



INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN BENI MELLAL-KHENIFRA (ISED-BMK)

USAID's new five-year strategy for Morocco aims to promote stability, prosperity, and sustainability by addressing significant socio-economic challenges in the country. Out of Morocco's regions, the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region, is ranked 7th in national wealth creation and second to last in Gross Domestic Product per capita despite enormous economic potential. It has been identified as a priority area for USAID's efforts, given its high poverty rate of 17.2 percent, youth unemployment rate of 28.5 percent, and disproportionate challenges for women, of whom only 25.9 percent participate in the workforce. Additionally, around 30,000 people with disabilities in the region face significant difficulty in accessing education, employment, and healthcare. Despite these challenges, the region has abundant development opportunities and political will to act on them, making it an important focus to advance inclusive economic growth, strengthen community development, and improve education.

USAID RESPONSE

To support the region in achieving its development priorities, USAID worked with regional stakeholders to co-design the ISED-BMK program, which promotes collaborative, demand-driven, innovative, and adaptable interventions that integrate robust gender mainstreaming and a strong private-sector focus. In promoting local solutions to achieve scalable and sustainable outcomes, the program is working with 40 pilot communes from urban and rural areas with substantial growth potential, effective leadership, and high levels of vulnerability (i.e., poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and disability rates) to deliver technical assistance and training that will lead to accelerated and more equitable and sustainable growth.

ISED-BMK supports activities that:

- Increase inclusive economic growth through innovation, entrepreneurship, and access to decent employment for women, youth, people with disabilities, and rural residents.
- Improve Sub-national Government Institutions' (SGIs) performance, efficiency, transparency, and capacity to design and adopt inclusive, participatory public policies.

- Strengthen the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in governance and advocacy for youth, women, and people with disabilities and empower them with improved access to information.
- Improve governance of business and economic ecosystems using a systemic approach.
- Increase business and job growth via improved market access, business development services, finance, and a small grants program (focused initially on agriculture/agri-business and tourism).
- Enhance workforce development by better aligning training to market needs.
- Improve living and working conditions for female agricultural workers.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Provided technical support to six multi-stakeholder action plans to improve the BMK business climate, including assisting 40 communes to:
 - Conduct 722 consultation workshops with over 9,000 citizens to design participatory and inclusive Communal Action Plans;
 - Promote transparency and proactive data disclosure, accountability, and public project and financial management; and
 - Stimulate the flow of Right to Information requests through coordination with SGIs to address supply-side constraints affecting government information disclosure.
- Organized the Regional Odysseys of Entrepreneurship in Beni Mellal-Khenifra, with participation from over 500 students and vocational trainees, from five provinces, who participated in more than 90 workshops on business idea development. This resulted in 11 entrepreneurship projects being selected to receive financial and technical support via the Small Grants Program.
- Launched the Regional Agribusiness Cluster, which comprises 18 members, including private sector industry leaders, producers, public sector agencies, and Research and Development institutions, to promote investment, production, sales, exports, and productivity.
- Raised awareness of gender-based violence among 793 participants in five provinces (41% male, 60% female and 5% people with disabilities) via collaborative CSO-led campaigns.

FACTS & FIGURES

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

- FHI 360
- Association Al Intilaka Pour Le Développement, L'Environnement Et La Culture – Afourer
- Mississippi State University

HOST-COUNTRY PARTNERS:

The Wilaya of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region, the Regional Council, the Regional Investment Center, the Office for Skills Training and the Promotion of Work, Sultan Moulay Slimane University, the National Initiative for Human Development, the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Competencies, and other regional public and private institutions

LOCATION:	Beni Mellal-Khénifra
BUDGET:	\$18 million
DURATION:	2021-2025
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