It also supports SDG 12 by promoting a circular economy.
- The production of parasols and street furniture from the residues of palm tree waste. This project is led by a young promoter and contributes to SDG 9 and SDG 12 by promoting a more sustainable production.



TREE PLANTING AND USE OF THE WATERBOXX IRRIGATION SYSTEM (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 13: ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE):

Direct support from the municipality of Geestland, amounting to €10,000, helped to carry out a project to plant 650 Paulownia trees in Tozeur. In addition, an innovative irrigation system, the 'Waterboxx', was introduced. This system reduces water consumption in the city's green areas by up to 90%. These two initiatives aim to protect the planet and help combat climate change.



ACQUISITION OF VIDEO CONFERENCE EQUIPMENTS (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 9): The provision of a videoconferencing system, including a projector, camera, microphone and speaker, to the municipality of Tozeur in 2021 was a proactive response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It enabled fluid and interactive remote exchanges. This equipment supported communication and collaboration with partners in Tozeur, despite travel restrictions and social distancing measures. In the medium term, it enabled the deepening of contacts with partners in Germany. This initiative is a step towards achieving SDG 9 by improving access to information and communication technologies.



ACQUISITION OF A SHREDDER, PRUNING AND CUTTING EQUIPMENT AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A COMPOSTING SYSTEM FOR PALM (CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 12 AND SDG 15: TERRESTRIAL LIFE): A high-capacity shredder for shredding palm wood waste, as well as pruning and cutting equipment, was provided to the municipality of Tozeur. The use of the shredder effectively transforms palm waste into reusable organic material, thereby encouraging composting. This approach contributes directly to SDG 12, by promoting the efficient use of resources and reducing organic waste. It also supports SDG 15 by promoting the conservation of biodiversity and preserving local ecosystems.

Diagram 02: Results achieved. © GIZ



Challenges

Two challenges were encountered, requiring specific solutions (diagram 03):



1

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR AN SDS IN TOZEUR:

It was necessary to raise awareness among local stakeholders, civil society organisations and citizens about the importance of elaborating an SDS specific for the city of Tozeur. This was facilitated by the acquisition of knowledge about the SDGs by local stakeholders, with the support of the German partner, and the organisation of public workshops, which encouraged the adoption of a participatory approach.



2

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY:

The implementation of an SDS in Tozeur required the acquisition of resources and equipment. To this end, the partnership between Tozeur and Geestland provided access to several funds, in particular for tree planting and equipment for the maintenance of the oasis.

Diagram 03: Challenges encountered. © GIZ



Left: Group photo taken during the workshop on the project to draw up a sustainable development strategy for the city of Tozeur by 2030, 07-08/04/2021.

Right: Visit by a delegation from Tozeur to Geestland and signing of a document on the implementation of SDG 17: Partnerships for achieving the goals.

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Innovative aspects and strengths

The Tozeur project stood out for its strengths, reflecting a commitment to sustainable development and citizen participation (diagram 04):

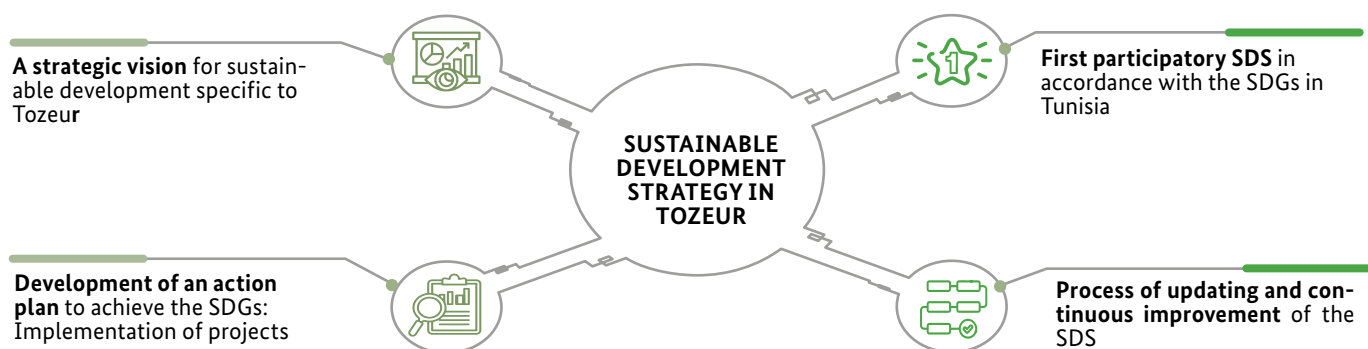


Diagram 04: Innovative aspects and strengths. © GIZ



Best practices, lessons learnt and advice

Several important lessons have been learnt and good practices identified from the experiences in Tozeur, which should be considered when implementing similar projects:



BUILDING ON THE EXISTING EXPERIENCE

Tozeur drew inspiration from its German partner, the town of Geestland, during face-to-face and virtual exchanges on the development of a concerted, participatory sustainable development strategy.



INVOLVING ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY AND ADOPTING A PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH

It's important to ensure that different stakeholders are well represented, such as young people, women and people with reduced mobility, to ensure that project proposals and their prioritisation meet everyone's needs.



UPDATING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE SDS

It is important to adopt a process of continuous updating of the SDS, based on the data gathered during the workshops with the various stakeholders involved. This makes it possible to analyse and question the progress made and to add, delete or adapt certain actions according to the needs identified.



ORIENTATION AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Tozeur's SDS has identified and prioritised the city's needs in order to achieve sustainability. It clearly summarises the most urgent needs and provides a solid basis for attracting external funding by linking the various actions contributing to Tozeur's sustainable development. In short, it is a holistic, participatory and up-to-date concept.

Diagram 05: Best practices, lessons learnt and advice. © GIZ

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