



## German-Egyptian Cooperation for High-Quality Organic Cotton Egypt | 14-17 February 2020

The EMA and the Association of the German Down and Feathers Industry VDFI are working together to develop a long-term project for the sustainable production of long-staple organic cotton to provide enough fabrics for the German market based on the customers' current and future requirements. For this purpose, the EMA along with the VDFI led a business delegation to Egypt from February 14-17, 2020 to work on the implementation of a four-year project for importing fabrics made of extra long-staple organic cotton from Egypt to produce high-quality cotton textiles used in the manufacturing of home textiles.

The visit aimed to develop the sustainable ecological production of extra long-staple organic cotton at all stages: farming, spinning, and weaving. This enables German economic actors to explore sustainable resources and new purchasing channels with the aim of opening markets and sourcing the Egyptian products. Egyptian cotton is associated with luxury and high-quality products and is traded all over the world as the best type of cotton noting that Egypt's climate provides excellent conditions for the environmentally sustainable cultivation of extra long-staple cotton, which is used especially in home textiles.

The production requirements of organic cotton are precisely a set of changes that must be made in the field and agricultural practices for the crop to be organic. To start with these changes, the organic fields must undergo a three-year cleansing period without using any prohibited substances before starting to plant the first organic crop. Fields must be equipped with physical barriers to prevent contact of organic crops with any chemicals from the surface water running from neighboring crops. Producers should improve soil fertility with agricultural practices while maintaining or improving physical, chemical, and biological soil conditions and reducing soil erosion. Organic farmers should also carry out support for biodiversity. These processes include integrated pest management, which deals with ecosystems so that they benefit both the crops and the organisms that live around them. In addition to these processes, producers may also develop crop nutrients and soil conditioners listed on the national Egyptian list of synthetic materials permitted in crop production.

Its first product in Africa was made by SEKEM, an organization that the business delegation visited on February 15. SEKEM convinced the Egyptian government to allocate 400,000 hectares to grow organic cotton, which led to a 90% reduction in pesticide consumption and 30% higher production.





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The Egyptian Ministerial Committee for Cotton held several meetings to follow up on the completion of the implementation of the new Egyptian cotton system. The Committee decided to increase efforts of improving the quality of Egyptian cotton and restore its distinguished position and reputation globally, to implement the strategy for the advancement of Egyptian cotton, which includes improving agricultural methods and the harvesting and cotton circulation system to motivate farmers, as well as to develop gins using modern technology.

On February 16, the business delegation was received by Prof. Mohamed Abdul Maged Abdul Aziz, the council chairman and minister advisor, who is a member of the Egyptian Ministerial Committee for Cotton. He welcomed the business delegation in the Agricultural Research Center and expressed the importance of the visit and how relevant its topic "Extra Long-Staple Organic Cotton" is with a view to the government's strategy and commitment of developing the industry of long and extra long-staple organic cotton.



The Cotton Research Institute of the Agricultural Research Center organized in collaboration with the EMA a joint workshop with the business delegation to discuss ways and possibilities for cooperation in the production, manufacturing, and marketing of extra long-staple organic cotton. Dr. Hisham Mosaad, Director of the Cotton Research Institute, explained through his presentation the cotton system in Egypt and the role of his Institute in the production and development of cotton cultivation as well as its role in organic cotton production, which led to establish a round table to discuss and exchange views on ways and possibilities for cooperation between the present parties.

An organic farming system is one that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems, and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity, and cycles adapted to local conditions rather than the use of artificial elements such as pesticides and other chemicals that cause adverse effects. Organic farming combines tradition, innovation, and science and promotes fair relationships with traders and a good quality of life for everyone involved.





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In order, to convince more farmers to plant long-staple organic cotton, the business delegation traveled to Alexandria on February 16, for a B2B dinner to meet with Dr. Amgad El Attal, the chairman of Egycot, which is a member of the International Cotton Association (only four Egyptian cotton trading companies are registered in the ICA) and the first Egyptian company to be granted the Chinese AQSIQ certificate (General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine), Mr. Tarek Khowessah, the General Manager of Liberty International Textile, and Dr. Mohamed Negm Mohamed, who is the Vice Chairman of the International Cotton Research Association. These gentlemen as key players in the organic cotton procurement business expressed their will in putting more efforts to work on changing the farmers' mindset so that it will be more oriented towards planting long-staple organic cotton.

Organic cotton can play an important role in helping countries such as Egypt to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by building resilient communities through holistic farming systems. Among the firms taking part in developing the Egyptian extra long-staple organic cotton, the business delegation went to Borg El Arab Free Zone on February 17. At Elvy Weaving, which is devoted to organic agriculture, cotton is cultivated according to organic guidelines and harvested by hand, in various phases, to guarantee the selection of the most mature cotton bolls.

The business delegation was the successful first step for the participating German companies as well as for the Egyptian actors of the private and public sectors. Further activities and partnerships are envisioned to follow suit

