

Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation

Digital Economy Tunisia – Untapped Potential for German Companies

Shaping the digital change in Tunisia

Good infrastructure, qualified professionals, competitive salaries: Tunisia offers many advantages as a digital business location and is considered a hidden champion on the African continent. In this context, further advancing Tunisia's digital transformation is the goal of several programmes for digital transformation being implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the Special Initiative on Training and Employment of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which operates under the Invest for Jobs brand. Together they work in a joint Digital Transformation Center.

The programme **Business & Invest** focuses in this context primarily on supporting cooperation with European companies. Implementing partner is the Tunisian government. Tech entrepreneurs as well as (foreign) investors and interested companies are invited to use the programme as a physical and virtual point of contact and benefit from the services of its **Business Facility Desk**. In addition to supporting start-ups and industry 4.0 solutions, the focus is to promote the digitalisation of multiple sectors, particularly digital finance, e-commerce and health.

The Tunisian digital economy is flourishing.

- / The industry accounts for more than 11 per cent of the gross domestic product
- / 1,800 companies have already created around 80,000 jobs
- / There are numerous partnerships in business process and information technology outsourcing, e.g. with Microsoft, IBM and Cisco
- / More than 2,000 companies from Europe and 3,500 companies from all over the world have been established in Tunisia



What are the advantages of the Tunisian IT market?

The digital economy is one of Tunisia's fastest growing industries. The country's IT market offers numerous advantages:

- / Large number of professional companies and highly skilled IT specialists (40% of universities specialize in IT)
- / Good digital infrastructure – with a powerful 4G network (5G in 2021) and almost 18 million mobile connections (for a population of 11.8 million)
- / Competitive wage costs – The daily rate of a Tunisian IT specialist is 300 euros on average, in Germany it is 1,200 euros on average.
- / Effective cooperation following Tunisia's proximity to Europe (around 2.5 hours flight time)
- / Numerous use cases of international companies working in and with Tunisia
- / A rapidly growing IT and start-up scene – with expertise in deep tech
- / Access to other markets in the MENA region and countries in sub-Saharan Africa

In addition to these benefits, the regulatory environment for the digital economy has been improved in meaningful ways. There is, for instance, less bureaucracy involved with processes like starting a business or creating investment incentives. Furthermore, the Tunisian government pursues an ambitious strategy of promoting industry 4.0 solutions.

What are the investment opportunities?

Tunisia has much to offer for German investors – especially in the context of business process and IT outsourcing opportunities, in areas such as customer service and data processing as well as software development. There is also a rising potential in outsourcing research and development services (knowledge process outsourcing). Furthermore, starting cooperations with Tunisian companies, SMEs or start-ups via testbeds has proven useful to initiate a quick transfer of innovations into viable market solutions.

Good to know: Tunisia scores particularly well in the World Bank’s “Doing Business 2020” report in the area of business start-ups – an advantage for German companies looking for new business opportunities.



How are investors being supported?

The Programme Business & Invest offers flexible consulting services through various projects.

DigitalWorks Tunisia

The project focuses on the technical training needs of Tunisian and international companies (with a location) in Tunisia. It brings together employers, trainees and institutions, aiming to fill local skill gaps through gender-sensitive recruitment and training as well as co-financed training programmes.

Industry 4.0 Tunisia

The programme Industry 4.0 is supporting the Tunisian government with its ambitious strategy, which forms the basis for the Tunisian manufacturing sector’s transition to Industry 4.0. The promotion of German-Tunisian business cooperations plays an important role in achieving this goal. Investment opportunities for German companies in particular are likely to arise in the area of data and system security. Cooperation can either be sector-focused or cross-sectoral and thus take place with different actors: with suppliers or competitors, with corporations operating on a global scale or innovative start-ups. Two Industry 4.0 competence centres have already been set up in the Tunisian cities of Sousse and Sfax to support companies in using digital solutions.

Tech216 – IT-Nearshoring in Tunisia

The initiative aims to make the unique advantages of Tunisia as an IT location accessible to the German market. Tech216 is a point of contact for German companies aiming to outsource IT services and processes to Tunisia or to develop joint business projects. Integrating Tunisian IT companies into the value chain of German and European companies in a sustainable manner, is a major objective in this context. For this purpose, Tech216 offers a range of consulting and other services. These include, among other things, tours for German companies in Tunisia, project initiation and development support, project and team support with agile project tools, legal advice and certification according to ISO standards.

Business Facility Desk

German companies that already have a digital project idea for Tunisia and are looking for an implementation partner can contact the Business Facility Desk directly. The local team will be happy to give advice on the next steps – providing contacts as well as project development or financing support.

Please get
in touch!

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