

Project Number: 200493 | Project Category: **Development Project**
Project Approval Date: December 20, 2012 | Planned Start Date: December 01, 2012
Actual Start Date: July 01, 2013 | Project End Date: June 30, 2018
Financial Closure Date: N/A

Contact Info

Maria Lukyanova
maria.lukyanova@wfp.org

Country Director

Maria Lukyanova (Head of Country Office)

Further Information

<http://www.wfp.org/countries>
SPR Reading Guidance



Capacity Development in the Framework of the School Feeding Programme

Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Tunisia, Tunisian Republic (TN)



World Food Programme

Table Of Contents

Country Context and WFP Objectives

Country Context

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

Achievements at Country Level

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

Project Activities

Operational Partnerships

Performance Monitoring

Results/Outcomes

Progress Towards Gender Equality

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

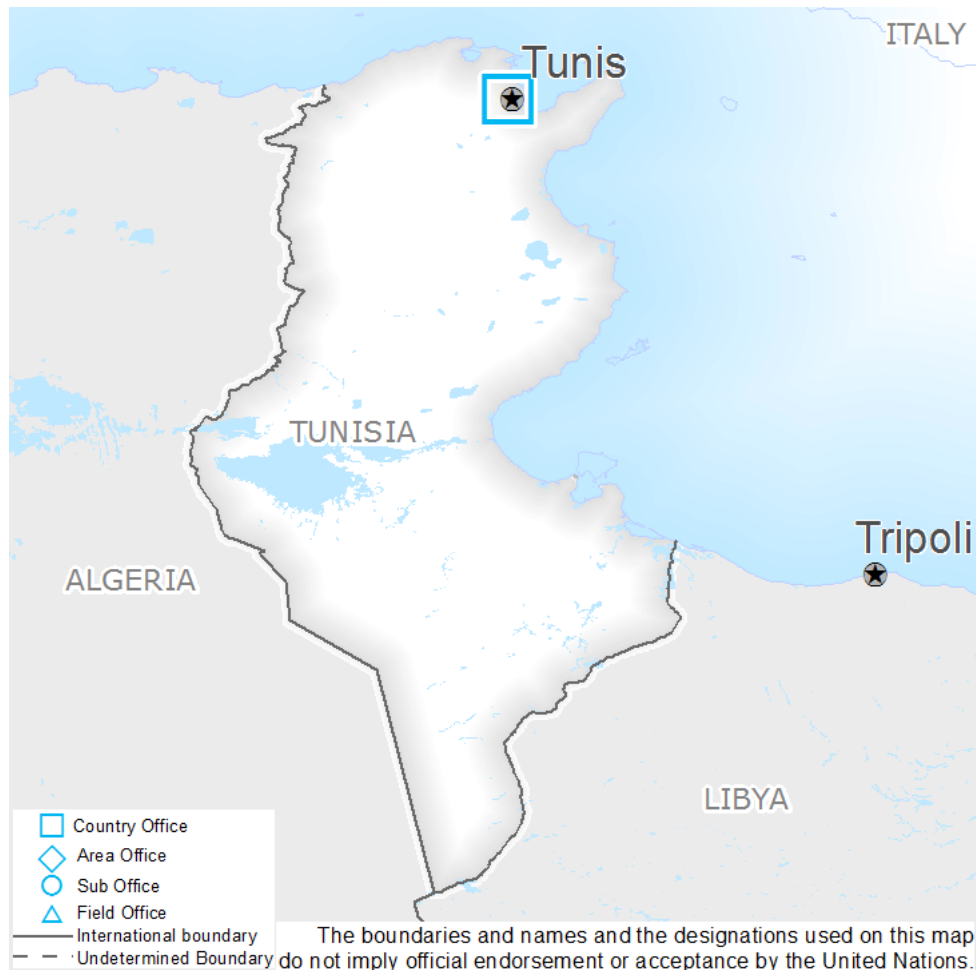
Nourishing Hope for a Better Tomorrow

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Project Indicators

Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

Tunisia has made steady progress to consolidate its democracy, a process triggered by the 2011 Jasmine revolution. In 2014, Tunisia adopted a new constitution and held successful legislative and presidential elections. The unity government that had been formed in February 2015 was dissolved and replaced in August 2016 by a broad coalition of parties, independents and trade union allies. The new government expects to deliver on the reforms necessary for economic recovery.

Tunisia is ranked 96 of 188 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index (HDI). The services sector is the largest contributor to Tunisia's gross domestic product (GDP) at 61.6 percent; with industry and agriculture representing 28.3 and 10.1 percent respectively. In 2015, successive attacks against the tourism sector and worker strikes in the phosphate sector, which combined account for nearly 15 percent of GDP, slowed the GDP growth rate to less than 1 percent.

Lasting economic hardship, aggravated by persistent disparities in living standards among the different regions of the country, have continued to foster popular discontent and protests. Poverty estimates are above 15 percent, ranging from 9 percent in Greater Tunis to 32 percent in the North West and Centre West regions. Unemployment rates, currently at 15.5 percent nationally, show considerable disparities, and are especially high in interior rural areas, and in the south. Unemployment is also high for women (41.7 percent) and men (20.5) holding a higher education degree. Youth inactivity is very high, with up to 50 percent of young women in rural areas out of education, employment, or training [1].

Wheat counts for more than 50 percent of daily calorie intake, while three quarters of cereal needs are imported, rendering the poorest strata of the Tunisian population particularly vulnerable to price inflation [2]. A stagnant economy furthermore erodes purchasing power, challenging vulnerable people's ability to ensure an appropriate, nutritious diet. Iron deficiency anaemia, an indicator for macronutrient deficiency, has been estimated at 28.8 percent among children aged 0-59 months in Grand Tunis and 28.3 percent among those in the South West regions of Tunisia.

Primary school has a net enrolment rate of 99 percent and cumulative dropout rate during primary education is estimated at 5 percent for boys and 7 percent for girls. Youth (15-24 years) literacy rates are high at 98.2 percent and 96.1 percent for boys/men and girls/women, respectively [3]. Challenges for basic education include the retention of students as they graduate from primary school to enter middle school, weak academic performances, and an education system not adequately responsive to the needs of the labour market.

In spite of progress seen towards gender equality, notably in education, there is much to be done to ensure equality of opportunity between women and men, in particular with regards to revenue generating activities, equal treatment in labour market and empowerment of women in political decision making. The Gender Inequality Index (2014) ranks Tunisia 48 out of 155 countries.

[1] World Bank, The Unfinished Revolution - Bringing Opportunity, Good Jobs And Greater Wealth to All Tunisians, 2014

[2] FAO, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia – Key trends in the agrifood sector, 2015

[3] UNICEF, 2016

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

Development Project 200493 addresses the request of the Government of Tunisia for technical assistance to enhance the National School Meals Programme (NSMP), which reaches 240,000 children in 2,500 primary schools. WFP assists the Tunisian Government in strengthening its institutional capacity to manage a sustainable, nationally owned school meals programme, which is fully funded by the Government. In 2016, an office for the management of school meals was established within the Ministry of Education.

Building upon this collaboration, the Government has recognised school meals as a social safety net that can deliver mutually reinforcing education, social protection and nutrition outcomes, while promoting social cohesion and community resilience through a home-grown approach.

Such reasoning has placed Tunisia's Sustainable School Meals Strategy in a cornerstone position of the Education Sector Reform, led by the Ministry of Education.

Efforts to enhance school meals also contribute to Tunisia's Development Strategy for 2016-2020. Reducing disparities within the country's regions and fostering social inclusion, mobility and cohesion through equitable access to social services are among the key priorities of the Tunisian Government.

The programme is aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Tunisia (UNDAF) 2015-2019, in particular with its axis III on Human Development and Social Inclusion. WFP is directly contributing to the attainment of outcomes 1 and 2 of this axis, by enhancing the capacity of public authorities to prepare, monitor and evaluate social reforms through a participative, evidence-based approach; and by strengthening capacity to ensure better quality of social protection, health and education services, as well as better access to vulnerable populations.

Partnerships and South-South cooperation are essential to the Tunisian model, both to ensure its success and sustainability and to foster synergies for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 17. WFP facilitated study trips for government representatives, including to the Global Child Nutrition Forum in Armenia. The Government was an active participant of efforts to launch an Initiative for School Meals and Social Protection in the Middle East and North Africa. This innovative partnership engagement brings together leading governments and national institutions, as well as regional organizations, United Nations agencies and international organizations, specialized bodies, donors, and the private sector, leveraging the initiative with their complementary capacities and expertise.

WFP is working with a number of partners in Tunisia to capitalise on potential synergies. WFP coordinates with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to promote the improvement of school life, as part of the Education Sector Reform, as well as to promote the inclusion of nutrition, hygiene and environmental education materials into the national curricula.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and WFP collaborate to support the implementation of school gardens and strengthen local farmers' groups. Building upon the work FAO has done in forming women's cooperatives in rural areas, the collaboration focuses on establishing links between nutrition sensitive school meals and local agricultural production.

The Ministry of Education, the Italian Development Cooperation (AICS) and WFP have agreed to leverage on 138 school kitchens equipped by AICS, to act as hubs to replicate an innovative model across Tunisia. Moreover, WFP is fostering synergies and coordinating interventions with the Tunisian civil society, collaborating with national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) Femmes pour les Cantines Scolaires (FCS) and Génération Liberté.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

WFP's Development Project 200493 was launched following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2013. The primary purpose of the project is to strengthen the Government's capacity to improve the quality and sustainability of its National School Meals Programme (NSMP), in line with international standards.

During the first phase of the project (2014-2015), WFP provided technical assistance and policy advice under three main axes: (i) a review of the existing programme; (ii) study visits for South-South cooperation, sharing experiences and best practices; and (iii) development of a sustainable school meals strategy, which was validated in December 2014.

The Government requested WFP's continued assistance in a second phase, until June 2018, to provide technical assistance and policy advice to operationalize and implement the strategy. WFP's support aims to strengthen regulatory frameworks and tools; upgrade the current decentralized school meals model; and pilot new implementation modalities that are efficient, accountable, and support local development.

WFP plays a key role in fostering synergies and promoting coordinated efforts amongst partners to assist the Tunisian Government as it strives to improve the coverage and quality of school meals. There are no food distributions or direct beneficiaries associated with this project as it solely includes capacity development activities. The approved overall budget is USD 6.5 million.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

The project was launched as part of a partnership between the Russian Federation and WFP on school meals, and began its phase one activities with a seed contribution of USD 1.5 million.

The 2015 revised total budget of USD 6.5 million for the second phase of the project encompassed a set of activities aiming to accompany the operationalization of Tunisia's Sustainable School Meals Strategy in the 2015-2018 period. The activities required to be funded by an additional contribution of USD 5 million. WFP is actively engaged in enriching the donor base and seeking to establish new partnerships including with the Government of Tunisia, private sector and civil society.

The funding landscape brought about a stronger focus on two of the three components of the second phase of the programme. Activities aimed at strengthening regulatory frameworks and tools for the National School Meals Programme, as well as technical support for the design and implementation of innovative implementation modalities have been given priority over direct WFP interventions aimed at upgrading the existing decentralised school meals model by refurbishing and equipping individual school canteens.

The Government of Tunisia's strong commitment to the project resulted in the allocation of national resources for the development, construction and equipment of two central kitchens, which will serve as hubs for home grown school meals pilots in the Zaghouan (2016) and Beja (2017) governorates.

The engagement of civil society partners such as Femmes pour les Cantines Scolaires (FCS) has helped to create synergies as well as to provide complementary resources, managed by civil society, in line with WFP's objectives in the country. FCS partially covered costs associated with seminars, meetings, as well as feasibility studies for the home grown school meals pilot in Zaghouan. A school canteen was refurbished in partnership with Tunisian non-governmental organisation Génération Liberté. Moreover, a partnership with Italian Development Cooperation (AICS) seeks to leverage on kitchens of boarding schools already equipped through AICS funding.

In 2016, WFP developed a partnership and fundraising strategy which explores alternative financing mechanisms, maps potential donors and their priorities, and aims to enhance outreach capacity and support efforts to diversify its donors base.

Achievements at Country Level

WFP has successfully positioned itself in a technical advisory role through capacity reinforcement activities in Tunisia. In 2016, WFP supported the Tunisian Government in designing and implementing innovative pilot modalities for nutritious school meals and continued to provide technical assistance to strengthen national capacity to enhance the National School Meals Programme at the central, subnational and local level.

WFP provided policy advice and critical support to the Ministry of Education in the establishment of the Office of School Services (OOESCO), charged with the management of school transportation, lodging, and school meals which were previously administered by the primary and secondary cycle directions. Financed by the Ministry of Education, OOESCO will ensure central management of these programmes, enabling better coordination and strategic planning for both school meals and the other areas under its mandate.

WFP supported the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Agriculture and Education in order to link school meals with local agricultural production and for the revitalisation of school gardens.

Guidelines for nutrition and hygiene for primary school canteens, as well as a practical guide were developed by WFP and validated by the National School Meals Steering Committee, which was established by the Government in 2014, with WFP's technical assistance, as part of the national capacity strengthening activities. The practical guide included four weekly menus based on locally sourced products and traditional recipes, as well as visual information on nutrition and hygiene norms and actionable recommendations on how to manage a school canteen.

Progress was made at the subnational level, with the establishment of the Zaghouan governorate's steering committee in 2016, tasked with the oversight of the implementation of the home grown school meals pilot. Pilot activities in the Nadhour district of the governorate were launched in the 2016-2017 school year, and included the preparation of a one hectare school garden that will serve as a hub for community participation, as well as support agricultural, environmental and nutritional education. The construction of the central kitchen that will prepare and distribute meals to 10 schools (the school where the kitchen will be based and 9 surrounding schools) began in

December 2016.

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

An external Operation Evaluation (OE) of the project was undertaken in 2015. The evaluation allowed WFP to have an in-depth reflection on how the Sustainable School Meals Strategy was to be optimally operationalized going forward. Its recommendations suggested concrete measures for the way forward for WFP, the Government, and other national school meals stakeholders.

In many instances, the evaluation reconfirmed WFP's observations, providing additional confidence in its planned approach. The OE included nine recommendations to enhance the design and ensure effective attainment of the programme objectives.

In line with the OE's recommendations, WFP supported the creation of the Office of School Services (OOESCO). Charged with the management of the National School Meals Programme, OOESCO was successfully established in 2016. WFP promoted the establishment of a regional steering committee in the Zaghouan governorate, where the central kitchen pilot is being implemented, in order to transfer to the subnational level a multi-sectorial and inclusive approach already implemented at the central level.

A workshop is planned early 2017 as part of an exercise to conduct a detailed analysis of funding and disbursement mechanisms to schools. A line in the national budget allocates 24 million Tunisian Dinars (USD 10.5 million) to the school meals programme. The funding is disbursed from central level to regional commissariats, which in turn transfer the funds to primary schools. The workshop will follow up on the OE recommendation to establish new administrative and financial disbursement structures of the OOESCO.

The OE recommended to conduct an analysis of the capacities and constraints of local women producers in order to supply school canteens reliably and cost efficiently, to inform how they can be engaged and how it could promote gender equality. This has been completed for the Nadhour district where the pilot is being implemented. The Nadhour analysis concluded that women were available and willing to form non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which could provide agricultural products for school meals, and generally had strong agricultural knowledge. Challenges included a lack of knowledge on how to establish and run an NGO, as well as a weak culture of forming cooperatives and marginalisation of women in civil society.

The Ministry of Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Agriculture to pursue similar analyses in other regions as the programme expands. Together with the Ministries of Education and Agriculture, and through pilot activities in Nadhour, Zaghouan governorate, WFP has promoted community participation as a key component of local procurement.

Further in line with OE recommendations, WFP continues to advocate for the participation of women in the management of school canteens, in partnership with the NGO Femmes pour les Cantines Scolaires. As per the last recommendation of the OE, a working group was established in 2016 within the Ministry of Education to ensure monitoring and evaluation of pilot experiences, aiming to identify and measure key success factors and challenges for larger scale replicability. The group developed an initial set of criteria for the selection of targeted districts and schools to be included in the subsequent scale-up phase.

WFP and the Institute of Development Studies published a comprehensive study of Social Protection and Safety Nets in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) [1]. The report confirms the value of school meals as a cost-effective approach to promote improved nutrition as well as access to education, and the need for a holistic approach to social protection in the MENA region.

[1] WFP and Institute of Development Studies, Social Protection and Safety Nets in the Middle East and North Africa, 2016

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

The project addressed the Government of Tunisia's request for WFP's technical assistance and policy advice, in order to develop the Ministry of Education's capacity to enhance its National School Meals Programme. Its objectives are to improve the quality, efficiency and sustainability of the programme, in line with international standards. Tunisia's Sustainable School Meals Strategy (2014) and Action Plan (2015) were developed in partnership with WFP, based upon a review of the existing school meals programme, study visits for South-South cooperation, and the sharing of experiences and best practices.

The Government requested WFP's continued assistance for a second phase of the project, until June 2018, to accompany the operationalization and implementation of its Sustainable School Meals Strategy (SSMS). As part of this second phase, WFP activities in support of the Government in 2016 were structured under three components: 1) strengthening regulatory frameworks and tools; 2) upgrading the current decentralised school meals model; and 3) piloting new implementation modalities that are efficient, accountable, and support local development by encouraging links to local agricultural production, in line with a home grown school meals approach. The project also seeks to strengthen the capacity of local and national civil society and promote community participation in school meals implementation.

WFP's programme activities aim to strengthen regulatory frameworks and tools in the areas of governance, targeting, cost efficiency, school meals' nutritional quality and safety, monitoring and evaluation, and community participation. WFP also promotes a healthy and diverse diet based on local products and nutritious traditional recipes, as a means to address nutrition-related concerns such as the double burden of malnutrition, driven by the prevalence of macronutrient deficiency (notably, anaemia) along with overweight and obesity.

The project also aims to support the upgrade of the current decentralised school meals model in order to augment the system's capacity to provide nutritious and preferably hot meals. WFP provides critical support to the Government in the design and implementation of a central kitchen pilot modality and contributes to the revitalisation of school gardens.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	3,350,459
Direct Support Costs	2,724,307
Indirect Support Costs	425,234
Total	6,500,000

Project Activities

WFP and the Government of Tunisia continued to strengthen governance tools for the management of an improved National School Meals Programme (NSMP), and to advance in the design and implementation of innovative pilot modalities. South-South study visits provided knowledge sharing about the role of school meals as a social safety net and to promote community resilience. Combined, these activities have contributed to enhancing the Government's capacity to implement its Sustainable School Meals Strategy.

WFP's close cooperation with the Ministry of Education in the establishment of the Office of School Services (OOESCO) was a notable milestone. The creation of OOESCO ensures a central entity is responsible for continuity and ownership in the implementation and management of an improved National School Meals Programme.

WFP assisted the Government to develop an innovative school meals implementation model. A pilot in the Zaghouan governorate will use locally sourced produce to prepare meals that will be delivered from a central kitchen to 1,500 children in ten schools, based on Nutrition and Hygiene Guidelines developed with support from WFP. The pilot will generate valuable experiences and lessons learned that will help streamline the model across other regions. A second pilot in the Beja region is planned to be launched in 2017.

The Nutrition and Hygiene Guidelines were validated in August 2016 by the National School Meals Steering Committee, including representatives of the Ministries of Health and Education, and the National Nutrition Institute. WFP also developed weekly menus based on locally available products and traditional recipes, in accordance with the recommendations of the Nutrition and Hygiene Guidelines.

WFP supported the Government in the design of the central kitchen pilot operating model, with critical contributions from two experts in logistics and supply chain, employees of Sodexo, the global leader in Quality of Life Services, and the founding partner of Stop Hunger, a global non-profit organization, for which they volunteered.

The construction of the first central kitchen pilot in Nadhour began in December 2016. The pilot will also be leveraged as a hub to promote community participation and to advance nutrition, environmental and agricultural education. One hectare of land was provided by the governorate of Zaghouan to put in place a school garden. The soil was prepared and trees planted to shield the crops from the wind. A multi-stakeholder, regional steering committee was set up earlier in 2016 to oversee the implementation of the pilot, including representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, teachers and the local community.

WFP collaborated with its government counterparts to ensure all the activities and actions required to successfully kick off the pilot were properly conducted and monitored. WFP organised the activities in six work streams: 1) construction; 2) school garden; 3) equipment; 4) supply chain management; 5) training and guidelines; and 6) local community engagement, with a particular focus on gender equality. The central kitchen pilot represents milestone for the enhancement of the National School Meals Programme and will foster valuable experiences to guide future replication of the model and the overall way forward for the programme.

Fostering links with local smallholder farmer's groups is an important component of the pilot intervention aimed at promoting local agricultural development. WFP's civil society partner, Femmes pour les Cantines Scolaires, assisted in mapping and analysing the capacities and constraints of local women producers to supply canteens. The analysis was aimed at informing WFP and the Government on how to better engage women in rural areas in project activities that could promote gender equality. Similarly, a study was conducted to assess the project's potential to promote the participation of parents and broader communities in school meals management.

WFP also facilitated South-South cooperation and learning. A Tunisian Government delegation participated in a study visit to the WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil on 09-13 May, where they attended the Centre's School Feeding Day. The study trip offered an occasion for the Tunisian delegation to gain valuable insights on Brazilian social protection programmes and school meals, as well experiences from other countries. In particular, discussions centred on best practices and lessons learnt with regards to the links between local smallholder production and the school meals systems. The Tunisian delegation also attended the 11th International Seminar on Social Policies for Development, an event co-organised by the Centre of Excellence against Hunger, the World without Poverty Initiative (WWP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Operational Partnerships

Partnerships are an essential component of the Tunisian model for a sustainable school meals programme. National civil society organisations as well as international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are increasingly taking part in shaping the future Tunisian society, opening up a large potential for synergetic partnerships.

WFP partnered with Tunisian NGO Femmes Pour les Cantines Scolaires (FCS) to support national efforts to enhance school meals. WFP supported FCS by providing training in programme design and implementation with aims to fostering their role as cooperating and complementary partners in the implementation of Tunisia's Sustainable School Meals Strategy. WFP and FCS entered a formal partnership by signing a Field Level Agreement in 2015.

The first phase of WFP's partnership with FCS aimed to accompany the implementation of the pilot project in the Zaghouan governorate. FCS engaged an expert to develop a comprehensive report, finalised in March 2016, of pilot schools and their immediate environment in the Nadhour district, as well as a feasibility study. The study addressed the key success factors needed to implement the multi-dimensional approach to school meals and assessed the potential for local producers, notably women in rural areas, to form community based organisations to participate in

the supply chain of nutritious, home grown school meals.

WFP and FCS also engaged in an advocacy campaign to advance civil society and private sector involvement in school meals and co-organised a lunch for a National Partnership for School Meals held on 24 May 2016 and attended by the Ministers of Education and Agriculture as well by WFP's Assistant Executive Director for Partnership and Governance Services. The event featured an appeal to the Tunisian private sector to contribute to the implementation of the school meals being piloted in the Beja and Zaghouan governorates, resulting in a private sector contribution of 120 000 Tunisian Dinars (USD 52 000) to FCS.

WFP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) worked to capitalise on potential synergies, in particular to coordinate interventions in 34 schools to be rehabilitated by UNICEF's "WASH at school" programme, where water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH--) improvements can be accompanied by a refurbishment of the school canteen and the planting of a school garden. WFP and UNICEF also work to promote the inclusion of nutrition, hygiene and environmental education materials into the national curricula.

WFP explores ways to support local procurement from smallholder farmers, and/or rural community-based organisations. WFP met with the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss and coordinate on advocacy efforts for a project for a Social and Solidarity Economy Law (Loi sur Economie Sociale et Solidaire), expected to be discussed by parliament in 2017. The bill aims to facilitate the establishment of cooperatives and community-based organisation, as well as to allow them to participate in public tenders, including for the provision of fresh produce for school meals.

FAO and WFP collaborated to map and analyse the potential inclusion of local smallholder farmers, notably women, in the school meals supply chain. WFP and FAO aim to collaborate in the revitalisation of school gardens, as well as to adapt the school meal menus to the products available in each region, promoting the nutritional benefits of the Mediterranean diet.

The Italian Development Cooperation (AICS) has funded the equipment of 138 kitchens of boarding schools. WFP, AICS and the Ministry of Education are coordinating their interventions, allowing a more targeted approach for the way forward for the expansion of the sustainable school meals programme.

WFP partnered with local NGO Génération Liberté for the refurbishment and improvement of the school canteen of the Ain Chebl school in Teboursouk, Beja Governorate. WFP provided training and guidance on school meal standards, while Génération Liberté provided for the construction and equipment of the kitchen and canteen.

Finally, with the support of the global non-profit organization Stop Hunger, two experts from Sodexo undertook a mission to Tunisia from 20 October to 01 November, to share their expertise on supply chain management, food preparation and delivery logistics. The results, presented to the Ministry of Education and WFP, included recommendations on the central kitchen operating model, mechanisms for regional and local procurement, as well as advice regarding the potential replication of pilot experiences.

Performance Monitoring

WFP's monitoring plan is aligned with the Plan of Action for the implementation of Tunisia's Sustainable School Meals Strategy. On a quarterly basis, WFP monitors progress towards the results outlined in the Plan of Action, the corresponding activities and related indicators, which are regularly updated to reflect government priorities and any changes in WFP's implementation plan.

Field activities, such as the establishment of a school garden, the equipment of a school kitchen, the construction of a central kitchen and mapping of school infrastructure in surrounding schools have primarily been monitored through a WFP programme assistant based in Zaghouan and tasked with supervising and promoting progress on the field. The presence of WFP staff in the field has helped WFP to better coordinate between the local, regional and central levels. Weekly reports are used to keep track of developments in the field and inform any required changes in implementation.

WFP collaborated with a Ministry of Education working group created in 2016 to monitor and evaluate the pilot experiences, and ensure that lessons learned and key success factors for future scale-up are properly accounted for. In collaboration with WFP, the group developed a set of criteria for the selection of targeted districts and schools to be included in a subsequent scale-up phase.

The operational partnership with Femmes pour les Cantines Scolaires (FCS) has been evaluated through quarterly progress reports since the collaboration began in July 2015, tracking the follow up on agreed tasks and responsibilities.

WFP and the Government develop mission reports reflecting the insights gained and lessons learned from study trips. Mission reports serve to ensure that knowledge shared through South-South cooperation informs both the national school meals policy and the implementation of the school meals pilots, as well being a useful tool for tracking the outcomes of each trip.

WFP encourages participants to share their opinions, comments and general feedback during and after trainings. Attendance sheets are kept to monitor government and school staff participation both at WFP-led training sessions and at Steering Committee meetings.

Results/Outcomes

WFP ensured close collaboration with its main government counterpart the National School Meals Steering Committee, providing critical support for the establishment of the central school meals governance entity Office of School Services (OOESCO), a new department in the Ministry of Education, fully funded by the Government. The production of Nutrition and Hygiene Guidelines, the commencement of the construction of the central kitchen pilot and preparation of a school garden at the Hnchir Jedid primary school in Nadhour, Zaghuan, as well as timely planning for the further expansion of the enhanced school meals programme, have laid the foundations for stronger impact over the remaining period of the project.

Given the Government's focus on the establishment of the Office of School Services (OOESCO) in 2016, a Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) - school meals evaluation, which would have provided the next follow up value of the National Capacity Index (NCI), was not conducted in 2016. The Government's strategic preference was to conduct the assessment once the office was fully operational at central and regional levels. The service delivery for school meals, run by OOESCO, started in January 2017.

The project steered much of its resources towards strengthening regulatory frameworks and tools for the National School Meals Programme. WFP trained 26 government staff in 2016. The trainings included an introduction to the WFP-developed guidelines, an expert presentation by Sodexo Stop Hunger volunteers on recommendations on the central kitchen operating model, and a study visit to the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brasilia.

In close collaboration with OOESCO, WFP advocated for an increase in the number of days in which school meals are served per year from the current 120 days to 130 days. This target was not reached, due to the adoption of austerity measures by the newly formed government, which has put the increase in allocation for running costs of school meals on hold.

The planned upgrade of 10 model schools was postponed due to the high cost of this component, with the project's overall funding remaining at 23 percent of its total budget. Despite the absence of funds to operate at scale in the equipment of schools, the Ain Chebl primary school (Teboursouk, Beja governorate) was equipped by national non-governmental organisation Génération Liberté in partnership with WFP. In this school, four school staff received WFP nutritional and hygiene training. The number of school staff receiving training is expected to rise as more schools have their canteens and kitchens equipped, as well as through WFP's collaboration to train staff in boarding schools already equipped with funding from the Italian Development Cooperation.

The central kitchen pilot and establishment of a school garden began end of 2016, and was not yet operational in 2016. The regional procurement of food for the school meals programme will only be tested once the construction of the central kitchen pilot is finalised. The central kitchen pilot aims to procure 30 percent of the food from Tunisia region where the kitchen is located.

Progress Towards Gender Equality

WFP encourages equal participation between the genders in the local, regional and national steering committees for the school meals programme and has seen an overall increase of female committee members since the start of the project.

The second phase of the project is designed to pay particular attention to foster women's opportunities by giving preference to women's community based non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as Femmes pour les Cantines Scolaires (FCS), entirely run by women. FCS has been advocating the role of women in administering the National School Meals Programme, promoting women's role in the management of school canteens, as well as giving particular attention to women in procuring food for the school meals programme. FCS conducted a feasibility study addressing the key success factors needed to implement the multi-dimensional approach to school meals and assessed the potential for women in rural areas to form community based organisations aimed at providing nutritious, home grown school meals.

The analysis concluded that women were available and willing to deliver products for school meals, but lacked the knowledge on how to run an NGO. The women who participated in the analysis were discouraged by a lack of culture and experience in forming cooperatives and/or community-based organisations. The report recommended trainings on how to form such NGOs and establish clusters where best practices could be shared. This approach is intended to address lack of market access for women in rural areas and support their ability to generate revenue.

WFP planned to undertake a Gender Analysis, including an assessment of gender-sensitivity of national zero hunger capacities, during the first quarter of 2017. The findings of the analysis will inform a detailed Gender Action Plan in the framework of the project's scope and activities.

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

While the WFP Development Project consists of technical support and capacity development activities only, with no direct beneficiaries and no populations directly affected by the project activities, WFP seeks to ensure that the National School Meals Programme is in line with WFP's commitment for protection and accountability to affected populations, and that it does not compromise the safety, dignity or integrity of the children receiving school meals, or their families.

The Sustainable School Meals Strategy that is developed with WFP assistance, outlines a school meals programme that serves nutritious meals free of charge and unconditionally, to ensure equal access and avoid elements of stigma which could arise for beneficiaries of school meals. WFP encourages the establishment of school councils as a proactive means to engage parents, children and school staff, and to address any protection risks related to the provision of school meals. The school councils function to provide information to beneficiaries about the school meals programme, and to facilitate discussions about the school meals experience.

Moreover, WFP advocates for the Government to establish and maintain feedback mechanisms to ensure that parents and children are aware of their entitlements, as well as to provide them with a channel where they can share experiences with the school meals programme.

Nourishing Hope for a Better Tomorrow

School children in Tunisia, as they do all over the world, aspire to follow their dreams. They are curious about the world and seek belonging, as well as knowledge. Yet, when they arrive at school, many are already tired after a long hazardous walk. In most rural areas of the country, an unvarying grain-based diet causes micronutrient deficiencies, such as too little iron, which can make children feel even more tired, prompting them to lose focus for learning. The school snack too often consists of a simple sandwich with sardines and chilli paste, which does not contribute to a nutritious, diversified diet.

The Tunisian Government is advancing an education reform to modernise the school system and prepare young Tunisians for a dynamic and connected world, requiring a new set of skills and knowledge. With support from WFP, and as a result of a partnership to enhance national schools meals since 2014, serving a warm and nutritious lunch at mid-day has become a cornerstone of the education reform. A key objective of the collaboration between WFP and the Government is to ensure the most vulnerable girls and boys are reached through a quality and high-impact school meals programme, one that is responsive to local needs and advances education, nutrition, and social protection.

Gathering once a day for a warm school meal not only fills the stomach, but also provides boys and girls with the nutrients they need to stay alert and focused during class. Using local products, traditional recipes and encouraging participation from the local communities promotes social cohesion and a sense of belonging - and is high on the agenda of the Tunisian Government and WFP.

One of the children with a long way to school is Montasar. He lives in the countryside of the Zaghouan governorate. Each day Montasar walks 3 km to and from the Jradou primary school, where he studies. The school takes part in Tunisia's sustainable, multi-dimensional approach to school meals, which has been developed with the assistance of WFP. For Montasar, as well as for 160 other schoolchildren attending the school, this means that he will be served a warm and nutritious meal for lunch. Today the meal is a hearty couscous with locally-grown vegetables, followed by a seasonal fruit. A nutritious school lunch provides him with enough strength to remain focused throughout the day, and ensures that he will have access to the nutrients he needs to become a healthy teenager when he graduates.

“One thing that I have become aware of at this school”, says teacher Kaouther, “is how important school meals are when it comes to attendance, both for boys and girls”. The school's headmaster, Adel, has led the establishment of a school garden that delivers fresh vegetables to the canteen and invites people from the local community to take part in learning activities and volunteering. He explains that the initiative has allowed the school to inject cash into the school development association and teach students about agriculture and nutrition. For Montasar, who aspires to become a doctor, the local community has become the focus of his dreams: “I would like to take care of the poor in my community and keep them well, and I would do it all willingly and without profit”.

WFP and the Tunisian Ministry of Education are now working together with partners to find the most applicable way forward to expand the Sustainable School Meals Programme and replicate the Jradou school model across Tunisia, bringing hope for a better tomorrow to thousands of children in the country.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover photo credit: WFP / Rim Mathlouthi

School children eating a nutritious meal in the Jradou school canteen, Tunisia

Project Indicators

Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
SO4 Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger				
Ownership and capacity strengthened to reduce undernutrition and increase access to education at regional, national and community levels				
NCI: School Feeding National Capacity Index				
<i>TUNISIA, Project End Target: 2016.12, SABER - SF Workshop, Base value: 2014.04, Joint survey, SABER-SF Workshop</i>	=2.80	2.20	-	-

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO4: Capacity Development - Strengthening National Capacities				
Average number of school feeding days per year in model schools	instance	130	120	92.3%
Number of government staff trained by WFP in nutrition programme design, implementation and other nutrition related areas (technical/strategic/managerial)	individual	50	26	52.0%
Number of model schools with upgraded equipment and infrastructure	school	10	1	10.0%
Number of national programmes developed with WFP support (nutrition, school feeding, safety net)	national programme	1	1	100.0%
Number of school staff and school committee members trained by WFP in school feeding programme design, and implementation in model schools	individual	10	4	40.0%
Number of schools with revitalised school gardens	school	10	1	10.0%
Number of technical assistance activities provided	activity	3	3	100.0%
Out-sourced model piloted in at least one region (no=0, yes=1)	activity	1	-	-
Regional level procurement piloted in at least one region (no=0, yes=1)	activity	1	-	-

Gender Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Proportion of women beneficiaries in leadership positions of project management committees				
<i>TUNISIA, Capacity Development, Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2015.12, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>50.00	60.00	-	68.00
Proportion of women project management committee members trained on modalities of food, cash, or voucher distribution				
<i>TUNISIA, Capacity Development, Project End Target: 2016.06, Base value: 2016.01, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>60.00	60.00	-	61.00

Partnership Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Latest Follow-up
Amount of complementary funds provided to the project by partners (including NGOs, civil society, private sector organizations, international financial institutions and regional development banks)		
<i>TUNISIA, Capacity Development - Strengthening National Capacities, Project End Target: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>0.00	54,000.00
Number of partner organizations that provide complementary inputs and services		
<i>TUNISIA, Capacity Development, Project End Target: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>5.00	6.00
Proportion of project activities implemented with the engagement of complementary partners		
<i>TUNISIA, Capacity Development, Project End Target: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>90.00	100.00
Share of inputs provided for infrastructure rehabilitation (including canteen, water and sanitation) by local authorities, communities and parents out of total value of costs for infrastructure		
<i>TUNISIA, Capacity Development, Project End Target: 2018.06, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>20.00	81.00