

PRESS RELEASE

Doing Research in Tunisia: A milestone for strengthening social science in the MENA region

Tunis, 29 September 2025 – On 18 September 2025, the final conference of the **Doing Research Assessment (DRA)** in Tunisia brought together **over 70 participants** at the Centre d'Études et de Recherches Économiques et Sociales (CERES) in Tunis, with additional participants joining online.

Organized by the [Global Development Network \(GDN\)](#), in partnership with [Expertise France](#), the [Delegation of the European Union to Tunisia](#), and the [Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research \(MESRS\)](#), the event marked an important step forward for the future of social science and economic research in Tunisia – and across the MENA region.

A comprehensive review of Tunisia's research ecosystem

Based on a survey of nearly **500 researchers, administrators, and policymakers**, the final DRA report provides a detailed overview of Tunisia's social science research system. The report highlights both achievements and persistent structural challenges: Although Tunisia boasts one of the strongest research outputs in Africa, the sector continues to face limited funding, weak private-sector engagement, fragmented governance, and modest policy uptake.

Presented by the local research team led by the **Applied Social Science Forum (ASSF)**, the findings opened a constructive discussion among institutions, researchers, donors, and international partners on ways to strengthen the research environment and improve the use of evidence in policymaking.

A strong commitment to supporting social science research in Tunisia

In his opening remarks, **Mourad Bellassoued**, Chief of Staff at the MESRS, praised "a rigorous and useful piece of work, driven by exemplary collaboration between GDN, Expertise France, the EU Delegation, and national actors". He emphasized the importance of the report's adoption by the Tunisian scientific community and announced the Ministry's intention to organize a national dissemination tour across universities and research centers, with support from Expertise France and the Savoirs Éco project.

The **CERES**, a leading national center for social science research in Tunisia, also announced the **establishment of a dedicated unit** to monitor the implementation of the report's recommendations, promote its findings, and ensure the sustainability of the data collected.

During the event, **H.E. Ms. Anne Guéguen**, Ambassador of France to Tunisia, underlined the importance of strengthening social science and economic research systems. She welcomed the pioneering nature of the DRA report, noting that **Tunisia is the first MENA country to undertake such an assessment**. She highlighted the project's contribution in offering concrete recommendations to bridge the gap between research production and policymaking, and in fostering stronger connections between science and society.

Toward a regional expansion of the Doing Research initiative

The afternoon featured a **regional roundtable** with high-level representatives from **Tunisia, Lebanon, Qatar, Jordan, and Egypt**. The discussion underscored the growing momentum for **collaboration across the region** and the interest in extending the DRA framework to other MENA countries.

"**Tunisia is now leading the way in rethinking social science research in the region**", said Jean-Louis Arcand, President of GDN. The DRA has become a Tunisian public good — a shared resource that can drive more effective, evidence-based policymaking."

About the Doing Research initiative

Launched in 2014, the global Doing Research initiative maps and evaluates social science research systems in the Global South, identifying barriers to the production, dissemination, and use of research. Tunisia is the first country in the MENA region to have undertaken this assessment.

More information: <https://www.gdn.int/doing-research-global-reach>

About the Global Development Network

The Global Development Network (GDN) is an international public organization that supports high-quality, policy-relevant social science research in low- and middle-income countries. Founded in 1999, GDN connects researchers and research institutions to funding, global networks, training, mentoring, and peer review. Currently headquartered in New Delhi, with an office in Clermont-Ferrand, France, and a team across ten countries, GDN has supported social science systems in 142 countries.

More information: <https://www.gdn.int/>