SUSTAINABLE SERVICES ACTIVITY (SSA)

PROGRESS REPORT

January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021

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SUSTAINABLE SERVICES ACTIVITY (SSA)

PROGRESS REPORT (January – March 2021)

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AASTMT</td>
<td>Arab Academy for Science Technology and Maritime Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABA</td>
<td>Alexandria Business Association</td>
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<td>ABE</td>
<td>Agricultural Bank of Egypt</td>
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<td>ABWA</td>
<td>Alexandria Businesswomen Association</td>
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<td>AmCham</td>
<td>American Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>ASRT</td>
<td>Academy of Scientific Research &amp; Technology</td>
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<td>AAST</td>
<td>Arab Academy for Science Technology &amp; Maritime Transport</td>
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<td>AUC</td>
<td>American University of Cairo</td>
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<td>AYB</td>
<td>Alashanek ya Baladi</td>
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<td>ABWA</td>
<td>Asyut Business Women Association</td>
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<td>BACO</td>
<td>Business Advisory Councils</td>
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<td>BD</td>
<td>Business Development</td>
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<td>BDS</td>
<td>Business Development Services</td>
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<td>BTL</td>
<td>Below the Line (Direct Marketing Tools)</td>
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<td>BUE</td>
<td>British University of Egypt</td>
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<td>BWE</td>
<td>Business Women of Egypt</td>
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<td>B2B</td>
<td>Business to Business</td>
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<td>CB</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
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<td>CBE</td>
<td>Central Bank of Egypt</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-based Organization</td>
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<td>CCI</td>
<td>Chamber of Chemical Industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEOSS</td>
<td>Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services</td>
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<td>CFI</td>
<td>Chamber of Food Industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHF</td>
<td>CHF Management and Consulting Services Egypt S.A.E</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIB</td>
<td>Commercial International Bank of Egypt</td>
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<td>CGC</td>
<td>Credit Guarantee Company</td>
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<td>CNC</td>
<td>Computer Numerical Control</td>
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<td>COC</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Chief of Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>Contracting Officer’s Representative</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>CRM</td>
<td>Customer Relationship Management</td>
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<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCOP</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Party</td>
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<td>DIY</td>
<td>Do It Yourself</td>
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<td>EBI</td>
<td>Egyptian Banking Institute</td>
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<td>EBRD</td>
<td>Egyptian Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<td>EBWA</td>
<td>Egypt Business Women Association</td>
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<td>ECAHT</td>
<td>Egyptian Chamber of Apparel and Home Textile</td>
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<td>ECASE</td>
<td>Education Consortium for the Advancement of STEM in Egypt</td>
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<td>ECP</td>
<td>Egypt Competitiveness Project</td>
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<td>ECTI</td>
<td>Egyptian Chamber of Textile Industries</td>
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<td>EEIP</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship, Enterprise, and Innovation Partnership Fund</td>
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<td>EFDA</td>
<td>Egyptian Franchise Development Agency</td>
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<td>EJBA</td>
<td>Egypt Junior Business Association</td>
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<td>ENCC</td>
<td>Egyptian National Competitiveness Council</td>
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<td>EPEMA</td>
<td>Egyptian Plastics Exporters and Manufacturers Association</td>
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<td>ERRADA</td>
<td>Egyptian Regulatory Reform and Development Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>FabLab</td>
<td>Fabrication Laboratory</td>
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<td>FDC</td>
<td>Fashion and Design Center</td>
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<td>FEDCOC</td>
<td>Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce</td>
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<td>FEI</td>
<td>Federation of Egyptian Industries</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>FIB</td>
<td>Faisal Islamic Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>Financial Regulation Authority (formerly EFSA)</td>
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<td>FSI</td>
<td>Financial Service Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAFL</td>
<td>General Authority for Investment and Free Zones</td>
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<td>GAP</td>
<td>Gender Action Plan</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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WISE  Workforce Improvement and Skills Enhancement Project
USAID SEED  USAID Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development Project
YEN  Youth Entrepreneurship Network
I. Executive Summary

During the first quarter, SSA carried out an assessment of the status and needs of SEED’s partners and beneficiaries, in addition to Egyptian MSMEs. The final assessment report was submitted to USAID on January 6. The assessment process also reconnected the SSA team with USAID SEED’s partners and beneficiaries. Armed with the assessment findings, the SSA team held a series of virtual and in-person meetings/workshops with the project’s intended support recipients to develop concrete Technical Assistance (TA) plans and, in some instances, started implementing them. SSA intends to achieve full-scale implementation in the upcoming (third) quarter.

**BDS Centers (BDSCs):** In order to guide the design of customized TA plans for the eleven selected BDSs (assigned according to the assessment findings into Tier I and II), a series of participatory technical assistance (TA) planning workshops took place to pinpoint the specific and individual needs of each BDSC. The TA planning workshops culminated in the development of TA plans that will be revisited on a regular basis to: (1) accommodate changing needs, (2) changes in the responsiveness of partners, and (3) to change the priority given to partners based on how well they implement the changes recommended in the provided TA.
SSA started delivering TA to nine BDSCs through a series of TA meetings that responded to the different pressing needs of different centers; in addition to financial performance review meetings with three of them, to ensure that they are moving towards higher cost recovery, which is key for achieving financial sustainability. Financial performance review meetings will be held with other SSA partners, and will be recurring throughout the project’s lifetime.

In terms of rescue interventions, a SOW was issued to hire a business rescue consultant who will work closely with SSA to develop a generic business rescue and continuity plan framework, in addition to a tailored business resilience and continuity plan for each of the six selected BDS partners. SSA also started planning for a Networking and Learning event for the BDSCs that will take place in the upcoming quarter. During the event, the centers will exchange their experience with COVID-19, its impact on their business, and the approaches they adopted to mitigate it; in addition to identifying potential collaboration opportunities between different centers

**Incubators:** While attempting to develop TA plans for incubators, SSA faced a challenge: incubators did not perceive the kind of support SSA is able to offer as valuable enough. Some incubators were expecting to receive financial assistance and/or equipment, while other incubators believed that they were too mature and developed to need further technical assistance. While SSA has been working actively since day one to manage the expectations of its beneficiaries regarding material support, incubators needed to be convinced that they still have gaps in their operations and systems that can compromise their sustainability, and that SSA can support them in closing those gaps. To help incubators identify those gaps, SSA developed an analysis tool that takes a deeper look into the incubators’ structure, operations, and practices. The tool was used in meetings that were held with incubators to assess their current situation, and to get more specific details regarding the needs identified during the initial assessment e.g., the features of the virtual incubation platform. This exercise has led the incubators to realize that there is still room for them to improve from a technical point of view, and increased the incubators’ interest in SSA’s support and the likelihood of them implementing the changes that will be recommended through SSA’s TA.

SSA divided the technical support that will be provided to incubators into phases that will fulfill the project’s objectives while taking into consideration the priorities of the incubators. Phase one, which is currently in progress, includes:

1. **Developing a virtual incubation platform:** This is a COVID-19 rescue intervention, which will enable the incubators to provide their services virtually, minimizing the need for in-person interaction. The in-depth analysis identified the core features to be included in the platform and procurement of a firm to develop the required software development houses is currently being finalized.

2. **Hiring a consultant to help incubators develop an equity financing model:** The consultant will develop a business model that improves the likelihood of sustainability of incubators as it allows them to own shares in the startups they incubate, and potentially make a profit selling those shares when the startups receive funding in later rounds. The scope of work (SOW) for this consultant has been developed, and will be issued in the upcoming quarter.
3. Hiring a consultant to work closely with different incubators on their services/offerings and pricing strategy: A SOW has been developed for this assignment, and will be issued in the upcoming quarter.

**Mentorship:** SSA finished reviewing the training material for the women mentors training program delivered by USAID SEED to ensure that the training material of the new upcoming women mentors training program would better serve the needs of the mentors. The first cohort of prospective women mentors will comprise 25 women, who are expected to receive the mentorship training in Q3 (May 2021). To select the trainees, a call for mentors was released, and 75 applications were received so far. In collaboration with the WEN Network, SSA developed an approach to identify the profile of the mentors who will be recruited. SSA and WEN also jointly developed the selection criteria and outreach plans for the prospective mentees.

In another training initiative, SSA included eight SEED-trained mentors in Shell’s NXPlorer training program (see details under WEN). The program responded to some of the advanced training needs identified in the assessment that SSA carried out in the previous quarter.

**WEN:** In cooperation with WEN member organizations, SSA drafted an MOU that governs the relationship between WEN members and the relationship between them and FEI. The MOU includes the FEI arrangements to host the WEN network and allocating work space for WEN members in the federation’s premises, as well as the arrangements for opening a separate bank sub-account for WEN under FEI’s account. SSA sent the MOU to WEN’s Executive Director, who reviewed it, and sent it back to SSA. In order to further ensure the sustainability of the MOU, SSA drafted a SOW to recruit a legal expert for the purpose of developing a legal framework for the agreement before the parties carry out a final review of it and sign it. The expert is expected to be recruited in the upcoming quarter.

To promote WEN’s sustainability, SSA held an introductory meeting with Social Enterprise Academy (SEA) and WEN to discuss the social enterprise model and how it can address WEN’s institutional and sustainability needs. SSA is a private company that provides transformational learning and development programs for individuals and organizations working for social change. This meeting was held after SEA had informed SSA that there is a possibility that they will receive funding to provide training to Egyptian individuals and organizations interested in social entrepreneurship.

SSA also linked WEN with Shell, which in turn provided WEN with the Shell NXplorer training program, which aims to strengthen design thinking skills for change agents. 25 women leaders, including ones from WEN’s steering committee member organizations and SEED-trained mentors, attended the training. The program focused on a unique combination of three methodologies: Systems Thinking, Scenario Planning, and Theory of Change. In the final session of the program, each team presented an intervention that could be executed by WEN to support women entrepreneurs impacted by the pandemic.

In terms of rescue interventions, SSA and WEN’s steering committee members drafted a concept paper for a proposed development program for the Akhmeem Community Center (an affiliate of a WEN member organization), which has been helping women artisans from a marginalized community in Sohag generate income for decades. The center’s efforts were severely compromised by COVID-19, making it imperative for the center to change its operational model in order to establish a sustainable source of income that would enable it to provide reliable support to its beneficiaries. The rescue/development
proposal covers three main pillars: (1) a social enterprise model, (2) an e-commerce handicrafts platform, and (3) product design and development support. The development proposal will be presented to the relevant partners in a workshop on April 1, 2021, and the partners’ roles in implementing the proposal will be discussed in that workshop.

**YEN:** SSA held discussions with select organizations from the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem to build consensus on the establishment of the network. This has led to the creation of a founding group that will hold meetings to agree on an institutionalization mechanism to be adopted, identify the roles and responsibilities of the member organizations, and develop a work plan for the first year. SSA will facilitate the first meeting, which is intended to take place next April.

In terms of rescue interventions, SSA collaborated with EYouth, an entrepreneurship education provider that had received support from SEED, to develop a capacity building program for sixteen co-working spaces covering Cairo, Alexandria, Delta, and Upper Egypt regions. Co-working spaces are hubs of entrepreneurial activity in Egypt that were shut down by the GoE for six months in 2020 as a preventive measure intended to curb the spread of the pandemic. The program aimed to help the co-working spaces mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

**Tiye:** SSA facilitated the creation of a founding group for the network. The group started holding regular meetings this quarter. In these meetings, the group started identifying the ideal outreach mechanisms for recruiting new angel investors, and created an action plan for the upcoming six months. The group—with SSA’s support—will identify an institutionalization framework for the network, whereby Tiye will be under the umbrella of WEN, while maintaining its autonomy.

**Access to finance:** To improve access to finance for MSMEs in the dairy value chain, SSA developed a SOW for a cheese manufacturing feasibility study. Cheese manufacturing will help MSMEs in the dairy sector to reduce their losses from milk that goes to waste due to the decrease in prices of milk and the inability to sell all of their produce (one of the consequences of COVID-19). SSA is currently identifying the needs of Milk Collection Centers’ (MCCs) owners to include these needs in the feasibility study SOW currently being developed.

As for the fishery value chain, SSA developed and delivered two presentations to the National Bank of Egypt (NBE), to educate the bank on the fish farming business. The presentations included discussing a tool that enables the bank to evaluate the feasibility of fish farming businesses. This tool is intended to help NBE improve its understanding of the fish farming value chain, and help minimize the risk of extending credit facilities to MSMEs operating in that sector. The developed tool will therefore help NBE overcome its reluctance to provide credit to fish farming businesses.

**Enabling Environment:**

- **Activation of the new MSMEs law:** MSMEDA requested the urgent support of SSA in activating selected articles of the executive regulations of the new MSMEs law. In discussions between MSMEDA and SSA to determine the list of joint activities, the two parties agreed on the following final list of tasks:
  - Developing forms needed by MSMEDA for the activation of the executive regulations of the new MSMEs law (Phase 1 of the assignment);
  - Developing the operation manuals for project start-up licensing, and for project reconciliation services;
- Preparing the operation manual for the accreditation offices system;
- Preparing presentations and other outreach material pertaining to selected messages regarding the new MSMEs law and its executive regulations;
- Supporting the organization of a conference for international and local entities to discuss the aforementioned law and its executive regulations.

During the reporting period, SSA’s team worked on designing four forms that were identified as a top priority by MSMEDA, as these forms and their administrative procedures are critical in activating the new MSMEs law, and its executive regulations. The documents in question are:

- the enterprise classification certificate, which allows MSMEs to benefit from the new incentives stipulated in the new MSMEs law,
- the certificate of registration in MSMEDA’s database,
- the certificate for dealing with different governmental agencies as an MSME,
- the request forms for the three aforementioned certificates and the procedures for their issuance.

The drafted certificates were sent to MSMEDA’s Head of Non-financial services for review and discussion. In parallel, five SOWs were developed to recruit consultants to help MSMEDA with the activation of the new MSMEs law and its executive regulations. SSA expects to finalize the recruitment process for the consultants during the next quarter.

- Activation of Law 23/2018: In collaboration with ASRT, SSA held a PPD session to generate a list of incentives for the private sector to collaborate with universities and research institutions under Law #23/2018. A list of recommendations was shared with the stakeholders after the meeting. Two SOWs were developed to hire a financial and tax consultant, and a legal consultant, to help moderate future PPDs that will aim to crystallize the recommendations and translate them into suggested amendments to the law.

One Stops Shops (OSSs): SSA finalized the assessment of the OSSs that will be receiving support, in addition to four other OSSs that USAID requested to assess. Based on the findings of the assessment, SSA developed TA plans for the OSSs, and started delivering capacity building sessions in February. So far, training was provided to managers and employees in the Mansoura and Suez OSSs.

SSA also started the process of updating the operational manual of MSMEDA’s service provision unit based on the Tamayouz OSS/ “front-office/back-office” model. To date, the first draft of the manual’s structure, and the procedures for service provision according to the Tamayouz OSS model, have been developed.

Moreover, SSA’s team met with the GrEEK Campus’s management-upon their request-to discuss the possibility of establishing a Tamayouz center on their premises. The GrEEK Campus is a technology and innovation park in Cairo which offers workspaces for startups as well as established local and multinational companies, and is highly regarded, and highly visible in the Egyptian entrepreneurship ecosystem. SSA provided the Campus’s management team with the required information regarding business registration, and the institutions involved in the process.

New Opportunities: SSA’s team, during a meeting with the Assistant to the Minister of International Cooperation for SME Affairs agreed to collaborate with the Ministry on its efforts aiming at supporting
the handicrafts sector, including the e-commerce platform that it intends to develop for the sector, and coordinating the various efforts of different actors in the sector.

**MEL:** The third version of the project’s MEL plan was submitted in January. USAID had requested modifications to the submitted plan, in particular addressing the financial sustainability issue, which were incorporated by SSA.
In order to finalize the MEL plan and submit it in its modified form, SSA started establishing the baseline Cost Recovery Ratio for supported BDS centers and incubators. SSA expects that the final version of the MEL plan will be submitted early in the upcoming quarter.

**Communication and Outreach:** SSA developed two info-graphics to improve the awareness of entrepreneurs of the support that they can get from BDS centers and Incubators.
A success story was also developed to highlight how AYB, a BDSC supported by SEED and currently supported by SSA, helped an art teacher reach a wider pool of potential customers, as a part of a partnership between AYB and Souq.com (the largest e-commerce provider in the Middle East, an Amazon subsidiary).
SSA also launched a Facebook page for the project in early March, to achieve higher visibility of the project’s efforts and activities.

**Revision of SSA’s organizational structure:** SSA proposed a revised organizational structure to USAID, and received USAID’s approval of it. The revision aims to optimize the performance of the team, and consequently, the project, by achieving a better fit between the skill sets of team members and their assigned roles.
II. Activity Implementation

Result 1: Sustainability of USAID SEED-supported BDS centers and incubators enhanced

Output 1.1: BDS centers supported in improving their sustainability

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:

Based on the findings of the assessment undertaken in the previous quarter, BDS partners have been grouped into three tiers based on criteria that have been identified at the beginning of the assessment, mainly pertaining to the historic and current performance of the BDS partner, its potential for growth, and the likelihood of each partner to benefit from SSA’s proposed activities and ultimately achieve financial sustainability.

SSA focused during this quarter on translating the findings of the aforementioned assessment into actions that can support SSA’s BDS partners in getting closer to financial sustainability. The key priority was to design and start implementing customized technical assistance plans for select BDS partners. To this end, SSA organized and conducted virtual Technical Assistance (TA) planning meetings with all eleven BDSCs in Tier 1 (Zeleusa, Ibn Souq, FEI, and CEOSS) and Tier 2 (Alexandria Businessmen Association (ABA), Asyut Businesswomen Association (ABWA), Alashanek Ya Baladi (AYB), Future Eve, Go Global, Life Vision Menya and South Egypt Development Association in Qena (SEDAQ)), in order to further discuss the outcomes of the assessment and involve the partners in the development of their respective customized TA plans, ensuring that the plans respond to the individual technical needs of each partner.

SSA also carried out a financial performance survey to collect baseline data for the cost recovery ratio of BDS partners, in order to use the ratio as a measure of their financial sustainability. The questionnaire included other questions related to the sources of revenue and/or funding for each BDS partner, the responses to which have complemented the findings of the earlier technical assessment, and have been taken into consideration while identifying financial gaps and potential areas of technical support needed by the BDSCs.

All these efforts culminated in developing TA plans for all Tier 1 and 2 BDS partners (click here to access the relevant tracker online), and initiating the delivery of TA to them.

BDS Needs

In terms of universal needs, all Tier 1 and Tier 2 BDS partners have identified a pressing need for Online Training Skills, and Online and Offline Marketing Solutions. To fulfill those needs, SSA drafted and finalized a Scope of Work...
(SOW) for an online training consultant and a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an online and offline marketing solutions service provider. In terms of the specific needs of individual BDS partners, Ibn Souq has highlighted the need to strengthen the capacity of its marketing and fundraising team, in order for the center to be able to tap into new opportunities for funding, sponsorships, or strategic collaborations, as part of Ibn Souq’s efforts to achieve and maintain financial sustainability. CEOSS BDS highlighted the need to further develop the operational manual that SEED has helped them develop, in order to tailor it to their operating context, as they exclusively work with agribusinesses.

**SSA’s response**

To fulfill the TA needs of BDS centers:

- SSA drafted and finalized a Scope of Work (SOW) for an online training consultant and a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an online and offline marketing solutions service provider, to provide all Tier 1 and 2 BDS centers with TA in the areas of Online Training Skills, and Online and Offline Marketing Solutions. Both SOWs have been disseminated, and SSA has received various proposals that were reviewed by SSA’s selection committees. SSA expects the selected providers to initiate performance of the contracts early in the upcoming quarter.

- SSA held a virtual workshop on “Building Successful Strategic Partnerships” for Ibn Souq on January 28. However, mid-way through the workshop, the internet connection on the BDS center’s side became very weak, making it impossible to continue. To continue the session, SSA held another session on the premises of the BDS center in Menofeya Governorate on March 15. The workshop focused on the different types of partners and how to identify, establish, and maintain strategic partnerships. The workshop also covered fundraising strategies, including how to tell a gripping story that showcases the growth and success of the BDS and its affiliate initiatives “Beit El Kheyata” and the newly launched online platform “Naguiba”. The workshop was attended by four members of Ibn Souq’s fundraising and finance team, in addition to two senior managers. This is part of a series of workshops that will continue to be implemented over the next quarter.

- SSA drafted and issued a SOW for a consultant who can develop, in a participatory manner with CEOSS BDS unit in Menya, a comprehensive operation manual, including:
  - process mapping for daily operations,
- a procedures manual,
- all the corresponding administrative and financial systems, forms, and documents.

The manual is also expected to guide the day-to-day operations of the agricultural BDS and depict the workflow for providing agricultural services, as well as specify the roles of human resources and supporting entities (e.g. agricultural coaching offices in villages) in delivering those services. The manual is intended to provide comprehensive technical and operational support to ensure the optimal operation of this sector-specific BDS, and cover various TA areas as identified by CEOSS and SSA’s BDS advisor.

- As improving cost recovery is a key stepping stone on the path to financial sustainability, SSA conducted Financial Performance Review Meetings with FEI, Go Global, and Zeleusa on March 22, 24 and 28, respectively. The purpose of the meetings was to help the BDS partners manage services in a more efficient manner, and increase their revenues, in order to cover some of their expenses, if not all of them, through setting milestones and quarterly targets. This is the beginning of a series of technical assistance meetings that SSA plans to continue to hold with different partners in the upcoming quarters.

- TA regarding the legal aspects of contracting outsourced service providers for was provided to Zeleusa.

- TA was provided to Go Global, focusing on their current business model, and the possible strategies to handle the human resources turnover problem they are suffering from.

- Meetings with other BDS partners (CEOSS, AYB, SEDAQ, Future Eve and Life Vision) focused on discussing their pressing TA needs, and challenges in the BDS performance, which all revolved around: outreach and marketing, restructuring of human resources, and digitization of the BDS centers’ training and coaching services. While these meetings respond to immediate technical support needs that SSA’s in-house advisors are capable of fulfilling, they also pave the way for TA that will be provided later in SSA’s lifetime. TA meetings also discussed any updates since the previous meeting, the upcoming steps in the TA plans, the date of the next meeting, and the list of actions that both the partner and SSA need to take until the following TA meeting. The meetings were planned and conducted on a monthly basis for Tier 1, and every six to eight weeks for Tier 2. Follow-up calls were made on a regular basis with all Tier 1 and Tier 2 partners, to help them implement what they learned through the TA.

Tier 3 BDS partners were included in general capacity building activities, including the Maharat men Google training sessions, and will continue to be included in any other online trainings of a universal nature. SSA also intends to disseminate the tools that will be developed by STTAs to all tiers. This is to ensure that Tier 3 partners are not left behind, and are ready to receive further focused TA under future USAID projects.

**Collaboration with Google**

Following on the collaboration efforts with Google that started in the previous quarter, SSA conducted three rounds of training on Digital Skills and Social Media Marketing “Maharat Men Google”, which took place on February 16, March 16, and March 23. The training program aimed to build the digital
competencies of the participants, as well as increase the participants’ knowledge of online tools that would facilitate the work of the BDSCs. The three rounds of training programs were attended by a total of 64 BDS staff members, representing 15 BDSCs from the three tiers. The trainings were introductory in nature, which has led the BDS partners to request more detailed sessions on some topics that were introduced during the training, such as: How to build a website, social media marketing, search engine optimization and digital marketing strategy. SSA asked Google to follow up with detailed sessions on the above-mentioned topics. The sessions are planned to take place during the upcoming quarter.

Maharat Men Google Training

National BDS Strategy

SSA has not received a response from CBE’s NilePreneur management regarding their interest in the strategy since the meeting SSA held with them to discuss the issue in the previous quarter. The strategy was initially the idea of the previous management of the NilePreneurs initiative. SSA explored MSMEDA’s interest in taking ownership of the strategy, however, MSMEDA’s only priority at this point is activating the new MSMEs law, as its executive regulations are expected to be approved soon. To ensure that BDS centers do not fall through the cracks due to GoE’s focus on implementing the new law, SSA is considering collaborating with MSMEDA on developing a framework for a single strategy that addresses both BDS centers and incubators, after consulting with USAID. The framework is intended to help guide the process of developing the strategy, even beyond SSA’s LoP, and doubles as a reminder of the existence of BDS centers and their needs.

Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:

• SSA will continue to deliver customized TA as per the plans developed for Tier 1 and Tier 2 BDS partners. The TA plans are living documents that will be updated periodically to reflect any newly-arising technical support requirements, changes in the operating context, or any areas of intervention;
• Following on the three rounds of the general Maharat Men Google training on Digital Skills, SSA plans to offer, in collaboration with Google, a series of specialized in-depth single topic training
sessions. The planned sessions will take place throughout the upcoming quarter, will cover the following topics: how to build a website, social media marketing, search engine optimization and digital marketing strategy;

• By the end of April 2021, SSA will have selected service providers and consultants who will support the BDSCs in the following areas: Online Training Skills for BDS Advisors, Online and Offline Marketing Solutions, Business Rescue, and a specialized expert for developing the operational manual for CEOSS’s agricultural BDS unit in Menya. Field work with the consultants is expected to start in May 2021. SSA will be working hand-in-hand with each of the consultants to ensure the quality of deliverables;

• A learning and networking event “BDS Post COVID-19: A Roadmap to Business Rescue” is planned for early April for Tier 1 and 2 BDS partners. This event intends to respond to the need for networking and sharing knowledge and experience, especially those related to post-pandemic business challenges and coping strategies; in addition to identifying and creating opportunities for growth and cooperation.
Output 1.2: Incubators supported in improving their sustainability

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:

SSA’s newly-hired Senior Advisor for Incubators and Accelerators joined the team, and underwent an onboarding process, through which he had one-on-one meetings with SSA’s units, in order to get him acquainted with the functions of the different teams, USAID SEED’s results, and to orient him on SSA’s priorities and objectives. The process also included introducing him to SSA’s partner incubators.

After carrying out a desk review of incubators’ best practices regarding financial sustainability, and combining the findings of this review with the findings of the assessment that was undertaken in the previous quarter, the team was able to develop a very detailed incubator assessment matrix, one that goes deeper into the different steps/levels of building and managing an incubator. The objective of developing that matrix was to help the incubators take an in-depth look at their current situation, and help them see their strength and weakness points in a systematic and objective manner, in contrast to the subjective manner that has been leading some incubators to believe they do not need the kind of TA that SSA intends to provide. Utilizing this tool, the team held one-on-one meetings with SSA’s partner incubators, which enabled SSA to further specify the individual technical assistance and/or capacity building needs of each incubator.

As it stands, most incubators rely on governmental funding received from ASRT (an affiliate of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research), which has left the incubators in a position where some of them lack the incentive to properly screen their incubated startups, especially when it comes to their potential for financial success. Consequently, the assessment matrix highlighted a need for building the capacity of the
incubators to diversify their funding sources, and the skills needed to achieve this diversification, with high demand for capacities needed for the incubators to adopt a business model that depends on equity, a business model that increases the likelihood of their long-term sustainability. The assessment matrix also helped highlight different shortcomings in the incubation program design of different incubators. The matrix, along with its findings for each incubator, can be seen in Figure 1. The matrix is an overview of areas that the incubators need support with, while Figure 2 illustrates the needs related to financial sustainability and rescue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item/Incubator</th>
<th>AAST</th>
<th>BUE</th>
<th>Ebni</th>
<th>Rowaq</th>
<th>EdVentures</th>
<th>HU</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Application Process</td>
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<td>Pitching Tool</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training and Workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Startup Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matchmaking</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>User Matrix</td>
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### Business Model

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### Branding

<p>| Branding identity that contains logo, colors, identity | Support not needed | Support not needed | Support not needed | Support not needed | Support needed |</p>
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<td>Partnership List</td>
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<td><strong>Facility</strong></td>
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<td>Space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online platform / Virtualization room</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1: Incubator Assessment Matrix, highlighting areas that each incubator needs support with*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Support</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Expected output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Policy</td>
<td>SSA to support the incubator in developing an internal policy for their incubation program. Policy includes staffing, salaries, financials, equity model, etc...</td>
<td>A policy that guides the incubator in managing the relationship between the incubator and the affiliated firm/university. The policy might include sections like financials, staffing, roles and responsibility, organizational structure, funding, equity models, etc...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>SSA to support the incubator in defining their own unique offering</td>
<td><strong>Incubator should have a concrete program to run and provide to startups and beneficiaries</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Clear Services/Offering | SSA to support incubators in developing and designing tailored KPIs for the program | - Program Offering  
- Program outline  
- Services and service description  
- Targeted sectors and startups  
- Program KPI's  
- Feedback forms  
- Need analysis mechanisms  
- Application form questions  
- Concrete selection criteria and weights  
- Content outline  
- Develop a network of mentors  
- Develop speaker network  
- Build community for startups  
- Define post incubation services |
<p>| Program KPIs          | SSA to support incubators in developing tools that enable it to track its KPIs and assess its program and services |                                      |
| Measuring Tools       | SSA to support incubators in developing different and tailored feedback forms for startups, mentors, etc... |                                      |
| Feedback Forms        | SSA to support incubators in designing and carrying out needs analysis, and analyzing its finding, taking into consideration the feedback forms, KPIs |                                      |
| Needs Analysis        | SSA to support incubators in designing their application forms according to the program offered |                                      |
| Application Form      | SSA to support incubators in developing their selection criteria and scoring systems |                                      |
| Selection Criteria    | SSA to support incubators in developing their selection criteria and scoring systems |                                      |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Outline / Content</th>
<th>SSA to support incubators in drafting and consolidating their program and content outline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Program</td>
<td>Online platform to manage the whole incubation program virtually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Process</td>
<td>SSA to support incubators in developing their own virtual incubation program, spanning the whole incubation cycle, to be able to run the cycle online; starting with the application form, including substantive support (mentorship, training, workshops, networking, and the pitching/demo day, among others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitching Tool</td>
<td>- Application form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>- Filtration mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training And Workshops</td>
<td>- Selection mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Startup Progress</td>
<td>- Program calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matchmaking</td>
<td>- Events booking system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network of Mentors</td>
<td>- Virtual Mentorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Matrix</td>
<td>- Virtual training and workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Community management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Startup matrix and KPIs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Models and Revenue Streams</td>
<td>Aiming to diversify incubators’ revenue streams to improve likelihood of financial sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services For Fees</td>
<td>Defined variety of services that incubators might provide for fees. Output might include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- List of services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Description of service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Cost of service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Price of service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Margin for each service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pricing packages</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target segment or customers for each service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Feedback form for services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Funds And Grants** | SSA to support incubators in raising funds from different donors | - Proposal writing techniques  
- List of donors /sectors  
- Budgeting |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| **Partnerships And Sponsorships** | SSA to support incubators in developing sponsorship packages, in order to cover the costs of running the incubator through sponsorship and partnership, as a new revenue stream | Incubator should have:  
- Received capacity building in this area  
- List of potential partners  
- List of potential sponsors  
- Sponsorship packages /prices  
- Email template  
- Follow up templates  
- Meeting manuals (how to run sponsor meeting) |
| **Fablab** | SSA to support incubators in developing and selling fablab services to generate revenue | Defined variety of services that includes:  
- List of services  
- Description of service  
- Cost of service  
- Price of service  
- Margin for each service  
- Pricing packages  
- Target segment or customer for each service  
- Feedback form for services |
| **Equity** | SSA to support incubators developing an equity business model, allowing them to generate profits from the incubation activity. | Incubator will have:  
- Received capacity building on the equity model  
- Develop a shareholder agreement template  
- Received capacity building on startup valuation  
- Develop contract template(s) |

Figure 2: Table summarizing the areas of support that directly relate to Financial Sustainability of Incubators, and Rescue Interventions related to them
Based on the findings of the assessment matrix, SSA decided to address the incubators’ needs in a phased manner, to ensure the quality of the outcomes. The first phase, which started this quarter, includes:

(a) Developing equity financing models for incubators. A SOW was developed for a consultant who will work with SSA and the incubators in this area, and will be issued in the upcoming quarter;

(b) The virtual incubation platform, which will be developed to enable the incubators to provide their services virtually, minimizing the need for in-person interaction. This responds to a problem that incubators have been facing since the onset of COVID-19, as their operational models relied heavily on the incubated startups and clients being on their premises, which affected the quality of the support and services they were able to provide under the pandemic. The in-depth assessment matrix was used to identify the core features to be included in the platform, and a RFP for software development houses who can develop the platform is currently pending management review;

(c) Improving the capacity of incubators to design services, improve their offerings, and their pricing strategy. A SOW was developed for a consultant who will work with SSA and the incubators in this area, and will be issued in the upcoming quarter.

The rest of the needs will be addressed as soon as the above three interventions reach a point where SSA is sure about the quality of the output, and is capable of tackling other needs without stretching its human resources thin.

While working with incubators, the team also ensured coordination with other team members to achieve synergy. Some of the examples of the incubators team collaborating with other SSA teams this quarter are:

- Sharing the Call for Mentors for WEN's mentorship program with partner incubators and other partners, to achieve higher reach to prospective female mentors;
- Inviting the BUE incubator’s training and consultancy arm to bid as a provider for the women mentorship training program, in an attempt to encourage the incubator to diversify their sources of income;
- Coordinating with incubators to identify their needs regarding “Maharat men Google” training. However, we realized that all incubators are already providing “Maharat men Google” as part of their offering. As a result, it was agreed that incubators would wait for an advanced training that is currently being developed by Google upon SSA’s request;
- Linking Tiye angels to incubators to increase the visibility of the network, and give it access to incubators’ demo days, where promising startups can be scouted for the investment-readiness program that will qualify them to pitch to Tiye’s angel investors.

Under networking efforts, the incubators team attended a conference held by the Arab Academy for Science and Technology (AAST) to celebrate 5 years of its achievements in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. USAID has been an integral partner for the AAST in this journey, through both SEED and SSA. SEED helped with the establishment of AAST’s incubator, provided capacity building for their Entrepreneurship Center, and supported their national business competition (known as the Rally competition). During the event, AAST acknowledged the role that USAID has played, and continues to
play, in supporting the Academy and the Egyptian entrepreneurship ecosystem. SSA’s Senior Advisor for incubators and accelerators extended his support by sitting as a judge on the panel of the Rally competition that took place as part of the conference.

**Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:**

- Continue the implementation of the first phase of technical assistance, which includes:
  - Starting the procurement process for the virtual incubation platform,
  - Recruiting consultants who will work with SSA and the incubators on developing equity financing models, improving their service design, and improving their incubation program design;
- Develop the quarterly TA plan;
- Follow up with Google on the status of their advanced training;
- Work with incubators to solidify plans for technical assistance that will be delivered in phase two.
Output 1.3: Pool of SEED mentors expanded

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:

In light of the assessment carried out in the previous report, and the feedback provided by women mentors trained under SEED, SSA has thoroughly reviewed the previously-developed mentorship materials to ensure that the outline of the upcoming program would enable SSA to better fulfil the needs of the mentors. Following this exercise, SSA released in March an RFP for a training provider for women mentors. SSA received several offers, these have been reviewed and assessed by the selection committee. After assessing the offers, SSA requested some clarifications from the offerors in order to finalize the selection and proceed with contracting the chosen company.

The 50 women in the Women Mentorship program will be trained in two cohorts, one in the upcoming quarter (May), and the next in the first quarter of the project’s second year (November). 25 experienced business women will be targeted in each round. SSA engaged and on-boarded WEN in the preparation of the program, and jointly developed an approach strategy to identify the profile of the mentors who will be recruited, and outreach plans for mentees including their selection criteria.

In regards to the recruitment of the first batch of 25 potential mentors, SSA released a call for mentors, detailing the requirements, as well as setting the expectations for the program. SSA received 75 applications from potential mentors, and developed screening and selection criteria for the applicants.

In another initiative, SSA also included eight SEED-trained mentors in Shell’s NXPlorer Program - “A problem-solving initiative for a complex world”; which was organized and conducted by WEN. The program delivered training in design thinking skills, satisfying some of the advanced training needs as identified through the assessment carried out in the previous quarter of the SEED-trained mentors.

Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:

- Screening and selecting the 25 prospective mentors for the Women Mentorship program;
- Contracting a service provider to deliver the training program for the selected trainees;
- Delivering the first round of the Women Mentorship training program;
- Issuing a call for women mentees;
- Screening and selecting the women mentees.
Result 2: Startups and MSMEs negatively affected by the COVID-19 economic crisis supported

Output 2.1: Incubators and/or BDS centers adopted COVID-19 rescue program

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:

**Incubators**

The assessment has shown that restrictions on in-person interaction and lack of access to incubators' premises under COVID-19 has had a negative impact on their incubatees, and on the quality of the services they were receiving. The in-depth assessment of incubators needs discussed under the previous result has revealed a universal need for support when it comes to efficient and innovative methods of conducting business and addressing challenges arising from COVID-19. To this end, SSA conducted multiple meetings with the incubators, to discuss the core features of a platform that would help incubators manage their whole incubation program virtually, minimizing reliance on in-person interaction with incubated startups and clients. The core features identified were:

- Application form
- Filtration mechanism (for applicants)
- Selection mechanism (for applicants)
- Program calendar
- Events booking system
- Virtual Mentorship
- Virtual training and workshops
- Community management
- Startup matrix and KPIs
- Feedback mechanism
- Evaluation mechanism
- Pitching tool
- Automated email system

SSA also met with several software developers to discuss the feasibility of building such a platform. These meetings guided the team in developing the RFP for the platform, which is currently pending review.

**BDS**

TA meetings conducted with BDS partners have helped highlight the need to contract an STTA who can work with them on business rescue modalities to help them overcome challenges. Hence, SSA issued a SOW for a business rescue consultant who will work closely with the BDS team to develop a generic full business rescue and continuity plan framework that will help identify risks and operational gaps, in addition to tailored business resilience and continuity plans for six selected BDS partners.

Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:

- Contract the service provider that will develop the virtual incubation platform;
- Contract the consultant who will design the business rescue framework for BDS centers and initiate delivery.
In addition to working with BDS centers and incubators, SSA strived to ensure the sustainability of YEN and WEN, and supporting them in serving MSMEs and entrepreneurs:

**Youth Entrepreneurship Network**

**Key activities implemented during this reporting period:**

Based on the findings of the assessment that was carried out in the previous quarter, and building on the previous work of YEN, SSA focused on two main areas in its activities targeting YEN:

1. Creating an institutional framework for YEN,
2. Capacity Building activities for the individuals who make up YEN.

SSA held discussions with relevant organizations from the entrepreneurship ecosystem to build consensus on the establishment of the network. This culminated in the creation of a founding group that will hold meetings to agree on an institutionalization mechanism to be adopted, identify the roles and responsibilities of the member organizations, and develop a work plan for the first year. SSA will facilitate the group’s first meeting, which will take place next April.

In terms of capacity building and COVID-19 rescue programs, SSA and EYouth, an educational technology enterprise that provides entrepreneurship education, collaborated on designing and delivering a capacity building program for youth hubs and co-working spaces, focused on helping them mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The hubs and spaces had to shut down for six months in 2020 in compliance with GoE’s preventive measures that were intended to curb the spread of the pandemic. YEN’s two physical hubs, which were created under USAID SEED, attended this program, along with seven other MSMEs (co-working spaces/hubs) from different governorates (Cairo, Ismailia, Dakahleya, Sohag, Minya, and Gharbeya). The virtual program spanned six weeks, and covered the following topics:

a. Understanding current market opportunities (Introduction to the new era of Corona);
b. Re-discovering your business model;
c. Managing your enterprise;
d. Marketing: keeping and creating new customers;
e. Thinking out of the box: new revenue streams;
f. Leadership and presentation skills.

To ensure that participating MSMEs will be able to apply the knowledge and skills developed as a result of participating in the program, each module included a practical assignment that they were required to submit. The participants had mentors from EYouth following up on their progress with the assignments, and offering assistance when needed. Each coworking space created or updated its
strategic plan, including a Business Model Canvas (a process through which they re-examined their business model), and a social media plan. They also had a chance to practice their leadership and presentation skills by pitching three times in preparation for a final pitching event that took place at the end of the program, where the top ten co-working spaces pitched in presence of key entrepreneurship eco-system players. The latter requested the contact information of the coworking spaces for potential collaborations in the future.

SSA also extended an invitation to the coworking spaces that attended the program to attend the Maharat men Google training on digital marketing, in order to facilitate the implementation of what they learned in the EYouth program by providing them with knowledge about marketing tools provided by Google.

SSA’s team worked closely with some eco-system players to support entrepreneurship, e.g. – Making a presentation on growth for startups, and resources available in the eco-system as a part of Etijah’s “Tomooh” pre-incubation program. SSA will onboard the startups enrolled in the program onto YEN’s online network, once activated. SSA also worked closely with Google-US Embassy program to recruit female-led tech startups for the network.

**Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:**

- Holding a number of roundtable meetings with key eco-system partners, to assist the YEN partners to develop an institutional framework for YEN. The objectives of the meeting will be (a) building consensus regarding institutionalization and its mechanism, (b) identifying the roles and responsibilities of the members, and (c) identifying the steering committee members. The following partners will be invited to the roundtable:
  - Etijah,
  - ElSewedy Education – Innovation Hub,
  - Fekretak Sherketak (Ministry of Investment)
  - EYouth
  - Giza Systems Education Foundation
  - Rise Up
  - Enroot
  - Gemini Africa
  - In addition to various co-working spaces, universities and incubators.
- Creating YEN’s steering committee;
- Planning for quarterly steering committee meetings;
- Facilitating quarterly meetings for YEN’s steering committee;
- SSA’s entrepreneurship team will coordinate with SSA’s outreach and communications manager to launch the social media presence and outreach efforts for YEN;
- Working with ecosystem partners to spread awareness of entrepreneurship resources through online and/or offline events;
- Strengthening the capacity of the network’s physical hubs.
Women Entrepreneurs Network

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:

**WEN MOU and FEI Hosting**

SSA, in collaboration with WEN members, drafted a MOU that is intended to govern:

- The relationship between WEN members,
- WEN’s relationship with FEI in regards to hosting the network and opening a separate bank account for it, and,
- allocating work space for its members in the federation’s premises.

SSA’s Gender Advisor drafted the MOU, then sent it to WEN’s Executive Director, who reviewed it, and sent it back to SSA. In order to further ensure the sustainability of the MOU, SSA drafted a SOW to recruit a legal expert to develop a legal framework for the agreement before the parties carry out a final review of it and sign it.

Meanwhile, SSA is supporting WEN in reaching out to more potential member organizations, i.e., Women of Egypt, FEPS (Faculty of Economics and Political Science) incubator, and EdVentures. New members will help WEN grow, and will strengthen the network. FEPS Incubator, and Women of Egypt agreed to join the network, and will be included in the MOU.

**WEN Capacity Building**

The main findings of the assessment conducted by SSA highlighted the effect of COVID-19 on WEN member organizations in terms of decreasing the organizations’ ability to reach out to their beneficiaries and address the different challenges they were facing.

The assessment also revealed that COVID-19 has had a strongly negative impact on female entrepreneurs, leading some of them to close their businesses. Consequently, WEN, all its member organizations, as well as the mentors, require support in order to be able to adjust to the new business environment, and better assist their beneficiaries in mitigating the impacts of the epidemic.

In light of these findings, and as part of SSA’s efforts to build the capacity of WEN, SSA linked WEN with Shell, which in turn provided WEN with a special edition of Shell’s NXPlorer Program: “A problem-solving initiative for a complex world.” The program explored the challenges that face female entrepreneurs in Egypt, and helped develop innovative interventions to support them, through introducing the women leaders attending the training to complex and creative thinking skills. The trainees acquired skills in this course that will support them in becoming efficient change agents, and equip them with the tools needed to actively utilize those skills to solve problems. The program focused on a unique combination of three methodologies: Systems Thinking, Scenario Planning, and Theory of Change. In the final session of the program, each team presented an
idea for an intervention that could be executed by WEN to support women entrepreneurs impacted by the pandemic. The WEN board is expected to review the ideas and incorporate feasible interventions, if any, in WEN’s work plan. The program was attended by 25 women, including eight SEED-trained mentors.

Building a Social Enterprise Model

WEN’s assessment also revealed needs related to WEN’s sustainability and the knowledge and skills needed for the network to adopt a social enterprise operation model, making it imperative to increase the network’s awareness of the concept of social enterprise, and how social enterprises operate. Social Enterprise Academy - a private company that provides transformational learning and development programs for individuals and organizations working for social change-informed SSA that there is a possibility that it will receive Scottish funding to provide training to Egyptian individuals and organizations interested in social entrepreneurship. To capitalize on this potential opportunity, SSA organized a session with SEA and WEN’s steering committee, to discuss the social enterprise model and how it can address WEN’s institutional needs. If SEA receives the required funds from their headquarters in Scotland, SSA
will assist in the coordination between SEA and WEN in a program where SEA will provide WEN with a capacity building program that engages the WEN member organizations in a highly practical and immersive program that will provide them with the skills and knowledge needed to adopt the social enterprise model. The program will explore social enterprise and enterprising leadership, in addition to giving the learners an opportunity to develop practical leadership skills and tools that they can take back to their day-to-day work with their teams, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. There will be time for reflection and learning between the learning sessions, as self-reflection, and developing an awareness and understanding of self, are key to the program. The program is expected to start in June, and continue for five months.

**Development of Akhmeem Community Center (ACC)**

For decades, the Akhmeem Community Center (ACC), an affiliate of the Association of Upper Egypt for Education and Development (AUED), which is a member of WEN, has been supporting women artisans from a marginalized community in Sohag in generating income through the production of handmade-embroidered textiles. COVID-19 has compromised the center’s ability to do so, and pushed it to consider changing its operational model in order to establish a steady source of income that would enable it to support its beneficiaries. To support ACC, SSA and WEN’s steering committee members have conducted a series of meetings in order to develop a rescue plan to develop the center and ensure its financial sustainability. The result of those efforts is a concept note for a development proposal that covers three main pillars: (1) the social enterprise model, (2) an e-commerce handicrafts platform, and, (3) product design and development. The proposal will be presented in a workshop on April 1, where the roles of different partners in implementing it will be discussed. Developing the plan doubled as a way to build the capacity of WEN member organization to develop rescue interventions.

Additionally, SSA’s team has conducted a meeting with the Assistant to the Minister of International Cooperation for SME Affairs, as part of the Ministry’s effort to unify the national and international efforts to develop the handicrafts sector in Egypt. SSA’s team agreed to collaborate with the Ministry on its e-commerce platform for handicrafts, and helping coordinate the various efforts exerted by different actors to support the handicrafts sector.

Finally, SSA’s team participated in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) workshop held by CREACT4MED—an EU project co-funded by the EuropeAid—on March 22nd, which aimed to bring together, and engage with, the key actors in the CCI ecosystem, in order to discuss obstacles and opportunities encountered by cultural and creative players, and to develop a network of those actors. SSA is willing to be an active member of this network, and is anticipating CREACT4MED’s next steps in this direction.

**Collaboration with CTEK Women in the MENA initiative**

SSA conducted several meetings with CTEK’s coordinator, in order to proceed with the planned training program. SSA agreed to draft a RFP for a service provider to deliver the agreed-upon program for developing the coding and entrepreneurship skills for 500 potential women entrepreneurs.

**Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:**

- Develop a legal framework for WEN’s MOU;
• Draft the RFP for a service provider to conduct the coding and entrepreneurship training for women (CTEK);
• Conduct a series of meetings and planning sessions with ACC to identify key milestones and initiate the execution of the rescue plan.
Result 3: Access to finance by startups and MSMEs improved

Output 3.1: Tiye Angels’ members trained on assessing investment opportunities and startup needs

Tiye Angels remains committed to act as a catalyst for female investors and female-led startups. Tiye Angels is focused on:

(1) Increasing the number of female Angel Investors; and
(2) Helping female-led startups become investment-ready.

SSA believes that these two fronts are critical to building a healthy pipeline of female-led startups that are capable of proving their potential to a growing pool of female angel investors who have the knowledge and skills that enable them to select and support female-led startups that they can profitably invest in.

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:

The assessment that was carried out in the previous quarter led to the realization that the ideal capacity building program for angel investors needs to include (a) investor meet-ups to help create relationships among investors, (b) interactive sessions where investors share their real-life experience with angel investors, (c) pitching/showcasing events where startups looking for investment pitch to the investors, and startups that have already received investment provide accounts of their experience, (d) training through technical modules, and (e) information sessions. SSA has discussed with GIZ a collaboration initiative, whereby GIZ will support the training that SSA intends to provide to Tiye Angels with some technical modules that GIZ has developed for its Angel Investor Academy, namely: investment strategy; screening and sourcing deals; company valuation; how to implement due diligence; investment documents (term sheets and shareholders agreements). GIZ expressed its willingness to collaborate with SSA on this front.

To ensure the sustainability of Tiye Angels, SSA facilitated the creation of a founding group, which includes influential successful women who are committed to the success and growth of the network. Through the facilitation and support of SSA, the aforementioned group will create an institutionalization framework for Tiye Angels. The network will be autonomous in nature, but will be under the umbrella of WEN.

The group already started meeting and working on developing a plan for the identification of new angels, identifying the ideal outreach mechanisms for recruiting them, and an action plan for the upcoming six months. This work will be guided by the matrix of best practices that SSA is currently developing. Malaikah (a local organization whose objective is to support the creation of an
angel investment ecosystem in Egypt) continued to be a committed partner, and hosted one of the in-person meetings held by the group.

As the ecosystem has recently shown an interest in syndication (a process through which multiple angel groups coordinate to invest in one startup), SSA continued discussions with other angel investment groups (e.g., Cairo Angels, Alex Angels, Nile Angels) to promote investment in female-led startups, and to facilitate syndicated investments with Tiye angels in female-led startups in the future.

**Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:**

SSA will continue working with Tiye Angels’ steering committee to develop its action plan; and help facilitate training for prospective angel investors, as well as facilitate the network’s access to female-led startups. The engagement activities and training intended for the networks; members will adopt the mixed approach discussed in the previous section. SSA will continue to work closely with ecosystem players, including investment professionals, other angel investment groups, incubators, and startups.

Accordingly, the upcoming period should include:

- Continuing to reach out to, and onboard, potential female Angel Investors to expand the network;
- Finalizing a matrix of best practices of angel investment groups;
- Ensuring Tiye Angels’ steering committee is meeting on a regular basis;
- The Tiye network developing a strategic outreach and engagement plan for the next 6 months;
- Facilitating investor meet-ups, to forge relationships among investors and provide space for individuals to learn more about angel investment;
- Delivering training sessions to Tiye Angels (virtual and, if possible, in-person). Sessions will include startup testimonials and an introduction to early-stage investing.
Output 3.2: MSMEs linked to sources of capital

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:

**TIYE Pitching Events**

SSA is working closely with incubators to create a mechanism to identify the most promising startups within their current cohorts, or in the ranks of their recent graduates, who can pitch to Tiye angels; and those who qualify for the investment-readiness program that SSA intends to deliver to prepare them for pitching. The SOW for the consultant who will work with startups to improve their investment-readiness was developed, and is pending management review.

SSA has also been reaching out to corporations as potential partners, either as sponsors, or to engage their mid-to-senior level managers interested in becoming angel investors to provide them with angel investment training. ExxonMobil was very interested in working with SSA to support female-led startups, and requested a sponsorship proposal for them to cover the costs of the investment-readiness program for female-led start-ups. As of the time of writing this report, the company has not responded to the proposal yet.

**Dairy Value Chain**

In the previous quarter, and based on the rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the dairy value chain, the problem of low milk prices was identified as a high priority issue. These low prices are due to (a) an inability to distribute the collected milk, (b) the overall decrease in demand during the pandemic because of business restrictions and curfews. Due to the persistence of the problem; and the interest in financing MSMEs in this value chain on the side of the National Bank of Egypt, SSA developed a SOW to study the feasibility of cheese manufacturing as a way to minimize the economic losses resulting from dairy surplus, and investment opportunities in this domain. This aims to decrease the amount of milk that goes to waste, and counteract the increased operational expenses and the overall decline in the business performance of milk producers.

In order to validate the SOW and to ensure that it will cover the technical and financial aspects of cheese manufacturing business, SSA shared the draft SOW with NBE for feedback. The feedback received from the bank was positive. SSA then developed a questionnaire for milk collection centers, in order to gather information to support the cheese manufacturing feasibility study. NBE disseminated the questionnaire to its clients in the milk collection sector, and SSA expects to receive the results early next quarter.

In an effort to promote awareness of the newly available credit facilities for milk collection centers from NBE, and to link milk collection centers who can benefit from said facilities with NBE, SSA approached the Dairy Association in order to discuss the organization of linkage forums, where MSMEs from the value chain will get to know about the facilities that they can benefit from, and...
representatives of financial institutions willing to extend them credit facilities are available to answer any questions. This comes at a time where NBE is fully aware of the potential of extending credit to MSMEs in the dairy value chain, as it has already extended credit facilities to more than 60 MCCs so far. However, a date has not been set yet to conduct the meeting with the dairy association. SSA and NBE will continue their efforts to conduct the linkage forums.

**Fishery Value Chain**

In an effort to improve NBE’s understanding of fish farm operations and the process of fish production, in order to encourage the bank to extend credit facilities to MSMEs in the value chain, SSA developed and delivered two presentations in January to the bank’s staff, to educate them on:

(a) The different stages of the production process,
(b) the supply and demand of fish farming activities,
(c) a tool to calculate the feasibility of fish farming,
(d) an analysis of the fish market in Egypt and the gap between supply and demand, with a focus on freshwater fish,
(e) detailed cost items,
(f) the revenue components throughout the project cycle,
(g) best practices of fish handling, and
(h) the prevalent marketing mechanism.

SSA’s team also facilitated a field visit for NBE to fish farms in Kafr El Sheikh, where they met with fish farm owners to understand the challenges faced by the enterprises, and the opportunity that lies in supporting these enterprises to expand and grow through developing a credit facility program that caters to their needs.

In continuation of USAID SSA’s efforts to support the establishment of credit facilities for MSMEs in the fishery VC, SSA has been trying to organize a meeting with the Head of the General Authority for the Fishery Resource Development (GAFRD) to reach an agreement whereby the Authority provides SSA with information on creditworthy fish farms. This will help banks minimize the risk of said facilities to a level that encourages banks to start extending them. However, the Head of the Authority has a very busy schedule, which has hindered our ability to hold that meeting. Nevertheless, the buy-in and interest of the authority to support the fishery VC still exists. As a result, SSA intends to continue following up until a meeting is held to discuss concrete next steps. Both NBE and ABE are interested in this initiative.

**Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:**

- Working with startups on the investment-readiness program to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed for them to be able to pitch to Angel investors;
- Issuing the SOW for the cheese manufacturing study, and contracting a service provider who will develop the study;
- Approaching the head of the dairy sector in the Ministry of Agriculture to get access to 700 MCCs identified by the Ministry as credit-worthy, to invite them to the planned linkage forums;
- Following up with GAFRD to hold a meeting with its head, in order to discuss arrangements for the authority sharing a list of credit-worthy fish farms with SSA;
• Delivering the linkage forums;
• Continuing to support NBE in identifying and approaching more MCCs who can benefit from the MCC credit program;
• Continue to support NBE and ABE in developing and activating the fishery credit facility program.
In a nutshell...

**Result 4: SME Business-enabling Environment Enhanced**

**Output 4.1: Public-Private Dialogue sessions held, in addition to other policy-related activities**

**Key activities implemented during this reporting period:**

**MSMEDA**

As part of SSA’s efforts to support MSMEDA in activating the new MSMEs law, SSA’s COP, Financial and Non-financial Services Lead, Enabling Environment Lead, and the OSS Senior Advisor, held a meeting with MSMEDA’s Head of Non-financial services to identify the areas of urgent support required by MSMEDA in anticipation of the issuance of the executive regulations of the new MSMEs law, which is expected to happen very soon; and to follow up with them in regards to their interest in benefiting from the Tamayouz OSS model. MSMEDA’s highest priority was identified to be designing (in terms of the information to be included, the visual form, and implementation procedures):

- the enterprise classification certificate, which allows MSMEs to benefit from the new incentives stipulated in the new MSMEs law,
- the certificate of registration in MSMEDA database,
- the certificate for dealing with different governmental agencies as an MSME,
- the request forms for the three aforementioned certificates.

The second priority area was identified to be redesigning the operational manual of MSMEDA’s service provision unit in light of lessons learned from the Tamayouz OSS/front-office-back-office model (more details can be found under the OSSs section).

In response to MSMEDA’s pressing and time-sensitive needs, SSA’s team worked on designing the three requested certificates, and the drafted certificates and work procedures were sent to MSMEDA’s Head of Non-financial services for review and discussion.

In parallel, five SOWs were developed to recruit consultants to help MSMEDA with the activation of the new MSMEs law and its executive regulations, the details of which are in the table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Legal and Procedures simplification consultant</td>
<td>1. Providing expertise to draft 17 forms required to activate some articles of the soon-to-be approved executive regulations for the new MSMEs law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> Financial/Tax expert to develop cost of compliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> OSS and Government Relations Expert</td>
<td>2. Developing two operation manuals, one for the issuance of project start-up licenses, and another for project registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D.</strong> Accreditation process Consultant</td>
<td>3. Preparing the manual for accreditation offices, which are new entities that can be delegated by MSMEDA, or chosen by MSMEs, as per the new MSMEs law, to assess the validity and extent of readiness of MSMEs’ applications for business registration, operationalization, and expansion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E.</strong> Marketing and Communication Consultant</td>
<td>4. Preparing presentations and other outreach material pertaining to the new MSMEs Law and its executive regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Supporting the organization of a conference for International / Local entities to address the law and its bylaw.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The five SOWs in the table above were reviewed by SSA’s management and in submission to USAID.

**FEI**

A SOW was developed for an expert to deliver awareness sessions on Law #182/2018 (Public Procurement Law) for both MSMEs, and public officials involved in managing procurement processes at public agencies/institutions. The SOW is currently pending USAID’s approval.

**FRA**

SSA was informed that the officer in charge of international cooperation at the Authority was replaced. SSA intends to meet with the new officer to agree on next steps.

**ASRT**

On February 18, SSA, in collaboration with ASRT, held a PPD session on suggestions for amending Law #23/2018, to incorporate incentives for the private sector when partnering with academic and scientific research institutions for R&D or innovation purposes.

Forty three representatives of universities, business associations, MSMEs, incubators, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of International Cooperation, participated in the consultation session and shared their views and concerns, and received answers to their questions.
Following the consultation session, SSA sent ASRT and other participants a list of the recommendations made throughout the sessions, which were:

1. Establishing definitions to differentiate between innovative projects and research projects,
2. Providing different levels of incentives according to the business size, in order to accommodate the reality of small, medium and large enterprises and entrepreneurship,
3. Allowing the use of new financing mechanisms to finance innovation projects in order to encourage more partnerships with the private sector,
4. Establishing a realistic pricing mechanism for universities to use when pricing research services carried out on behalf of the private sector,
5. Clarifying tax treatment mechanisms and non-tax incentives mandated by laws for companies that support innovation and scientific research,
6. Ensuring the enforcement of customs exemptions for raw materials and equipment imported under this law, through coordinating with the Ministry of Finance,
7. Studying the addition of incentives for other forms of collaboration with universities and research entities e.g. private sector companies implementing corporate social responsibility initiatives in partnership with research entities, as is the case in the new investment law,
8. Studying the possibility of providing land and infrastructure as an incentive to establish technology valleys for universities when partnering with the private sector, to promote models such as Silicon Valley,
9. Allocating a section of the state’s budget for incentives under this law,
10. Simplifying the processes of implementing the law to reduce red tape,
11. Establishing a digital mechanism to link industry needs with the scientific research agenda of universities and research institutions in order to further localize manufacturing, and pave the way for exporting local technology in the future,
12. Creating marketing mechanisms for scientific research outputs,
13. Including private universities in the law,
14. Studying the links between incentives in this law and incentives in other laws e.g. investment law and MSMEs law.

In order to organize further PPD sessions to crystallize the recommendations and translate them into suggested amendments to the law, SSA has developed SOWs for:
• A Financial and Tax Consultant who shall design and develop financial and tax incentives for the private sector in order to incentivize Research and Development (R&D) and innovation, and participate in Public Private Dialogue (PPD) sessions to validate the proposed incentives and collect feedback from private sector representatives.

• A Legal consultant who shall review existing incentives in similar local or international laws aiming to promote private sector engagement, propose amendments to the law based on the review findings, and participate in Public Private Dialogue (PPD) sessions to validate the proposed incentives and collect feedback from private sector representatives.

**Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:**

• Planning, organizing and conducting a public-private dialogue session for ASRT to continue discussions on the private sector incentives in Law #23/2018, after finalizing the recruitment of the two relevant consultants: a financial and tax expert, and legal expert, for the purposes described above;

• Finalizing the recruitment of the five consultants who will working with MSMEDA’s team to help the Agency activate the new MSMEs law after the executive regulations were issued;

• Conducting a meeting with FRA’s newly-appointed international cooperation officer;

• Delivering the first awareness session on the Public Procurement Law for FEI, Ministry of Finance, and other concerned entities after finalizing the recruitment of the relevant consultant;

• Continuing to communicate with MSMEDA to identify further areas of collaboration, to support the activation of the executive regulations once issued.
**Output 4.2: OSSs supported to improve their service provision**

**Key activities implemented during this reporting period:**

In a series of field visits, the OSS Senior Advisor has conducted two field visits to assess Gerga and Asyut OSSs, two of the OSSs that were chosen to receive SSA’s technical assistance, during which meetings took place with the managers of the OSSs, the managers of back-office teams, and the front office employees/case agents. Additionally, and upon USAID’s request, SSA conducted field visits to Bahtheem, Tahta, Sohag, and Cairo Chamber of Commerce Tamayouz OSSs with the purpose of assessing their current status. The assessments helped SSA identify the main areas of support needed by Tamayouz OSSs, which are:

1. establishing a customer complaint management system,
2. speeding up the implementation of the incentive scheme for OSS employees,
3. capacity building focused on soft skills: time management, problem solving skills and communication skills,
4. improving the CRM software to add more features, especially the generation of reports,
5. handing over the modified CRM software source, as the absence of the software source rendered the OSSs unable to reinstall the CRM software,
6. developing a platform to provide OSS services online, starting with receiving scanned documents and communicating with customers. All Chambers of Commerce expressed their interest in receiving SSA’s support in this area, and are willing to implement and utilize an online service provision system.

Based on the previously-submitted assessment report, SSA developed OSS TA plans, and started delivering capacity building sessions to OSSs in February. The OSS team has so far provided training to managers and employees of the Mansoura and Suez OSSs. The sessions focused on raising awareness of the concept behind the Tamayouz OSS model, as well as the Tamayouz workflow. Additionally, the training discussed the role and workflow of each back office in Tamayouz in depth. The capacity building activity was provided to 15 employees in Mansoura and 22 employees in Suez, from both the Commercial Registry and the Chamber Certificates back offices, in addition to their managers.
USAID SEED had developed an operational manual for OSSs, which was intended to facilitate the process of onboarding new OSS employees and act as a reference that all employees can consult when needed without disrupting the workflow. SSA updated the manual to include information about Tamayouz OSS, how to operate it, as well as all the service requirements. SSA is currently waiting for input from the Commercial Registry and the Tax Authority regarding their updated service provision rules, in order to update the relevant sections of the manual.

**One-Stop Shop in GAFI and/or one in MSMEDA transformed into Tamayouz model**

In SSA’s meeting with MSMEDA (see details under output 4.1), the Agency stated that redesigning the operational manual of MSMEDA’s service provision unit as per the Tamayouz OSS/front office-back office model is a second priority area. SSA started the process of updating the manual. So far, the first draft of the manual’s structure and the procedures of service provision according to the Tamayouz OSS model have been developed.
Meeting with the GrEEK Campus management on establishing an OSS on their premises

In order to support the GoE’s efforts to encourage the formation and formalization of SMEs, and to help replicate the Tamayouz approach in delivering registration services, SSA’s team met with the GrEEK Campus’s management—upon their request—to discuss the possibility of establishing a Tamayouz center on their premises. SSA provided the Campus’s management team with the required information regarding business registration and the institutions involved in the process. At the end of the meeting, the Campus’s management said that they will discuss the situation internally in light of the information provided by SSA, and that they will get back to the team if they need more information or support.

Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:

• Conducting field visits to the targeted OSSs in Suez, Mansoura, Gerga, and Asyut, to deliver the planned TA and capacity building programs;
• Continuing to update MSMEDA’s operational manual for the service provision unit;
• Continuing to provide the required TA support to MSMEDA in order for them to make use of the lessons learned from the Tamayouz OSS model;
• Following up with the Commercial Registry and Tax Authority to obtain their new rules for service provision.
• Finalize updating the operational manual for OSSs.
III. Cross-cutting issues

3.1 Gender Equity and Female Empowerment

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:
For details on the Women Mentorship Program and WEN, see outputs 1.3 and 2.2, respectively.

USAID SIMPLE Gender Learning Faire

SSA, upon the request of SIMPLE, participated in the Gender Learning Fair on February 9th. During the event, SSA’s team shared SEED’s experience in mainstreaming a gender perspective across the project’s activities, and highlighted the implementation of successful women-focused initiatives e.g. establishing WEN, the mentorship program, and Tiye Angels.

Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:
SSA’s Senior Gender Advisor will continue working with technical advisors to ensure gender equity in the design of their planned activities.

3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Key activities implemented during this reporting period:
To collect data on the cost recovery ratios of BDS centers, a data point was agreed upon with USAID. This data point will be used as the metric to assess the financial sustainability of incubators. SSA’s Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor worked with the BDS Advisor to design and carry out a financial performance survey for BDS centers. The BDS centers received a web-based questionnaire that was developed using Google Forms. All BDS centers responded to the survey, but there were some responses that caused SSA to send follow-up questions via e-mail. All but one of the BDS centers that received follow-up questions responded to them.

As for the incubators, they were asked to provide their cost recovery ratio via email. The incubators have not yet provided the data requested. SSA expects the cost recovery ratios for all the aforementioned partners to be available in April, and will engage USAID in a discussion regarding SSA’s target cost recovery ratio.

SSA also updated the MEL plan in accordance with the feedback received from USAID regarding the financial sustainability indicators for BDSCs and incubators. The plan will be shared with USAID after incorporating the cost recovery ratio targets that will be agreed upon.

SSA’s MEL Advisor also facilitated the quarterly learning sessions with the project team.

Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:
- Finalizing the collection of cost recovery ratios for BDS centers and incubators;
- Discussing the cost recovery ratio target based on the data collected with the SSA’s relevant advisors, management, and USAID;
- Holding an introductory session on data requirements for supported BDS centers, during the BDS Learning and Networking Event planned in April;
• Submitting the modified version of the MEL plan;
• Developing a report on the findings of the quarterly learning session, including an action plan to improve implementation based on the findings.

3.3 Communication and Outreach

**Key activities implemented during this reporting period:**

**Branding and Visibility Support**

SSA finalized two info-graphics covering services available for entrepreneurs from BDS centers and Incubators, and sent them to USAID for approval. Below are screenshots of both of them:
SSA also launched a Facebook page for the project in early March, to showcase the project’s activities and achievements, as well as increase its outreach. The page can be reached at [https://www.facebook.com/Sustainable-Services-Activity-SSA-621780611965040](https://www.facebook.com/Sustainable-Services-Activity-SSA-621780611965040)

![Screenshot from SSA's Facebook page](image)

**Success Stories**

SSA developed a success story to highlight how Ashanek Ya Balady (AYB)’s BDS center, which received support from USAID SEED, succeeded in positively influencing the life of one of its clients. The AYB client in the success story is an art teacher who managed to promote her art products through Souq.com, the largest e-commerce site in the Arab world, which was recently acquired by Amazon. The art teacher, after receiving training that was jointly organized by AYB and Souq.com, got a partnership offer from Souq.com, giving her the opportunity to reach a wider pool of potential customers, one that she did not have access to prior to the support she received.

SSA’s Communications and Outreach manager also ensured that all materials and documents developed by the project are compliant with SSA’s approved branding plan.

**Key activities planned for the upcoming reporting period:**

- In the upcoming quarter, SSA plans to develop two more success stories covering the progress and success of two supported BDS centers, namely Ibn Souq and CEOSS, in mitigating the effects of COVID-19 and developing innovative business ideas to sustain their business and benefit their clients;
- Managing SSA’s Facebook page;
- Ensuring branding compliance for upcoming training programs.
IV. Challenges

- COVID-19 continued to hinder the project’s workflow, as multiple team members contracted the disease, at different times, forcing two closures of the office during the quarter. While the team utilizes digital tools to plan, coordinate, and implement activities to the best of its ability, those tools still do not allow for a working pace as fast as that achieved when team members can interact with each other at the office. To mitigate this, SSA has provided its team with a training on how to use MS Teams to better collaborate while they are unable to meet in person;

- Even when team members are in a healthy state, COVID-19 still poses a challenge for implementing activities, as showcased by the inability to deliver an online workshop for Ibn Souq BDSC in its entirety in January due to weak internet connectivity on the BDSC’s part. The workshop had to be resumed in March, the earliest time on which all the trainees were available. This will be mitigated in the future by relying on in-person workshops as much as allowed by the COVID-19 situation;

- Another challenge that the team faced working from SSA’s office is the weak internet connection available through ADSL. SSA has been attempting to solve this problem through procuring a leased line from WE (internet service provider), which will give SSA a dedicated internet connection straight from the exchange, eliminating noise that compromises the quality of ADSL connections. However, after going through the steps required to procure a leased line, WE informed SSA that there are no ports available for our line. SSA will continue to find other ways to solve this issue.

- The fourth wave of COVID-19, in combination with the decreased working hours of staff at beneficiary organizations, hindered SSA’s ability to collect data from its beneficiary organizations for the purpose of this report. This will be mitigated by including data from both Q2 and Q3 in Q3’s progress report, and encouraging beneficiaries to create relevant records as they go, rather than compiling them at the end of the quarter based on SSA’s request.
V. Annexes

Annex A: Success Story

“From Paper”, how it all started

Asmaa Hassan is an entrepreneur who used to be an art and handicraft teacher, then chose paper products as a business. Asmaa first got the idea to work in the paper products business when she realized that her school’s ability to compete in handicraft competitions was weak due to the school’s low budget, an issue that Asmaa addressed by reducing the cost of supplies used in competitions by using paper instead of other expensive material.

Later, Asmaa started her own business in which she sold paper products. At first, she started with paper plates and paper frames and then was able to join competitions and exhibitions with a very low preparation cost budget.

“I used to let my paintings promote my small paper craft project, when I sold a painting or a portrait, I used to add one of my paper craft boxes as a gift, then I started selling the craft box separately”

Asmaa said that she never got the opportunity to fully develop her business until she met “Alashanek Ya Balady”.

Sustainable efforts for a sustainable future

“I was so frustrated, a lot of people made fun of my business until I saw a post from “Alashanek Ya Balady” in the social media. I asked their assistance, and didn’t expect that they would contact me, but they did.”

In 2018, USAID SEED approached Alashanek Ya Balady (AYB), an association that promotes sustainable development and provided them with technical support to establish and run a business development center (BDS). SEED provided AYB with training, coaching, and capacity building for both the BDS team, and their client entrepreneurs.
Through the USAID SEED assistance, AYB established its BDS by the end of 2018, with the aim to increase opportunities for small and micro enterprises entrepreneurs, and to improve MSMEs access to services such as: entrepreneurship training, business and marketing plans, operations and financial management, and other required technical assistance.

AYB assistance, focused on women and youth provides small entrepreneurs with marketing and financing opportunities that helps them develop and expand their projects at a higher rate than other entrepreneurs who have not received this assistance, and to earn more profits.

Alashanek Ya Balady’s BDS Center launched on Facebook a program called “Herfetak”, a program that promotes business development through coaching, training, and access to new markets and business links.

Asmaa said that she benefited a lot from the Herfetak program and learned how to price her product, and how to prepare a feasibility study before starting a new project. Asmaa also participated in three of the “Alashanek Ya Balady’s BDS Center” exhibitions, these were successful experiences that helped her gain more customers.

Ashanek Ya Balady nominated Asmaa to participate in another marketing training with Souq.com, an American company owned by Amazon. The Souq.com training was focused on sales, communication with clients, and professional standards for presenting, wrapping, and delivering products.

"The AYB training was critical for me, I use to struggle before to market my products and to communicate with my clients”.

USAID’s SSA mandate is to continue supporting the SEED established BDSs during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing them with technical assistance to help them promote their services to startups, and MSMEs in general, and to assist them in replicating best practices.

In Asmaa’s case, Souq.com were so impressed with her hard work and creativity that they picked some of her products and offered her a partnership. Asmaa’s journey is a beautiful success story where after only six months of training, consultations, and orientation sessions, Asmaa began using social media to promote her business “From Paper” and thereby managed to adapt her business to the COVID 19 pandemic impacts.
### Table: Performance Indicators Tracking Table (PITT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective Statements</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual FY 2022</th>
<th>Actual FY 2023</th>
<th>Cumulative Achieved to Date</th>
<th>Cumulative % Achieved to Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result 1:</strong> Sustainability of MSMEs and private sector firms supported</td>
<td>Number of MSMEs receiving Technical Assistance (TA)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result 2:</strong> Startups and MSMEs negatively affected by the COVID-19 economic crisis</td>
<td>Number of MSMEs that benefited financially sustainably</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result 3:</strong> Access to finance by Startups and MSMEs supported</td>
<td>Number of startups receiving Technical Assistance (TA)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result 4:</strong> BDS Centers supported in improving their sustainability</td>
<td>Number of BDS centers receiving Technical Assistance (TA)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>180.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result 5:</strong> BDS Centers supported in improving their sustainability</td>
<td>Number of BDS centers receiving Technical Assistance (TA)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result 6:</strong> BDS Centers supported in improving their sustainability</td>
<td>Number of BDS centers receiving Technical Assistance (TA)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result 7:</strong> BDS Centers supported in improving their sustainability</td>
<td>Number of BDS centers receiving Technical Assistance (TA)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**

1. Green color indicates a target met or exceeded.
2. Red color indicates a target not met.
3. Yellow color indicates a target has changed.
4. Blue color indicates a target has not yet been set.
5. Black color indicates that the target is not applicable.

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**Note:** The data in the table is based on the Performance Indicators Tracking Table (PITT) for the USAID SSA's PITT Project Y2. The data reflects the performance indicators for the fiscal year 2022 (FY 2022) and FY 2023, along with the cumulative achievements up to date. The targets and indicators are aligned with the project's objectives to enhance business performance and support MSMEs and startups.