



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Tunisia Country Brief April 2020



## Operational Context

Tunisia has undergone significant changes since the Revolution of January 2011. The strategic direction of the Government of Tunisia currently focuses on strengthening democracy, while laying the groundwork for a strong economic recovery. Tunisia has a gross national income (GNI) per capita of US\$10,275 purchasing power parity (UNDP, 2018). The 2018 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) ranks Tunisia 91 out of 189 countries and 63rd on the Gender Inequality Index (GII 2018).

WFP has positioned itself in a technical advisory role through capacity-strengthening activities, providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Education (ME) and Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Fisheries and Hydraulic Resources (MAPRH), as well as working with other ministries and national stakeholders aiming to improve national school feeding and other social protection programmes in Tunisia.



Population: **11 million**

2018 Human Development Index:  
**95 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

GNI per Capita (PPP):  
**US\$ 3,690**

**In April, 260,000 children and their families** were affected by the disruption of the national school feeding programme due to school closure. WFP in Tunisia is adjusting and scaling up its existing social assistance programmes as part of technical support to the Government on COVID-19 response.

WFP in Tunisia provides technical support to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) in the setup of a more inclusive and harmonised shock responsive social protection system. More than 675,000 vulnerable people will benefit from the intervention.

## Operational Updates

- On April 15, WFP Tunisia's Head of Office Fatimata Sow Sidibe met the Minister of Local Affairs to discuss the technical support WFP is providing under the National response for COVID-19. The Minister requested WFP's support to scale up School Food Banks in rural areas and setup city farming for youth and adolescents.
- As a result of discussions between the Agriculture and Food security Crisis Committee led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), WFP will provide cash assistance to 537 families of 784 primary school children aged 5-12 affected by school closure due to COVID-19. The value of the cash-based transfer (CBT) is equal to the one-off top ups provided by the Ministry of Social affairs to vulnerable household (TND 200/USD 69). The intervention is meant to complement the social protection system and fill the gaps by serving several segments of the population, currently not benefitting from the system.
- On 30 April, the [Minister of Health requested WFP](#) to assist in the gradual lift of the lock down measures effective starting 4 May. Main interventions include to equip primary schools with hygiene products and raise awareness on preventive measures as well as contribute to food safety by conducting studies to assess the possible spread of the virus via food and water in rural and inland schools. At the end of April, preliminary results of the Cost of Diet (CoD) study for Tunisia have been finalized and will be released externally next month. Findings show that the basic needs of individuals are being met despite nutritious foods being costly. The following step is to assess the percentage of households that would be unable to cover the costs of the energy-only and nutritious diets.

## Tunisia Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)
<b>4 m</b>	<b>3 m</b>
2020 Requirement (in US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (May - October 2020)
<b>1.1 m</b>	<b>0</b>

**Strategic Result 5:** Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs

**Strategic Outcome 1:** National institutions in Tunisia have strengthened capacity to implement enhanced school meals and social protection programmes which advance food security and nutrition by 2022.

**Focus area:** Root Causes

**Activities:**

- Provide policy advice and technical assistance to national institutions implementing school meals and social protection programmes.

## Monitoring

- As part of WFP’s technical support to the government, WFP will conduct a price monitoring and market analysis across Tunisia. The results will help to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on access to food supplies especially among the most vulnerable communities. Moreover, WFP is providing technical support to the government in setting up a food security monitoring system.
- [The Ministry of Education \(MoE\)](#) is providing WFP with the basic (demographic) information related to students eligible to receive top-ups under the CBT programme for the region of Siliana. WFP supports the MoE with the setup of a digitalised database of beneficiaries and a reliable feedback mechanism.

## Challenges

- Since the COVID-19 outbreak was officially declared in Tunisia, the WHO’s threshold for community transmission of 10+ cases has exceeded and Tunisian health authorities declared the risk of community transmission as extremely high. Some recent models suggest that the peak of the pandemic in Tunisia will be reached in August 2020 jeopardising the capacity of the [Government to respond adequately in the long term](#). WFP is coordinating with sister agencies (IOM, UNHCR) on how to contribute with tangible logistics assets and supply chain services to support effectively the implementation of the COVID-19 national response.

## Partnerships

- WFP has led the submission of a joint proposal to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund with UN Habitat, UNAIDS, UNFPA, OIM and UNHCR. The scope of the intervention is to harmonise and update the social registry by making it more inclusive of those segments of the population who are currently not

benefitting from any safety net. WFP will indirectly support more than 675,000 vulnerable people of whom 260,000 are primary school students and their families deprived of daily school meals.

- WFP and the Rome Based Agencies (RBAs) are working together to implement the national crisis response plan of the Ministry of Agriculture. WFP is leading different working groups of the crisis committee, implementing CBT in Siliana Governorate, conducting rapid assessments on food security and access to basic services as well as market assessment and price monitoring.
- The World Bank and WFP Tunisia are in discussion to collaborate on the COVID-19 socio economic impact study. Aspects related to the impact on households and student’s food security due to the closure of schools and suspension of the school feeding programme will be included in the study.

## WFP Tunisia’s Head of Office meets the new appointed Minister of Education

- On April 29, Ms. Fatimata Sow and Mr. HE. Mohamed El Hamdi, Minister of Education met to discuss the support WFP is providing to the school feeding programme and the shifts occurring under the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Tareq Loussaief, Director of OOESCO (Office of School Works) and Mrs. Nawel Ben Ali, Director of the International Cooperation also attended the meeting.
- WFP and the Minister have discussed how WFP can support the development of a comprehensive and digitalised baseline, capturing the 260,000 beneficiaries of the school feeding programme. Through a rapid digital survey, harmonized with the national social registry, WFP will support the Government in identifying the level of vulnerability of the students and their families.
- Additional exchanges with the Minister were held on the scale up of the school food bank’s warehouses to mitigate the eventual disruption of the food supply chain for the schools and other public institutions such as hospitals. WFP updated the partner on the progress versus the school feeding programme’s operational manual and the next steps for the setup of a digitalised monitoring system.



**Photo:** Ms. Fatimata Sow and Mr. Minister of Education HE. Mohamed El Hamdi  
ME/