

Operational Fund for Rural Water Infrastructure in Tunisia

Sustainable management of water for food security and climate adaptation

At a Glance

With around 440m³ of renewable fresh water resources per inhabitant per year, Tunisia suffers from acute water shortages, which jeopardise the livelihoods of the rural population, especially in Central Tunisia. Outdated and poorly maintained drinking water supply and irrigation systems and management deficits of water user groups lead to high water losses, financial bottlenecks and continuous degradation of infrastructure. Water scarcity is thus a key obstacle to development in an agricultural region. Agriculture is the largest consumer, accounting for about 77% of total water consumption, with about 440,000ha of agricultural land irrigated. Particularly water-intensive export crops such as citrus fruits and dates cause an annual water consumption of over 600 million m³. At the same time, in many places, the efficiency of agricultural irrigation systems is below 50%, due to outdated infrastructure, leakages and lack of maintenance.

Project Approach

On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), KfW is supporting the Tunisian Government in setting up an operational fund ("Fonds de Bonne Gestion", FBG) that is specifically financing the modernisation and repair of drinking water systems (Alimentation en Eau Potable, AEP) and small-scale irrigation systems (Petite et Moyenne Hydraulique, PMH) in the governorates of Kairouan, Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid, Sfax and Mahdia.



Olive grove. Source: KfW / Daniela Casabona-Fischer

Project name	Operational Fund for Rural Water Infrastructure (FBG)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implemented by	KfW Development Bank
Country/Region	Tunisia
Lead execution agencies	Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Fisheries
Implementation period	2018–2027
Funding	EUR 10 million budget loan, EUR 2.5 million accompanying measure budget grant, EUR 0.4 million A+F budget grant

KfW financed water supply and irrigation facilities in the project region are to be operated sustainably by means of rules-compliant and resource-conserving management (module objective). The aim is to use water resources more efficiently and stabilise supply in rural areas in the long term by modernising systems and reducing water losses and managing demand by means of cost-covering water prices.

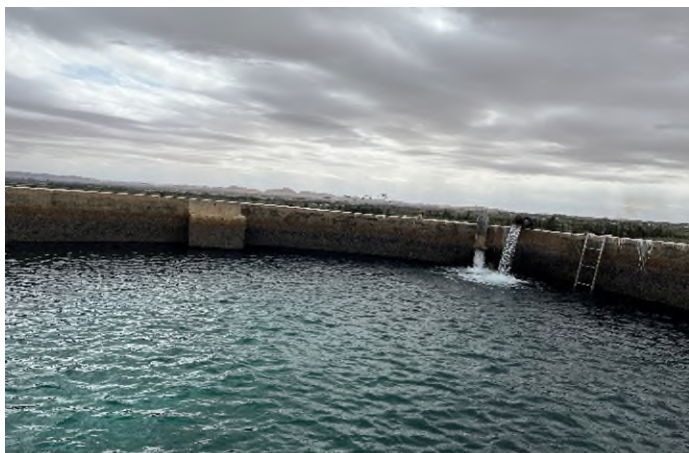
The rural population across the central Tunisian governorates of Kairouan, Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid, Sfax and Mahdia are organised in water user groups, 110 of them participate as the project's direct target groups. These are supported and individually supplied with modern solutions for drinking water and irrigation. Moreover the water user groups are trained and advised in the management, operation and maintenance of the systems in order to be able to ensure the operation of the systems independently, efficiently and sustainably. In addition, the training of local craft enterprises for repair and maintenance work will strengthen local economic cycles. The involvement of user groups in decision-making and implementation processes as well as the promotion of ownership and governance are in focus and contribute directly to the achievement of the development cooperation programme goal of a climate-resilient, sustainable water balance with positive socio-economic impact – especially in disadvantaged areas of the region.

Implementation and Outputs

The project has significantly increased the security of supply and reliability of rural water systems and helped to ensure that more people have access to clean water. About 40,000 people in five governorates and about 1,800 farmers benefit from the

investment measures. In addition, the FBG makes an important and effective contribution to the fight against displacement and

migration: Through the rehabilitation and modernisation of water supply and irrigation systems financed by KfW, 130 families who had moved away due to lack of access to water have been able to return to their villages and homes.



Modernised water storage. Source KfW / Daniela Casabona-Fischer

The modernisation of the irrigation systems reduced water losses from 50% to 10%. Investments in modern technology, renewable energies and the reduction of water losses enable a more sustainable use of water resources and contribute to climate protection. The extensive involvement and training of user groups promotes their ownership in the management of water systems, resulting in more efficient and independent communities. The modernisation of drinking water and irrigation systems has significantly reduced downtime and supply interruptions, which is crucial for farms and households, especially in dry periods.



Modernised drinking water access for rural households. Source: KfW / Daniela Casabona-Fischer

Local companies received new assignments and were strengthened through qualification measures. The involvement of local stakeholders ensures acceptance and long-term maintenance of the facilities. In addition, private sector support strengthens the supply and quality of technical services, making the region more

resilient and creating additional development opportunities. Overall, the project contributes significantly to improving the quality of life and creating new prospects in Tunisia's rural regions.

Partners

- Direction Générale du Génie Rural et de l'Exploitation des Eaux (DGGREE)
- Commissariats Régionaux au Développement Agricole (CRDA)



Individual household with new access to water. Source: KfW / Daniela Casabona-Fischer

Publisher

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