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**SWISS
COOPERATION
PROGRAMME
IN EGYPT**
2025-2028



Background

Switzerland and Egypt look back on over 45 years of development cooperation. As a key trading partner for Switzerland and the second largest economy in Africa, Egypt holds many opportunities for Swiss businesses and investment. Yet, over the past years, the country has faced a multitude of external shocks, such as the wars in Ukraine, Sudan and Gaza, the Covid-19 Pandemic and the downturn of Suez Canal revenues due to instability in Yemen, which exacerbated already existing structural challenges, such as high level of external debt and inflation. These crises are intensified by Egypt's vast and fast-growing population of 110 million people - out of which around 35 million are living in poverty – as well as the strongly felt effects of climate change. In addition, owed to its geographic location, Egypt is a major transit and destination country for migrants and displaced persons in need of support, basic services and protection. It is estimated that Egypt hosts over 9 million migrants and refugees, with more than

1.5 million Sudanese refugees having entered the country since April 2023.

In response to all these challenges, the Egyptian government undertook significant efforts to revitalize the economy, enhance welfare programs, invest in infrastructure, and safeguard national security. Egypt also engaged in a macro-economic reform program with the International Monetary Fund. The reform measures included fiscal consolidation, privatization of state-owned enterprises and tax restructuring. Further measures such as food and energy subsidy reductions and currency devaluation helped tame inflation and stabilize the economy but posed considerable challenges to the most vulnerable, while the expansion of social safety nets is still in progress.

Switzerland follows governance and human rights developments in Egypt closely, particularly in the areas of freedom of expression, association and judicial

independence. Ongoing legal reforms and national dialogue initiatives suggest possibilities for constructive engagement and gradual institutional reform. This includes also economic governance, and an administrative reform agenda Egypt has embarked on. Switzerland began its economic development cooperation with Egypt in 1979. Three decades later, following the Arab Spring, Switzerland established a comprehensive development partnership and signed a Framework Agreement in 2013.

The Cooperation Programme 2025–2028 marks the fourth comprehensive programme in Egypt, implemented by three entities of the Swiss public administration, namely the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). This multifaceted approach responds to the complex needs and opportunities, adding Swiss value where it has the biggest impact.



Results in 2021–2024

During the Cooperation Programme 2021–2024, Switzerland and Egypt partnered to support economic stabilization, promote green growth, strengthen governance and expand access to essential services for the most vulnerable. Below some highlights of results achieved:

Better Lives for Citizens and Refugees

With people at the core of its programme, Switzerland, through its local partners, provided health care, education and protection services to over 500'000 people in need, especially for refugee women, girls, and unaccompanied children. It also offered skills training to over 200'000 youth to help find work. Also, thanks to Swiss support, over 300'000 women entrepreneurs were able to access tailored banking services, through a program called "Zaat/ذات" ("Herself" in Arabic) with the second largest Egyptian bank.

Green Economic Development

With climate challenges in mind, Switzerland supported Egypt's green growth,

working together with the government and the private sector. Switzerland continued to support sustainable urban development and joined Germany and the EU in investing in waste collection, disposal and treatment facilities benefiting thirteen million people across four governorates. In parallel, by raising awareness on the value of waste, Switzerland helped 150 green enterprises in Upper Egypt valorise more than 300'000 tons of biomass, which led to a reduction of more than 200'000 tons of CO₂ emissions. These enterprises benefitted from tailored green credits for agribusiness, waste management and sustainable energy, securing over EGP 132 million in financing. Finally, Switzerland supported the certification of the Grand Egyptian Museum as a green building. Its design uses approximately 20% less energy and water than conventional buildings. Public and private sector actors followed suit, and now several hospitals, shopping malls and universities are designed more sustainably.

Dialogue and Stronger Institutions

Switzerland worked to create spaces for dialogue and strengthen local institutions. It facilitated dialogue among diverse stakeholders to advocate for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable, including migrants, forcibly displaced persons and children. It supported the development of evidence-based knowledge and built advocacy capacity of local actors. Switzerland collaborated with the government of Egypt to improve children's safety and wellbeing when dealing with the justice system. A new law affirmed the independence of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), strengthening its mandate to protect children's rights. Finally, Switzerland worked with the Egyptian Government on its fiscal reforms and public financial management. It supported the development of Egypt's first medium term revenue strategy and built capacities for debt management helped Egypt better manage regional shocks.

Switzerland's commitment – focus areas for 2025–2028

Protecting lives, green economic development and improving governance in Egypt

In times of uncertainty and a series of unprecedented external challenges facing Egypt, Switzerland will enhance the focus of its activities on poverty reduction and lifesaving interventions for Egyptians, migrants and refugees. Good governance, including economic governance, and human rights – as well as green and inclusive economic development with a thriving private sector – are key to enabling these objectives. The programme works in the following three priority areas:

1. Migration, Protection and Socio-economic Integration

As regional tensions continue, Egypt hosts a growing number of refugees and migrants. With the aim of enhancing their resilience, well-being and socio-economic

opportunities, Switzerland works at the nexus of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, combining immediate protection, capacity building and lifesaving interventions with improving livelihood opportunities such as employability and entrepreneurship. More concretely, Switzerland works to improve access to protection, lifesaving and community-based services such as health, shelter, food, psycho-social support, gender-based violence (GBV) support services and education.

The programme also supports skills development and education for better livelihood opportunities and income generation. Working closely with community-led organisations and building their capacities ensures a better response to emerging needs. Knowledge sharing and evidence-based advocacy bring stakeholders together for more effective and efficient

action. On a regional level, Switzerland's engagement for the protection of children and youth on the move across East African Migration Route continues. Exchanges with relevant humanitarian actors will enable timely responses to emerging needs in Egypt related to Gaza.

2. Sustainable and Green Economic Development

Switzerland considers sustainable and green economic development to be key to creating jobs, reducing poverty and building resilient, resource-efficient cities. Switzerland will continue to support green growth and better income opportunities for people in Egypt. This includes supporting the growth of local green businesses, promoting recycling and advancing circular economy practices. Switzerland applies a market systems development approach to catalyse change through local actors with

a focus on green economy. Switzerland is also working to facilitate employment opportunities for job seekers by supporting entrepreneurship, start-ups, as well as innovation in climate-friendly and green sectors. At the same time, it is promoting climate-smart farming and helping communities adapt to the effects of climate change, including facilitating access to green finance mechanisms.

In cities, Switzerland supports sustainable urban development to facilitate business growth and to improve citizens' quality of life. This is achieved through better urban planning and management of basic infrastructure and services (drinking water, waste management, mobility) focusing on innovative, efficient and sustainable solutions.

3. Human Rights and Governance

Switzerland takes a multi-dimensional and people-focused approach to promoting good governance. This includes efforts to strengthen the rule of law, promote inclusive rights and strengthen access to justice, especially for the most vulnerable groups, with particular attention to migrants, women, youth, and children. To help public institutions work better for citizens, Switzerland supports efforts to enhance institutional capacity, improve internal management and ensure they can operate independently. Switzerland also supports macro-economic reforms that help the government manage its finances more effectively, enhance domestic revenue mobilization and create more room to invest in public services.

These reforms, in line with Egypt's Vision 2030, aim to make the economy stronger, fairer and more transparent. At the same time, Switzerland encourages open dialogue between government, civil society, universities and international partners, to help shape policies that reflect people's needs and are based on data and evidence. This includes supporting research and making sure people have access to reliable information. In addition, Switzerland works with Egyptian and International companies to encourage responsible business practices that foster transparency, respect human rights and promote social responsibility.

Migration, Protection and Socio-economic Integration



Human Rights and Governance



Sustainable and Green Economic Development





Approach and partners

The Programme is managed by the Office for International Cooperation (OIC) of the Embassy of Switzerland in Egypt. The OIC represents three federal offices: The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). The **geographic coverage** of the portfolio focuses on **Upper Egypt** – home to the poorest and strongly affected by the refugee influx – and on **Greater Cairo**, core to the refugee crisis response, urban development efforts, and the engagement on governance and human rights.

The **Government of Egypt**, on the national and local levels, remains the main cooperation partner for Switzerland. **UN agencies and International Financial Institutions** provide technical expertise and coordination mechanisms in priority areas such as protection, gender-based violence, green growth, urban development and macroeconomic reforms. Engagement with **media**,

academia and civil society on the other hand bring alternative and critical analysis. By supporting **community-based organisations and shifting resources and voices to civil society**, Switzerland contributes to **localization**. The main partners for sustainable green growth and income generation are **private sector actors**, especially MSMEs, service providers and financial institutions.

Cooperation Programme – Egypt

Indicative budget: CHF 60 million* for the duration of 2025 -2028 (covers development cooperation and humanitarian aid)

Intervention zones

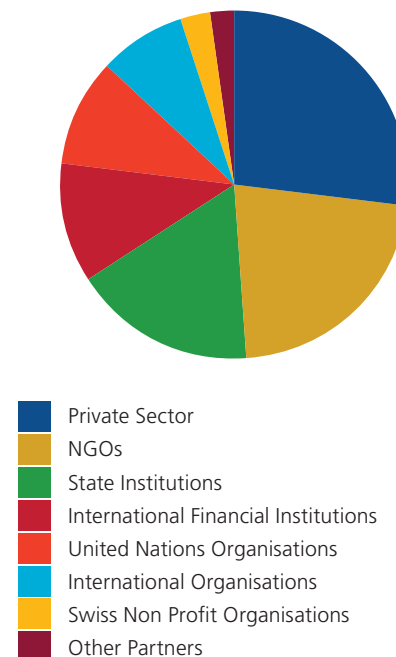
Upper Egypt, Greater Cairo

Focus areas

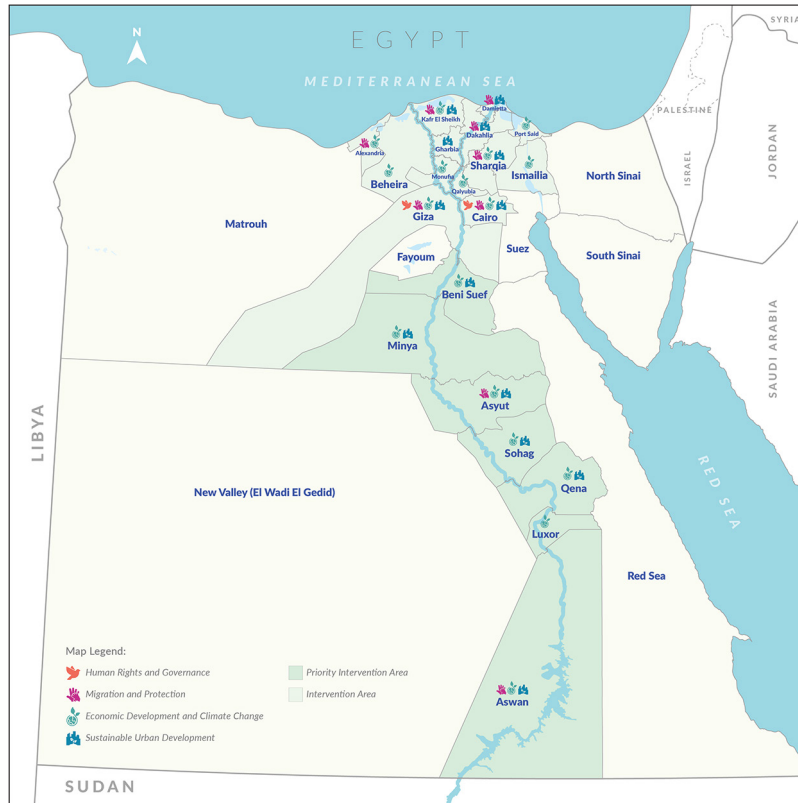
Migration, Protection and Socio-economic Integration; Sustainable and Green Economic Development; Human Rights and Governance

* The information on the financial envelope is indicative. This information serves merely as a basis for the forward spending plans that are reviewed each year by the Federal council and the Swiss Parliament.

Breakdown per partners



Map of Egypt





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**Swiss Agency for Development and
Cooperation SDC**

Horn and North Africa Section
Eichenweg 5, 3003 Bern - Zollikofen
deza.hna@eda.admin.ch
www.deza.admin.ch

Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education
and Research EAER

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

Economic Cooperation and Development
Holzikofenweg 36, 3003 Bern
info.cooperation@seco.admin.ch
www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch

Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP

State Secretariat for Migration SEM

International Affairs
Quellenweg 6, 3003 Bern - Wabern
www.sem.admin.ch

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