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## Extended Growing Season Boosts Green Beans Yields

### ACDI/VOCA Helps Farmers Quadruple Revenues While Improving Export Competitiveness



During the winter 2015-2016 season, the Advanced Marketing and Agribusiness Logistics (AMAL) Global Development Alliance (GDA) successfully established linkages between two community development associations in Aswan – one in Al Hekma and the other in Al Amal – and two green beans' exporters: Green Egypt and Nivex. Thirty farmers from Aswan agreed to supply approximately 25 hectares-worth of produce to the buyers.

Compared to other Upper Egypt locations, Aswan's comparative advantage lies in its unique weather conditions, which allow the AMAL project to help farmers extend the cultivation season of green beans. The extended season makes green beans available to international markets in the off-season and provides valuable gains along the value chain, including to farmers, villagers, and exporters. The AMAL project will use the model launched in Aswan to engage project beneficiaries in subsequent seasons.

Farmers' gains are evident in the anticipated profits. Since costs are estimated at \$1,190/hectare (excluding rental and irrigation costs), yield at 10.7 tons/hectare, and sales at approximately \$5,300/hectare, the project anticipates that farmers will at least quadruple the money they invested in the crop in only 75 days.

Farmers were initially reluctant to change their cultivation patterns and replace customary practices. Through the, infield visits, capacity building programs and technical and marketing assistance offered by AMAL GDA, farmers' perceptions changed. As they approach the end of the season, farmers are now eager to start harvesting their crops and collect revenues. In addition to the financial return, growing legumes in Aswan increases soil fertility.

The benefit of the extended growing season for buyers is undeniable; open-air cultivation of green beans was not previously available at this time of the year in Upper Egypt. Previously, buyers resorted to greenhouses to

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### Winter 2015-2016 Achievements

*Thirty farmers from Aswan contracted 25 hectares of green beans to extend the season, which resulted in the following:*

- Quadrupling farmers' investment
- High competitiveness for the Egyptian exporters in the international markets
- Increased profits for the exporters
- Decreasing the operational cost of the Luxor packhouse
- Creating additional employment opportunities in the packhouse



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cultivate green beans in northern Egypt. Cultivating green beans in greenhouses costs at least four times that of open-air cultivation; the additional costs come from the use of plastic and the huge amounts of chemicals and pesticides required. The reduced costs of purchasing the green beans from Upper Egypt will significantly increase both Egyptian exporters' competitiveness in the international markets as well as their returns.

Extending the cultivation and harvesting seasons also positively impacts the operations of the Luxor packhouse. On the one hand, operating the facility decreases its annual operational costs; while on the other hand, extending the operational season creates additional seasonal employment opportunities for Luxor villagers who perform the needed post-harvest operations including sorting, grading, and packing the produce at the packhouse.

### Learn More

In partnership with the Horticultural Export Improvement Association (HEIA), the USAID AMAL project develops inclusive horticulture value chains in Upper Egypt that integrate smallholder farmers into the high-value export market.