



TUNISIA

COVID-19 RESPONSE

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has committed over \$31 million to mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19.

USAID ASSISTANCE TO TUNISIA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

USAID has been working in coordination with the Government of Tunisia and other key stakeholders to address and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in Tunisia. USAID's support includes the provision of life-saving assistance, prioritization of investments to respond to evolving public health needs, and delivery of essential services and assistance to spur Tunisia's economic and social recovery. USAID has committed over \$31 million in resources to support Tunisia in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

HEALTH RESPONSE

Since the start of the pandemic in Tunisia, USAID provided over \$11 million, out of the \$31 million, **to support the Government of Tunisia's immediate health response**. USAID is partnering with key UN organizations to strengthen lab and surveillance capacity, improve infection prevention and control, promote public awareness and community engagement, deliver critical case management and testing equipment, and promote improved water, sanitation, and hygiene in health facilities, day care centers, schools, and other government institutions hosting children. In order to ensure a rapid response to emerging needs, efforts are closely coordinated with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. Since April 2020, USAID has:

Healthcare and Health Facilities:

- Supported infection prevention and control (IPC) and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) awareness raising activities and provided 62 water tanks in 87 facilities, benefiting 3,064 Tunisians directly and approximately 31,000 indirectly.
- Provided 834 personal protective equipment kits for healthcare workers, and approximately 103,000 coveralls to protect frontline health workers from infection.
- Procured 2,400 contactless thermometers for the Ministry of Health.

Education and Child Care:

- Procured about 2,000 contactless thermometers for the Ministry of Education to support June 2020 end-of-year exams.
- Provided 8,630 contactless thermometers, 150,000 posters, and one million fliers to all 6,250 schools in Tunisia. This facilitated their reopening in September 2020 after six months of closure due to COVID-19.

- Supported the printing and distribution of 42,000 copies of the Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 health and safety protocols for early identification, tracing, and case referral of COVID cases to 13,500 educational institutions.
- Supported the procurement and distribution of thousands of individual and institutional water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) kits to schools, kindergartens and other governmental institutions hosting children, to enable adoption and implementation of infection prevention behaviors. This included:
 - Over 23,000 individual hygiene kits for children hosted at protection facilities.
 - Over 470 institutional kits for the disinfection and the application of preventive measures in institutions and facilities hosting children.
 - Over 6,000 institutional kits for all public schools in Tunisia, benefitting over 2 million children.
 - Individual kits for children, staff, and teachers at 150 kindergartens throughout the country (a third of public sector kindergartens nationwide); including 7,500 individual kits for children under 6 years of age which contained coloring books to educate children on good hygiene practices, and flyers/posters to take home to parents.
- Implemented small WASH-related (sinks, taps) repairs to 154 schools to enable students and staff to wash their hands.

Communication and Awareness Raising:

- Supported a number of communication and awareness raising campaigns aiming to inform the general public, including children and parents, about the risks of COVID-19 infection and the preventive measures to be adopted against the virus. Efforts included the production and intensive dissemination of communication materials including through TV and radio spots, billboards, posters, flyers, and other materials. Over 2 million Tunisians were reached through social media platforms with this important health information.
- Supported community engagement and mobilization activities by Tunisian Scouts on COVID-19 prevention. Activities were carried out across 21 regions, reaching over 72,000 beneficiaries (citizens, students) directly with COVID prevention messaging and 923,000 individuals indirectly through TV, radio, and social media.

Case Management and Testing:

- Procured 100,000 test kits and a DNA extractor to increase public sector lab testing capacity.
- Trained 17 staff from 7 laboratories in biosecurity, biosafety, and diagnostic techniques.
- Purchased 240 medical cooler boxes and 1,000 medical waste bins to ensure PCR test kits and samples are protected, and medical waste is properly disposed.
- Purchased 5 autoclaves to ensure the proper functioning of the new public sector labs opened to strengthen national diagnostic capacity.
- Provided training to 178 staff of regional Rapid Response Teams to assist in strengthening surveillance in light of the second wave of infection.
- Supported rehabilitation of the resuscitation unit at Abdurrahman Mami Hospital in Ariana.
- Supported the establishment of COVID-19 triage units designed to identify, separate, and treat COVID-19 cases at Kef and Gafsa regional hospitals.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Through its Democracy and Governance portfolio, USAID/Tunisia is providing a total of \$6.5 million, out of the \$31 million, to **support municipalities in the safe delivery of essential services.**

- In May 2020, as the pandemic began spreading in Tunisia, USAID provided \$1.5 million in sanitation supplies and equipment to 151 municipalities throughout Tunisia through its Tunisia Accountability, Decentralization, and Effective Municipalities (TADAEEM) project, benefiting over half the country's population.
- USAID is purchasing \$5 million of IT equipment to set up a crisis response communications network between the Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment and all 350 municipalities throughout the country. USAID will also use a portion of these funds to expand the deployment of an e-construction permitting system that helps citizens decrease face-to-face contact in the new COVID-19 reality.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Through its Economic Growth portfolio, USAID/Tunisia is providing a total of \$13.8 million, out of the \$31 million, to **mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on Tunisia's economy, and support the country's economic recovery efforts.**

- To mitigate the economic impact on small and medium sized enterprises, a \$10 million Enterprise Recovery Fund was created under USAID's Jobs Opportunity and Business Support (JOBS) project through which support will be provided to 15,000 enterprises throughout Tunisia. This funding provides the flexibility to expand ongoing activities to address pandemic-specific needs.
- Through its JOBS project, USAID is assisting the Government of Tunisia with the design, structure, operational procedures, and launch of a 700 million TND (\$800,000) fund for Tunisian small businesses and firms to mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19.
- Also through the JOBS project, USAID is providing \$3 million in grants to increase the productivity of Tunisian companies providing essential goods and services, and support the CDC (private equity fund) to manage the fund for small and medium sized enterprises.
- Through its Fiscal Reform for a Strong Tunisia (FIRST) project, USAID supported the installation of a software system for secure data communication for 25 senior officials of the Ministry of Finance as well as a secure webcasting system allowing the Ministry to virtually connect 13 regional offices throughout Tunisia. This ensured the continuation of public finance functions during this time of crisis.
- USAID assisted the Ministry of Finance with modeling, forecasting and analysis of the economic impact of COVID-19 through its FIRST project. This provided the Government of Tunisia with accurate information which is essential for proper economic preparations and future planning.
- USAID's FIRST project directed \$800,000 towards supporting the Ministry of Finance's e-filing and e-payment system, to respond to new demands caused by COVID-19.
- In partnership with 8 Tunisian banks and financial institutions, USAID is facilitating access to commercial credit. These efforts have mobilized about \$86 million in loans to 3,015 small businesses nationwide.
- USAID continues to assist Tunisian small businesses nationwide with tailored technical assistance to resolve management, market, financial, and operational constraints that resulted from COVID-19.