Scaling Global South Climate Solutions | Institutionalizing Climate Change in Health - Cairo, Egypt



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Egypt Healthcare Authority (EHA): Egypt's public healthcare provider under the Universal Health Insurance System, leading one of the most significant healthcare transformations in the country's modern history.

Challenge

Climate change poses a major threat to public health and sustainable development in Egypt, with rising temperatures, water scarcity, sea-level rise, coastal flooding, and agricultural disruption expected to intensify heat-related illnesses, infectious diseases, food and water insecurity, and pressures on healthcare systems and the wider economy. These risks are compounded by limited adaptive capacity, institutional and governance challenges, weak cross-sectoral coordination, and insufficient investment in climate-resilient health systems, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive climate adaptation and mitigation measures within the health sector. These interconnected climate, environmental, economic, and health system challenges underscore the urgent need to transform Egypt's healthcare sector into a climate-resilient, low-carbon, and environmentally sustainable system.

Recognizing this imperative, Egypt Healthcare Authority (EHA) has adopted an integrated Sustainability and Green Transformation Strategy that embeds climate adaptation, climate mitigation, digital transformation, environmental governance, sustainable infrastructure, green financing, research and innovation, and community engagement into healthcare planning and service delivery. Through this strategy, EHA seeks not only to reduce the environmental footprint of healthcare operations but also to strengthen the resilience, efficiency, and long-term sustainability of healthcare services. The strategy aligns with Egypt's Vision 2030, the National Climate Change Strategy 2050, the National Adaptation Plan process, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, and the World Health Organization's Operational Framework for Climate-Resilient and Low-Carbon Health Systems, positioning EHA as a national and regional leader in sustainable healthcare transformation.

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Solution

Recognizing that sustainable healthcare requires systemic institutional change rather than isolated projects, EHA established the Sustainability and Green Transformation (SGT) Unit to lead the integration of climate action across all areas of healthcare planning and service delivery. Building on the success of EHA's pioneering Green Hospitals' initiative, the SGT Unit has evolved from a project-based programme into an organization-wide transformation mechanism that embeds sustainability into every aspect of healthcare operations. The Unit serves as the focal point for coordinating climate action, promoting innovation, strengthening institutional resilience, and driving continuous environmental performance improvement across all EHA healthcare facilities. The Sustainability and Green Transformation (SGT) Unit is the Egypt Healthcare Authority's institutional platform for integrating environmental sustainability and climate action across the healthcare system. Established to mainstream sustainability into healthcare governance, planning, infrastructure, and service delivery, the Unit leads EHA's transition toward a climate-resilient, low-carbon, and environmentally sustainable healthcare system in alignment with Egypt's national climate commitments and international sustainability frameworks.



The Unit adopts a comprehensive approach based on two complementary strategic pillars:

- Climate Adaptation, which focuses on strengthening the resilience of healthcare facilities and services through Climate Vulnerability and Adaptation (V&A) Assessments, climate-informed planning, resilient infrastructure, emergency preparedness, disaster risk management, and implementation of Egypt's Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP).
- Climate Mitigation, which aims to reduce the environmental footprint of healthcare operations by measuring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy and water efficiency, expanding renewable energy, strengthening sustainable healthcare waste management, promoting mercury-free healthcare, adopting low-carbon technologies, advancing sustainable procurement, and supporting circular economy practices.

By institutionalizing sustainability across governance, operations, and healthcare delivery, the Egypt Healthcare Authority (EHA) is establishing a scalable model for green, climate-resilient healthcare systems that supports healthcare transformation across Egypt and the wider region. Through this integrated approach, the Sustainability and Green Transformation (SGT) Unit advances Egypt's commitments under the Paris Agreement, contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and strengthens EHA's position as a national and regional leader in environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient healthcare.

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Impact

Direct Benefits:

- Significant progress has been achieved in energy conservation across multiple hospitals, with overall reductions reaching up to 9% and cumulative savings amounting to 18.9 million Egyptian Pounds. Notably, 13 hospitals successfully reduced their annual average energy consumption. In parallel, substantial water savings have also been realized, with reductions of up to 64% in select facilities.
- Establishing a safe, integrated waste management system by gradually transitioning from incineration to shredding and autoclaving. To date, 15 shredder and autoclave units are in operation across their facilities.
- Adopting WHO-Healthcare Without Harm initiative to promote mercury-free healthcare. This involved replacing mercury devices with digital alternatives, leading to the recognition of two hospitals as Mercury-free hospitals.
- Fostering a healthier work environment by promoting alternatives such as cycling, encouraging stair usage and promoting healthy eating habits and balanced diets. Consequently, 86% of Surveyed patients and visitors, showed high awareness of the hospital's sustainability measures.
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- Enhancing green infrastructure with drought-resistant plants and modern irrigation systems, with a current project of planting 6000 trees in EHA facilities.
- Utilizing smart technology, such as telemedicine units, and completing a digital transformation in the hospital setting, resulting in 30% reduction in paper usage.

Partners

- International organizations: WHO, World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, AFD
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs): Pathfinder, Egyptian Red Crescent
- Government ministries and authorities: Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy, and other relevant national institutions.



