

WAVERLEY GATEWAY GUIDE

Connecting International Capital with Emerging & Frontier Markets

TUNISIA

Africa North

Dialogue | Trust | Partnership

office@lordwaverley.com

www.lordwaverley.com

WHERE AND HOW TO ENTER

KEY INVESTMENT LOCATIONS

Location / Region	Strategic Importance	Priority Sectors
Tunis / Greater Tunis	Capital, administrative and financial hub	Banking, services, government contracts
Bizerte / Menzel Bourguiba industrial zone	Automotive-components and mechanical-engineering export base	Automotive wiring harnesses, components manufacturing
Sfax / Monastir / Sousse coastal corridor	Textiles, light manufacturing and tourism	Textiles, agri-food processing, hospitality
Gabès / southern phosphate belt	Phosphate mining and chemical processing	Phosphate mining, fertiliser and chemical production
Southern and central desert zones (Kebili, Tataouine)	Utility-scale solar development frontier	Solar power generation, renewable IPP projects
Radès / Tunis port and logistics zone	Principal container port and trade gateway	Port logistics, re-export, warehousing
Kasserine / interior regions	Historically marginalised interior, locus of past unrest and weak private investment	Agriculture, limited local manufacturing, development-finance-linked projects

INVESTOR ENTRY ROUTES

- TUNISIA INVESTMENT AUTHORITY / FOREIGN INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY (FIPA-TUNISIA) REGISTRATION: The standard facilitation and incentive-coordination channel
- INVESTMENT LAW 2016-71 INCENTIVE PACKAGE: Tax and customs benefits for qualifying regional-development and export-oriented projects
- OFFSHORE / EXPORT-MANUFACTURING REGIME: Full customs and tax exemption for companies exporting at least 100% of output, widely used in automotive and textiles
- RENEWABLE-ENERGY INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCER (IPP) CONCESSION: Solar and wind project tendering via the Ministry of Energy and STEG
- Phosphate and chemicals joint venture via the Gafsa Phosphate Company (CPG) and Tunisian Chemical Group (GCT)
- EU GLOBAL GATEWAY AND BILATERAL EUROPEAN CO-FINANCING: Grant- and loan-blended structuring for clean-energy and infrastructure projects tied to the EU-Tunisia partnership

MARKET-ENTRY OBSERVATION

Tunisia's economy grew 2.5% in 2025, helped by a strong olive-oil harvest and a tourism rebound, but the IMF's April 2026 World Economic Outlook puts 2026 growth at just 2.1%, well below the government's own 3.3% target, citing inflation (projected to average 6.5% in 2026), external energy-price shocks, and what the Fund calls a still-"fragile" recovery. Tunisia imports more than 60% of its energy needs, leaving it exposed to global oil and gas price swings. Foreign direct investment is nonetheless recovering: FDI reached TND 1,650.3 million in the first half of 2025, up 20.8% year on year, with the government targeting TND 4 billion for 2026 - the first year of its new 2026-2030 Development Plan. Manufacturing drew 63% of that FDI (up 22.9%), led by automotive components and textiles, while energy-sector FDI rose 60% on renewable and oil-exploration interest.

France remains the leading investor (TND 421 million in H1 2025), followed by Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States, with Qatar the leading Arab investor. The EU has deepened its economic and migration partnership with Tunisia, including a €35.8 million Global Gateway grant for clean-energy projects awarded in January 2026 and a broader package tying economic cooperation to

migration-management funding - though EU officials and observers have described the resulting migration deal as falling short of original expectations on both sides.

INVESTOR RISK & MARKET ACCESS

KEY ENTRY BARRIERS

Issue	Potential Impact	Possible Mitigation
Systematic erosion of judicial independence under President Kais Saied, including the 2022 mass dismissal of 57 judges and a 2024 law stripping the Administrative Court of jurisdiction over electoral disputes	Materially weakens contract enforcement, dispute resolution and regulatory predictability for any investor relying on Tunisian courts	Favour arbitration clauses and international dispute-resolution forums in investment agreements wherever possible
A December 2025 appeals court ruling handed sentences of up to 45 years to dozens of opposition leaders, businesspeople and lawyers - including prominent figures Chaima Issa, Ayachi Hammami and Nejib Chebbi - on conspiracy charges, triggering weeks of continuing protests	Signals an increasingly adversarial relationship between the state and parts of the business and political elite, with unpredictable knock-on effects for commercial actors seen as politically connected	Conduct enhanced political and reputational due diligence on local partners and counterparties; avoid any arrangement with an overtly political dimension
Use of the 2022 cybercrime law (Decree-Law 54) against journalists, bloggers and online critics, alongside restrictions on NGOs and civil-society funding	Raises the general operating-environment risk for media, technology and civil-society-adjacent businesses specifically	Assess sector-specific exposure to speech- and NGO-related restrictions before committing to Tunisia-based media or civic-tech ventures
Growth persistently running below government targets (2.1% IMF 2026 forecast versus a 3.3% official target) and elevated inflation near 6.5%	Domestic demand remains constrained, squeezing consumer-facing and local-currency-revenue businesses	Favour export-oriented and hard-currency-revenue business models over domestic-demand-dependent ones
Heavy energy-import dependence (over 60% of needs)	Direct exposure to global oil and gas price volatility, with knock-on fiscal and current-account effects	Factor energy-price pass-through risk into project cost modelling
Collective expulsions of sub-Saharan migrants to the Algerian and Libyan borders and periodic mass arrests, drawing international criticism	Reputational risk for investors in sectors with exposed or migrant-dependent labour forces, and a signal of broader rule-of-law strain	Apply rigorous labour and human-rights due diligence across the supply chain
Regional disparities, with the interior (Kasserine and similar areas) persistently underinvested relative to the coast	Limits the geographic scope of attractive investment sites largely to the coastal corridor and select resource zones	Favour established coastal industrial zones unless pursuing a specific development-finance-backed interior project

INVESTOR RISK NOTE

Tunisia's principal risk today is political and institutional rather than macroeconomic. President Kais Saied, re-elected in October 2024 with 90.69% of the vote on 28.8% turnout after authorities convicted or detained at least ten prospective rival candidates, has since presided over a steady tightening of control: a judiciary stripped of independence, a cybercrime law used to jail critics and journalists, restricted civil society, and, most starkly, a December 2025 appeals-court ruling imposing sentences of up to 45 years on dozens of opposition leaders, businesspeople and lawyers on conspiracy charges. Weekly protests demanding the release of political prisoners were continuing into December 2025 and the underlying grievances remain unresolved. Investors should treat Tunisia's governance trajectory, not its headline growth figures, as the defining variable for medium-term risk.

On the economic side, the gap between the IMF's 2.1% 2026 growth forecast and the government's own 3.3% target is itself informative: Tunisian authorities have a documented pattern of publishing more optimistic growth and investment targets (the 2023-2025 plan's goal of nearly tripling phosphate output by 2025, for instance, was highly ambitious) than independent forecasters validate. Investors should treat official targets as aspirational rather than base-case planning figures.

MARKET ACCESS

FIPA-Tunisia's facilitation role and the offshore export-manufacturing regime's full tax and customs exemption have made Tunisia a genuinely competitive nearshoring base for automotive-components and textiles exporters serving the EU, reinforced by proximity and an EU association agreement, and manufacturing FDI grew a healthy 22.9% in H1 2025.

The EU's Global Gateway initiative and bilateral European financing are opening a parallel channel for renewable-energy and infrastructure co-investment, including the €35.8 million clean-energy grant awarded in January 2026, though the broader EU-Tunisia economic and migration partnership remains, by outside accounts, a work in progress rather than a settled framework.

WHO SHOULD THE INVESTOR MEET?

INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE

Actor	Why It Matters	Waverley Engagement Angle
Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA-Tunisia)	Primary FDI facilitation and incentive coordination	Central registration and incentive contact for new entrants
Presidency of the Republic (Kais Saied)	Concentrated executive authority over policy, judiciary appointments and the political process	Monitor presidential decrees and political signals directly; do not assume institutional checks will constrain executive decisions
Tunisian judiciary (post-2022 restructuring)	Contract enforcement and dispute resolution, with independence significantly weakened since the 2022 mass judicial dismissals	Favour international arbitration clauses over reliance on domestic courts
Société Tunisienne de l'Électricité et du Gaz (STEG) / Ministry of Energy	Renewable-energy IPP tendering and grid access	Route for solar and wind project development
Gafsa Phosphate Company (CPG) / Tunisian Chemical Group (GCT)	State phosphate mining and chemical processing	Route for phosphate and fertiliser joint ventures
Central Bank of Tunisia (BCT)	Monetary policy and banking supervision	Confirm foreign-exchange and banking-sector conditions
European Union delegation / Global Gateway coordination office	EU-Tunisia economic, migration and clean-energy partnership	Route for grant- and loan-blended infrastructure and energy co-financing

CURRENT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CHANNELS

France remains Tunisia's largest foreign investor and historical partner, followed by Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States, with the European Union collectively Tunisia's dominant trade partner under its association agreement. Qatar leads among Arab investors. The EU has also become Tunisia's principal migration-policy counterpart, tying economic and clean-energy cooperation, including the Global Gateway program, to migration-management commitments - a linkage that has drawn criticism from human-rights organisations over insufficient safeguards for migrants and refugees.

INVESTOR PROFILE BEST SUITED

Tunisia is best suited to export-oriented manufacturers - particularly in automotive components and textiles - using the offshore regime to serve EU markets, renewable-energy developers pursuing IPP concessions or EU Global Gateway-linked financing, and phosphate and chemicals investors partnering with the state sector.

It is a materially weaker fit for investors dependent on judicial predictability, domestic consumer demand, or political neutrality in their local partnerships, given the current trajectory of judicial and political control under President Saied.

FROM INTELLIGENCE TO ENGAGEMENT

STEP 1: Confirm the Entry Route and Export Orientation

Determine whether the offshore export regime, a FIPA-facilitated standard investment, an energy IPP concession, or a phosphate-sector joint venture fits the project.

STEP 2: Engage FIPA-Tunisia and the Relevant Sector Body Early

Open parallel conversations with FIPA and, where relevant, STEG, the Ministry of Energy, or CPG/GCT.

STEP 3: Conduct Enhanced Political and Judicial-Risk Due Diligence

Assess counterparties for political exposure and structure dispute resolution through international arbitration rather than domestic courts where possible.

STEP 4: Secure the Licence, Concession or Offshore-Status Approval

Finalise the specific legal and tax structure for the chosen entry route.

STEP 5: Launch and Monitor

Begin operations while tracking the political and judicial situation, IMF program signals, and energy-price exposure.

WAVERLEY'S ROLE

- Independent due-diligence and structuring advisory across FIPA, offshore-regime and energy-IPP entry routes
- Introductions to FIPA-Tunisia, STEG, the Ministry of Energy and CPG/GCT counterparts
- Ongoing monitoring of Tunisia's political and judicial trajectory and its implications for contract enforceability
- Coordination with international arbitration specialists and experienced local legal and tax advisory partners

INVESTOR CALL TO ACTION

Investors seeking EU-facing export-manufacturing capacity, renewable-energy IPP opportunities, or phosphate-sector participation in Tunisia are invited to engage Waverley for a confidential, risk-calibrated structuring consultation.

INTELLIGENCE → RISK ASSESSMENT → STRUCTURING → MARKET ENTRY

WAVERLEY INVESTOR INTELLIGENCE & OPPORTUNITY PIPELINE

Current pipeline items Waverley is tracking include renewable-energy IPP tenders and EU Global Gateway-linked clean-energy co-financing following the January 2026 €35.8 million grant; continued automotive-components and textiles nearshoring investment under the offshore export regime; phosphate-sector modernisation at CPG and GCT; and the evolving EU-Tunisia economic and migration partnership, whose terms remain unsettled and worth monitoring directly.

POSITIONING

Waverley approaches Tunisia as a genuinely competitive EU-facing export-manufacturing and renewable-energy base operating inside an increasingly centralised and judicially constrained political system.

Our role is to help investors capture the export and clean-energy opportunity while applying the enhanced political, judicial and reputational due diligence that Tunisia's current governance trajectory demands.

SELECTED SOURCES

- Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2025 - Tunisia"
- The New Arab, "Tunisians Step Up Protests Against Saied's Crackdown on Opposition," December 2025
- Kapitalis, "Croissance 2026: Le FMI tempère l'optimisme de la Tunisie," April 2026
- AllAfrica, "Tunisia: Foreign Investments Up 20.8 Percent to TND 1,650.3 Million in H1 2025," August 2025
- European Investment Bank / Global Gateway, "EU Boosts Clean Energy in Tunisia with €35.8 Million Grant to Partners," January 2026