



# Best Practices Database

Subscriber: Vervoorn, IHS

Subscription Expires: 01-AUG-04



## Programme to Support Environmental Assessment and Management, Cairo Egypt

Good Practice

New for 2002

### Categories:

Urban and Regional Planning:

- localizing Agenda 21

Environmental Management:

- environmental health
- environmental remediation
- environmentally sound technologies
- pollution reduction
- resource management

Infrastructure, Communications, Transportation:

- energy use, conservation and production
- sanitation
- waste-management and treatment

**Level of Activity:** Provincial/State

**Ecosystem:** Arid/Semi-Arid

### Summary

Support for Environmental Assessment and Management (SEAM) is a regional programme geared towards strengthening decentralized environmental management and improving environmental planning and services for the poor.

The initiative focuses on the following areas: Sohag, Dakahleya, Qena and Damietta, whose combined population exceeds 11 million. Preparation of Governorate Environmental Action Plans has provided a framework for sustainable development. Wide community participation helped build consensus on priority issues and develop actions that respond to people's needs. The methodology developed has become EEAA's model for all Governorates.

Decentralized environmental management has been strengthened including the initiation of District Environmental Units and Village Environmental Officers. A National Policy and Decree on the role of Governorate Environmental Management Units, is in preparation.

Solid waste and cleaner production demonstration projects applied best practice methods and supported GEAP implementation. Improvements on solid waste management included solid waste collection, transfer, disposal, recycling, composting and dumpsite remediation.

Solid waste projects have improved living conditions and have been regarded as best practice for rural towns and villages in the recently developed National Waste Strategy. The initiative has ensured the consumption of clean water, introduced alternative sources of energy and has phased out toxic and

hazardous substances.

Community projects implemented in the villages, improved sanitation procedures, solid waste collection, environmental awareness and education, have improved the community's standards of living, the environment and have stimulated further community action.

Integrating social, economic, institutional and environmental issues into development activities has been an integral part of all SEAM activities. Replication of SEAM activities is high both within and without.

## Narrative

### Situation Before the Initiative Began

Awareness on issues to do with the environmental conservation was low and environmental management capacity weak. Hence, little was done to integrate environmental issues into planning and development activities. Community participation was considered unnecessary and communities often suffered from inadequate services and environmental pollution. There was little coordination between key stakeholders in their attempt to rectify the environmental situation.

### Establishment of Priorities.

1. Understand the main environmental problems facing selected rural areas.
2. Develop practical and affordable actions to improve the living environment.
3. Implement projects to demonstrate tangible benefits of improved environmental management.
4. Integrate social, economic, environmental and institutional issues, in the sustenance of development activities.
5. Focus on assisting the poor communities.

Consensus was achieved on the priority issues through wide stakeholder consultation with all levels of governorate, academic centers, private sector, civil society groups and the community. Issues of great concern were solid waste management, water and sanitation, industrial pollution, environmental awareness and institutional strengthening.

### Formulation of Objectives and Strategies

SEAM supported implementation of the first National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) released in 1992 and Environment Law 4, passed in 1994. Objectives were partially determined by the many Governorate organisations, civil society groups, and International Agencies that participated in the NEAP. Further elaboration by EEAA, DFID and beneficiary Governorate resulted in the following objectives:

1. Strengthen decentralized environmental management.
2. Improve environmental planning and services for the poor.
3. Build environmental capacity within Egyptian organizations.
4. Implement projects that improve living conditions and demonstrate the tangible benefits of improved environmental management.

### Key strategies included:

1. Institutionalisation of the Environmental Action plan in 4 areas.
2. Implementation of solid waste management strategies and 14 demonstration projects.
3. Support community based environmental initiatives, which include 64 projects.
4. Introducing better strategies and methods for use by factories, which ensure less environmental pollution and the implementation of 50 projects.

## Mobilisation of Resources

DFID provided US\$15,952,974 to both SEAM 1 and SEAM 2, in order to enable SEAM cover technical expenses, training, operating expenses, with around 40% of the total being spent on demonstration and community projects. International inputs total 266 person per month and Egyptian technical inputs 821 person per month. Much of the international input is used on short-term inputs to provide specialist advice to the Egyptian team and beneficiary organizations.

EEAA have provided staff, office facilities and operating expenses plus US\$250,000 in the support of community projects. The partner organisations and communities that benefitted directly from the project demonstration contributed US\$1,750,000 (partly as benefits in kind).

Governorates have also contributed significant resources. Working groups, covering a broad range of interests such as drinking water, sanitation, solid waste, water resources, urban development, industry, community development, cultural heritage, biodiversity and so on, have made substantial contributions. The staff members from the governorate Environmental Unit, have been actively involved in the various activities. Over 30 social surveyors have worked with communities in trying to understand their needs. SEAM is working with over 50 NGOs and Community Development Associations. Governorate Environmental Councils have been established, to provide high level commitment in integrating environmental issues in development processes.

## Process

Governorate Environmental Action Plans (GEAP) have been developed for Sohag and Dakahleya Governorates and are in preparation for Qena and Damietta Governorates. Establishing the Environmental Profile and Action Plan, gaining wide community involvement, identifying priorities and actions that respond to people's needs, strengthening institutional issues to support GEAP actions and addressing resource mobilization issues, are some of the key components contributing to the success of the GEAP.

Some of the underlying processes included:

1. Identification of environmental conditions involving local technical working groups.
2. Stakeholder analysis, in order to identify key persons, groups or institutions and vulnerable groups, to ensure that the views of all are also considered.
3. Extensive consultation (12-18 months) with the community, numerous central and local government organisations, private sector and civil society groups.
4. Community consultation was achieved through thousands of interviews, regional workshops and focus group discussions with. The creation of focus groups is gender based to ensure that gender issues are fully considered.
5. Integration of the technical and community consultation work to build consensus on priority issues.
6. Agreeing on the objectives and strategies which were to be realised in a 10-year period.

Within the Governorates, community participation was initially seen as unimportant and only over time did the benefits become apparent. Often, the development facilitators felt that the problems were understood and that what lacked were the resources necessary for the implementation of the development projects. However, they realised that more efficient services could be provided within existing resources.

Our initial concern was ensuring that the GEAPs were implemented. The consultation process however, helped to raise awareness in the community often stimulating local actions as well as creating a demand for improved services. SEAM also supported environmental projects that improved living conditions and demonstrated best practice, thereby reinforcing the GEAPs as plans of action. Four solid waste demonstration projects including a 150tpd composting and recycling plant, improved collection, transfer, disposal and dumpsite remediation, have been implemented and plans for

implementing another 10 are underway. SEAM supported community groups, through the implementation of 14 community projects, to improve village sanitation, solid waste management and environmental education and awareness. Another 50 projects are due to be implemented. The capacity of NGOs and Community Development Associations are also being strengthened to articulate the needs of poor communities into viable and sustainable interventions.

In relation to industry, environmental improvements were initially considered an expense, with little or no added value. Thus, the approach taken was the introduction of better ways of industrial processing that guaranteed less environmental pollution, enhance efficiency, yield financial savings and create an enabling environment for workers and the surrounding community. SEAM has implemented 21 demonstration projects and a further 30 are underway.

### Results Achieved

Completed GEAPs for Sohag and Dakahleya provided a framework for sustainable development with many priorities being implemented by the Governorates using local resources. SEAM's methodology has become the EEAA model and it has been replicated in four other Governorates.

Decentralized environmental management has been strengthened, through the upgrading of the Governorate Environmental Management Unit, establishment of District Environmental Units and institutionalisation of Village Environmental Officers.

Demonstration projects have improved solid waste management including collection, transfer, disposal, recycling, composting and dumpsite remediation. In Sohag community satisfaction, with waste services has increased from 31% before the initiative began to 85% after the start of the initiative. 70% of the community were willing to pay for improved services and cost recovery charges have since been introduced. Dumpsite remediation eliminated smoke that previously caused respiratory problems in over 80% of residents. The solid waste projects have been regarded as best practice for rural cities and villages in the recently developed National Waste Strategy and they (the projects) have been widely replicated.

Community projects implemented in village sanitation, solid waste collection and environmental awareness and education, have improved the community's health and environment and are being replicated by other communities. Incidence of diarrhoea and dumpsite on streets have declined markedly.

Cleaner production demonstration projects have reduced water, energy and raw material consumption by up to 70% and phased out hazardous substances. Average payback of interventions is 6 months. This work is being further sustained by new strategies implemented by the Federation of Egyptian Industries, which ensure the reduction of environmental pollution.

### Sustainability

Gaining widespread community participation and collecting information on a gender segregated basis across all SEAM activities, paved way for actions, that directly responded to the needs of the community, to be developed. Creation of awareness, particularly on environmental-health issues created a demand for a more environmental conservation. Strengthening NGOs and Community Development Associations enabled such groups to communicate the needs of the community more effectively. Of equal importance, SEAM has engaged decision-makers, in order to transform their initial entrenched views of a 'top-down' approach to one that recognizes the benefits of community participation ('bottom-up approach').

Community projects have been based on the principles of sustainability and have been used to show how problems can be addressed by involving relevant stakeholders, using local resources, improving efficiencies, addressing cost benefits and cost recovery and planning for future needs. Providing practical and affordable solutions, procuring local equipment and strengthening local manufacturing

and maintenance workshops also contribute to the project's sustainability.

Involving key stakeholders and the community in the design and implementation of demonstration and community projects and requiring beneficiary confidence (up to 50%) increased ownership and sustainability.

Assessing the financial cost and benefits of different solutions enabled the most effective approach to be taken. Willingness to pay surveys were undertaken and cost recovery and socially equitable charges promoted.

Institutional strengthening was an integral part of ensuring sustainability. Technology transfer, training of trainers, training workshops, on the job training and overseas training all contributed to building Egyptian capacity. Organizational structures to improve environmental management were developed by building on existing Local Administrative structures.

SEAM experience has also contributed to the development of national policy and approaches, particularly on community participation, GEAP implementation, solid waste management and upgrading of Environmental Management Units.

### Lessons Learned

1) Community participation is the key to success in improving the environment.

Despite initial reservations in the Governorates, the active participation of stakeholders in the GEAP process is now recognised as a key to the success of SEAM. The participatory approaches promoted by SEAM have strengthened local ownership of the GEAPs and created partnerships between Governorates, communities and industries. The Governor of Dakahleya stated that "involving the community is the key to future success in environmental improvements".

2) Effective consultation takes time.

SEAM showed that it takes time and significant management resources to ensure active stakeholder participation. The environmental awareness of some stakeholders was very low and considerable time was needed to explain how and why they could contribute to the GEAP. Considerable time was also needed to explain the objectives of the consultation process to Governorate officials, who were initially very wary of any involvement with community organisations.

3) Develop practical and affordable actions

Solutions to the problems should be appropriate for the purpose of sustainability. While additional capital is often required, much can be achieved by improving the efficiency and maintenance of existing operations.

4) Provide tangible evidence of action.

SEAM has so far implemented 39 demonstration and community projects in solid waste management, cleaner production, village sanitation, environmental education and awareness. These have proven to be a cost-effective way of demonstrating best practice and stimulating further action. Active stakeholder involvement and beneficiary confidence has increased ownership and sustainability.

Cleaner production interventions have demonstrated improved environmental performance and yielded financial savings. There was initially a lack of understanding of such opportunities with most factories believing that pollution control could only be achieved by end-of-pipe treatment, which is very costly.

5) Give a high priority to institutional strengthening

Any actions will not be sustainable unless the appropriate organizational structures are in place and the necessary capacity building provided.

### Transferability

The potential for replication of the innovative aspects both within and outside Egypt is high. Many SEAM concepts that were developed have now been incorporated in other major programmes including:

1. Environmental programmes that are being run by DFID in other countries.
2. Danida's Egyptian Environmental Sector Programme (2001-7)
3. USAID's Egyptian Environmental Policy Programme (2000-5)
4. Finnida, Egypt Pollution Abatement Programme
5. Finnida, Beni Suef Water and Sanitation Programme
6. Egypt's Social Fund for Development
7. Other NGO programmes.

The results of all activities have been published and disseminated in the form of strategic reports, case studies and guidance manuals, all of which have been uploaded to the SEAM website:

<http://www.seamegypt.org>

The SEAM GEAPs have been adopted as the model for all future Egyptian GEAPs. Demonstration and community projects are being replicated by the government, private sector and other donor bodies. For example the Dakahleya Governorate had ordered 130 waste collection trailers based on the SEAM design.

Study tours have come from within and outside Egypt to learn from SEAM projects. Outside Egypt, SEAM materials have been requested from India, Palestine, UK, and Nepal. Specialists from Palestine have come to Egypt to educate people on environment conservation. We have also invited specialists from Nepal to do the same. In Nepal, eco-labelling has been successfully introduced in 6 factories using the SEAM guidance manual.

SEAM has won a number of awards, which have further increased awareness within Egypt and abroad. These include:

1. The Mostafa Tolba prize for 'Best Environmental Protection Work in 1998/9' was awarded to two Egyptian consultants for SEAM work by Egypt's national Academy of Science and Technology.
2. The British Consultancy of the Year Award 1999 awarded to the foreign Partner Company by the British Consultancy Bureau.
3. European Environment Award 2000, International Partnership for Sustainable Development.

## Key Dates

Â· 1994 - SEAM I Programme (1994-1999) commenced in support of the NEAP

Â· 1998 - Governorates commit themselves to the implementation of Environmental Action Plans

Â· 1999 - 39 demonstrations and community projects completed and results disseminated.

Â· 2000 - SEAM II (2000-2004) commences, building on the success of SEAM I.

Â· 2000 - The initiative wins the European Environment Award in the "International Partnerships for Sustainable Development" category.

## References

Over 45 publications have been produced on SEAM outputs. A complete set of documents is enclosed with this application. Most of these documents can also be downloaded from the SEAM website: <http://www.seamegypt.org>

A selection of the titles include:

1. Dakahleya Governorate Environmental Action Plan ; SEAM Programme GEAP, January 1998
2. Sohag Governorate Environmental Action Plan; SEAM Programme GEAP, January 1998
3. An Approach to Preparing Governorate Environmental Action Plans: the SEAM Experience; SEAM Programme Strategic Report, July 1999
4. 150 tpd Compost plant, Mansoura, Governorate of Dakahleya; SEAM Programme Case Study, June 1999
5. Solid waste collection, transfer and disposal, Sohag City; SEAM Programme Case Study, March 1999
6. Solid waste management strategy, Governorate of Sohag; SEAM Programme Strategic Report, March 1999
7. Sanitary drainage and treatment, Naga El-Deir; SEAM Programme Case Study, March 1999
8. Improving environmental health issues, Geheina and Sohag community hospitals; SEAM Programme Case Study, March 1999
9. EIA guidelines for municipal wastewater treatment works; SEAM Programme Strategic Report, January 1999
10. Water and energy conservation at Edfina Co. for Preserved Foods, Alexandria and Kaha Company for Preserved Food, Kaha; SEAM Programme Case Study, June 1999
11. Guidance manual, eco-labelling for textiles; SEAM Programme Guidance Manual, January 1999

Partner 4

ERM

8 Cavendish Square

W1M 0ER London

UK

Tel: +44 20 7465 7200

Fax: +44 20 7465 7272

Email: eb@ermuk.com

Contact Person: Eamonn Barrett

Type of Organisation: Private Sector

Type of Support: Technica

## Contact

Dr Ibrahim Abdel Gelil

30 Misr Helwan Agricultural Road

P.O. Box 11728

Maadi, Cairo

Egypt

Tel:+20 2 525 6452

Fax: +20 2 525 9648

Email: inquiries@seamegypt.org,

**Type of Organization:** Central Government

## Partners

Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)

Dr Ibrahim Abdel Gelil,

30 Misr Helwan Agricultural Road

P.O. Box 11728

Maadi, Cairo

Egypt

Tel:+20 2 525 6452

Fax:+20 2 525 9648

Email: [inquiries@seamegypt.org](mailto:inquiries@seamegypt.org)

**Type of Organization:** Central Government

**Type of Partner Support:** Technical Support

UK Department for International Development (DFID)

Jean-Paul Penrose,

1 Palace Street

SW1E 5HE London

UK

Tel: +44 20 7023 0906

Fax: +44 20 7023 0679

Email: [JP-Penrose@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:JP-Penrose@dfid.gov.uk)

**Type of Organization:** International Agency (Multilateral)

**Type of Partner Support:** Financial Support

Entec UK Ltd

Philip Jago

Northumbria House, Regent Centre, Gosforth

NE3 3PX Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

UK

Tel:+44 191 272 6353

Fax:+44 191 272 6591

Email: [entecegy@eis.com.eg](mailto:entecegy@eis.com.eg)

**Type of Organization:** Private Sector

**Type of Partner Support:** Technical Support

## Financial Profile

| Year | Total budget<br>in US\$ | Partner 1<br>(% of the budget) | Partner 2<br>(% of the budget) |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1996 | 1,455,093               |                                | 93%                            |
| 1997 | 2,322,932               |                                | 85%                            |
| 1998 | 2,241,672               |                                | 75%                            |
| 1999 | 513,038                 |                                | 100%                           |
| 2000 | 963,918                 |                                | 100%                           |
| 2001 | 1,165,517               |                                | 100%                           |

[Main Menu](#)

[Search Database](#)

[Sponsors](#)

[To Order](#)

Email questions or problems to [help@bestpractices.org](mailto:help@bestpractices.org).

Copyright © 1996-2002 [The Together Foundation](#) and [UNCHS](#). All Rights Reserved.