

# **EAIS PROJECT OVERVIEW**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The EAIS project was launched in 2000 by the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt (SCA) in collaboration with the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in order to create, within the SCA, a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) and database of Egypt's historical sites. The system is intended for the use of national and international organisations and institutions as well as individual professionals and scholars whose activities are related to the protection and management of historical sites.

EAIS was set as a *Centre of Excellence* within Egypt's public sector, operating according to established international management and performance guidelines and standards. It has been managed jointly by the SCA and the Finnish Environmental Institute (SYKE), with Dr. Naguib Amin as its leading consultant and Mrs. Azza al-Shawarby as its National Director.

The project has been audited by the funding agency (Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and the beneficiary party (Egyptian Ministry of Culture). Both have declared the project transparent and financially sound.

## **NEED AND IMPACT**

Access to land use information in Egypt, including allocation of historical and archaeological land, is essential to direct work of planning agencies and development authorities.

If data, location and boundaries of historical and archaeological sites are unknown or inaccessible the risk of their loss to urban and agricultural expansion and intensive development activities is high and the capacity to manage them is much reduced.

The tourism sector in Egypt, combining coastal and cultural tourism, has been identified as a main factor of economic development and poverty reduction in the country, noting that it is the first source of foreign currency and the second generator of employment.

Additional destinations of historical sites need to be developed to attract tourism away from both over developed coastal areas and over visited historical sites, namely Gizah, Luxor and Aswan.

## **EAIS STATUS**

Starting October 2007, EAIS will be managed by the EAIS Association, operating in full partnership with the GIS department of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, which is the beneficiary partner.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The ultimate goal of the project, and the GIS Centre, is to aid in historical site protection and management. The aim is to identify the location and characteristics of historical sites, record them and transfer the information to targeted stakeholders who should then take the existence of the sites into consideration and use this information in all their conservation, administrative and social and economic development related activities. These stakeholders include national development agencies, land use planners, local and municipal authorities, and key ministries such as those of housing, planning and tourism.

## **OPERATIONS**

EAIS provides critical information for Cultural Resource Management and most overall land management.

- It collects data from dispersed and often inaccessible sources, such as unpublished official SCA reports (usually handwritten in Arabic) and old archaeological mission reports.
- It retrieves, translates and synthesises data published in several languages (English, French, Italian and German) into Arabic and English. Access to such information is particularly important to international scholars who do not speak Arabic, and to Egyptians who have limited foreign language proficiency.
- It makes available information that often constitutes the only record of small historical sites.
- It provides the SCA with information that is a prerequisite for proper site management planning.
- It helps protect sites from uncontrolled expansion by supplying national planning authorities (such as the General Organization of Physical Planning (GOPP)<sup>1</sup> and the Ministry of Agriculture) with maps establishing accurate boundaries of historical sites, so that they can take them into consideration while implementing development plans and land use allocation.
- It enables the Ministry of Tourism, local authorities and investors to identify sites with potential for tourism development.

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<sup>1</sup> The organization is responsible for setting the general directives for physical planning policy and preparing plans and programs for urban development in Egypt.

## **RESOURCES**

### **1. Personnel**

EAIS affiliates experienced, multidisciplinary, multinational and multilingual staff. Permanent full time staff totals 30: five archaeologists, six GIS and four database engineers, two legal researcher, one graphic-designer, one web-developer and two system engineers, in addition to the management team consisting of a Team Leader, a National Project Manager, one Administrative Officer, two administration and two service staff. A number of external collaborators are also affiliated to EAIS in Egypt and abroad.

### **2. Equipment**

EAIS is fully equipped with state-of-the-art IT equipment assuring a full cycle of data research, collection, documentation, site survey, treatment and production, as well as for management tasks. This includes workstations, printers, photocopiers, scanners, plotters, cameras, GPS devices, in addition to two 4x4 vehicles. The project also uses the latest versions of relevant GIS and Database software.

## **FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

The GIS Centre will continue to cover the remaining Governorates to expand the database but with seven years of experience in CRM the centre now has the capacity to be closer involved in a number of other related activities.

- Conducting Information Technology related projects in the field of historical heritage, such as digital documentation of archaeological objects or museum collections, remote sensing and survey.
- Conducting joint site management projects which include heritage documentation and preparation of site management plans.