

Concept Note for the Event:

"Nurturing Water Innovators: Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Heart of the Nile"

Background

In recent years, the European Union (EU) has significantly amplified its support for Egypt's efforts to tackle water challenges, acknowledging the critical importance of sustainable water management in the context of climate change, population growth, and economic development. The partnership between the EU and Egypt, particularly through initiatives such as the Team Europe Initiative on Water and Food Security, underscores a shared commitment to enhancing water resilience. A recent milestone in this ongoing collaboration was the signing of a Joint Declaration to establish a sustainable water partnership, emphasizing high-level meetings, joint working groups, and the potential for a water forum for businesses ([Environment](#)) ([European External Action Service](#)).

Simultaneously, Egypt faces acute water scarcity, exacerbated by its rapid population growth and reliance on the Nile for almost all its water needs. The EU's contribution of over €550 million in grants since 2007, alongside leveraging nearly €3 billion in concessional funds, has been instrumental in addressing these challenges, underpinning a range of initiatives aimed at sustainable water resource management and improving quality of life for millions in rural and urban areas .

The proposed event, is strategically designed to complement and extend the objectives of the EU-Egypt Water Partnership, established during COP28. This partnership marks a significant step forward in EU-Egypt environmental cooperation, setting a precedent for future collaboration on water resilience and sustainable management. It includes the establishment of high-level annual meetings, a joint working group, and potentially, a water forum for businesses, aiming to enhance Egypt's water security by sustainably managing its limited resources and fostering regular dialogue and policy exchanges.

The event seeks to actively contribute to the Partnership's goals by engaging the vibrant energy and innovative potential of Egypt's youth and young entrepreneurs. By doing so, it will directly support the Partnership's aim of bolstering water security and facilitating technological and scientific exchange between Egypt and the EU. Furthermore, the event aligns with the broader EU efforts to support Egypt in overcoming water challenges through substantial financial contributions and technical assistance, ensuring that the achievements of the Partnership are built upon solid ground and can be sustained through the innovative contributions of the next generation.

Event Overview

Aligned with the EU's Green Week 2024 and its focus on environmental sustainability and climate resilience, "Nurturing Water Innovators: Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Heart of the Nile" is a proposed event to be held in Cairo in mid-June 2024. This event aims to engage the dynamic and innovative potential of youth and young entrepreneurs in Egypt, directing their energies towards addressing the critical water challenges that Egypt faces.

Objectives

- **Showcase Innovative Solutions:** Highlight innovative water management and conservation solutions developed by young entrepreneurs and innovators.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide workshops and seminars on sustainable water management practices, the importance of resilience in the face of climate change, and how to start and scale environmental startups.
- **Foster Partnerships:** Create a platform for dialogue between young innovators, policy-makers, established businesses, and international partners like the EU to foster partnerships and support for impactful water projects.
- **Align with EU-Egypt Water Partnership:** Reflect and build upon the strategic initiatives and partnerships between the EU and Egypt, particularly focusing on sustainable management and technological advancements in water resources.

Key Activities

- **Innovative Showcase Exhibition:** A platform for young entrepreneurs to display their solutions for water conservation, recycling, and management.
- **1 day panel workshop:** Sessions led by experts in water management, sustainability, and business development, focusing on key themes like innovation in water technology, successful case studies from the EU-Egypt partnership, and strategies for scaling environmental solutions.
- **A Water Got Talent Competition:** A contest where the best water-related startup ideas receive mentorship and potential funding from participating organizations and investors.
- **EU Aqua Dialogue Networking Event:** Opportunities for attendees to connect with experts, potential investors, and partners from both the local and international community, encouraging cross-pollination of ideas and the formation of new collaborations.

Expected Outcomes

- Empowerment of youth and young entrepreneurs with the knowledge, networks, and support necessary to contribute effectively to water sustainability efforts.
- Increased awareness among stakeholders of innovative water management solutions and the potential for youth-led enterprises in this sector.
- Strengthened partnerships between the EU, Egypt, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem around sustainable water resource management.