

Private Sector Innovation in Egypt

Driving innovation, boosting growth,
and enhancing competitiveness for
Egyptian businesses



Implemented by



Private Sector Innovation in Egypt

Over the last couple of years, Egypt's government has introduced economic reforms which helped growing and diversifying the economic base. However, despite these ambitious programmes, Egypt's industries are still facing a **structural innovation problem**. A sharp rise in production costs and the still-growing population are challenges to further economic growth in the country, with many companies now concentrating on their survival.

"In general, we see that the Egyptian economy needs modernisation", says Jonas Naguib, Cluster Coordinator for Private Sector Development of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in Cairo. "The industry is outdated, and we have a need for additional technical as well as managerial skills along with the use of new technologies." Another limiting factor to industrial innovation driven by the private sector, adds Naguib, is the lack of access to adequate financing instruments.

For many years, GIZ has been implementing projects in the area of private sector

development in Egypt on behalf of the German Government and other commissioning parties. **With the Private Sector Innovation (PSI) project**, which started in 2021, GIZ supports the Egyptian manufacturing sector in becoming more innovative and competitive.

As a joint decision with its political partner, the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Egypt, PSI is working in four industrial sectors: The food processing sector, the chemical sector, the engineering industries, and the cross-cutting sector of packaging and printing. "These sectors have **good potential for growth**", explains Naguib, "and they are labour intensive". This is important in a country where unemployment rates are at around 7.5 per cent among the workforce and around 23 per cent among the young people aged 15-24. Many try to find a job in the informal sector which leaves them vulnerable and without social security. It is estimated that only around 40 per cent of the working population is employed in the formal sector, and 70 per cent of the overall population is either poor or at risk of poverty.

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| Commissioned by | German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) |
| Partner | Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) |
| Project Region | Egypt |
| Duration | 2021 - 2024 Follow-up project PSI II: 2024 - 2027 |



The project approach: working from macro to micro level to boost the Egyptian industry

To tackle these challenges, GIZ is working with different partners – and on different levels. The PSI project promotes **cooperation between governmental institutions and the private sector**, bringing together policymakers and companies to ensure that businesses' demands and needs are heard and met. To achieve this, PSI is collaborating with the Egyptian Ministry of Trade and Industry to improve the policies around manufacturing and private sector development, and, at the same time, with intermediaries like chambers, export councils and others to enable them to support Egyptian businesses. The collaboration enables policymakers to support businesses and promote a more sustainable economy, thereby generating employment opportunities across various sectors. To do so, policymakers need an understanding of the challenges private businesses are facing and then find means and ways to directly address these challenges with targeted policies and regulations. The affiliation between the Egyptian Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Food Export Council, for example, provides various services to exporters, among them the opportunities to enter new markets on the continent and abroad.

Four export councils and four industry chambers upgraded their administrative and financial legislation and improved their customer-relation management to better serve the needs of their member companies.

The project also works with business service providers like universities and business associations. They advise, for example, on developing new products or optimising manufacturing processes through innovative solutions, energy efficiency and digitalisation and offer skill training and knowledge transfer to manufacturers. This is a much-needed service, because not only is the lack of managerial and technical skills a main challenge for industrial innovation – it is also jeopardising the competitiveness of the Egyptian industries and therefore the Egyptian economy.

The cooperation between universities and industries plays an important role in economic growth. With the support from PSI, the partners start with identifying focus areas where skills and information are needed most and then setting up technical training to capacitate the workforce. The cooperation also involves the facilitation of consultations or the establishment of **innovation hubs** to help companies enhance their production lines and improve their products.

One concrete example for an innovative result of this cooperation is that an

Egyptian engineering company producing home appliances in Sadat City re-designed the lower and upper washing arms for commercial dishwashers. The University supported the company to turn such innovative solution into design, prototype, and finally implementation with the lowest possible investment risk.

PSI also supports its partners in the enhancement of **quality standards and certifications** as the mismatch of these standards between lead companies and their suppliers poses a main challenge to their competitiveness in foreign markets.

The means to address this challenge include the implementation of a 'food safety and quality standards' programme, coupled with high-quality technical training. The tangible outcomes are evident in the achievement of higher quality standards. Through the support of PSI, 11 food and packaging companies have successfully acquired internationally recognised certifications, leading to improved products, increased business and satisfied clients in the longer term.

Innovation comes with a price tag, and finances are tight at the moment, Jonas Naguib points out. The compounding effects of the



Strengthening innovative processes in manufacturing enterprises is a focus of the project.

The PSI project aims to complement technical skills with innovative management practices to enhance the competitiveness of Egyptian businesses.



Covid crisis alongside ongoing global turmoil have exacerbated the strain on the Egyptian pound, resulting in a widespread cash shortage. As a result, private enterprises find themselves lacking the necessary funds to invest in new machinery and innovation.

The solution involves partnering with financial institutions in developing well-designed products providing small businesses with the necessary capital to build and expand their operations. This financial boost not only facilitates business growth but also contributes to increased employment opportunities, showcasing **the transformative effect of strategic financial partnerships** in fostering a robust and inclusive business ecosystem.

Transition to a greener and more sustainable economy

After three years, the project is starting into a new phase in summer 2024, further extending its scope to **transform the Egyptian industries to become greener and more sustainable**. In light of the climate crisis, the goal of net zero emissions is a necessity. Without this goal, Egypt's industries risk falling behind greener competitors abroad. It's clear that economies must participate in the transition and decarbonise to remain competitive. PSI will work with its partners to highlight the benefits of a greener economy, showcasing not only the necessity of this transition but also the substantial business opportunities it presents. The future role of PSI, as Jonas Naguib puts it, is to "raise awareness towards the Egyptian business community on the potentials of resource efficiency, green business models, and new green services. I strongly believe that it offers great chances".

Better together

How the Egypt-Japan University Of Science & Technology and Masar Engineering Industries collaborate

At the heart of PSI's mission is the facilitation of innovation and growth for Egyptian businesses. Companies, however, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), are not always aware of the importance of innovations and how crucial it is to remain relevant in a fast-developing market. On top of that, many SMEs have limited access to services that could support them in business development or the creation of innovative products. Or they cannot afford such services, let alone the modernisation of their production lines.

Yet, there are service providers and institutions that can support businesses, such as the Center of Innovative Technology (CINTECH) and the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST) in Alexandria who aim to bridge the gap between industrial enterprises and university research.

„Our problem at the university is that the industry isn't confident in us because we work in very high research, while their needs are for medium or low-level technology, not these high-end needs,“ explains Dr Wael Mahmoud Khair El-Din of E-JUST. „We don't know how to communicate with each other.“

Matching the needs of Egyptian businesses with scientific research

This is where PSI comes in. The project establishes **direct communication between businesses and business service providers**, including CINTECH. „PSI is working with universities and factories directly, trying to connect them and lowering the universities' level to meet the factories' needs so that

they can have a handshake or matchmaking between them,“ describes Khair El-Din the project's approach. The service that E-JUST in the scope of PSI can offer to companies lies in utilising the resources of the Egypt-Japanese university either by providing technological solutions to factories or by having factories bring their needs to university researchers to find solutions.

Masar Engineering Industries, a steel processing plant in the industrial zone of Alexandria, benefits from this collaboration. Masar manufactures sheet metal into high-quality server racks. Their story began when a group of engineers working for a petrochemical plant needed decorative panels to conceal infrastructure like cables and tubes. In 2010, such materials were not available in Egypt, at least not from Egyptian businesses. „The engineers decided to produce their own panels,“ says

Hany Fathy, managing director of Masar, and soon they discovered they could also manufacture other products like server racks and, as a new product line, metal furniture.

However, the crisis in the Egyptian economy and the further devaluation of the national currency has, like many other businesses, also affected Masar. „We need to increase efficiency and productivity to be able to compete, and we are competing with Chinese and European products at the same time,“ says Hany. To increase productivity, Masar needs both money and modernise its production. „Our press had low productivity, and there were some errors during operation that led to the damage of raw material,“ explains Hany. „The problem was that the press was manually operated. Now we are converting it to automatic operation.“



With the scientific support of CINTEC and the E-JUST university, Masar company has trained its workforce and modernised its production processes.

Enabling face-to-face communication – and understanding

Hany and his team had PSI at their side. Through the Alexandria Business Association, which offers vocational and skills training and is one of the E-JUST's cooperation partners, Masar got in touch with the university. Initially, Masar and E-JUST faced exactly the problems laid out by Khair El-Din: "They didn't have a clear understanding of the products we were making because they were somewhat distant from the field," explains Hany. However, through the cooperation in the PSI programme, the partners overcame these initial difficulties.

"Companies benefit from the programme in two ways," says Khair El-Din. "First, someone comes in and analyses their situation, trying to identify the root cause of the problem, telling them, 'You have this problem, and this problem can be solved.' In many cases", he adds, "companies are not sure if there is a solution to their problem at all, and they definitely don't know what a possible solution looks like".

The next step is a consultation with the university, explaining the scope of the problem and the range it should be solved in – and then letting the researchers do their tailor-made work. In the case of Masar, the company through PSI not only got funding to **update their machinery**, but also benefitted through training sessions that **enhanced the knowledge of the workforce**.

Participating in the programme, Hany concludes, „involved networking with other companies, which gave us the opportunity to collaborate with them.“ Through PSI, Masar could increase the efficiency of the press and enhance productivity. In the future, Hany and his team want to continue working with PSI because the approach of the project benefits many companies – and ultimately the entire Egyptian economy.

Female entrepreneurs driving sustainable change

Empowering youth and local communities: Sally and Rehab's Oasis Community Center focuses on environmental education

"The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence!" This might have been on Sally Hafez Bahgat's mind when she decided in 2013 to follow her passion and turn her family activities such as recycling and planting trees into a sustainable farm experience for children.

So, she left her job as a physician and founded the Oasis Community Center together with Rehab Aly Sharaf. Today, the centre is a 10.000 square meter piece of greenery and desert land dedicated to sustainability education and training. Featuring eco-friendly infrastructure, the centre provides a space for Egyptian children to actively participate in **environmental initiatives** such as recycling, energy conservation, and waste reduction.

The centre's mission is to encourage the community, especially the young generation, to recycle and plant trees for CO2 emission reduction. The method is offering "Green Days" on the farm that gives the children hands-on experience and teaches them about environmental issues. They take part

in different workshops, like a renewable energy workshop where they learn about solar energy, a recycling station, a treasure hunt to match a tree with its seeds, and a planting activity. "Moreover", says Sally Hafez Bahgat, "we organise school trips and scouting, all of them with environmental themed activities, to gain children's interest for a cleaner, healthier, and brighter future. We also host different environmental events like 'World Environment Day' and 'Building with Earth'."

Dreams and hopes don't create opportunities - your actions do

Like most businesses, the Oasis Community Center was hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023 the business partners took part in the **Fit-4-Future Business me**, implemented by Womenpreneur in collaboration with and funded by PSI. The two weeks intensive programme for women entrepreneurs, and female SME leaders or owners, in Egypt is designed to provide targeted training

and tools to allow participants to tap into their full economic potential. The trainings especially focused on the areas of business resilience, financial literacy and education, digitalisation, and sustainable growth.

"This programme served as a catalyst for reflection," remember the women. "We recognised that we were really in need of more resilient business practices." Armed with insights and strategies from the programme, Sally and Rehab adeptly restructured their business model which still focuses on the environment and sustainability education, but also ensures that the company can grow and flourish.

"Instead of stopping when things don't go as expected, we have learned to adapt and make alternative plans," explains Sally. As part of the adaptation, the entrepreneurs extended the Oasis Community Center's services and introduced skill development initiatives to local women, such as crafting natural cosmetics and candles from bee-wax. Now it's not about moving on or quitting - it's about finding new ways to keep going, no matter what.



From dream to reality - female entrepreneurs in Egypt are paving the way for a more sustainable future.

Making businesses more efficient through digital solutions

Empowering tradition: How Melad Steel & Construction flourishes with a second generation female leader

The steel and construction company Melad is located in the industrial zone of Minya, approximately three hours south of Cairo. Melad has been in business for more than 25 years – it was founded by mechanical engineer Melad Abd El-Sayad Ibrahim in 1997. Today, the second generation of the family has joined the business, and it is this generation that has initiated a new phase of doing business, aiming for a new phase of growth.

When Marina Melad, daughter of the founder, joined the company in 2013, she brought a wide range of skills in negotiation, data analysis, and organisational leadership from her previous working history in the furniture industry. Marina also had ideas on how to transform the business into a modern, thriving company which could not only compete on the Egyptian, but even on international markets. As it turned out, this idea was challenging.

For years, the company had operated in a traditional manner, with sales depending very much on the expertise and experiences of the people in top management, and manufacturing relying on the skills and established processes of the resident engineers. The company had no set processes – neither for procurement, nor for manufacturing or even accounting. This worked okay, but Marina was dreaming of modernisation and expansion which was not possible while doing things in “the old ways”.

“I am responsible for exports,” says CEO Marina Melad. She remembers that most of her communications with clients abroad was about trying to convince them that Melad was offering good quality. “Convincing someone that there’s a good factory in the industrial zone in Minya was almost impossible.” This has changed. Today, says Marina, people know about E3M, a company belonging to the Melad Group which manufactures door and handrail furniture. “We even have a market share in the English market.”



Second-generation entrepreneurs like Marina Melad are driving innovation by focusing on the digitalisation of production processes, overcoming initial reservations from the first generation.

Overcoming challenges and resistance

Change did not happen overnight, and it did not happen without resistance. But Marina was persistent. "I decided to use digital applications in the factory because family businesses always have a problem transitioning between paper-based or old-fashioned methods and the new generation," she says. Her main goal was to be able to calculate costs accurately and not rely on rough estimations, which is difficult to determine accurately without digital tools.

Marina enrolled in the **Digital Transformation Programme** offered by PSI to support Egyptian small and medium enterprises in digitising and enhancing the efficiency of their business processes. The support programme

collaborates with the Egyptian consulting firm Frontline Solutions which specialises in re-engineering business processes by implementing a digital Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) solution. Marina knew that this would be the next right step for her factory in its journey towards expansion and growth.


She and her team received training on ERP modules which helped them to work on all aspects of Melad's digital transformation. Right from the start the aim was to have all business processes digitalised by the end of the programme and thereby increase competitiveness and sustainability. To ensure that all persons in charge actually use the software solution, PSI and Frontline offered **tailored hands-on training and coaching sessions** and implementation

of a hand-holding approach. However, some of the users were resistant to using the system, partly because they had to get accustomed to new technologies, and partly because they had to modify the way they do their work.

Marina's commitment to the process helped to overcome the resistance. "I tried to encourage the participants," says Marina. "I showed them the final steps, where we would end up after resolving our issues and what we could achieve. They started to understand that it wasn't just my stubbornness, not just a new programme, and that's it." It is due to Marina's dedication that the factory will benefit from the implementation of the new system. "We will be able to see what issues we can address to achieve higher efficiency, how we can increase

capacity, how the plans are progressing, and how the actual plan is working."

After the project came to an end, Melad continued by herself to pushing on to digitise all of the factory's business processes. There are still users that must be brought on board which requires further persistence. The project was a great success, and taking part in the Digital Transformation Programme has already paid off for Melad. "Digitalisation greatly affects how we deal with companies abroad, especially in export. It makes a big difference with foreign clients if they feel that we are advanced, capable of digital transformation. It matters that they perceive us as understanding and implementing it, which gives us more support and encouragement from the client," says Marina.



Transitioning businesses from paper-based practices to digital solutions make them more efficient and sustainable.

Boosting production through energy efficiency

Interview with the energy expert Dr. Hasnaa Hatem

Egypt is the largest oil and natural gas consumer on the African continent, with the industry sector accounting for almost half the consumption of natural gas, more than 80 percent of fuel oil and a quarter of electricity. Egypt's government has launched an energy diversification strategy which is based on the expansion of renewable energies to ensure the stability of the countries and its industries energy supply. GIZ's Energy and Resource Efficiency Programme implemented by PSI allows companies to identify energy-saving opportunities and simultaneously cut costs and address climate change concerns. Dr Hasnaa Hatem is an energy efficiency expert and certified ISO 50001 energy consultant who, as part of the GIZ programme, has been working with Alamal Alsharif Company to support their transformation to a more energy-efficient company. In the interview Dr Hatem speaks about the energy challenges of Egypt's industries and the impacts energy efficiency could have on their prosperity.

Dr Hasnaa Hatem, can you tell us about your work and the companies you work with?

Hatem: As a consultant I work with factories in various industrial sectors. I have worked with petroleum refineries, natural gas extraction and distribution, with plastic industries, textile industries, pharmaceutical industries, telecommunications industries, steel industries, food manufacturing, drainage, buildings, and in many other industries.

What does an energy expert do?

Hatem: I provide training services on energy efficiency or introduce people to the importance of energy efficiency and what opportunities there are in energy efficiency. The trainings could be general knowledge about the importance of energy, or simple ways to conserve energy, or it could be slightly deeper training on all equipment. I also provide energy audit services in the factory including consumption, equipment, and opportunities for conservation. I also do energy measurements, whether electricity, airflow, or water flow, to

find opportunities for energy conservation. I also provide the economic calculations for these possible energy and carbon emission savings.

Why do Egyptian businesses need to know details about their energy consumption and their carbon emissions?

Hatem: Companies' awareness of carbon emissions varies from companies that operate on a global level or are part of a global integrated system to small and medium enterprises. Global companies have a very high awareness of these matters because their emissions are part of the indicators that they report to external bodies. When we move down to large local companies, they also have pretty good awareness, they also follow their emissions. But micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, their awareness is low. It's not part of the indicators they care about, though I am convinced that if they thought about it as an important indicator or personal responsibility towards the community and the environment we live in, the situation would be better.

What challenges do companies face regarding energy consumption?

Hatem: Companies often lack leadership awareness on the management level about the importance of energy cost compared to productivity. Most top managements focus on production, and as long as the factory is producing, nothing else matters. Some factories have old equipment, and with old equipment, the consumption remains high. If the companies don't realise that upgrading to newer equipment could lead to better optimisation, change becomes difficult. There's also internal resistance, because if you tell someone we're here to optimise energy, they feel like you are implying that they are wasting energy. Other challenges include knowledge. For example, with air leaks – it looks like a minor thing but air leaks cost money. This type of knowledge is often lacking. But even if the companies know and they want to optimise their energy consumption, they don't know where to go or which entity they can turn to for support. Though when they finally find these opportunities, it greatly helps them to improve.

You work as part of GIZ's Energy and Resource Efficiency Programme with companies. What exactly do you do?

Hatem: If we're providing energy audit consultation for a company, we start conducting a comprehensive study of its energy consumption, its energy sources, and all consumption levels over the past two years. We identify the equipment with the highest energy consumption or those with opportunities for energy efficiency improvement. We analyse measurements to find the causes of energy loss. And then we provide energy efficiency solutions. If these require financial investments, we provide economic indicators so that the company can compare its financial investment with its savings in energy costs.

How did you work with PSI?

Hatem: The PSI project provides good knowledge in several stages. At first, we provided practical training services to individuals and engineers in factories and shared knowledge about different industrial systems and energy efficiency methods, along with good practice examples where energy efficiency was applied and how it was achieved. We also provided coaching, where we went down with the engineers on on-site tours in the factories and studied the best places to work on, then we started making energy measurements,

and we continued like this until we identified energy saving opportunities and they were applied properly. The PSI programme provided additional support to the factories not only by knowledge sharing, but also with the opportunity to obtain energy measurements through the devices available in the project. Many factories do not have these devices or meters, so it was a great opportunity for the factories because they could see what energy saving opportunities they have.

If Egyptian industries implemented comprehensive plans for energy improvements, what would be the impacts?

Hatem: If the idea of energy saving was fully implemented in the entire industrial system, it would help reduce emissions in Egypt and in the world in general. There wouldn't be a need for more energy or at least the same amount of energy would be utilised more efficiently. There would be better productivity and more opportunities for factory operation because a factory could install additional production lines with the same amount of energy consumption. This would also create more job opportunities for many factories, providing more employment opportunities for people.

With her work, energy efficiency expert Dr Hasnaa Hatem ensures that Egyptian companies work more sustainably, protect the environment - and also save energy costs.



The GIZ initiative on energy efficiency incentivises manufacturers to obtain certificates that open growth opportunities. Therefore, the people in charge must understand the matter very well. Understanding comes through workshops, through training. So, we strongly support trainings, they lead to tangible results. The most important thing we notice in implementing this type of programme is that it increases the thinking of the people responsible for production and operations in the industry sector. The project by GIZ enriches our identity, aligns with the company's identity, and gives us a competitive advantage over competitors or those involved in this type of manufacturing in the local market.

Eng. Mohamed Zein El-Abdin Khalifa



Mohamed Youssef Zein El-Abdin Khalifa is committed to transform his company into a greener business.

Alamal Alsharif Plastics was founded in 1964 as the first factory specialised in the manufacturing of plastic pipes in Egypt and the Middle East. Today, the company owns three factories producing 60,000 tons of pipes and 12,000 tons of pipe joints annually for water supply, drainage, and sewage projects. Even with this market power, the company faces several challenges, particularly with regards to energy supply. After all, it is not only necessary to ensure that production is protected against power outages. Mohamed Youssef Zein El-Abdin Khalifa, the Chairman of

the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer of Alsharif, is also concerned about the impact on the environment and pollution. In cooperation with the energy efficiency expert Dr Hasnaa Hatem and GIZ's PSI project, Alsharif began working on a programme with the long-term goal of not only identifying energy leakages and energy saving opportunities but also on-boarding the employees on the mission to become more environmentally friendly. The desired results are growth opportunities and access to new markets.

Mohamed Zein El-Abdin Khalifa of Alamal Alsharif

Export opportunities through certification: strengthening the Egyptian food industry

In partnership with Juhayna, PSI qualifies suppliers to meet international standards – amongst them packaging producer PolyTech

Food industries all over the world have strict rules to ensure high-quality standards throughout their supply chains, and companies must keep pace with the fast-moving world of food safety, quality, and compliance. Raw goods, such as fruit or milk produced by farmers and growers, must be processed, stored, and delivered to the food-processing plants in the safest manner possible. Food safety and quality is an issue when it comes to transportation and timely delivery of raw goods – which is critical in Egypt mainly due to inadequate road infrastructure. It is also a factor to be considered in subsequent processes. If leading food and beverages companies like Juhayna Food Industries aim to further improve their product and access new international markets, their packaging

suppliers must also enhance their processes and meet international recognised standards, such as the Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) 22000 and the Brand Reputation through Compliance Global Standard (BRCGS).

Juhayna was founded in 1983 and has secured a well-established position in the dairy and juice industries in Egypt and the Middle East. However, the company is not only pursuing new growth opportunities with exports to East and West Africa, but also targets expansion in European markets. For this, its entire supply chain must fulfil high food safety and quality standards. This is also in the interest of Juhayna's supplier base.

"The biggest motivation for us to develop our products is that there is a very intense competition in the market nowadays," says Osama Fathi Shahab El-Din, Quality Manager at PolyTech for Plastics and Chemicals. Based in Cairo and founded in 2006, the company produces PET bottles and jars for international food and beverages companies, including Pepsi, Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble – and Juhayna. "It's no longer acceptable for the customer to tolerate low product quality from us or for the food product safety to be compromised. There is a great emphasis on product quality, which drives us to improve our products and strive for the highest level of competitiveness in the market."



Osama Fathi Shahab El-Din is convinced that PolyTech will benefit greatly from the cooperation with PSI and Juhayna and the associated qualification and certification.



Training the supplier base to meet international food safety and quality standards is key for Juhayna to further export to foreign markets, says Farah Ellabbad from Juhayna's Sustainability team.

International food safety standards

PolyTech was one of the companies that Juhayna selected from their supplier base when they partnered with GIZ for PSI's Food Safety and Quality Standards Qualification programme. "The programme is basically used to train and coach suppliers on the FSSC and BRCGS standards," says Farah Ellabbad, PR and Sustainability Team leader at Juhayna. It consists of several phases including a gap assessment phase, trainings, and on-site consulting visits and hands-on coaching. Juhayna partnered with PSI to make its Egyptian suppliers more competitive and efficient and its supply chain sustainable.

After selection "GIZ sent us consultants to help us implement the programme within our factories," explains EL-Din how PolyTech became a part of the collaboration. Through all phases, consultants supported PolyTech step by step to ensure that manufacturing, the processing facility, and the company as such met the requirements. "They had expertise in improving the facility and addressing the actual needs and gaps in our manufacturing process. This was crucial for us. Now we have a large group of trained individuals to apply the standards," says EL-Din, pointing out the benefits for PolyTech: "If we continue to

maintain the quality level in our company, I believe that this will greatly benefit us in the near future with more customers than we currently have and larger supply areas for existing customers. This will certainly be an incentive for us to progress in the upcoming period."

The Food Safety and Quality Standards Qualification programme also means a lot for Juhayna as a lead company in the food and beverages sector. "It is important for us to be at the forefront of this process. We have a leading prominent position in the industry, and our actions have significant impact and influence on the sector as a whole," says Farah. She is convinced that the trainings and certifying processes will benefit her company and even the economy, because "stricter regulations pave the way for exports to Africa, the Gulf and even Europe, making Egyptian products global contenders. The boost in quality and safety," she concludes, "would benefit everyone from farmers to businesses. It's a win-win scenario for the Egyptian food industry."

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Registered offices:
Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Address:
GIZ Egypt Private Sector Innovation (PSI);
24 Talaat Harb, Marouf, Qasr El Nil,
Cairo Governorate, Egypt

T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de/en

Author/ Editor:
FLMH Labor für Politik und Kommunikation,
Berlin

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FLMH Labor für Politik und Kommunikation,
Berlin

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