

Request for UNDP Crisis Assessment and Coordination Resources¹ for events with No Crisis Response Level declared



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Country: Tunisia

Date: 2nd of April 2020

1. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The first case of contamination of COVID-19 was detected in Tunisia on 2 March 2020. Since then the Government has announced a transition to Level 3 and declared complete sanitary confinement as of 22 March to 4 April- this is likely to be extended. All international flights were suspended, and borders closed to contain the spread of the Coronavirus. The Ministry of Health announced four hotspots of contamination, namely in Djerba, and Les Berges du Lac, La Marsa, and La Soukra, in Tunis. To date, 27 March, Tunisia counts 227 positive cases, 6 deaths, 2 recoveries and over 11,000 inhabitants put in quarantine. Although the number of cases remains relatively low in comparison with other countries, the speed of spread of the virus is of great concern. Moreover, the Health Minister stated that the outbreak has the potential to quickly overwhelm the national health system, which is already struggling due to infrastructure degradation and lack of funding.

In response to the pandemic, the government announced the allocation of 2.5 billion dinars to reduce the economic and social impact of the health crisis. The reimbursement of bank loans is deferred for those whose income does not exceed 1,000 dinars per month. Electricity, water and telephone will not be cut, even in the event of unpaid invoices. It also announced the creation of a special support fund for businesses in difficulty to enable them to recover more quickly after the crisis. Medicines, fuels and food stocks are reinforced thanks to an exceptional envelope of 500 million dinars. Measures to support companies' cash

¹ In the UNDP Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for immediate crisis response these resources are referred as TRAC 113 funding for coordination and assessment.

flow will be implemented, such as the deferral of monthly loan payments, payment of taxes, and social charges.

The socio-economic impacts are no less important than the health impacts of the pandemic. Tunisia has been through a steep democratic transition following the revolution in 2011. Despite great progress on the political front, the economic transition is lagging, which poses great risks to not only the economic but also social stability in the country. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to further exacerbate this fragile situation. The cost of the response and the sanitary confinement is expected to result in serious socio-economic impacts, leading to the exacerbation of existing inequalities, hurting disproportionately the most vulnerable, including women, youth, the disabled, and more.

The UN System in Tunisia is supporting the government in developing response plans in the health, social and economic sectors. While there is no UNCT response plan per se at this stage, various ad-hoc groups were established to support the government on procurement (chaired by UNDP) and the elaboration and implementation of the response plans mentioned above (UNDP is co-chairing the economic group with the World Bank and is a member of the social group).

Given the context in Tunisia and based on UNDP global response programming framework, the CO articulated its offer primarily to support the 3 settings “prepare and respond” and to lay the foundation to “recover”, through launching the three immediate priority actions, namely: (1) Strengthen health systems and supply chains: procuring health and medical supplies, supporting health infrastructures, managing health waste (Output 1, Activity 1.2); (2) Enhance inclusive crisis management: facilitating inclusive, integrated crisis management for a whole-of-society response to COVID-19, including, fighting misinformation and fake-news with a consortium of media outlets and the national High Authority for Audio-visual Communication (Output 1, Activities 1.1 and 1.3); and (3) Assess and mitigate socio-economic impact, at the meso and micro-levels (Output 2, Activities 2.1 and 2.2). The RC a.i is aware of UNDP’s support proposal and discussions with the Government and is supportive.

2. PROJECT OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

This proposal will support the immediate response to COVID-19 and will lay the foundations for early recovery and future resilience through evidence, policy options and reinforced systems. All activities and approaches will be gender sensitive, ensuring women, youth and vulnerable people are integrated and

participate in both the design of the activities and in their implementation, with contributions of the (virtual) SDG Camps and Accelerator labs.

The proposed activities build on existing partnerships, networks and experience developed by projects, namely, those of the elections (Fake-news platform), DRM at the local level, decentralization, CSO strengthening, Justice, Community policing, and Entrepreneurship projects. Proposals have already been submitted to donors to mobilize resources for developing the scope and scale-up these preliminary activities for the possible combined figure of 4 million USD (Swiss and EU).

Output 1: Inclusive and integrated crisis management enhanced through a whole-of-society response to COVID-19.

Activity 1.1: Support the National Committee to fight against COVID-19 by developing and implementing Crisis Emergency Plans at national and local levels (pilot governorates in the South).

This would entail supporting, as part of UN System contribution, the Ministry of Health in establishing monitoring and information units at the central and regional levels. These units will monitor the implementation of social measures adopted by the government to alleviate the impacts of the pandemic on vulnerable groups such as low-income households, people with special needs, informal sector workers and MSMEs. This activity will be complemented by innovative approaches and strategic partnerships for promoting digital solutions for enhancing access to services and information to vulnerable groups (potential partnership with GSMA² and/or local mobile providers, etc.).

It is worth noting that the CO is exploring support to local actors for engaging vulnerable and marginalized groups not only as beneficiaries but also as potential contributors to the general effort for combating and preventing the propagation of COVID-19. Current partnerships and networks with NGOs, private and public entities, professional associations, academia and youth groups will be capitalized on for engaging vulnerable and marginalized group, such as detainees, people with disabilities, migrants, etc., not only as beneficiaries but also as potential actors and contributors to the general effort for combating and preventing the propagation of COVID-19 at the local level. A first activity was launched using the ongoing Justice

² UNDP has a global MOU with the GSM Association, which is an industry organization that represents the interests of mobile network operators worldwide. More than 750 mobile operators are full GSMA members and a further 400 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem are associate members.

project funds to involve the cutting and sewing workshops in the prisons of Manouba, Mornaguia, Mahdia and Borj Al-Roumi to produce masks and protective gear for detainees and sanitary workers in accordance with the standards and sanitary conditions required. Most of the workers are women and will be earning income that would be used to improve their detention conditions, support their families and/ or for their reintegration in the society once released.

Activity 1.2: Support local capacity and implementation of sanitary measures as part of local DRM

In addition to the above, support will be provided for the establishment of four Advanced Medical Posts at the level of the Regional Hospitals for screening and/or confinement of potential patients suspected of carrying the virus, using WHO guidelines for COVID-19 screening posts. This action will be coordinated with WHO (UN lead on health response) and implemented with civil society organizations, such as the Association of Architects. In addition, health products, protective gear and other key health equipment and supplies will be procured and provided to municipalities and regional partners for supporting monitoring and response to the pandemic. This activity will be complementary to a broader disaster risk management (DRM) capacity, which UNDP Tunisia has been supporting for several years. Currently, disaster risk reduction interventions are being implemented by UNDP in the South (namely, the Djerba island and Tataouine).

Activity 1.3: Combat mis/disinformation and fake-news by strengthening the capacity of the national press to verify and validate information on COVID-19.

This activity will capitalize on the existing partnership with the Independent High Authority for Audio-visual Communication (HAICA) and adapting its technological fact-checking platform developed during the latest elections to fight fake-news on the pandemic in Tunisia. The network of trained journalists will be reactivated and supported to address COVID-19. Gender-sensitivity will be applied to all communication materials and channels. The algorithm database developed by the CO, as part of its CPD elaboration exercise, for gauging the perceptions of the population using social media will be expanded to include the pandemic.

Output 2: Socio-economic impacts, especially on vulnerable populations, are assessed and mitigated in partnership with public and private sector actors, IFIs and UN system, including through innovation and digital development.

Activity 2.1: Microeconomic assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and households in Tunisia, focusing on gender and vulnerabilities.

As part of the UNCT, UNDP Tunisia is co-leading the socio-economic impact assessment of the pandemic with the World Bank. It will complement the work led by IFIs on macro-economic impacts. The general objective of this assessment is to (i) Evaluate the impact of the shock caused by the Covid-19 and the effects in terms impoverishment, increased vulnerability of populations (including the elderly, people with disabilities, women and youth), job losses and income; and (ii) identify the instruments that would allow the Tunisian government to moderate the negative effects. Gender and vulnerabilities will be included in the modelling exercises.

Activity 2.2: Strengthening local entrepreneurial connectors partners' capacity to ensure micro-businesses continuity

UNDP support through virtual learning and coaching of SMEs to engage in digital transition. It will facilitate training of trainers from student CSOs group leaders, namely Junior Enterprises Tunisia (JET³) & ENACTUS⁴, who will cascade the learning and transmit it to their members creating a ripple effect. Training and coaching will include design thinking, open innovation and business model innovation and lean startup. Awareness raising messages on small business adaptation and resilience will also be developed for further dissemination.

The Entrepreneurial connectors (trained JET & ENACTUS members) will also coordinate with entrepreneurial resource providers to identify small businesses and microentrepreneurs for remote support in the context of COVID-19 and facilitating their transition to digital tools. Social measures announced by the government in support of MSMEs will be reviewed to identify complementarities and synergies, if applicable.

³ a national network of estudiantins consulting firms, <https://jetunisie.com/>

⁴ ENACTUS (ENTrepreunariat ACTION US) is a community of students, academics and professionals who support a new generation of young leaders to become agents of change, <https://www.enactustunisie.com/>

3. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The project will be implemented by UNDP Tunisia under the Direct Implementation Modality, in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders (government, civil society organization, private sector actors and UN agencies), with whom UNDP entertains long-standing partnerships both at the national and local levels, and participate in coordination mechanisms and joint task forces. It will upscale and optimize ongoing initiatives funded under specific projects mentioned above, including Elections (fact-checking platform used beyond elections), DRM (additional crisis management centers and enhanced capacity of existing ones to respond to pandemics) Entrepreneurship Projects (strengthening business continuity) and others. Their infrastructure and networks will also be used to ensure agile and efficient response.

3. ANNUAL WORK PLAN BUDGET SHEET

EXPECTED OUTPUTS and indicators including annual targets	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Source of Funds	Budget Description	Amount
<p>Output 1: Inclusive and integrated crisis management in enhanced through a whole-of-society response to COVID-19</p> <p>Indicators: Output Ind. 1.1 Extent to which the National capacitated committees are able to manage an inclusive national response to COVID-19 (Target = informed crisis plans and management based on inclusive assessments)</p> <p>Output Ind. 1.2.1 Evolution of the gender sensibility of publication and disseminated verified news (Target = 50% of the re-disseminated news accessible to all categories, including children and disabled people)</p> <p>Output Ind. 1.2.2 Proportion of journalists effectively involved in the fight against fake news (target = 70% of the trained journalists contributing daily).</p>	<p><i>Activity 1.1:</i> Support the National Committee to fight against COVID-19 by developing and implementing Crisis Emergency Plans at national and local levels (3 pilot governorates in the South).</p>		x	x		UNDP	RRF	Meeting costs Contracts	21,400
	<p><i>Activity 1.2:</i> Provide 4 advanced medical posts, health equipment and protective gears and materials to regional partners and municipalities</p>		x	x		UNDP	RRF	Materials and contracts	155,150
	<p><i>Activity 1.3:</i> Combat disinformation and fake-news by strengthening the capacity of the national press to verify and validate information on COVID-19</p>		x	x		UNDP	RRF	Contracts or consultancies	26,750
Total Output 1									203,300

EXPECTED OUTPUTS and indicators including annual targets	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Source of Funds	Budget Description	Amount
<p>Ind. Output 1.3.1 Number of emergency / crisis plan prepared by the local authorities in 3 pilot governorates in the South.</p> <p>Ind. Output 1.3.2 # of advanced medical posts and temperature devices provided to regional hospitals and municipalities.</p> <p>Output 2: Socio-economic impacts, especially on vulnerable populations, are assessed and mitigated in partnership with public and private sector actors, IFIs and UN system, including through innovation and digital development</p> <p>Output Ind. 2.1 To what extent SDGs, vulnerabilities and inequality are integrated in assessments (target= 3 – high level – all the specified tools and focus integrated in the assessments)</p> <p>Output Ind. 2.2 To what extent innovation, digital, PPP are adopted by trained MSMEs for business continuity (target= 3 – high level – all the specified tools and focus adopted)</p>	<p><i>Activity 2.1:</i> Microeconomic assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and households in Tunisia, focusing on gender and vulnerabilities</p> <p><i>Activity 2.2:</i> Strengthening local connectors partners' capacity to ensure business continuity of Small businesses and self-entrepreneurs</p>								
			x	x		UNDP	RRF	Contracts	42,650
			x	x		UNDP	RRF	Contracts Communication	21,550
Total output 2									64,200
TOTAL BUDGET									\$267,500