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RRSA M&E Workshops and TA Prove Useful to Partners and Counterparts

In May 2004, the Results Reporting Support Activity (RRSA) conducted four workshops on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for the USAID/Egypt Economic Growth (EG) Program activity managers, implementing partners and their counterparts. As requested, RRSA also provided technical assistance to selected partners in evaluation planning and performance measurement. The workshops and demand-driven technical assistance were geared towards providing participants with hands on experience in applying M&E concepts to strengthen their capacity to use various tools for improved performance management.

The first workshop, "Evaluation as a Tool for Improved Performance Management," on May 5, centered on optimal ways in which evaluations can serve as management tools. Primarily using group exercises, the workshop focused on ways of selecting an appropriate evaluation approach and developing relevant scopes of work. The workshop facilitators reviewed using evaluations as tools for improved performance management and decision making. This included a discussion of relevant approaches such as common rapid appraisal methods.

The second workshop, "Performance Measurement for Enhanced Management," on May 6, provided participants with an understanding of how performance measurement can best serve as a management tool. The workshop introduced the use of performance monitoring as a tool for managing and reporting on results. Participants had the opportunity to apply these concepts as they worked in small groups to identify results, good performance indicators, baselines and targets.

RRSA's TA Team worked with selected USAID/Egypt Economic Growth funded-Programs and Government of Egypt (GOE) Counterparts to build their capacity in designing and implementing appropriate results management systems. The Team provided technical assistance to the Information and Communication Technology Program



Participants at RRSA M&E "Partner and USAID Program Manager Sharing of Best M&E Practices" Workshop, May 18, 2004

(ICT) in identifying indicators for selected results. They also assisted the Agricultural Exports and Rural Income's (AERI) ACDI/VOCA Livestock and Dairy Program in integrating USAID cross cutting themes (gender, environment, family nutrition and civil society) into the program's performance management system.

The Team conducted a third workshop for the Customs Reform Unit (CRU) aimed at introducing the staff to performance measurement and building their capacity in designing and implementing appropriate results management systems. The workshop was held at the headquarters of the CRU in the Port of Alexandria. Participants included the implementing Partner (Booz, Allen Hamilton) and USAID's Cognizant Technical Officer.

On May 18, the results of this capacity building exercise were

shared in the fourth workshop, "Partner and USAID Program Managers Sharing of best M&E Practices." This workshop was designed to provide partners and counterparts with an opportunity to discuss their experiences with a large and diverse audience. ACDI/VOCA Livestock and Dairy Program, ICT and the CRU all presented at the workshop and participants provided critical and useful feedback on the results statements and indicators developed during the technical assistance period.

Participants reported that the practical exercises were critical to the success of the workshops, and the vast majority of those who participated in each of the three workshops (86, 90 and 95 percent, respectively) indicated that the workshops were very useful. "Good workshop overall... Will help in making sure we pare down the number of indicators we try to monitor", remarked one participant.

New Initiatives

USAID/Egypt Contracts Chemonics International for Implementing AERI's New Activity to Support Trade Associations and Manage a Grant Program for Smallholder Groups

In June 2004, USAID/Egypt contracted Chemonics International for the implementation of the Agricultural Export and Rural Income (AERI) Support to Trade Associations and smallholders' Horticulture, Livestock and Dairy Activity. This is one of the four interlinking activities of the AERI Program aiming to increase on-farm and agro-business jobs and rural incomes, and the last to begin operations. The new activity will complement the work of the three activities which provide across-the-board support to industry (horticulture, livestock and dairy) stakeholders including small holder farmer NGOs, agricultural-based trade associations, local research institutions including universities and technical schools, food processing and agriculture exporters and growers. In concert with AERI's sustainability principle and focus on capacity building of trade associations, AERI's new activity includes a component providing flexible, appropriate technical assistance and grant support to accommodate an array of agricultural trade associations based on their size, need and level of institutional maturity.

AERI's intent is to help strengthen agricultural trade associations, now an increasing important vehicle for the improvement of the agricultural industry, to the point of self-sustainability. AERI's new activity will examine trade associations' limitations, strengths and opportunities and propose approaches for stronger, more

responsive and sustainable institutions.

In addition, AERI's new activity will manage a grant program to cater for smallholder infrastructure and equipment needs. The contractor will put this program in place through a flexible mechanism involving some form of cost sharing by

grant beneficiaries. Funds will be used for activities that directly support AERI goals of employment, rural incomes and export growth and that promote the targeted fresh and processed horticulture, livestock and dairy sectors. The grant program will be implemented in the AERI targeted area.

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New IPRA Program to Improve the IPR System in Egypt

The protection and promotion of intellectual property rights (IPR), by encouraging innovation and investment, will continue to play a central role in enhancing Egypt's economic development. USAID began providing technical assistance to the Egyptian government for the promotion of IPR protection in 1995 with two programs: Strengthening Intellectual Property Rights in Egypt (SIPRE, May 1995-June 2001), and Technical Assistance for Intellectual Property Rights in Egypt (TI-PRE, September 2001-March 2003). Both programs have helped the government modernize and strengthen its IPR system and provided technical assistance on the IPR law and regulations to try to ensure consistency with the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Properties (TRIPs). In April 2004, USAID launched, and Nathan Associates began implementing, the Intellectual Property Rights Assistance (IPRA) project, a two year program (with the possibility of an additional one year option) through which USAID will continue to provide technical assistance.

IPRA will place greater emphasis on the implementation of the new IPR law as articulated in the anticipated executive regulations. It will also work towards the establishment of a reliable IPR system compliant with WTO/TRIPs.

IPRA will focus on five main areas: (i) improving the legal and regulatory framework; (ii) establishing and upgrading IPR offices and developing operating procedures for them; (iii) raising public

awareness of IPR; (iv) training employees in different ministries to address IPR-related issues; and (v) providing IT equipment (software and hardware) for these offices to help them implement their new responsibilities.

This technical assistance will cover protection of marks, patents, industrial designs, plant varieties, copyright, neighboring rights, utility models, trade secrets, geo-

graphical indications, data confidentiality, and the design of integrated circuit layouts.

IPRA will work closely with the following ministries, all of which have responsibility for implementing a portion of the new IPR law: the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade (MOSIT), the Ministry of Higher Education and State for Scientific Research (MHESR); the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), and the Ministry of Culture (MOC).

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ECES Discusses the Implications of the EU Enlargement on the Egyptian Economy

On May 31, 2004, the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES) hosted a roundtable discussion on the Implications of EU Enlargement on the Egyptian Economy. The roundtable discussion focused on the impact on Egyptian exports, FDI flows to Egypt, and the migration of Egyptian labor to the EU. Speakers at the discussion included Galal El Zorba, Nile Clothing Co. and ECES; Abeer El Shennawy, Senior Economist, ECES; and Ambassador Gamal Bayoumi, Secretary General, Arab Investors' Federation. Taher Helmy, Partner at Helmy & Hamza Law Firm and Chairman of ECES, moderated the discussion.

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RRSA Prepares for the CSR 2004

The USAID-funded Results Reporting Support Activity (RRSA) is currently preparing for its annual Client Satisfaction Review (CSR). These Reviews serve as good monitoring, evaluation and management tools for USAID/Egypt Economic Growth Programs because they survey clients' perspectives on their level of satisfaction with select USAID services and the impact of these services on the performance of their businesses, associations, or farms. The 2004 CSR will follow up on the findings of the 2003 review by exploring client perspectives on the content and quality of five USAID Partners' services, and their assessment of the result of these services on their income, exports, production, and employment for 2002-2003. The CSR will also ask clients to rate how satisfied they have been with services, and ask clients to offer their recommendations on how programs can better meet their needs. The report will also further explore some noteworthy findings that came out of the 2003 report. This year's CSR will focus on services provided by five Partners to three target beneficiary groups: private firms, associations, and smallholders.

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ATR and FEI Discuss Customs Valuation

In coordination with the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI), the USAID-funded Assistance for Trade Reform (ATR) project held a Customs Valuation Workshop on May 25, 2004, which was attended by representatives from the Egyptian Customs Authority and the Customs Reform Unit (CRU). Ms. Zeinab Gaber, from the Egyptian Customs Authority, gave a presentation on the obstacles encountered in implementing WTO rules on customs valuation in Egypt, and Mr. Mahmoud Abul Ella, representing the CRU, discussed the set agenda and the current efforts aimed at implementing the reform in accordance with WTO require

ments. Current efforts include: conducting a study in cooperation with the legislative committee to identify penalties imposed on importers who present false data; conducting a cost-benefit analysis for the establishment of a body responsible for assessing customs valuation; conducting a study examining the feasibility of developing a database on customs values and charges and linking it to customs' ports and outlets; conducting training courses for importers and custom agents on valuation; and developing a mechanism for integrating this operation with other customs authorities and bodies.

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Bureau of Labor Statistics Conducts Two Training Workshops for DATA

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) conducted two training workshops for the Data Access and Transmission Activity (DATA) Project on Employment and Unemployment and Price Indices during April and June, 2004. Several Ministries were represented at both workshops, including the Ministry of Planning, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the Ministry of Manpower and Migration, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE), the Ministry of Finance, the National Accounts Unit/MOP, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation. 41 ministry representatives participated in the workshop on Employment and Unemployment (April 24- May 5), while 50 participated in the workshop on Price Indices, including the Consumer Price Index and Producers Price Index (May 22 to June 2, 2004).

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AERI Livestock and Dairy Program Holds Three Successful Veterinary Campaigns in Minya, Sohag and Fayoum

In May and June 2004, the Agricultural Export and Rural Income's (AERI) Livestock and Dairy Program organized three successful veterinary campaigns in the Minya (May 9-13), Sohag (May 16-20), and Fayoum (June 6-10) governorates. Each of the Minya and Sohag campaigns covered five villages, and the Fayoum campaign covered five villages and two hamlets. Campaigns provided free veterinary services to approximately three thousand small holders. Campaign services included internal and external parasite treatments, pregnancy diagnoses, surgeries, and general diagnoses. Campaign records indicate that the campaigns treated 6392 animals. These veterinary campaigns are much needed in Upper Egypt and are provided by AERI Livestock and Dairy Program on a regular basis.

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William Tucker, Chief of Party of USAID/Egypt SEB Program, explains why, by the time you go home today, 1500 New SME Loans will have been disbursed

USAID/Egypt has become the largest financier of microfinance initiatives in Egypt, supporting an estimated 70 percent of all activities in microfinance for Small and Micro enterprises (SMEs). USAID/Egypt's Small and Emerging Businesses Program (SEB) has had remarkable success since its inception in 1990, and with its commercial business approach, is currently considered an international best practice model for excellence. SEB data reveals marked growth in the number of active borrowers and the rates of loans. In the past four years the number of active borrowers has increased by an astounding 360 percent, and the number of cumulative loans disbursed has increased by 275 percent, while the rate of loan repayment default has yet to exceed three percent. The program continues to have a positive impact on the income and livelihood of borrowers, especially asset-less female heads of households, who make up 65% of borrowers, and USAID estimates that SME loans have contributed to the creation of more than 300,000 job opportunities. The key players behind this success are the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) and the Cairo-based Environmental Quality International (EQI). Through the SEB program, loans are channeled through the following institutions: six not-for-profit business associations (Alexandria Business Association (ABA), the Cairo-based Egyptian Small Enterprise Development Program (ESED), the Assiut Businessmen's Association (ASBA), the Small Enterprise Development Association of Port Said (SEDAP), the Sharkeya Business Association for Community Development (SBACD), and the Dakahlia Business Development Association (DBDA), Bank Du Caire, and the Credit Guarantee Company. EgLink invited SEB Chief of Party William Tucker to share his views on what he believes are the key ingredients behind the program's success. In the interview that follows Tucker explains why, by the time you go home today, 1500 new SME loans will be disbursed.

EgLink: Could you give us a brief on the success of the program?

WT: Since its inception in 1989, the SEB Program has witnessed exponential rates of growth in number of loans and active borrowers. Under USAID/Egypt guidance and the NCBA and EQI implementation, ever since the first loan was disbursed by the Alexandria Business Association (ABA) in 1989, 1.2 million loans worth LE 2.5 Billion were disbursed to 500 thousand borrowers. In the past four years alone, the rate of growth of cumulative loans disbursed to women has increased by a staggering 1550 percent from 30, 000 loans in July 2000, to 500, 000 today. Also during those past four years, official data reveal a



significant rate of increase for active loan borrowers by 360 percent. This is very significant success. Impact tracking reports reveal that the SEB Program has made a big difference to the vast majority of its borrowers' life, especially women who make up more than 65% of the total number of borrowers.

EgLink: What do you feel are the key factors behind the success of the SEB program?

WT: Primarily, there are a couple of critical factors: The first being sustained support from USAID/Egypt since 1989 through the continuous leadership of the SEB Management, Magdy Khalil and Rizkallah El Zayat. The excellent Management Team at USAID has, over the years, been providing us with clear guidance. The

second being: the Program's commercial business philosophy, that considers micro-lending from business finance, rather than a solely social perspective. The business approach entails looking at micro-lending as means of income generating not for consumption. That philosophy has led to success.

EgLink: In what way has this SEB Program's commercial business approach been a key factor of success?

WT: USAID/Egypt has been very adamant and successful at encouraging respected local business leaders to focus on microfinance—we are talking of convincing business associations or foundations to implement SME loan programs and channel funds through their institutions as

MUCIA Presents "Building a Public-Private Strategy for Global Market Development: Refocusing Research and Extension to Serve the Needs of Small-Scale Farmers in Egypt" in Dublin

Dr. Mohamed Samy, Coordinator; and Dr. Burton Swanson, Project Manager of the Agricultural Export and Rural Income (AERI) Institutional Linkage Activity, presented a paper entitled "Building a Public-Private Strategy for Global Market Development: Refocusing Research and Extension to Serve the Needs of Small Scale Farmers in Egypt" at the twentieth annual meeting of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education, in Dublin, Ireland on May 23-29, 2004. The paper outlines the key elements of the public-private strategy being implemented in Egypt to strengthen the capacity of agricultural research and extension to assist small-scale farmers in participating in new global markets.

The public-private strategy for global market development is an initiative of the Institutional Linkage Activity component of AERI, a USAID project funded under a Cooperative Agreement with the Government of Egypt. The project is implemented by the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities (MUCIA). Its major objective is to prepare the Research and Extension public services in Upper-Egypt to provide adequate answers to the impact

of globalization on small-scale horticultural producers. The strategic factors taken into account in linking smallholder horticultural producers to export markets include the identification of the potential horticultural crops that smallholders can successfully grow, the determination of the minimum quality and food safety standards that required by key markets, and the promotion of the most efficient ways of organizing farmers for meeting the market demand.

The proposed approach for implementing this public-private market development strategy stresses the creation of public-private teams including researchers, extension agents, farmer and trade associations; the implementation of need and comparative advantage assessments; the identification of market opportunities; the promotion of business development programs; and extension outreach activities.

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sustainable means of income generating. The quality of board members and chairmen of these partner foundations have been superb.

EgLink: Do you feel that these institutions will stand the test of time and sustain the Program after USAID support?

WT: I believe the partner institutions have been successful and will continue to sustain after USAID support. The Bashayer program is a good example: partner institutions have reinvested their profits into the creation of this new product, a poverty lending model type of program that channels loans to female heads of the household--asset less women who have no means of gaining credit to help them expand their business and livelihood. Bashayer El Khier initiative was created in 1998 to serve female heads of households--women who are widowed, divorced, or deserted-- living in poor urban settlements. Through poverty-lending units of the initiative's six foundations, loans are extended to help women start income generating activities or expand existing ones. So, not only are the institutions sustaining themselves, they are also expanding into new markets.

EgLink: A number of impact tracking studies on Bashayer El Khier have referred to the program's positive impact on improving the quality of life for its beneficiaries in terms of income, livelihood and empowerment. What was behind the creation of that program?

WT: Since SEB started, loans have been disbursed to small enterprises (business that employ up to ten workers). Over the years, with continuous assessment, we found out that the percentage of female borrowers with this one product was only 15-20 percent. We tried to ask the foundations to expand this percentage but they had a hard time. So, we decided to create a whole new product to cater for the needs of a needier group, asset less women. Bashayer El Khier adopts a poorest of the poor criteria of selection for its beneficiaries

and is based on group collateral Grameen micro lending model where a group of asset less women would guarantee one another. The average loan size for this program is less, but it is increasing to reach an average loan size of US \$40. When we first started, the number of loans disbursed to women did not exceed 30,000, now it has reached 500,000. The same business approach of the SEB is applied to loan extension and repayment terms of Bashayer El Khier. Female extension workers (Monasaqat) from the area, explain that loans are purely for income generation and not consumption. It is clear from the rate of increase in female borrowers that we are reaching who should be reached. An impact tracking study assessing the benefit of the program on 600 of its beneficiaries (April 2003) has indicated that the majority of the surveyed beneficiary reported that the Program has raised their income, standards of living and gave them more-of-a-say in deciding household budget allocations. Ninety one percent of Bashayer El Khier current female beneficiary clients reported an increase of their business capital.

EgLink: How did effective monitoring contribute to the success of the Program?

WT: Monitoring is an important element behind the success of the program. Over the years, we have developed our performance monitoring systems. We have processed all of the project data and trend analysis and instead of just keeping it to ourselves here at EQI, shared it with the implementing partner institutions not only on the executive board or the chairman level but to branch managers. We wanted each branch manager to see where his/her results lie compared to other branch manager in the organization. That created friendly competition between branch managers and had a positive impact on performance. We went a step further and obtained written authorization from each partner foundation to share some of their loan data with



William Tucker
SEB COP

other foundations in the program. We carry out many workshops, so all foundations can get together so they can analyze these trend analysis. There was a visible improvement of performance as a result of that practice. Another creative move by USAID was to separate Impact tracking from the foundations tasks and assign EQI to do it. In a sense that ensured objectivity and accuracy.

EgLink: USAID/Egypt and the GOE have agreed to extent assistance to the SME sector until 2007. Do you think that EQI has played a role in that respect?

WT: I believe that EQI staff has been very successful. The president of EQI, Dr. Mounir Neamatallah, has been an important element behind the success. Based on the success of the program, he was able to convince Bank Du Caire to disburse loans through its bank branches. It is now disbursing 125,000 loans-becoming the largest SME finance channel in Egypt. Although the project is coming to an end this summer with EQI's supervision, we are also continuing the technical assistance to capacity building of the association. The implementing foundations are self sustainable. They and EQI are working on creating more products and reaching out for more people.

EgLink: How Does USAID/Egypt Feel about this success?

WT: USAID is happy with that success, which is why USAID has asked us to implement a public awareness campaign to publicize that success to the general public in Egypt. We started an aggressive awareness campaign this year to get journalists to speak directly to the client. We organized a variety of forums for a variety of public and private media channels to publicize the SEB impact. We also managed to get published a number of significant articles on the program's achievements. USAID is also discussing the achievements of this program with other donors to coordinate efforts.

EL SHAMS Convenes a Third Regional Investment Workshop in Upper Egypt

The AERI horticultural grant, EL SHAMS, held its third regional investment promotion workshop in Beni-Suef, Upper Egypt, on Tuesday, May 25, 2004. Like previous investment promotion workshops held in Luxor (April 14, 2004), and in Assuit (April 21, 2004), this day-long workshop brought together regional public and private sector leaders to discuss specific methods of cooperation for achieving the project's goals and objectives. The most successful of the three, the workshop was the culmination of weeks of planning by the EL SHAMS team, led by Area Manager, Zoheir el-Shandweily, and ably assisted by the Cairo-based Local Marketing Technical Advisor for EL SHAMS, Ayman Salam Khalil. A team of professional workshop planning specialists from Environmental Quality International (EQI) assisted with the logistical and administrative arrangements for the regional investment workshop.

Beni-Suef Governor Eng. Said el-Najjar opened the regional investment promotion workshop. His Excellency spoke of the government's eagerness to promote private sector investment in the region, especially in the agricultural sector.

EL SHAMS Chief of Party, Dr. Tom Herlehy, spoke about the importance of public sector – private sector cooperation for the success of AERI EL SHAMS. Dr. Herlehy emphasized that EL SHAMS is a demand-driven project that only advises farmers to grow the crops that they can market, and assured private sector buyers, exporters and potential investors that EL SHAMS wants to work closely with them, affirming that with technical assistance and training Upper Egyptian farmers have the potential to produce high quality horticultural crops for domestic and international markets.

Zoheir el-Shandweily, EL SHAMS Beni-Suef Area Manager, presented participants with the various activities and objectives of EL SHAMS. Magdy Moussa, the EQI project manager for EL SHAMS, focused on investment opportunities for creating regional agribusiness enterprises. Salah Hegazy, Chairman of AGROFOOD Co., spoke about changes in international quality



From (L) to (R) His Excellency the Governor of Beni-Suef, Eng. Said El Najjar, EL SHAMS Chief of Party, Tom Herlehy CARE/ EL SHAMS Beni Suef Area Manager, Zoheir El Shandweily and Behind him USAID CAD Division Chief Gary Robbins

standards and marketing practices that are compelling Egyptian farmers and exporters to raise their production quality standards and to pay more attention to certification of quality.

The participants then broke up into groups, where they discussed and analyzed what actions each specific group would have to take in order to help promote investment in the horticultural sector in Beni-Suef. Among the notable guests who discussed the needs of food processing companies

was Mustafa el-Halwagy, member of the Board of Directors of HEINZ. Participants expressed interest in buying medicinal and aromatic plants for processing into herbs and spices, essential oils and seeds. Senior managers and owners from companies such as Spiceland (Mr. Nadir Naiem), Al-Shoubaky Inc., (Farouk al-Shoubaky), Medico Co., (Mohamed Dawoud) and others all expressed keen interest to make forward contracts with farmer associations for the supply of high quality medicinal and aromatic plants.

Participants also included representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR) from Giza, Fayoum and Beni-Suef; the Horticultural Extension Service from Beni-Suef, Giza and Fayoum; the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs (MISA); the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI); the Ministry of Foreign Trade (MOFT); International Trade Point; the Egyptian Association for Seeds and Pesticides (EASP); and USAID senior executives, Anne Williams, Gary Robbins and Adly Osman. Participants also included more than 20 private sector buyers, exporters and food processing executives, leaders of Farmer Associations, and other members of the EL SHAMS team

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MUCIA Export Marketing Training Program--a Step towards Increasing Egyptian Exports to the EU

The Midwest University for International Activities (MUCIA), the contractor for the Agricultural Exports and Rural Income's (AERI) Institutional Linkage Activity, organized an export marketing training program on April 18-June 24, 2004.

The training program, designed to increase Egyptian's exports to major EU countries, targeted select representatives of trade associations, smallholders, exporters, university professors, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade (MOT).

The training program strengthened participants' understanding of the functioning of the global supply chain, and of the market distribution system for horticultural produce being imported into the Netherlands and neighboring countries.

It also developed participants' market research skills to be applied in analyzing price information, consumer preferences, import regulations, and networking.

The training program included three modules. Module one presented an overview of domestic supply chains within Egypt for horticultural crops exported to the EU. Module two provided an understanding of the different supply

chains within the Netherlands, including wholesale and retail markets, as well as within the food service industry. Module three utilized this information to develop business and international marketing plans to export specific horticultural crops to selected EU countries. This information will be disseminated to Egyptian exporters and producer groups through a business development conference and producer group meetings to be held during July in Upper Egypt.

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DATA's Conference Raises Awareness on Official Statistics' User Needs, and Modernization

Accurate and timely statistics are an important component of Egypt's growing market economy. Economic measurements such as rates of inflation, unemployment, poverty, median income, economic growth, foreign trade deficits and many others are crucial to investors and economic planners. In order to raise awareness of current statistical activities, promote a dialogue on statistical needs, and highlight recent changes and improvements within the Egyptian statistical system, the USAID-funded Data Access & Transmission Activity (DATA) held a conference on official statistics awareness, user needs, and modernization on May 10th, 2004. Organized under the sponsorship of His Excellency Dr. Osman M. Osman, Minister of Planning, and attended by producers and users of official statistics, the conference focused on ways to improve the efficacy of the national statistical system and increase statistical literacy.

The conference was attended by H.E. Dr. Osman M. Osman, Minister of Planning, General Ahab Elwi, President of CAPMAS, and Dr. Mary Ott, USAID Deputy Mission Director.

The purpose of the conference was to draw attention to the vital role of reliable statistics in developing evidence-based decision making policies. It was also meant to strengthen ties between producers and users of data and the media, to encourage data-driven policies in decision making, and to mobilize support for a national statistical system.

Everyone can benefit from increased familiarity of the principles of statistics. Growing familiarization will insure that statistical policy standards reflect the best practices of international statistical organizations and domestic research institutes. This standardization in turn promotes trust in information provided by Governments and enhances the credibility of the data needed by decision makers in both the domestic market and the international arena.

The conference included two panel discussions on statistical awareness topics with a chairperson and four panelists for each session. Topics included the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics' (CAPMAS) future vision, environmental indicator measurements for sustainable development, information culture creation, role of statistics in business decisions; and the legal and institutional framework of Egypt's current statistical practices and future challenges.

The first panel session on "The Role of Statistics in Business Decisions" was chaired by Dr. Taher Helmy, Head of ECES and President of AmCham; with Mrs. Josse Dorra Fiani, CEO, Fiani and Partners; Mr. Philip Khoury, Head of Research, EFG Hermes; and Mr. Dan McCarthy, Chairman, general Motors Egypt as panelists.

The second panel session on "Strengthening Egypt's Statistical System for the Future" was chaired by Dr. Shahida Azfarm, UNICEF Re

gional Representative; Mr. Elhamy El Zayat, Chairman, Egyptian Travel Federation; Dr. Kamal Selim, Professor at the Faculty of Economics, Cairo University; and Dr. Ahmed El Kholly, Professor of Urban Planning, Menofia University as panelists.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Raafat Radwan, Chairman, Information Decision and Support Center (IDSC), who gave a presentation on "The Legal and Institutional Framework of Egypt's Current Statistical Practices and Future Challenges". Closing remarks were made by Mr. Nasr Tantawi, Consultant to the Minister of Planning and DATA Project Coordinator.

The DATA conference provided an opportunity for public and private sector representatives to meet with decision makers and highlight current statistical needs and concerns. Participants in DATA's conference were introduced to the current status of the national statistical system in the economy and provided with a walk-through of what exists for users of data and what is needed in the system.

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Ministry of Finance Representatives Gain First Hand Knowledge of the Canadian Experience in CTP and DT 2 Study Tour to Canada

The USAID-funded Corporate Tax Project (CTP) and the Developmental Training 2 (DT2) Project organized a study tour to Canada for 12 members of the Ministry of Finance on May 25- June 2. The tour provided participants with first hand knowledge of the Canadian experience and how it could be applied in the Egyptian context.

Tour participants met with representatives of the Government of Ontario, including the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, and the Canada-Ontario Business Service Center. They also met with representatives of the Canadian government from the Canada Customs & Revenue Agency, Industry Canada, and the Public Works, Government Services and Treasury Board Secretariat.

The tour covered several topics, includ

ing the evolution of public service program delivery, information management (IM), IM frameworks and metadata, portal strategies and architecture, the tax 'policy-to-implementation' lifecycle, and the multiple uses of common sourced information holdings. Participants plan to use this knowledge to provide more efficient and streamlined services to Egyptian taxpayers, with the hope of improving tax compliance while at the same time providing enhanced levels of service to the private sector.

Canada has won many international awards for its achievements in providing 'connected' public services and is a world leader in the development of e-government. It also has a long history of sharing its experience with public administrations overseas to improve public service standards worldwide. The Ministry of Finance is dedicated to providing better customer service by making single-windows or one-stop-shop facilities available to the public.

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In April, **Dr. Paul Bruning** joined USAID/Egypt Economic Growth Office as their Sector Policy and Privatization (SPP) Economist for four years. Mr. Bruning replaces **Dr. Glenn Rogers**, who is transferring to Washington in late August to join USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT). Before arriving to the USAID/Egypt mission, Mr. Bruning spent the last year in Washington working on the Iraq economic program. He also has several years experience working in countries of the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In Mid-July **Dr. Anthony Chan**, SPP Division Chief is transferring to Washington, USAID/EGAT and will be replaced by **Mark Gellerson**.

In April, **Ronia Hawash** joined the Results Reporting Support Activity (RRSA) as its Monitoring and Research Associate. An economist by practice and education, Ms. Hawash will be filling in for Ms. Rawia Mokhtar's while she is on maternity leave. Ms. Hawash is currently finishing off her MSc. dissertation in Economics at the American University in Cairo (AUC), and is a part-time teaching assistant at the Arab Academy for Sciences, Technology, and Maritime Transportation's External Program for the London School of Economics and the Economics Department at AUC. Ms. Ronia has led a number of training courses including "Analytical Skills based on MS Excel," a course sponsored by USAID's Assistance Trade Reform (ATR) and designed for public sector foreign trade employees.

In **June**, **Arwa Morsy** rejoined RRSA as an Economist. Ms. Morsy is currently a Doctorate Candidate in Economics at Maastricht School of Management. Ms. Morsy has served at the office of the Minister of Finance as a Research Economist and as an Economist in Egypt's Formalization project. She has also held a number of significant Research and Consulting posts including being an Economic Consultant for El EZZ Group where she prepared a number of reports for the budgeting and planning committee of the Egyptian Parliament, economic consultant for Finance and Banking International (FINBI), where she was responsible for preparing a number of financial and economic feasibility studies; and IDRC where she helped in the study of 'Labor Costs and Comparative Advantages'. Her current tasks at RRSA include analyzing Economic Growth Program' results for EG website posting.

Amr Tabbakh, the Information and Communication Program's Marketing and Business Development Specialist, resigned from his post in late May in order to pursue a career with his family's business. During his stint on the ICT Program, Tabbakh worked on several efforts aimed at Egypt's IT business associations, and was largely responsible for the success that the ICT Program had in assisting in the creation of the Egyptian Information, Telecommunications, Electronics, and Software Alliance (EITESAL).

EITESAL Attains WITSA Membership during an ICT Program-sponsored Trip

The Egyptian Information, Telecommunications, Electronics, and Software Alliance (EITESAL) was granted World Information Technology Services Alliance (WITSA) membership following a unanimous vote at WITSA's World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) held in Athens, Greece, on May 17-21.

In a closed-door WITSA General Assembly Meeting, EITESAL was awarded membership following its presentation and formal request for to join the Alliance, which includes IT associations from all around the world, representing more than 90 percent of the global IT market. EITESAL was represented at the event, which was hosted by the Federation of Hellenic Information Technology and Communications Enterprises, by two of its Board members who participated under

the sponsorship of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Program.

During the five-day trip to WCIT, the EITESAL Board members had the opportunity to attend a number of events. Those events included WITSA's one-day IT Mentors Alliance (ITMA) Workshop on association marketing and membership services. During the ITMA Workshop, the EITESAL Board members had the

opportunity to network and exchange lessons learned with the other WITSA members. The ITMA aims to enhance the capacity and sustainability of IT industry associations in emerging markets to promote the use of ICT for economic development.

The EITESAL participants also attended the Third Arab IT Association Alliance (IJMA'A) Meeting. IJMA'A is a regional alliance of Arab IT associations sponsored by USAID and WITSA.

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USAID/ Economic Growth Program Studies On the Spot (March-May 2004)

Available...

▶ **Public and Private Investment in Egypt: Crowding-Out or Crowding-In? – The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES), April 2004.** This paper analyzes and assesses the relationship between public and private investment in Egypt. It offers two sets of proposals. The first set relates to public sector investment in non-infrastructure projects and the second focuses on enhancing the efficiency of public investment in infrastructure, particularly in the education and health sectors, while encouraging private sector participation (domestic and foreign) in infrastructure projects and looking for new and varied sources of financing. The paper suggests that no new public sector investment should be channeled to non-infrastructure projects. It also suggests continuing the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing projects, especially in the banking sector and capital market, in addition to encouraging privatization. **Contact:** www.eces.org.eg and www.usaideconomic.org.eg

▶ **The Cost of Not Privatizing: An Assessment for Egypt. The Privatization Implementation Project (PIP) - March 2004.** The Study describes the economic cost of not accelerating the privatization process of Law 203 public enterprises (commercial production companies), four public sector banks, economic authorities, joint venture companies, and public insurance companies. The study forecasts a huge direct budgetary cost (LE 100 billion in present value terms) over the next five years, which amounts to one half of the budget deficit, 4.3% of GDP and 20% of total domestic saving. **Contact:** www.usaideconomic.org.eg

▶ **The Regional Fact Finding Study on the Food Processing Industry, RRSA-June 2004.** The study will examine trends in variables that affect household welfare or well-being. The study will utilize variables from two sources: the Demographic and Health Surveys covering the period 1995 through 2003 and the Household Expenditure and Consumption Surveys, 1995/96 and 1999/2000 by CAPMAS. The study will design a governorate wealth index where employment in the food processing sector is the highest. It will calculate correlation coefficients between the wealth index and the concentration of the food processing sector and sub sector in these governorates. **Contact:** www.usaideconomic.org.eg

▶ **The Data Limitations to the Measurement of Competitiveness in the Food Processing Sector in Egypt Using Government Data, RRSA- June 2004.** The study examines the existing national data and the scenarios this data paints concerning the competitiveness, economic viability and overall performance of the processed food sector in Egypt at the national, sector and sub-sector level. Data. The study pays special consideration to the relationship between the capital invested in the sector and the value added, i.e. productivity, employment, job creation, exports, and the generation of foreign exchange in the available data. **Contact:** www.usaideconomic.org.eg

▶ **Best Practices for M&E for Customs Reform in Egypt- the Results Reporting Support Activity (RRSA)-June 2004.** This report reviews and assesses the quality of the USAID/Egypt Assistance to Customs and Trade Facilitation (ACTF) results and performance indicators as well as the Customs Reform Unit performance indicators. It aims to give a better perspective of Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) systems and to suggest a set of operational indicators based on best practices to monitor customs reform policy and trade facilitation performance. Noteworthy to mention is that ACTF aims to reduce the average clearance time for goods at port, the clearance process steps, the number of customs disputes, and increase the amount of customs declarations transmitted electronically.

In Progress...

▶ **Estimating Income and Employment, Multiplier for Food Processing Industry in Egypt, Phase II, RRSA-September 2004.** This study estimates multipliers of employment and income generated from various processing activities as a result of direct increases in the final demand for processed food and livestock products. This includes change in employment and income at the processed plants, the increased supply of horticultural and livestock products from the farm gate (back-ward linkage), and the dispersal of processed food to intermediate and final markets (forward linkage).

▶ **The Client Satisfaction Review 2005 (CSR) - RRSA- November 2004**
The CSR will follow up on the findings of the 2003 review by exploring client perspectives on the content and quality of five USAID/Egypt-funded Competitiveness and Agriculture Development Partner services and the result of these services on their income, exports, production, and employment. The CSR will also ask clients to rate how satisfied they have been with Partner services, and ask for clients to offer their recommendations on how better to meet their needs. It will focus on services provided by five Partners to three target beneficiary groups: private firms, associations, and smallholders.