




2019
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

**AICS CAIRO
EGYPT**




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ITALIAN AGENCY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

CAIRO

Country Profile

DEMOGRAPHICS

Official language: Arabic

Languages spoken: English and French are commonly used by the more educated classes

Area: 1,00,450 km²

Capital: Cairo

Population: 99 million

Density: 98.9 inhabitants per km²

Population growth rate: 2.3%

Life expectancy: 73.7 years

Literacy rate: 71.2%

Religions: Islam 90% (mainly Sunni), Christianity 10% (mostly Coptic Orthodox, there are also Apostolic Armenians, Catholics, Maronites, Orthodox and Anglicans)

Human Development Index: 0.700

ECONOMY

GDP: USD 250,89 billion

Annual GDP growth rate: 5.3%

Gross National Income per capita at purchasing power parity: 12,100 international dollar

Unemployment rate: 12.2%

Inflation rate: 21.4%

Export goods: Unrefined oil and petroleum products, gold, chemical and agricultural products, cotton, textiles, metallurgical products

Imported goods: Wheat, oil, food, chemicals, machinery and equipment, wood

Main export partners: United Arab Emirates, Italy, Turkey, United States, Germany

Main import partners: China, Russia, Germany, United States, Italy, USA

Contribution to GDP: Agriculture (11.7%), Industry (34.3%), Services (54%)

Currency: Egyptian Pound

The Italian Cooperation in Egypt

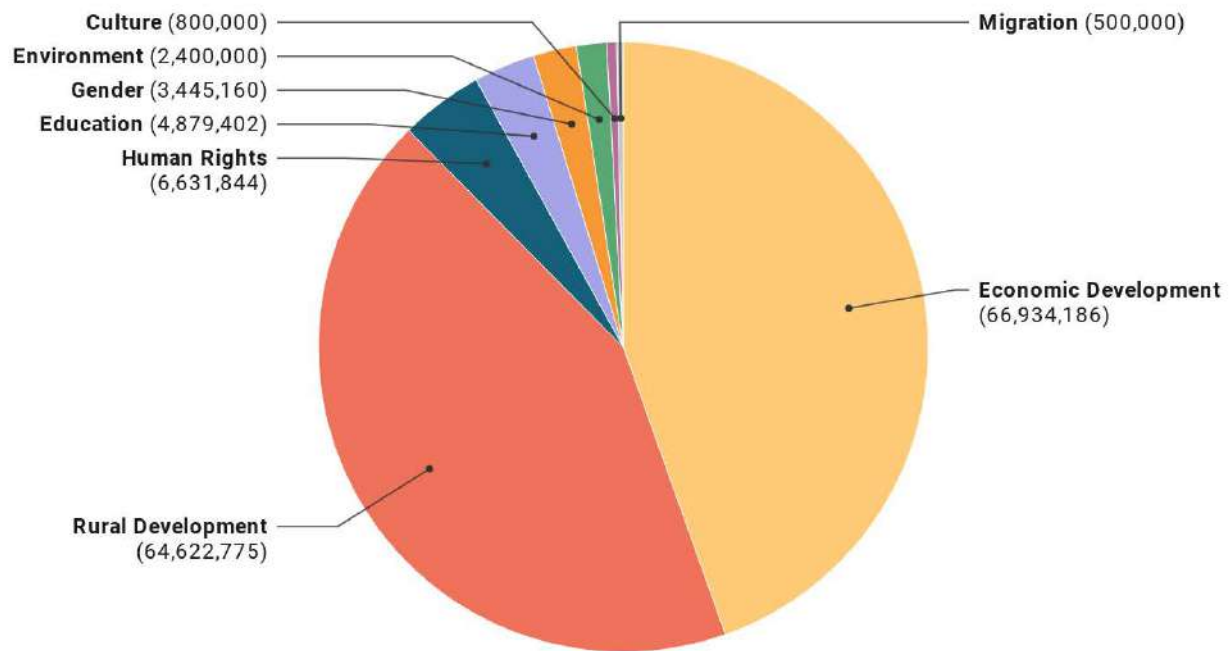
The Italian Cooperation has been operating in Egypt since 1982, supporting projects that promote sustainable socio-economic development in the country. The sectors of intervention of the Italian Cooperation in Egypt have been identified in collaboration with local counterparts, including the Ministry of International Cooperation, and in harmony with the programmes of other donors, in particular the Delegation of the European Union in Cairo. The sectors are in line with the new priorities of the EU-Egypt Partnership 2017-2020 and take into account Egypt's development priorities identified in the document "Egypt Vision 2030" and the Strategic Framework for Economic and Social Development plan until year 2022 published by the Ministry of International Cooperation and the Ministry of Planning.

The Italian presence focuses on the fight against poverty, attaching great importance to the social dimension, the support of population groups in vulnerable situations (such as women, children, the elderly, the disabled, migrants), the development of human resources through education and technical and vocational training, the promotion of job opportunities, especially for young people, and the development of the private sector, with a focus on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Particular attention is paid to rural development and agriculture, in which Italy stands out for a long-standing and appreciated experience, as well as to the protection and enhancement of the priceless natural, cultural, and historical heritage of Egypt, also through the promotion of responsible forms of tourism.

Data and areas of intervention

At sectoral level, in 2019 the Italian Cooperation in Egypt focused on eight areas of intervention for a total of more than € 150 million*. The priority sectors of AICS Cairo are (i) Rural Development and Food Security, (ii) Economic Development, (iii) Education and Training, (iv) Governance and Human Rights, (v) Gender, (vi) Migration and Development, (vii) Environment and (viii) Culture and Tourism.

Areas of Intervention

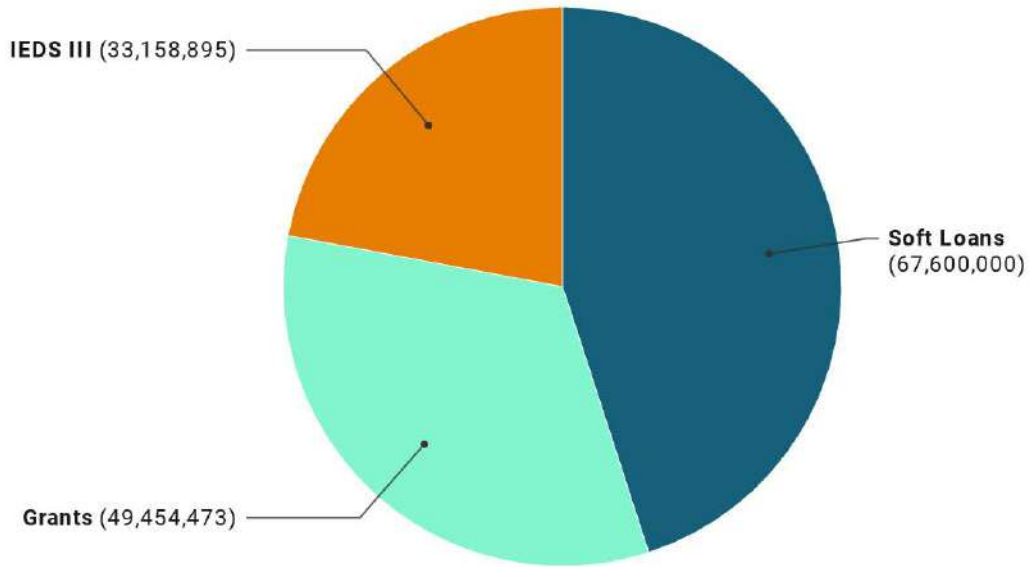


The Italian Cooperation operates through grants and soft loans. Grants are assigned on the bilateral channel (contributions to local entities and institutions) and multilateral channel (contributions to International Organizations and UN Agencies). Many projects are also financed through the Italian-Egyptian Debt Swap Programme

* The mentioned portfolio specifically amounts to EUR 150,213,368 and only includes projects active in 2019. All initiatives approved but not yet launched have thus been excluded.

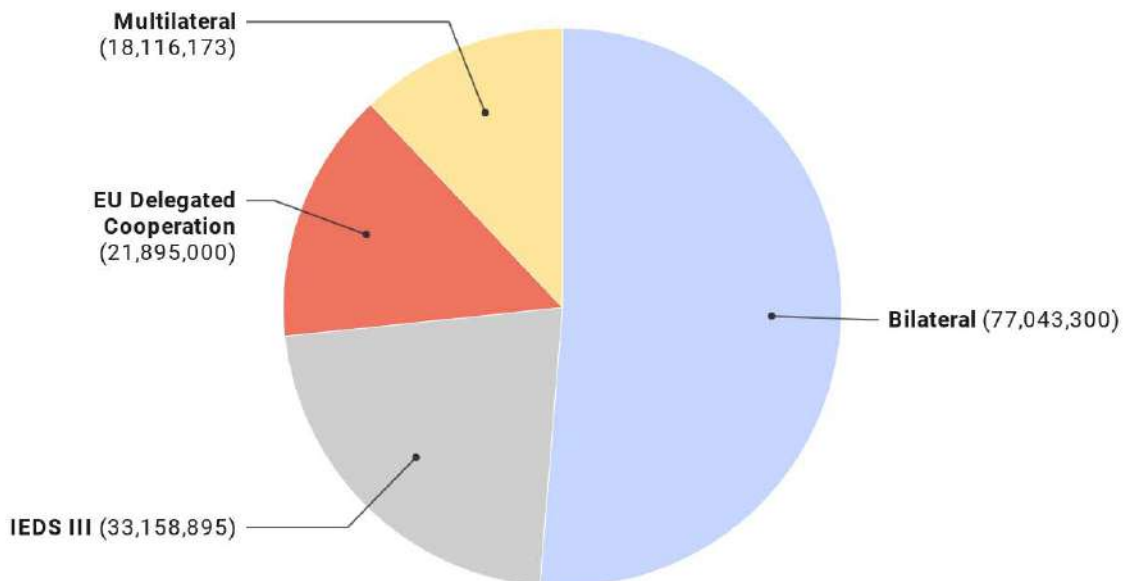
(IEDS), which has entered its third phase, for a total value of about 100 million USD and the counterpart funds generated by the Food Aid Program.

Types of Funding



In addition, in December 2013, a Delegation Agreement with the European Union worth approximately €22 million was finalised for the management of European funds under the EU Joint Rural Development Programme (EU-JRDP), which is still in progress and will run until 2020.

Funding Channels





**OUR
PROJECTS**



RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

In the field of agriculture and rural development, which have always been priority sectors of the Italian Cooperation in the country, the Agency has been working successfully over the years with local and international actors and institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, the Desert Research Center, the Agricultural Research Center, the General Authority for Fish Resources Development (GAFRD) of the Ministry, the Ministry of Supply, the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (IAM) of Bari, various Italian and Egyptian NGOs, and UN agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). Since 2014, the Italian Cooperation has assumed the role of coordinator, together with FAO, of the Development Partners Group (DPG) on Agriculture and Rural Development, a thematic platform aimed at coordinating relevant donors in the country.

In 2019, the programmes managed in collaboration with UNIDO and the Ministry of Agriculture have continued their activities. With the first, the Italian Cooperation has implemented the Egyptian Cotton Project, which is playing a considerable role in promoting sustainability and inclusion throughout the value chain of cotton production in Egypt, while restoring the precious and unique quality of Egyptian cotton. With the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture, on the other hand, the "SAMSIMIFA" project, managed by IAM Bari, aims at improving agricultural mechanisation systems in the governorates of Minya and Fayoum.



This year also saw the conclusion of two projects implemented in partnership with FAO. The first has improved the skills of women and young people in food production and has provided income opportunities to foster food security and access to a sufficient and diversified diet. The second was a regional project carried out in Egypt and Tunisia addressed to small farmers and aimed at improving the value chain of selected products (tomatoes and grapes) through the adoption of improved post-harvest techniques to reduce losses and environmental footprint. The project has generated added value and provided development opportunities for rural farmers while also creating employment opportunities in the agro-industrial sector.

In this field, Italy also manages a EU delegated cooperation programme, the "EU Joint Rural Development Programme", which aims to strengthen the agricultural infrastructure and the capacities of active rural associations, cooperatives and producer unions. The project explores new and innovative solutions for income generation by offering tailor-made support. Farmers and craftsmen are actively involved in order to support their long-term social, economic and human development.

Two other projects are being implemented through the funding of the Italian-Egyptian Debt Swap Programme: the first aims to improve food security and the local grain production value by increasing storage efficiency and reducing the government's physical and economic losses



in the supply of subsidised bread through the improvement of the supply chain, the increase of storage capacity under more hygienic and safe conditions and the introduction of modern technologies; the second aims to develop and consolidate the aquaculture sector on the North Coast of Egypt by providing technical support to the public and private sector and establish an updated aquaculture district in order to improve the capacity and income of farmers as well as the performance of the GAFRD to provide an up-to-date technical service.

Finally, a project for "Improving the value chain of SIWA date palm through enhancing good agricultural practices on Geographic Indicators" and an initiative to develop the agro-industrial tomato supply chain in a sustainable and integrated way in order to create new job opportunities for young entrepreneurs are being launched.



1- AGRICULTURAL MECHANISATION IN MINYA AND FAYOUM - SAMSIMIFA

Target area: Governorates of Minya and Fayoum

Implementing partner: Ministry of Agriculture and

Funding channel and type: Bilateral soft loan

Duration: 36 months (Jan17-Jun20)

Budget: 10 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The project aims to contribute to increase agricultural sustainability by supporting and enhancing the agricultural mechanization system. The project will provide farmers and their cooperatives with innovative mechanization systems and advance the agricultural mechanization machineries of the Hiring Services Stations in the selected Governorates of Minia and Fayoum. Innovative and participatory knowledge management systems will be applied. The project will also improve the capacities of the research mechanization centres of the Ministry of Agriculture in Minia.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- A set of agricultural machinery is supplied to 5 mechanisation stations in Fayoum and 9 mechanisation stations in Minya, the workshops are rehabilitated and a pilot laboratory equipped for extraordinary maintenance is established in each Governorate
- Beneficiaries' management skills are improved
- Hiring Service Stations' management and performance is improved

BENEFICIARIES



Farmers, small and medium communities, Hiring Service Stations, Applied Mechanisation Centres





2- FROM COTTON SEEDS TO CLOTHING: ENHANCING SUSTAINABILITY, INCLUSIVENESS AND VALUE ADDITION OF THE COTTON VALUE CHAIN IN EGYPT



Target area: Governorates of Damietta and Kafr El-Sheikh

Implementing partner: United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant

Duration: 36 months (Jan17-Jun20)

Budget: 1,5 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The primary objective of the initiative is to promote sustainability and inclusion throughout the entire value chain of cotton production through the direct involvement of all players in the supply chain, creating lasting partnerships with the ultimate goal of delivering high quality products that meet the growing needs of an international market increasingly attentive to the issue of sustainability.

EXPECTED RESULTS 

- Improved operational capacity of the Cotton Research Institute and other institutes and centres responsible for quality control of cotton seeds and experimentation with new hybrids in compliance with modern disciplinary practices of sustainable cultivation (including organic farming regulations)
- Knowledge, practices and methodologies of organic and/or low environmental impact cultivation among operators in the agricultural and industrial cotton processing chain are improved
- Innovative and sustainable methodologies aimed at the efficient use and reuse of resources are adopted in the whole industrial cotton processing chain, in particular for spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing

BENEFICIARIES 

Cotton growers, including associations, private enterprises, agricultural workers, technical operators, students, traders and exporters, specialised technical institutionse





3- FOOD LOSSES AND WASTE REDUCTION THROUGH VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT FOR FOOD SECURITY IN EGYPT AND TUNISIA

Target area: Lower Egypt and Tunisia

Implementing partner: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant

Duration: 36 months (Oct15-Jul19)

Budget: 2,1 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The initiative aims to reduce food waste and improve the agri-food supply chains with particular attention to the production, post-harvest and marketing of food products, with the involvement of all actors in the key supply chains identified in each of the two countries of intervention, i.e. cereals and milk in Tunisia, tomatoes and grapes for Egypt.

EXPECTED RESULTS 

Food waste is reduced thanks to the strengthening of key food supply chains in the agro-food sector, these chains are better organised, have a reduced ecological impact, include small producers more and are able to generate added value.

BENEFICIARIES 

Small and medium enterprises in the food chain and agricultural producers





4- IMPROVING HOUSEHOLD FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN EGYPT BY TARGETING WOMEN AND YOUTH



Target area: Upper Egypt

Implementing partner: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

Funding channel and type:

Multilateral grant

Duration: 76 months (Dec12-Jul19)

Budget: 2,7 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The objective of the initiative is to support the Egyptian Government, relevant institutions and local communities in activities aimed at improving food security and nutrition quality among the most vulnerable sections of the population through the promotion of income-generating activities, awareness-raising campaigns and capacity building at central and local level.

EXPECTED RESULTS 

- The organisational and management capacities of NGOs, civil society organisations and government institutions working in the food sector are improved
- A participatory strategy of education and communication on food safety is developed

BENEFICIARIES 

Young people and women in the target areas





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is a crucial sector for the Italian Cooperation in Egypt, and it is included across several projects. The Italian Cooperation works to promote sustainable economic development and support the country's private sector with particular emphasis on agri-food chains, know-how transfer in the industrial sectors where Italy can bring added value, and stimulating the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through loans at favourable interest rates. Particular attention is also given to environmental sustainability and to the support of the most vulnerable groups, such as young people and women.

Currently, the Italian Government has extended two aid credits for the Egyptian Government targeting MSMEs. The first, created in 1999, is the credit line in favour of the Egyptian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA). This offers credits at favourable interest rates through the local banking system, especially to micro and small enterprises, the main beneficiaries of MSMEDA, to be used both for the purchase of machinery and equipment and for technical assistance and training services. The second credit line, whose agreement was signed during the Africa Forum in Sharm el Sheik in 2018, amounts to a total of 45 million euros and will allow not only the activation of credit lines for local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), but also a system of credit guarantees, which continue to be one of the most relevant issues for Egyptian MSMEs.



Another ongoing initiative in the field of economic development is the €6 million "*Robbiki Leather City*" (RLC) programme, managed directly by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in Cairo. This project follows up on the ambitious Robbiki Programme launched in 2004 by the Egyptian Government with the aim of: (i) creating a new industrial district for leather processing in the Robbiki industrial area, located approximately 50 km from Cairo; and (ii) transferring to the district all production activities related to the tanning of hides in the central area of old Cairo in Magra el Eyoun, where they are processed with obsolete and highly polluting means of production.



To date, the infrastructure of the industrial area of Robbiki has been completed also thanks to the previous important contribution of the Italian Cooperation to the first and second phase of the Debt Swap Programme. The initiative intends to consolidate what has already been achieved, through the support to tanners in the decisive phase of the transfer to RLC and the requalification of leather production activities. The project focuses on supporting the management of the Leather Tanning Technology Centre (LTTC) and the shared facilities of RLC.

In addition, as part of the Debt Swap Programme, several projects promoted by both Egyptian and Italian civil society have supported the creation and growth of small and medium sized enterprises (such as the construction and start-up of an incubator for SMEs in Kharga, in the



Governorate of the New Valley), and intervene to improve the economic conditions of the most disadvantaged sections of the population of Upper Egypt through training and incentives for the start-up of income-generating activities, especially for women and young people.

Finally, this sector also includes two ongoing regional projects. The first, "*Creative Mediterranean*", was launched in 2014 in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and focuses on providing technical assistance to selected clusters to improve the competitiveness of SMEs. The initiative is funded by the European Union with €6.1 million, with



a financial contribution from Italy of €700,000, and takes place in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Palestine. The second project, "*Youth and innovation for sustainable management of water and marine resources in the Mediterranean*", carried out in collaboration with the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (IAM) of Bari for a value of 1 million euros, aims to promote youth entrepreneurship initiatives in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia with a focus on sustainable management of water and coastal marine resources.



1- PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT IN EGYPT



Target area: Nationwide
Implementing partner: Ministry of Trade and Industry

Funding channel and type: Bilaterale soft loan
Duration: 60 months (Dec18-Nov24)
Budget: 45 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The Italian contribution of 45,000,000 Euros in aid credit to the Egyptian Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation will allow the activation of credit lines for local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and the supply of machinery necessary to carry out their business activities.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- competitiveness of SMEs is increased
- technologies used by local SMEs in the industrial sector is updated
- Access to credit for SMEs is facilitated
- The work of venture capitals operating in the country investing in SMEs is facilitated

BENEFICIARIES

Egyptian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises





2- SUPPORT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM IN FAVOUR OF EGYPTIAN SMES

Target area: Nationwide
Implementing partner: AICS Cairo
Duration: 36 months (Jan18-dec20)

Funding channel and type: Bilateral grant
Budget: 507.300 EUR

DESCRIPTION: The project provides Egyptian Small and Medium-sized enterprises with technical assistance services necessary for the follow-up of the credit line that the Italian government financed with a contribution of €12.6 million for the acquisition of technology, machinery, know-how and licenses of Italian origin through MSMEDA (formerly known as Social Fund for Development), partner of the initiative.

BENEFICIARIES  Egyptian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises



3- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO IMPLEMENT THE “ROBBIKI LEATHER CITY – RLC” RELOCATION PROJECT



Target area: Robbiki industrial area, 50km from Cairo

Implementing partner: Ministry of Trade and Industry

Funding channel and type:

Bilateral grant

Duration: 36 months (Dec17-Nov19)

Budget: 6 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The initiative aims to support the Training and Services Centre built within the Robbiki Leather City - RLC in organizing and starting up its support and training activities for tanners through the supply of equipment and specialist technical assistance by Italian experts.

EXPECTED RESULTS



- Support to the business plan for the removal of old tanneries from ancient Cairo (Magra el Eyoum - MEE) to RLC and start-up of the new Leather Tanning Technology Center (LTTC)
- Technical assistance for the management of RLC facilities and for the organization of the LTTC is provided
- Provision of equipment necessary for the execution of LTTC services

BENEFICIARIES



Actors of the Egyptian tanning industry



4- ITALIAN CREDIT LINE WITH THE MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (FORMERLY SOCIAL FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT)

Target Area: Nationwide
Implementing partner: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (formerly Social Fund for Development)

Funding channel and type: Bilaterale soft loan
Duration: 24 years (1999-2023)
Budget: 12,6 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The aim of this initiative is to provide Egyptian MSMEs with loans at subsidised interest rates through the local banking system for the purchase of machinery of Italian origin in order to achieve the technological upgrade necessary for the sustainable development of their businesses. The priority sectors are agricultural mechanisation and agro-food industry, leather, wood, marble, textile, and packaging (the list is not exclusive).

BENEFICIARIES



Egyptian Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises



5- YOUTH AND INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND MARINE RESOURCES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



Target area: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia

Implementing partner: Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (IAM) of Bari

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant

Duration: 12 months (May19-Jun20)

Budget: 1 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The project contributes to the sustainable development in the Mediterranean Region by promoting youth entrepreneurship initiatives, as well as the inclusion of young people and the promotion of socio-economic opportunities in the management of water resources in marine and coastal areas. The project also aims to enhance the contribution of innovative companies led by young people under 35 to the sustainable management of water and coastal/marine resources in Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine.

BENEFICIARIES



Young men and women from target countries



6- CREATIVE MEDITERRANEAN - DEVELOPMENT OF CLUSTERS IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN THE SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN

Target area: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia
Duration: 66 months (Jan14-Jun19)
Budget: 710.000 EUR

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant
Implementing partner: United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)

DESCRIPTION: The project focuses on the supply of technical assistance to selected clusters in order to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs. The project is funded by the European Union with €6.1 million with a financial contribution from Italy of 710,000 euros.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Two hubs are created to support creative actors and entrepreneurs. In particular in Egypt Creative Hub Egypt was supported, in collaboration with the Industrial Modernisation Centre, and the Leather Technology Centre and the Ministry of Industry and Trade
- 60% of the beneficiaries improved their companies in the following aspects: (a) increase in sales, (b) new customers, (c) access to new markets
- New collections are developed and marketed in national and international markets
- Creation of 227 new jobs, of which 79 for women

BENEFICIARIES

Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the target areas





The sector of education, technical and vocational training is fostered by the Italian Cooperation in Egypt through the strong support to the Ministry of Education and Technical Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The activities funded by the Italian Government through AICS are intended to assist the Egyptian Government in achieving the strategic objectives described in the *Egypt's Vision 2030*.

In 2019 the interventions in support of the Egyptian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system continued to promote skills that meet the needs of the local labour market and increase the competitiveness of Egyptians in regional and global markets. Among the interventions promoted, it is worth mentioning the creation of an Italian-Egyptian Integrated Technical Training Centre (*ITEC project*) in the field of electronic and mechanical production in the Governorate of Fayoum. The ITEC project in Fayoum, funded under the second phase of the Italian-Egyptian Debt Conversion Programme, is one of the flagship projects of the Italian Cooperation in Egypt and has succeeded in establishing a pilot model of technical education at the service of industrial sectors of national priority. Since its inception, it has been fundamental to create a link between the vocational and technical education system and the private sector, adapting the training modules to the concrete needs of the Egyptian labour market. Following the positive results of Fayoum ITEC, the Italian Cooperation reproduced the TVET centre in the city of Abu Ghaleb, in the Governorate of Giza.



In the same area of intervention falls the project "*Enhance the nursing sector in three governorates in Egypt*", which is the second phase of the project "*Technical Assistance to the Port Said Nursing Institute*". The initiative sees the contribution of the University of Sassari and the Ministry of Health and Population and aims to support the Department for Nursing Care of the Ministry in order to improve the initial and continuous training capacity of nursing staff in the Governorates of Port Said, South Sinai and Ismailia.



The two-year "*Water Knowledge*" project, which will be funded via the multilateral channel and implemented by the IAM Bari, is also in the start-up phase and is aimed at improving the management and technical skills of water operators in Egypt and the Region.



1- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE PORT SAID NURSING INSTITUTE



Target area: Port Said

Implementing partner: University of Sassari

Funding channel and type: Bilateral grant

Duration: 36 months (Feb16-Feb19)

Budget: 586.000 EUR

DESCRIPTION: The project aims to transform, thanks to the transfer of Italian know-how and expertise, an existing structure in Port Said into a Nursing Institute of excellence that can play the role of national reference point for the training of qualified and competitive professionals for all Egyptian governorates. This will also constitute a pilot model for the progressive implementation of Egyptian policies in other areas.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- The existing facility in Port Said is redeveloped and transformed into a training centre of excellence in the sector of nursing scienc
- Port Said Nursing School's trainers are trained according to international standards
- A centre for continuing education is fully functional within the Institute
- The research plan of the PSNI is formulated, approved and completed

BENEFICIARIES

Students of the centre, Minister of Health and Population



The Italian Cooperation in Egypt has always been committed to protecting the rights of the most vulnerable sections of the population, such as minors at risk, people with disabilities, women, migrants and refugees.

During 2019, an initiative in partnership with UNICEF, which promoted a protective environment for adolescents at risk of irregular migration, was concluded. The project has activated occupational training and vocational guidance courses and programmes focused on supporting young people in their psycho-social development, involving more than 80,000 adolescents. In addition, the initiative has set up protection committees in schools that have identified and taken charge of 1,123 students in vulnerable situations.

The collaboration with the National Council for Childhood and Maternity (NCCM), which is responsible for the social protection system in the country, on the project "*Rights of Minors and Family Empowerment in Fayoum Governorate*" continues. The initiative aims to ensure the protection of the rights of children and their families, starting with the reduction of practices and phenomena such as female genital mutilation, child marriages, school dropouts, child labour, non-registration at birth and maternal and infant malnutrition. The project has assisted the Governorate of Fayoum in the creation of a Central Committee and six Sub-Committees for Child Protection, whose staff was subsequently trained, and has promoted assistance and prevention acti-

vities. Since January 2017, a total number of 16,000 cases have been reported through the child helpline. The project is now about to start the creation of Income Generating Activities to revitalize Egyptian handicrafts, mixing modern trends with traditional practices, which will create new job opportunities for local communities.

AICS Cairo also continued its collaboration with the Ministry of Construction and Urban Planning for the development of the community of the "*Zabaleen*", the informal recyclers of 15th May City in Cairo. This group is among the most discriminated and poor, and is plagued by major urban, health, and educational problems, such as the lack of basic services, sewerage system, schools and health centers. The presence of large quantities of waste and the high concentration of children generates, indeed, great health risks. The project, in a first phase, has made the area safe and protected from flooding by financing the construction of a drainage channel. Then, it has developed an urban plan with the participation of the whole community. In the following phase, the project contributed to the implementation of this plan and to the launch of campaigns aimed at raising public awareness on issues related to the environment, health and education.



In 2019, an initiative was launched to address one of Egypt's biggest challenges: population growth. Today, Egypt has more than 100 million inhabitants, with an annual growth rate of about 2%. An alarming number, especially when combined with a poverty rate at 32.5%, a level of literacy that reaches 32% in rural areas of the country, and a GDP growth that is unable to sustain such an increase in population. The Italian Cooperation has therefore supported the Egyptian Government in

in the implementation of the *National Strategy for Population and Development 2015-2030* by promoting an initiative with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in order to address the problem of overpopulation and ensure population containment through the promotion of family and women's rights.

Also in the field of social protection, two new initiatives have already been approved and are in the start-up phase. The first one, *"Promotion of the rights and social inclusion of persons with disabilities in Egypt"*, aims to strengthen the National Council for



People with Disabilities and to foster endogenous and participatory development processes in public policies and concrete and integrated action plans. The second programme, entitled *"Children Restorative Justice: Socio-educational Models of Reintegration and Alternative Measures to Detention"*, aims to contribute to the implementation of the Convention of the Child and the National Law on the Rights of the Child on Juvenile Justice. This two-year programme will be implemented through the valuable work of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). AICS Cairo will be responsible for the direct management of a component related to the exchange of experiences between virtuous realities of juvenile justice and restorative practices worldwide. The Italian system will also be included as an example through the involvement of the Italian Ministry of Justice.



1- RIGHTS OF MINORS AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT IN FAYOUM GOVERNORATE



Target area: Governorate of Fayoum
Implementing partner: National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)

Funding channel and type: Bilateral grant
Duration: 24 months (May16-Jul20)
Budget: 1,5 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The initiative aims to strengthen the capacities of the relevant Egyptian institutions to ensure the protection of the rights of children and their families, with particular reference to the most disadvantaged. The intervention aims to reduce practices and phenomena that are harmful to the realization of the fundamental rights of children and their families, such as female genital mutilation, marriages between children, school dropouts and child labour, non-registration at birth, maternal and child malnutrition.

EXPECTED RESULTS



- The National Action Plan for Minors is monitored at local level
- A database containing information collected through a search in 50 villages is created
- A Centre for the Connection and Enhancement of Integrated Social Services for Children and Families is created
- Capacity of 12 OSC strengthened
- Children are aware of their rights
- Initiatives to support family income are promoted

BENEFICIARIES



Families in vulnerable situations in the Governorate of Fayoum and their children, 12 Civil Society Organizations





2- CREATING A PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT FOR VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS IN GOVERNORATES WITH HIGH RISKS OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND CHILD TRAFFICKING

Target area: Greater Cairo, Alexandria, Gharbeya, Dakahleya, Kafr El Sheikh, Marsa Matrouh, Aswan, Red Sea, Kafr El Sheikh, Beheira

Implementing partner: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant

Duration: 24 months (Apr17-Mar19)

Budget: 2 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: This project seeks to address some of the core issues surrounding refugee and migration movements by strengthening community-based child protection and life skills programming in high-risk areas for irregular migration, establishing a child protection mechanism in schools in high-risk areas to support a protective environment for children and supporting a national referral mechanism for child protection cases linked to irregular migration.

EXPECTED RESULTS



- Child protection and life skills planning for adolescents in areas at high risk of irregular migration are strengthened
- A child protection mechanism is set up in high risk schools in order to ensure the participation of adolescents, parents and school staff in creating a safe environment
- A national reference mechanism to respond to irregular migration and trafficking of adolescents is established

BENEFICIARIES



Egyptians in a vulnerable situation, refugees, children and adolescents of migrants (70% Egyptians and 30% any other nationality), parents (70% Egyptians and 30% any other nationality)

3- SURROUNDED AND ENGAGING PLATFORMS CAMPAIGN: INTEGRATED APPROACH TO ADDRESS POPULATION GROWTH



Target area: Nationwide
Implementing partner: United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA)

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant
Duration: 24 months (Jun19-May21)
Budget: 2 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The overall objective of the initiative is to address the sensitive issues related to the rapid and unsustainable growth of the Egyptian population in order to ensure population containment and a better quality of life and better socio-economic conditions in the country. In this regard, the project intends to support the Egyptian Government in implementing the "National Strategy for Population and Development 2015-2030", whose main objective is to improve the quality of life and economic growth through population containment.

EXPECTED RESULTS 

- Increased demand for informed and voluntary family planning products and services for women and men of reproductive age
- Access to knowledge, information and reproductive health services for the most vulnerable and marginalised young people is facilitated

BENEFICIARIES 

Young men and women aged 15-30, policy makers in the executive and legislative sectors, leaders of local communities, civil society partners, religious leaders



4- DEVELOPMENT OF 15TH OF MAY ZABALEEN RECYCLERS COMMUNITY

Target area: 15th of May district, Cairo Governorate

Implementing partner: Informal Settlements Development Funds (ISDF)

Funding channel and type: Bilateral grant

Duration: 24 months (Dec17-Dec19)

Budget: 850.000 EUR

DESCRIPTION: The project operates in the Zabaleen area, in Cairo's May 15 district, and aims to improve environmental safety in the area, create an urban plan, provide basic infrastructure and services, as well as carry out health, environmental and social awareness campaigns.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- The industrial work of channel conversion is completed
- Infrastructure (water supply, electricity supply and sewerage) is built
- Educational and health facilities are built
- The development of human capital in the area is strengthened

BENEFICIARIES

- Zabaleen community of the 15th of May, Ministry of Construction, Public Services and Urban Development services





The gender approach remains cross-cutting in programmes funded or directly implemented by AICS Cairo. The intention is to support Egypt on its path towards building a more inclusive and gender-responsive society through projects to empower women and combat gender-based violence, as defined in the country's "*Women's Strategy 2030*".

With UNFPA, a programme to combat gender-based violence through a coordinated approach to prevention and protection has been underway since 2017. The initiative aims to create a favourable environment for promoting women's rights from a political, legal, social and cultural point of view, strengthening the competences of national and local entities in responding to cases of gender-based violence (GBV), and promoting a strategy to fight abuse of women throughout Egypt. The project has achieved important objectives such as the establishment of a GBV unit within the National Council for Women (NCW) and various task forces against gender-based violence, which constitutes the key focal points in support of women victims of violence at district level.

2019 also saw the start of the regional programme activities in collaboration with UNFPA, ESCWA and two consortia of NGOs led by ARCS and OXFAM. The initiative aims to contribute to improving the living conditions of Syrian refugee women and girls and vulnerable women and girls from the host communities in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. The interventions carried out have a specific focus on sexual and reproductive health rights, capacity building of stakeholders for the



implementation of the international agenda for women, peace and security and socio-economic empowerment of women in the areas concerned.



Another regional programme, "*GEMAIISA II*", implemented by IAM Bari for a total of €2 million, aims to strengthen gender mainstreaming for sustainable rural development and food security in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. Moreover, among the projects implemented in the Debt Swap Programme, the economic development project named "*Becoming leaders*", implemented by MAIS NGO in Upper Egypt, demonstrates a strong gender approach and contributes to supporting the entrepreneurial skills of Egyptian women in rural areas of the country.





1- FIGHTING GENDER VIOLENCE IN EGYPT THROUGH A COORDINATED APPROACH OF PREVENTION AND PROTECTION



Target area: Nationwide
Implementing partner: United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA)

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant
Duration: 24 months (Jun17-Mar20)
Budget: 2 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The objective of the initiative is to create an environment conducive to the promotion of women's rights in political, legal, social and cultural terms, by strengthening the competences of national and local entities in responding to cases of gender-based violence and by promoting a strategy to combat abuse of women throughout Egypt.

EXPECTED RESULTS 

- An Operational Plan for the implementation and institutionalization of the National Strategy to combat Violence Against Women is created
- Effective justice and police systems to support victims of violence are in place
- The guidelines to combat Gender-Based Violence are in place and operational at the Ministry of Health, university hospitals and reference desks
- A GBV Coordination Unit is approved and established within the National Council for Women (NCW)
- A network of gender focal points is established at national institutions at central and local level

BENEFICIARIES 

Women at risk or victims of violence





2- ENHANCING GENDER MAINSTREAMING FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY – GEMAISA2

Target area: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia

Implementing partner:
Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (IAM) of Bari

Funding channel and type:

Bilateral grant

Duration: 36 months (Sep18-Aug20)

Budget: 2,3 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The programme is a continuation of the previous GEMAISA regional programme implemented by the IAM between 2015-2016 in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia to foster the empowerment of women in rural areas through the promotion of natural resource management, food security, economic empowerment and access to resources. As a continuation of the previous programme, GEMAISA II also extended the area of intervention to Jordan, Morocco and Palestine.

EXPECTED RESULTS



- Initiatives in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia are strengthened and/or expanded
- Pilot initiatives in Jordan, Morocco and Palestine are planned and implemented in cooperation with local institutions and civil society organisations
- The participatory process of monitoring and evaluation to measure changes in women's multidimensional empowerment is systematised
- Institutional dialogue on issues of gender inequality and female empowerment (GEWE) in rural areas is promoted with partners on the basis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected.

BENEFICIARIES



Women at risk or victims of violence



3- ASSISTANCE TO AND EMPOWERMENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS AND VULNERABLE WOMEN AND GIRLS IN HOST COMMUNITIES IN EGYPT, JORDAN



Target area: Egypt (Damietta and Sharqeya Governorates), Jordan, Lebanon

Implementing partner: AICS Cairo, UNFPA, UN-ESCWA, Oxfam Italy, ARCS, MAIS, Caritas

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant

Duration: 36 months (Jan19-Jan22)

Budget: 6 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The aim of the initiative is to improve Syrian refugees' access to support services on sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence, and to promote the participation of Syrian women in the peace process and the reconstruction phase of Syria within the International Programme on Women, Peace and Security. In addition, Italian civil society organizations, in collaboration with local organizations, will carry out activities aimed at the socio-economic empowerment of both Syrian refugee women and host communities.

EXPECTED RESULTS



- Access to sexual and reproductive rights for refugees and women in vulnerable situations is increased
- Prevention of and response to violence against refugees and women and girls in vulnerable situations is increased
- Capacity of stakeholders to participate in the implementation of the International Agenda for Women, Peace and Security is increased
- The socio-economic situation of Syrian refugees and vulnerable women in vulnerable conditions is improved

BENEFICIARIES



Women and girls, particularly Syrian refugees



Testimonies from the field



"Badiaa Zeina is 53 years old, from Syria. She was only 13 years old when she was married off and she still feels like a little girl whose childhood was stolen. At the Sanad centre (one of the project Safe Spaces), she started to express herself and she gradually became more comfortable with and aware of her own feelings. "Sanad is my inner peace", she once said.

Badiaa found the help she needed not only in psychological support activities, but also during the vocational trainings she participated in, as the latter helped her trust her abilities. She attended a leather-work course and now she can make products on her own. Thanks to theatre performance workshops she has finally become deeply aware of the consequences of early marriage. Although at first she was confused about her emotions, she has now accepted them and has decided not to do the same with her daughter."

Testimony of the NGO Etijah, local partner of UNFPA in the project of assistance and empowerment of Syrian refugee women and girls and host communities. The main objective of the Sanad centre, like other safe spaces, is to provide a safe zone and help refugee women to integrate into Egyptian society. To this end, the following three main programmes have been implemented: (i) psychosocial support services for survivors of gender-based violence, (ii) vocational rehabilitation and (iii) awareness raising and outreach on reproductive health and gender-based violence.



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

In the field of migration, Egypt is an important player in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, both in terms of emigration and immigration, being a country of destination, transit and origin. According to IOM estimates, there are about 250 thousand refugees and more than 6 million migrants in Egypt, of whom 900 thousand are in a vulnerable situation. At the same time, the country is the largest provider of migrant labour in the region, mainly in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, while 3 million Egyptian citizens and their descendants reside in Europe, North America and Australia. Egyptian expatriates have managed to create a very vibrant diaspora around the world.

Egypt is actively participating in the Khartoum Process and has been particularly determined to combat irregular migration. In 2016 the Government started working with the European Union to stop irregular migration at the borders and to prevent human trafficking. In that year the National Coordination Committee for the Prevention of Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCPIM&TIP), a focal point for projects in this field, was established.

The Italian Cooperation in Egypt is actively engaged in different migration and development initiatives that mainly aim at involving diasporas in local development projects, at combating the root and structural causes of irregular migration, in line with what was decided at the Valletta Summit, and at the protection and socio-economic empowerment of refugees.

The second phase of the programme "*ILDEA - Initiatives for the local development of Egypt through the support of Egyptians abroad*", implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), promotes the enhancement of the role of diasporas as development agents through a participatory approach that consists in the direct involvement of the Egyptian Government and various stakeholders concerned with migration and development issues. The first phase of the programme, which ended in 2018, led to the implementation of micro-projects for rural development, health care and environmental protection, which allowed - through local NGOs coordinated by the Egyptian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (MSMEDA) - to illustrate how Egyptian remittances abroad can be used for projects in favour of the communities most affected by migration.

Further new programmes, still in the start-up phase, will strengthen national capacity in the fight against irregular migration, including the Delegated Cooperation Programme "*MEPEP - Multi-Educational Programme for the Promotion of Employment in Areas Affected by Irregular Migration*", funded through the EU Trust Fund for Africa, and the "*PLAY*" initiative, which aims to raise awareness among various groups in vulnerable situations about the risks of irregular migration and to promote employment and regular mobility opportunities for young people. Finally, AICS Cairo supports the coordination of a regional initiative for the socio-economic empowerment of Syrian refugee women and girls and women from host communities in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan.



1- ILDEA II - INITIATIVES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT OF EGYPT THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF EGYPTIANS ABROAD



Target area: Egypt and Italy
Implementing partner: International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Funding channel and type: Multilateral grant
Duration: 16 months (Feb19-Jun20)
Budget: 500.000 EUR

DESCRIPTION: The project aims to support the Egyptian government in consolidating its efforts to involve Egyptian expatriates in the country's development by building a strategic policy framework on expatriates' commitment to development together with a communication strategy with expatriate communities through a participatory approach involving different stakeholders concerned with migration and development issues.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- A new policy framework on expatriate engagement is available
- Egyptian officials have the knowledge and tools to promote and facilitate investment and business opportunities among Egyptian expatriate communities
- The Egyptian expatriate communities in Italy are engaged in the realization of small initiatives for the development of local communities in Egypt

BENEFICIARIES

Egyptian government, Civil Society representatives, academia and the private sector, local communities, representatives of expatriate communities




ENVIRONMENT

In Egypt, environmental protection and biodiversity are facing several challenges: the effects of climate change, mass tourism, natural habitats degradation and poaching have a direct effect on Egyptian ecosystems. To address these threats, Egypt adopted Law 102/1983 establishing a national system of Protected Areas, launched a national strategy and signed several international protocols and conventions.

The Italian Cooperation has supported several environmental protection activities for the development of the Egyptian system of Protected Areas. Since the 1990s Egypt has been supported by the Egyptian Italian Environmental Cooperation Programme (EIECP). The first phase of the programme started in the late 1990s, while its second phase ended in 2010.

The EIECP supported Egypt in the protection of natural resources and cultural heritage by (i) strengthening the legal framework, and institutional capacity-building and support activities; (ii) implementing the Siwa Environmental Amelioration Project (SEAP), the Gebel Elba National Park development project and the intervention in the Wadi Rayan and Wadi Hitan Protected Area, which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the second phase, the attention was on improving the governance of natural resources and strengthening local communities, highlighting the link between poverty and local environmental management, as in the case of Siwa.



Today the Egyptian Ministry of Environment is supported by the third phase of the EIECP, which promotes a sustainable use of Protected Areas through a Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM). Thanks to the participation of all stakeholders for each area of intervention and under the management of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the initiative promotes sustainable eco-tourism with the direct involvement of local communities and the integration of all other potential local economic activities, such as agriculture and fisheries. As part of these activities, the Programme has fostered increased economic income for families living around Protected Areas, encouraging participation in management choices affecting these areas and through the promotion of local handicrafts.

The important contributions of the Italian Government for the creation and management of Protected Areas, and in general of environmental programs in Egypt, were presented by AICS Headquarters in Cairo during the Conference on Biological Diversity at COP 14, which was held in Sharm el Sheik in November 2018.

In the framework of previous initiatives, the Italian Cooperation has financed the installation of a solid urban waste collection and recycling plant in the Governorate of Minya, giving a strong boost to the sustainable management of urban and rural pollution.





1- EGYPTIAN ITALIAN ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION PROJECT - EIECP III

Target area: Wadi El Gemal, Red Sea, Wadi Rayan, Fayoum, Siwa, Matrouh, White Desert and New Valley

Implementing partner:
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Funding channel and type:
Multilateral grant

Duration: 60 months (Jun16-May21)

Budget: 2,4 million EUR

DESCRIPTION: The project aims to strengthen Egyptian institutions in supporting the sustainable development of rural communities by exploiting the natural, historical, cultural and social development of their respective territories.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Community based natural and cultural resources management mechanisms in support of sustainable development are integrated into appropriate land management policy frameworks of the selected areas (Community Based Natural Resources Management - CBNRM)
- Methods of conservation and economically sustainable management of the areas of intervention are tested, documented and ready to be integrated into the operational practices of the nature conservation sector

BENEFICIARIES

Rural population, local institutions, Egyptian Ministry of Environment





CULTURE AND TOURISM

The Italian Cooperation in Egypt supports the Ministries of Environment and Antiquities in the field of environmental protection and the conservation and promotion of historical, archaeological and cultural heritage. Specifically, the objectives for the next three years include the strengthening and improvement of the management of historical and cultural heritage (e.g. archaeological sites and national museums).

In particular, a project has been launched to rehabilitate the exhibition of the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo, which was damaged in 2014. The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo is considered one of the most important in the world with its exceptional collection of rare wooden objects, plaster, metal, ceramics, glass, crystal and textiles. On 24 January 2014 it was severely damaged due to a terrorist attack against the main security stations located in front of the Museum building. The Government launched a request for cooperation to which the Italian Government responded. The Ministry of Antiquities and the implementing body, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), are currently formulating the operational plan for the start of activities.



1- REHABILITATION OF THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART IN CAIRO DAMAGED EXHIBITION

Target area: Cairo

Implementing partner: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

Funding channel and type:

Multilateral grant

Duration: 12 months (Nov19-Oct20)

Budget: 800.000 EUR

DESCRIPTION: The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo is considered to be one of the most important in the world for its exceptional collection. On 24 January 2014 it was heavily damaged by a terrorist attack, and the Government launched a request for cooperation to which the Italian Government responded. Therefore, the Italian Cooperation in Cairo, the Ministry of Antiquities of Egypt and UNESCO have agreed to join forces through this project in order to improve the valorisation of Islamic art in Egypt by contributing to the full rehabilitation of the Museum.

EXPECTED RESULTS



- Management, conservation and restoration capacity in Egyptian Islamic art museums is improved
- Systematic programmes for the promotion of Islamic art in Egypt and abroad are established
- Selected collections and Islamic objects of exceptional importance are restored, documented and exhibited in public for the knowledge and promotion of Islamic art
- A network of museums and collections of Islamic art at national and international level is created

BENEFICIARIES



Museum directors, curators, conservators, guides, Islamic art museums and communities of experts



ITALIAN-EGYPTIAN DEBT SWAP PROGRAMME

The Italian-Egyptian Debt Swap Programme was born in 2001, when the first agreement on the subject was signed between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for a total converted amount of 149 million Dollars. This phase was very successful, with a total of fifty-three initiatives financed in different fields of action, such as environment, cultural heritage, rural development, SMEs development, education, and social protection.

The second phase started in 2007, with the signing of the second intergovernmental agreement, and ended in December 2017 with thirty-one projects totalling USD 100 million. In line with the bilateral cooperation interventions and the priorities identified in the National Development Plan, and on the basis of the Joint Declaration of the two Governments signed on May 12, 2009, the initiatives financed focused on themes in continuity with those of the first agreement.

The third debt swap agreement between Italy and Egypt was signed on May 10, 2012, and entered into force on August 15, 2012. The Agreement lasts eleven years and has a total value of USD 100 million.

To date, nineteen initiatives have been approved by the Management Committee, six of which relate to the component for the benefit of public entities and thirteen are part of the Civil Society component.

In the field of women's socio-economic development, a project implemented by the FAODA association is currently underway. It pro-

motes the improvement of the conditions of unemployed mothers and younger girls through training courses and the provision of loans that will allow the development of small activities related to the breeding of local chickens. To date, 250 women (direct beneficiaries) have received poultry of the indigenous Bigawi breed



(12,500 in all), along with feed, vaccinations, and construction or restructuring of poultry houses. The women have also participated in training courses organized by the NGO. Thanks to these courses, egg production has increased from 1 egg every 96 hours to 1 egg every 36 hours, the mortality rate of chickens has decreased (about 16 chickens per 100 on a 500-day production cycle) and there has been a reduction in the use of medicines and veterinary care. Finally, 5 marketing committees have been created and will be responsible for the design of business plans for the sale of poultry and eggs.

In the field of job creation for young people, it is important to highlight the valuable contribution of the project managed by the Italian NGO CISS, which is currently being implemented in the Governorate of the New Valley. This project aims to strengthen the social and economic role of women and young people in the Governorate through income-generating activities closely related to local needs and availability of natural resources. The project has established a business incubator that will support the creation of around 50 small formal and informal businesses run by women and young people. In particular, the incubator will offer several services, including workspaces and vocational training courses in craft production, local agricultural production and ecotourism.

It is also worth mentioning the project implemented in the Governorates of Behera and Alexandria by the Alex Worskhop Center. The initiative aims to promote social inclusion and dignity of people with mental disabilities and speech impairments, using art as a tool for personal expression and a means of creating economic opportunities. The art

workshops have already been created and equipped with all the necessary machinery and equipment and 44 beneficiaries have received training courses in artistic disciplines such as glass and porcelain working, wood carving, and recycling of leather products. It is interesting to note that while the instructors are professionals (university professors), their assistants and facilitators are the beneficiaries of a previous project with the same objective funded under the second phase of the Debt Swap Programme.

Two other projects are dedicated to local economic development, especially for women and small producers. The first project, "*HOPE*", promoted by the Italian NGO COSPE, aims to improve the efficiency and sustainability of the Kheir we Baraka Foundation as a national platform for small agricultural producers and artisans, and to guarantee them better working and



socio-economic conditions through the provision of ad hoc and low-cost social services. The project offered training courses for 13 groups of artisans, mainly women, living in eight different governorates (Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Sharkia, Behera, Sohag, Qena and Assiut). As a result of the courses, new products were developed, such as wooden dolls, accessories made from cattle horns and banana leaves, kilim carpets, leather and brass objects, crochet items, and objects created with other traditional embroidery techniques. Different designs have been created for each type of product. In parallel, in the governorate of Minya 6 groups of farmers participated in training courses and learned good practices in the agricultural field. Old bad habits that had negative effects on the harvest have been eradicated and there is a general increase in the quality and quantity of production.

The second one, "*Becoming Leaders*", promoted by the NGO MAIS, aims to support the productive activities of a group of craftswomen in the Governorate of Sohag through the creation of a Handicraft Committee with the involvement of five local NGOs, which will play an active role in



safeguarding the traditional handicrafts of the area. To date, the Crafts Committee, whose mission is to promote crafts and support small local producers, has been consolidated and is gaining great popularity in Sohag Governorate. Thanks to the training courses, the beneficiaries have started to produce and sell both in groups, so as to minimize costs and

maximize earnings, and by setting up their own small businesses. From a social point of view, in addition to increasing the level of trust, establishing a climate of solidarity and creating a strong sense of belonging to the Committee, the project has made the beneficiaries active players, ready to put aside the pre-established role of woman and mother from time to time in order to get involved and dedicate themselves to their aspirations. It is gratifying to note that, quite spontaneously, the beneficiaries of the courses have organized themselves to give lessons and transfer the skills they have learned to other women in the community.

As far as public bodies are concerned, significant is the contribution of the projects with the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education and Technical Education aimed at improving the technical training system in Egypt, in order to meet the needs of the Egyptian labour market and to increase the competitiveness of Egyptian technicians in the regional and global market. In this framework operates the initiative that establishes a new high school path within the first Italian-Egyptian Integrated Technicale Education Cluster (ITEC) in the city of Demo, Governorate of Fayoum. The courses of the first three specializations began in September 2018. Of the initial 60 students enrolled, 40 students were admitted to the second year divided into three specializations: electrical and photovoltaic systems, vehicle repair and maintenance, and manufacturing. As for the fourth specialization, air conditioning maintenance, the courses started in September 2019. There are 48 students enrolled in the first school year in the 2019-2020 academic year. A quality control system has been developed and both teaching and administrative staff have been trained on the functioning of this system.

Based on the success and experience gained in the first Italian-Egyptian Integrated Technical Education Cluster (ITEC) in Demo, within the Third Phase of the Programme it was decided to establish a new ITEC in the city of Abou Ghaleb (Governorate of Giza), based on the same 3 + 2 model, which will host about 1000 students.



To date, it continues the periodic hiring of teachers and administrators, who periodically benefit from training courses. Furthermore, orientation sessions have been organized for students and their families. Vocational Education and Training (VET) will offer two specializations, electrical and photovoltaic systems and clothing. Students who pass the final exam will obtain a common Italian-Egyptian high school diploma. In order to select VET students, in July 2019 it was organised the preparatory Italian language course, which is held annually in summer. Out of 446 applications received, 248 students were selected and attended the preparatory course. At the end of the course, 150 students enrolled in the first year of the two specializations. Currently there are 250 students enrolled in the first and second year.

Another important initiative funded under the third phase of the Programme is the "MADE II" project, promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Reclamation. The initiative represents an expansion of the "MADE I" project (IEDS Phase II) and aims to further consolidate the marine aquaculture sector in Egypt taking into account the local economy and needs through a sustainable and responsible approach.



The initiative will implement two hatcheries at the Port Said and K21 sites. To date, the Ministry of Agriculture has drawn up a strategic plan listing the suitable areas for the construction of aquaculture facilities on the shores of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The plan has been submitted to the attention of a Committee composed of several governmental bodies. After a careful study of the proposals,

the Committee has identified 21 suitable areas, 12 in the Mediterranean and 9 in the Red Sea. The plan will become operational following the issuing of a presidential decree. With regard to technical assistance services in favour of private producers, a dialogue has been established between a delegation of 10-15 producers and the government authority responsible for exports, which is carrying out a feasibility study for the sale of fish products in Europe.

Finally, also as part of the Debt Swap Programme, an initiative worth about LE 360 million (around 18.7 million euros) is underway and involves the construction of 10 vertical silos for the storage of wheat in collaboration with the Ministry of Supply. The project aims to improve food security and the value of local wheat production in Egypt.



EU-JOINT RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The European Union's programme called "*European Union - Joint Rural Development Programme*" includes initiatives focused on geographical redevelopment implemented by the local offices of the Italian Development Cooperation in the Governorates of Matrouh, Fayoum and Minya. The programme is financed by the European Union for 21.9 million euros under the "*European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development*", and co-financed in parallel by the Italian Government for 11 million euros.

The entity responsible for the initiative is the Italian Embassy in Cairo, delegated by the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAECI). AICS office in Cairo provides assistance for all technical aspects of the programme.

In the Governorate of Matrouh, the European Union has also funded, under the guidance of the EU-JRDP Steering Committee, the Demining component implemented by the United Nations Development Agency (UNDP). The aim of the EU-JRDP is to improve the quality of life of people living in rural areas with two specific objectives: (i) to increase the production of sustainable agriculture through good management in terms of water and natural resource efficiency and effectiveness; and (ii) to improve living conditions in rural areas through an increased number of income-generating activities.

Achievements

Matrouh



- With reference to the expected result "**Rainwater harvesting and increase in agricultural land**", the Programme has rehabilitated 1206 cisterns, increasing water storage capacity by 3.3% and reducing water scarcity for domestic use by 70%, the cost of drinking water by 87% and water supply time by 80%. The rehabilitation or construction of small dams along 55 km of Wadi have contributed to increasing the availability of productive land (750 feddan, about 315 hectares) and significantly reducing soil erosion and degradation from 50 to 25%. All these actions have contributed to a substantial increase in the quality of life of people living in these rural areas, especially the poorest ones in Matrouh, where more than 9500 families living in extreme poverty;

- With reference to the expected result "**Adoption of Good Agricultural Practices in order to enhance the quality and quantity of products and strengthen local associations in order to improve agricultural services**", the practices introduced through the creation of demonstration sites for the production mainly of oil, figs and table grapes, but also of almonds, barley and wheat, have increased the productivity of these crops up to 30% in the Wadi and 25% for crops registered as Geographical Indications (GIs). Selected varieties have been promoted and horticultural gardens for women have been created. This has increased the income and improved the nutritional status of the families involved, thanks to the greater diversification of available food products, mainly fruit and vegetables;
- With reference to the expected result "**Strengthening rural communities and community associations**", the main success concerns the MADAD association in Matrouh which has been directly involved in the registration of certain products (olive oil, figs and grapes) as GIs products, increasing their pool of users and members. Through MADAD, the farmers' access to the market has improved, the value of the products has increased and traditional production methods and knowledge have been preserved. For the first time in Egypt, a National Committee on Geographical Indications was created within the Ministry of Trade;
- With reference to the expected result "**Improvement of farming and grazing**", 200 breeding communities (35,000 people) received improved sheep and goats and numerous veterinary services including livestock vaccination (27,800 animals vaccinated). As a result, mortality has decreased, prices and the average weight of animals have improved, and the quantity of milk produced has increased (+50%). Milk is used by 15 groups of women for the production of dairy products for self-consumption and sale.

📍 Minya e Fayoum



- With reference to the expected result "**Improvement of the efficiency of the irrigation system and water management**", the Programme has renovated the irrigation infrastructures of the main and secondary canals. These interventions involved a total of 3,554 feddan and 2,351 small agricultural producers. The Programme has also improved irrigation efficiency at the level of the irrigated parcels out of a total of 394 feddans and 389 small producers and introduced new practices and technologies for an additional 1000 farmers. Thanks to these works, the productivity and value of all the land concerned has increased. In addition, the renovations were entrusted to local companies, which has encouraged the creation of seasonal and permanent jobs, producing further positive effects on the local economy;
- With reference to the expected result "**Adoption of Good Agricultural Practices in order to enhance the quality and quantity of products**", 1,000 households benefited from interventions to improve horticultural production, such as the introduction of new technologies for irrigation (laser levelling and raised bed irrigation) and agricultural production (greenhouses and improved seeds);

- With reference to the expected result "**Management and conversion of agricultural waste and municipal solid waste**", agricultural producers and women have been trained, through extensive awareness-raising campaigns, in composting techniques and better management of municipal waste, which are then recycled and sold to large recycling companies or local farmers. The success of these activities is also demonstrated by their expansion beyond the objectives of the Programme initiated by the women involved. The use of agricultural and municipal waste, which is no longer thrown into canals or burned, has led to an improvement in water and air quality, with obvious positive effects on the health of the surrounding communities;
- With reference to the expected result "**Improvement of rural communities and community associations**", 70 associations, elected committees and organisations have been created and supported for the management of specific issues, such as the management of irrigation channels or technical support to local farmers, who are also put in direct contact with the Ministry of Agriculture and its technicians. These activities have significantly improved the management of available resources, reducing conflicts between farmers and increasing productivity and access to local and regional markets;
- With reference to the expected result "**Improvement of capacity building of local service providers**", closely linked to the previous expected result, the entities mentioned were trained towards a business-oriented vision, with specific and regulated roles and functions. These entities do not only function as a point of contact, but as real service providers, able to also offer technical services, machinery and input to their members, thus increasing the income generated with these activities;
- With reference to the expected results "**Development of archaeological sites and creation of an action plan**" and "**Creation of a Local Action Group**", specific to the Governorate of Fayoum, the Programme has facilitated access to multiple archaeological and cultural sites through the renovation of access routes and tourist centres. The project has created maps with different itineraries (Cultural, Archaeological, Naturalistic), also avai-

lable on the specific Application for Android and iOS "*VisitFayoum*". The tourism offer has also been strengthened through the creation of a community kitchen, entirely managed by women throughout the production chain, and through the introduction of new designs, mostly geometric, for the typical ceramics of Tunis Village. The Local Action Group, formed by both public and private local stakeholders active in the tourism sector, has the function of directing future activities and increasing the capacities of local actors in the offer, management and advertising of tourism in the Governorate of Fayoum.





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