MGI WORLDWIDE · COUNTRY BUSINESS GUIDE

Doing Business in Tunisia

A practical guide for foreign investors and their advisers: setting up, taxation, payroll, exchange control and reporting obligations.

2026 edition · Figures verified against the Finance Laws 2025 and 2026

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01. Why Tunisia, and why this guide

> Foreign direct investment into Tunisia rose by about a quarter in the first months of 2026, driven by manufacturing and energy. Behind the statistics, the announcements speak for themselves: a German electronics group choosing Tunisia for its first plant outside Germany, an automotive supplier studying a site for 1,200 people, a Chinese electronics firm selecting the country as its first production base abroad.

Tunisia sits two to three hours' flight from most European hubs, in the same or a neighbouring time zone, with an industrial free trade agreement with the European Union and a deep pool of multilingual talent: engineers, developers, accountants and client-facing staff working in French, English, Italian, German and Arabic. All social levies included, an employer pays roughly 21% on top of gross salary.

This guide is written for the adviser as much as for the investor. It covers what a foreign group actually has to decide, file and document in its first two years in Tunisia. Every rate and threshold in it is tied to its legal source, and the whole document is revised at each Finance Law.

> **A word on figures.** Tunisian rates change with each Finance Law, and outdated figures circulate widely, including on major international platforms. Several published sources still show the personal income tax scale repealed in 2025, or social contribution rates repealed in January 2025. Every figure in this guide states the law it comes from; where a value is an order of magnitude rather than a statutory rate, it is labelled as such.

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How to use this guide with a client

Sections 03 to 05 answer the questions asked before the investment decision. Sections 06 to 09 are the operating manual for the first two years. Section 10 lists what we most often have to repair on files that were set up without local advice.

03. Choosing the right structure and regime

Two decisions drive everything that follows: the legal form, and the tax and customs regime. They determine corporate tax, VAT treatment, customs, and the exchange-control route for future dividends.

Form	Main features	Typical use
SUARL	Single-member limited liability company, liability limited to the contribution, light governance.	100% owned subsidiary
SARL	2 to 50 partners, free capital, transfers of shares subject to the articles' approval rules.	SMEs, joint ventures
SA	Board or management board, statutory auditor in all cases, heavier governance.	Large projects, regulated activities, future listing
Branch	No separate legal personality; the parent bears the liability.	Contract execution, representation

Incentive regimes

Beyond the ordinary regime, two regimes matter to most industrial and service investors: **totally exporting companies**, and companies established in **regional development zones**. Both carry tax and customs advantages, and both come with conditions that must be respected throughout the life of the company, not only at set-up. The choice is not reversible at no cost: it is worth modelling both before incorporating.

04. Incorporating: steps, timetable, documents

#	Step	What it involves
1	Articles of association	Drafting; for a corporate shareholder, parent company documents (register extract, powers) translated and legalised or apostilled.
2	Capital deposit	Paid from abroad, in foreign currency, through a Tunisian bank. This is the step that documents the foreign investment.
3	Registration	National business register, tax identification number, declaration of start of activity.
4	Social security	Registration with the CNSS before the first hire.
5	Sector formalities	Investment declaration with the competent bodies where the sector requires it; operating bank accounts.
6	First obligations	Bookkeeping under Tunisian standards, monthly returns, payroll, group reporting.

Does the investor need to travel?

In most cases, no. Formalities can be carried out by a local representative holding a legalised or apostilled power of attorney. A visit remains useful to choose premises and to recruit.

How long does it take?

With a complete file, the sequence from articles to tax identification is counted in weeks rather than months. Delays usually come from the parent's documents and from bank account opening, both of which can be prepared in parallel from day one.

05. Corporate taxation, VAT and withholding taxes

Corporate income tax

Taxpayer	Rate
Standard rate	20%
Banks, financial institutions and insurance (including takaful)	40%
Specific sectors (telecoms, downstream oil, large retail, concession holders)	35%
Reduced rate (agriculture, handicrafts and similar)	10%

Source: article 37 of Law 2024-48 (Finance Law for 2025), for profits from 2024 onwards.

> **A common trap.** Summaries circulating online describe a "15% / 20% / 25% scale according to turnover". That scale comes from the *draft* Finance Law for 2025 and was not enacted. The rates above are those of the voted text.

Corporate tax is paid through **three advance instalments of 30%** of the previous year's tax, in June, September and December, followed by the annual return. A **social solidarity contribution** is added to corporate tax; under article 87 of the Finance Law for 2026 the 2023-2025 regime was extended, at 4% for companies taxed at 35% or 40%, and 3% for those taxed at 20% or 10%, each with a statutory minimum.

Value added tax

Rate	Applies to
Standard	19%
Intermediate	13%
Reduced	7%

Exports are exempt. Returns are monthly. **Electronic invoicing** was extended to services subject to VAT from 1 January 2026 (article 53 of the Finance Law for 2026), with a penalty of TND 500 per non-compliant invoice, capped at TND 50,000 per audit. For a services subsidiary invoicing its parent monthly, compliance is neither difficult nor expensive, but it does not happen by itself.

Withholding taxes

Payment	Rate
Dividends	10% for individuals and non-residents; 0% between resident companies
Royalties paid to non-residents	15%, subject to tax treaty relief
Rent of buildings	10% (5% on rent paid to hotels)
Professional fees and commissions	3% for companies and individuals under the actual regime; 10% under the lump-sum regime
Purchases of goods and services of TND 1,000 or more (VAT included)	0.5%, 1% or 1.5% depending on the supplier's tax regime
Salaries	Monthly withholding based on the personal income tax scale

Tunisia has a wide network of double tax treaties which frequently reduce the rates on dividends, interest and royalties. Treaty relief is not automatic: it requires a residence certificate and a documented file.

06. Employing people: payroll, social security and leave

Payroll is where most compliance errors are found in foreign-owned subsidiaries, usually because the rates applied were copied from an outdated source. The values below are those in force.

Social security contributions (general private-sector regime)

Contribution	Rate
Employee social security (CNSS)	**9.68%**
Employer social security (CNSS)	**17.07%**
Vocational training levy (TFP)	**1% or 2%**
Housing levy (FOPROLOS)	**1%**
Work accident insurance	**0.4% to 4%**
Typical total employer cost	**≈ 21%**

Each of the two CNSS rates includes a 0.5% unemployment insurance fund introduced from 1 January 2025 by article 17 of the Finance Law for 2025. Rates of 9.18% and 16.57%, still shown by many international sources, are repealed. The training levy is 1% for manufacturing industries and 2% for other sectors. Contributions are declared quarterly.

Personal income tax scale

Annual taxable income (TND)	Rate
Up to 5,000	**0%**
5,000 to 10,000	**15%**
10,000 to 20,000	**25%**
20,000 to 30,000	**30%**
30,000 to 40,000	**33%**
40,000 to 50,000	**36%**
50,000 to 70,000	**38%**
Above 70,000	**40%**

Source: article 36 of Law 2024-48 (Finance Law for 2025), applicable to income from 1 January 2025. Professional expenses are deducted at 10%, capped at TND 2,000 a year. A household allowance of TND 300 a year and TND 100 per dependent child (up to four) also apply.

Minimum wage, working time and leave

Minimum wage, 48-hour regime	**TND 554.736 / month**
Minimum wage, 40-hour regime	**TND 470.251 / month**
Statutory annual leave	One working day per month, i.e. 12 working days, rising by one day per five years of service, capped at 18
Maternity leave	15 days before birth and 3 months after, extendable by one month for twins, premature birth or congenital condition
Paternity leave	7 days (10 for twins or a child with a disability)

Minimum wage: Decree 2026-67 of 30 April 2026, retroactive to 1 January 2026, with further increases already enacted for 2027 and 2028. Parental leave: Law 2024-44 of 12 August 2024, which replaced the previous regime of 30 days' maternity leave and one day of paternity leave; collective agreements may provide more favourable terms.

07. Exchange control and repatriation of profits

> This is the single most important file of a Tunisian subsidiary, and the one most often neglected. Tunisia welcomes foreign capital, but the future transfer of dividends and sale proceeds depends entirely on how the initial investment was documented when it entered the country.

The capital must be paid from abroad, in foreign currency, through a Tunisian bank, with the declarations that record the investment. Shareholder loans follow the same logic. A subsidiary that neglects this paperwork at incorporation can find itself, years later, profitable but unable to transfer its dividends. Repairing the file afterwards is possible, but slow; doing it correctly on day one costs nothing.

> **Practical rule.** Before the first transfer of funds, agree with the bank in writing which documents will evidence the investment, and keep that file for the entire life of the company. It will be requested again at every dividend distribution and at exit.

08. Accounting, audit and the compliance calendar

Accounts are kept under the Tunisian accounting system, in Tunisian dinars, and books and supporting documents must be retained for **ten years**. Most foreign-owned subsidiaries keep statutory accounts locally and produce, in parallel, a reporting package in the group's chart of accounts or under IFRS, in English, aligned with the parent's closing calendar.

Statutory audit

A **statutory auditor** (commissaire aux comptes) must be appointed by every SA, whatever its size. For an SARL or SUARL the appointment becomes mandatory once regulatory thresholds are exceeded (balance sheet total, turnover and average headcount); below them it remains optional but is often required by banks, investors and parent companies. The mandate runs for three financial years. The auditor controls the accounts and does not keep them: the same firm cannot be both bookkeeper and statutory auditor of the same company.

Obligation	Frequency
VAT, withholding taxes and payroll levies return	Monthly
CNSS declaration	Quarterly
Corporate tax instalments (3 × 30% of prior year tax)	June, September, December
Annual corporate tax return and financial statements	Annual
Employer's annual declaration	Annual
Transfer pricing return (above threshold)	Annual

09. Intragroup flows and transfer pricing

Transactions between the Tunisian company and its group must be priced at arm's length. Obligations scale with size:

Obligation	Threshold (turnover)
Annual transfer pricing return	**TND 20 million**
Master file and local file	**TND 200 million**
Country-by-country reporting	**TND 1,636 million consolidated**

Undocumented management fees are the first item reassessed in a tax audit of a foreign-owned company. A written agreement, evidence that the service was actually rendered, and a defensible allocation key, all drafted at the start, avoid most of the difficulty.

10. Five mistakes that cost foreign subsidiaries money

1. Documenting the investment after the money has moved

The exchange-control file is built at the moment the capital enters the country. Reconstituting it years later, when a dividend is due, is slow and sometimes impossible. Nothing else in this guide has a worse cost-to-effort ratio.

2. Applying payroll rates copied from an outdated source

Contribution rates changed in January 2025 and the minimum wage changed again in 2026. Several major international platforms still publish the repealed figures. Payroll computed on repealed rates is non-compliant, and the arrears are the employer's.

3. Charging management fees without a contract

Intragroup charges that cannot be evidenced are the first reassessment in an audit. A one-page agreement, proof of the service and an allocation key, written at the start, neutralise the risk.

4. Choosing the regime after incorporating

The totally exporting and regional development regimes carry conditions that must hold from the outset. Switching afterwards is rarely neutral, and the modelling takes days, not weeks.

5. Treating e-invoicing as a formality

Since January 2026 it covers services subject to VAT, with a penalty per non-compliant invoice. A subsidiary invoicing its parent monthly is directly concerned.

11. About MGI BFC

MGI BFC is a firm of chartered accountants and auditors based in Tunis, registered with the Tunisian Order of Chartered Accountants (OECT) and an independent member of MGI Worldwide since 2017. Founded in 2010, the firm serves subsidiaries of international groups, Tunisian SMEs and family groups, financial institutions, investment funds and development institutions, including donor-funded projects. It also operates in French-speaking West Africa through BFC Senegal (Dakar) and BFC Guinea (Conakry).

For fellow MGI member firms

We act as the Tunisia desk of the network: one email, an answer from a partner within 24 hours, in English. Set-up, bookkeeping and payroll, tax and transfer pricing, statutory audit, valuation and due diligence.

Working languages

French, English, Arabic, Italian and German. Reporting is delivered in the group's format and calendar, under Tunisian standards or IFRS.

Keeping this guide current. Tunisian rates change with each Finance Law. MGI BFC maintains a sourced reference table of every published figure and revises this guide accordingly; a one-page quarterly Tunisia briefing is also available to member firms and their clients.

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This guide provides general information based on legislation in force in September 2026 (Finance Laws 2025 and 2026, Decree 2026-67, Law 2024-44). It does not constitute advice and cannot replace an analysis of a specific situation. Rules change with each Finance Law and with Central Bank circulars. MGI Worldwide is a network of independent audit, tax, accounting and consulting firms; member firms are separate legal entities and no member firm is responsible for the services of another.