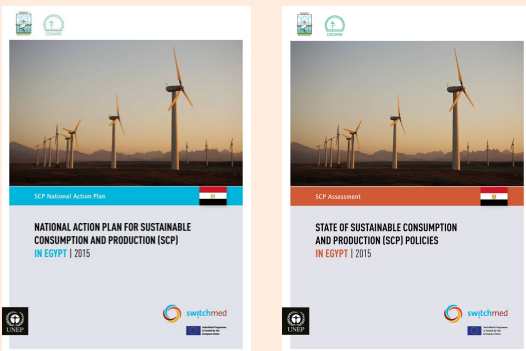


Reducing Plastic Bag Consumption in Egypt

In Egypt, the consumption of plastic bags is unrestrained at an average of 124 bags per person during 2015, equivalent to 12 billion annually. The top 5 consumers in Egypt are groceries (25 per cent), fruit and vegetables kiosks (20 per cent), stores and shops (17 per cent), supermarkets (14 per cent), and fast food and restaurant chains (6 per cent). Typically, plastic bags are given away free by supermarkets and other shops, which leads to excess use. These plastic bags are littering streets and waterways, including the Nile, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. Identifying potential bidders and/or solutions, understanding the benefits, the “lowest-price-only” syndrome, and missing market intelligence are some of the issues that have to be addressed to switch to a more sustainable consumption of shopping bags.



A Sustainable Consumption and Production National Action Plan (SDG12.1) was developed in Egypt through nationally owned multi-stakeholder processes focusing on Integrated community development, sustainable energy applications and solid waste management. The implementation of the plan is ongoing through selected projects and initiatives.

Assessment study conducted revealed that Egypt produces annually 16.2 million tons of waste, 6 per cent of this waste (+- 970 thousand tons) is plastic. Only 45 per cent are recycled and 5 per cent is reused. Half of waste is not collected and this uncollected waste is often burned in ways that pollute the surrounding environment or is simply spread out everywhere in nature. The study also illustrates the alternatives to using single-use plastic bags and makes recommendations on policy and laws to minimize plastic-bag use.

Consultations were organized with producers, consumers, government officials, retailers and non-government organizations to raise the awareness of all stakeholders to the hazard of single-use plastic bags and to present alternatives. The main outcomes of these consultations were an agreement on reducing the use of plastic bags and identifying alternatives, and an engagement by different groups to play an active role in this switch. Another outcome was the need to lobby the Government to introduce strict specifications for bio-degradable bags.

Multi-use bags were considered as an alternative to single-use plastic bags. A needs analysis was developed and a plan to distribute the alternative bags was developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment.


A memorandum of understanding was signed with seven hypermarkets (Metro, Carrefour, HyperOne, Ragab Sons, Kheir Zaman, Fathalla Market & Al Raya Market) to cooperate and organize work on awareness campaign and distribution of alternative bags.



SwitchMed Programme is funded by the European Union

 **12**
billion
purchase
a year

 **970,000**
tons plastic
waste a year

 **45%**
Recycled

 **5%**
Reused

 **4500**
Alternatives
distributed

National initiative on reduction of plastic bags consumption in Egypt was launched by the Minister of Environment on World Environment Day on 5 June 2017. Over 4500 alternatives to single-use plastic bags were distributed in seven supermarket chains in Cairo and Alexandria as well as through large events including the World Environment Day 2018, EU climate diplomatic week 2018, in the fourteen meeting conference of parties to the convention on biological diversity held in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2018, etc.

The campaign has received a lot of interest and has already been showcased in several international conferences (5th SCP roundtable for the Arab world, December 2017 and League of Arab States/ESCWA HLPF preparation forum, April 2018) and widely covered by national media. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and under the umbrella of the National Initiative several media campaigns were carried out has largely arouse the public awareness. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) video for banning plastic bags was dubbed into Arabic and broadcasted on the World Environment Day celebration in Egypt in 2018 and in Egyptian movie theaters.

Media campaigns: Video/Radio clips were produced in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and were broadcast throughout the country.



Video:
National Initiative



Video:
Breaking up with Plastic



Al Rayah
الارايه



حجاز
خير زمان - بجهته زمان

كارفور
Carrefour

METRO
everyday value with a smile



For more information please contact: Ministry of Environment of Egypt,: Maysounali2@gmail.com
CEDARE: hallam@cedare.int; UNEP: luc.reuter@un.org

UN Environment Programme

UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.



The EU-funded SwitchMed programme assists eight countries in the southern Mediterranean to switch to sustainable patterns of consumption and production and supports national and regional stakeholders in achieving productive, circular, and sharing economies in the Mediterranean. www.switchmed.eu