

The Pollution Abatement Project was launched to combat environmental pollution in Egypt by building up institutional capacity and funding practical projects in industry. Finland participated in EPAP together with the World Bank, the Government of Egypt and the European Investment Bank during the period 1997-2004. Finnish funding focused on technical and institutional support, with one of the main results being the establishment of a new Industrial Unit within the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency. Co-operation is still continuing through the useful networks created during EPAP between Egyptian and Finnish environmental experts.



EGYPTIAN POLLUTION ABATEMENT PROJECT (EPAP)

Combating industrial pollution

Rapid industrialisation has led to serious environmental problems in Egypt, especially in Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Suez, where most of the country's industrial activity is concentrated. Environmental degradation has been aggravated due to the weak enforcement capacity of the environmental administration, difficulties in monitoring industrial emissions, a lack of suitable policy instruments, and the limited number of trained personnel. The absence of industrial responsibility and the lack of economic or political incentives to invest in pollution abatement are also contributory factors.

The Egyptian Pollution Abatement Project was launched in 1997 to improve this situation, jointly financed by the Government of Egypt, the Government of Finland, the World Bank and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The main goal of the Project was to help Egypt to reduce industrial pollution by strengthening the enforcement and monitoring capabilities of the environmental administration at regional and local levels. Finland provided funding amounting to €6.2 million for the technical and institutional support component of EPAP.

Funding environmental technology

EPAP also sought to assist the most polluting industries in four governor-

ates to finance their pollution abatement projects from the World Bank's financing package, and to help non-governmental organisations and media representatives to increase public awareness and sustain positive participation in industrial environmental planning and decision-making. The World Bank provided USD 35 million and the EIB €15 million to finance environmental investments in industry.

Beneficiaries included large and medium-sized enterprises, NGOs, media representatives, banks and inspectors in Regional Branch offices, and Environmental Management Units in four governorates: Cairo, Qaliobeya, Alexandria and Suez. The project has also greatly benefited workers in the enterprises concerned, as well as the many people who live in areas affected by industrial pollution.

Successful capacity building

The EPAP has significantly strengthened the environmental expertise of various Egyptian stakeholders. Officials from the national and local environmental administration, inspectors, and representatives of businesses, the media and NGOs received training on subjects including emission inventories, inspections, environmental management, environmental law, cleaner production and environmental monitoring.



From the institutional point of view, the quality and efficiency of industrial inspection by the various units of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) has been greatly improved. EPAP has facilitated the documentation of inspection procedures, introduced official sectoral inspection guidelines, and trained local inspectors. Useful new connections were built up between the EEAA and training institutions such as universities and technical institutes. EPAP manuals and training modules are now incorporated into academic curricula and research studies.

EPAP has successfully accelerated the development and implementation of the National Cleaner Production Strategy of Egypt. The EEAA's new Industrial Unit, which was set up with support from EPAP, will help to ensure that the improvements made during EPAP will be sustained. The mandate of the Industrial Unit focuses on coordination with local and international stakeholders' activities and projects.

Progress in industrial development

Major reductions in industrial emissions were achieved through 25 practical projects involving 21 companies. The EPAP provided technical services for about 75 industrial facilities to identify feasible pollution

abatement projects. More than half of the companies involved implemented their pollution abatement projects with the help of financing from the World Bank and other funding bodies. Environmental management in industrial enterprises was promoted through capacity building in environmental self-monitoring and pollution abatement.

Access to the EU internal market is vital for Egyptian industry. Finland has been able to provide useful information for Egyptian companies and the administration concerning EU market regulations and quality standards. The modernization of Egyptian industry and the promotion of environmental friendly production have created new market opportunities for Finnish environmental technologies and know-how in Egypt.

EPAP has served as an important pilot scheme for introducing mechanisms of enforcement, voluntary environmental management and sustainable environmental financing. It has shown how these objectives can be successfully achieved where all the parties involved are fully committed to improve the state of the environment.

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