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EU-ZIRA3A

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EU-ZIRA3A Programme in Action - 2026 Mid Year reflection



Cultivating Sustainable Agriculture, Strengthening Rural Communities

During the first half of 2026, the EU-ZIRA3A Programme continued to support sustainable rural development across **Beni Suef, Assiut and Sohag** by strengthening agricultural institutions, improving farmers' access to knowledge and veterinary services, and investing in resilient agricultural infrastructure. Through close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and local partners, the programme is helping rural communities become more productive, competitive and climate resilient.

Discover how EU-ZIRA3A is helping transform agriculture and rural livelihoods across Beni Suef, Assiut and Sohag



Watch the Story of EU-ZIRA3A



Learning by Doing: Farmer Field Schools Transform Agricultural Practices

This summer, EU-ZIRA3A established 52 Farmer Field Schools and 52 demonstration fields, bringing together 997 smallholder farmers, including 119 women, across Upper Egypt. The schools focus on strategic crops such as maize, sorghum, basil, pomegranate and citrus, enabling farmers



to observe crop development throughout the season and apply Good Agricultural Practices under real field conditions. By transforming fields into open-air classrooms, the programme is promoting climate-smart agriculture while improving productivity and strengthening farmers' resilience.

[Read more: Farmer Field Schools: Practical learning for sustainable agriculture](#)



How did a **Farmer Field School** transform farming practices for a farmer in Sohag?

Read more: Mohamed Abdel Mughith, a farmer from Sohag, shares his experience participating in the FFS.



Veterinary Services that Protect Livestock

Livestock is one of the most valuable assets for rural families. During the reporting period, EU-ZIRA3A implemented 38 veterinary convoys, reaching 5,749 livestock breeders and treating more than 20,000 animals. The programme also delivered 43 awareness sessions benefiting 2,030 farmers, while 128 veterinarians strengthened their skills through seven specialised training programmes. Recent stories from Beni Suef and Sohag highlight how these services are improving animal health, reducing farmers' costs and protecting household incomes.



MeetTheFarmers - Voices from the Field



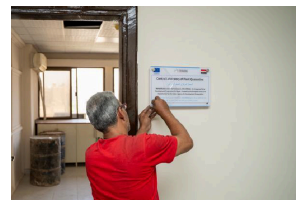
Read more: Meet the Farmers: Veterinary convoys supporting healthier livestock



Strengthening Agriculture & Institutional Capacity

DELIVERING IT EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE, ESTABLISHING A NEW LABORATORY

As part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen Egypt's plant quarantine system, the project rehabilitated the Central Laboratory of Plant Quarantine and provided the Central Administration of Egyptian Plant Quarantine with IT equipment, office furniture, and laboratory furnishings. To further enhance service delivery at the local level, part of the procured equipment and furniture was allocated across



the project's target governorates of Beni Suef, Assiut, and Sohag. These investments contribute to improving inspection and testing processes, strengthening institutional capacity, and advancing the digital transformation of CAPQ. Ultimately, they support the quality, competitiveness, and compliance of Egyptian agricultural exports with international market requirements.



"This intervention will enhance the efficiency of daily operations, facilitate inspection procedures and technical services, improve communication with exporters, and strengthen the competitiveness of Egyptian agricultural exports"

Prof. Ahmed Rizk
Head of the Agricultural Services Sector

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF PLANT QUARANTINE INSPECTORS

Strengthening technical capacities within the plant quarantine system is a key component of EU-ZIRA3A Programme's efforts to improve plant quarantine performance and support agricultural export competitiveness. Since the beginning of the Programme, capacity-building activities have benefited 354 staff members from the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, including 215 staff members from the Central Administration of Plant Quarantine, through specialized training programmes supporting improved export compliance. As part of these efforts, the Programme recently delivered specialized training sessions on Inspection and Sampling Techniques for Crops to enhance inspectors' practical capabilities and strengthen the implementation of procedures in line with international requirements.

INSPECTION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES FOR STRAWBERRY CROPS

To strengthen export inspection practices, the EU-ZIRA3A Programme delivered specialized training for CAPQ inspectors. The training enhanced practical inspection and sampling skills, strengthened compliance with European Union import requirements, and contributed to improving the effectiveness of plant quarantine inspections



Voices from the Field

"The training strengthened our inspection skills, which will positively improve our performance and help maintain the quality and reputation of Egyptian agricultural exports"

Mohamed Bekhit

Plant Quarantine Inspector, Central Administration of Plant Quarantine

VISUAL INSPECTION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES FOR CITRUS CROPS



To strengthen citrus export inspection practices, the EU-ZIRA3A Programme delivered specialized training for CAPQ inspectors. The training strengthened practical inspection skills, supported compliance with European Union phytosanitary requirements, and contributed to reducing EU identity and physical checks on Egyptian citrus exports from 20% to 10%

Voices from the Field

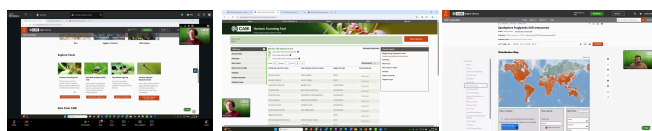
"The training played an important role in enhancing the efficiency of plant quarantine work and supporting the quality and competitiveness of Egyptian agricultural exports."

Doaa Eid

Plant Quarantine Inspector, Central Administration of Plant Quarantine

STRENGTHENING PLANT BIOSECURITY THROUGH CABI DIGITAL TOOLS

To strengthen the technical capacities of CAPQ, EU-ZIRA3A Programme provided a three-year subscription to CABI's scientific tools, including the CABI Compendium, Horizon Scanning Tool, and Pest Risk Analysis Tool. These resources provide access to reliable scientific information, supporting improved pest identification, risk assessment, and evidence-based technical decision-making. To maximize the benefits of these resources, the Programme also delivered a dedicated virtual training session for 18 CAPQ staff members, enabling participants to effectively navigate and apply the digital tools in their technical work.



BENI SUEF REGIONAL LABORATORY FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUE AND HEAVY METALS ANALYSIS

For farmers and exporters in Upper Egypt, accessing laboratory testing has often meant transporting samples to Cairo. The establishment of the Beni Suf Regional Laboratory for Pesticide Residue and Heavy Metals Analysis marks an important step towards bringing these essential services closer to agricultural production areas. Rehabilitation works are progressing steadily, preparing the laboratory to deliver accredited pesticide residue and heavy metals testing services.



Once operational, the laboratory will provide faster and more accessible testing, helping reduce turnaround times while strengthening food safety and quality assurance. By expanding accredited laboratory services in Upper Egypt, the new regional laboratory will support compliance with national and international standards, enhance the competitiveness of Egypt's agricultural

Stay Connected

Follow EU-ZIRA3A for more stories from the field, programme updates and inspiring testimonials from the farmers, extension officers and veterinarians driving sustainable change across Upper Egypt.



"This publication was funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of EU-ZIRA3A programme and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union"