



4.5 TUNISIA

4.5.1 Existing Situation

The Tunisian Railway Network of SNCFT (Societe Nationale de Chemins de Fer Tunisien) is quite extensive in the north of the country, but there are no railways south and east of Gabès – though extensions to Mednine, Zarzis and the Libyan border are planned.

The main route on the Tunisian Railways Network eastward is from Gharadimaou on the Algerian Border to Tunis (**Route 18**), and then Southward via Sousse (**Routes 19 and 20**) and Sfax (**Route 21A**) to Gabès (**Route 22**). This route could be continued onward to Libya via the proposed extension to Ras Ajdir (**Routes 23 and 24**). In addition to this, there are a number of subsidiary routes as shown at Figure 4.5.1. Proposed new lines are also shown.

There is 1,674 km of metre-gauge route, and 468km of standard-gauge (plus 10km of dual / mixed gauge). Currently, rolling stock differences prevent through running between the northern and southern metre-gauge systems. 65 km of the metre-gauge railway is electrified at 25kv AC. There is a limited amount of double-track, including the line from Tunis to Sousse and Monastir (**Routes 19 and 20**).

The passenger and freight figures for 1998 to 2002 are given below:-

Table 4.5.1: Tunisia – Passengers and Freight (1998-2002)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Passengers (M)	32.4	34.4	35.6	36.9*	36.9*
Passengers – km(M)	1,128	1,197	1,258	1,280*	1,280*
Freight (M Tonnes)	12.54	12.55	12.08	12.05	12.2
Freight (M Tonne – km)	2,347	2,364	2,282	2,273	2,285

* From UACF statistics – data for 2002 has not been changed from that for 2001.

The overall level of passengers and freight carried has stayed relatively constant over the last few years, though there has been a noticeable increase over the last 15 years (approx +55% for passengers and + 25% for freight). With proposed extensions to the network, and international links to Algeria and Libya, these figures should increase further. Traffic on these international links will take some time to develop, but should be quite well established within 10 years provided that:-



- Construction of Libya’s proposed new rail network proceeds without delay;
- Tunisian railway works, as detailed below, are undertaken;
- The political / security situation develops in a satisfactory manner. (N.B. the link to Algeria is open, but no passengers are carried at present because of safety concerns).

4.5.2 Development Proposals

In recent years, especially in the Ninth and Tenth Plan Periods (1996 – 2006), there has been significant new investment in Tunisian Railways, funded by International Banks including the World Bank and the European Investment Bank.

It is unclear whether SNCFT are proposing to convert their metre-gauge tracks to standard-gauge. Given that the proposed line from Gabès, via Mednine, to Ras Ajdir (**Routes 23 and 24**) is, apparently, proposed as a standard gauge line this would seem to be likely. (At least for the Fondouk – Sousse – Mahdia line (**Route 20**), together with the proposed new line from Mahdia to Sfax, to permit through running of standard-gauge trains).

Amongst the proposed new lines / re-opening of former lines are the following:

Potential Strategic Routes:

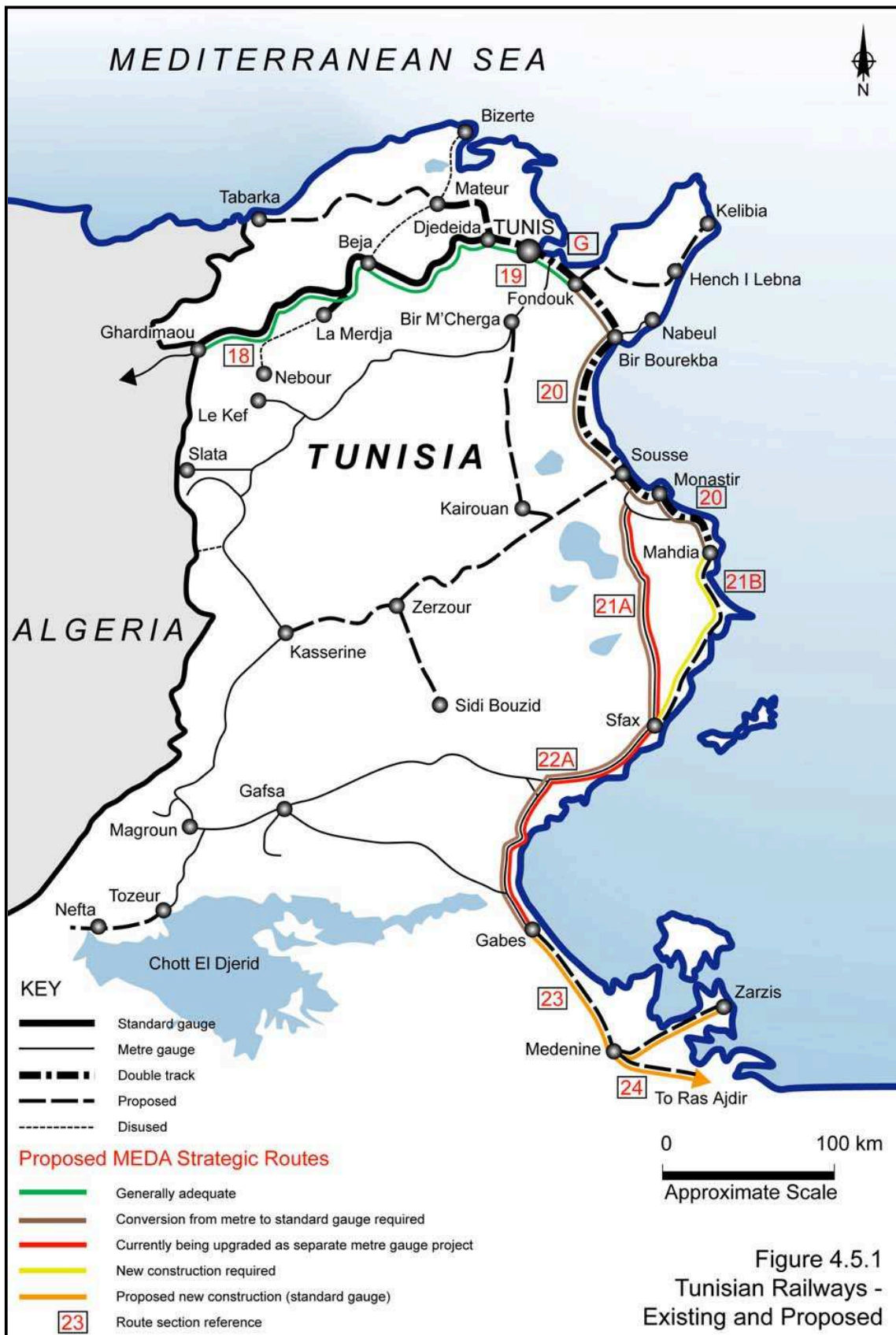
- A new coastal line from Mahdia to Sfax (**Route 21B**), with associated improvements to the Sousse – Sfax line (**Route 21A**);
- A new standard-gauge line from Gabès, via Mednine, to Ras Ajdir on the border with Libya (**Routes 23 and 24**).

Other Routes

- Re-opening of the Mateur to Tabarka, Mateur to Djedeida and Mastouta to La Merdja lines in Northern Tunisia;
- Re-opening of the Fondouk to Kelibia line (the Cap Bon Line);
- Re-opening of the Sousse to Kasserine Line;
- Two new North-South inland lines from Bir M’cherga to Kairouan and from Zerzour to Sidi bou Zid;

Re-opening of the line from Seldja to Tozeur, and construction onward of a new line to Nefta.

Euro Mediterranean Transport Project Mediterranean Transport Infrastructure Network		Reference: IP0335-RPT-TR-15	
Europe Aid/B/6	Title: Technical Note 10 – Long Term Perspective for MEDA Regional Rail Services	Date: September 2004	Page 26 of 91





4.6 LIBYA

4.6.1 Existing Situation

Currently there are no operational railways in Libya; the last trains ran in 1985.

4.6.2 Development Plans and Proposals

A comprehensive plan for the establishment of an operational railway network has been developed. This includes a coastal railway from Libya's western border with Tunisia to its eastern border with Egypt, a distance of some 2,179 km. This railway is proposed as a single-track, standard-gauge system suitable for speeds of up to 140 kph for passenger trains and 100 kph for freight trains.

The route for the coastal railway is from Ras Ajdir on the Tunisian border, via Tripoli, Misratah, Surt, Benghazi and Tubruq to Salum on the Egyptian border (**Routes 25 and 26**).

A contract was signed in 2000 with the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) to construct the first section of this line from Ras Ajdir to Tripoli (**Route 25**), including a link to Tripoli's port area. The value of this contract is US\$477M for a length of 191 km and includes for maintenance of the line for two years after its completion. This section of line includes 16 stations and 45 bridges, but no tunnels.

The coastal railway is expected to carry passenger and freight traffic, the latter predominantly being agricultural and petroleum products, but also iron ore from Sabha (see below).

In addition to the coastal railway, a southerly line from Surt to Sabha, via Elgofra (**Route J**), is proposed; a distance of approximately 920 km. This will primarily be used to carry iron ore from the Sabha area to the steelworks at Misratah to the east of Tripoli. The total cost of the coastal railway and the line south to Sabha is estimated to be US\$10,000 Million, for a length of approximately 3,100 km of new single-track, standard gauge railway.

The first section of the new railway is expected to open in 2007 or 2008.

The routes of the proposed railways described above are shown at Figure 4.6.1.

Euro Mediterranean Transport Project Mediterranean Transport Infrastructure Network		Reference: IP0335-RPT-TR-15	
Europe Aid/B/6	Title: Technical Note 10 – Long Term Perspective for MEDA Regional Rail Services	Date: September 2004	Page 28 of 91