



EVALUATION REPORT

# UN WOMEN TUNISIA COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

STRATEGIC NOTE 2022–2025





# UN WOMEN TUNISIA COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

STRATEGIC NOTE 2022–2025

**UN Women Independent Evaluation,  
Audit and Investigation Services**

Independent Evaluation Service

2026



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This evaluation was conducted by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service. The independent evaluation team comprised Chaitali Chattopadhyay, UN Women Regional Evaluation Specialist, Arab States; Mireia Cano Vinas, International Evaluation Expert; and Asma Ayari, National Evaluation Expert.

The evaluation was conducted between June and December 2025. The evaluation team is grateful to the more than 85 stakeholders, including government counterparts, development partners, private-sector partners,

civil society representatives and personnel from the UN Women Tunisia Country Office who engaged in the evaluation through online and in-person interviews, and survey participation.

We are especially grateful to the UN Women Tunisia personnel who supported the conduct of the evaluation, particularly, Florence Basti, Country Representative of the Tunisia–Libya Cluster for her leadership and support.

## EVALUATION TEAM:

**Chaitali Chattopadhyay**, UN Women Regional Evaluation Specialist, ROAS

**Mireia Cano**, Evaluation Consultant

**Asma Ayari**, National Evaluation Expert

## EVALUATION MANAGEMENT:

UN Women Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS)

**Inga Kaplan**, Chief, UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

**Lisa Sutton**, Director, UN Women Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS)

Copy-editing: **Catherine Simes**

Design and layout: **Yamrote A. Haileselassie**

**Cover Photo:** UN Women/Emad Karim

# ACRONYMS

|                  |                                                                         |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CEDAW</b>     | Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women           |
| <b>CPE</b>       | Country Portfolio Evaluation                                            |
| <b>CSO</b>       | Civil Society Organization                                              |
| <b>EVAW</b>      | Eliminating Violence Against Women                                      |
| <b>GRB</b>       | Gender-Responsive Budgeting                                             |
| <b>IEAIS</b>     | Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services                |
| <b>IES</b>       | Independent Evaluation Service                                          |
| <b>SDG</b>       | Sustainable Development Goal                                            |
| <b>UN</b>        | United Nations                                                          |
| <b>UNCT</b>      | United Nations Country Team                                             |
| <b>UNCT-SWAP</b> | United Nations Country Team System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality |
| <b>UNDP</b>      | United Nations Development Programme                                    |
| <b>UNICEF</b>    | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund                  |
| <b>UNOCHA</b>    | United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs          |
| <b>UNSDCF</b>    | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework            |
| <b>UN Women</b>  | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women  |
| <b>WEE</b>       | Women's Economic Empowerment                                            |
| <b>WPP</b>       | Women's Political Participation                                         |
| <b>WPS</b>       | Women, Peace and Security                                               |

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                            |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>                                     | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>ACRONYMS</b>                                            | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>                                   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT</b>                           | <b>12</b> |
| 1.1. Tunisia context                                       | 12        |
| 1.2. Gender equality in Tunisia                            | 14        |
| 1.3. UN in Tunisia                                         | 16        |
| 1.4. UN Women in Tunisia                                   | 17        |
| <b>2. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH</b>    | <b>24</b> |
| 2.1. Evaluation purpose                                    | 24        |
| 2.2. Evaluation objectives                                 | 24        |
| 2.3. Evaluation scope                                      | 24        |
| 2.4. Intended users and uses of the evaluation             | 25        |
| 2.5. Evaluation design                                     | 25        |
| 2.6. Evaluation limitations and risk-mitigation strategies | 27        |
| 2.7. Evaluation governance and quality assurance           | 27        |
| <b>3. FINDINGS</b>                                         | <b>28</b> |
| 3.1. Relevance                                             | 29        |
| 3.2. Coordination                                          | 32        |
| 3.3. Effectiveness                                         | 35        |
| 3.4. Efficiency                                            | 49        |
| 3.5. Gender equality and human rights                      | 53        |
| <b>4. LESSONS LEARNED</b>                                  | <b>57</b> |
| <b>5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>                  | <b>59</b> |

# LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND BOXES

## LIST OF FIGURES

**Figure 1** Tunisia Gender Inequality Index 1990–2023

**Figure 2** Reconstructed theory of change

**Figure 3** Portfolio analysis UN Women Tunisia 2022–2025

**Figure 4** Gender at Work Framework

## LIST OF TABLE

**Table 1** Strategic Note impact and outcomes and their alignment with the UNSDCF

## LIST OF BOXES

**Box 1:** Testing the theory of change – coordination

**Box 2:** The Country Office's contribution to operationalizing Organic Law 58/2017

**Box 3:** Testing the theory of change – normative

**Box 4:** Testing the theory of change – Women's Economic Empowerment

**Box 5:** Testing the theory of change – Women's Political Participation and Leadership

**Box 6:** Testing the theory of change – Women, Peace and Security

**Box 7:** Testing the theory of change – Eliminating Violence Against Women

**Box 8:** Testing the theory of change – Gender-responsive budgeting, gender data and social norms

**Box 9:** Testing the theory of change – CSO partnership

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

UN Women has been active in Tunisia since 2009 (previously as UNIFEM) and formally joined the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in 2019. Prior to this, UN Women's engagement in Tunisia was managed under the Morocco MultiCountry Office. In 2019, UN Women reconfigured its presence, establishing a Cluster Office covering both Tunisia and Libya, with offices in Tunis and Tripoli.

Although UN Women operates through a Tunisia–Libya Cluster Office, the two countries have maintained separate Strategic Notes to ensure that programming remains responsive to the distinct political, institutional and operational contexts. The Strategic Notes serve as the primary planning instrument guiding UN Women's normative, coordination and operational engagement in each country.

This Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) exclusively assesses the UN Women Tunisia portfolio against its Strategic Note for the period 2022–2025. For the purposes of this report, the entity under evaluation is hereafter referred to as the Tunisia Country Office.

## Purpose

The CPE was conducted by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) as a primarily formative (forward-looking) evaluation to support the Tunisia Country Office and national stakeholders' strategic learning and decision-making for the next Strategic Note. The evaluation also had a secondary summative (retrospective) perspective to support enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and learning from experience.

## Objectives

The evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and gender-transformative nature of the Country Office's work. It also sought to identify lessons learned; highlight good practices that can be scaled; and provide actionable recommendations to inform development of the new Strategic Note.

## Scope

The CPE included all activities undertaken by the Country Office under its current Strategic Note 2022–2025, including operational work, support to normative policy and UN system coordination.

However, as UN Women operates through a Tunisia–Libya Cluster Office with shared management, operations and communications functions, the evaluation also assessed how this cluster arrangement has influenced functionality and the Tunisia Country Office's delivery of results during the current Strategic Note period.

The geographical scope of the evaluation was Tunisia. Most of the interviews were conducted either in-person or virtually with stakeholders in Tunis, the capital, where normative, coordination and programmatic activities were implemented.

## Intended users

The primary intended users of this evaluation are UN Women management and Country Office personnel; the UN Women Executive Board, UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States, UN Women Global Office/s and other Regional and Country Offices outside the Arab States region; target groups, their households and community members, programme and project partners; national and local governments in Tunisia; civil society representatives; the donor community and other development partners; and the UNCT.

## Evaluation methodology

The evaluation followed gender-responsive principles and had a utilization-focused lens. It used a theory-based design to assess Strategic Note performance based on its stated assumptions about how change happens. The evaluation was conducted using a mixed-data collection approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

A desk review, interviews and focus group discussions were organized involving a total of 82 consultations with civil society organizations (CSOs), government partners, donors, target groups, UNCT, external consultants, the Country and Regional Office and headquarters (69 females, 13 males). This included two focus group discussions with a total of 21 target women. One survey was conducted with Country Office personnel, which had an 84.2 per cent response rate (16 of 19).

The Gender at Work Analytical Framework<sup>1</sup> was used to assess the extent to which Country Office programmes had been gender transformative.

## Key findings

### RELEVANCE

**Finding 1.** The Country Office's 2022–2025 Strategic Note was responsive to national, international and UN priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment. In the context of pushback against women's rights and shrinking civic space, UN Women's mandate – encapsulated in the Country Office's Strategic Note – is regarded as essential, and its thematic focus remains relevant. However, the Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) portfolio is currently fragmented across multiple initiatives, highlighting the need for a more coherent and integrated prevention-to-response strategy. Scaling up the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) portfolio and revisiting the scope and focus of the Country Office's work under the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) pillar also remains key to maintaining relevance in the changing context.

### COORDINATION

**Finding 2.** The Country Office has effectively and consistently leveraged its UN system coordination mandate. It has chaired/co-chaired the UN Gender Theme Group and convened the multi-partner Gender Coordination Group, using these platforms to bring together UNCT stakeholders and development partners around shared gender equality and empowerment of women priorities, even in a context that has become less conducive to overt gender advocacy. At the same time, some coordination overlaps and funding competition across UN agencies remains a challenge.

### EFFECTIVENESS

**Finding 3.** UN Women has made credible contributions towards its normative mandate, namely in advancing and sustaining the operationalization of Organic Law 58/2017 on eliminating violence against women, paternity leave reform, the National Strategy for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women and Girls in Rural Areas and gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). Its strengths lie in providing credible technical input, strategically aligning the policy environment, convening key stakeholders and keeping gender equality central in parliamentary debates. Stakeholders emphasized the need for UN Women in Tunisia to revitalize its engagement on compliance with international normative commitments, particularly relating to gender parity concerns within the Personal Status Code.

**Finding 4.** The Country Office's WEE portfolio integrates rural livelihoods programming; pathways for educated young women to enter growth sectors; and market-enabling partnerships with government, the private sector and international financial institutions. These efforts are complemented by early work on the care economy and social norms to expand women's access to decent work and essential services. A more clearly defined road map is required to translate partnerships into sustained employment opportunities and enterprise growth in the context of the forthcoming "Surge in Women's Employment" Initiative.

<sup>1</sup> <https://genderatwork.org/resources/gender-at-work-framework/>

**Finding 5.** The Country Office's Women's Political Participation and Leadership portfolio demonstrated adaptability in a highly constrained environment by shifting from conventional electoral assistance to supporting women in leadership roles and influencing public policy, including measures to prevent and address violence against women in politics. This strategic pivot was considered effective. Engagement with the Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality (Ra'edat) was recognized as a promising mechanism for sustaining leadership pipelines and strengthening knowledge infrastructure, essential for long-term gender equality outcomes. However, delays in implementation were observed.

**Finding 6.** UN Women's support to Tunisia's second National Action Plan on WPS was widely acknowledged. However, the Country Office's attempt to address all areas of the plan was seen as ambitious. While support to the Women's Mediation Network has effectively strengthened local capacities in conflict prevention and mediation, persistent legitimacy barriers remain, as public authorities have often been hesitant about engaging with the network due to its perceived "informal" status. Declining donor engagement on WPS in Tunisia has led to constrained financial resources for this portfolio.

**Finding 7.** The Country Office has made notable contributions to implementation of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 on eliminating violence against women through technical assistance, capacity-building and multi-stakeholder coordination. The Country Office also produced credible diagnostics and mobilized youth. However, the ERAW portfolio is dispersed across normative, downstream work, social norms and urban-safety initiatives (e.g. support for implementation of Law No. 58 of 2017, Dare to Care and the Safe Cities Flagship Initiative) indicating the need for an integrated ERAW prevention-to-response approach. Overall delivery is not yet commensurate with the scale and persistence of violence against women, pointing to the need for a clearer ERAW strategy.

**Finding 8.** The Country Office's cross-cutting portfolio made the greatest and most system-level progress through GRB, complemented by emerging work on social norms and gender statistics. Together, these investments strengthened the enabling environment for equitable public policies and services, despite uneven capacity, data gaps and decision makers' limited uptake of evidence.

**Finding 9.** UN Women in Tunisia has acted as a bridge between national institutions and civil society to advance gender equality, a role that is relevant to national priorities and stakeholder needs. These efforts have increased the visibility of gender issues in national planning and have strengthened inter-institutional dialogue. However, engagement with CSOs and the women's movement appears less robust than expected and advisory groups and consultative mechanisms remain limited in scope. A clearer strategy for engaging civil society and feminist movements is required.

#### EFFICIENCY

**Finding 10.** Several critical positions, including Head of Programmes and Operations Manager, remained vacant for extended periods, undermining strategic leadership and oversight. The Country Office faced limited resource mobilization and relied heavily on regional programmes and joint initiatives, while partnership opportunities were increasingly constrained by shrinking civic space and operational bottlenecks. Within this context, the Tunisia–Libya cluster model – originally intended to leverage synergies and mutual learning – faced implementation challenges, affecting its ability to consistently deliver on coordination functions and its operational effectiveness across both contexts.

#### GENDER EQUALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

**Finding 11.** The Country Office has progressively embedded "leave no one behind" and disability inclusion across its portfolio, especially for rural women, young women and survivors of violence. However, the approach is not fully institutionalized internally: standardized tools, monitoring, and resourcing are still required. Climate and environmental integration are emergent and largely procedural rather than programmatic.

**Finding 12.** The portfolio has catalysed system-level changes, most notably through the institutionalization of GRB and gender statistics, while contributing to social norms shifts. However, the depth and consistency of transformation are moderated by political constraints and uneven uptake across sectors.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### CONCLUSION 1

While the Country Office's portfolio is relevant and strategically placed to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, reprioritization is required given the current context. The Country Office has demonstrated agility by adapting to Tunisia's evolving context, particularly in the area of women's political participation.

### CONCLUSION 2

Constraints on political participation and WPS within a tightening operating environment have limited downstream influence. UN Women's value add is strongest where normative engagement is paired with support to women's leadership across public and private sectors, subnational reach and resilient CSO partnerships.

### CONCLUSION 3

Internal enablers, including leadership continuity, appropriate levels of staffing and a fit-for-purpose structure are decisive for performance. In the Tunisia–Libya cluster context, leadership vacancies and limited capacity have amplified constraints, particularly across monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning, and operations functions. The appointment of a new Country Representative in August 2024 began to restore leadership stability and strengthened internal coordination processes. This is being reinforced through an ongoing functional review and change-management process, offering an opportunity to better align the office's structure with strategic priorities.

### CONCLUSION 4

The Country Office has made significant progress in embedding "leave no one behind" and disability inclusion principles throughout its portfolio, although there is potential for further strengthening. Its work is well aligned with gender-transformative principles.

#### RECOMMENDATION 1



Under the next Strategic Note, the Country Office should aim to achieve greater thematic coherence and engage deeply on a limited number of thematic areas of work that address the most pressing gender equality challenges where the Country Office has a clear comparative advantage.

#### RECOMMENDATION 2



The Country Office should build on the recommendations of the recently completed functional review to address the structural and operational challenges that have constrained the efficient delivery of its mandate.

#### RECOMMENDATION 3



The Country Office should foster resilient partnerships with civil society, feminist movements and grassroots organizations, with a focus on protecting achieved rights; building alliances to counter pushback; supporting gender equality actors; and sustaining gender equality action.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4



Building on its disability inclusion efforts to date, the Country Office should further strengthen its work, paying attention to commitments under the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and recommendations arising from the Country Office's EnAbility audit (2024),<sup>2</sup> including the systematic collection and reporting of data on disability inclusion.

<sup>2</sup> EnAbility Audits are conducted to assess the integration of disability inclusion across operations and communications.

# 1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## 1.1. TUNISIA CONTEXT

Tunisia is a North African country, bordered by Algeria to the west, Libya to the southeast and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and east. With a population of 11.88 million people (January 2024),<sup>3</sup> it is a lower-middle-income country with a diverse economy, but continues to struggle with high unemployment rates, economic stagnation and political instability.<sup>4</sup> Since the 2011 revolution, Tunisia has faced challenges in consolidating democratic governance while addressing economic and social demands. The country is also highly vulnerable to climate change, particularly water scarcity, desertification and rising temperatures, which threaten agriculture, water resources and overall economic stability.<sup>5</sup>

Tunisia also serves as both a destination and transit country on the Central Mediterranean route for asylum seekers and refugees primarily from Sudan, Syria and Somalia, as well as migrants mainly from West and Central Africa. The large majority are men aged 18–59 years, with many facing precarious living conditions and limited access to legal protection and employment opportunities. Tunisia has struggled with migration management policies, balancing national security concerns with international obligations regarding human rights. A recent decrease in numbers reflects stricter asylum registration and processing by Tunisian

authorities, the closure of informal migrant camps and a growing shift towards both forced and assisted repatriation.<sup>6</sup>

Tunisia has a Human Development Index value of 0.732 – which put the country in the “high” human development category – positioning it at 101 of 193 countries and territories in 2022. Tunisia has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.238, indicating a moderate level of gender-based inequality, with disparities persisting across reproductive health, women’s empowerment and labour market participation,<sup>7</sup> ranking the country 62 of 172 countries in 2023 (see Figure 1). While notable progress has been made in areas such as maternal mortality reduction and women’s educational attainment, significant gaps persist (particularly in economic participation and access to decision-making) which continue to drive overall inequality.

The evaluation will analyse the gap between high female education versus lower labour force participation in comparison with men and provide recommendations to bridge this gap, including the creation of decent job opportunities for women and redistribution of care responsibilities between men and women – as these are two areas where UN Women is focusing interventions to address challenges (including social norms) and bridge the gap between education and participation in the job market.

<sup>3</sup> Institut National de la Statistique Population figures <https://www.ins.tn/statistiques/111>

<sup>4</sup> The World Bank in Tunisia Overview <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia/overview>

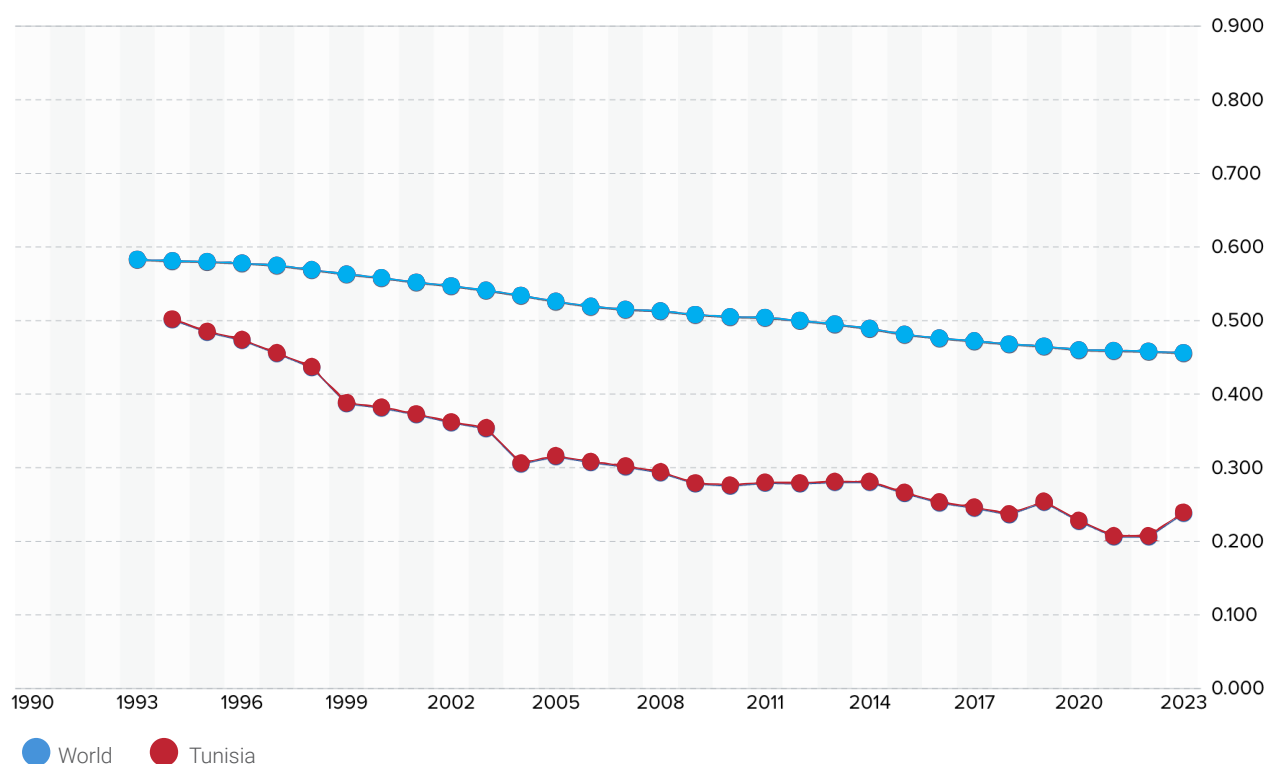
<sup>5</sup> UN Tunisia Plan Cadre de l’Aide au Développement de Tunisie 2021-2025 <https://tunisia.un.org/fr/151595-plan-cadre-de-daide-au-developpement-de-tunisie-2021-2025>

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR Tunisia <https://www.unhcr.org/where-we-work/countries/tunisia>

<sup>7</sup> UNDP Human Development Index Tunisia 2023 <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/TUN>. The Gender Inequality Index measures gender inequalities in three key dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment and labour market. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held and population with at least some secondary education by each gender; and labour market participation is measured by the labour force participation rates for women and men.

**FIGURE 1.**

Tunisia Gender Inequality Index 1990–2023

Data source: UNDP HDR, 2023<sup>8</sup>

In 2023, the unemployment rate in Tunisia stood at 15.1 per cent, with significant gender disparities: 12.8 per cent among men and 20.4 per cent among women.<sup>9</sup> Youth unemployment remains a pressing issue, with a rate exceeding 38.5 per cent.<sup>10</sup> Tunisia's economic recovery post COVID-19 has been slow, exacerbated by rising public debt, limited access to international financing and structural challenges in the labour market.<sup>11</sup>

In response to economic and social challenges, the Tunisian National Development Plan (2023–2025)<sup>12</sup> was introduced, focusing on economic revitalization, reducing unemployment, enhancing social protection and strengthening gender equality policies. The plan emphasizes increasing women's labour force participation and

aims to promote inclusive governance and improve legal frameworks for gender-responsive economic policies, including the introduction of a universal child benefit to support caregivers; the expansion of pre-primary education to enhance early childhood development; and the reinforcement of social protection mechanisms to reduce economic disparities, particularly for women.<sup>13</sup>

The combination of high female educational attainment, persistent gender gaps in labour force participation and structural economic and social vulnerabilities meant that UN Women has focused on women's economic empowerment (WEE), the care economy and gender-responsive social protection, in close alignment with the National Development Plan.

<sup>8</sup> <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/TUN>

<sup>9</sup> International Labour Organization ILOSTAT Tunisia Country Profile [https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/country-profiles/?ref\\_area=TUN](https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/country-profiles/?ref_area=TUN)

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> The World Bank Tunisia Country Overview <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia/overview>

<sup>12</sup> Tunisia National Development Plan 2023-2025

<sup>13</sup> Tunisia government <http://www.tunisia.gov.tn>

At the same time, the persistence of violence against women and girls (including its links to economic insecurity, discriminatory social norms and crisis contexts), reinforces the importance of UN Women's strategic positioning on Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW), through support to comprehensive legislation and policies; quality and accessible multisectoral services; prevention and social norms change; and improved data and evidence. UN Women can also build on Tunisia's comparatively strong legal and policy framework on gender equality to promote implementation and accountability mechanisms; support innovative partnerships with civil society and the private sector; and strengthen data and evidence generation to inform policy choices. These contextual factors point to the importance of a Strategic Note that prioritizes areas where UN Women has a clear comparative advantage, and reinforces national ownership of gender equality commitments in a context of ongoing political and economic uncertainty.

## 1.2. GENDER EQUALITY IN TUNISIA

Shortly after obtaining its independence in the 1950s, Tunisia introduced a family law<sup>14</sup> that prohibited polygamy, set a legal age for women to marry and allowed women to initiate divorce proceedings. In 1999, Tunisia introduced its first gender quota,<sup>15</sup> requiring women to make up 20 per cent of candidates on political party lists. This quota was increased to 30 per cent in 2009. Following the Arab Spring, the country implemented further advancements in giving women a political voice. In 2011, a Gender Parity Law<sup>16</sup> was introduced, stipulating that candidate lists should have an equal number

of male and female candidates. In 2014, gender parity was added in the new Constitution and extended to local elections.<sup>17</sup> In 2017, after realizing that gender parity in candidate lists had not resulted in gender parity in the presidency of lists, Tunisia amended the 2014 law,<sup>18</sup> making it mandatory to have 50 per cent of women at the head of lists. However, in September 2022, all temporary measures supporting women's access to parliament were eliminated by Decree No. 55.<sup>19</sup> This shift resulted in a significant drop in female representation in the Assembly of People's Representatives, falling from 26.3 per cent<sup>20</sup> in 2019 to 16.2 per cent<sup>21</sup> after the January 2023 elections. As of February 2024, only 15.7 per cent of seats in parliament were held by women. In its 2023 Concluding Observations, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee expressed concern over the reversal of temporary special measures and urged Tunisia to reinstate legislative mechanisms, including parity provisions, to ensure women's equal representation in political life at all levels.<sup>22</sup>

Violence against women remains widespread, with nearly 47.2 per cent of ever-partnered women and girls aged 18 and older subject to any form of violence by a current or former partner, including physical, psychological and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime;<sup>23</sup> 1.5 per cent of women aged 20–24 were married or in a union before age 18;<sup>24</sup> and four of every 1,000 girls aged 15–19 gave birth in Tunisia in 2023. Tunisia has a National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women (2022–2026) that aims to strengthen institutional response mechanisms, increasing access to justice and implementing prevention programmes.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Wilson Center <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/three-waves-gender-reform-tunisia-reflections-eve-national-womens-day>

<sup>15</sup> Arab Center DC <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/womens-rights-and-state-feminism-in-the-arab-world/>

<sup>16</sup> SDG 6 <https://www.sdg16.plus/policies/tunisias-electoral-law-mandates-gender-parity-for-parliamentary-and-regional-elections/#policy-reference-3>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sdg16.plus/policies/tunisias-electoral-law-mandates-gender-parity-for-parliamentary-and-regional-elections/>

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> UN Women 2023, Women Political Participation in Tunisia. <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/wpp-report-tunisia.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> IPU Parline Global Data on National Parliaments. Tunisia. <https://data.ipu.org/parliament/TN/TN-LC01/>

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> UN OHCHR CEDAW Concluding Observations on the Seventh Periodic Report Tunisia March 2023. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cedawtunco7-concluding-observations-seventh-periodic-report>

<sup>23</sup> UN Women (2022) "Understanding Masculinities in Tunisia: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> UNFPA/Tunisian Government Stratégie Nationale de Lutte contre les VFF <https://nwm.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/National%20Strategy%20for%20combating%20all%20forms%20of%20Violence%20against%20Women%20throughout%20the%20different%20phases%20of%20life%20%28FR%29.pdf>

Tunisia ratified CEDAW on 20 September 1985. However, Tunisia initially entered reservations to several articles, particularly those seen as conflicting with Islamic law (Sharia) and national legislation, especially concerning Article 9 (Nationality rights), Article 15 (Equality before the law), Article 16 (Marriage and family relations) and Article 29(1) (Arbitration of disputes).<sup>26</sup> In 2011, following the revolution and democratic transition, Tunisia withdrew its reservations to CEDAW (except Article 29(1)). This was a landmark move, signalling a commitment to gender equality and human rights. Tunisia became the first Arab country to fully commit to CEDAW's core provisions (with one procedural exception). Despite these progressive steps, implementation has been inconsistent, facing legal, cultural and institutional barriers including the contradictions in Domestic Law such as the Personal Status Code which still contains gender-discriminatory elements (e.g. inheritance laws that favour men). While laws against domestic violence exist (notably the 2017 law), enforcement remains weak. In its 2023 Concluding Observations, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern that discriminatory provisions in the Personal Status Code remain in force and called on Tunisia to undertake comprehensive legal reform to ensure full alignment with the Convention, particularly in family and inheritance law.<sup>27</sup> In March 2025, Tunisia submitted its Beijing+30 national report to the global review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (CSW69).

The government also aligned its National Development Plan 2016–2020 with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN's Agenda 2030 and issued its second Voluntary National Review on SDG implementation in 2021.<sup>28</sup> The Voluntary National Review report highlights the country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda, with a five-year development plan set for 2021–2025, which highlights gender inequalities, poverty and youth unemployment as priorities.

The adoption of Tunisia's first National Action Plan 2018–2022 for implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security highlighted the country's commitment to support women's roles in peacebuilding and security.

The gap in adult literacy between men and women in Tunisia is 14.3 per cent.<sup>29</sup> In 2024, the labour force participation rate among females was 26.7 per cent and 65.4 per cent for males.<sup>30</sup> In 2023, vulnerable employment among women was 12.8 per cent and 21.3 per cent for men. Workers in vulnerable employment were the least likely to have formal work arrangements, social protection and safety nets to guard against economic shocks; therefore, are more likely to fall into poverty.<sup>31</sup> In 2021, 28.8 per cent of women and 45.1 per cent of men in Tunisia had a bank account. Women represented 26 per cent of those employed in senior and middle management in 2019. Sex-disaggregated data is not available for house ownership status, proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work and share of business owners.<sup>32</sup>

Various factors including regional instability and the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated inequalities, poverty and discrimination for women and girls. Primary challenges for women include: harmful social norms that remain embedded in institutions and legal frameworks; high unemployment, especially for young women; increasing incidence of both economic and political violence, including online violence; despite parity laws, low rates of women in government; and the rising tide of violent extremism.

This evolving gender equality landscape is central to the Country Office's contribution, as it reveals both the strength of Tunisia's normative commitments and persistent implementation gaps that the Country Office seeks to address. Building on Tunisia's ratification of CEDAW and the withdrawal of most reservations, UN Women continues to support the government and civil society in CEDAW reporting and follow-up; facilitate dialogue around the Committee's Concluding

<sup>26</sup> CEDAW was ratified by Tunisia in 1985; while reservations were lifted 2011, it was only formally registered in 2014 with notification by the government to the UN.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cedawctunco7-concluding-observations-seventh-periodic-report>

<sup>28</sup> SDG Knowledge Platform Tunisia. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=2647&menu=3170>

<sup>29</sup> The World Bank Gender Data Tunisia <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/tunisia>

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Observations; and promote greater alignment of national legislation and policies (including the Personal Status Code, Law 58 and the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women) with international standards. At the same time, setbacks in women's political representation; the continued high prevalence of violence against women and girls; and structural barriers to women's economic empowerment confirm the strategic importance of UN Women's work on EVAW, women's political participation and leadership, and gender-responsive governance and budgeting.

### 1.3. UN IN TUNISIA

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Tunisia has 26 members and operates under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021–2025,<sup>33</sup> signed in late 2020 between the Government of Tunisia and the UNCT. Twenty-one UNCT member entities are signatories to the UNSDCF 2021–2025<sup>34</sup> and 22 members are physically present in the country.<sup>35</sup> Two strategic priorities constitute the guiding threads of the UNSDCF:

1. Supporting the development of effective public policies that take risks into account.
2. Implementing actions aimed at reducing inequalities and enhancing Tunisia's resilience to crises and climate-related risks.

The UNSDCF explicitly identifies gender and equity as a core principle for implementation and follow-up. It acknowledges that:

*"Girls and women are the main victims of violence, unemployment, poverty, and school dropouts. Promoting and protecting their rights—particularly by improving their education, health, and vocational training—impacts their participation in economic, social and political life, and in wealth creation."*

The UNSDCF emphasizes strengthening the capacities of national institutions to deliver on gender-responsive policies, aligned with Tunisia's commitments to CEDAW, the Tunisian Constitution and the 2030 Agenda. The UNSDCF commits to integrating these considerations into four outcomes detailed in below:



#### **Outcome 1 – Economic Transformation:**

Tunisia benefits from a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy, generating decent work and reducing economic and territorial disparities.



#### **Outcome 2 – Rule of Law and Social Cohesion:**

Democratic governance, rule of law, human rights, gender equality, civic participation, and trust in public institutions are strengthened to foster social cohesion and reduce inequalities.



#### **Outcome 3 – Human Capital and Social Protection:**

People, especially the most vulnerable, enjoy equitable access to quality social services (health, education, social protection) in a rights-based, inclusive and resilient system.



#### **Outcome 4 – Environment and Climate Resilience:**

Natural resources are managed sustainably and Tunisia is more resilient to climate change, contributing to the transition to a green and inclusive economy.

<sup>33</sup> UN Tunisie/ République Tunisienne Plan Cadre des Nations Unies pour l'Aide au Développement 2021-25 <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Tunisia-UNSDCF-2021-2025.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> IFC, IMF, UNCDF, UNDSS and World Bank are not signatories to the UNSDCF

<sup>35</sup> IFAD, ITC, UNECA, UN ESCWA do not have a country presence

## 1.4. UN WOMEN IN TUNISIA

UN Women has been active in Tunisia since 2009 (previously as UNIFEM) and formally joined the UNCT in 2019. Prior to 2019, UN Women's engagement in Tunisia was managed under the Morocco Multi-Country Office. In 2019, UN Women reconfigured its presence, transitioning Tunisia into a dedicated Cluster Office jointly covering Tunisia and Libya. This restructuring coincided with Tunisia's full integration into the UNCT and reflected the need to respond to Libya's protracted conflict while leveraging Tunisia as a stable coordination hub.

Since 2019, UN Women has operated as the Tunisia–Libya Cluster Office, with offices in Tunis and Tripoli. Although UN Women operates through a Tunisia–Libya Cluster Office, the two countries have developed **separate Strategic Notes** to ensure that strategic priorities and interventions remain responsive to the distinct political, institutional and operational contexts of each country.

The Tunisia Country Office operates within the framework of UN Women's triple mandate (normative support, UN system coordination and operational programming) and contributes to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in close alignment with the UNSDCF and UN Women's global Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

Leveraging its coordination mandate on gender equality within the UNCT, UN Women established two coordination groups on gender – the Gender Coordination Group and the UN Gender Theme Group – with UNFPA. The Gender Theme Group, co-led by UN Women, supports Results Groups to effectively integrate gender considerations across the UNCT. Therefore, UN Women is responsible for providing technical support for the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard and ensuring gender mainstreaming of the Common Country Analysis, design of the UNSDCF and support to the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan. UN Women has partnered with other UN agencies such as UNDP, FAO, WHO, IOM and IFAD for joint programming with a strong gender dimension.

UN Women engages in multisectoral partnerships with national and local institutions, including the Ministry of Women, Family and the Elderly, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy and Planning, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of High Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Social Affairs and regional development agencies, to ensure policy coherence and grassroots implementation. The National Observatory on Violence Against Women, the National Institute of Statistics and the National School of Administration are also key partners. At the local level, the Country Office engaged women's cooperatives, microfinance institutions and municipal councils to tailor interventions to community-specific needs. It also works closely with civil society organizations (CSOs), women's rights networks, the media and academia.

### Strategic Note 2022–2025 overview

The Country Office's current Strategic Note Cycle (2022–2025) is structured around three thematic areas for its strategic programming.

- **Outcome 1: Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE):** *In 2025, institutions, conducting effective and risk-sensitive public policies in partnership with economic and social actors, put the country's resources at the service of inclusive, sustainable, resilient socioeconomic development that generates decent jobs, particularly for the most vulnerable. (UNSDCF Outcome 1)*
- **Outcome 2: Inclusive Governance and Women's Political Participation (WPP):** *By 2025, health, education and social protection systems are resilient and ensure equitable access and quality services, especially for the most vulnerable, and effective engagement of the population. (UNSDCF Outcome 3)*
- **Outcome 3: Women, Peace and Security (WPS):** *In 2025, accountable institutions supported by a harmonized legislative framework and committed populations guarantee the strengthening of the rule of law, the protection of human rights and social cohesion and justice, especially for the most vulnerable, in accordance with international conventions and standards and in complementarity and interdependence with inclusive and sustainable development efforts. (UNSDCF Outcome 2)*

**Cross-thematic contributions** – for amplified impact on WEE, WPP and WPS

- **Data and statistics:** Institutional development of gender-disaggregated data and sex-disaggregated statistics to ensure evidence-informed policy processes. In particular, technical support to build sustainable capacity of national institutions to monitor and report on global norms and standards on EVAWG as well as interventions designed to promote financing for gender equality.
- **Social norms:** Supporting cross-thematic contributions in line with national priorities to advance norms and standards. UN Women Tunisia is a partner country in the regional programme “Dare To Care” aimed at transforming patriarchal masculinities and social norms and advancing women’s economic empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa by applying cutting-edge theories that have emerged from documented experiences and lessons learned from UN Women’s global and regional masculinities programming – notably the MWGE programme, feminist practices and behavioural sciences.

## Tunisia Strategic Note alignment with the UNSDCF

UN Women Tunisia contributes to three of the four UNSDCF strategic priorities for the country (See Table 1). The Country Office contributes to Outcome 1 (Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Transformation) by advancing inclusive employment policies, women’s entrepreneurship, and access to economic resources. Under Outcome 2 (Rule of Law and Social Cohesion), it supports the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Under Outcome 3 (Human Capital and Social Protection), it promotes gender-responsive social policies to ensure equitable access to social protection services, particularly for women and girls in vulnerable situations. The Office also contributes to inclusive governance and women’s political participation.

**TABLE 1.**

The Strategic Note impact and outcomes and their alignment with the UNSDCF

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><b>Outcome 7.1:</b> In 2025, institutions, conducting effective and risk-sensitive public policies in partnership with economic and social actors, put the country’s resources at the service of inclusive, sustainable, resilient socioeconomic development that generates decent jobs, particularly for the most vulnerable.</p>                                                                                                                | <p>UNSDCF Outcome 1</p> |
| <p><b>IMPACT 7</b><br/>Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy.</p>                                                                                                                                                            | <p><b>Outcome 7.2:</b> By 2025, health, education and social protection systems are resilient and ensure equitable access and quality services, especially for the most vulnerable, and effective engagement of the population</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>UNSDCF Outcome 3</p> |
|  <p><b>IMPACT 8</b><br/>Women fully and equally participate in leadership and decision-making, and women and girls benefit from gender-responsive governance.</p> | <p><b>Outcome 8.1:</b> In 2025, accountable institutions supported by a harmonized legislative framework and committed populations guarantee the strengthening of the rule of law, the protection of human rights and social cohesion and justice, especially for the most vulnerable, in accordance with international conventions and standards and in complementarity and interdependence with inclusive and sustainable development efforts.</p> | <p>UNSDCF Outcome 2</p> |

## Theory of change

The logic model of the Strategic Note is based on the following theory of change that revolves around critical development pathways to social and institutional change:

- **If**, women can freely hold decision-making, law making and policy oversight roles,
- **If**, women are provided equal access to economic opportunities and financial autonomy,
- **If**, women's participation and leadership role is institutionalized in peace, security and humanitarian recovery processes,
- **If**, women and girls of Tunisia are able to fully enjoy their human rights including their legitimate acceptance as equal citizens by social forces,
- **If** the relevant duty bearers (government institutions) design, develop and implement gender-responsive laws and policies in transparent, inclusive and accountable manner emphasizing the needs of women rights holders as equal citizens,
- **Then**, women will become politically, socially and economically more empowered, contributing to the national economy, politics and governance including being able to influence peace building, recovery and response efforts on a sustainable and inclusive basis,
- **Because** women from all socioeconomic backgrounds will be empowered by a supportive government and society, with enhanced social, political and economic opportunities including gender-responsive peace and security arrangements and institutions.

The evaluation team reviewed and reconstructed the theory of change to reflect the intervention logic, key risks and assumptions as presented in Figure 2 below.

## Budget and human resources

The Country Office's total budget during the Strategic Note period was US\$ 10.4 million. In terms of funding sources, 25 per cent came from core funding, 69 per cent from non-core, 2 per cent from extra budgetary resources and 4 per cent from institutional budget. In terms of resource mobilization, there was a consistent shortfall in the resources mobilized against the targeted budget. The Multi-Donor Trust Fund, Government of Finland and Agence Française de Développement were the top three donors during the current Strategic Note period (see Figure 3). Through the Tunisia–Libya Cluster Office, UN Women utilizes shared management, operations and communications functions.

**FIGURE 2.**

Reconstructed theory of change

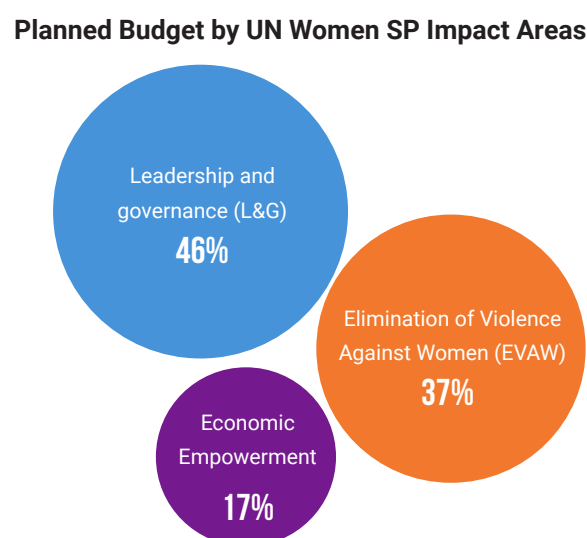
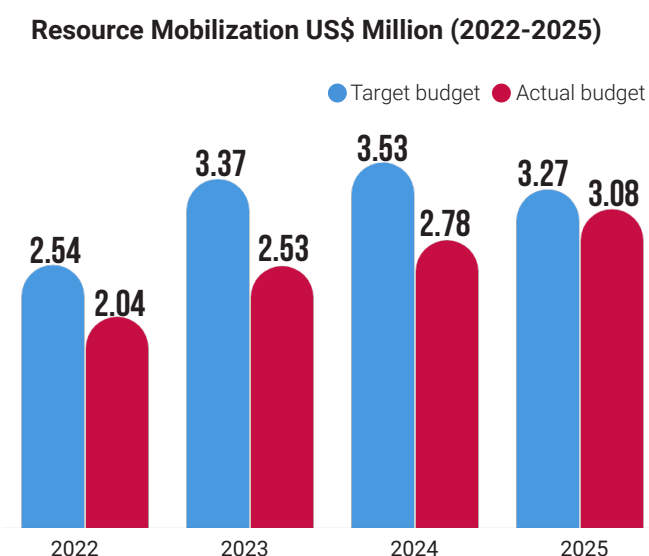
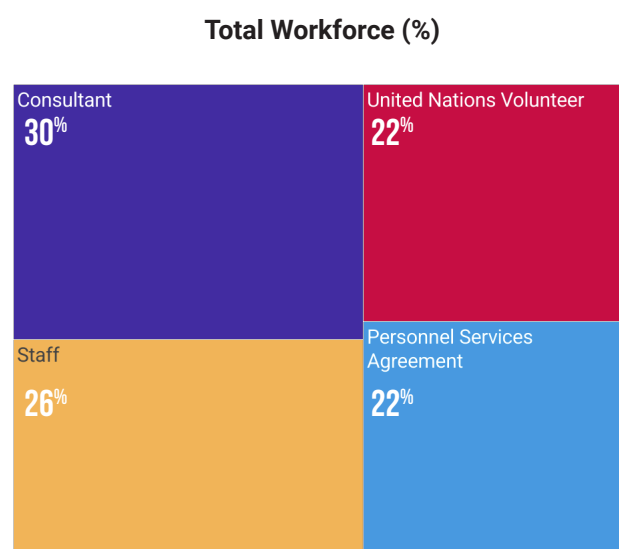
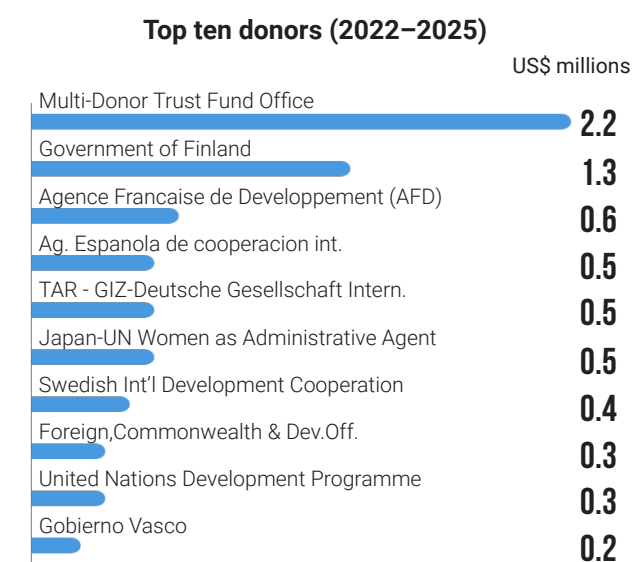
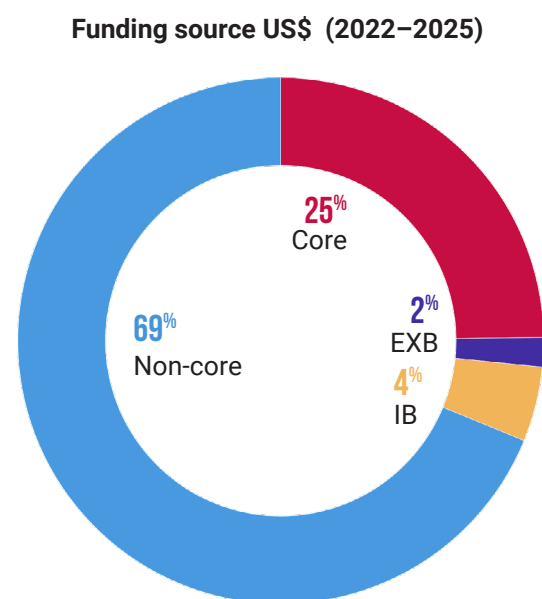
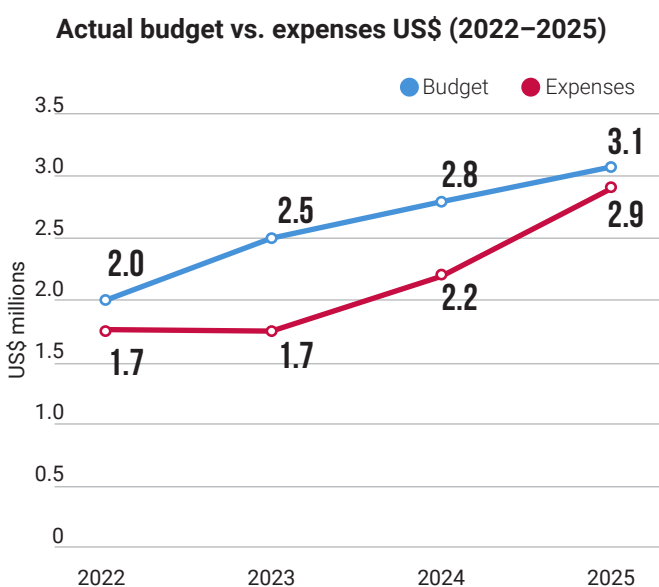
| INPUTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | ASSUMPTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | OUTPUTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | ASSUMPTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | STRATEGIC OUTCOMES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | IMPACT                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| NORMATIVE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Governance and Participation in public life |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Policy and technical input to strengthen data and evidence to augment evidence informed policies and programming on GEWE.</li><li>→ Technical support to national statistical bureaus/ women's machinery on national data collection</li><li>→ CO facilitate a shared coordination approach to monitoring SDGs, BPfA and Cairo Declaration.</li><li>→ CO support UNCTs to improve performance and accountability on Gender equality commitments and UNDIS DI.</li></ul>                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ National statistical bureaus/ women's machinery demonstrates greater use of gender statistics, analysis and policy relevant research.</li><li>→ UN Women's engagement serve as a catalyst for accountability and political will, encouraging governments to implement gender-responsive reforms</li><li>→ Increased capacity of COs support to governments on gender data use will drive implementation of BPfA, Cairo Declaration and SDGs.</li><li>→ COs committed to RO priorities that align to their own.</li><li>→ ROAS has strong and relevant partnerships.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Gender-responsive governance frameworks are developed, reviewed, or strengthened leading to legal reforms to advance gender equality and women's empowerment</li><li>→ Governments advance availability of data, and adopt inclusive practices to collect data and monitor the implementation of the Cairo Declaration, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the SDGs.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Government is willing to implement, and institutions have the capacity to integrate gender-responsive policies.</li><li>→ Political will exists for implementation of GEWE laws</li><li>→ Closing the Knowledge and data gap will improve the implementation of agreed norms and standards on GEWE with stringer evidence and coherence.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Increased accountability for implementation of BPfA, SDGs, Cairo declaration</li><li>→ The CO accelerate the implementation of global and regional gender norms and standards with quality comparable data on the implementation of BPfA, SDGs and the Cairo Declaration for Arab Women.</li></ul> |                                             |
| COORDINATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ The CO strengthens gender mainstreaming and UNDIS through technical support and coordination across the UN system (UNCT-SWAP, Gender Merker, CCA/UNSDCF, UNDIS)</li><li>→ The CO strengthens capacity and partnership networks across CSO and youth actors.</li><li>→ The CO strengthens alliances across stakeholders' academics, development actors and financial institutions to advance GEWE commitments, joint working and common approaches.</li></ul>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Advancing inter agency coordination across strategic priorities will drive greater focus on gender analysis, coherence and joint working across agencies</li><li>→ UN Coordination will drive common results in operational and normative areas</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ UN System operates more coherently and systematically towards common results on GEWE</li><li>→ Improvements in the UNCT performance on the UNCT</li><li>→ Accountability Framework on DI Improved</li><li>→ Cooperation across diverse stakeholders with common approach to GEWE</li></ul>                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Targeted organizations have the capacity to apply technical support</li><li>→ UNCT coordination leads to prioritization of UNDIS and gender mainstreaming efforts</li><li>→ Increased support to network activities leads to action on GEWE commitments</li></ul>                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ The UN system coherently and systematically contributes to progress on GEWE</li><li>→ The CO harness broad coalition of actors to contribute to progress on GEWE</li></ul>                                                                                                                         | Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)          |
| OPERATIONAL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Women Peace and Security (WPS)              |
| Inclusive Governance and Women's Participation in Public Life                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Collaborate with political parties, CSOs and media to ensure coherent policy push to promote gender parity in decision making.</li><li>→ Support strengthening inclusive political and electoral processes by focusing on candidate nomination and voter registration, national ID and codes of conduct etc.</li><li>→ Policy advocacy based on gender statistics.</li><li>→ The capacity development support towards specific elements of technical assistance to address violence against women in politics.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Technical assistance provided by UNWomen is valued</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ COs are able to advance WPP programmes for a measurable increase of women in national parliaments, cabinets and local governments</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Political support for women-equal political participation is maintained by both national governments and international partners.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Increased representation of women (nominated and elected) candidates in elected and governance bodies; namely the parliament, the cabinet and the local municipalities - with the aim of reaching 30% in each constituency.</li></ul>                                                              |                                             |

| INPUTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | ASSUMPTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | OUTPUTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | ASSUMPTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | STRATEGIC OUTCOMES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | IMPACT                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Governance and Participation in public life</b><br><br><b>Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)</b><br><br><b>Women Peace and Security (WPS)</b> |
| → CO advancing women's employment by addressing structural barriers through a) evidence-based policy reforms, working closely with Tunisian authorities, b) addressing economic violence and stereotypes, and c) employment of women (rural and urban areas with focus on the most vulnerable including safe transportation, quality care for children and safe workplaces. Gender responsive budgeting will be strengthened.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | → Technical assistance provided by UN Women is valued and aligned with national needs to strengthen their gender responsive provision.<br><br>→ Technical assistance provided through LEAP programming. contributes to resilience of targeted communities. | → More women access equitable employment opportunities and services created, increasing the rate of women's participation in the workforce in Tunisia, including the most marginalized (rural women, unemployed yet educated youth, migrants and refugees and women with disabilities. | → Long-term financial and political support for gender-equal employment programmes is maintained by both national governments and international partners.<br><br>→ Technical assistance provided through LEAP programming. contributes to resilience of targeted communities. | → Women's Increased access to equitable employment opportunities and services, decent work and economic autonomy in Tunisia, including the most marginalized.<br><br>→ Increased number of Women and girls affected by crises and displacement who have improved access to income security, economic autonomy and multi-sectoral comprehensive essential services for preventing and responding to GBV |                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Women Peace and Security (WPS)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |
| → The CO supports strengthening institutional capacities for effective monitoring of the 2nd generation of NAP 1325 processes.<br>→ institutional development and expanded capacity with relevant national counterparts and civil society partners to carry forward an inclusive peacebuilding agenda in Tunisia.<br>→ Support national reform efforts to address roots of vulnerability including de-radicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts related to victims, survivors and women as perpetrators of violence.<br>→ Promotion of women's participation and leadership role in peace and security including fight against stereotypes and the change of social norms for a better positioning of women and girls in this sector. | → Technical assistance to women and youth groups are considered relevant by target organizations.<br><br>→ A strong women's rights movement will be a driver to policy change on WPS and peacebuilding responses                                           | → Concerned stakeholders are supported in developing and executing WPS programmes.<br><br>→ Capacities of policymakers, research partners, and inter-governmental bodies are strengthened to advance WPS commitments.<br><br>→                                                         | → The targeted organizations and women are able to apply technical skills to influence the political and decision-making process                                                                                                                                              | → Strengthened monitoring framework for meaningful implementation process including engagement of key stakeholders for effective advocacy and participation.<br><br>→ % of women mediators increased and advocacy capacities of women's CSOs/ peacebuilders advanced                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                  |

| INPUTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | ASSUMPTIONS                                            |  | OUTPUTS                                                                                            |  | ASSUMPTIONS                                                      |  | STRATEGIC OUTCOMES                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | IMPACT                                      |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------------|--|
| CROSS CUTTING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | Governance and Participation in public life |  |
| Data and statistics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| → Technical support to build sustainable capacity of the national institutions to monitor and report on global norms and standards on ending violence against women and girls including interventions designed to promote financing for gender equality.   |  | → Technical assistance provided by UN Women is valued. |  | → Improved institutional capacity and systems on gender data and statistics                        |  | → Partners recognize and support gender data and statistics work |  | → Sustainable capacity of the national institutions to monitor and report on global norms and standards on ending violence against women and girls including interventions designed to promote financing for gender equality. |  |                                             |  |
| Social Norms                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)          |  |
| → Empirical evidence produced under IMAGES to be used to inform policy reforms to bring about transformative changes in attitudes and behaviours of both rights holders and duty bearers                                                                   |  | → Technical assistance provided by UN Women is valued  |  | → Improved attitudes and behaviours on gender social norms of both rights holders and duty bearers |  | → Partners recognize and support the work                        |  | → Enabling policy and legal environment to to address structural causes of discriminatory social norms                                                                                                                        |  | Women Peace and Security (WPS)              |  |
| → Campaigns like 'He4She' and 'Because I am a Man' by engaging academia and relevant partners from civil society.                                                                                                                                          |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  | → Positive gender social norms of both rights holders and duty bearers                                                                                                                                                        |  |                                             |  |
| → Law and policy reforms- Engagements with the national institutions to address structural causes of discriminatory social norms which are often reinforced by social institutions and gender discriminatory laws and policies.                            |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| RISKS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| 1. Backlash on UN and threats to women's rights defenders, CSOs and UN women personnel.                                                                                                                                                                    |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| 2. Increased/new political instability or uncertainty within the region particularly in areas already affected by conflict / displacements.                                                                                                                |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| 3. Potential limited political will due to the Government/Ministries/political parties' reluctance to prioritize women's rights (particularly with regards to improving women and young women's participation in political processes and decision-making). |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| 4. Deeply rooted socio-cultural norms that prevent women's participation in the economic and political sphere.                                                                                                                                             |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| 5. Limited donor appetite and ability to provide resources for UN Women's programmes as well as external competition for resources.                                                                                                                        |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| 6. Turnover of RO personnel.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |
| 7. Limited access to private sector actors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |                                                        |  |                                                                                                    |  |                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                             |  |

**FIGURE 3.**

Portfolio analysis UN Women Tunisia 2022–2025



Data source: UN Women Quantum (financial data), UN Women Donor Agreement Management System and UN Women Dashboard for Workforce Data <sup>36</sup>

Prepared by the evaluation team.

<sup>36</sup> Please note that the workforce data was extracted in March 2026, so it corresponds to the period from January 2022 to March 2026 as the system provides only real-time data and not backdated data.

# 2. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

## 2.1. EVALUATION PURPOSE

This CPE was conducted by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) in close collaboration with the UN Women Tunisia Country Office as a primarily formative (forward-looking) evaluation to support the Country Office and national stakeholders' strategic learning and decision-making for the next Strategic Note. The evaluation also had a secondary summative (retrospective) perspective to support enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and learning from experience.

## 2.2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The following evaluation objectives were developed in consultation with the Country Office at the outset of the evaluation process:

1. Assess the relevance of UN Women's programmatic interventions at national level and their alignment with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
2. Assess the effectiveness, organizational efficiency and coherence of Country Office programming in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the Strategic Note.
3. Enable the UN Women Country Office to improve its strategic positioning to better support the achievement of sustained gender equality and women's empowerment goals.
4. Analyse how a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the design and implementation of the Strategic Note.

5. Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovation that can be scaled up and replicated to support gender equality and human rights.
6. Provide insights into the extent to which UN Women has realized synergies from its integrated mandate (normative, UN system coordination and operational).

## 2.3. EVALUATION SCOPE

The CPE included all initiatives undertaken by the Tunisia Country Office under its current Strategic Note 2022–2025, including operational work, support to normative policy and UN system coordination. Programme work was considered in relation to the thematic areas established by the UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025.<sup>37</sup>

However, as UN Women operates through the Tunisia–Libya Cluster Office with shared management, operations and communications functions, the evaluation also assessed how this cluster arrangement has influenced functionality and the Country Office's delivery of results during the 2022–25 Strategic Note period.

The geographical scope of the evaluation was Tunisia. Most of the interviews were conducted either in-person or virtually with stakeholders in Tunis, the capital, where normative, coordination and programmatic activities were implemented. The evaluation team also conducted consultations with target groups and UN Women implementing partners in Kairouan city.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/un-women-strategic-plan-2022-2025>

## 2.4. INTENDED USERS AND USES OF THE EVALUATION

The primary intended users of this evaluation are UN Women management and Country Office personnel; the UN Women Executive Board, UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States, UN Women headquarters and other Regional and Country Offices outside the Arab States region; target groups, their households and community members, programme and project partners; national and local governments in Tunisia; civil society representatives; the donor community and other development partners; and the UNCT.

Intended uses of the evaluation include learning and improved decision-making to support development of the next Country Office Strategic Note; accountability for the development effectiveness of UN Women's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment; and capacity development and mobilization of national stakeholders to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

## 2.5. EVALUATION DESIGN

The evaluation methodology applied the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency as well as a criterion of gender equality and human rights. The evaluation followed the principles of gender-responsive evaluations and had a utilization-focused lens to generate forward-looking and actionable recommendations ensuring the information needs of the Country Office and its stakeholders were met.

The evaluation employed a non-experimental, theory-based design, applied a feminist approach and used gender-analytical frameworks to examine issues of power and to understand and evaluate whether and how UN Women has contributed or led gender-transformative changes in Tunisia. The evaluation also applied the Gender at Work Framework<sup>38</sup> to better understand the types of changes UN Women contributes to using the framework's four, interlinked domains of change

needed to make sustainable progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women: individual change, formal change, systemic change and informal change.

The evaluation adhered to United Nations Evaluation Group guidance on evaluations, with gender-responsive and human rights approaches integrated into the scope and conduct of the evaluation.<sup>39</sup> A Data Management Plan guided the evaluation team on how data was managed and stored, and the ethical protocols adopted during data collection.

A mixed-methods approach utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data was used to triangulate and verify data, increasing the internal reliability and consistency of findings. The evaluation used a participatory approach to ensure the perspective and voices of all stakeholders were considered, paying specific attention to the inclusion of women, individuals and groups who are vulnerable and/or discriminated against.

Specifically, the evaluation:

- Reviewed approximately 45 documents. A desk review of key documents is listed in Annex 2. In addition to the analysis undertaken during the inception stage, the evaluation team reviewed relevant strategic documents, including key documents related to the Strategic Note 2022–2025, project documents, monitoring reports and evaluations of UN Women Tunisia programmes, academic literature, relevant knowledge products and non-governmental organization/third-party reports.
- Conducted a portfolio analysis of the UN Women Strategic Note and project documents, synthesizing secondary results data from the Country Office's Development Results Framework and the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework. Data was drawn from the UN Women Results Management System and UN Women's financial analysis of the budget, expenditure and trends in the type of expenditure from UN Women financial records.
- Organized an all-personnel inception workshop.

<sup>38</sup> <https://genderatwork.org/resources/gender-at-work-framework/>

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.unevaluation.org/uneg\\_publications/integrating-human-rights-and-gender-equality-evaluations](https://www.unevaluation.org/uneg_publications/integrating-human-rights-and-gender-equality-evaluations)

- Undertook a total of 82 consultations with CSOs, government partners, donors, target groups, UNCT, external consultants, and UN Women Country/Regional Office and headquarters personnel (69 females, 13 males). This included two focus group discussions with a total of 21 target women.
- One survey was conducted with Country Office personnel, which had an 84.2 per cent response rate (16 of 19).
- Conducted a meta synthesis of evaluations to synthesize evidence and lessons related to results under the Development Results Framework to aggregate and analyse key insights and recommendations from previous country, regional and global evaluations conducted since 2021.

The inception phase included an evaluability assessment; a participatory workshop with Country Office personnel to discuss elements of the evaluation approach; the review and reconstruction of the Strategic Note theory of change; and a stakeholder mapping exercise. The results of these exercises were used to design evaluation questions and support analysis. The evaluation matrix can be found in Annex 6.

Artificial intelligence tools (Microsoft Copilot) were used selectively to support language refinement and improve clarity in the drafting of this report.

#### SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION

### MIXED METHODS



#### data collection –

Quantitative and qualitative data collected and triangulated

### DESK REVIEW



#### documents reviewed –

project documents, evaluations, academic literature, relevant knowledge products and third-party reports.

82



#### consultations –

internal and external (69 females, 13 males) and 2 focus groups discussions with a total of 21 target women.

### META SYNTHESIS



#### of evaluations

synthesize evidence and lessons related to results under the Development Results Framework

1



#### online survey –

with Country Office personnel, with 84.2% response rate (16 of 19)

### INCEPTION WORKSHOP



Organized an all-personnel inception workshop

Source: Compiled by the evaluation team

## 2.6. EVALUATION LIMITATIONS AND RISK-MITIGATION STRATEGIES

**Sociopolitical and institutional limitations:** Tunisia's evolving institutional and policy environment could have impacted stakeholder availability and the reliability of certain data sources. To mitigate these risks, the evaluation team adopted a flexible and adaptive approach, including virtual data collection where necessary. The team coordinated closely with UN Women Tunisia to facilitate stakeholder engagement and ensure adherence to ethical principles, including informed consent and confidentiality. The evaluation also triangulated evidence through primary data from UN Women personnel and a thorough review of secondary sources, including previous evaluations, strategic documents and relevant literature.

**Context sensitivity:** The evaluators ensured that participation in the evaluation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained and that confidentiality and anonymity were protected. The evaluators ensured they were relevant and respectful to the context. Evaluators guarded against predictable harmful effects and regularly reviewed how the evaluation was adhering to "do no harm" principles. The well-being and safety of participants was prioritized, especially when dealing with sensitive topics related to gender-based violence and conflict-related issues.

**Language and cultural barriers:** Language and cultural differences with national stakeholders were mitigated by the national consultant leading those consultations.

## 2.7. EVALUATION GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The evaluation team comprised the Regional Evaluation Specialist for the Arab States, who is a member of UN Women IES and acted as the team lead for this evaluation process; an international independent evaluator; and a national independent evaluator. The Country Office provided administrative, technical and logistic support for this exercise.

An Evaluation Reference Group was established to enhance the evaluation's participatory approach; national ownership of the process; and for validation purposes. It included a representative sample of key stakeholders from the UN Women Tunisia Country Office, Arab States Regional Office and the UNCT.

The evaluation report was validated by the Evaluation Reference Group. The draft report was shared with key management stakeholders for validation, and their feedback and comments were integrated into the report.

IEAIS provided quality assurance support to the process. The IEAIS Director, IES Chief and IAS Chief provided oversight and methodological guidance.

# 3

## FINDINGS

### 3.1. RELEVANCE

Is UN Women's thematic focus and strategy for implementation the most relevant and coherent for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Tunisia considering its added value vis-à-vis other actors?

#### FINDING 1.

**The Country Office's 2022–2025 Strategic Note is responsive to national, international and UN priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment. In the context of pushback against women's rights and shrinking civic space, the Country Office's Strategic Note is regarded as essential, and its thematic focus remains relevant. However, consolidation of the EVAW portfolio is key to sustaining relevance in a country where policy frameworks are comparatively strong, but underlying behaviours and barriers remain a challenge. Scaling up the WEE portfolio and revisiting the scope and focus of the Country Office's work under the WPS pillar remains key to maintaining relevance in the changing context.**

The Tunisia Country Office's Strategic Note 2022–2025 was responsive to national, regional, international and UN priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment. It was aligned with key international instruments such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs (especially SDG 5); regional frameworks such as the African Union's Agenda 2063;<sup>40</sup> and national commitments such as Tunisia Vision 2035.<sup>41</sup> It also supported the Tunisia National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women<sup>42</sup> and the National Action Plan on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women.

The Strategic Note was closely aligned with the Tunisia UNSDCF 2021–2025, contributing to three key outcomes. Under Outcome 1 on inclusive and sustainable economic transformation, it advanced women's economic empowerment by supporting inclusive employment policies, women's entrepreneurship, and improved access to economic resources, particularly for vulnerable groups. Under Outcome 2 on rule of law and social cohesion, it supported the Women, Peace and Security agenda, strengthening institutional accountability, protection of women's rights, and social

cohesion in line with international standards. In relation to Outcome 3 on human capital and social protection, it promoted inclusive governance and women's political participation, while also contributing to more resilient and equitable systems that enhance access to essential services.

The UN Resident Coordinator's Office confirmed the relevance of the Strategic Note for UN priorities in the country, indicating that the Strategic Note addresses the structural causes of gender inequalities, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of the economic and political crises in Tunisia.

The evaluation survey of UN Women personnel corroborates this alignment: half of the respondents (8 of 16 respondents) indicated that the Strategic Note was "relevant and aligned to some extent", and the remaining half as "relevant and aligned to a large extent"<sup>43</sup> (see Annex 5). The stakeholders consulted also acknowledged that the Strategic Note was developed in a participatory and inclusive manner. Several key informants confirmed that the consultations with national partners, including with ministries, public institutions, civil society and the

<sup>40</sup> African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Economy and Planning Guidance Document Tunisia 2035 <https://ecastats.uneca.org/ecastats.api/api/documents/329/download>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. <https://nwm.unescwa.org/resources/323>

<sup>43</sup> See response to Q2 in the survey in Annex 5.

media ensured the framing and approaches reflected Tunisia's gender equality priorities and diverse stakeholder perspectives.

From a thematic perspective, stakeholders indicated that the WEE portfolio was highly relevant, responding to national data showing persistent inequality of access to economic opportunities. Work with rural women, focus on job creation, shifting gender norms and increasing men's engagement in care roles were considered highly relevant and well-aligned with national institutional priorities. In the same vein, stakeholders highlighted that GRB, ERAW and support for women in leadership positions were timely and aligned with both national strategies and international frameworks.

Stakeholders also indicated that the situation in Tunisia in terms of gender equality had not unfolded as originally planned. This is largely due to the evolving national context, changes in laws or practices and shrinking civil society space which have restricted the Country Office's scope of work. For instance, the public and political space for advancing gender equality has been shrinking, with growing pushback against use of the term "gender." Stakeholders indicated that this has reportedly limited the Country Office's ability to fully implement work in areas such as WPP and in advancing partnerships with feminist organizations. Despite this, the main thematic areas and outcomes within the Strategic Note remain highly relevant and continue to provide the framework for advancing the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda in Tunisia.

Key informants across various profiles confirmed that the Country Office's portfolio demonstrated agile adaptation to Tunisia's evolving context. In terms of WEE, the Strategic Note initially focused on post-COVID recovery by integrating access to services and health-related support. As that model became less relevant over time, the Country Office pivoted towards a more sustainable approach, reprogramming efforts to emphasize knowledge and skills development for entrepreneurship and business creation. This shift was implemented in collaboration with national institutions, other UN agencies and private-sector partners. In parallel, when a major

change in the electoral law in 2022 removed the explicit gender-parity requirement, affecting UN Women's engagement on WPP, the Country Office adapted its strategy by continuing to promote women's leadership in the public sphere beyond the electoral cycle.

Key informants suggested that the Country Office revisit the scope and focus of its work under the WPS pillar, given the need to concentrate on a set of priority areas and the constraints posed by limited donor engagement and available resources.

Overall, UN Women's mandate in Tunisia was widely recognized as essential, addressing a broad spectrum of issues to advance gender equality. However, some key informants perceived the Strategic Note as too narrowly focused on traditional pillars (such as WPP, ERAW and WEE) and overly reliant on training-centric modalities. This approach was seen as limiting the Country Office's ability to engage in more transformative and technically grounded work in emerging domains, including the green and blue economy, climate change and digitalization. There was limited uptake of more practice-oriented delivery models, such as mentorship, master classes and operational missions, which reportedly could have enhanced the relevance and impact of programming.

The personnel surveyed agreed on key priorities for the next Strategic Note,<sup>44</sup> indicating that consolidation of the gender-based violence portfolio is key to sustaining relevance in the country. Despite Tunisia having excellent policy and legal frameworks, implementation remains a challenge. Stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen the multisectoral response, focusing on prevention efforts and ensuring a survivor-centred response model with particular attention to cyber-violence and the development of robust data systems.

There was strong consensus on the importance of scaling up WEE through pathways to decent work, improved access to finance and enhanced skills development, with deeper engagement from the private sector. Respondents to the survey emphasized the need to position women within emerging sectors such as the

<sup>44</sup> See response to Q5 in the survey in Annex 5

green and digital economies, while also addressing the care economy and promoting women's participation in STEM fields.

Advancing gender-responsive governance was highlighted as a critical area, encompassing gender-responsive planning, budgeting, legal and policy implementation, and support for women's leadership. These efforts should deliberately target young women, rural women and women with disabilities, while also safeguarding civic space and supporting women human rights defenders.

Support from the Regional Office for development and implementation of the Strategic Note was assessed as moderate overall among Country Office personnel: 88 per cent answered medium (14 of 16 respondents), and 13 per cent answered to a large degree (2 of 16 respondents). According to the survey response (qualitative), the Regional Office provided technical guidance and quality assurance during planning stages, but more sustained, hands-on support during implementation – especially adaptive management in response to contextual shifts – could have enhanced effectiveness. From

the explanations received, it was evident that there is room for deeper collaboration with the Regional Office, particularly in terms of programmatic support and resource mobilization, knowledge-sharing and capacity development, regional advocacy and the integration of cross-cutting priorities,<sup>45</sup> inclusion and intersectional approaches.<sup>46</sup>

Interaction with headquarters was perceived less positively: 31 per cent of survey respondents indicated the support they received from headquarters was “not so good” (5 of 16 respondents); while 63 per cent rated it as medium (10 of 16 respondents); and only 6 per cent indicating it was positive “to a large degree” (1 of 16 respondents). Interaction was typically limited to specific thematic areas or during global reporting processes. While headquarters provided valuable tools and strategic frameworks, the level of direct support for country-specific implementation was moderate, emphasizing the need to strengthen two-way communication and context-specific guidance to improve impact.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> See response to Q5 in the survey in Annex 5

<sup>46</sup> See response to Q3 in the survey in Annex 5

<sup>47</sup> See response to Q4 in the survey in Annex 5

### 3.2. COORDINATION

To what extent has the Country Office leveraged its UN system coordination mandate to address gender equality and the empowerment of women priorities?

#### FINDING 2.

**The Country Office has effectively and consistently leveraged its UN system coordination mandate. It has chaired/co-chaired the UN Gender Theme Group and convened the multi-partner Gender Coordination Group, using these platforms to bring together UNCT stakeholders and development partners around shared gender equality and empowerment of women priorities, even in a context that has become less conducive to overt gender advocacy. At the same time, recurring coordination overlaps and funding competition across UN agencies remains a challenge.**

The Country Office sustained its visible leadership of the UN Gender Theme Group – established in 2021 – and co-convened the broader Gender Coordination Group with technical and financial partners. There have been regular Gender Theme Group meetings (three meetings in 2021, four in 2022, two each in 2023–2024) and activities, with a validated terms of reference and workplan in 2024 and a biannual workplan elaborated for 2025–2026. The stakeholders consulted acknowledged that the external assessment of the Gender Coordination Group in 2022<sup>48</sup> offered a concrete road map to deepen its effectiveness. The assessment recommended shifting towards a more operational model with a clear action plan and systematic follow-up; maintaining contact between meetings via a virtual sharing platform; avoiding sub-groups given the group's size; aligning discussions more explicitly with national policies; and ensuring the Gender Theme Group speaks to the Gender Coordination Group “with one voice” to reinforce UN system coherence on gender issues. The evaluation observed that these lessons had informed adjustments in Gender Theme Group/Gender Coordination Group practice and, during the evaluation consultations, there was a broad acknowledgement that UN Women's ability to bring together agency heads and focal points had kept gender priorities on the UNCT agenda despite the changing national context. The current Country Representative's leadership was

highlighted as providing UN Women with the necessary impetus, accelerating progress and inspiring both the UN Women team and broader UNCT.

UN Women led and coordinated efforts to mainstream gender equality across the UNSDCF in Tunisia, ensuring that gender is integrated as a cross-cutting priority in all outcome areas. The Country Office provided technical support and capacity-building to the Resident Coordinator's Office and UN agencies, resulting in improved gender-responsive planning, monitoring and budgeting. Key achievements include completion of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard with a joint Action Plan in 2023, and the first official Tunisia Gender Profile, working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and its *Gestion du Budget par Objectifs* Unit. Many credit UN Women for supporting the harmonization of data on gender equality across the UN system; aligning the collection, analysis and reporting of gender-related data and indicators among UN agencies operating in Tunisia to avoid duplication; filling data gaps; and enabling comparability across programmes and reporting frameworks such as the UNSDCF, UN-SWAP and the Gender Equality Scorecard. Other coordination efforts acknowledged by stakeholders were the provision of training on gender markers and the peace marker with the Resident Coordinator's Office and OHCHR, and facilitation of gender inputs to the Common Country Analysis.

<sup>48</sup> Mission d'évaluation des activités du Group de Coordination Genre en Tunisie, Mars 2022

Close review of the Common Country Analysis shows gender equality is positioned as a systems enabler – with SDGs 5, 10 and 16 at its core – explicitly aligning with leave no one behind principles and flagging considerable evidence gaps (data were available for only 90 of 244 SDG indicators and just 15 were disaggregated, mainly by geography and gender). The Common Country Analysis integrates gender and youth in governance, noting women’s persistent under-representation in state institutions (47 per cent of municipal councillors are women; 37 per cent of elected representatives are youth). Economic analysis makes disparities visible (female unemployment at 22.7 per cent versus 12.5 per cent for men, and only 6.5 per cent of enterprises are headed by women); identifies high youth unemployment as a national constraint; and recognizes the national strategy for the economic and social empowerment of rural women and girls.

Social sectors are tracked with a gender lens (for example, 53.5 per cent of women reporting gender-based violence in public spaces in 2011–2015 and a five-fold increase in reported instances of gender-based violence during confinement). Intersectional leave no one behind analysis specifies priority groups (e.g. rural poor families, rural women and girls, men and boys in interior rural regions, and poor and illiterate women and girls); highlights compounded exclusion for young rural women; and focuses on men/boys where relevant (17.4 per cent of rural men reporting discrimination/harassment). The Common Country Analysis also acknowledges disability data gaps, urban accessibility deficits and, in its risk analysis, underscores insufficient employability programmes as a binding constraint for women and youth.

The stakeholder consultations revealed that joint programming has served as a constructive channel for coherence, particularly following the more explicit shift towards family-centred policy framing in Tunisia from around 2017–2018 with the family promotion strategy presenting challenges for individual rights-based programming. This required adaptation of advocacy strategies by various UN entities: collective action through joint programming has been an effective way of addressing challenging gender issues.

Of seven joint UNCT programmes during the period concerned, UN Women was part of three: overall, there was positive feedback about UN Women’s leadership, technical contribution and coordination efforts. According to survey respondents, as part of the UN Joint Programme on ERAW, UN Women coordinated with WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF to support the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly and other institutions in scaling-up integrated service delivery (health, justice, social services) for gender-based violence survivors and also facilitated national gender-based violence data harmonization efforts through support to the Observatoire National de Lutte Contre la Violence à l’Égard des Femmes. In another joint programme, in coordination with UNDP and OHCHR, UN Women supported local governance initiatives to increase women’s participation in municipal councils and local decision-making spaces, especially the post-2018 municipal elections which reportedly contributed towards improved representation of women in local development planning processes. Stakeholders also cited the Joint Programme on Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment in collaboration with FAO, IFAD and WFP as well-functioning and complementary, with each agency leveraging its specialization. UN Women was particularly valued for its technical strategic advice on gender equality and the integration of GRB practices into national and sectoral budgeting frameworks through coordination with the Ministry of Finance and other UN agencies.

Stakeholders reported that coordination overlaps among UN agencies are a reality, often driven by the search for funding. The stakeholders consulted acknowledged UN Women’s participatory and inclusive approach and encouraged the Country Office to continue working with the Resident Coordinator’s Office to clarify mandates where needed and to use coordination spaces for collective problem-solving exchanges. The evaluation observed that efforts were under way from the Resident Coordinator’s Office to improve coordination and avoid duplication by fostering better communication and collaboration: the Resident Coordinator’s delegation to UN Women of coordination for the 16 Days of Activism was cited as a good practice.

UN Women's coordination role with donors was also recognized, with some donors noting the potential for UN Women to play stronger leadership roles in donor coordination, particularly through the existing gender donors coordination group led by Germany and the EU. UN Women's positioning as a rights-based convener was seen as an asset for donor dialogue on sensitive issues, such as the arrest of women political activists, noting current ambiguity among donors about appropriate responses.

UN Women's coordination role with the national government was noted as a strength, with some stakeholders suggesting further strengthening of sectoral engagement was needed beyond the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly to other line ministries (e.g. agriculture, environment) to embed gender across policy dialogues.

Overall, the Country Office has leveraged its coordination mandate to make tangible, meaningful contributions to advancing gender priorities in the UN system. Building on this foundation, the Country Office should continue to strengthen coherence by deepening joint programming logic to maximize complementarity, especially beyond existing programmes, and by systematizing knowledge harvesting and dissemination from coordination products (e.g. UNCT-SWAP/Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, Common Country Analysis inputs, gender profile, increased leave no one behind implementation) so that learning loops back into UN collective action on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

#### BOX 1.

#### Testing the theory of change – coordination

The theory of change intervention logic of advancing UN system coordination on gender equality through UNCT platforms, technical support and system-wide mechanisms (e.g. UNCT-SWAP, Gender Marker, Common Country Analysis/UNSDCF), while leveraging broad coalitions to drive progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women, was valid and yielded tangible results in strengthening collective UN commitment to gender equality in Tunisia. Similarly, the assumption that inter-agency coordination across strategic priorities would enhance gender analysis, coherence and joint action proved valid, as evidenced by three joint programmes on gender equality implemented in partnership with other UN agencies.



### 3.3. EFFECTIVENESS

To what extent have UN Women's contributions across its integrated mandate advanced gender equality and the empowerment of women in Tunisia, including through the UN system and government stakeholders?

#### FINDING 3.

**UN Women has made credible contributions towards its normative mandate, namely in advancing and sustaining operationalization of Organic Law 58/2017 on eliminating violence against women, paternity leave reform, the National Strategy for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women and Girls in Rural Areas and GRB. Its strengths lie in providing credible technical input, strategically aligning the policy environment, convening key stakeholders and keeping gender equality central in parliamentary debates. Stakeholders strongly emphasized the need for UN Women to revitalize its engagement on compliance with international normative commitments, particularly relating to gender parity concerns within the Personal Status Code.**

One of the key normative contributions made by the Country Office was towards the advancement and operationalization of Organic Law 58/2017 on eliminating violence against women. Programme documentation shows sustained, multi-year support to strengthen operationalization of Law 58 across the protection, justice and coordination chain in close collaboration with the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly<sup>49</sup> and across ministries (Justice, Interior, Health, Education, Social Affairs, etc.). Stakeholders appreciated the Country Office's contribution (in partnership with the Ministry) and its associated local offices to support shelters and listening centres for women survivors; hotlines and referral systems; and training for service providers (police, social workers, legal professionals) on survivor-centred approaches (see Box 2 for key initiatives). The Country Office's strong partnership with national and subnational governments was widely regarded as a key strength.

The Country Office also supported institutionalization of Law 58 by facilitating development of a monitoring system in close collaboration with the National Observatory on Violence Against Women, set up to assess, monitor and report on implementation of national gender-based violence policies (particularly Law 58/2017) and produce evidence-based reports to inform policy and public awareness. Triangulation with the UN Women personnel survey and interviews validated these contributions. In the evaluation personnel survey,<sup>50</sup> Country Office personnel repeatedly cited operationalization of Law 58 as a primary normative achievement. Interviews with UN Women personnel and CSOs underscored the Country Office's contributions to the Observatory's 1899 hotline and training of regional mechanisms.

<sup>49</sup> It oversees the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women (2017–2030), which is aligned with Law No. 58 of 2017 on the elimination of violence against women

<sup>50</sup> See response to Q9 in the survey in Annex 5

**BOX 2.****The Country Office's contribution to operationalizing Organic Law 58/2017**

UN Women:

- Strengthened frontline and coordination capacities by training 14 National Observatory listeners on the legal framework for applying Law 58 (2023)
- Produced a legal-orientation guide for use on the 1899 helpline (2023)
- Built the capacity of 23 directors/vice-directors of state care centres (2023)
- Convened 22 inter-ministerial focal points to align workplans with Circular No. 18 on improving implementation of Law 58 (2023)
- Trained 80 regional committee members to strengthen regional coordination mechanisms (the Ministry's decision of 24 February 2020 established 24 regional committees for this purpose) (2023)
- Strengthened the capacity of 13 violence against women and girls centres, with a focus on psychological violence, to improve service delivery (2024)

Source: Country Office Annual Progress Reports 2023 and 2024  
(reported by management)

Despite these achievements, stakeholders flagged persistent obstacles to full operationalization of the law and called for EVAW to be treated as a stand-alone priority in the forthcoming Strategic Note with a clearer strategy, developed through a more participatory approach with feminist movements. Elements of GRB and public finance that intersect with Law 58 are treated under a separate finding on GRB.

Key informant interviews and survey responses also highlighted that UN Women played a pivotal role in Tunisia's recent paternity leave reform, culminating in the adoption of Law 2024-44 in July 2024, which extended leave entitlements from one or two days to seven days (ten days in cases of twins or a child with health challenges). The amendment allowed flexible uptake within 30 days of the birth and ensured coverage for both public and private-sector workers. According to stakeholders, the Country Office provided timely technical input and evidence, including comparative analyses on the socioeconomic benefits of men's caregiving, and strategically engaged parliamentarians at a critical stage of the legislative process. In this context, results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) Tunisia<sup>51</sup> were highlighted as a pivotal source of evidence, helping stakeholders and decision makers understand men's perceptions of caregiving roles, as well as the broader socioeconomic benefits of men's caregiving and shared parental responsibility. The Country Office's targeted engagement with parliamentarians was reported to be particularly well-timed: in July 2024, it convened a workshop with 36 members of Parliamentary Commissions on Defence, Security, Finance and Human Rights, alongside international experts, precisely as discussions of Bill 13/2024 (which later became Law 2024-44) were under way. Documentary evidence from 2024 records details the workshop, timing and legal changes, substantiating UN Women's contribution to an enabling, evidence-based policy dialogue.<sup>52</sup>

The Country Office's contribution towards the National Strategy for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women and Girls in Rural Areas and GRB were also widely acknowledged (see the Effectiveness section – Findings 4 and 8). Overall, by providing technical input, aligning the policy environment, convening key stakeholders and keeping gender equality at the centre of parliamentary debate, UN Women helped create enabling conditions for legislative adoption, potentially generating tangible outcomes for advancing broader gender equality goals.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/eng-images-tunisia-full-report.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Tunisia Country Office Annual Work Plan report 2024

The evaluation findings indicate that the Country Office played a key role in strengthening national capacities for compliance with gender-related international commitments. Evaluation survey responses and stakeholder consultations consistently highlighted achievements in reporting, monitoring and follow-up processes, with an emphasis on the inclusive participation of women's organizations. Notable contributions include technical support to the Government for Tunisia's periodic reporting to the CEDAW Committee; facilitation of civil society shadow reporting; and the development of a gender-responsive SDG monitoring framework. Complementary efforts encompassed capacity-building workshops for government officials and civil society actors on leveraging human rights mechanisms to advance women's rights, as well as active engagement in international advocacy spaces to promote accountability and policy coherence. The Country Office's support for preparation of Tunisia's Beijing+30 national report (March 2025) was also acknowledged as a key normative contribution.

Despite these advances, concerns were raised regarding Tunisia's absence from the Commission on the Status of Women sessions over the past two years. Stakeholders attributed this gap to growing sensitivities surrounding international engagement and restrictions on civil society participation, signalling potential constraints on global advocacy. Furthermore, the CEDAW Committee's 2023 concluding observations were repeatedly referenced as critical, particularly in relation to regressions in gender parity and the persistence of discriminatory provisions within the Personal Status Code. Stakeholders also noted that partnerships with CSOs and women's movements on advancing UN Women's normative mandate represent an area where the Country Office could further strengthen its engagement. These findings underscore systemic barriers to substantive equality, contravening

obligations under Articles 2 and 16 of CEDAW, which require States Parties to eliminate discrimination in law and practice, including in family and marital relations. In light of these normative commitments, stakeholders emphasized the need for UN Women to recalibrate its strategy by intensifying advocacy for legislative reform and reinforcing mechanisms that advance compliance with international human rights standards. Such recalibration is considered essential for addressing structural inequalities and ensuring alignment with global gender equality norms.

### **BOX 3.**

#### **Testing the theory of change – normative**

The theory of change intervention logic of providing technical input, advancing gender data availability, keeping gender equality central in parliamentary debates and strengthening gender-responsive governance frameworks to advance the Entity's normative mandate was valid. However, in the context of growing sensitivities around international engagement and restrictions on civil society participation in compliance with international normative commitments (particularly regarding gender parity concerns within the Personal Status Code), the theory of change required a more intentional approach. This should have included strategies to address these challenges and create space for CSO engagement in the normative sphere.



---

## FINDING 4.

**The Country Office's WEE portfolio integrates rural livelihoods programming; pathways for educated young women to enter growth sectors; and market-enabling partnerships with government, the private sector and international financial institutions. These efforts are complemented by early work on the care economy and social norms to expand women's access to decent work and essential services. While the Regional Flagship Initiative to Surge Women's Employment by 5 per cent by 2030 has laid the essential groundwork and demonstrated ambition to scale, it has yet to yield measurable results among the intended target populations.**

---

Evidence from multiple sources confirms the Country Office's contribution towards rural women's economic development at the normative and operational level, particularly through the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment, implemented in partnership with FAO, IFAD and WFP.<sup>53</sup> Stakeholders indicated that the Joint Programme's integrated approach – entrepreneurship skills, leadership, climate-smart production, market linkages – translated into practical changes and strengthened grassroots rural women's voice and agency. Monitoring reports for 2024 indicate early outcomes, including 410 rural women empowered through capacity-building; +29 per cent increase in rural women's participation in the formal labour market; and +19 per cent increase in average off-farm income since 2022. The Joint Programme also reported increasing women's leadership and voice, for instance, +32 per cent membership in decision-making structures; establishment of a network for Gender Action Learning System champions; and early movement with financial institutions towards gender-responsive services, although product roll-out remains a work-in-progress.<sup>54</sup>

The evaluation's consultation with the target group of women validated such positive shifts. The women indicated that the programme was built on a participatory principle, wherein community members, local authorities and stakeholders jointly identified needs, set priorities and designed interventions so programmes reflected their realities. They described concrete shifts such as post-training ability to use digital skills to sell

their products, and leadership and decision-making skills that strengthened their respect in their household and community. At the same time, they also flagged persistent barriers such as transportation and the need for more advanced technical training modules, beyond standard marketing skills (e.g. packaging, storage etc.).

At systems level, key stakeholders acknowledged the Country Office's contribution to the development of the National Strategy for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women and Girls in Rural Areas. According to these stakeholders, the Country Office brought experience from the ground to identify and addresses structural barriers such as informal employment, limited access to finance and inadequate social protection, which disproportionately affect rural women, to inform and develop a relevant strategy. Multi-stakeholder platforms and policy dialogue also culminated in a 2024 Presidential decree covering transportation costs for rural women, an issue repeatedly prioritized by targeted women and partners.<sup>55</sup>

Responses to the evaluation personnel survey corroborate that among the main results and tangible outcomes across the operational pillar of Strategic Note priority areas, rural women's economic empowerment was the most cited. Interviews with Country Office personnel point to growing effectiveness and credibility, e.g. increased demand from authorities to lead on the National Strategy for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls.

---

<sup>53</sup> IFAD joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment. <https://www.ifad.org/en/initiatives/accelerating-economic-empowerment-of-rural-women>

<sup>54</sup> Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment monitoring report for 2024.

<sup>55</sup> Tunisia Country Office 2024 Annual Report

Donor and UN partner consultations further validated that employment creation, digital skills and green jobs are high-priority, lower-controversy entry points with strong transformational potential in the Tunisia context; and through the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment, the Country Office has achieved tangible results.

Looking ahead, the Regional Flagship Initiative to Surge Women's Employment by 5 per cent by 2030<sup>56</sup> was acknowledged as a strategic and timely intervention. This model aims to achieve impact at scale by addressing structural barriers to women's economic participation through coordinated legal, policy and social interventions. The programme design in Tunisia involved context-specific analysis to identify potential growth sectors for women's employment, particularly within the STEM, green and CARE economy.<sup>57</sup> A notable outcome of this initiative was the establishment of a financing model through collaboration with international financial institutions. In 2024, UN Women signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Islamic Development Bank<sup>58</sup> securing US\$ 254 million in capital to support women's employment in Tunisia (and Jordan).<sup>59</sup> In Tunisia, the initiative aims to create up to 20,000 jobs for women by 2030, primarily in the food and agriculture sector. While the initiative has laid the essential groundwork and demonstrated ambition to scale, it has yet to yield measurable results among the intended target populations. The upcoming Strategic Note period will therefore be critical for translating this groundwork into tangible national outcomes.

The evaluation observed that youth mainstreaming was a cross-cutting thread. The evaluation personnel survey highlighted that >1,500 youth were engaged through awareness and civic participation, including through a first job forum for young women in STEM, and partnership with the Youth Scouts to create the region's first gender-equality badge – measures to build the future talent pipeline and challenge social norms.

#### BOX 4.

#### Testing the theory of change – Women's Economic Empowerment

The intervention logic of promoting women's workforce participation in Tunisia – particularly among rural women – by addressing structural barriers such as safe transportation, quality childcare and safe workplaces was valid and has begun to deliver results. Similarly, the logic of targeting high-potential growth sectors for women's employment, notably STEM, and the green and care economies through the Regional Flagship Initiative to Surge Women's Employment appears sound. However, as this initiative is still in its early stages, its effectiveness will depend on demonstrating tangible results over time.



<sup>56</sup> UN Women Background Note UN Operational Response in the Arab States. [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/background\\_note\\_on\\_operational\\_response.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/background_note_on_operational_response.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Tunisia's road map will create 20,000 jobs for women via transnational remote work and sustainable finance, while Morocco anticipates over 30,000 jobs in rural care and ICT.

<sup>58</sup> UN Women also updated an existing Memorandum of Understanding with the African Development Bank.

<sup>59</sup> As per the key informant interviews, the project in Tunisia has been allocated US\$ 200 million and in Jordan, US\$ 3.5 million.

---

## FINDING 5.

**The Country Office's Women's Political Participation and Leadership portfolio demonstrated adaptability in a highly constrained environment by shifting from conventional electoral assistance to supporting women in leadership roles and influencing public policy, including measures to prevent and address violence against women in politics. This strategic pivot was considered effective. Engagement with the Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality (Ra'edat) was recognized as a promising mechanism for sustaining leadership pipelines and strengthening knowledge infrastructure, essential for long-term gender equality outcomes. However, delays in implementation were observed.**

---

Numerous stakeholders characterized Tunisia as a “case of regression,” citing a marked decline in women’s political participation in recent years. They attributed this regression primarily to electoral reform in 2022, which repealed the mandatory gender-parity provisions that had previously guaranteed a minimum representation of women on candidate lists. These provisions had facilitated women securing approximately 26 per cent of seats in the 2019 national Parliament.<sup>60</sup> In contrast, subsequent elections witnessed a significant drop in women’s representation to around 15 per cent, underscoring the detrimental impact of removing institutional mechanisms designed to promote gender parity in political decision-making.

Interviews with Country Office personnel highlighted a pragmatic recalibration and strategic approach in response to the evolving political context. Under the previous Strategic Note, the Country Office had actively engaged in electoral processes, including support for party law reform, collaboration with the Electoral Commission and initiatives addressing violence against women in politics. However, during the current Strategic Note cycle, the Country Office had to strategically withdraw from direct electoral assistance and instead refocus its efforts on supporting women in leadership roles and influencing public policy. The Country Office prioritized legal and policy literacy and institutional capacity-building. For example, it facilitated training sessions for parliamentarians on international frameworks such as CEDAW and UN General Assembly Resolution 66/130, which address women’s political participation

and violence against women in politics. The Country Office also proposed the development of a guide for CSOs and media outlets to promote gender-sensitive election coverage and observation, thereby maintaining visibility of rule-of-law and anti-discrimination standards in an increasingly hostile environment.

The parliamentarians interviewed as part of the evaluation appreciated UN Women’s role in cultivating a dedicated cohort of legislative advocates who consistently engage in gender-related initiatives and are widely recognized as staunch defenders of women’s rights. Stakeholders emphasized that the training programmes significantly enhanced participants’ understanding of international conventions and protocols, enabling them to identify gaps between national practices and global standards and apply international normative frameworks in legislative deliberations. According to these stakeholders, this capacity-building translated into tangible advocacy outcomes, exemplified by the recognition that general amnesty provisions should not apply to rape cases, reflecting the integration of human rights principles into national legislative discourse. Women parliamentarians and institutional partners described UN Women as a “real partner” in these efforts, while also highlighting persistent practical barriers – such as transportation costs – that continue to hinder women’s safe and equitable participation in politics at the local level.

In the context of electoral processes, the Country Office strategically invested in regional and digital enablers to sustain women’s leadership capacities amid

---

<sup>60</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2022). Tunisia tramples gender parity ahead of parliamentary elections. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/11/02/tunisia-tramples-gender-parity-ahead-parliamentary-elections>

domestic constraints. Notably, leveraging support from the Strategic Partnership Framework (a flagship global programme<sup>61</sup>), the Country Office issued a request for proposals to develop a secure e-learning platform for the Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality (Ra'edat). This initiative was designed to complement scheduled training on effective communication and leadership, including modules on violence against women in politics and GRB for parliamentarians. The initiative was recognized as a promising mechanism for sustaining leadership pipelines and strengthening knowledge infrastructure, essential for long-term gender equality outcomes. However, the evaluation team observed delays in implementation mainly due to operational challenges outlined under the Efficiency section of this report.

Interviews with implementing partners and UN Women headquarters personnel highlighted both enabling and constraining factors influencing the WPP portfolio's effectiveness. There was broad consensus on the need to strategically recalibrate the Country Office's role in advancing political participation, with an emphasis on feasible and sustainable interventions. Capacity-building efforts targeting parliamentarians and women's networks were widely valued and remain in high demand. However, under-resourcing, procedural constraints and the weakening of electoral gender safeguards were identified as significant barriers to achieving outcome-level progress.

#### **BOX 5.**

### **Testing the theory of change – Women's Political Participation and Leadership**

The theory of change assumption that political support for women's equal political participation will be maintained by the national government did not hold as electoral reform in 2022 repealed the mandatory gender-parity provisions that had previously guaranteed a minimum representation of women on candidate lists. However, UN Women's implicit intervention logic to shift from conventional electoral assistance to supporting women in leadership roles and influencing public policy – including measures to prevent and address violence against women in politics through technical assistance, capacity-building and a regional approach to sustaining leadership pipelines and strengthening knowledge infrastructure – was proving to be valid, yielding some meaningful results.



<sup>61</sup> Led by UN Women headquarters, the Strategic Partnership Framework III (2022–2025) is in its third phase and is jointly funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

---

## FINDING 6.

**UN Women's support to Tunisia's second National Action Plan on WPS was widely acknowledged. However, the Country Office's attempt to address all areas of the plan was seen as ambitious. While support to the Women's Mediation Network has effectively strengthened local capacities in conflict prevention and mediation, persistent legitimacy barriers remain, as public authorities have often been hesitant about engaging with the network due to its perceived "informal" status. Declining donor engagement on WPS in Tunisia has led to constrained financial resources for this portfolio.**

---

Stakeholders identified UN Women's technical and strategic support to development of Tunisia's second National Action Plan on WPS as one of the Country Office's most significant contributions to the WPS agenda. UN Women supported the drafting and inter-ministerial review of National Action Plan II, which was scheduled for launch in October 2025 under the leadership of the National Action Plan Steering Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and the Elderly, with participation from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Social Affairs, Interior, Economy, Youth and Culture, and Tourism, as well as the Presidency. Stakeholders appreciated the participatory nature of the plan's development process, noting that it helped ensure alignment with both local realities and international standards, including UN Security Council Resolution 1325. UN Women's role encompassed convening stakeholders, providing technical expertise and supporting the formulation of strategic axes for the plan, reinforcing institutional mechanisms for inclusive governance and peacebuilding.

However, the evaluation revealed concerns regarding the scope and focus of National Action Plan II. Stakeholders observed that the plan is quite broad, encompassing areas such as preventing violent extremism, counter-terrorism, migration and climate security. In this context, they emphasized the need for UN Women to move away from addressing all thematic areas and instead focus its engagement more strategically – particularly under the protection and prevention pillars – where it is perceived to add the greatest value. Peacebuilding efforts at the community level were also reported to have received positive feedback and were identified as a potential area for deeper investment.

Under this portfolio, the Country Office contributed to building local capacities for conflict prevention and mediation through the establishment of and support to the Women's Mediation Network. Stakeholders indicated that this initiative, implemented in partnership with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, exemplifies UN Women's commitment to enhancing women's leadership in peace processes and fostering community-based mechanisms for social cohesion. The network serves as a platform for women to engage in local governance and contribute to early warning systems, thereby operationalizing the WPS agenda at the grassroots level. Members of this network appreciated the training they had received, enabling them to undertake conflict analysis, early warning and community mediation. Participants reported applying skills to prevent escalation, address workplace and conjugal conflicts, and run advocacy on women's access to water and economic empowerment.

At the same time, legitimacy barriers remain salient: as highlighted during a focus group discussion conducted for this evaluation, public authorities are often reluctant to engage with what they perceive as "informal" groups, underscoring the need for greater institutional recognition.

In 2024, with funding from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (through the British Embassy in Tunis), the Country Office launched a one-year WPS-framed initiative on cyber-violence against women and girls, targeting the gap in Organic Law 58 on online violence. Building on a national WPS assessment, the project works with influencers and CSOs and includes capacity-building for police special units to handle digital evidence, explicitly linking women's participation in public life (activists, journalists, candidates) with protection measures in and around electoral processes. The donor highlighted UN Women's legitimacy as a partner of choice and its agility in convening stakeholders and translating workshops into actionable recommendations.

At the same time, the evaluation found that declining donor engagement on WPS in Tunisia has led to constrained financial resources for the portfolio.

#### BOX 6.

#### Testing the theory of change – Women, Peace and Security

The theory of change intervention logic of building policymakers' capacities, providing technical support and facilitating a multi-stakeholder participatory approach to developing National Action Plans and their monitoring architecture was valid and contributed to the successful development of National Action Plan I and II, ensuring alignment with both local realities and international standards. Similarly, the assumption that strengthening the capacities of women-led organizations and women mediators would advance local-level conflict prevention and mediation proved valid. However, the assumption that these trained women would effectively engage in policy dialogue and advocacy with public authorities was only partially valid, as legitimacy barriers persist, with formal authorities often reluctant to engage with informal groups.



#### FINDING 7.

**The Country Office has made notable contributions to implementation of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 on EVAW through technical assistance, capacity-building and multi-stakeholder coordination. The Country Office also produced credible diagnostics and mobilized youth. However, the EVAW portfolio is dispersed across normative, downstream work, social norms and urban-safety initiatives (e.g. support for implementation of Law No. 58 of 2017, Dare to Care and the Safe Cities Flagship) indicating the need for an integrated EVAW prevention-to-response approach. Overall delivery is also not yet commensurate with the scale and persistence of violence against women pointing to the need for a clearer EVAW strategy.**

National and city-level data underscore the persistent and multifaceted nature of violence against women in Tunisia. The evaluation observed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Country Office played a critical role in responding to the surge in violence against women, particularly in the digital sphere, through targeted interventions addressing online violence against women

and girls. Stakeholders acknowledged the Country Office's leadership in this area, and its co-implementation of a joint programme with UNDP that addressed post-pandemic economic violence, an initiative that was particularly valued for its recognition of the intersection between economic vulnerability and gender-based violence.

UN Women's technical assistance to support implementation of Organic Law No. 58 (Tunisia's comprehensive legal framework for the elimination of violence against women) was widely appreciated by national stakeholders. This support included a series of capacity-building workshops for senior representatives from key ministries focused on integrating Law 58 into sectoral planning and budgeting processes. The evaluation noted positive feedback on these capacity-building sessions. The Country Office also developed and disseminated GRB tools, notably the Balanced Scorecard on Gender sheets, which enabled ministries to embed gender-sensitive objectives into their annual performance plans. Stakeholder consultations confirmed that these tools contributed to institutionalizing a more coherent and accountable approach to gender-responsive governance more broadly and to operationalizing Law 58 specifically.

The Country Office's engagement with the National Observatory to Combat Violence Against Women and first-line service providers was reported to have strengthened planning, data systems and inclusive service delivery. Training initiatives targeting focal points, shelter managers and hotline staff under Law 58 were particularly commended for contributing to the standardization of case management practices, although stakeholders noted that the scale of these efforts remains modest relative to the scale of the challenge.

Another notable initiative under the EVAWG portfolio is the *Tunis Safe City and Safe Public Spaces* programme, which has begun to yield foundational outputs<sup>62</sup> aimed at addressing urban safety for women and girls. Stakeholders highlighted the completion of a mixed-methods scoping study,<sup>63</sup> conducted in partnership with the Municipality of Tunis, as a key milestone. The study revealed critical insights into the lived experiences of women, including pervasive risks such as daily harassment and fear associated with urban mobility. Through participatory mapping of seven zones,

safety walks and community consultations, the initiative identified actionable priorities, including the need for improved lighting along ten priority corridors; safer transport hubs; and the development of digital reporting mechanisms such as the *Système d'Information et de Suivi des Cas de Violence* – a national, survivor-centred gender-based violence case management and information system for Greater Tunis. These findings informed the validation of a city-level strategy in June 2025, structured around four pillars: inclusive governance, safer urban planning, social norms transformation and enhanced legal and monitoring frameworks. While these developments represent early steps in a five-year trajectory, they lay the groundwork for reducing harassment and fostering greater autonomous mobility for women and girls in urban spaces.

UN Women's work on EVAW through social norms change advanced through the Dare to Care regional programme (building on IMAGES Tunisia) and youth partnerships. Stakeholders indicated that through innovative campaigns and strategic partnerships, these efforts sought to challenge and reshape entrenched gender norms while fostering inclusive and participatory approaches to gender equality. One illustrative initiative reported was the *Nubader Campaign*, developed in collaboration with the Tunisian Scouts. This campaign mobilized over 1,200 young people to actively promote gender equality and positive masculinities within their communities. A reported key achievement of this partnership was the creation of the Gender Equality Badge – the first of its kind globally within the scouting movement – which institutionalized gender equality as a core value in its youth development programming.

The campaign also supported community-led projects such as *Project Emna*, which trained high-school students to serve as safety ambassadors, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to advocate for safer school environments and challenge gender-based violence among their peers. Sports-based empowerment initiatives were employed to address gender

<sup>62</sup> Other activities included: a youth summer camp (45 participants); co-designed local actions; and the short film *Beyond Reality* helped seed a city-wide conversation (estimated reach 300,000–350,000). Capacity-building included training for >80 local actors and the digitization of two online modules with the Virtual University of Tunis on gender-responsive urban safety and Law 58.

<sup>63</sup> Conducted between February and June 2024.

stereotypes and expand opportunities for women and girls in rural areas. The establishment of the Zaafrane women's football team exemplifies this approach, providing a platform for women to assert their agency and visibility in traditionally male-dominated spaces. Regional interviews confirm Tunisia's good performance despite funding constraints, with tangible normative wins (e.g. paternity leave reform) and youth-focused prevention pilots. However, the country has not been a primary recipient of new Dare to Care resources, limiting continuity and scale.

Stakeholders appreciated UN Women's innovative partnerships with the private sector and technology actors to address online violence against women and promote survivor-centred approaches within the digital ecosystem. Building on the global partnership between UN Women and Nokia that aims to increase women's participation and leadership in the online sphere, UN Women convened a multi-stakeholder round table in September 2024 to explore artificial intelligence-based solutions to address the growing challenge of online violence against women. According to the stakeholders consulted, this initiative highlighted the importance of basing such interventions on solid data and information from service providers, including civil society, and ensuring that women without access to the internet are included in technical solutions. Donor consultations indicated that such multi-stakeholder efforts are in alignment with the Pact for the Future (adopted by global leaders at the United Nations on 23 September) and the Global Digital Compact, which calls on all actors to ensure the digital world is safe and accessible to all. Concrete outcomes of this initiative are yet to come.

Collectively, these interventions have contributed to the cultivation of youth leadership and enhanced community engagement in EVAW prevention, laying the groundwork for more equitable and violence-free

communities. However, there was also feedback that the EVAW component was scattered, and its narrative was "unclear". Stakeholders urged a stand-alone, better-communicated EVAW strategy and stronger, more participatory engagement with feminist organizations. These perspectives align with the evaluation's emerging observation that consolidation of the EVAW portfolio is needed to remain relevant. Overall, there was a case for an integrated EVAW prevention-to-response approach that connects Safe Cities outputs, Law 58 service strengthening and sustained social-norms programming with adequate multi-year financing and CSO co-leadership.

#### **BOX 7.**

#### **Testing the theory of change – Eliminating Violence Against Women**

The theory of change lacks a clearly articulated intervention logic for EVAW, as its elements are dispersed across multiple thematic areas – economic empowerment, violence against women in politics, social norms change and strengthening gender data and statistics. Nevertheless, the combined use of technical assistance, capacity-building and multi-stakeholder coordination for implementing EVAW-related laws, alongside efforts to improve data availability and influence social norms, represents a valid approach. However, its limited scale compared to the magnitude of the problem underscores the need for a more coherent and comprehensive EVAW interventional logic in the new theory of change.



---

## FINDING 8.

**The Country Office's cross-cutting portfolio made the greatest and most system-level progress through GRB, complemented by emerging work on social norms and gender statistics. Together, these investments strengthened the enabling environment for equitable public policies and services, despite uneven capacity, data gaps and decision makers' limited uptake of evidence.**

---

Stakeholders indicated that the Country Office's most consequential cross-cutting contribution was the institutionalization of GRB across government. The evaluation observed a discernible strategy behind this shift, i.e. a whole-of-government "360°" approach that works simultaneously with duty bearers (such as the Ministry of Finance and other line ministries), oversight actors (Parliament) and public administration training systems (*École Nationale d'Administration*) and the *Virtual University of Tunis* to embed gender equality within public financial management.

The Country Office developed four online modules on governance and gender equality with the public administration training unit (*École Nationale d'Administration* and the *Virtual University of Tunis*); convened cross-ministerial clinics on gender and GRB; and conducted a briefing for parliamentarians to embed GRB in oversight practice. Through targeted capacity-building initiatives, the Country Office reported that it had trained 34 officials<sup>64</sup> in 2023 from 12 key ministries, including Finance, Justice, Health and Interior, focusing on the application of GRB tools such as the Balanced Scorecard on Gender and integration of Organic Law 58/2017 on ending violence against women into fiscal planning.<sup>65</sup> This training was significantly scaled in 2024, reportedly reaching 217 participants (109 women and 108 men) across 13 ministries, including Transport, Youth and Sports, Tourism and Equipment, with tangible outcomes such as the incorporation of gender-sensitive objectives into the 2025 Annual Performance Plans.<sup>66</sup>

Complementing these efforts, UN Women co-developed and disseminated GRB assessment reports, practical guides and gender-sensitive sectoral briefs, which reportedly served as critical tools for aligning national policies with international gender equality commitments. A series of workshops held throughout 2024 provided technical guidance on the use of Balanced Scorecard on Gender sheets in performance reporting; the integration of GRB into budget cycles; and operationalization of Law 58/2017 within budgeting processes. The evaluation learned that by the end of 2024, 13 national partners had acquired the capacity to apply GRB tools and GRB had reportedly been institutionalized across 24 ministries – signalling a shift towards gender-responsive governance in Tunisia.

Stakeholders indicated that UN Women's strategic engagement with the Ministry of Finance and the *Gestion du Budget par Objectifs* Unit facilitated the alignment of sectoral plans with the National Action Plan to institutionalize and integrate<sup>67</sup>, ensuring coherence and accountability in gender mainstreaming. Appreciating these design choices, national partners indicated that UN Women's engagement went beyond awareness-raising to deep, technical implementation and scale-up across ministries.

The Country Office's cross-cutting pillars on statistics enable and qualify these GRB gains. Stakeholders indicated that UN Women's cooperation with the National Council of Statistics has been pivotal in strengthening Tunisia's institutional capacity for gender data and

---

<sup>64</sup> 22 women and 12 men

<sup>65</sup> Tunisia UN Women Country Office Annual Progress Report, 2023

<sup>66</sup> Tunisia UN Women Country Office Annual Progress Report, 2024

<sup>67</sup> PANIIG aims to institutionalize gender mainstreaming across planning, programming and budgeting processes in Tunisia. This involves embedding gender considerations into public policies and governance systems to ensure sustainable and inclusive development. It is implemented under the leadership of Tunisia's national gender machinery, with coordination across ministries and local authorities. It aligns with Tunisia's commitments under CEDAW, the SDGs and other international frameworks for gender equality.

statistics, particularly to inform GRB. Key achievements include the establishment of inter-agency working groups; improved coordination within and across ministries; and the successful integration of gender indicators into national statistical systems in areas such as violence against women, maternal mortality and education. UN Women's participation in the national steering committee for the 2024 census was also acknowledged as a significant contribution.

Despite these advances, persistent challenges remain. Stakeholders noted a general cultural resistance to data-driven decision-making, which extends beyond gender-related issues. Ministries often fail to translate available data into actionable policies, resulting in missed opportunities for improvement and resource allocation, as illustrated by the underutilization of school sanitation data. Data diffusion and transparency were also weak, with some statistics not disseminated at all, limiting their potential policy impact. To address these gaps, stakeholders indicated that UN Women could enhance the regularity and visibility of gender data dissemination; promote the use of data for evidence-based decision-making; and invest in capacity-building for downstream users to enable ministries and local actors to translate statistical evidence into gender-responsive programmes and budgets.

On social norms, the cross-cutting portfolio advanced public engagement through the Dare to Care programme and related initiatives (e.g. 16 Days, HeForShe), although civil society stakeholders stressed the need for a clearer strategy and stronger dissemination of evidence products (such as IMAGES) to counter pushback.

Overall, stakeholders agreed on what “success” for the GRB/cross-cutting portfolio should look like over the next Strategic Note: higher-quality gender analysis across all sectors; a published, annually updated national gender report that feeds budget decisions; execution-stage tracking (not only planning) with parliamentary and CSO oversight; and intersectional integration (climate, disability, poverty) in sector action plans down to the municipal level.

Consultation with government partners flagged the need for advanced gender-analysis training, cross-country exchange and stronger linkages with climate/disability areas of work. Some stakeholders also called for headquarters/Regional Office support to position Tunisia as a regional GRB leader and to disseminate lessons learned.

#### **BOX 8.**

### **Testing the theory of change – Gender-responsive budgeting, gender data and social norms**

The theory of change assumption that strengthening institutional capacity leads to improved implementation of gender equality and the empowerment of women laws and policies is largely valid. In Tunisia, a whole-of-government “360°” approach to GRB engaging duty bearers, oversight actors and public administration training systems enabled the institutionalization of GRB within the public financial management architecture. Conversely, the theory of change assumption that enhanced access to gender data and statistics would drive gender-responsive public policies and programming proved only partially valid. While investments improved the availability of gender data, this did not fully translate into evidence-based decision-making, as the uptake and use of such data remained limited and a more intentional strategy is required to strengthen utilization.



---

## FINDING 9.

**UN Women Tunisia has acted as a bridge between national institutions and civil society to advance gender equality, a role that is relevant to national priorities and stakeholder needs. These dialogues have increased the visibility of gender issues in national planning and have strengthened inter-institutional dialogue. However, engagement with CSOs and the women's movement appears less robust than expected and advisory groups and consultative mechanisms remain limited in scope. A clearer strategy for engaging civil society and feminist movements is required.**

---

Several stakeholders cited the difficult context since 2022 that has constrained the convening space, indicating it has become too challenging for UN Women to play the convening role between CSOs and the government. When asked in the evaluation survey how successful the Country Office has been in convening dialogue platforms on gender mainstreaming with government and local partners, UN Women Tunisia personnel were broadly positive but noted the Country Office's efforts have not yet been consolidated in performance. On a scale from 1 (not successful) to 5 (very successful), nearly two thirds of respondents (10 of 16) rated such convening as successful (between 4 and 5), while over one third of respondents (6 of 16) saw room for improvement (between 2 and 3). The comments provided in the survey, and during evaluation interviews, indicated that UN Women has made significant efforts to bring together government institutions, CSOs and local actors to advance gender mainstreaming; that these platforms have led to the increased visibility of gender issues in national planning; and have strengthened inter-institutional dialogue. At the same time, institutionalization of these mechanisms within government structures remains a challenge, and continued support is needed to move from dialogue to systemic institutional shifts.

Non-governmental organizations, CSOs and feminist movements have been very strong in Tunisia, and there is a recognition of their contribution across UN entities and donor groups. Long-standing women's organizations interviewed for this evaluation affirmed UN Women's relevance, some describing the Country Office as a real partner rather than just a logistics or funding provider. At the same time, they indicated that engagement has not always matched expectations: advisory groups and consultations have been perceived as limited in scope; and partnerships are reportedly

skewed towards larger or national institutions. These stakeholders urged renewed investment in relationships with smaller, movement-based organizations and clearer communication around opportunities.

Key informant interviews also pointed to the need for a stronger presence in the field, working directly with local authorities and communities so that programming reflects people's realities as municipal capacities have weakened. CSOs similarly stressed that Tunisia's strong legal framework needs to be turned into changes in behaviour and service delivery, best achieved through practical partnerships at the local level. This means expanding locally based work on WEE and social norms change, and strengthening community protection and referral systems for ERAW, while considering the shrinking civic space at subnational level.

Multiple interviewees also encouraged UN Women to exercise a more proactive leadership role across the UNCT, both anticipatory (reading risks to gender rights at an early stage) and mobilizing (coordinating a joint response). Donors and technical partners affirmed UN Women's unique mandate and legitimacy to convene and set the bar on gender equality and the empowerment of women, while noting that, at times, UN Women (like other UN entities) defaulted to partnering with CSOs and feminist movements for programme delivery rather than strategic agenda-setting. They called for UN Women to be the "first address" on gender equality and women's empowerment and to define multilateral, political approaches that protect civic space and women's voice.

The new leadership of the Country Office is cognizant of this issue and is committed to involve CSOs in development of the next Strategic Note, with attention to "do no harm" amid heightened risks for women human rights defenders.

**BOX 9.****Testing the theory of change – CSO partnerships**

The theory of change's consideration of the growing backlash against women's rights defenders and CSOs was valid and significantly shaped UN Women's risk mitigation strategies. However, the assumption that strengthened advocacy capacities of women CSOs and peacebuilders, coupled with a robust women's rights movement, would drive policy change on WPS and peacebuilding responses was only partially valid. Despite capacity-building efforts, the ability of trained CSOs and women to apply technical skills and influence political and decision-making processes remained limited. Furthermore, the theory of change would have benefitted from a more intentional approach to fostering proactive leadership within the UNCT – both anticipatory (identifying risks to gender rights at an early stage) and mobilizing (coordinating a joint response).

**3.4. EFFICIENCY**

Does the Tunisia Country Office have appropriate governance, capacity and capability to ensure good use of resources (personnel, funding and assets) to deliver results? To what extent has the Country Office facilitated internal coordination and cross-thematic, integrated ways of working during the current Strategic Note period? How has the sharing of management operations and communications functions with the Libya Country Office through the cluster configuration affected the efficiency of the Tunisia Country Office?

**FINDING 10.**

**Several critical positions, including Head of Programmes and Operations Manager, remained vacant for extended periods, undermining strategic leadership and oversight. The Country Office faced limited resource mobilization and relied heavily on regional programmes and joint initiatives, while partnership opportunities were increasingly constrained by shrinking civic space and operational bottlenecks. Within this context, the Tunisia–Libya cluster model – originally intended to leverage synergies and mutual learning – faced implementation challenges, affecting its ability to consistently deliver on coordination functions and its operational effectiveness across both contexts.**

**Tunisia Country Office structure:** The Tunisia–Libya cluster structure, established in 2019, aimed to leverage operational and programmatic synergies between the two countries and promote mutual learning. However, sustaining this arrangement with limited resources – e.g. one Country Representative and one common operations team – was reported as challenging, with persistent issues related to implementing the coordination mandate and operational effectiveness.

Respondents to the evaluation survey highlighted that the absence of a second leadership tier has left the Country Representative overstretched between Tunisia and Libya. This gap is particularly critical given the increasing pushback against gender equality in Tunisia and Libya, alongside emerging opportunities to advance gender equality, e.g. in the context of gender-responsive nexus approaches aligned with national priorities for peace and development. Several respondents emphasized the need for an additional international Deputy Representative to support the Country

Representative in managing both portfolios effectively. According to these respondents, such a role would strengthen UN Women's presence, facilitate UNCT coordination and enhance engagement with stakeholders.

The evaluation survey also revealed a clear perception of resource constraints: none of the respondents considered investments in human and financial resources to be fully appropriate to implement the Strategic Note. At a rate scale of 1-5 where 1 indicates "minimum investment" and 5 indicated "appropriate level" of investment, 31 per cent rated resourcing as "2" (5 of 16 respondents); 37 per cent as "3" (6 of 16 respondents); and 31 per cent as "4" (5 of 16 respondents). No respondent selected either the "minimum" or "fully appropriate" funding response.

Qualitative feedback to the survey question reinforces this finding. Personnel emphasized that the Country Office had an "over-stretched operations team," and key technical portfolios such as GRB, ERAW and peace-building were under-resourced, limiting opportunities for scaling up or consolidating results. Respondents described funding as fragmented and largely short-term, which restricted flexibility and long-term planning. Several comments stressed the need for an additional international Deputy Representative who could represent UN Women in Libya, a stronger operations team and more predictable multi-year funding to enhance delivery and sustainability across all pillars of the Strategic Note.

Analysis of the organization charts, complemented by key informant interviews with personnel (including the functional review consultant supporting the Tunisia-Libya Cluster Office review – commissioned by the Tunisia Country Office in partnership with the Regional Office to better understand the existing organizational structure and its limitations) identified persistent structural challenges that constrained organizational efficiency.

Several critical positions (including Head of Office, Operations Manager and Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management) remained vacant for extended periods, undermining strategic leadership and oversight. Human resource capacity was also notably

underdeveloped, with inadequate induction processes and recurrent delays in recruitment. Core functions were unevenly distributed and heavily reliant on consultants, a practice complicated by Tunisia's regulatory requirement for consultants to register as single liability entities, which incurred additional costs and led to inconsistencies in SSA-level remuneration. Additionally, the allocation of programme assistants by programme coordinators was driven largely by funding availability rather than workload or strategic considerations, resulting in uneven workload distribution and increased personnel stress.

Several respondents noted that the operations team had a particularly heavy workload, especially in relation to procurement activities, as the team was required to support both the Tunisia and Libya offices. The Tunisia office implements the majority of its programmes through direct implementation (discussed further under strategic partnerships), which entails significant procurement demands. Similarly, the Libya office faces complex challenges, including restrictive banking systems, adding further strain on operational capacity.

The Country Office lacked dedicated monitoring and reporting capacity, which had an impact on its accountability mechanisms and donor relations (recruitment for a Planning, Monitoring and Reporting position was under way at the time of reporting). There was no designated knowledge champion to facilitate institutional learning and cross-functional knowledge-sharing.

The organizational climate in the office was further strained by limited communication channels and weak coordination between programme and operations teams, all of which negatively impacted personnel morale and cohesion. Gender imbalance across staffing levels was also flagged, with HR reporting persistent difficulties in recruiting male candidates, thereby influencing internal dynamics and perceptions of equity – a challenge not unique to Tunisia and Libya but observed more broadly across UN Women offices.

The evaluation noted that the functional review proposed a clearer division of roles; strengthened core-funded technical and operational positions; and emphasized the need to bolster senior leadership and

mid-level management capacity, particularly to support the Libya portfolio. The review also recommended streamlined programme support functions, more stable contract modalities, improved knowledge management and stronger accountability mechanisms.

**Resource mobilization:** During the current Strategic Note period, the evaluation observed that the Tunisia Country Office undertook limited resource mobilization efforts and relied heavily on regional programmes and joint initiatives. As reflected in Figure 3 above, there was a consistent shortfall in the resources mobilized against the targeted budget. This is also reflected in the limited number of Project Appraisal Committee meetings held between 2022 and 2025, with only one project presented during this period. Although the Country Office maintains an updated resource mobilization strategy, reliance on short-term, project-based funding has constrained flexibility and hindered long-term planning. Securing multi-year funding would significantly strengthen the Country Office's ability to deliver across all pillars of the Strategic Note. The evaluation survey of Country Office personnel also reflected that while some resources have been mobilized, they fall short of what is required.<sup>68</sup> Overall, the evaluation consultations highlighted that leadership gaps, limited monitoring and reporting capacity, and restricted opportunities for partnerships with grassroots organizations and CSOs all contributed to challenges in resource mobilization and donor relations.

**Strategic partnerships:** The Country Office did not have any programme partners during the Strategic Note period, except for one which developed the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)<sup>69</sup> in Tunisia. This was reported to be largely due to regulatory restrictions on CSO operations in Tunisia: interviewees noted that government cancellation or non-renewal of registrations had curtailed CSO implementing partner agreements, resulting in the office assuming the role of implementing agency. Consultations also indicated that the prominence of regional programmes within the

Country Office portfolio further limited efforts to actively pursue partnerships with CSOs, women-led organizations and grassroots groups.

Consequently, UN Women's work in Tunisia relied heavily on direct delivery, leading to what personnel described as a "procurement-heavy" office. Activities such as event management and training are increasingly delivered through mini-bids and requests for proposals. To expedite processes, teams often depend on Long-Term Agreements, frequently sourced locally from UNDP or UNICEF, or from the UN Women Regional Office. However, these vendors are not always familiar with the Tunisian context. The personnel consulted described this approach as procurement-heavy and slow, with multiple projects bundled under a single request for proposal and substantial time lost to scoring and compliance requirements.

The Country Office launched a limited number of calls for responsible parties due to the short duration of many projects. For example, the Country Office receives short-term projects or requests for implementation from the Regional Office and headquarters (e.g. Strategic Partnership Framework funds projects for one year), making it difficult to engage with implementing partners. However, Country Office personnel indicated that UN Women's implementing partner selection process remains accessible and transparent: the call for requests for proposals is managed through the Regional Office-dedicated email and CSOs are only required to complete a form and submit basic documentation.<sup>70</sup>

The constraints highlighted above carry efficiency and quality costs. Interviewees described agencies with faster procedures having captured opportunities that UN Women could not operationalize at pace. Personnel also flagged that delivery through Long-Term Agreements can miss local nuances, and that administrative fixes (e.g. direct payments) ease reporting burdens for some partners but reduce flexibility, further complicating inclusive participation (e.g. transport stipends for rural women).

<sup>68</sup> See response to Q8 in the survey in Annex 5

<sup>69</sup> International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) is a multi-country study that examines men and women's attitudes and behaviours on gender equality, including norms around masculinity, relationships and violence.

<sup>70</sup> Find an open call here as example: [La promotion des droits des femmes par l'intégration de la dimension genre et jeunesse](#).

Internally, personnel underscored the need to revise the model of work to increase partnerships, including with programme partners, by (a) systematizing how partnerships are identified and leveraged, beyond ad hoc efforts; and (b) strengthening connectivity across portfolios so that civil society engagement is more continuous and strategic (notably on youth and social norms).

While personnel suggested working more with CSOs, they also highlighted the conditions required to successfully facilitate such increased cooperation, i.e. timely procurement support, context-aware suppliers and adequate operations/monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning capacity to co-design, monitor and course-correct with partners. Without these enablers, reliance on external Long-Term Agreements risks entrenching a service-procurement model over a partnership-for-change model that is central to UN Women's comparative advantage.

**Internal coordination across the portfolio:** During the period under review, the Country Office's coordination across portfolios relied largely on meetings without a functional mechanism to identify, prioritize and manage inter-thematic synergies. Personnel described limited, open information-sharing, often resulting unknowingly in duplication of work, e.g. multiple teams' work on EAW from different perspectives, without a coherent, shared approach. According to these personnel, with the past country leadership gaps, regular programme meetings discontinued and delivery pressure pushed the teams to focus on individual projects rather than joint outcomes. A short, promising practice emerged during a two-month secondment from the Jordan Country Office, which introduced pragmatic tools and processes to identify and operationalize synergies; however, this was not institutionalized after the secondee's departure.

While the small size of the Country Office facilitated day-to-day coordination and informal problem-solving, the predominance of single-project posts and tight implementation deadlines reportedly still incentivized vertical delivery and limited systematic inter-thematic planning. Personnel emphasized that a projectized staffing model (specialists implementing "one single project") reduced the space to co-plan across portfolios and

encouraged short-termism over portfolio outcomes. In contrast, engagement with national government partners reflected strong internal coordination due to the number of Country Office programmes engaging with the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly, which required a unified voice.

**Forward-looking initiatives undertaken:** Despite the structural and organizational challenges identified, the appointment of a new Country Representative in August 2024 has marked a shift towards restoring leadership stability, strengthening internal communication and clarifying decision-making lines. The functional review and an associated change-management process – near completion at the time of writing this report – have supported this transition, with a focus on clarifying roles, strengthening accountability, reducing reliance on consultants and SSAs, and improving coordination between programme and operations functions.

Under the Country Representative's leadership, management has also begun to pivot towards a more holistic, cross-thematic way of working. This has included the revival of regular programme meetings, active facilitation of collaboration across teams and a gradual move from single-project delivery towards a portfolio-based approach aimed at improving internal coherence. Resource mobilization has also been established as a strategic priority, with concrete efforts under way in donor mapping and the development of project concept notes. Stakeholders nonetheless emphasized that sustained implementation of these reforms will be critical to addressing remaining structural inefficiencies and strengthening organizational cohesion across the Tunisia–Libya cluster.

### 3.5. GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Has the Country Office's portfolio been designed and implemented according to leave no one behind principles, including disability perspectives, and has it been gender transformative?

#### FINDING 11.

**The Country Office has progressively embedded “leave no one behind” and disability inclusion across its portfolio, especially for rural women, young women and survivors of violence. However, the approach is not fully institutionalized internally: standardized tools, monitoring and resourcing are still required. Climate and environmental integration are emergent and largely procedural rather than programmatic.**

The Country Office has demonstrated a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to advancing the leave no one behind agenda. The Country Office has prioritized the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups – such as rural women, youth (particularly those not in education, employment or training) and women with disabilities – through targeted interventions and policy advocacy. Notably, UN Women provided technical support to the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly in developing a National Action Plan for the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women, addressing the needs of women who constitute over 70 per cent of the rural workforce yet remain largely marginalized in the informal sector. Programmes such as the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment have enhanced financial literacy and access to resources for rural women; while leadership and advocacy programmes, such as the Nubader Campaign and the “Gender Equality Badge” with the Tunisian Scouts, have engaged over 1,200 youth from disadvantaged regions, in leadership, advocacy and positive masculinity training. Special focus was placed on youth not in education, employment or training and adolescent girls in rural areas (e.g. “Football for All” in Zaafrane). The Country Office also established the Youth Gender Equality Advocates Tunisia, a network that co-created the Country Office's youth engagement strategy. UN Women ensured the inclusion of sexual

minorities and other marginalized groups in round tables and consultations, particularly in the context of the IMAGES survey and youth strategy development.

At the institutional level, UN Women has advanced the production and use of gender-disaggregated data, supporting the National Council of Statistics in integrating gender indicators into national statistics and strengthened the capacity of ministries to integrate GRB and leave no one behind principles into public finance and policy.

Community engagement has been furthered through partnerships with CSOs, the formation of women's rights coalitions and the establishment of networks for peace and social cohesion. In the realm of political participation, intensive academies and leadership training have targeted women from disadvantaged and rural areas, ensuring their representation in electoral processes. The Country Office has also facilitated the participation of women with disabilities in national and international forums (e.g. IBSAR Association at the World Urban Forum) and supported capacity-building for service providers to address the needs of women with disabilities who are survivors of violence. Under the Safe City initiative, the Country Office collaborated with CSOs such as Ibsar to ensure their meaningful inclusion.

The Country Office conducted an EnAbility Audit<sup>71</sup> in 2024 to assess the level of preparedness and inclusivity within UN Women Tunisia, specifically in areas such as

<sup>71</sup> EnAbility Audits are conducted to assess the integration of disability inclusion across operations and communications.

employee recruitment, physical accessibility, programming, procurement and communications. By identifying existing gaps and barriers, the audit provides a baseline understanding of disability inclusion and serves as a foundation for developing an action plan with specific, time-bound measures. The audit revealed internal gaps that limit consistent, organization-wide practice: 71 per cent of premises/services did not meet basic accessibility standards; 94 per cent of respondents were unaware of a budget or timeline for disability inclusion; 100 per cent reported no disability inclusion training for personnel; 76 per cent were unfamiliar with obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; 88 per cent were not collecting disability and sex-disaggregated data; and 82 per cent were not consulting organizations of persons with disabilities. These results point to the need for an internal disability inclusion plan with clear resourcing and accountability to match external ambitions.

The evaluation survey evidence<sup>72</sup> indicates Country Office personnel see leave no one behind/disability inclusion as substantively integrated: a strong majority rated application of leave no one behind as medium (56 per cent, 9 of 16 respondents) or to a large extent integrated (37 per cent, 6 of 16 participants), with comments highlighting youth engagement (*Youth Gender Equality*

*Advocates Tunisia*); tailored actions for women with disabilities via Safe City partners (e.g. Ibsar); and careful support to migrant women with the Tunisian Red Crescent. The evaluation found that while the collection of sex disaggregated data was more consistently available across the portfolio, disability inclusion data needed to be collected, reported and used more systematically. Collectively, these efforts underscore UN Women Tunisia's commitment to ensuring that the most marginalized women and girls are not left behind in Tunisia's development trajectory.

On environmental integration, Country Office personnel<sup>73</sup> assessed progress as nascent: 31 per cent (5 of 16 respondents) said the extent to which the Country Office has integrated environmental considerations is limited, 56 per cent (9 of 16 respondents) rated it medium and 12 per cent (2 of 16 respondents) rated it large. Some noted good office practices (e.g. reduced printing) but limited systematic analysis in pro docs. The evaluation consultations with Country Office personnel indicated overall support for strengthening the office's work on environmental sustainability. Most personnel indicated that the forthcoming Ajyal programme and dedicated interventions on gender-climate budgeting offers an entry point to move from procedure to programmatic integration.

<sup>72</sup> See response to Q11 in the survey in Annex 5

<sup>73</sup> See response to Q14 in the survey in Annex 5

## FINDING 12.

**The portfolio has catalysed system-level changes, most notably through the institutionalization GRB and gender statistics, while contributing to social norms shifts. However, the depth and consistency of transformation are moderated by political constraints and uneven uptake across sectors.**

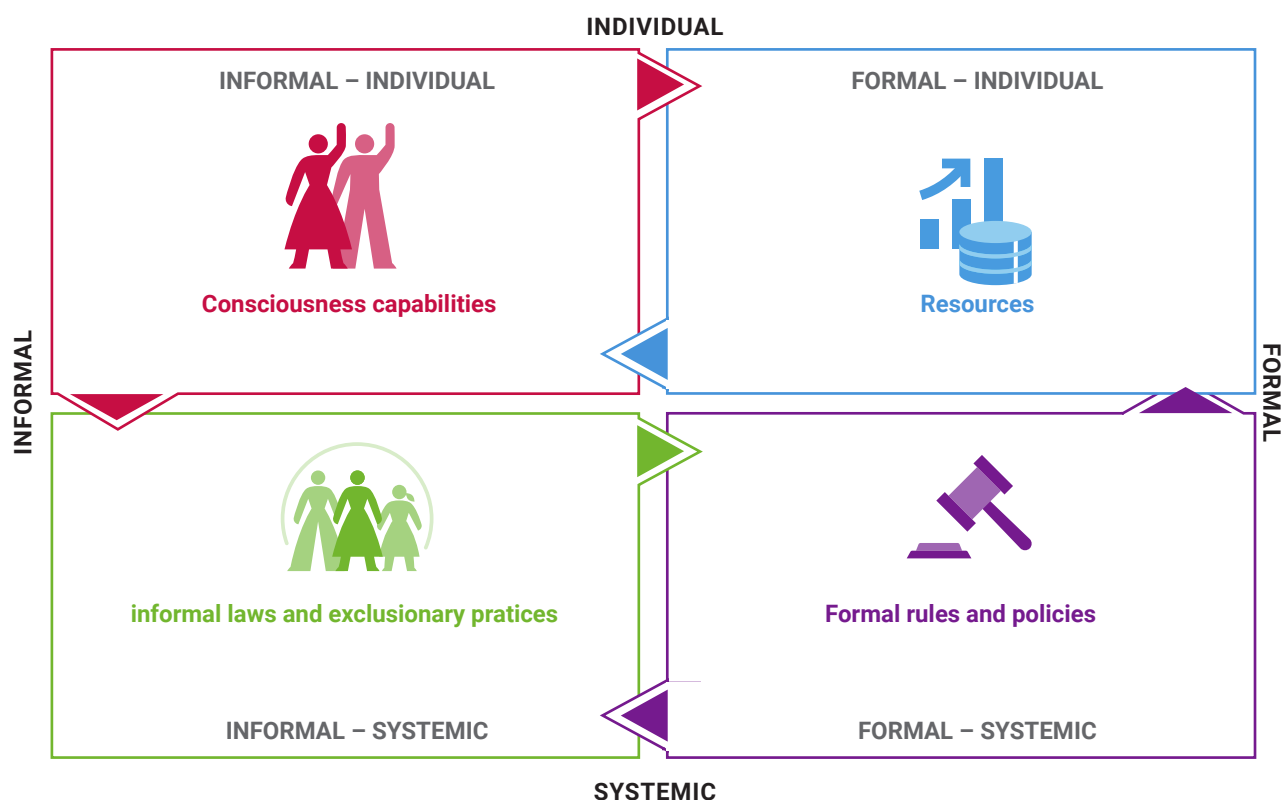
The Gender at Work Framework<sup>74</sup> provides a comprehensive lens for assessing organizational and societal change towards gender equality, distinguishing between formal and informal dimensions, as well as individual and systemic levels. The Country Office's interventions demonstrated engagement across all four quadrants, with varying degrees of depth and sustainability.

**Formal-individual (access to resources, skills, education, employment):** The Country Office has made significant investments in enhancing individual women's access to resources and opportunities. For example, through the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment, it delivered entrepreneurship

training, digital skills development and leadership capacity-building to rural women, resulting in measurable increases in formal labour market participation and off-farm income. The Country Office's targeted support for women parliamentarians and young women in STEM further exemplifies efforts to expand individual access to education, employment and leadership pathways. These interventions are complemented by technical assistance for service providers (e.g. police, social workers, legal professionals) to improve survivor-centred responses to violence against women, thereby strengthening individual capacities within formal institutional settings.

**FIGURE 4.**

Gender at Work Framework



<sup>74</sup> <https://genderatwork.org/resources/gender-at-work-framework/>

**Formal-systemic (laws, policies, organizational practices, resource allocation):** At the systemic level, the Country Office's most consequential contributions are evident in the institutionalization of GRB across government ministries; operationalization of Organic Law 58/2017 on eliminating violence against women; and advancement of national strategies such as the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women and the National Action Plan on WPS. As outlined earlier in the report, the Country Office has provided technical input, convened multi-stakeholder platforms and facilitated the integration of gender-sensitive objectives into annual performance plans and sectoral budgets. These efforts have resulted in the mainstreaming of gender equality within public financial management; the development of monitoring systems for gender-based violence policies; and the alignment of national frameworks with international commitments such as CEDAW and the SDGs. The Country Office's leadership in UN system coordination, including chairing the Gender Theme Group and supporting joint programming, further reinforces systemic change through collective action and policy coherence.

**Informal-individual (consciousness, self-esteem, beliefs, values):** Country Office programming addresses informal individual change, particularly through initiatives aimed at shifting attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions. Campaigns such as Nubader (in partnership with the Tunisian Scouts) and the Dare to Care regional programme have mobilized youth to promote positive masculinities and gender equality, fostering new norms among young people. Leadership training for women and girls, as well as the cultivation of youth ambassadors and sports-based empowerment initiatives, have contributed to increased self-confidence, agency and aspirations among participants. These interventions are critical for challenging internalized gender norms and building the foundation for broader social transformation.

**Informal-systemic (social norms, cultural beliefs, attitudes, relationships):** At the informal systemic level, the Country Office has sought to influence social norms and collective attitudes through public campaigns, community engagement and partnerships with civil society. For instance, the IMAGES-informed communications and youth-led campaigns are visible<sup>75</sup> and the Safe

Cities and Safe Public Spaces programme has engaged communities in participatory mapping and advocacy to address harassment and urban safety for women and girls. The Country Office's work with the National Observatory and the development of gender-sensitive media guidelines aim to shift public discourse and institutional practices around gender-based violence. The evaluation noted progress but engagement with feminist movements and grassroots organizations has been constrained by shrinking civic space and regulatory barriers, limiting the depth and sustainability of norms change. Stakeholders advocated for deeper, multi-level approaches and emphasized the need for a more integrated and participatory approach to social norms transformation, particularly in the context of rising pushback against gender equality.

Most survey respondents<sup>76</sup> indicated UN Women addressed the structural causes of inequality to a "medium" (56.2 per cent or 9 of 16 respondents) or "large" extent (31 per cent or 5 of 16 respondents), citing policy reform support (GRB), national strategies and social norms initiatives (Dare to Care). Stakeholders emphasized the need to further leverage grassroots and youth-led movements to influence power dynamics, particularly for marginalized women.

Overall, the Country Office's contributions span all quadrants of the Gender at Work Framework, with notable strengths in formal-systemic change (laws, policies, budgeting) and formal-individual empowerment (skills, resources). The Country Office also initiated promising work in shifting informal norms at both individual and systemic levels, although these efforts require greater scale, integration and partnership with local actors to achieve transformative impact. The need to consolidate the EVAW portfolio, deepen engagement with civil society and invest in sustained social norms change to complement legal and policy gains was highlighted. Addressing persistent barriers, such as limited civic space, under-resourcing and fragmented partnerships will be essential in advancing holistic and sustainable gender equality outcomes in Tunisia.

<sup>75</sup> Albeit modest relative to the context.

<sup>76</sup> See response to Q12 in the survey in Annex 5

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED

This section provides generalizable lessons from the experience of the Tunisia Country Office that have potential application in other UN Women offices and programmes.

---

### LESSON 1:

#### **The strategic value of systems-strengthening and evidence-based approaches to gender equality and the empowerment of women in restrictive contexts**

The Tunisian experience demonstrates that, even as national governments impose greater constraints on the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda, anchoring gender work in systems-strengthening and evidence-based interventions yields sustainable results. In contexts where the legal and policy frameworks for gender equality and the empowerment of women remain relatively advanced but the operating environment becomes more restrictive, UN Women's ability to sustain progress has hinged on the integration of high-quality gender data, gender-responsive public finance instruments and timely normative engagement to capitalize on policy windows. Specifically, the mainstreaming of GRB across 12 ministries and the strengthening of gender statistics have established institutional mechanisms that endure beyond political fluctuations. When coupled with evidence-informed policy dialogue, these efforts have enabled the advancement of reforms, such as the extension of parental leave, that challenge entrenched gender norms around care work. This approach illustrates that, in restrictive environments, investing in robust gender data ecosystems, GRB and targeted policy dialogues can maintain the visibility and actionability of the gender equality and empowerment of women agenda, even as political space contracts.

---

### LESSON 2:

#### **The imperative of “fit-for-purpose” structures and business continuity in Cluster Office arrangements**

Cluster Office configurations, such as the Tunisia–Libya arrangement, can magnify the operational risks associated with leadership vacancy gaps and limited core capacities. The absence of sustained leadership and prolonged vacancies in essential operational and monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning functions were found to exacerbate delivery and partnership risks.

An over-reliance on short-term consultancies and ad hoc workflows not only contributed to delays but also undermined the development of a cohesive “one office” culture. In contexts where offices are responsible for multi-country portfolios, the establishment of robust business continuity plans is critical. Such plans should encompass interim leadership arrangements, reliable back-up for core functions, stable contract modalities and structured onboarding and knowledge management systems. These measures are essential to safeguard programme quality and organizational reputation during periods of transition. The insights derived from this experience are transferable to other potential cluster settings and are particularly salient for any office navigating leadership transitions.

---

### LESSON 3:

#### **Integrating normative advances with service-system strengthening and community-level prevention to accelerate ERAW outcomes**

The Tunisian experience demonstrates that the enactment of comprehensive legal frameworks on violence against women yields the most significant and sustainable results when deliberately paired with investments in service-system strengthening and community-based prevention initiatives. While the passage of robust violence against women legislation is a critical normative advance, translating legal provisions into tangible improvements in women's lives requires concurrent and coordinated action across the enforcement chain – including hotlines, shelters, coordination mechanisms, and enhanced police and prosecutorial capacities – as well as survivor-centred case management. Effective prevention requires targeted interventions to shift social norms, address technology-facilitated violence (such as online violence against women) and promote urban safety. In Tunisia, capacity-building efforts for the 1899 hotline operators, regional coordination committees and violence against women centres, alongside youth-led and urban safety initiatives, have demonstrated promising results. However, the emergent and dispersed nature of these interventions has struggled to keep pace with the scale of need, highlighting the limitations of fragmented approaches. This underscores a broader lesson: to maximize impact, ERAW efforts should be consolidated into a coherent portfolio that systematically links services, justice and prevention – including responses to technology-facilitated violence – and employs robust measurement frameworks to track change across the entire pathway from law to lived experience.

---

### LESSON 4:

#### **Safeguarding the partnership model in restrictive and short-term project contexts**

The experience in Tunisia highlights the risk that, under restrictive CSO registration regimes and short project cycles, UN Women may inadvertently assume a de facto implementing role, thereby diluting its intended partnership model. In contexts where stringent CSO registration requirements and limited project durations prevail, the Country Office was constrained in its ability to issue calls for responsible parties, resulting in increased reliance on direct implementation. While such arrangements can ensure the continuity of activities, they risk marginalizing feminist partners and diminishing the depth of local contextual insight. Striking the right balance is critical for UN Women to remain a genuine partner, supporting national/local organizations to co-design, learn and adapt to enhance the likelihood that policy gains are translated into substantive improvements in services and social norms. The Tunisian experience also underscores the importance of integrating delivery and operational planning as a unified process.

# 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides overall conclusions and corresponding recommendations. The recommendations have been drafted following a consultative approach with the Evaluation Reference Group. Presentation of the preliminary findings and the way forward took place in a workshop with the Country Office management team to inform the recommendations presented below. Each recommendation is tied to corresponding findings and conclusions and includes actions for consideration by the Country Office. The level of priority and responsibility for the action are indicated with each recommendation.

## CONCLUSION 1:

**While the Country Office's portfolio is relevant and strategically placed to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, reprioritization may be required given the current context. The Country Office has demonstrated agility by adapting to Tunisia's evolving context, particularly in the area of women's political participation.**

(Relevance, coordination and Effectiveness; Finding 1,2, 3 and 4)

The Country Office's Strategic Note demonstrates robust alignment with Tunisia's national priorities, regional frameworks and international commitments, notably CEDAW, the SDGs and the UNSDCF. While thematic focus and implementation strategies remain relevant to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment within the national context, reprioritization may be required given the current context. The Country Office has demonstrated agility in responding to Tunisia's dynamic sociopolitical landscape, particularly in the face of legislative shifts and a contracting

civic space. Through effective utilization of its coordination mandate, the Country Office has made substantive contributions to gender priorities across both the UN system and donor community. Nevertheless, there is significant scope for the Country Office to assume a greater leadership role in facilitating dialogue on sensitive issues, such as the arrest of women political activists, especially amid prevailing uncertainties. To further enhance relevance and impact, the forthcoming Strategic Note should embrace transformative approaches in emerging domains, including the green and blue economy, climate change and digitalization, while simultaneously addressing the care economy and fostering women's participation in STEM fields. Greater thematic coherence is also imperative. This specifically entails consolidating the EVAW portfolio to reinforce multisectoral responses; prioritizing prevention and survivor-centred models; and strengthening linkages between WEE and EVAW. Scaling up social norms interventions, particularly those engaging men and boys, and integrating gender-responsive planning throughout the policy cycle (not just limited to budgeting) are essential.

## CONCLUSION 2:

**Constraints on political participation and WPS within a tightening operating environment have limited downstream influence. UN Women's value add is strongest where normative engagement is paired with support to women's leadership across public and private sectors, subnational reach and resilient CSO partnerships.**

(Effectiveness; Finding 3-9)

The Country Office has demonstrated effectiveness across multiple domains, with its integrated mandate yielding tangible advances in gender equality and women's empowerment. The Country Office's technical leadership, political acumen and convening skills have been particularly useful in operationalizing key legislative frameworks (such as Organic Law 58/2017 on eliminating violence against women) and in supporting reforms related to paternity leave, rural women's economic empowerment and the institutionalization of GRB across government structures.

Intentional efforts have been made to pair normative work with leadership development, institutional capacity-building, subnational outreach and grassroots engagement. For example, the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment not only supported rural women directly but also informed development of the National Strategy for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment. Similarly, the Country Office piloted an innovative WPS initiative on cyber-violence against women and girls, linking women's participation (activists, journalists and candidates) with protection measures and enhanced police capacity to handle digital evidence. The WPP portfolio has also prioritized capacity-building for elected women, particularly parliamentarians and young women in municipalities.

Work at the community and grassroots level emerged as a particular area of strength. Within the WPS portfolio, the creation of and support to the Women's Mediation Network exemplified effective grassroots engagement by building local capacities for conflict prevention and mediation and enabling women to participate in community-level early warning systems and conflict resolution. Additionally, youth-focused initiatives such as the Nubader Campaign with the Tunisian Scouts have promoted gender equality and positive masculinities,

institutionalizing these values through the creation of the Gender Equality Badge and community-led projects such as Project Emna.

Nevertheless, while partnerships with civil society and feminist movements are valued, they have not always met expectations. In the context of a shrinking civic space – marked by CSO registration cancellations, non-renewals and growing pushback against gender equality, including the rights of women human rights defenders – there is a clear need for deeper, more resilient partnerships with feminist groups and the broader women's movement.

## CONCLUSION 3:

**Internal enablers, including leadership continuity, appropriate levels of staffing and a fit-for-purpose structure are decisive for performance. In the Tunisia–Libya cluster context, leadership vacancies and limited capacity have amplified constraints, particularly across monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning, and operations functions. The appointment of a new Country Representative in August 2024 has begun to restore leadership stability and strengthened internal coordination processes. This is being reinforced through an ongoing functional review and change-management process, offering an opportunity to better align the office's structure with strategic priorities.**

(Efficiency; Finding 10)

Persistent structural and operational challenges have constrained the effective delivery of the Country Office's mandate. Sustaining the Tunisia–Libya cluster arrangement with the resources of a single Country Office has proven difficult, with critical leadership and operations positions remaining vacant for extended periods, undermining strategic oversight, coordination and resource mobilization. Resource mobilization efforts have been limited, resulting in fragmented and largely short-term funding that restricts flexibility and long-term planning. The Country Office's heavy reliance on direct delivery and external Long-Term Agreements, compounded by regulatory restrictions on civil society partnerships, has led to a procurement-heavy model that is often slow and insufficiently responsive to local contexts. Internal coordination has suffered from the absence of formal

mechanisms to manage inter-thematic synergies, resulting in duplication and missed opportunities for integrated programming. Furthermore, gaps in monitoring, reporting and knowledge management have affected donor relations, resource mobilization, accountability and organizational learning. In response to these challenges, the Country Office has initiated a comprehensive functional review and an ongoing change management process aimed at clarifying roles; reducing over-reliance on consultants; and strengthening communication and accountability. Early indications suggest that these reforms, supported by new leadership, are beginning to restore stability, enhance resource mobilization and foster a more cohesive and strategically aligned working environment. Nevertheless, sustained commitment to these organizational reforms will be essential to address underlying inefficiencies and ensure the Country Office is equipped to deliver on its ambitious mandate.

#### CONCLUSION 4:

**The Country Office has made significant progress in embedding leave no one behind and disability inclusion principles throughout its portfolio, although there is potential for further strengthening. Its work is well aligned with gender-transformative principles.**

(Gender Equality, Human Rights and Sustainability; Finding 11)

The Country Office has made significant progress in embedding the principles of leave no one behind and disability inclusion throughout its portfolio, prioritizing marginalized groups such as rural women, youth, women with disabilities and survivors of violence through targeted interventions, advocacy and community engagement. Notable achievements include technical support for the National Action Plan for the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women; youth leadership initiatives such as the Nubader Campaign and the Gender Equality Badge; and the establishment of networks such as Youth Gender Equality Advocates Tunisia. The Country Office's work has catalysed gender transformative changes at system-level, particularly through institutionalization of GRB and operationalization of laws and strategies for gender equality, while also initiating promising efforts to shift social norms and empower individuals.

The Country Office has facilitated the participation of women with disabilities in national and international forums and collaboration with disability-focused organizations has further enhanced the meaningful inclusion of women with disabilities in programming and service delivery. However, the 2024 Disability Inclusion Audit underscored that, to fully realize its ambitions, the Country Office must address internal gaps in accessibility, staff training, disability-related data collection and resource allocation. Development of a robust disability inclusion action plan, accompanied by systematic staff capacity-building, improved data systems and stronger partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities will be essential to mainstream disability inclusion across all aspects of the Country Office's work.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1.

Under the next Strategic Note, the Country Office should aim to achieve greater thematic coherence and engage deeply on a limited number of thematic areas of work that address the most pressing gender equality challenges where the Country Office has a clear comparative advantage.

**Priority:** HIGH

**Responsible:** Tunisia Country Office, Regional Office Strategic Planning Unit

#### Suggested action points:

- Consolidate the EAW portfolio by adopting an integrated prevention-to-response approach. This should be developed through meaningful consultation with CSOs and donors, and build upon government priorities. To maximize impact, the EAW portfolio should be cross-thematic, establishing strong linkages with WEE, governance initiatives such as GRB, and leadership, digitalization and social norms change interventions. Drafting a stand-alone, clearly communicated EAW strategy would further support coherence, visibility and multisectoral collaboration.
- The WEE portfolio should continue to refine its focus on strengthening emerging domains, including the green and blue economy and climate change, while simultaneously addressing the care economy and fostering women's participation in STEM fields. It should accelerate and broaden its efforts to achieve the expected scale.
- Consider mainstreaming social norms interventions with a particular emphasis on engaging men and boys as agents of change across all thematic areas of the portfolio to help foster more sustainable gender-transformative outcomes, addressing structural barriers to equality.
- Consider narrowing the focus of the WPS portfolio to ensure greater thematic coherence, limiting Country Office engagement to a smaller number of priority areas.
- Advocate for the integration of gender-responsive planning throughout the entire policy cycle, ensuring that gender analysis informs not only budgeting but also the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies.

## RECOMMENDATION 2.

The Country Office should build on the recommendations of the recently completed functional review to address the structural and operational challenges that have constrained the efficient delivery of its mandate.

**Priority:**HIGH

**Responsible:** Tunisia Country Office

### Suggested action points:

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the functional review process to strengthen the Tunisia–Libya cluster arrangement, paying special attention to the need for a second line of leadership and strengthened operations functions.
- Support revitalization of the teamwork culture and streamline internal coordination mechanisms.
- Strengthen the planning, monitoring, knowledge management and learning function within the Country Office, paying attention to capturing outcome-level results for advocacy, communications and resource mobilization.
- Continue to strengthen resource mobilization efforts by creating a small, cross-functional team to lead donor intelligence, pipeline tracking and strategic engagement, enabling a proactive, coordinated and sustained approach to fundraising that seeks to diversify the funding partner portfolio. Assign clear responsibilities for this team and ensure the unit collaborates closely with programme, monitoring, communications and operations teams to align fundraising with programmatic priorities and advocacy messaging.

## RECOMMENDATION 3.

The Country Office should foster resilient partnerships with civil society, feminist movements and grassroots organizations, with a focus on protecting achieved rights; building alliances to counter pushback; supporting gender-equality actors; and sustaining gender equality action.

**Priority:**MEDIUM

**Responsible:** Tunisia Country Office

### Suggested action points:

- Develop a strategy for engaging with civil society and feminist movements in Tunisia outlining the commitment to “do no harm” principles.
- Conduct an assessment and mapping of CSOs in Tunisia, and launch an open call for proposals to identify and pre-select a pool of qualified CSOs for potential partnership as responsible parties.
- Work closely with the UN Resident’s Coordinator’s Office, UNCT and donors to adopt a more coherent and strategic response to anti-gender pushback in Tunisia, building on growing concern about this issue among civil society, donors and UN partners. UN Women can add value by providing the UNCT with expertise and good practices on countering pushback.
- Regional Office and headquarters should provide systematic support, guidance and lesson sharing to assist the Country Office in developing a context-relevant approach to anti-gender pushback that is coherent with wider organizational-level responses to this challenge.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4.

Building on its disability inclusion efforts to date, the Country Office should further strengthen its work, paying attention to commitments under the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the recommendations arising from the Country EnAbility audit (2024), including the systematic collection and reporting of data on disability inclusion.

**Priority:**MEDIUM

**Responsible:** Tunisia Country Office

##### **Suggested action points:**

- Provide more explicit references to the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy in the Strategic Note and develop an associated workplan with clear targets to strengthen results in this area.
- Ensure a specific focus on collecting disability data to demonstrate reach and results.

# UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

As the lead United Nations entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social norms and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector, coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations, deliver lasting changes. We make strides in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and peace, security and humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.

