

Title: Danone Egypt celebrates the 10th anniversary of launching Alban Baladna project in Beni Suef.

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Haitham Sadek: "Alban Baladna" is an important initiative to empower small farmers and provide high quality, pollutant-free milk François-Henri Derrien: Marking the 10th anniversary of project Alban Baladna is a reflection of its continued success Hazem Fahmy: Establishing a sound and balanced system for stakeholders is one of the most important factors for success.

Celebrating 10 years of impact on local farmers, [Danone Egypt](#), in partnership with CARE International in Egypt and Danone Ecosystem Fund held a grand ceremony for the 10th anniversary of “Alban Baladna” project in Beni Suef Governorate. The event was attended by Dr. Assem Salama, Deputy Governor of Beni Suef, François-Henri Derrien, Danone Ecosystem Fund Manager for Africa & Eastern Europe, Dr. Hazem Fahmy, Country Director of Care International in Egypt, along with a number of executive leaders from the Ministry of Agriculture, including Mr. Omar Hassan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Director of Veterinary Services in Beni Suef Governorate.

Danone International, along with Care Egypt, established milk collection centers ten years ago, the first of these came in the village of Halabiya, Beni Suef, in Upper Egypt in 2010. The project expanded by establishing 6 milk collection centres in the village of Ibshna, Halabiya, Bani Madi, Barout, Al Nouria, Shabab Al Mostaqbal in Behbeshin, in addition to 11 milk collection points: (4) Ibshna village, (2) in Al-Nuwaira, (2) in Barut, and (3) in Bani Madi. Over the years, the project has empowered more than 8,000 people indirectly and 3000 small farmers directly of which 2,500 women and has offered 190 employment opportunities in collecting milk.

“The celebration of the 10th anniversary of launching Alban Baladna with all key partners is a testimony of this project’s success and vital role in achieving our objectives towards developing small holder farmers communities in the ecosystems of Danone’s value chain”, stated François-Henri Derrien, Danone Ecosystem Fund Manager for Africa & Eastern Europe. The project also works on achieving inclusiveness and environmental sustainability, providing organizational knowledge, technical expertise and financial support. “The projects developed by Danone Ecosystem Fund respond to local challenges on 4 main clusters:

sustainable sourcing (incl. regenerative agriculture), inclusive recycling, micro-distribution, and focusing on health topics.” François-Henri added that in 2009, Danone shareholders have

agreed to put €100 million of the company's liquidity in the Danone Ecosystem Fund, a general interest mission endowment fund. "So far, the Fund's has empowered more than 70 000 people

worldwide with different social and economic backgrounds to try and build a more sustainable and inclusive economy. Our operating model is to bring together non-profit organizations, local Danone business units and civil society for a positive impact on people and the planet." Haitham Sadek, General Manager and Managing Director of Danone Egypt and North East Africa said that the "Alban Baladna" project is one of the most important initiatives of Danone Egypt's. In 2010, the company, through the Danone Ecosystem Fund and in cooperation with CARE International in Egypt, established milk collection centers with the aim of enabling small milk producers and farmers to provide high quality milk, free from any contaminants, antibiotics or solid impurities.

Haitham Sadek added that the project started in Beni Suef Governorate in 2010 and succeeded in providing top quality milk, while ensuring a healthy and sustainable ecosystem across the supply chain. The project was able to secure a significant portion of the company's needs of raw fresh milk, in addition to creating 190 job opportunities, and empowering more than 8,000 people indirectly, 3000 small holder farmers directly, with the participation of more than 2,500 women in the work of collecting milk, from 13 Milk collection centers in several governorates. The project contributes in reducing the high unemployment rates in rural areas in Egypt. Danone aims to create healthier and more sustainable food systems, in line with its vision "Nourishing a Happy, Healthier Egypt," which reflects a strong belief in the company's global vision: "One Planet, One Health".

He explained that over the course of 10 years, nearly 3,000 farmers and rural women benefited from the project directly and 8,100 people benefited indirectly, this includes family members of farmers and rural women. The project increased the dairy production rates of Beni Suef Governorate significantly; going from 5 tons only at the beginning of the project, where the daily average was estimated at 200 kg before "Alban Baladna" project, to reach a whopping 34 tons of milk per day, with a 5% increase year on year.

Dr. Hazem Fahmy, Country Director of CARE International in Egypt, said that the partnership between [CARE Egypt](#) and Danone is one of the longest partnerships. "The project also witnessed many challenges, the most critical of which was attracting dairy producers to supply the stations with the quantity of milk produced and to ensure its quality." He added, "It was necessary to raise the efficiency of the stations and provide skilled manpower. A key lesson learned from the project is that establishing a sound and balanced system for stakeholders is one of the most important factors for success. The project was not limited to merely providing a fair price and raising the efficiency of the stations, but its services extended to the provision of veterinary services, including vaccinations, artificial insemination, the provision of proper fodder and clean water sources for cattle." Dr. Hazem Fahmy emphasized that such partnerships have the greatest impact on diversifying the sources of income for the population of rural areas and in developing the national economy.

The first phase of the project focused on introducing advanced high-tech equipment to ensure high-quality milk, which is indispensable in the dairy industry in Egypt. During the first ten months of the project implementation, the local assembly centers were able to reach 5 tons per day compared to 200 kilos per day at the beginning of the project's construction, thus exceeding the project's original goal of 3 tons per day, and the focus of the second and third phases was on increasing production and improving milk quality. By improving feed and veterinary services, improving breeds and spreading good milking practices.