



International Projects

Egypt: BSI unlocks prosperity through improving Egypt's trade and quality infrastructure

The story at a glance

- Despite a large domestic market and significant trading possibilities, several constraints were impeding the full realization of Egypt's export and industrial development potential.
- The Egyptian government wanted to overcome these challenges to make the economy more competitive in order to fuel future growth.
- BSI's International Projects team worked with Egypt's Ministry of Trade and Industry on a 39-month project to build capacity and improve Egypt's quality infrastructure.
- The project helped Egypt enhance its regulatory reform measures, increase its exports and become better equipped for economic growth and global trade.

The starting point

Egypt has a population of almost 100 million – the largest of any country in the Arab-speaking world, and the third highest in Africa. It has huge export and foreign trade potential.

Egypt's main trading partner is the EU, and in 2010 they signed an agreement on agricultural and fishery products. Trade then more than doubled in these sectors, and in 2012 Egypt and the EU signed up to the Trade and Domestic Market Enhancement Programme (TDMEP).

The aim of the TDMEP is to support Egypt's efforts towards:

- Ensuring long-term and sustainable economic development
- Reducing economic disparities
- Creating jobs, and
- Strengthening Egypt's international trade role.



The challenge

The Egyptian government sought to make the country's economy more competitive in order to fuel future economic growth. Despite Egypt's huge potential, it falls behind other North African competitors in its industrial goods trade links with Europe.

Egypt has faced political, social and economic challenges in its recent past. These have hampered government efforts to achieve its domestic market policy, which is geared towards strengthening its quality infrastructure and aligning it to international norms and standards – with the ultimate aim of benefiting the national economy and Egypt's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The solution

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Trade and Industry brought in BSI to run TDMEP:

Technical Assistance in Areas of Domestic Market and Industrial Competitiveness. This was BSI's fourth quality infrastructure-related project in Egypt since 2011.

Funded by the EU, the project was carried out by BSI's International Projects team. The project had five primary objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of Egypt's quality infrastructure institutions
- Support Egypt's industrial development
- Improve Egypt's business-enabling environment
- Enhance support services for Egypt's SMEs
- Improve laws and regulations for the initiation of negotiation on Agreement of Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA).

“The multi-theme approach across quality infrastructure, industry development and trade promotion aligns perfectly with the Ministry’s Strategy.”

Shimaa Ali,
Director, Strategy and Development Projects Department,
Egyptian Ministry of Trade and Industry

International and local expertise

The BSI project team was based in Cairo for the entirety of the project. It was formed from a pool of Egyptian and European experts to provide the best available knowledge and skills.

“We also used local expertise, especially when it came to industrial development,” says the BSI project leader, Mohammed Shohaieb. “We didn’t want to miss out on regional trade opportunities, so it made sense to use people with local knowledge.”

As well as working closely with the Egyptian Ministry of Trade and Industry, the team regularly engaged with other agencies and the private sector, visiting sites throughout the country. Their responsibilities ranged from providing policy advice and supporting strategic decision-making to capacity building and outreach programmes for SMEs to help with their training and development.

“Our expertise is not only confined to standards,” explains BSI Project Manager Ornella Leone. “We can really help countries to facilitate trade and improve investment flows.”

The team’s approach was to interact with their counterparts on an individual basis. “We undertake peer-to-peer capacity development to train and transfer skills,” says Mohammed. “Our team has the experience and knowledge of what is available on the market. It’s much more effective than the traditional consultant solution.”

New five-year industrial development plan

The team identified five sectors as having good potential for increasing trade and exports and creating jobs: food, textiles, construction and building materials, chemicals, and traditional handicrafts.

“We worked closely with the private sector on formulating a coherent industrial strategy,” says Mohammed. “Having industry adopt international standards is a core part of the strategy. Whatever infrastructure we put in place for standards development, conformity assessment and accreditation, nothing will happen unless industry gets the message.”

Focused efforts to boost global trade

In addition to the main TDMEP project, the BSI team focused on two other projects crucial to helping Egypt trade globally:

- Helping the Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality Control (EOS) to align Egypt’s quality and regulatory environment with international best practice. The team trained people in the standards development process; helped with designing IT tools; and advised on technical committee management and inclusivity, so that standards-makers from all parts of society and the economy were included
- Building the Egyptian National Institute of Standards capacity in metrology. The team worked with Egypt’s national measurement institute to develop standardized legal measurements, which are essential for global trading.



The result

Over the 39-month project, the team:

- Trained over 1,500 people via more than 300 training courses
- Engaged over 100 government and private sector institutions
- Arranged study visits to Europe for over 100 participants.

The client's view

The International Projects team's work has been welcomed in Egypt by government, regulatory and private sector bodies.

"TDMEP's multi-theme approach across quality infrastructure, industry development and trade promotion aligns perfectly with the Ministry's Strategy," says Shimaa Ali, Director of the Strategy and Development Projects Department at the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

"The advantages of peer-to-peer national standards body assistance are considerable," adds Abeer Sadek, General Manager of EOS's Technical Relations Department.



Opening up markets

The International Projects team has built a strong relationship with Egypt's National Standards Body, the Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality (EOS). The team's guidance has enabled EOS to offer accredited certification and conformity assessment services that will open up international markets to Egyptian companies.

The groundwork done by the International Projects team will enable Egyptian quality infrastructure agencies to align with international standards and to harmonize their technical regulations with the EU's.

Once they have achieved technical eligibility, negotiations can start on an Agreement of Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA). At the conclusion of the ACAA, the products covered by the agreement can enter the EU without additional testing and conformity assessment procedures and EU products can freely enter the Egyptian market.

Removing trade barriers

As well as benefiting from a more modern and streamlined quality infrastructure, the project helps more Egyptian SMEs to become exporters or grow their existing export orders regionally, to the EU, and globally. Greater entrepreneurial success will boost the national economy, while consumers will also benefit from improved market surveillance to better ensure product quality and safety.

About the client

Egypt's Ministry of Trade and Industry is a cabinet-level department in the Government of Egypt, with its headquarters in Cairo. It aims to make industrial development the engine of sustainable and inclusive economic development in Egypt, in order to meet domestic demand, generate job opportunities, enhance export growth and make Egypt a key player in the global economy.

Why BSI?

BSI is a global thought leader championing business excellence, innovation and best practice – whether by developing agile standards or offering quality management advisory services. BSI's International Projects team works with developing countries and transition economies to improve their quality infrastructure, trade and investment flows and market access, with the goal of boosting economic growth and prosperity.

Our aim

BSI's International Projects (IP) division was formed with a specific mission – to help governments improve their trade policy-making processes, unlock prosperity and boost private sector competitiveness.

For over 20 years, we've been providing regular best-in-class expertise on trade promotion, regulatory compliance and export readiness on a range of aid-funded programmes in more than 100 countries.

Find out how International Projects can benefit your country

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If you have any questions please get in touch.



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