

Three Tunisian Coastal Towns, One Shared Solution for Waste

LA MARSA, SIDI BOU SAID AND CARTHAGE ARE JOINING TOGETHER FOR CLEANER STREETS, LESS EMISSIONS AND SAFER, BETTER JOBS.



 **La Marsa, Sidi Bou Said & Carthage, Tunisia**

 **129,000**

 **Category of Climate Action:**

- Solid waste
- Circular economy
- Climate & Health
- Inter-municipal delivery

Turning waste into opportunity

Along the Gulf of Tunis, almost 95% of household waste still goes to landfill. Food scraps and garden cuttings make up half of that waste, which could be turned into compost for local greenery or help generate clean electricity through biogas.

The three neighbouring towns of La Marsa, Sidi Bou Said, and Carthage saw a chance to work together with the Gap Fund to change this while modernising waste services for their residents, enabling clearer sorting at home, tidier streets and seafronts, and fewer overflowing bins. At the same time, diverting organics away from landfills to cut methane emissions and improve air and water quality.

Three towns, one challenge to solve together

Along the Gulf, the recovery rate – the proportion of household waste diverted from landfill through recycling or composting – is low for several reasons. Households are not separating their waste; each town uses different collection methods; and there is no shared facility to process organic or recyclable materials. Additionally, there is no agreed framework for financing, governance, or monitoring a joint service across the three towns. Much of the recycling effort relies on minor private initiatives and informal waste workers who lack formal contracts and adequate safety protections.

To move from intention to action, the municipalities needed a unified, phased plan that all three could commit to and co-finance.



A new model for waste and work along the coast

The EIB-Gap Fund supported the three towns – La Marsa, Sidi Bou Said, and Carthage – with a pre-feasibility study that explored technical options, estimated costs, and clarified roles and responsibilities.

The proposed system begins with residents separating waste at the source using household bins, guided by clear instructions and supported by around 200 conveniently located drop-off points for recyclables, general waste, and organic materials. The next step involves constructing a central recovery facility to process the sorted waste.

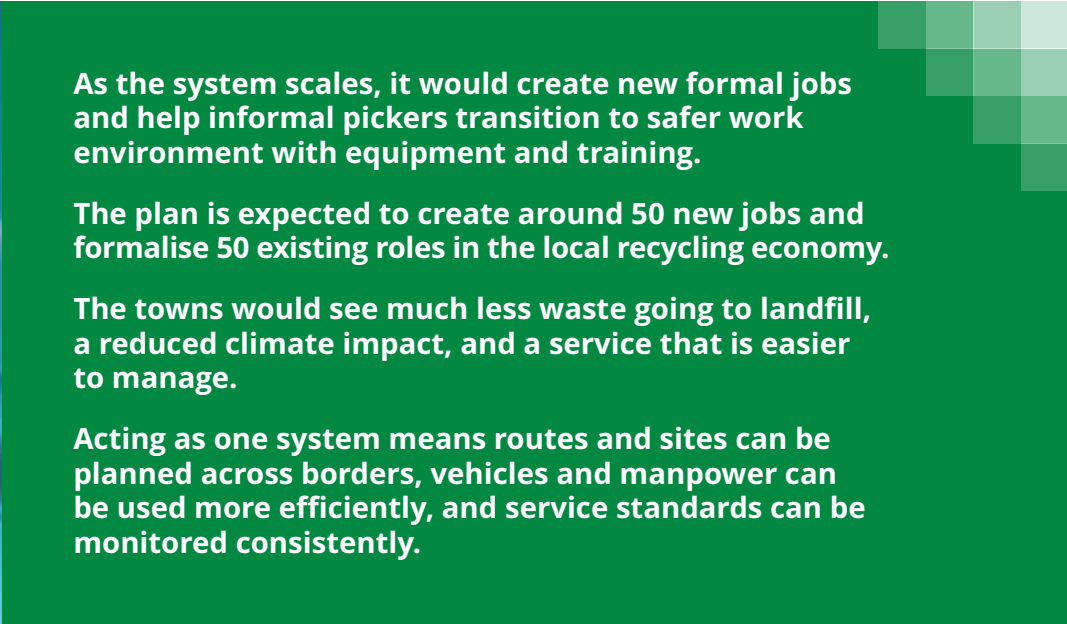
To manage operations, a simple public-private partnership model was recommended, with a small inter-municipal team overseeing contracts and performance. The proposed model also includes a pathway to integrate informal waste collectors into structured, safer roles.

As an inter-municipal initiative, the Gap Fund's assistance was instrumental in defining responsibilities across national institutions, establishing contract oversight mechanisms, and setting up performance monitoring systems for when the project becomes operational.



How communities and workers will feel the difference

Residents would see the benefits on the street: cleaner neighbourhoods, reliable drop-off points, and cleaner air. Food and garden waste that once sat in the heat would be collected separately and treated properly, improving local conditions. Recyclables would be recovered rather than dumped.



As the system scales, it would create new formal jobs and help informal pickers transition to safer work environment with equipment and training.

The plan is expected to create around 50 new jobs and formalise 50 existing roles in the local recycling economy.

The towns would see much less waste going to landfill, a reduced climate impact, and a service that is easier to manage.

Acting as one system means routes and sites can be planned across borders, vehicles and manpower can be used more efficiently, and service standards can be monitored consistently.



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The coast would see much less litter and windblown plastic on the shoreline. Organic waste would no longer be left to rot, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and returning useful products to the local economy. Over time, the burden on landfill sites would steadily reduce.



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Formalizing the partnership for lasting change

The three towns are now formalising their partnership and engaging national partners to line up technical and financial support. With that backing, they will launch a competitive process to select a private operator and establish the small inter-municipal team they need to manage the contract.

From there, the programme will move into design, permitting and procurement, followed by a phased rollout. Residents will notice early wins like clearer sorting guidance, new drop-off points, and tidier collections while they wait for the central recovery facility to be built and tested.

As each phase goes live, the towns' recovery rates will improve, less waste will end up in landfill, and communities will have a cleaner, healthier place to call home.



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