

LABOUR MARKET (RE-)INTEGRATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES – TUNISIA

Country note

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Manuscript completed in February 2026.

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European Training Foundation (2026), *Labour market (re)integration and skills development for persons with disabilities – Türkiye*, Turin

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PREFACE

The Country Note outlines the labour market (re)integration and skills development for persons with disabilities in Tunisia, focusing on Active Labour Market Policy and Measures. It is based on a comprehensive analysis of national policies, legal frameworks, institutional structures, and service delivery mechanisms, with a particular emphasis on identifying gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

The analysis was carried out in alignment with the framework proposed by the European Commission's Disability Employment Package. This initiative seeks to assist Member States in promoting social inclusion and labour market participation for persons with disabilities through tailored policy responses and enhanced cooperation among stakeholders.

This country note integrates two primary sources of evidence:

1. Desk-based research (secondary data) drawn from national legislation, statistical publications, government strategies, and international reports.
2. Qualitative insights from twelve semi-structured stakeholder interviews conducted with representatives of government ministries, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), employers, civil society actors, and international development partners. The list of interviewed institutions and organisations is available in the Annex.

The integration approach followed a thematic triangulation method. The desk research provided the baseline policy and statistical framework, while interview findings were used to test, enrich, and contextualise those observations. Each section of the report presents the original research narrative followed by an Integrated Analysis, where interview-based insights are compared to documentary evidence. Areas of convergence are labelled “Aligned finding: Research and Interviews”, while areas of divergence are marked “Conflicting finding: Research vs Interviews.”

This mixed-method design allows both for factual precision and experiential nuance. It was guided by three analytical principles:

- Triangulation – validation of data through multiple sources;
- Transparency – clear distinction between desk research and qualitative perspectives;
- Interpretive depth – moving beyond description to understand why alignment or divergence occurs.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings:

1. Data Gaps: National employment data disaggregated by disability type, gender, and region remain limited or inconsistent. The absence of comprehensive quantitative indicators restricted cross-verification of some interview statements.
2. Representativeness: The interview sample, though diverse, was not statistically representative. Perspectives mainly reflect institutional and civil society actors; private-sector employers and informal workers with disabilities are underrepresented.
3. Reporting Bias: Some interviewees, particularly government officials, may have presented more favourable views of policy implementation. Conversely, OPD representatives may have emphasised shortcomings based on advocacy priorities.
4. Temporal Scope: Both data sources capture a specific moment in Tunisia's evolving policy landscape. Legislative or programmatic developments occurring subsequently may not be reflected.
5. Access Constraints: Logistical and linguistic barriers limited field-based data collection, particularly in remote regions. This may understate regional disparities highlighted by qualitative accounts.

6. Comparability: The terminology used for disability and employment across different reports and interviews sometimes varied, requiring interpretive alignment to maintain consistency in analysis.

1 CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

1.1 Context

Tunisia is a North African country with a population of nearly 12 million as reported in the 2024



General Population and Housing Census¹. Following the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, Tunisia adopted a democratic constitution in 2014 that was later revised in 2022 to establish a presidential system. However, significant ongoing political transitions and governance challenges remain (National Institute of Statistics Tunisia, 2024; UNPRPD, 2023).

Economically, Tunisia's GDP is primarily driven by the service sector, which accounts for approximately 64%, followed by industry and agriculture². Nevertheless, the country faces persistent structural challenges in the labour market. The overall unemployment rate stood at 16% in 2023, with youth unemployment critically high at 38.4%, and female unemployment reaching around 21% (National Institute of Statistics Tunisia, 2024; Ulandssekretariatet, 2023). Labour force participation among the population aged 15 and over stood at 46.6% in Q4 2023, with male participation at 65.7% and female participation at 28.0%, figures that underscore the persistent gender gap in formal labour market integration (INS, 2024).

The informal economy accounts for around 35-40% of Tunisia's economic activity,

reflecting major obstacles in securing formal employment and access to social protections (UNPRPD, 2023). Inactivity rates remain high, especially among women and youth, many of whom are outside the formal sector or migrate abroad seeking employment opportunities, straining social systems and reinforcing economic vulnerabilities (Ulandssekretariatet, 2023)³.

Tunisian society displays a high degree of poverty and income inequality. The national poverty rate was estimated at approximately 16.2% in 2025, based on the World Bank's recent poverty and equity brief, using the international poverty line of \$6.85 per day. Higher poverty rates are observed in rural areas (24.8%) than in urban areas (12.7%) (World Bank, 2025). Multidimensional poverty affects

¹ Institut National de la Statistique (INS) (2025), *Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat 2024: Bilan démographique (mai 2025)*. Tunis: INS. Available at: <https://www.ins.tn/en/enquetes/population-and-housing-census-2024>.

² World Bank (2025), *Tunisia Economic Monitor, Fall 2025: Strengthening Social Safety Nets for Increased Efficiency and Equity*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/44080>.

³ Ulandssekretariatet (LO/FTF Council) (2023), *Labour Market Profile: Tunisia 2023*. Copenhagen: Danish Trade Union Development Agency. Available at: <https://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/LMP-Tunisia-2023-final.pdf>; World Bank (2025), *Tunisia Economic Monitor, Fall 2025: Strengthening Social Safety Nets for Increased Efficiency and Equity*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/44080>.

about 1.3% of the population, indicating critical levels of health, education, and living standards despite overall improvements (OPHI, 2025). Gender disparities persist in poverty and labour market engagement, with women facing greater risks of economic inactivity and income insecurity (Ulandssekretariatet, 2023)⁴.

Tunisia's socio-economic environment is shaped by its demographics, urbanisation trends, and evolving political landscape that pose significant challenges as the country strives to address labour market issues and social inequalities. Addressing inactivity and unemployment, especially among youth and women, reducing informal sector prevalence, and mitigating poverty and income disparities are critical for achieving sustainable and inclusive development (National Institute of Statistics Tunisia, 2024; Ulandssekretariatet, 2023; World Bank, 2025)⁵.

1.2 Situation of persons with disabilities

This section reviews labour market and administrative data from 2023 to. Labour market indicators are primarily sourced from the 2023 Labour Force Survey, with selective updates for 2024, while administrative disability and ALMP participation data are drawn from the Ministry of Social Affairs and ANETI, covering the period 2023–2025. References to strategic frameworks reflect policy documents validated between 2021 and 2025, including the National Employment Strategy (2023–2027) and the National Strategy for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021–2030)⁶.

Amid ongoing economic challenges, individuals with disabilities encounter unique and multifaceted barriers to participation and employment. Data indicates both under-registration and underemployment. Official statistics capture only a portion of the actual population of persons with disabilities, thereby understating the extent of their labour market exclusion.

Administrative records from the Ministry of Social Affairs, through the official disability card system, show that in the first half of 2025, there were 295 thousand adults with disabilities registered in Tunisia. This accounted for 2.4% of the population. The group includes approximately 164 000 men and 130 680 women. These data are based on medical assessment criteria, which likely underestimate the true disability prevalence (National Institute of Statistics Tunisia, 2024; Ministry of Social Affairs, 2025)⁷.

The relatively low administrative prevalence rate reflects structural and methodological factors rather than a genuinely lower incidence of disability. Registration is linked to eligibility for social benefits and depends on medical certification, which excludes many persons with mild or moderate functional limitations. Stigma and family reluctance further discourage registration, especially in rural areas. In addition, functional approaches such as the Washington Group Questions have not yet been systematically integrated into all national surveys, and disability-related information systems remain

⁴ Ulandssekretariatet (LO/FTF Council). 2023. *Labour Market Profile: Tunisia 2023*. Copenhagen: Danish Trade Union Development Agency. Available at: <https://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/LMP-Tunisia-2023-final.pdf>.

⁵ World Bank. 2025. *Tunisia Economic Monitor, Fall 2025: Strengthening Social Safety Nets for Increased Efficiency and Equity*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/44080>; Institut National de la Statistique (INS). 2025. *Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat 2024: Bilan démographique (mai 2025)*. Tunis: INS. Available at: <https://www.ins.tn/en/enquetes/population-and-housing-census-2024>.

⁶ Gouvernement de la République tunisienne. 2023. *Stratégie nationale pour l'emploi 2023–2027*. Tunis: Présidence du Gouvernement. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_867712.pdf; Gouvernement de la République tunisienne. 2021. *Stratégie nationale pour la promotion des droits des personnes en situation de handicap 2021–2030*. Document interne; références dans UNPRPD (2023), Situation Analysis – Tunisia (full country report), §1.2, Tunis: Ministère des Affaires sociales Available at: https://unprpd.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CR_Tunisia_2021-a86.pdf.

⁷ Institut National de la Statistique (INS). 2026. *Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat 2024: Module handicap*. Tunis: INS. Available at: <https://www.ins.tn/en/enquetes/population-and-housing-census-2024>; Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

fragmented across institutions. These elements jointly explain why administrative data capture only a fraction of the population with functional limitations⁸.

According to the 2024 Population Census, persons with disabilities represent a significant share of the population in Tunisia. Around 3.3% of residents aged 5 and above (about 375 600 people) live with a severe disability, while a much larger group, 12.2% or approximately 1.37 million people, report at least one functional limitation in areas such as vision, mobility or communication. Functional limitations are slightly more prevalent among women (12.8%) than men (11.5%), although severe disability affects both sexes at similar rates (around 3.3–3.4%). Disability prevalence increases sharply with age, rising from about 1.1% among children aged 5 – 14 to 27.5% among persons aged 80 and over. Geographical disparities are also evident, with higher prevalence of severe disability in rural areas (4.4%) compared to urban areas (2.9%). In addition, only 1.6% of the population aged 5+ holds an official disability card, indicating potential gaps in formal recognition and access to support measures.

According to the 2023 Labour Force Survey, Tunisia has 248 600 working-age people with disabilities (142 300 men and 106 300 women). Only 21.1% participate in the labour force, compared to about 44–46% for the general population. The employment-to-population ratio for this group is 17.7%, and the unemployment rate stands at 15.8% (National Institute of Statistics Tunisia, 2024; UNPRPD, 2023)⁹.

Glaring disparities exist by gender and residential location. The labour force participation rate for men with disabilities was 26.8%, nearly double that of women with disabilities at 14.1%. Corresponding employment-to-population ratios were 22.4% for men and 12.2% for women, evidencing significant intersectional discrimination limiting women's access to formal employment (UNPRPD, 2023)¹⁰.

Of particular concern, 196 200 persons with disabilities (78.9%) were outside the labour force in 2023. The most common impediments identified were health limitations, the scarcity of accessible employment opportunities, and social barriers including stigma and discrimination (National Institute of Statistics, Tunisia, 2024)¹¹.

Employment Composition and Sectoral Distribution among persons with disabilities (PWD) in Tunisia in 2025 reveal a complex interplay of formal and informal employment dynamics shaped by geographic, sectoral, and structural factors. Data from the National Institute of Statistics, Tunisia (2024), highlights that the workforce among employed PWD is almost evenly divided between salaried employees (47.2%) and self-employed individuals (51.3%), underscoring a widespread reliance on informal or precarious forms of employment. This duality reflects limited access to stable formal jobs and illustrates the crucial role of self-employment in sustaining livelihoods for many PWD, especially where formal employment opportunities remain scarce or inaccessible¹².

Employment is heavily skewed towards agriculture, with 42.8 percent of PWD working in the sector. This is followed by 28.4 percent in services and 23.1 percent in manufacturing and industry. The predominance of agricultural employment suggests that many PWD continue to be overrepresented in subsistence farming and lower-formality jobs, particularly in rural settings where social safety nets and

⁸ United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). 2023. *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. New York: UNPRPD (now Global Disability Fund). Available at: https://unprpd.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CR_Tunisia_2021-a86.pdf; World Health Organization (WHO). 2022. *Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities*. Geneva: WHO. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240063600>.

⁹ INS. (2026). *Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024 – Module handicap*. Tunis: Institut National de la Statistique. Available at: [Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024](#); INS. (2025). *Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024 – Module main-d'œuvre*. Tunis: Institut National de la Statistique. Available at: [Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024](#).

¹⁰ INS. (2026). *Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024 – Module handicap*. Tunis: Institut National de la Statistique. Available at: [Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024](#); United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). 2023. *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. New York: UNPRPD (now Global Disability Fund). Available at: https://unprpd.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CR_Tunisia_2021-a86.pdf.

¹¹ INS. (2026). *Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024 – Module handicap*. Tunis: Institut National de la Statistique. Available at: [Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024](#).

¹² United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). 2023. *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. New York: UNPRPD (now Global Disability Fund). Available at: https://unprpd.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CR_Tunisia_2021-a86.pdf.

labour protections are minimal. Such sectoral distribution points to entrenched economic marginalisation and limited prospects for upward mobility for PWD in Tunisia's evolving labour market.

Labour force participation rates further reveal a rural-urban dichotomy. Persons with disabilities in rural areas exhibit a marginally higher participation rate of 22.6 percent compared to 19.9 percent in urban areas, mainly driven by agricultural work in rural locales. Urban labour markets, while offering slightly higher-quality employment opportunities, continue to present substantial barriers to inclusion for PWD. These barriers include inadequate physical accessibility of workplaces, persistent discrimination, and gaps in workplace accommodations that inhibit full and equitable participation (UNPRPD, 2023)¹³.

These patterns illustrate the intersection of geographic, structural, and attitudinal challenges that limit the economic integration of PWD in Tunisia. The dominance of informal and precarious employment points to insufficient formal-sector opportunities for persons with disabilities. The overconcentration of persons with disabilities in agriculture, combined with limited access to formal employment in services and manufacturing, confines many to low-productivity, low-income activities, reinforcing cycles of poverty and social exclusion¹⁴.

Addressing the sectoral imbalances and employment composition demands an integrative approach. This includes strengthening inclusive policies that promote formal employment opportunities for PWD, expanding vocational training tailored to emerging sectors, improving workplace accessibility and accommodations, and combating discriminatory employer attitudes. Such interventions should pay particular attention to bridging rural-urban disparities and ensuring that self-employment and entrepreneurship are supported with adequate resources and capacity building¹⁵.

Access to employment services in Tunisia reveals significant barriers that contribute to the exclusion of persons with disabilities (PWD) from the labour market. As of June 2025, data from the National Employment Agency (ANETI) indicate a stark underrepresentation of PWD in unemployment registration: 3 847 individuals with disabilities were registered as unemployed in mid-2025, constituting 0.6 per cent of all registered unemployed persons. The total registered jobseeker pool over the same period stood at approximately 798 650 individuals; PWD are estimated to account for well under 1 per cent of this pool, although disability status at registration is self-declared and the actual share is likely higher (ANETI, interview, October 2025). Of the 3 847 registered unemployed PWD, 1 542 are women and 2 305 men. This severe underrepresentation underscores the considerable obstacles PWD encounter in accessing public employment services. Barriers include perceptions of inefficacy or inaccessibility of these services, which can stem from service design limitations, lack of adequate accommodations, and potential discouragement due to societal stigma¹⁶.

Women with disabilities face an additional layer of disadvantage within this context. Their lower registration rates in employment services, relative to men with disabilities, suggest even greater disengagement or exclusion. Social norms assigning caregiving roles to women, alongside gender-biased hiring practices and limited accessible training pathways, further restrict their labour market opportunities¹⁷.

¹³ United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). 2023. *Situation Analysis – Tunisia (full country report)*. New York: UNPRPD (now Global Disability Fund). Available at: [Situation Analysis – Tunisia \(full country report\)](#).

¹⁴ United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). 2023. *Situation Analysis – Tunisia (full country report)*. New York: UNPRPD (now Global Disability Fund). Available at: [Situation Analysis – Tunisia \(full country report\)](#); Ulandssekretariatet (2023), *Labour Market Profile: Tunisia 2023*. Danish Trade Union Development Agency, Copenhagen. Available at: [Labour Market Profile: Tunisia 2023](#).

¹⁵ United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). 2023. *Situation Analysis – Tunisia (full country report)*. New York: UNPRPD (now Global Disability Fund). Available at: [Situation Analysis – Tunisia \(full country report\)](#).

¹⁶ United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). 2023. *Situation Analysis – Tunisia (full country report)*. New York: UNPRPD (now Global Disability Fund). Available at: [Situation Analysis – Tunisia \(full country report\)](#).

¹⁷ United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). 2023. *Situation Analysis – Tunisia (full country report)*. New York: UNPRPD (now Global Disability Fund). Available at: [Situation Analysis – Tunisia \(full country report\)](#); *Authors' interviews with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (LAMS, OTDDPH, IBSAR)*, Tunis, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewees #1, #4 and #11.

Overall, enhancing labour market inclusion for persons with disabilities in Tunisia requires dismantling systemic barriers that perpetuate informal employment reliance and sectoral segregation, coupled with targeted efforts to create accessible, decent work opportunities across diverse economic sectors¹⁸.

Socio-cultural perceptions of disability still restrict opportunities, as stereotypes regarding the productivity of people with disabilities and the need for workplace accommodations remain widespread. Employers interviewed considered hiring individuals with disabilities to be “administratively risky,” due to uncertainties surrounding insurance procedures and adaptation costs in the workplace.

Youth and Emerging Labour Markets

Tunisia’s youth unemployment remains among the highest in North Africa, reaching around 38% overall and exceeding 55% for young persons with disabilities. Barriers are compounded by weak transition mechanisms between education and work, limited employer incentives, and a shortage of accessible vocational options. While the National Civil Service for Youth theoretically includes persons with disabilities, it remains, “formally open but practically closed,” due to inaccessible digital systems and low awareness among disabled youth.

Inclusion within the education system is still uneven. Only about 1.3% of students with disabilities enrol in higher education, while over 60% remain illiterate, particularly in rural areas. Vocational programmes often steer young people with disabilities into low-skill, gender-stereotyped trades such as sewing or handicrafts. Public employment centres under ANETI rarely provide disability-specific adaptations, and career guidance seldom integrates accessible technology or targeted job coaching.

Table: Key Disability and Employment Indicators – Tunisia (2024–2025)¹⁹

Indicator	Value	Source	Reliability
Estimated prevalence of persons with disabilities (functional definition)	9–11% of total population	WHO Global Disability Report 2023; UNPRPD Tunisia 2024	Estimate
Officially registered persons with disabilities (administrative data)	294 680 (≈2.4% of population)	Ministry of Social Affairs, 2025	Strong
Distribution by type of disability	Physical/motor 43%, Sensory 29%, Intellectual 18%, Multiple 10%	Ministry of Social Affairs Registry, 2025	Moderate
Employment rate of persons with disabilities (working-age)	23–25%	National Institute of Statistics, 2024; ANETI records	Estimate
Employment rate – general population	46%	National Institute of Statistics, 2024	Strong
Female employment rate among persons with disabilities	<15%	UNPRPD Tunisia Gender Analysis, 2024	Estimate

¹⁸International Labour Organization (ILO). 2023. *Towards more job-rich growth: The case of Tunisia*. Geneva: ILO. Available at: [Towards more job-rich growth: The case of Tunisia](#).

¹⁹ Institut National de la Statistique (INS). 2026. *Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024 – Module handicap*. Tunis: INS. Available at: [Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2024](#); Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

Indicator	Value	Source	Reliability
Youth (18–29) unemployment among persons with disabilities	~55%	FACE Tunisia / Handicap International pilot data, 2024	Weak (sample-based)
Disability employment gap (difference vs general population)	~21 percentage points	Derived from INS 2024 data	Derived (moderate)
Share of informal employment among employed PWD	~68%	AIFO Tunisia Labour Market Review, 2024	Estimate
Regional participation variation (Coastal vs Interior regions)	Employment-to-population ratio, PWD aged 15–64: 2.7% in coastal governorates (Tunis, Ariana, Ben Arous, Manouba, Nabeul, Bizerte, Sousse, Monastir, Mahdia, Sfax); 1.5% in interior governorates (Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid, Kairouan, Jendouba, Beja, Le Kef, Siliana, Gafsa, Tozeur, Kebili, Tataouine, Medenine).	Ministry of Social Affairs, 2025	Moderate

Note. All rates in this table refer to the population aged 15 and over. General-population indicators are drawn from the INS Labour Force Survey, Q4 2023 (INS, 2024); PWD-specific indicators are drawn from the INS General Population and Housing Census 2024 (INS, 2024b), in which disability status is identified through the Washington Group Short Set on functioning. Differences in coverage and definitions between the two instruments are discussed in section 1.2; readers should interpret the gap between general-population and PWD-specific rates as indicative rather than strictly comparable.

Persistent structural barriers affect employability across all groups: inaccessible transport and training centres, limited availability of adapted materials and aids, negative employer attitudes and slow administrative procedures for issuing disability cards. Interviews consistently emphasised that these barriers, combined with fragmented data systems, hinder evidence-based policymaking²⁰.

Data gaps

Tunisia faces critical data gaps that significantly hinder the development and monitoring of disability-inclusive employment policies. There is no comprehensive, up-to-date national dataset covering key indicators such as wages, informal employment, access to training or reskilling, or employer hiring practices for persons with disabilities (PWD), limiting evidence-based policymaking and enforcement of existing legislation. Additionally, the absence of disaggregated data on employment outcomes and the lack of coordinated, centralised data systems across ministries result in fragmented approaches and poor accountability. Overall, weak data governance, limited institutional coordination, and gaps in standardised data collection severely constrain Tunisia's ability to design targeted interventions and advance labour market inclusion for PWD.

²⁰ Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.; Authors' interview with ANETI (Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant), Tunis, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #6.

2 STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Legislative framework

The rights and employment of persons with disabilities in Tunisia are regulated by a set of core statutes.

The Comprehensive Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 2005-83 of 15 August 2005) is the principal act governing disability rights in Tunisia. It establishes the legal framework for protection against discrimination, accessibility requirements, social protection, and employment rights. The law mandates reasonable accommodation in employment and establishes a quota system requiring public and private sector employers to reserve a percentage of positions for persons with disabilities.

The Labour Code of Tunisia (Law No. 66-27 of 30 April 1966, as amended) regulates general labour relations and contains specific protections for persons with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination in hiring, promotion, and working conditions, and requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation. The code also establishes protections against unjust dismissal and mandates equal pay for equal work.

The Law on Active Employment Policies and Vocational Training regulates the public employment service and the system of active labour market programmes. It defines employment broadly to include wage employment, self-employment, and cooperative arrangements. The law establishes the National Employment Agency (ANETI) as the primary body responsible for implementing employment measures and coordinating with vocational training institutions.

Additional legislation includes the **Social Security Code**, which governs disability pensions and social insurance, and the **Law on Social Assistance**, which provides means-tested support for vulnerable households including those with members with disabilities.

Ongoing reforms include proposed amendments to strengthen the enforcement of the employment quota system, as well as regulatory changes to improve the accessibility of public buildings and transport systems. The government has also announced plans to revise the disability assessment system to align more closely with the ICF framework²¹.

Although Tunisia has a comprehensive legal framework regulating disability rights, employment, and labour relations, its impact is limited by several important shortcomings.

Enforcement mechanisms are weak. Provisions on reasonable accommodation and quotas exist in law but are rarely implemented in practice. The quota system, although formally established for public and private sector employers, is widely ignored, with minimal consequences for non-compliance. Labour inspectorates lack the capacity and the mandate to systematically monitor disability-related violations, and sanctions are rarely applied.

There are conceptual and legal inconsistencies. The employment legislation continues to use language that reinforces medical and charitable approaches to disability rather than a rights-based model. Persons with disabilities are often classified administratively in ways that do not reflect their actual capabilities or support needs, and legal provisions do not adequately address multiple or intersectional discrimination.

The role of non-governmental organisations and organisations of persons with disabilities, although legally recognised, is not meaningfully ensured in practice. Their participation in policy design

²¹ Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

and implementation remains limited, and funding for civil society initiatives is inadequate and inconsistent.

2.2 Strategic framework

Tunisia ratified the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in 2008, committing to ensure equal rights, including in employment. The country has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol, which would allow individuals to submit complaints to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The National Strategy for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 is the main national framework on disability inclusion. It sets objectives for accessibility, social protection, education, health, and employment. The strategy includes specific targets for increasing the labour force participation rate of persons with disabilities and improving the quality and accessibility of employment services, although implementation has been slow and monitoring mechanisms are weak.

The National Employment Strategy 2023-2027 defines the national approach to labour market development. Its purpose is to increase overall employment, reduce informality, and improve the quality of jobs. The strategy mentions persons with disabilities as a priority group and includes commitments to strengthen active labour market measures and improve coordination between employment and social protection systems. However, specific targets, budgets, and implementation timelines for disability inclusion are not clearly articulated.

This marks a renewed focus on employment policy following several years of limited strategic planning. However, despite Tunisia's commitments under the CRPD and other international instruments, disability remains a marginal concern in mainstream employment policy. The strategy does not allocate dedicated resources for disability-specific measures, nor does it establish clear responsibilities for implementing inclusive practices across public institutions.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2022-2026 seeks to promote gender equality in public life, education, and the labour market. Although it has a broad scope, the strategy makes only passing reference to women with disabilities and does not include specific measures or targets to address the multiple forms of discrimination they face.

Although Tunisia has adopted several strategies touching on disability inclusion, their coherence and operational alignment remain limited. The National Disability Strategy 2021–2030 includes general commitments to employment, yet lacks measurable performance indicators and does not define institutional responsibilities for implementation. The National Employment Strategy 2023–2027 mentions vulnerable groups broadly but does not outline concrete measures targeting persons with disabilities. Interviews confirmed that cross-ministerial coordination is weak, with disability commitments often not translated into annual action plans or budget allocations. As a result, progress in implementing strategic priorities has been uneven and difficult to monitor.

2.3 Institutional framework

The Ministry of Social Affairs is the lead institution responsible for employment and social protection policy, including disability inclusion in the labour market. The Ministry develops policies, oversees implementation through specialised agencies, and coordinates with other ministries on cross-cutting issues such as education, health, and transport. However, its capacity is constrained by limited budgets, weak inter-ministerial coordination, and insufficient technical expertise in disability-inclusive employment²².

²² Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

The Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEVT) is responsible for the design and monitoring of active labour market policies, including the implementation of employment quotas and vocational training programmes. While the ministry plays a central role in promoting labour market inclusion, the mainstreaming of disability within ALMPs remains limited and enforcement of the existing 2% employment quota for persons with disabilities is weak. As a result, the ministry's overall capacity to advance inclusive employment policies is assessed as moderate and largely dependent on political leadership and external donor support.

The National Employment Agency (ANETI) operates a nationwide network of regional and local offices and provides front-line services including job matching, counselling, and administration of active labour market programmes. ANETI is responsible for implementing employment measures for all jobseekers, including persons with disabilities, but lacks specialised staff, adapted tools, and systematic procedures to ensure inclusive service delivery²³.

Employers are recognised as key partners in state employment policy. They participate in the work of ANETI and are formally represented in vocational education and training (VET) governance structures. However, employer engagement on disability inclusion is minimal, and there are no systematic mechanisms to promote inclusive hiring practices or support workplace accessibility²⁴.

Regional and local government bodies also have a legal role. According to the Law on Local Authorities, governors and municipal councils participate in the implementation of state and community social programmes, while municipalities deliver certain frontline services including social assistance and local employment initiatives. However, disability is rarely a priority at local level, and coordination between national and local authorities is often weak²⁵.

NGOs and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities play a complementary but increasingly important role. NGOs often provide front-line services such as pre-employment counselling, job coaching, and local-level mediation between jobseekers and employers, particularly where public employment offices lack specialised expertise. They also contribute to identifying candidates for vocational training and to monitoring barriers faced by persons with disabilities. However, their interventions remain project-based, small in scale, geographically limited, and dependent on unstable project funding²⁶. Interviewees from NGOs managing inclusive programmes stressed **chronic under-funding and late disbursement of grants**, particularly outside Tunis. They also noted that **donor-funded pilot initiatives often collapse once external support ends**. A clearer recognition of their role, including through stable partnership frameworks, would enhance the overall effectiveness of employment support for persons with disabilities.

Civil society organisations, particularly Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), are crucial in **advocacy, raising awareness, and implementing pilot programmes** aimed at enhancing employability. However, their involvement in formal policymaking processes is frequently inconsistent, as highlighted by both research and interviews. OPD leaders have voiced frustration that government consultations are often “invitational rather than participatory”, with NGOs sometimes invited to events but excluded from key drafting committees. This approach creates a sense of tokenism and hinders genuine co-ownership of national strategies, ultimately undermining the effectiveness and inclusivity of policy development.

²³ Authors' interview with ANETI (Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant), Tunis, October 2025. See [Annex, interviewee #6](#); UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

²⁴ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#); *Authors' interviews with Chamber of Commerce representatives, HR managers and disability service providers, Tunis, October 2025*. Aggregated; see [Annex](#).

²⁵ République tunisienne (2018), *Loi organique n° 2018-29 du 9 mai 2018 portant Code des collectivités locales*. *Journal officiel de la République tunisienne (JORT)*, No 39, 15 May 2018. Available at: [JORT text](#); “Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities” (*Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP*), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex, interviewee #2](#).

²⁶ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#); *Authors' interview with Humanity & Inclusion (HI) Tunisia*, October 2025. See [Annex, interviewee #9](#).

Donors and international partners support employment and social protection reforms broadly. The European Union, ILO, UNDP, and World Bank implement programmes on employment policy, labour market information systems, social protection modernisation, and gender equality. However, disability inclusion is not systematically integrated into these interventions, and coordination among donors on disability-specific programming is limited²⁷.

Tunisia's institutional framework for employment is formally well-defined, with clear roles. The VET system is a relatively strong institutional asset. However, **coordination between these actors is weak, disability expertise is insufficient, and accountability mechanisms are largely absent**. As a result, despite the existence of multiple institutions, persons with disabilities remain largely invisible in employment policy and practice²⁸.

Interviews revealed significant overlaps and gaps within the institutional framework.

Responsibilities for vocational rehabilitation are divided between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, **with no clearly defined coordination mechanism**. ANETI offices often **lack disability focal points** and do not systematically communicate with MSA regarding jobseekers holding disability cards. OPDs play a crucial role in providing support and advocacy but **lack stable funding**, which limits their effectiveness and scalability. Overall, the **system operates without a single entity** that ensures coherence of employment-related services for persons with disabilities²⁹.

2.4 Coordination and cooperation mechanisms

Tunisia has both formal and informal mechanisms that are intended to facilitate coordination between state institutions, social partners, and civil society in the field of employment and disability, but their effectiveness remains limited³⁰.

Institutionally, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) leads disability policy through its Directorate-General for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (DGPHP). It coordinates with the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Education, and local authorities. While this arrangement provides a formal coordination channel, fragmentation persists. Interviewed officials confirmed that, in practice, coordination among these institutions is limited. “Each ministry does its own part,” said one regional employment officer, “and we meet only when a donor insists on cross-sector projects.” Several stakeholders from OPDs and NGOs reported difficulty identifying a single-entry point for disability-related employment matters, describing the system as “fragmented and overlapping.”

Stakeholders repeatedly highlighted the absence of a unified disability database shared among ministries. According to one ministry official, “each institution holds its own data, and none trusts the other's figures.” Lack of data coordination hampers policy coordination.

The Labour Code establishes a system of social dialogue at national, sectoral, and enterprise levels, providing a framework for cooperation between workers, employers, and the government. In

²⁷ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#); European Commission (2022), *Multiannual Indicative Programme for Tunisia 2021–2027*. European Commission, Brussels. Available at: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/mip-2021-c2021-9082-tunisia-annex_en.pdf.

²⁸ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

²⁹ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

³⁰ ILO (2023), *Towards More Job-Rich Growth: The Case of Tunisia*. International Labour Organization, Geneva. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/towards-more-job-rich-growth-case-tunisia>; Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

practice, disability is rarely on the agenda of social dialogue structures, and representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities are not routinely included in these processes³¹.

Another mechanism is the **National Council for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, established under the 2005 disability law and composed of government representatives, local authorities, and organisations of persons with disabilities. This Council is mandated to advise the government on disability policy and monitor implementation. However, Council meetings are few and far between, its recommendations are not binding, and its influence on policy decisions is marginal³².

Local governance reform introduced **Regional Commissions for Persons with Disabilities**, designed to decentralise service delivery and monitor inclusion policies at governorate level. However, capacity and resourcing remain major constraints. Interviewees highlighted that these commissions exist largely on paper, often staffed by one or two individuals without specialised training. Regional disparities in budget allocation further weaken their impact, with northern and coastal areas receiving more consistent funding.

In the absence of strong formal coordination platforms, **cooperation often relies on informal practices and personal relations**. Staff in ANETI, municipalities, and civil society organisations frequently use direct contacts to resolve individual cases. While such ad hoc arrangements can be effective in specific instances, they are not scalable, not transparent, and do not contribute to systemic change³³.

The challenges emerging from this system are significant. Policymakers are often unfamiliar with the practical realities of service delivery, while service providers have little knowledge of the policy framework³⁴.

Overall, **the coordination architecture in Tunisia is more symbolic than functional**. Mechanisms exist on paper but fail to generate meaningful cooperation and depend on individual initiative rather than institutionalised processes. Stronger engagement is needed at all levels so that policymakers, service providers, employers, and civil society organisations work together to remove barriers and create opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate fully in the labour market³⁵.

Nonetheless, there are a few instances where coordination has produced more tangible results. In some governorates, such as Kef and Sfax, informal regional coordination committees bringing together ANETI, social affairs services, municipalities, and NGOs have been used to jointly follow individual cases and organise targeted outreach to persons with disabilities.

Under UNPRPD-supported programmes, inter-ministerial working groups have tested common disability indicators and shared responsibility for pilot inclusive employment initiatives. International cooperation projects funded by agencies such as AICS have also created practical collaboration between vocational training centres, local authorities, and civil society around inclusive training pathways. While these examples remain isolated, they provide useful models for more structured and institutionalised coordination at national scale³⁶.

³¹ ILO (2023), *Towards More Job-Rich Growth: The Case of Tunisia*. International Labour Organization, Geneva. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/towards-more-job-rich-growth-case-tunisia>; Authors' interviews with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (LAMS, OTDDPH, IBSAR), Tunis, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewees #1, #4 and #11.

³² Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

³³ Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.; Authors' interviews with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (LAMS, OTDDPH, IBSAR), Tunis, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewees #1, #4 and #11.

³⁴ Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.; Authors' interview with ANETI (Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant), Tunis, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #6.

³⁵ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

³⁶ Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

Tunisia's institutional framework for promoting the employment of persons with disabilities combines relatively well-established formal structures with weak coordination in practice.

Responsibilities are fragmented across several ministries, and both horizontal and vertical communication remain limited. Although coordination mechanisms exist on paper, stakeholders report that their influence is modest: inter-ministerial meetings are irregular and tend to focus on administrative issues rather than strategic planning or implementation oversight. Cooperation between public institutions and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) often depends on personal networks and local initiatives rather than institutionalised arrangements, while employers' organisations and trade unions are rarely involved in policy planning. As a result, coordination efforts have had limited impact on service delivery and the development of integrated support pathways. Stakeholders frequently summarise the situation by noting that "the system's bones are strong but the muscles are weak," and call for stronger central leadership, for example through a coordination mechanism under the Prime Minister's Office or an inter-ministerial council.

2.5 Sources of financing

All active labour market programmes are funded from the state budget and administered through the National Employment Agency (ANETI). These programmes, such as wage subsidies or support for entrepreneurship, are open to the general population. Persons with disabilities can in principle access these measures, but there are no disability-specific adaptations, no allocated resources for reasonable accommodation, and no monitoring of participation or outcomes by disability status³⁷.

Regional and local budgets play a role in financing social assistance, but there is no evidence that municipalities support employment programmes specifically for persons with disabilities³⁸.

The quota system was intended to create an additional source of financing for employment promotion and vocational rehabilitation for persons with disabilities. In practice, the quota system is not enforced, and therefore no such fund has been established³⁹.

Donor programmes are active in strengthening social protection and employment services in general. The European Union, UNDP, the World Bank, and the ILO provide financial and technical support for reforms in employment services, labour market information systems, and youth employment. Disability inclusion is occasionally mentioned in these programmes but is not systematically integrated, and dedicated funding for disability employment measures is minimal⁴⁰.

The absence of disability-specific programmes means that financing for the employment of persons with disabilities is effectively non-existent. This creates two major challenges. First, there is insufficient funding, as general employment programmes do not allocate resources for measures such as workplace accommodations, assistive technology, job coaching, or accessible skills training. Second, there is no accountability, as budgets are not disaggregated by disability status and it is therefore impossible to track whether public funds are reaching persons with disabilities at all⁴¹.

³⁷ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

³⁸ République tunisienne (2018), *Loi organique n° 2018-29 du 9 mai 2018 portant Code des collectivités locales*. Journal officiel de la République tunisienne (JORT), n° 39, 15 mai 2018. Available at: [Loi organique n° 2018-29](#); Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

³⁹ République tunisienne. 2005. *Loi d'orientation n° 2005-83 du 15 août 2005 relative à la promotion et à la protection des personnes handicapées*. Journal officiel de la République tunisienne (JORT), no 65, 16 August 2005. Available at: [Loi d'orientation n° 2005-83](#); Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

⁴⁰ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#); Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

⁴¹ Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

Financing challenges are a major constraint on the implementation of disability-employment measures. Budget allocations for workplace adaptations and vocational rehabilitation are insufficient, and disbursement processes are often slow. Public institutions reported that funding is primarily consumed by basic operational needs, leaving little room for programme innovation. Moreover, financial reporting systems do not disaggregate expenditure by disability-related activities, making it difficult to assess the efficiency or effectiveness of public spending in this area. Donor-funded pilot initiatives remain isolated and are not systematically scaled due to lack of domestic funding⁴².

⁴² Authors' interview with Humanity & Inclusion (HI) Tunisia, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #9.; Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

3 POLICIES SUPPORTING EMPLOYABILITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

3.1 Services supporting employability of persons with disabilities

Employment services for jobseekers, including persons with disabilities, are delivered through the National Employment Agency (ANETI). The agency is required to carry out needs assessments, prepare individual employment plans, and provide job matching services. The legal framework designates persons with disabilities as a priority group for employment services, and in principle they should receive tailored support⁴³.

Despite this framework, services remain largely generic. Counselling is not tailored to disability-related needs and there are no case managers or job coaches⁴⁴.

The lack of disaggregated monitoring data makes it impossible to determine how many persons with disabilities benefit from these services. Available evidence suggests that the number of users is very low. NGOs sometimes provide complementary services, but these are project-based, limited in scope, and not integrated into the national employment service system⁴⁵.

As a result, although the legal framework foresees individualised services and recognises persons with disabilities as a priority group, the absence of practical adaptations, reliable monitoring, and systematic cooperation severely limits their effectiveness in supporting employability⁴⁶.

Table 2 – PWD Participation in Job-Seeking Services (Tunisia)⁴⁷

Measure / Service	Total Participants	PWD Participants	Share of PWD	Source	Data Strength
Employment counselling (ANETI)	90 000 jobseekers	~2 500 PWD	~2.8%	ANETI 2023	Moderate
Job fairs / employer matching events	15 000	350 PWD	2.3%	ANETI, 2022	Estimate
Entrepreneurship advisory sessions	2 500	250 PWD	10%	Handicap International, 2020	Moderate
Accessibility audits / workplace adaptation requests		120 PWD beneficiaries		HI project records, 2020	Weak

Source: ANETI, administrative data shared during the country mission, October 2025; authors' compilation.

Note: This table summarises the participation of persons with disabilities in selected ANETI employment services over the period 2024–2025. Figures are drawn from ANETI administrative reporting shared during the country mission. They should be

⁴³ République tunisienne (2005), *Loi d'orientation n° 2005-83 du 15 août 2005 relative à la promotion et à la protection des personnes handicapées*. *Journal officiel de la République tunisienne (JORT)*, No 65, pp. 2236–2241. Available at: [Loi d'orientation n° 2005-83](#).

⁴⁴ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

⁴⁵ Authors' interview with Humanity & Inclusion (HI) Tunisia, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #9.; Authors' interview with AIFO Tunisia, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #10.

⁴⁶ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

⁴⁷ Authors' interview with ANETI (*Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant*), Tunis, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #6.; World Bank (2024), *Bridging the Employment Gap for Youth and Women in Tunisia: ANETI Digital Transformation Brief (TERI Programme)*. World Bank, Washington, DC. Available at:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/programmes/teri/brief/bridging-the-gap-how-tunisia-is-connecting-job-seekers-to-opportunities>.

read as lower-bound estimates: disability status at registration is self-declared, and stakeholders interviewed consistently considered the actual share of PWD users to be higher than what the registration system captures. Three caveats apply: (i) individuals registered under more than one programme are counted under each one; (ii) the figures do not distinguish between active beneficiaries and those whose participation has ended within the reporting period; and (iii) ANETI's reporting categories have evolved between 2023 and 2025, which limits direct year-on-year comparisons.

The accessibility of employment services remains uneven. Many ANETI offices lack ramps, adapted counters, or sign language interpreters, which discourages persons with disabilities from registering. Digital platforms are not fully compliant with accessibility standards, particularly for persons with visual impairments. No systematic evaluation of service effectiveness for persons with disabilities has been conducted, and monitoring tools do not track outcomes for this group. Interviews indicated that counsellors have limited training in disability inclusion, resulting in inconsistent quality of support and limited ability to tailor services to individual needs⁴⁸.

3.2 Measures supporting employability of persons with disabilities

Measures supporting employability of persons with disabilities in Tunisia primarily operate through the Public Employment Service, offering universal supply-side interventions such as vocational training referrals. However, these measures are not specifically designed or adapted to address the unique needs of persons with disabilities (PWD). Training opportunities frequently lack physical accessibility, and curricula are often not adjusted to diverse learning requirements⁴⁹.

Between 2020 and 2021, budgetary constraints and administrative reorganisations led to the temporary suspension of several state employment measures, creating a policy vacuum, as no new programmes were introduced to replace discontinued ones. This interruption exacerbated the exclusion of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, from active labour market support systems, deepening existing inequalities⁵⁰.

The following table provides recent estimates regarding the participation of individuals with disabilities in Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) measures. Vocational rehabilitation training is particularly notable, reaching approximately 700 individuals annually.

Three instruments dominate adaptsupport for persons with disabilities in Tunisia. The first is vocational rehabilitation training, delivered through specialised centres under the Ministry of Social Affairs and its General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (DGPHP); this stream reached approximately 700 PWD beneficiaries in 2024 and combines skills acquisition with adaptive support over programmes typically running six to twelve months. The second is wage-subsidy placement, channelled primarily through ANETI's SIVP scheme (*Stage d'initiation à la vie professionnelle*) and other adaptation and integration contracts, with PWD participation small in absolute terms but trending upward since the 2023 ANETI Job Fair for People with Disabilities (WAPES, 2023). The third is self-employment support, provided through Banque Tunisienne de Solidarité in the form of micro-loans for income-generating activities. The three instruments are administered by different ministries (MAS, MEVT, and the Ministry of Finance respectively) and target different stages of the activation pathway: rehabilitation, wage employment, and self-employment.

⁴⁸ Authors' interview with ANETI (*Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant*), Tunis, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #6.

⁴⁹ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#); Authors' interview with the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Physically Disabled Persons, October 2025; and the Vocational Training Centre for the Deaf, Ksar Hellal, October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewees #7 and #8.

⁵⁰ ILO (2023), *Towards More Job-Rich Growth: The Case of Tunisia*. International Labour Organization, Geneva. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/towards-more-job-rich-growth-case-tunisia>; World Bank (2025), *Tunisia Economic Monitor, Fall 2025: Strengthening Social Safety Nets for Increased Efficiency and Equity*. World Bank, Washington, DC. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/44080>.

Table 3 – Additional Education and Training for PWD (Tunisia)

Program Type	Description	PWD Participants	Year	Source	Data Strength
Vocational rehabilitation training (MAS/DGPHP, PWD-specific)	Technical and soft skills	~700	2023	Ministry of Social Affairs	Moderate
Entrepreneurship training	Small business creation	~200	2022	UNPRPD / HI	Moderate
Digital skills initiatives	ICT literacy programmes	~100	2022	UNDP Tunisia	Estimate
Apprenticeships / internships	Supported placements	<100	2021	NGO projects	Weak
Literacy / life skills	Basic education for PWD			Not tracked nationally	Weak

Source: Interviews with stakeholders

Since 2025, Tunisia has strengthened the disability focus of its employability measures, supported by greater political and financial commitment. However, further progress requires a more comprehensive and flexible approach that improves accessibility, provides tailored training, engages employers, and ensures consistent policy implementation. This is essential to enable persons with disabilities to participate more fully in the labour market⁵¹.

3.3 Enhancing capacity of main stakeholders

The capacity of primary stakeholders engaged in disability employment in Tunisia remains constrained, with notable deficiencies in specialised training, institutional structures, and integrated support systems. The public employment sector does not have dedicated supported employment agencies or coordinators focused on disability, limiting the availability of tailored support for persons with disabilities seeking employment, despite the presence of some vocational centres offering adapted training programmes⁵².

Despite those gaps, so far, initiatives addressing specific needs of employment service staff are limited. There are, however sporadic initiatives, pilot projects, and awareness campaigns.

Research-action projects, such as those led by the Italian Agency for Cooperation Development (AICS) and Tunisian partners, have introduced vocational training pathways specifically targeted at empowering persons with disabilities, including capacity-building activities for employment counsellors, social workers, and employer organisations. For example, the project “Independent Living” implemented in three regions has trained Tunisian professionals on socio-occupational evaluation and employment inclusion strategies⁵³.

⁵¹UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](https://www.unprpd.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ILO%20Disability%20Inclusion%20Strategy%20(2024-2027)%20-%2003%2012%2024_1.pdf); ILO (2024); *ILO Disability Inclusion Strategy 2024–2027*. International Labour Organization, Geneva. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ILO%20Disability%20Inclusion%20Strategy%20\(2024-2027\)%20-%2003%2012%2024_1.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ILO%20Disability%20Inclusion%20Strategy%20(2024-2027)%20-%2003%2012%2024_1.pdf).

⁵² UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](https://www.unprpd.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ILO%20Disability%20Inclusion%20Strategy%20(2024-2027)%20-%2003%2012%2024_1.pdf).

⁵³ AICS (2024), *Independent Living Project: Inclusive Vocational Training in Tunisia*. Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo, Tunis Office, Tunis. Available at: <https://tunis.aics.gov.it/>.

In yet another example, Spanish institutions provided training for Tunisian special education teachers, psychologists, and employment counsellors, including methods for vocational evaluation and inclusive practices. Such programmes have helped shift perspectives from charity-based models toward talent-oriented and rights-based approaches. Nevertheless, these efforts are not yet institutionalised or integrated into official training or employment systems at scale⁵⁴.

To realize sustainable improvements in PWD employment outcomes, Tunisia requires institutional capacity-building strategies that include systematic training for employment service staff, development of specialised support services like supported employment agencies, and the establishment of disability employment coordinators within public agencies. Additionally, fostering partnerships between government, civil society, and the private sector to share best practices and build shared standards in disability inclusion remains a critical priority⁵⁵

Bridging data gaps in Tunisia is foundational to dismantling systemic barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Without accurate, comprehensive, and disaggregated data, policy development and programmatic interventions will remain inadequately informed and less effective in achieving disability-inclusive development goals.

Several reforms initiated since 2023 aim to strengthen disability-related data. The Ministry of Social Affairs is developing a national disability registry to merge administrative datasets from regional directorates and specialised institutions. The National Institute of Statistics plans to integrate Washington Group Questions into upcoming household and labour force surveys, allowing functional-disability measurement aligned with global standards. ANETI has begun digitalising its registration and follow-up systems to better track the participation of persons with disabilities in employment services and active labour market programmes. In addition, UNPRPD-supported work is harmonising disability indicators across employment, education, and social protection sectors to reduce inconsistencies and improve comparability⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

⁵⁵ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#); United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). 2023. *Disability in the Arab Region 2023*. Beirut: ESCWA. Available at: [Disability in the Arab Region 2023](#).

⁵⁶ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

4 POLICIES SUPPORTING DEMAND FOR EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The private sector remains largely unreceptive to disability inclusion. Most private firms operate in the informal economy, which lacks the oversight mechanisms needed to enforce inclusion measures. Employers interviewed cited both attitudinal and economic barriers. Many equated disability employment with decreased productivity or additional cost, though few had firsthand experience employing PWD. Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce acknowledged that no systematic awareness campaigns have targeted employers to change these perceptions.

Evidence gathered during the country mission, including the employer-attitudes section of the UNPRPD Tunisia Situational Analysis (UNPRPD, 2023) and interviews with Chamber of Commerce representatives, HR managers, and disability service providers, points to prevalent negative perceptions of PWD employability, particularly in the manufacturing and service sectors. More than half of the employers consulted raised concerns regarding productivity losses, workplace safety, and the cost of workplace accommodations, even though few had direct experience employing persons with disabilities. These perceptions reinforce a culture of reluctance to integrate PWD into the workplace and contribute to the very low formal employment rates observed in section 1.2.

Despite those barriers, demand-side measures in Tunisia are weakly developed. Although several instruments exist in law or policy, their implementation is limited, coverage is small, and they have little measurable impact on employer behaviour.

The main financial incentive for employers is the **reduction or full exemption of employer-paid social contributions** for employed persons with disabilities, which directly lowers labour costs. The level of exemption depends on the degree of disability and can range from 100% to 50% exemption. These exemptions apply to employer social security contributions, vocational training tax and contributions to housing funds (FOPROLOS). The main logic of the instrument is to offset perceived productivity gaps or adaptation costs. There is no data on actual coverage of the instrument and its effectiveness.

Wage subsidies present another instrument for hiring unemployed persons from disadvantaged groups. These programmes are administered by ANETI and provide employers with a partial reimbursement of wages for a fixed period. Persons with disabilities are eligible for these measures, but there are no disability-specific provisions, no additional support for workplace accommodations, and no data on the number who have benefited.

The quota system is one of the key measures foreseen by legislation. The 2005 disability law requires public sector employers to reserve 2 percent of positions for persons with disabilities, while private sector employers with more than 100 employees must reserve 1 percent. In principle, employers who do not meet their quota obligations are subject to compensatory penalties. In practice, **however, the quota is widely ignored, monitoring is non-existent, and no penalties have been imposed.** Several employers claimed they had “never been officially informed” of the requirement, or lacked clarity on compliance reporting. Others considered the quota unfeasible, citing the absence of workplace adaptation support and guidance from authorities.

Within the public sector, adherence to the quota is marginally better but still incomplete. Administrative recruitment procedures for PWD are complex and often depend on exceptional decisions rather than standard practice. Civil servants with disabilities interviewed described the recruitment process as, “humiliating” involving repeated medical assessments and limited career advancement prospects. One participant noted: “I was recruited through a special quota, but promotion has been impossible for ten years.”

As a result, the quota system has had no measurable effect on hiring practices, with interviewees across the private sector revealing widespread misunderstanding of the quota system

In 2023, the government introduced a pilot programme to support employers in providing reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. The scheme allowed for reimbursement of related costs up to a specified ceiling. However, take-up was minimal, with only a handful of employers applying for support by mid-2024. The reasons for low participation include lack of awareness, complex administrative procedures, and insufficient promotion of the measure.

Entrepreneurship presents an alternative pathway to economic participation. Microcredit institutions and social-innovation programmes occasionally target PWD, but eligibility requirements and collateral constraints often deter applicants. Interview insights showed that microfinance institutions rarely adapt their assessment criteria. One PWD entrepreneur recounted being asked for physical signatures and in-person meetings “despite explaining that I cannot travel or hold a pen.” Stakeholders proposed developing dedicated credit lines with flexible documentation.

Tunisia also operates a dedicated scheme for **“creating sources of income for people with disabilities able to work,”** delivered through **Local Social Promotion Units (ULPS)** across the country. The scheme provides support for **launching small individual projects** (e.g. crafts, services, and micro-enterprises), with relatively simple procedures. Persons with disabilities can apply and may receive financial assistance, equipment, or facilitation.

The Tunisian government has launched a significant financing initiative under the 2025 Finance Law, allocating 5 million dinars (1.48 million EUR) **to support economic activities led by persons with disabilities.** This includes interest-free loans of up to 10 000 dinars (approximately 3 thousand EUR) per beneficiary with favourable repayment terms and an eight-year horizon with a two-year grace period. Personalised support services, additional training modules enhancing employability, and the development of standardised intervention frameworks accompany this financial support. Furthermore, certain private training institutions now offer free programmes specifically designed for PWD. The Tunisian Solidarity Bank has introduced facilitation measures, such as debt rescheduling for beneficiaries and credit lines for associations active in disability inclusion. These initiatives signal a stronger political commitment toward social justice and the economic integration of persons with disabilities⁵⁷.

Information and promotion measures directed at employers are insufficient. ANETI provides some counselling to employers, but there are no systematic campaigns to raise awareness or demonstrate the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities. Employer associations are not regularly engaged, and social partners have not prioritised disability inclusion in collective bargaining or social dialogue processes⁵⁸.

⁵⁷World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES). 2023. *ANETI: The first Job Fair for people with disabilities*. Brussels: WAPES. Available at: [ANETI: The first Job Fair for people with disabilities](#); Authors' interview with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs / DGPHP), Tunis, 6–21 October 2025. See [Annex](#), interviewee #2.

⁵⁸ Authors' interviews with Chamber of Commerce representatives, HR managers and disability service providers, Tunis, October 2025. Aggregated; see [Annex](#); International Labour Organization (ILO). 2023. *Towards more job-rich growth: The case of Tunisia*. Geneva: ILO. Available at: [Towards more job-rich growth: The case of Tunisia](#).

5 THE LINKAGES BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER POLICIES AREAS

5.1 From school to the labour market

Despite a strong legal framework, including Orientation Act No. 2005-83, **the transition from education to employment for persons with disabilities (PWD) in Tunisia remains weak and poorly structured.** Inclusive education is only partially implemented: a limited number of children with disabilities are integrated into mainstream schools (around 4 400–5 000), while the majority remain in segregated settings (over 16 000), reflecting persistent infrastructural, pedagogical, and attitudinal barriers. Accessibility shortcomings, insufficient teacher training, and lack of assistive technologies undermine learning outcomes, contributing to high illiteracy (around 62%) and very low participation in higher education (approximately 1.3%).

The link between education and labour market integration is particularly underdeveloped. There are **no systematic transition mechanisms** such as career guidance, work-based learning, or job placement support tailored to PWD. **Vocational training pathways exist but are often segregated, low-quality, and poorly aligned with labour market demand,** frequently channelling learners into limited, low-productivity sectors. Digital and advanced skills training remains marginal, further restricting access to emerging employment opportunities. Institutional coordination between education, training, and employment services, particularly with the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment, is weak, and engagement with employers is limited.

As a result, educational attainment translates only marginally into improved employment outcomes, with persistently low labour market participation among PWD. Gender and regional disparities exacerbate exclusion, particularly for women and those in interior regions. While pilot initiatives combining tailored training, job coaching, and employer engagement show promising results (e.g., around 37% transition to employment), these remain small-scale. Overall, the system continues to produce graduates with disabilities without adequate pathways into employment, highlighting the need for integrated, demand-driven, and inclusive transition policies.

5.2 Skills development opportunities

In Tunisia, skills development opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWD) remain limited and insufficiently tailored to their specific needs. The country lacks adult education programmes designed explicitly for PWD, and career guidance through the Public Employment Service is universally provided without adapted methodologies, specialised counsellors, or assistive tools. Consequently, these services tend to be inaccessible or ineffective for this population, highlighting a significant gap in inclusive vocational support (National Institute of Statistics Tunisia, 2024).

Recent reforms in the vocational education and training (VET) system introduce promising mechanisms, such as short modular programmes that allow flexible skill acquisition. However, these reforms have yet to incorporate concrete measures ensuring physical accessibility, curriculum adaptation, or reasonable accommodations within VET institutions. Thus, despite modernisation of the structural framework, it still falls short in providing fully inclusive opportunities for PWD, particularly in terms of institutional accessibility and supportive learning environments.

In addition to governmental efforts, NGOs have occasionally provided training initiatives for PWD, frequently supported by international donors. However, these limited initiatives remain fragmented and are not integrated into the national qualifications framework. Moreover, a recurrent issue is the gendered nature of these programmes, which predominantly train women in stereotypical roles such as crafts or low-paid service work rather than preparing them for sustainable, diverse employment

paths. This limits the long-term economic empowerment and career advancement potential of PWD, reinforcing social and economic marginalisation.

In particular, the government has recently launched a financing initiative aimed at supporting PWD with zero-interest loans and personalised training modules to enhance employability. Private training institutions are also beginning to offer free programmes specifically designed for PWD, marking a political commitment toward greater inclusion. The National Conference on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities led to a memorandum of partnership to expand access to vocational training and employment support, including provisions for adapted workstations and remote work opportunities.

Despite these developments, persistent challenges include the lack of adapted career guidance, insufficient physical and curriculum accommodations in VET, and the limited scale and scope of NGO programmes. Achieving effective skills development for PWD in Tunisia will require scaling inclusive training programmes, embedding them into national qualifications, and ensuring that gender-sensitive policies dismantle stereotypes and broaden economic opportunities⁵⁹.

In summary, while incremental progress is evident in Tunisia's skills development landscape for persons with disabilities, marked by policy reforms and pilot initiatives, a comprehensive, disability-inclusive approach awaits fuller realisation to translate opportunity into tangible labour market integration.

5.3 How social benefits support employment of persons with disabilities

Income support for persons with disabilities in Tunisia is primarily **provided through means-tested social assistance schemes**, rather than a distinct, comprehensive disability pension system. **Eligibility is based on official disability certification, linked to a medical assessment**, and integrated within broader poverty-targeted programmes managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. This framework ensures a basic level of income protection, although benefit levels remain low and insufficient to cover minimum living costs, leaving many persons with disabilities at risk of poverty. Stakeholders unanimously described the benefit as “symbolic.” Many noted that its value has not kept pace with inflation, leaving recipients dependent on family or informal work.

The system is characterised by fragmentation and limited disability sensitivity. Cash benefits are often combined with in-kind support and access to services, but there is no unified mechanism addressing the additional costs of disability. Means-testing is conducted at the household level, which may dilute the individual entitlement of PWD and reduce access to complementary support when other household income is present. Although benefits are not formally withdrawn upon entering employment, their interaction with poverty-targeted schemes may create implicit disincentives to formal work, particularly in low-wage contexts.

Administrative complexity and proxy means-testing mechanisms can lead to exclusion errors and inadequate targeting, especially where disability-related needs are not fully captured. Overall, while Tunisia's social protection system provides a basic safety net for persons with disabilities, the system's adequacy and coherence remain limited, with weak links to activation measures and insufficient support for facilitating sustainable labour market inclusion.

⁵⁹ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#); European Training Foundation (ETF). 2021. *Policies for human capital development: Tunisia. Torino Process assessment*. Turin: ETF. Available at: [Policies for human capital development: Tunisia](#).

5.4 Access to social services

Access to social services remains a key constraint on the labour market participation of persons with disabilities (PWD) in Tunisia. Provision is fragmented and uneven, with no state-funded personal assistance system, leaving individuals with higher support needs dependent on family or small-scale NGO initiatives with limited and unstable coverage.

Rehabilitation services and specialised support centres exist, but they are concentrated in urban areas, with limited capacity and long waiting times. This particularly affects rural populations. Coordination between rehabilitation, social services, and employment support especially with the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment remains weak, reducing the effectiveness of transition pathways into employment.

Assistive devices (e.g. wheelchairs, hearing aids, prostheses) are provided through schemes managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, but coverage is limited. The system is characterised by restricted availability, administrative delays, and insufficient funding, leading many PWD to rely on out-of-pocket purchases or forgo essential equipment, with direct implications for mobility and employability.

Significant regional disparities and accessibility barriers persist, including limited accessible transport, complex administrative procedures (e.g., disability certification), and weak service outreach in interior regions. In addition, the absence of comprehensive data on service coverage and unmet needs constrains effective planning and resource allocation.

Overall, while a basic service infrastructure exists, gaps in personal assistance, assistive technologies, and territorial coverage, combined with weak coordination and data systems, limit the capacity of social services to support sustainable labour market inclusion of PWD.

5.5 Accessibility

Accessibility in Tunisia continues to face systemic challenges across physical, digital, and informational domains. Although accessibility standards were formally adopted in 2005, enforcement has remained weak. The main issue lies in monitoring: the designated authority responsible for verifying compliance lacks the resources, mandate, and political backing to enforce standards effectively. As a result, public buildings, transport systems, and workplaces remain largely inaccessible.

In the digital domain, Tunisia's disability rights law obliges the government to adopt and enforce digital accessibility standards. However, these standards have not been implemented in practice, leaving the legal provision largely symbolic.

Government digital platforms such as e-government portals, online tax declaration systems, and employment platforms remain inaccessible to many users with disabilities. This forces users to visit physical offices, which are themselves often inaccessible, further increasing barriers to accessing public services and employment opportunities.

Informational accessibility is another gap. Public information campaigns, legal texts, and government websites are rarely provided in accessible formats such as Tunisian Sign Language, Easy-to-Read, or audio. This excludes large groups of persons with disabilities from participating equally in public life and accessing information about their rights and available services.

Overall, the lack of specialised monitoring mechanisms and the government's failure to adopt and enforce digital accessibility standards mean that accessibility obligations remain on paper. Without

reforms that include proper enforcement, training, and institutional capacity, accessibility will continue to be a major barrier to employment for persons with disabilities⁶⁰.

5.6 Gender dimension of policies supporting employment of persons with disabilities

Labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities (PWD) in Tunisia are strongly shaped by gender disparities. Women with disabilities face significantly lower participation rates, with labour force participation at 14.1% compared to 26.8% for men, and employment rates at 12.2% versus 22.4%. They are also underrepresented among users of public employment services, including the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment, indicating barriers to access and engagement.

These gaps reflect intersecting structural constraints, including restrictive gender norms, social stigma, and limited access to education and training. Women with disabilities are more likely to be confined to informal, low-paid activities, often in traditionally gendered sectors, and have a limited access to social protection. Lower educational attainment and restricted participation in technical and digital training further reduce their access to emerging labour market opportunities.

Regional disparities exacerbate exclusion. Women with disabilities in interior and southern regions face additional barriers related to transport, service availability, and institutional capacity, while most inclusive initiatives are concentrated in coastal areas. Weak coordination between gender, disability, and employment policies, in particular those involving the Ministry of Social Affairs, limits the effectiveness of targeted interventions.

While pilot initiatives combining vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and employer engagement show positive results, their scale remains limited. Overall, women with disabilities remain significantly excluded from formal employment, reflecting cumulative disadvantages linked to gender, disability, and geography.

⁶⁰ UNPRPD (2023), *Situation Analysis: Tunisia (full country report)*. United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York. Available at: [UNPRPD report](#).

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

Tunisia combines a relatively advanced legal framework for disability inclusion with the persistent and widespread exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market. While the country has established a comprehensive formal architecture anchored in foundational legislation and international commitments, this has not yet translated into tangible economic opportunities. Bridging this gap requires moving beyond formal policy design to addressing the underlying systemic, institutional, and societal barriers that continue to limit implementation.

At the core of this implementation gap are structural governance weaknesses. Responsibilities are fragmented across institutions, particularly between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, resulting in policy silos and disjointed service delivery. Coordination mechanisms exist, but remain weak in practice, and political commitment to enforcing existing provisions such as quotas and accessibility requirements is limited and inconsistent.

Access to labour market services is a major constraint. Persons with disabilities are significantly underrepresented among registered jobseekers and beneficiaries of active labour market measures. This reflects a combination of insufficient capacity within public employment services, lack of accessibility of mainstream services, and underdevelopment of specialised support such as job coaching or tailored counselling. While non-governmental organisations provide valuable complementary services, the scope of their activities is narrow and depend on unstable project-based funding, limiting their systemic impact.

On the demand side, existing instruments are underdeveloped and weakly implemented. Financial incentives, such as social contribution exemptions, are not systematically monitored, and the quota system is largely unenforced.

At the same time, policy measures are primarily designed for formal wage employment, whereas a large share of persons with disabilities in Tunisia rely on self-employment, informal activities, and low-productivity sectors such as agriculture. This structural mismatch reduces the effectiveness of existing instruments and highlights the need for more diversified approaches that simultaneously support livelihoods while facilitating transitions to more formal and productive employment.

Financial constraints further limit progress. There is no dedicated, transparent funding framework for disability-inclusive employment policies, and expenditures are not tracked in a way that allows assessment of their effectiveness. This weakens accountability and limits opportunities for scaling successful interventions.

Accessibility barriers remain a cross-cutting obstacle. Physical environments, transport systems, digital platforms, and access to assistive technologies are still insufficiently adapted, restricting participation not only in employment but also in education, training, and public services more broadly.

These challenges are compounded by significant data gaps. The absence of comprehensive, disaggregated, and coordinated data systems limits evidence-based policymaking and prevents effective monitoring of outcomes. At the same time, the education and training system does not adequately support labour market integration. High illiteracy rates among persons with disabilities, the lack of structured school-to-work transition mechanisms, and the concentration of vocational training in low-skilled, stereotypical sectors all contribute to poor employment outcomes.

Barriers are further intensified by intersectional inequalities. Women with disabilities face substantially lower participation rates, reflecting both gender and disability-based discrimination, while persons in rural areas encounter additional constraints due to limited access to services and infrastructure.

These factors interact to create a self-reinforcing cycle of exclusion, where limited access to education, services, and employment opportunities leads to economic dependency, which in turn reinforces social marginalisation and negative stereotypes.

Despite these challenges, there are important signs of progress. Recent policy initiatives, including new financing schemes for self-employment, pilot programmes supporting workplace accommodation, and efforts to improve data systems, indicate a growing recognition of the need for more inclusive approaches. Localised initiatives led by civil society and international partners demonstrate that integrated, person-centred models combining training, employment support, and employer engagement can produce tangible results. These emerging practices provide a foundation on which more coherent and scalable reforms can be built.

Overall, Tunisia has the legal and institutional foundations necessary to advance disability inclusion. The key challenge now lies in translating these commitments into practice through stronger coordination, dedicated financing, improved data systems, and consistent enforcement, while building on promising initiatives that demonstrate the potential for meaningful labour market inclusion.

6.2 Recommendations

Strengthening the employment of persons with disabilities in Tunisia requires a shift from policy formulation to **effective implementation of existing frameworks**, complemented by targeted reforms addressing systemic gaps. The recommendations below focus on practical, scalable measures that can improve outcomes in the short to medium term while laying the foundation for longer-term structural change.

Strengthening governance and coordination mechanisms

Improving coordination across institutions is a prerequisite for effective policy implementation. While formal structures exist, they require stronger operationalisation and accountability.

- Establish a **high-level coordination mechanism** with a clear mandate to oversee disability inclusion across key ministries (employment, social affairs, education, transport, finance).
- Define **clear roles, responsibilities, and reporting obligations** for all relevant institutions.
- Introduce **regular monitoring and public reporting** on employment outcomes of persons with disabilities.
- Ensure **systematic involvement of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)** in policy design, implementation, and evaluation.
- Build on existing experiences to **formalise and scale local multi-stakeholder coordination models**.

Strengthening institutional capacity and service delivery

Enhancing the capacity of institutions is essential to translate legal provisions into effective support for persons with disabilities.

- Strengthen the capacity of public employment services by:
 - Introducing **disability focal points** and standardised procedures
 - Providing **systematic staff training** on disability inclusion and job matching
- Develop and expand **specialised services**, including vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, and job coaching.
- Improve coordination between employment services, vocational training providers, and social services to ensure **integrated support pathways**.

- Establish **stable partnership frameworks with NGOs**, including predictable funding and contractual arrangements, to scale specialised service provision.

Strengthening demand-side measures and employer engagement

Demand-side measures require both improved enforcement and stronger support for employers.

- Strengthen enforcement of the **employment quota system** through:
 - Simplified and automated monitoring mechanisms
 - Application of proportionate sanctions
 - Transparent management of quota-related funds
- Conduct an **assessment of existing financial incentives** (e.g. social contribution exemptions) to improve their effectiveness.
- Develop **employer-oriented support services**, including counselling, workplace adaptation guidance, and awareness-raising activities.
- Operationalise the concept of **reasonable accommodation** through clear guidance and targeted financial support, particularly for SMEs.

Addressing informality and diversifying employment pathways

Given the importance of informal and self-employment in Tunisia and to better reflect labour market realities, policies should:

- Develop measures supporting the **transition from informal to formal employment**, including simplified administrative procedures and incentives.
- Strengthen and expand **self-employment and entrepreneurship support**, combining financial assistance with training, mentoring, and market access.
- Promote access to **more productive sectors**, including through alignment of training programmes with labour market demand.
- Integrate disability inclusion into **local and regional economic development initiatives**.

Ensuring adequate and transparent financing

The effectiveness of employment measures depends on the availability and management of financial resources. This requires:

- Establishing mechanisms to **track public expenditure** related to employment of persons with disabilities.
- Consider the development of a **dedicated funding mechanism**, including resources linked to quota enforcement.
- Ensuring adequate funding for **workplace adaptations, assistive technologies and specialised services**.
- Facilitating the **scaling-up of successful pilot initiatives** through sustainable domestic financing.

Strengthening accessibility as a cross-cutting condition

Accessibility remains a key enabling factor for participation in employment and services. It requires:

- Developing a **coordinated national approach to accessibility**, covering physical, digital, and informational dimensions.
- Prioritising **low-cost, high-impact improvements** in the short term.

- Strengthening mechanisms for **monitoring and enforcing accessibility standards**.
- Ensuring accessibility of **public employment services and digital platforms**.

Improving data systems and monitoring

The following actions are crucial to the acquisition of reliable data for evidence-based policymaking and effective monitoring:

- Developing an **integrated data system** on persons with disabilities across employment, education, and social protection.
- Ensuring systematic **data disaggregation** in labour market programmes.
- Reinforcing **monitoring and evaluation systems**, including impact assessments of employment measures.
- Using data to inform **policy design, targeting, and resource allocation**.

Ensuring the transition from education to employment

Greater coherency between education, training, and labour market needs improves employability by:

- Developing **structured school-to-work transition programmes**, including career guidance, internships, and apprenticeships.
- Reforming vocational education and training to ensure:
 - Accessibility and inclusion
 - Alignment with labour market demand
 - Expansion of digital and emerging skills
- Promoting employer involvement in training systems.
- Addressing gender disparities and expanding opportunities for women with disabilities.

Aligning social protection with employment objectives

Social protection systems should support, rather than hinder, labour market participation by:

- Reviewing benefit structures to **avoid disincentives to employment**.
- Introducing support to cover **additional disability-related costs**.
- Strengthening links between **social assistance and activation measures** to facilitate transitions into employment.

Tunisia has a solid legal and policy foundation for disability inclusion. The priority now is to **transform this framework into effective practice** through improved coordination, strengthened capacity, adequate financing, and consistent enforcement. Achieving this requires a systemic approach and the active involvement of persons with disabilities at all stages of policymaking and implementation, in line with the principle *“Nothing about us, without us.”*

6.3 Best practices

Despite systemic challenges, a number of promising practices driven by civil society, international partners, and recent government initiatives offer a blueprint for success. These initiatives are significant because they work precisely by addressing the specific failures identified in the previous section, particularly by fostering collaboration, introducing innovative service models, and centering the lived experiences of persons with disabilities.

A small number of promising practices emerged during interviews. Local OPDs, often with donor support, have implemented personalised employment-support pathways combining individual assessment, skills coaching, and job placement. These initiatives have reported positive outcomes in terms of job retention and employer satisfaction, particularly when workplace adaptations are accompanied by disability-awareness training for staff. Although limited in scale, these practices demonstrate the potential effectiveness of integrated, person-centred approaches and offer models for future expansion.

Overcoming Systemic Failures Through Localised Action

As a direct countermeasure to fragmented national governance, localised, multi-stakeholder platforms have proven effective. A project led by Handicap International, for example, successfully created “technical support committees” that have united diverse actors including Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), training centres, and public employment offices into a functional, collaborative ecosystem. Similarly, Municipal Accessibility Audits in Ariana, Sfax, and Tunis have demonstrated how local ownership can translate national accessibility standards into tangible improvements in public spaces, directly addressing the environmental barriers that perpetuate exclusion.

Building Human Capital and Fostering Opportunity

Innovative programmes are tackling the skills mismatch and creating direct pathways to employment through:

- **Adapted Vocational Training:** As a response to misaligned training, vocational centres in Nabeul and Sousse have pioneered the introduction of adapted curricula and assistive technologies, setting a precedent for inclusive public training policy that meets both market and individual needs.
- **Integrated Employability Projects:** UNPRPD-supported initiatives have demonstrated the power of integrated models that combine soft-skills training for jobseekers with sensitisation campaigns for employers, leading to an increased local employment placement.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** The inaugural “Employment Fair for People with Disabilities” in June 2023, co-organised by civil society and the national employment agency, resulted in 166 signed work contracts, proving the high potential of directly connecting qualified PWD with employers.
- **Inclusive Entrepreneurship Support:** The 2025 Finance Law has allocated 5 million TND for a comprehensive support package that includes interest-free entrepreneurship loans up to 10 000 TND, alongside tailored vocational training. This is complemented by pilot programmes offering microcredit and mentorship, creating replicable frameworks for self-employment.
- **Civil Society as an Incubator:** Civil society is fostering innovation from the ground up. The International Center for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (CIPPH) hosts startups like “handicare,” while the OTDDPH’s “Qyada” project develops leadership skills within the disability community.

The Centrality of “Nothing for us without us”

The common denominator in the most effective initiatives is the central and leading role of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities. Their expertise, derived from lived experience, is indispensable for designing policies and services that are genuinely responsive to community needs. This principle is captured in the powerful words of activist Bisma Soussi:

“Always consult persons with disabilities... They are best placed to improve their own lives”.

This approach stands in sharp contrast to the risk of ineffective interventions that arise when PWD are not leading the process, a practice critiqued by the OTDDPH as “Moutajara bel i3a9a” (Trading in disability). These innovations provide clear, evidence-based guidance for the systemic reforms needed at the national level.

ANNEX

List of institutions and organizations

The interviews were carried out with the following institutions and organizations:

1. LAMS NGO for the Blind, Visually Impaired, and Hearing Impaired
2. General Committee for Social Protection and Directorate General for Persons with Disabilities (PSH)
3. Former General Committee for Social Protection (CGPS) and Expert in Persons with Disabilities (PSH)
4. Tunisian Organization for the Defence of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OTDDPH)
5. International Center for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities (CIPPH)
6. Ministry of Employment, International Cooperation, Directorate General for PSH, and ANETI (National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment)
7. Vocational Rehabilitation Center for Physically Disabled and Injured Persons
8. Vocational Training Center for the Deaf in Ksar Hellal
9. Handicap International (HI)
10. Italian Association Amici di Raoul Follereau (AIFO)
11. NGO IBSAR
12. Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion (FACE) Tunisia

ACRONYMS

AB	Assignment Beneficiary
AIFO	Italian Association Amici di Raoul Follereau
ALMM	Active Labour Market Measures
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
ANETI	National Employment Agency
CGPS	Former General Committee for Social Protection
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIPPH	International Center for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DGPHP	General Directorate for the Promotion of Persons with Disabilities
DPO	Disability Persons Organisation
EAA	European Accessibility Act
EC	European Commission
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FACE	Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion Tunisia
GAP III	Gender Action Plan 2021-2025
HI	Handicap International
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology
MEVT	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training
MSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MSs	Member States

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPDs	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
OTDDPH	Tunisian Organization for the Defence of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
PES	Public Employment Services
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
PCs	Partner Countries
PSH	Persons with Disabilities (used in some organizational contexts)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UTSS	Tunisian Union for Social Solidarity
WHO	World Health Organization
YAP	Youth Action Plan

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