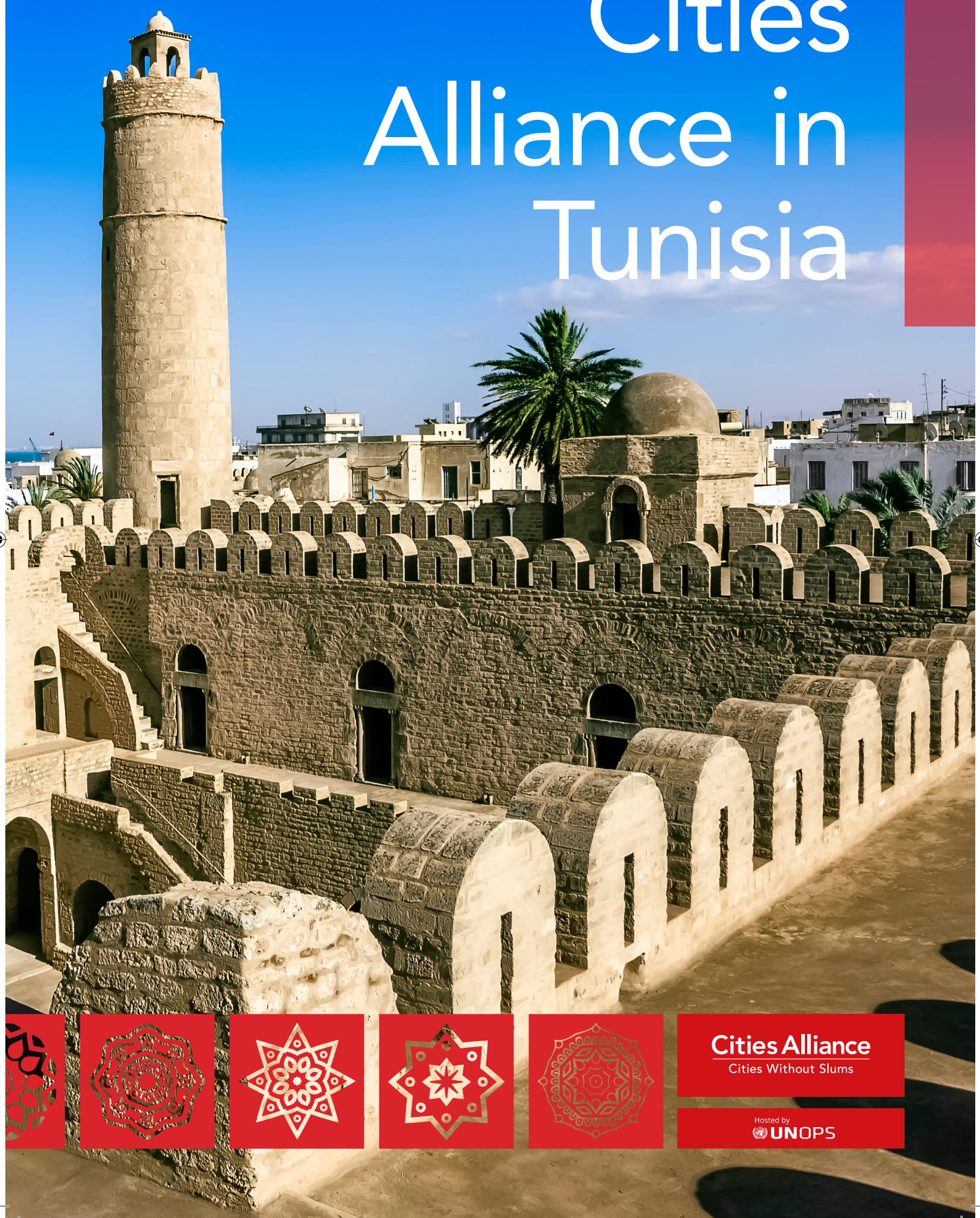



Cities Alliance in Tunisia



Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

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 **UNOPS**



The uprising in Tunisia was arguably the most successful of the Arab Spring. The country managed to achieve a democratic transition establishing the foundations of a more open and inclusive society. Despite this important progress, Tunisians are currently facing multiple economic and social challenges. Some have more immediate causes, like the inflation caused by the Ukraine war and the slow economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. But others are the result of more tenacious underlying structural weaknesses.

Tunisia is one of the most urbanised countries in the Middle East and North African region. Rural to urban migration dynamics increased the urban population from 40 per cent in the 1960s to nearly 70 per cent today. Cities account for 85 per cent of the country's GDP, with important regional disparities. Urban areas in lagging regions are particularly held back by the lack of resources or lack of autonomy to foster local development. These areas have high unemployment rates, greater urban sprawl, and lower citizen participation in political, economic, and social issues, especially among youth and women.

Without new policies and practices, these challenges will continue to hinder economic development and social progress and fuelling political turmoil.

Cities Alliance has been working in Tunisia since 2016, to strengthen the democratic process and decentralisation initiatives that were put in place in the country over recent years. By providing vital support to urban development and local governance, we help reinforce institutions and frameworks and encourage civil society participation to help Tunisian cities become engines of local democracy and development.

To achieve these objectives, Cities Alliance in Tunisia works at the national, city, and community levels. Our initiatives focus on five key areas:

- 1. Decentralisation and national urban frameworks**
- 2. City planning for inclusive and sustainable development**
- 3. Partnerships for innovative municipal financing**
- 4. Climate-resilient and gender-sensitive infrastructure**
- 5. Economic development and inclusion in lagging cities**

Cities Alliance is a global partnership hosted within the United Nations system. Its mission is to tackle urban poverty and support cities to deliver equitable and sustainable development.

The organisation, composed of 23 members, promotes long-term programmatic approaches to support national and local governments, develops policy frameworks, strengthens local capacities, undertakes strategic city planning, and facilitates investments. Cities Alliance provides advisory services and direct implementation of projects.



KEY RESULTS AND SDG CONTRIBUTION 2017-2022



Collaboration with over **25** municipalities across Tunisia, on topics including:



Institutional capacity development: over **700** national and local authorities, and civil society members, from more than **30** institutions, were trained on topics such as strategic and participatory city planning, project financing, energy transition, gender-sensitive city planning, inclusive migration governance, and job creation.



Urban governance participation: more than **11,000** people were consulted and involved in the design of city interventions. More than **700** women were actively engaged in gender assessments to promote inclusive cities and gender-sensitive urban



Improved infrastructure: through **24** projects more than **811,000** citizens benefitted from more inclusive public spaces, better marketplaces, improved street lighting systems, more robust flood prevention mechanisms, and better sport facilities.



Financing: leveraged over **\$2.8 million** co-financed with implementing partners, and over **\$23.7 million** for follow-up projects. The city of Medenine mobilised nearly **\$5.2 million** for the implementation of City Development Strategy projects.



Strengthened dialogue and partnerships: **33** collaborations between national and local government authorities, civil society, academia, and the private sector. These focused on setting up new public-private partnerships and financing modalities for territorial development.



Knowledge creation: more than **40** urban development diagnostics, strategies, plans, and assessments delivered providing key guidance for tailored, high-impact interventions.

1. Decentralisation and national urban frameworks

Cities Alliance supports the national government to develop appropriate urban policies and empowering key urban institutions to deliver their mandates. We do so through a multi-stakeholder approach, bringing different urban voices to the table, fostering mutual understanding and social cohesion, learning, and by forging new partnerships.



Supporting Tunisian municipalities to lead decentralisation

Donor: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

Cities Alliance was one of the first international actors to support the National Federation of Tunisian Municipalities (FNCT) after the 2011 revolution. FNCT represents 300 municipalities. This partnership institutionalized participatory urban development planning across the country's local governments. Tunisia held its first municipal election in 2018. Cities Alliance interventions further contributed to FNCT becoming a central actor in Tunisia's decentralization process, capable of leading large decentralization programmes independently. As part of the project, Cities Alliance assisted in setting up a peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange Network on Territorial Development Planning. Their goal is to scale up the Federation's role as a technical assistance body, by strengthening members' capacities through training, coaching and mutual learning.

2. City planning for inclusive and sustainable development

We strengthen the capacities of national and local government and civil society in inclusive and sustainable city planning. We do this by providing technical assistance and supporting capacity building. We also develop, implement, and finance projects across a range of thematic areas, including gender equality and women's participation in decision-making, and project preparation for investment and financing.



Femmedina: Women at the centre of urban planning

Donor: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

The Femmedina Inclusive City Program empowers women to become key actors in urban governance and public space development. The pilot project implemented in the Medina of Tunis involved more than 120 women and residents. Participants included local stakeholders of small and medium-sized enterprises, civil society organizations, and city government representatives. Together they assessed the socio-economic, cultural, and political engagement of women in the Medina. Based on that assessment, urban spaces were created or rehabilitated with the goal of improving the living conditions of women and residents in Tunis' historical centre.



Madinatouna II: Shaping local development plans

Donor: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

Local Development Plans (LDPs) are the key planning instrument for Tunisian municipalities, developed through broad participatory processes. The Madinatouna II project supported four municipalities: Béja, Jendouba, Medenine and Tataouine. In coordination with the Ministry of Housing and Equipment, the project elaborated and operationalised the LDPs, ensuring alignment with the regional development plan and the city's master plan. This initiative was the first of its kind in Tunisia. Cities Alliance provided technical assistance to the cities throughout the process. Each city identified infrastructure projects they wished to develop such as improved public spaces and increased efficiency in energy provision.



3. Partnerships for innovative municipal financing

We support municipalities to develop financially viable, bankable projects able to attracting funding. Through partnerships, we facilitate access to new financing mechanisms.



Integrating a gender perspective into municipal budgeting

Donor: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

Municipal budgeting constitutes a crucial component of cities' responsibility to ensure the provision of urban services to their populations. In the cities of Beja and Medenine, Cities Alliance and the Tunisian NGO Aswat Nissa worked together with the local authorities. The purpose of the project was to integrate a gender perspective into municipal budgets to guarantee the gender-responsive allocation of financial resources and the long-term sustainability of urban services. Beyond the success of the initiative in the two partner cities, the project paved the way for a nationwide discussion on local gender-sensitive budgeting.



Madinatouna II: Mobilising local finance in Medenine

Donor: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

The city of Medenine is the commercial and trade centre of southern Tunisia. Under the leadership of the mayor and the city council, a multi-stakeholder partnership designed a 4.6 million EUR flagship project whose goal was to boost local economic development. This was achieved by developing an inclusive commercial hub that now hosts crafts, migrant workers, and companies. The space also operates as an incubator for social entrepreneurs and start-ups. The hub was built with environmental considerations.

By integrating local formal and informal vendors currently occupying the surrounding main roads of the city centre, it is helping to reduce traffic and uncontrolled waste disposal. It is also increasing revenues for stakeholders.

To attract investors, Cities Alliance supported the city in a variety of ways, including standardizing its project preparation procedures to international best practices. It also integrated the project into SOURCE, a multilateral infrastructure project preparation and management software.

Le rôle des municipalités
dans la réduction des inégalités

Municipalité locale

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
TUNISIE

Din Rana



4. Climate-resilient and gender-sensitive infrastructure

We develop municipal investment projects with climate resilience and gender inclusion lenses. Our work runs from participatory prioritisation and design to monitoring execution, to equipping municipal staff with the necessary skills to manage the life cycle of the entire project.



Supporting Tunisia's energy transition towards achieving climate targets

Donor: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

The government of Tunisia has committed to tackling climate change and developing a climate-resilient economy by reducing total GHG emissions across sectors by 41 per cent by 2030. Cities Alliance is working with the cities of Beja, Jendouba and Tataouine to transform their energy use. By replacing public lighting in Beja and Tataouine with energy-efficient LED lights, these cities made considerable savings (30-50 per cent) which were reallocated to other priorities while simultaneously contributing to Tunisia's commitment towards the Paris Agreement to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts. These cities also introduced intelligent street lighting control systems, which further reduce consumption based on traffic hours and performance monitoring. For this initiative, Cities Alliance has closely collaborated with the National Agency for Energy Management (ANME), the Local

Government Development Bank (CPSCL), international financing partners and private investors. We are also developing an innovative PPP financing mechanism.

"I'm particularly proud that based on the initial experience we extended energy-efficient street lighting into the disadvantaged, peripheral neighbourhoods of our city, benefiting those that are often left out. The savings will allow us to extend other municipal services into these areas, too."

Mohamed Salah Bedda,
Technical Director, city of Beja



Rehabilitating public spaces to boost women's socio-economic prospects and participation

Donor: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

As part of the Femmedina project, Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the municipality of Tunis, rehabilitated multiple public spaces to promote women's socio-economic inclusion in the Medina of Tunis. The new spaces include a vocational skills centre and two dedicated spaces equipped with IT material for women and local associations to host trainings and events. They also include market stalls that support the livelihoods of women artisans and entrepreneurs, a public library, playground facilities and recreational areas for women and children in the capital's historical centre.

5. Economic development and inclusion in lagging cities

Cities Alliance supports projects that promote the economic integration of youth. We do this, both from a financial perspective through vocational training and through incentives for entrepreneurship. Our efforts are focused on supporting young rural-urban labour migrants who are moving to regions that are lagging and marked by high levels of unemployment and poverty. Our goal is to improve living standards and create jobs.



Creating jobs and inclusive economic development through responsible tourism

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)


Many young migrants from Tunisian secondary cities are attracted to the large metropolitan areas in search of employment and better opportunities. Secondary cities are in turn receiving rural migrants for the same reasons. Local authorities are trying to find ways to integrate them economically, socially, and culturally, while at the same time retaining entrepreneurial residents who would otherwise migrate to the primary cities.

Cities Alliance supported tourism initiatives in Jendouba and Kairouan, with the goal of stimulating job creation. Our focus was on integrating migrants who had moved from rural to urban areas. In collaboration with the National Office for Tourism and with the participation of young entrepreneurs, new tourism circuits bridging the urban-rural divide were designed. Nearly 120 youth were provided training on responsible tourism.

In Kairouan, a women-run artisanal market was created. The National Office for Tourism decided to develop the circuits in three communes (Ain Jeloula, Haffouz, and Oueslatia) as part of a \$7.5 million initiative. The central government provided Oueslatia with additional funds of \$107,000 to improve local tourism pathways. Youth entrepreneurs created social enterprises around responsible tourism. These were promoted through social media campaigns which achieved impressive online engagement and measurable results.

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