

PDHL  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME

UNDP, IN COLLABORATION WITH  
IOM, UNICEF, WHO AND UNOPS



TUNISIA

IN TUNISIA

TUNISIA

## PRESENTATION

### Duration of activities

The Programme began in July 1998 and was ongoing as of December 2003.

### National coordination

National Solidarity Fund 2626, established at the office of the Presidency of the Republic and now transferred to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity, is the national institution responsible for the local-level human development programme (PDHL).

The Fund set up a National Steering Committee, composed of representatives from various Ministries including: Foreign Affairs, Interior, Health, Education, Social Affairs and Solidarity, and Development. This committee guarantees the national coordination of the PDHL.

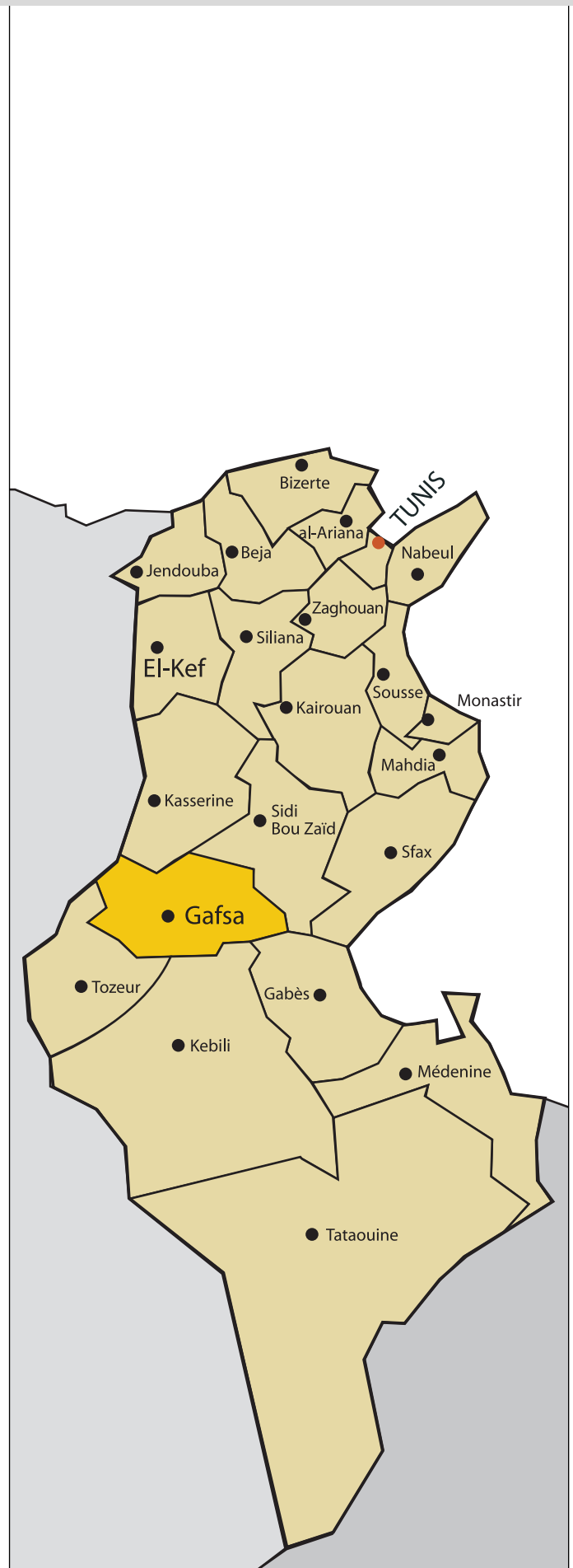
### Governments involved in cooperation

Italy.

### Territorial actors

Since 1999, the Human Development Committee of the Governorate of Gafsa has played the leading role in the territorial implementation of the PDHL. The committee is composed of the regional offices of various ministries and representatives of the civil society (Attafael, Club UNESCO, the Chamber of Commerce for Young People, Ahd El Jedid Farming Cooperative, Soay, and universities) and the private sector (Gafsa Phosphate Company – CPG, UTICA, and the Chamber of Commerce). The committee has programmed all PDHL activities, and set up four sectoral technical groups to guarantee project implementation in the various fields of activities.

In 2000 and 2001, by means of a broad participatory process, the committee drafted the Regional Human Development Plan, a document presenting the strategic guidelines for development in the Gafsa Region in accordance with the indications of the Tenth National Development Plan. Public presentation of the Regional Human Development Plan (also available on CD-ROM) was made on numerous public occasions by the secretary-general of Gafsa, and it is a point of reference for those involved in decentralised cooperation.



## Territorial partners

- Human Development Committee of the Governorate of Gafsa
- Committee of the Municipality of Palermo;
- Committee of the Lazio Region and the Municipality of Fiumicino;
- Committee of the Municipality of Napoli;
- Committee of the Sardegna Region and the Municipalities of Guspini and Arzachena;
- Committee of the Province of Reggio Calabria;
- Committee of the Province of Alessandria (Istituto di Cooperazione allo Sviluppo – ICS).

## Funding

Between 1998 and 2003, the Italian Government provided the PDHL with funding worth USD 1,600,000. In 2003, the Italian Government made a further disbursement of Euro 1,000,000. Between 1998 and 2003, decentralised cooperation committees provided

a total of USD 500,000 for the implementation of development projects. Moreover, the committees also made substantial contributions in terms of goods and high-level technical assistance, provided by technical experts operating from their respective associated structures.

## Key features

In 2001, the Tunisian Government made decentralised cooperation a priority issue in its Tenth Social and Economic Development Plan, for the period 2002–06.

Based on the experiences of the social cooperative Cartonnage & Arômes Pépinière Sociale Aghila (CAPSA), which was set up in Gafsa with the collaboration of the Committee of the Lazio Region and the Municipality of Fiumicino, the Tunisian Government's Tenth Social and Economic Development Plan for 2002–06 includes, for the first time, provisions for the promotion of social enterprises as a priority strategy for local economic development.

The Regional Rehabilitation Unit (URR) Support Project, which was carried out in Gafsa with the collaboration of the Committee of the Municipality of Napoli, won an award in the "One hundred projects to serve the community" event promoted by the Italian Ministry of Public Administration.

In 2002, the Tunisian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for the Interior took the initiative to extend the methods of local development to other governorates of the country with the backing of the international partnerships set up by the PDHL in the Governorate of Gafsa. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) followed up the Tunisian Government's request and drew up an initiative entitled "Gouvernance Locale et Développement dans le Maghreb" (GOLD/MAGHREB). This initiative is part of the UNDP Cooperation Framework for Tunisia and of the United Nations Development Aid Framework (UNDAF), and provides backing for the priorities listed in the Tunisian Government's Tenth Social and Economic Development Plan for 2002–06. The initiative was launched in 2003 at the regional level, and also concerned the governments and UNDP offices of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Algeria and Morocco. Coordination is to be provided by the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior. For the implementation of the initiative, the Tunisian Government consulted the cooperation offices of France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Japan and the European Union (EU). The results of the GOLD/MAGHREB Programme are presented in a separate chapter of this report.

## OVERVIEW

The PDHL Programme began in Tunisia in July 1998 with the arrival of the expert from the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in charge of coordinating the project.

The Programme was developed by UNDP and UNOPS, based on a protocol of understanding signed in February 1997 by the Italian Government and the Tunisian Government. Initially, the PDHL provided for collaboration between the International Decade for the Reduction of Natural Disasters (IDNDR) and the World Health Organization (WHO), through its Mediterranean Centre, which is based in Tunis. Overall funds initially granted by the Italian Government, through disbursements to the UNDP, IDNDR and WHO amounted to USD 613,000.

The Tunisian institution responsible for the PDHL is National Solidarity Fund 2626, established at the Office of the President of the Republic, for the support of low-income categories and those communities lacking in essential services, known as "shadow zones".

Initial PDHL activities involved the definition, in conjunction with the national and local authorities concerned, of the Programme's first plan of operations, which provided for a start-up phase and an operational phase. The plan of operations was approved on 19 December 1998 by the National Coordination Committee of the PDHL, and the start-up phase became operational immediately.

In November 1999, the first PDHL tripartite meeting was held with representatives of the Tunisian Government, Italian Government, UNDP, UNOPS, WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). At the meeting, the Tunisian Government also expressed its appreciation of the commencement of decentralised cooperation and its desire to extend the duration of the PDHL. In 2000, the Italian Government allocated LIT 1.8 billion to UNDP for implementation of the second phase of the PDHL/Tunisia.

In April 2001, Bechir Majdoub, formerly director-general of regional affairs at the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior, was appointed as the new Secretary of State in charge of the National Solidarity Fund. Following his nomination, a meeting took place between the him, the Italian Ambassador in Tunis and the UN resident representative in order to assess the progress of the PDHL and draw up short-term strategic guidelines. In June 2001, the Secretary of State sent an official communiqué to both

the Tunisian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the UN resident representative expressing appreciation of the results achieved by the PDHL in Tunisia and requesting its extension to other regions of the country.

In September 2001, the Tunisian Minister for Foreign Affairs presented a formal request to the Italian Ambassador in Tunis to extend the initiatives of the UNDP/APPI Trust Fund to Tunisia in order to consolidate the achievements of the PDHL in the Governorate of Gafsa and to extend the local development initiatives to another three governorates. At a meeting of the Italo-Tunisian Joint Commission, held in Tunis on 4–5 October 2001, the Tunisian and Italian Governments agreed in principle to consolidate the results of the PDHL in Gafsa and extend similar methods to another three governorates.

Bearing in mind that the PDHL was due to wind up its activities in June 2002, and in view of the prospects of setting up a new initiative that would involve several regions of the country, the Tunisian Government proposed the development of a further phase of the PDHL, to last 12 months, in order to consolidate the results already achieved and prepare organically the extension of the work methods used in Gafsa to the other governorates. The documentation relative to the third phase of the PDHL was approved at the tripartite meeting held in Tunis on 9 May 2002. The meeting was attended by the Secretary of State, the Italian Ambassador in Tunisia, the UN resident representative, and representatives of the Governorate of Gafsa and the human development committee. In July 2002, UNDP asked the Italian Government for new funds, amounting to Euro 1,000,000.

Taking into account the availability of residual finances, the PDHL arranged and agreed with the relevant Tunisian institutions on a plan for gradually closing down activities in 2003. Funds worth Euro 1,000,000 for the third, consolidation phase of the PDHL were approved at the end of 2003 and activities are scheduled to commence in early 2004.

## OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The Tunisian institution responsible for the PDHL is National Solidarity Fund 2626, established at the Presidency of the Republic, for the support of low-income categories and those communities lacking in essential services, known as "shadow zones". The contributions planned under National Solidarity Fund

2626 are managed directly by the governors and by local development committees, which participate in the Gafsa Human Development Committee.

Supervision of the PDHL at the national level is the responsibility of the National Steering Committee. This committee was set up by the Fund, and it is composed of representatives of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Interior, Health, and Education, and the Tunisian Women's Union.

The human development committee was also established and is now operational in the Governorate of Gafsa. It is composed of regional representatives of the ministries already sitting on the National Committee, and of representatives from the civil society and the private sector. The committee has produced periodic plans of operations for the PDHL, based on a jointly agreed system. In 2002, the committee further strengthened its role in project monitoring. Through regular meetings, the committee's four sectoral technical groups have ensured that the projects work well in the various fields of activity.

PDHL national headquarters are located in the UNDP representative offices in Tunis. The activities of the PDHL are handled by the UNOPS international coordinator of the PDHL. A locally contracted assistant, responsible for administrative and secretarial duties, was also hired to work in the national headquarters. As of April 2001, a PDHL office in Gafsa, located in the premises of the governorate, has been fully operational. From April 2001 to the end of 2002, UNOPS hired an area manager to work in the Gafsa office in order to coordinate the implementation of projects and provide technical assistance to those involved in decentralised cooperation. As of October 2002, management of activities in Gafsa was carried out by an official of the regional office of the National Solidarity Fund.

Following approval for funding for the third phase of the PDHL, relations with national institutions were maintained and the monitoring of some ongoing activities in the Governorate of Gafsa was guaranteed. The PDHL office in Tunis has been operational since 1 April 2003 under UNDP management and supervision.

## RESULTS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Throughout its term of activities, the PDHL has carried out numerous international activities to support ongoing development processes in the Governorate of Gafsa.

In 2002, the UNDP journal "Choises", which enjoys wide international circulation, published an article on the PDHL in Tunisia. From the statements made to by journalists working for the journal, it appears that decentralised cooperation partnerships have had a multiplier effect on the financial and human resources of Gafsa. In fact, numerous development projects have been developed and, at the same time, confidence, a sense of belonging, and a sense of responsibility have been generated among local actors.

The PDHL took part in the meeting organised in Cadiz (Spain) from 11 to 13 December 2002 by Arco Latino, an association which groups together Spanish, French and Italian provinces. The meeting had the aim of preparing a joint project between the provinces participating in Arco Latino and similar associations in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The meeting was informed about the experience of UNDP/UNOPS in supporting local development through decentralised cooperation partnerships.

## Results of decentralised cooperation

Decentralised cooperation with the Governorate of Gafsa commenced in the second half of 1999, when a Tunisian delegation visited the Regions of Sicilia, Calabria, Sardegna and Lazio; the Province of Cagliari; the Municipalities of Palermo, Catania, Messina, Reggio Calabria, Catanzaro, Cosenza, Crotone, Vibo Valentia, Verbicaro, Bari, Adelfia, Arzachena, Guspini, Quartu Sant'Elena, Calasetta, Serramanna, Serrenti, Selegas and Fiumicino, and the National Union of Mountain Communities. Between November 1999 and February 2000, missions to the Governorate of Gafsa were carried out by the Committees of Palermo, Catania, Napoli, Fiumicino, and the Regions of Lazio, Sardegna and Calabria. Following the missions, the Gafsa Human Development Committee conducted feasibility studies on the projects, which were integrated into the governorate's human development plan.

Together with the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ambassador in Tunisia, three editions of the "Cartago Dilecta Est" regatta, a cultural and sporting event, were sponsored by the Municipalities of Roma, Fiumicino and Ventotene. The scientific high school of Gafsa participated in the International Network of Young People on the themes of the G8 Summit in Genoa (July 2001). The Commercial Institute of Gafsa, as part of an initiative run by the NGO COPE of Catania, took part in a contest organised by the Sicilia Region for the promotion of international

exchanges on training for entrepreneurship. A Tunisian delegation comprising representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Governorate of Gafsa took part in a workshop held in Sardegna to launch the creation of an "integrated information portal for the community" in the framework of the EU's INTERREG III B. This programme groups together Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and French regions to facilitate the movement of people and goods in the Mediterranean area. As a result of the meeting, the Gafsa Region became an associate to Regions on Line (ROL) project, an integrated information portal for the citizen. The Gafsa Region is associated to this project, which is promoted by the Balearic Islands, at no expense and enjoys benefits from the training and transfer of know-how provided as part of the framework of the EU programme for the Internationalisation of Regional Development – INTERREG – MEDOC (October 2001).

In 2002, the URR Support Project, conducted by Napoli ASL 1 Health Centre, in partnership with the Gafsa regional health department, won an award in the fourth edition of "One hundred projects to serve the community". This event was organised by the Italian Government's Ministry of Public Administration to promote innovative and high-quality administrative activities of local public administration offices. For this specific initiative in Tunisia, Mayor Rosa Russo Jervolino of Napoli received a letter of appreciation from Honourable Franco Frattini, the Minister for Public Administration.

In 2002, the mayor of Gafsa paid a visit to the mayor of Naples in order to attend the ceremony of handing over six city buses and to sign a protocol of understanding with the Naples Transport Agency, which guarantees technical assistance and training for urban transport workers in Gafsa. The buses from Naples are used by the Municipality of Gafsa to supplement the school transport system within the municipal territory. A Tunisian delegation also met with the Campania association of industrialists, the association of tour operators, and the association of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which have expressed a desire to visit the Gafsa Region in order to study collaboration and partnership possibilities with their local counterparts.

Decentralised cooperation made a contribution amounting to USD 500,000 for the implementation of projects in the Governorate of Gafsa. The results are presented in another section of this report.

In 2002, as part of a university training course, a study was carried out analysing the impact of international technical assistance costs on the budget of each individual project conducted by the Programme. The study revealed that the percentage impact was considerably less than the standard normally adopted in international cooperation activities. In fact, decentralised cooperation committees provide high-level technical assistance, which do not weigh on the PDHL budget.

## RESULTS OF NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The PDHL, in collaboration with National Solidarity Fund 2626, and through the activities of the National Committee, conducted numerous activities involving various needs of the Tunisian Government on issues regarding integrated and concerted local development. Invitations to take part in tripartite meetings were sent systematically to the ministries involved in PDHL activities. In particular, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs took part in all salient management phases of the programme. The tripartite meetings also involved the Governorate of Gafsa and its human development committee. A CD-ROM containing the Gafsa Regional Human Development Plan (PRDH), drawn up by the human development committee, was produced and distributed at national level. A National Working Group was set up to draw up a strategic study on the tourism potentialities of the Governorate of Gafsa, involving the Ministries of Tourism, Environment and Culture, the Agency for the Safeguarding of National Heritage, and the Governorate of Gafsa. Another national result to which the PDHL made a contribution was the integration of decentralised cooperation and social enterprise among the priorities of the Tenth Tunisian Development Plan.

With the active backing of the UNDP representative, numerous UN agencies were involved in PDHL operations. UNDP, UNOPS, IDNDR, WHO and its Mediterranean Centre for the Reduction of Vulnerability (WMC) in Tunis, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) all participated by providing technical assistance to the activities of the PDHL. In collaboration with the WMC, action research was carried out on school dropouts in Gafsa, which involved the Tunisian Ministries of Education and Health and the regional departments of health, education and social affairs. WHO also produced a health and road risk map of the Governorate of Gafsa. The PDHL participated systematically in the UNDAF working group, coordinated by UNDP, on the theme of

governance, especially at the UNDAF meeting on "Governance and decentralised cooperation" organised at the request of the Tunisian Government and held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. At the meeting, those taking part repeated their conviction that PDHL/Tunisia represents an interesting platform for local sustainable development that can be extended to other regions of the country. Collaboration was established with the Tunisian headquarters of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for the purchase of reduced-price air tickets for persons travelling on PDHL/Tunisia business. In 2002, the PDHL took part in the training course on local development for Arab countries, organised at Hammamet by the Turin ILO International Training Centre. The methods used by PDHL/Tunisia, based on joint planning involving the public and private sectors and civil society, aroused great interest among the participants from various Arab countries of the Mashreq and the Maghreb. In 2002, the PDHL was presented at a press conference organised on the day celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the UN, in which journalists, national authorities and representatives from civil society were present. At the request of the UNDP resident representative, the PDHL was presented to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), who was on an official visit to the country.

The PDHL met with representatives of Belgian, Dutch, French, Spanish and EU cooperation in order to present the experiences of decentralised cooperation and encourage their participation. The PDHL took part in a workshop entitled "Support strategies for urban development", organised by the Swiss NGO Intercooperation to promote collaboration between Tunisian NGOs and the cooperation programme staff. Together with the Italian Embassy, collaboration was established with Italian NGOs operating in Tunisia, in particular with CISS and Ricerca e Cooperazione.

A brochure in French and Arabic, produced in conjunction with the Tunisian authorities and UN agencies involved in the activities, was issued on PDHL/Tunisia. An information campaign on PDHL/Tunisia was broadcast on radio, television and disseminated through the local and national press (interviews, articles and reports in French and Arabic). A seminar on "Experiences and methods of PDHL Tunisia" was held on 12 November 2001, with the participation of the authorities, Tunisian officials and technical experts at both the national and local level, representatives of Italian decentralised cooperation, and representatives of Belgian, French and Spanish

cooperation, together with UN and EU international agencies. At the seminar, the experience of the PDHL and the regional human development plan, as drawn up by the Gafsa Committee, were illustrated. A video made by the documentation unit of the EDINFODEC Programme was also shown. In 2002, a new brochure on the PDHL was produced and distributed. It summarised the progress of the various initiatives and, above all, evaluated the results achieved with the participation of decentralised cooperation.

In 2002, the PDHL collaborated, as requested by the UNDP resident representative, in the preparation of the national strategy supporting local development through decentralised cooperation partnerships. It prepared the necessary documentation and participation in meetings to present the initiative to the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Development and Cooperation, and to the various donor countries (Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, Switzerland) and the EU.

## RESULTS IN THE GOVERNORATE OF GAFSA

In 1999, in the initial phase of the PDHL, a sustainable human development committee was established in the Governorate of Gafsa. This committee set up various sectoral working groups and prepared a first draft of the development plan with the collaboration of the private sector and local communities. Thanks to the methodology of social mapping, strategic sectors for local development were pinpointed. Documentation on the needs and resources of Gafsa was also prepared for presentation to Italian local authorities intending to form decentralised cooperation partnerships. Collaboration also began with Belgian Cooperation in the healthcare sector.

From 1999 to 2001, immediate impact programmes (listed below) were programmed and implemented in the communities of Guettis, Ouled Whiba Djebel, and Bir Zouari in North Gafsa, which was designated a pilot scheme. Two mobile units were brought into operation for the maintenance of surface wells and the regeneration of 200 wells. This created six new jobs and increased the water supply by 30 percent. A depot was set up for the collection, conservation and sale of milk, which collects the milk of some 400 cows belonging to 130 farmers, thereby reducing milk wastage by 40 percent and increasing the collection capacity of the Soay Depot from 2,000 to 4,000 litres. A two-year training course was organised for 80 women in the production of wall hangings (a traditional craft in

southern Tunisia). Training focused on product quality, promotion of traditional techniques, management and marketing, literacy and simple arithmetic. The Ministry of Vocational Training gave its financial backing to the course, and awarded an official diploma to participants completing the course. The merchandise produced was put on sale by the National Tourist Board in collaboration with the Tunisian Women's Union. Multipurpose classrooms in seven primary schools in the region were equipped and opened.

In 2000, the decentralised cooperation committees commenced operations in the Governorate of Gafsa. Following technical missions, the committees decided, together with local working groups, on the activities to be undertaken. These working groups, composed of technical experts and the beneficiaries, took on the responsibility for completing the projects. The PDHL provided technical assistance, thereby contributing to the prompt solution of logistical problems and operational coordination. By March 2000, the Committees of Palermo, Lazio/Fiumicino, Napoli and Sardegna had submitted the lists of selected projects together with an indication of financial contributions for 2000. The opening of the Gafsa office in 2001, and the arrival of the UNOPS area manager, provided a strong boost to activities. In March 2001, contacts were made in Italy to activate the participation of the Piemonte Region in PDHL/Tunisia. The ICS, which groups together local bodies in the Province of Alessandria, joined the PDHL in a project to restore the Medina in Gafsa, based on a study carried out within the framework of MED-URBS, an EU programme.

In 2002, the Governorate of Gafsa Human Development Committee continued to provide overall coordination and management of ongoing PDHL activities, with participatory programming of the activities of the new third phase of the plan of operations. Furthermore, in 2002, PDHL operations in the Governorate of Gafsa helped complete the projects developed with the collaboration of the decentralised cooperation committees.

Thanks to the contribution and effort of all the parties involved, work of considerable importance was carried out. Despite ongoing logistical and bureaucratic difficulties, in September 2002, five important projects were inaugurated: the veterinary surgery serving about 8,500 farmers; a social enterprise comprising 20 entrepreneurs, of whom 12 with mental and physical disabilities; a cheese-making enterprise benefiting the 240 members of the agricultural services cooperative which manages it; and a language laboratory serving

the university and the Chamber of Commerce. During its official visit, six completely overhauled city buses were donated by the City of Napoli to the City of Gafsa. Present at the inauguration ceremony were the Italian Ambassador, the UN resident representative in Tunisia, the general coordinator of programmes of the Tunisian National Solidarity Fund, 22 representatives of Italian decentralised cooperation committees, the governor of Gafsa, representatives of the local human development committee, and local organisations involved in the projects.

Following the creation of a social enterprise in Gafsa, the first of its kind in Tunisia, collaboration with some social cooperatives in the Marche Region was activated. These cooperatives agreed to supply technical assistance to CAFSA. The Marche Region declared its interest in promoting new social enterprises in the territory, within the framework of activities included in the plan of operations for the third phase of the PDHL.

The Umbria Region also expressed a particular interest in participating in the third phase of the PDHL, above all in expanding the geographical information system (GIS) developed in Gafsa to aspects regarding health and road risks. These activities are to be carried out with the technical assistance of WHO.

The main results of projects concluded in the Governorate of Gafsa are summarised in the following sections.

#### **Protection and development of the Acacia Tortilis forest, in collaboration with the Committee of the Municipality of Palermo**

The project began in June 2000. Participating in the project were: the Faculty of Agronomy of the University of Palermo, the Tunisian National Research Institute for Rural Engineering, Water and Forests (INGREF), the Regional Agricultural Commission, the Forestry Department, and the Gafsa Environmental Authority. Two researchers from the Faculty of Agronomy of the University of Palermo, in collaboration with the Regional Agricultural Development Commission, defined a project to combat bacteria causing the high rate of mortality of the Acacia Tortilis. Material necessary for the project was purchased in February 2001. The public was kept informed by means of local radio broadcasts, and meetings with farmers were organised regarding the

importance of reforestation. During a study-trip by the Faculty of Agronomy to Tunisia, 55 students from Palermo visited Gafsa to learn about the techniques used to prevent desertification and soil erosion. In November 2001, the officer in charge of the Gafsa forestry service and a representative of the Regional Commission for Agricultural Development gave lectures on the project at the faculty in Palermo.

In February 2002, the fourth scientific protocol of the project was formulated and activities were initiated in Gafsa by technical experts from the University of Palermo and INGRES in Tunis. The work consisted of: the specific treatment of *Acacia Tortilis* seeds; and the planting and methodical classification of the plants according to a carefully detailed programme. In June, data were collected for future elaboration and interpretation. The concluding document, which summarises the results of this scientific experiment on *Acacia Tortilis*, was completed in January 2003. It has been made available to the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture, which will be able to apply the same method in the country's tree nurseries where this species is cultivated. All interventions to further develop the Haddej di Belkhir nursery in Gafsa were completed.

#### **Equipping of a veterinary centre, in collaboration with the Committee of the Municipality of Palermo**

The project began in June 2000, with the backing of two veterinary surgeons from the Palermo Animal Health Institute. The head of veterinary services in Gafsa and a laboratory technician underwent training in Palermo on analysing techniques for the diagnosis of contagious diseases, such as brucella abortis. In 2001, a project was defined to set up a livestock register in view of a national survey of livestock scheduled for 2002. Three laboratory technicians from the Palermo Animal Health Institute worked alongside their colleagues from the Gafsa Veterinary Centre to prepare a scientific study on brucella abortis. The study was presented jointly at an international conference on veterinary medicine in Canada in June 2002. The Palermo Animal Health Institute purchased and installed all the equipment and material for the laboratories of Gafsa and Moulares, an area close to the Algerian border, for which a veterinary surgeon was hired. Staff training was completed.

The veterinary centre in Gafsa and the control post at Moulares provide an important service to about 8,500 breeders and to all the public and private structures

concerned with animal health care. Before the opening of these facilities, the Governorate of Gafsa and all the governorates of the centre-south of the country had had to use facilities in Tunis, which greatly delayed analysis and consequently any necessary intervention against epidemics and against highly damaging endemic diseases, such as brucella abortis. Local veterinary surgeons are now able to intervene with preventive treatment just five minutes after taking a sample.

#### **Creation of a cheese factory, in collaboration with the Committee of the Lazio Region and the Municipality of Fiumicino**

The project began in June 2000. Taking part in the project are the Municipality of Fiumicino, the Lazio Region, OICS, COIN, the Tunisian Regional Agricultural Commission, the "Ere Nouvelle" agricultural services cooperative, the Regional Social Affairs Department, and the Tunisian Union for the Mentally Disabled. In November 2000, work started on the construction of the cheese factory, directed by Ere Nouvelle, with the technical assistance of experts from Fiumicino, who also began training the members. An international tender was held for the purchase of the equipment. The members of the cooperative contributed financially to the building of the factory, the first in the central-western area of the country, and which is of major importance for milk producers because the sector suffers from excess production. An agreement was signed between Ere Nouvelle and the Soay Collection Depot for the partial sale of milk from the depot (constructed under a PDHL project) to be processed in the cheese factory, thus starting the creation of a milk chain.

An international tender organised for the purchase of equipment was awarded to a Tunisian firm. The first batch of equipment was installed in the cheese factory in March 2002. The remaining equipment was installed in July 2002. Civil engineering work necessary for the completion of the plant was carried out, and in August 2002 an expert from Fiumicino verified the correct installation of all the equipment and arranged a programme of technical assistance in loco.

Three operatives from Gafsa were trained in cheesemaking at a high-quality cheese factory in the Fiumicino area, where they followed the various phases of production. Contact was made with the association "Seniores d'Italia - Partner per lo Sviluppo" to find a retired cheese-maker willing to provide technical

assistance to the members of the Gafsa cooperative. In August 2002, collaboration was set up with the Albe Steiner Advertising Graphics Institute in Turin to prepare advertising material for the cheese factory, and the Web site. Preparation and production of the material were made part of the annual curriculum of students of two classes in the fourth and fifth grades. The name proposed for the cheese factory, and the one which met with most approval in Gafsa was Oasis.

The cheese factory was inaugurated on 20 September 2002 in the presence of high-level international, national and local authorities, which were appreciative of the great effort made by the people of Gafsa in constructing the building. They were also able to savour the first products – cheeses of Gouda, Edam and Ricotta types flavoured with local spices. The factory, which has a production capacity of 200-600 kg of cheese per day, employs 12 people and benefits the 254 members of the cooperative.

In October 2002, a milk-quality expert from Fiumicino held a training course in Gafsa on hygiene, milk-quality control and equipment hygiene. Following the mission, a new organisational chart was drawn up for the cheese factory indicating staff roles and responsibilities. The team in charge of hygiene and equipment maintenance also attended a training course in loco in December, instructed by a Tunisian cheese-maker. The expert from Fiumicino supplied the factory with manuals, documents and all the necessary information. In collaboration with the social enterprise, a computer training course was also organised on computerised bookkeeping and on how to use the Internet to market image and products. The trainer, a Tunisian expert, was brought up to date on advertising graphics by the Albe Steiner Institute of Turin. On 17–18 February 2003, students from the Albe Steiner Institute of Turin visited the cheese factory. They worked with those responsible for marketing in order to complete the products prepared in their course of study (brochures, product catalogue, and the Internet Web site).

From 2 March to 18 April 2003, two retired Italian cheese experts from “Seniores d'Italia – Partner per lo Sviluppo” provided technical assistance as a follow-up to the first phases of production.

On United Nations Day, a cheese stand with Oasis products was set up in Tunis. The director general of the Tunisian Foreign Ministry's International Cooperation and all those speaking at the three-day exhibition appreciated the quality of Oasis products and submitted several orders. Recently, the new

cheese factory has signed an agreement with a large Tunisian cheese production chain, which will buy and sell products with the Oasis brand, thus allowing the small enterprise to expand.

### **Establishment of a social enterprise, in collaboration with the Committee of the Lazio Region and the Municipality of Fiumicino**

The project began in 2000. Taking part in the project are the Municipality of Fiumicino, the Lazio Region, the Tunisian Regional Social Affairs Department, and the Tunisian Union for the Mentally Disabled. The aim of the project is to experiment a model of social enterprise in Gafsa in which 30 percent of those employed are disabled or have difficulty in finding work. Two training courses were held in Rome on policies for the integration of vulnerable groups and the selection of human resources to be employed in the social enterprise of paper recycling and the production of aromatic herbs. Two Italian experts helped set up the enterprises for the production of packaging materials and the production of aromatic herbs. Feasibility studies were completed by the Office for the Development of the South (ODS), and the equipment required was purchased.

Aromatic herb production has been under way since June 2001. After the purchase of seeds for the cultivation of aromatic herbs, in January 2002, an Italian technical expert trained staff at the enterprise in the use of the hollow-punching machine for the production of packaging materials. A training course on the use of the hollow-punching machine took place in Tunis, in the workshop of the Tunisian supplier of cardboard-cutting punches, which also offered to provide technical assistance free of charge to these new entrepreneurs in Gafsa. The raw material necessary to meet the first orders was purchased. In September, the unit for recycling and producing packaging material was completed, as were the modifications necessary for enlarging the building in order to house the equipment, raw materials and end products. A contract was signed with the Italian social cooperative “Mina Vagante”, which purchased small quantities of herbs (verbena, mint and basil) in a practical example to accustom CAPSA to the procedures of selling and delivering products. Mina Vagante continued to provide both in loco and distance assistance to CAPSA. In November 2002, CAPSA took part in the “Copernico” trade fair of cooperatives in the Marche Region.

In 2002, a teacher from the Albe Steiner Advertising Graphics Institute undertook a mission to Gafsa to train a local computer programmer in the most advanced techniques of graphic design in order to create, together with the members of the social cooperative, the logo for the new enterprise and to prepare a marketing strategy. The name chosen for the cooperative was CAPSA, an acronym of "Cartonnage & Arômes Pépinière Sociale Aghila", but also the ancient Roman name for Gafsa. An information brochure on the services and products was also produced. Two classes of the Turin institute collaborate in their year's course in the preparation of a series of multimedia products advertising CAPSA and the Oasis cheese factory.

An expert in social enterprises undertook several missions to Gafsa in order to study the legal reference framework. The social enterprise statute was defined and the necessary conventions stipulated. Lawyers provided free legal assistance. The Ministry of Social Affairs then granted the ministerial stamp of approval. The statute is being defined and a new national legal framework devised. The entrepreneurs contributed in equal measure to the company's capital, and the families of the 12 disabled persons accepted legal responsibility.

Today, CAPSA is an important social and economic reality. Annual production of aromatic herbs is forecast at 500 kg of verbena, 20 kg of mint, 30 kg of basil, 500 kg of rosemary, 500–1,000 kg of garlic, and 2,000–4,000 kg of onions. The herbs are certified under EcoCert F32600. The quantity of paper recycled has reached 30 kg/day. This experience has enabled the inclusion, for the first time, of social enterprises in Tunisia's Tenth Development Plan as a priority strategy for local economic development.

On United Nations Day, a stand was set up in Tunis to promote CAPSA products (aromatic herbs, tisane, and recycled paper). A thousand brochures were published and given to CAPSA for its first marketing operations (November 2003).

**Support for the Regional Rehabilitation Unit (URR), in collaboration with the Committee of the Municipality of Napoli**

The project began in 2000. Taking part in the project were: the Campania Region ASL 1 Health Centre of the, the Committee of the Municipality of Napoli, and the Gafsa health and social affairs departments. The unit

was provided with equipment and a vehicle. Experts from the Napoli ASL 1 Health Centre trained the URR team in Gafsa, which then attended a one-week internship in Napoli. The project led to the establishment of the NGO Attafael, with the PDHL providing backing for its legal recognition. The project also encouraged the use of street theatre in order to reach out to the public, thus exploiting the theatrical tradition of Gafsa, renowned in Tunisia. A company of young actors (Orbata) was discovered in one of the most isolated areas of the governorate. Orbata produced a play on the issue of disability, "Ghalta", which was performed in all the delegations of the region. In October 2001, the company took part in a street theatre festival held in Naples.

Training was provided for workers of two outlying health centres, which have a large number of disabled people in their care. A protocol was produced for the training of health workers in basic rehabilitation techniques. In 2002, two decentralised rehabilitation units were set up in the hospitals of Metlaoui and Redayef in the mining basin in order to extend access to rehabilitation services. Two technicians (a mechanic and a carpenter) took part in a training course in Naples with a view to creating a laboratory in Gafsa for the production of prostheses using recycled material. The "URR Support Project", whose candidacy was put forward by the City of Napoli, won an award in the "One hundred projects to serve the community" event promoted by the Italian Ministry of Public Administration.

**Strengthening of multidisciplinary areas in seven primary schools, in collaboration with the Committee of the Municipality of Napoli**

The project began in 2000. Taking part in the project were: the Municipality of Napoli, the Gafsa regional departments of education, culture, social affairs and vocational training, and UNICEF. The project was defined in a workshop in Gafsa attended by two expert instructors from Naples, school inspectors and head teachers from the Governorates of Gafsa, El Kef and Kasserine, and the head teachers of the seven pilot schools. The project concerned the schools taking part in the national "Areas of priority education programme", promoted by UNICEF. Following suggestions by an architect from Naples, the areas were furnished with furniture made by students of the Aghila training school. The head teachers of the schools travelled to Naples to establish twinning

agreements with similar schools. Four young architects from the University of Turin, who were in Gafsa to complete their degree theses on the Medina, helped the school head teachers in arranging furniture and materials to make the best use of both space and equipment.

After the purchase of the materials, the multidisciplinary classrooms were inaugurated in January 2002. The Municipality of Napoli signed an agreement with the regional education department to support the twinning of seven primary schools in Gafsa with seven associations in Naples: "Sened Djebel" school – "Il Trifoglio" association; "2 Mars 34 Haouel El Oued" school – "CSI Piscinola" association; "Bir Saad" school – "Lo Scoglio e il Gabbiano" non-profit association; "Majoura" school – "Volideali" association; "Ouled Ouhiba" school – "Laboratorio Città Nuova" association; "Sidi Aich Centre" school – "Arcobaleno" association; – "2 Mars 34 Guettis" school – "Gioco Immagine" association. In March 2002, computers with Internet connections were purchased and installed in each of the multidisciplinary classrooms in order to facilitate exchanges. The Municipality of Napoli sent a publication to Gafsa regarding the twinning initiative, news of which had been widely publicised in Napoli. The project has now been concluded, but the close relations established between the schools and associations of Gafsa and Napoli remain.

### **Twinning of the cities of Napoli and Gafsa, within the framework of collaboration with the Committee of the Municipality of Napoli**

The twinning protocol was signed in February 2000. The project began with a work camp in Gafsa from 10 to 26 November 2000 for 18 university students from Naples and 3 coordinators. Work, which was carried out together with students from the local university, concerned the environmental, social, health and archaeological sectors. In June 2001, a work camp of Gafsa university students was organised in Naples, which contributed to the establishment of a new culture of voluntary work among the Tunisian students. On their return to Tunis in spring 2001, they were active in the organisation in Gafsa of a day of voluntary work to clean up the oasis.

In January and July 2002, there were visits by the director of the social affairs department of the Municipality of Napoli to Gafsa, and a delegation from Gafsa, headed by the mayor, travelled to Naples. The City of Naples donated six completely overhauled city buses to reinforce the fleet of school buses operating

in the Gafsa area, and the Naples Transport Agency guaranteed technical assistance for those running the public transport service in Gafsa. The buses officially entered service in Gafsa on 20 September.

### **Creation of a playroom for child patients at Gafsa regional hospital and Metlaoui hospital**

The project was set up by the NGO Attafael. An important result of this project was the strengthening of the skills and structure of this association, which was established with PDHL backing. The room was provided with the equipment and materials required, and savings made on the purchases permitted the opening of a similar playroom in Metlaoui hospital. Play-group leaders were trained with the collaboration of experts from the Municipality of Napoli and Rome's "Sale in Zucca" association. The impact of the playrooms on the quality of life of the children in hospital was considerable. The NGO also stipulated an innovative agreement with the Ministry of Education to provide for the voluntary assistance of young tutors for those children needing to make up for schooling lost through long periods in hospital. Attafael drew up an annual recreational programme also involving those parents willing to devote some time to entertaining children who are not sufficiently mobile to reach the playroom. The project was the first of its kind in Tunisia. The experience was discussed at a seminar in Gafsa in January 2003.

### **Establishment of a tourist circuit in the region of Gafsa, in collaboration with the Committee of the Sardegna Region**

The project began in October 2000, and was prepared during a visit to Sardegna by the Gafsa regional directors of tourism, environment, agriculture and crafts. Taking part are the Municipalities of Guspini and Arzachena, the Tunisian Regional Commission for Tourism, the regional departments for agriculture, environment, vocational training and crafts. In order to implement the first module for the restoration of the Berber Grottoes of Sned Djebel, the mayor promoted the establishment of an association to safeguard the Berber Village of Sned Djebel. Twelve young Sardinians, members of the environmental group Legambiente, worked for two weeks on the project. Restoration work on the Berber Grottoes of Sned Djebel ended in 2002. The site was provided with electricity, and a Sardinian architect decided on the artistic placing of the lights for the best

night-time illumination. The outside staircase, terraces, toilet block, doors, windows and internal furnishings of the grottoes were all completed and opened to the public. On the occasion of the UNDP International Anti-Poverty Day, the UNDP resident representative, accompanied by the mayor of Guspini, representatives of the Sardegna Region, and all the Tunisians who had been involved in the restoration, took part in a visit to the site, an important legacy of Berber civilisation. Thanks to the benefits that restoration has brought to the area, an entrepreneur from Sfax has opened a unit for the production of carpets in Sned, employing about 80 young women. The classification of medicinal and aromatic herbs growing along the route from the Berber Village to Mount Biadha was completed by a student from the Faculty of Medicinal and Aromatic Herbs of the University of Urbino. Information and photographs of the site in Sned are available on the Web site of the Municipality of Guspini.

A Sardinian food-industry contractor designed and installed a fruit- and olive-processing unit for the production of juices, jams and spreads. The unit has not become operational yet owing to problems with the local partner. The contractor, at his own expense, gave a month's training in Sardegna to a local technician.

A project for protecting and promoting the Telah mosaics, as prepared by experts of the Tunisian Artistic Heritage Institute and an expert from the Sardinian Cultural Heritage Office, was implemented. Dry-stone walls were erected in order to protect the site and define the area of the ancient Roman settlement. Descriptive panels historically reconstructing the site are in preparation and will be erected in loco. In January and February 2003, signposts were erected along the tourist route from Sned Djebel to the Telah mosaics in order to facilitate access to the sites.

Another project started in 2000, and which ended in 2002, concerned the breeding of Sardinian partridges. As imports from Sardinia were not allowed, despite being completely compatible, 20 pairs of birds were collected from throughout the national territory. The project also involved the training of instructors to encourage the inhabitants of the Berber village to look after reintroduced species. The habitat was created inside the nature reserve of Orbata. In January 2003, a training course for local breeders was held in Sardinia.

### **Development of the Metlaoui mining basin, in collaboration with the Municipality of Guspini and the Sardegna Region Committee**

The project started in June 2002 with agreements between the mayors of the mining towns of Guspini and Metlaoui and between the governor of Gafsa and the Province of Cagliari and the Sardegna Region on matters concerning environment, tourism, entrepreneurial exchanges and university cooperation. Metlaoui became a member of the European Association of Mining Towns after collaboration had been established through numerous reciprocal missions. The participation of Metlaoui in vocational training projects to be presented to the EU (Equal Programme) was prepared. Metlaoui was included in the programme of Internet Web sites for the promotion of cultural tourism. Exchanges were organised between associations in the two municipalities engaged in work concerning children with problems. In August 2001, ten young volunteers from Metlaoui stayed in Guspini at premises of Legambiente and participated in summer maintenance jobs in town parks, beach cleaning and social activities. In April 2002, the town of Guspini organised a public event dedicated to the town of Metlaoui during which toys and other materials were collected for donation to associations working with children in Metlaoui. Two representatives of the Municipality of Guspini personally handed over these gifts at a meeting organised in Metlaoui by the mayor, in the presence all the associations involved.

### **Creation of a fruit- and olive-processing unit**

Following installation and testing of the equipment by the Sardinian supplier, the Association for the Disabled of Sned, partners in the project, declared that it was unable to guarantee its management. In February 2002, with the support of the governorate, the search began for another association to take on the task. The Soay Agricultural Services Cooperative decided to accept the responsibility, and it proceeded to collect contributions for the construction of suitable sheds. Then, in November, this second cooperative also withdrew because of internal problems. The "Ere Nouvelle" agricultural services cooperative, which manages the cheese factory, has applied to run the activities during the third phase of the PDHL.

**Creation of a language laboratory for teaching Italian, Arabic and French, in collaboration with the Committee of the Province of Reggio Calabria**

The project provides for the creation of a language laboratory for teaching Italian, Arabic and French to students and entrepreneurs at Gafsa Higher Institute of Technological Studies (ISET), in collaboration with the Italo-Tunisian Chamber of Commerce and the Reggio Calabria University for Foreign Students.

In February 2002, following the mission to Gafsa by a professor from the Reggio Calabria University for Foreign Students, decisions were taken regarding the equipment necessary for setting up the language laboratory and the content of the teaching modules. The equipment was bought and installed in ISET premises in Gafsa in June 2002. From 23 July to 31 August, an ISET language teacher in Gafsa completed a refresher course at the Reggio Calabria University for Foreign Students. On 14 September, an agreement was signed between ISET and the Gafsa Chamber of Commerce for the joint use of the laboratory, which is of benefit not only to university students but also to those with business interests.

As a result of a Lombardia Region project, the ten-booth laboratory for students plus teacher has also been made available for the language training of 75 workers in Gafsa, with a view to their working in Italy. The first educational module started in January 2002. A library was also set up with the contribution of the Reggio Calabria University for Foreign Students.

**Restoration of a patrician dwelling in the Medina of Gafsa, in collaboration with the Committee of the Province of Alessandria (ICS)**

The project began in March 2001, in collaboration with the ICS, an institute that groups together local organisations in the Province of Alessandria, and the Piemonte Region. The Medina of Gafsa restoration project was based on a study made within the

framework of the EU MED-URBS Programme. The project provided for the setting up of a training site for the restoration of an ancient patrician dwelling in the Medina (to be used for hotel accommodation), the improvement of catering services, the opening of small handicrafts shops, and the regeneration of the basements, the facade and the building so as to form a model to be followed for similar restorations in the Medina. The training site allowed the project to: provide training for a group of 15 young manual workers (bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, joiners, electricians, painters and decorators) both in loco and at the Alessandria Building School; train four young architects through the concrete experience of the regeneration of the Medina; retrieve ancient construction techniques; and grant the technical office of the Municipality of Gafsa a protocol for the protection of, and specific intervention in, the Medina.

In September 2002, the governorate concluded the purchase of the house, with the collaboration of the Municipality of Gafsa, the Association for the Protection of the Medina, and the National Heritage Institute. Once restoration is concluded, the house will become public property, to be used as a small hotel, restaurant, or for the exhibition and sale of local arts and crafts. In October 2002, architects from Alessandria and Palma de Majorca (Spain) signed a protocol at the Municipality of Gafsa, which is the chief promoter of the intervention, committing all those involved in the implementation of the project for a period of nine months. A technical commission was set up, comprising four ISET trainers and four technical experts of the Municipality of Gafsa, charged with organising the training programme for the young workers and the schedule for the activities of supervisors and manual workers. The technical commission is also required to meet once a month to evaluate progress and make a report on the quality of each worker's contribution and learning times.

The site is being cleaned and restoration of the foundations is in progress. In close coordination with the Municipality of Gafsa, the training of four site officials and four site workers was organised and took place in Alessandria in December 2003.