

SEKEM |



COP²⁸
UAE

2023 Report



**EGYPTIAN
BIODYNAMIC
ASSOCIATION**
demeter


Economy
of Love


جامعة هليوبوليس
Heliopolis University
for Sustainable Development


CFC
EGYPTIAN FOOTPRINT CENTER



Executive Summary

At COP 28, SEKEM clearly conveyed the message; Agriculture is a part of the solution. SEKEM, Egyptian Biodynamic Association “EBDA” and Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development support the Egyptian farmers in transitioning from conventional practices to organic and biodynamic methods. They have developed the Economy of Love (EoL) standard; a comprehensive and consolidated scheme, which includes governance, certification criteria, and an online platform for impact tracing following ISO 17067 guidelines.

Through EBDA, farmers have been able to generate additional income by implementing EoL carbon practices, which is considered a promising solution to address climate change challenges. Currently, EBDA has initiated a project to scale up organic farming in Egypt by assisting 40,000 farmers in transitioning to organic and biodynamic practices. This initiative aims to monetize ecosystem services through agricultural carbon credits, foster affordable sustainable and healthy food consumption, and improve the livelihoods of local communities.

Beside its own call to action, SEKEM was part of Non-State Actor Call to Action for transforming

food systems for people, nature, and climate that was endorsed by over 200 endorsers. By signing the Call to Action, we are advocating for time-bound, comprehensive, global targets and locally appropriate pathways for the transition of food systems and emphasizing the importance of assisting farmers and other frontline food system actors as well as vulnerable groups and respecting and valuing indigenous peoples’ traditional knowledge.

SEKEM is part of Climate Resilient Food Systems (CRFS) Alliance led by three main co-leads: WFP, UNFCCC, and FAO which aims to bring together a diverse range of actors from both UN and non-UN backgrounds to contribute with their knowledge, to building a world where food systems are climate resilient, inclusive, and sustainable. The CRFS Alliance Advocacy Framework presents an annually updated document to reflect the latest available science and knowledge, emerging themes and the different events and processes related to climate-resilient food systems. Through The CRFS Advocacy Framework 2023, SEKEM conveyed its key message that was issued to



serve as a basis for relevant advocacy efforts at COP 28. SEKEM message was originated from its Call of Action:

- Joint approval of minimum requirements for carbon credit schemes. Schemes meeting the proposed requirements herein are accepted and can sell and trade their validated and verified agricultural carbon credits on the international Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM), ensuring global recognition.
- Funding farm transitions, ensuring their shift towards climate-friendly agriculture by utilizing future earnings from agriculture carbon credits for initiatives such as renewable energy installation and capacity building.
- Facilitating smallholder farmers' entry to the global VCM by providing knowledge, funding, and assistance in transitioning farms to apply climate friendly methods (e.g., Economy of Love scheme).

The World Economic Forum's white paper Grassroots to Boardrooms: Social Innovation Partnerships for Climate Adaptation published in November 2023 highlighted the importance of climate adaptation for companies, as it can affect supply chains, agricultural production, and asset prices. The report emphasized that efforts to combat climate change have primarily focused on mitigation, but there is a growing recognition of the need to allocate more resources to adaptation. The report suggests that collaboration between

businesses and community-driven social innovators is crucial for effective adaptation. SEKEM through its Economy of Love initiative was referred to as a case study for social innovators, working at the local level, from the private sector that has fully embraced climate adaptation.

SEKEM was selected to be one of the case studies presented in a white paper prepared by Dasra that is known as a catalyst for social change in India. The white paper focuses on Equity, Climate, and Gender (ECG) which are some of the themes that SEKEM is concerned with. The introduction of the white paper includes a quote by Mr. Helmy Abouleish:

"Despite challenges in Egypt, SEKEM continues

to invest in its people, communities, and drives innovation towards a brighter, more sustainable future for all. No matter the circumstances, we are enthusiastic about changing the world and confronting a new "mission impossible". We have this concept of sustainable development which tries to balance economic, ecological, societal, and cultural developments in a harmonious way." The paper is set to be released during the World Economic Forum 2024. The white paper describes SEKEM's strategy, which involves promoting biodynamic agriculture and other regenerative practices to enhance food security in Egypt. The document also highlights SEKEM's milestones in the ECG (Economy, Climate, and Gender) aspects. The white paper refers that SEKEM's aspirations



include training farmers in waste reduction and recycling, establishing a waste management facility for agricultural reuse, and building climate resilience among producers. They also plan to expand into new export markets for organic agricultural products to help producers diversify their revenue streams.

SEKEM was addressed in another white paper that will be published in January 2024. It will be presented by The UN High Level Climate Champions team, supported by PwC. The white paper aims to align a business case for climate adaptation, outlines the critical role of the private sector in adaptation action, and highlights how businesses are investing in adaptation. SEKEM is highlighted as a case study under the Food and Agriculture impact system to demonstrate how businesses can contribute to the Sharm El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda (SAA) outcome targets. SEKEM shows how businesses are scaling-up regenerative agricultural practices to help deliver on Outcome 1 under the SAA Food and Agriculture Impact Systems: "50% of food globally is produced through sustainable agriculture practices (including agroecological and regenerative approaches), without expansion of the agricultural frontier into pristine ecosystems, to deliver for people, nature and climate", highlighting the many co-benefits that come from nature-based solutions.



COP28 PARTENERS



Participation **Details**

Pavilion Location

ZONE B7, BUILDING 89, PAVILION TA2-125 – FOOD & HEALTH BUILDING – Ground floor, next to Food System, Expo City, Dubai, UAE.

Areas of Cooperation

- Co-hosting events in the Blue Zone (Future Economy Forum pavilion) and the Green Zone, including daily “Solutions Dialogues” sessions, larger content & receptions events in the auditorium and on the terrace of the beautiful Terra building.
- Showcasing our industry expertise through our team members’ speaking engagements at various sessions.

Discussed Topics

- “40,000 Farmers for a Regenerative Future in Egypt” initiative.
- Organic and climate positive agriculture.
- Whole food systems framework.

SEKEM Contributions

- **Joint call to action for organic and climate positive agriculture:** SEKEM Group, HU, EoL, Carbon Footprint Center, and Future Economy Forum collaborated to develop a call to action that collectively call for easing the carbon credit schemes requirements and facilitating the shift towards climate-friendly agriculture in addition through facilitating smallholder farmers’ entry to the global VCM by providing knowledge, funding, and assistance.
- **“Transforming our food systems” - Climate Champions:** Endorsed by more than 150 entities, the call to action focuses on transforming food systems and setting global targets for climate, nature, and food crises to be achieved by COP29.
- **Social Innovation Partnerships for Climate Adaptation:** In this Future Economy Forum’s WhitePape, SEKEM Group commitment to a regenerative future was highlighted as a compelling case study, showcasing our ‘40,000 farmers creating a regenerative future in Egypt’ initiative.
- **Climate Resilient Food Systems (CRFS) Alliance Advocacy Framework 2023:** This document was the result of a compilation of high level messages collected through the

core group and leadership group of the alliance, and is composed by an executive summary of key messages, the extended version of such messages (including facts and data to support them) and annexes containing the overview of food and agriculture related events at COP and CRFS Alliance members’ specific calls to action.

SEKEM Group Partners



Participating SEKEM Entities



COP28

Engagements



NOVEMBER

The COP28 Presidency Reception

Mr. Helmy Abouleish attended The COP28 Presidency Reception in the presence of His Majesty King Charles III and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nayhan, President of the United Arab Emirates.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

Operationalizing the Nairobi Declaration

Mr. Helmy Abouleish participated in the High-Level Presidential Session on the Africa Green Industrialization Initiative, themed “Operationalizing the Nairobi Declaration.” The event was organized by the Government of Kenya, The African Union, UN Climate Change High-Level Champions, Africa Business Leaders Coalition, and the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet. During the session, H.E President Ruto and other African presidents announced the Africa Green Industrialization Initiative and the operationalization of the Nairobi Declaration. Additionally, Sir James Mwangi of Equity Group led non-state actors and members of the private sector in announcing progress towards driving a net-zero agenda in Africa.

Carbon Market session

Mr. Helmy Abouleish attended the Egyptian Carbon Market session at The Egyptian Pavilion.

The Leadership Dialogue for Regenerative Food Systems to shape the future of climate action

Mr. Helmy Abouleish attended the “Leadership Dialogue for Regenerative Food Systems to shape the future of climate action” session hosted by Future Economy Forum. The session highlighted the success of the “Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming” (APCNF) method, which has benefited 850,000 Indian farmers. This innovative approach to agriculture combines economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and social well-being.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

Blended Finance to Scale Regenerative Agriculture

Mr. Helmy Abouleish attended APCNF's session titled: Blended Finance to Scale Regenerative Agriculture: The session discussed the potential of combining different forms of financing to scale agroecology initiatives such as Egypt's Sekem and India's APCNF at both domestic and global levels.

Terra Pavilion

Financing the transition towards regenerative food systems

Mr. Helmy Abouleish took part in the "Financing the transition towards regenerative food systems" session, emphasizing the global finance community's need to invest in food systems transformation, including public-private partnerships. This is vital due to the role of regenerative agricultural systems in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

Whole System Carbon Credits

Mr. Helmy Abouleish moderated the “Whole System Carbon Credits” session. The session discussed the Economy of Love (EoL) standard, which balances four dimensions of society, economy, culture, and environment. EoL is a certification standard that supports biodynamic farmers and promotes sustainable practices, such as regenerative agriculture and forestry. The standard aims to improve various aspects of life, including:

- **Biodiversity, soil, and human health**
- **Food and water security**
- **Socioeconomic conditions of smallholder farmers**

High-integrity and high-quality carbon credits financed the shift to regenerative agriculture and forestry, enabling smallholder farmers in Egypt to earn more money.

Carbon Farming Collectives: Overcoming Vulnerability

Mr. Helmy Abouleish was a speaker during Save the soil session: Carbon Farming Collectives: Overcoming Vulnerability. The session focused on how small and marginal farmers can mitigate the effects of climate change and create an efficient carbon sink on their lands through implementing sustainable soil management practices. Key points discussed included the challenges that might face the farmers and how global efforts can bring together farmers for scaling up agriculture-based climate solutions.

Circles of Trust

The event was arranged by EIT Food, Future Economy Forum and Paul Polman to discuss the importance of partnerships for the food system transformation and the importance of building partnerships on trust and deeper human connections.

The discussion was an exclusive discussion with a small, carefully chosen group of world leaders and decision makers from the public and private sectors to identify actions to build trust between key stakeholders, and enable the needed transitions for food systems.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

The High Level Meeting of Caring for Climate

Mr. Helmy Abouleish attended the High Level Meeting of Caring for Climate. The event was organized by the UN Global Compact in partnership with the UN Environment Programme and UN Climate Change. Mr. Helmy Abouleish, as one of the CEOs of the UN Global Compact Participant Companies, was invited to join other representatives from various stakeholder groups, including investors, civil society, labor organizations, business associations, academic institutions, governmental agencies, and the United Nations. The event aimed to convey a clear business message of climate ambition and to support the scaling and acceleration of climate action, particularly following the conclusion of the first Global Stocktake.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

The Catalyst 2030 South x South Climate Alliance Launch

Mr. Helmy Abouleish spoke at The Catalyst 2030 South x South Climate Alliance Launch. The event included Catalyst 2030 members from the Global South encouraging the inclusion of an additional pillar at COP28 and the allocation of funds specifically for social entrepreneurs.

During the event, Mr. Helmy Abouleish, Neelam Chibber (Industree), and Sheela Patel (ROOH) discussed the vital connections between addressing climate change and promoting food security, resilience against poverty, and circularity.





DECEMBER

Business Coalition Pavilion

Ms. Naglaa Ahmed, Project Manager & Consultant at EBDA, took part in NOW Partners sessions at the Business Coalition Pavilion:

1. **Climate adaptation: managing risk and resilience:**

The panel discussed the importance of managing risk and resilience in the face of climate change, emphasizing the need for businesses to incorporate adaptation strategies into their sustainable growth plans. As the world warms, mitigation efforts must be prioritized to ensure businesses can adapt and thrive in a changing climate

2. **Health Care Round Table (über Walter) Emirates towers:**

The session showcased activities that demonstrate the benefits of biodynamic



farming for health and food safety.

Evening Event:

Opening Night Kyu House

Our team members attended The inaugural event at Kyu House, which took place during COP28 in Dubai, aimed to connect creativity to climate action in order to catalyze and deliver solutions around climate change.



DECEMBER

Blue Zone

Biodiversity Credits: Financing the transition to regenerative agriculture & forestry

Mr. Helmy Abouleish moderated the Solutions Dialogue session on “Biodiversity Credits: Financing the transition to regenerative agriculture & forestry”. The session focused on the need for transformative change in biodiversity preservation, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive collaboration and the involvement of diverse stakeholders. This approach aims to address the complex challenges posed by the loss of biodiversity and the climate crisis.



Creating A Sustainable ‘Zero Carbon Footprint’ World: Accelerating & Connecting Business, Technology and Governance Solutions

Dr. Thorya Seaada, Director of Carbon Footprint Centre, spoke during the “Creating A Sustainable ‘Zero Carbon Footprint’ World: Accelerating

& Connecting Business, Technology and Governance Solutions” panels. The first panel convened government officials, investors, corporates, labor leaders, and developers to deliberate on practical measures for realizing a ‘carbon reduction’ future. While the second panel sparked a global dialogue, bringing together corporate and labor leaders as well as policy experts to champion a comprehensive clean energy revolution.

Pioneering intersectoral partnerships for climate actions in Africa

Mr. Helmy Abouleish was one of the speakers during the “Pioneering intersectoral partnerships for climate actions in Africa”

The session showcased SEKEM as a successful climate-sensitive business model in Africa, emphasizing the importance of the private sector interventions in climate actions including adaptation and mitigation. In addition to shedding light on the importance of investing in youth capacity building and green entrepreneurship to address climate change and create sustainable opportunities for the future.



DECEMBER

Driving Accountable and Actionable Climate Solutions in Africa

Mr. Helmy Abouleish attended the session on: Driving Accountable and Actionable Climate Solutions in Africa at the SDG Pavilion (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

The session brought together key stakeholders from various sectors to discuss and plan the next steps in addressing climate commitments, scaling up climate action and financing, and ensuring a just and fair transition for all.

Crafting policies: Easing Farmers' access to Carbon Finance

Ms. Naglaa Ahmed, Project Manager & Consultant at EBDA, was part of the speakers during the "Crafting policies: Easing Farmers' access to Carbon Finance" session.

The session addressed the necessity for policy evolution and the persistent challenges in enabling farmers' access to carbon finance. The unique event explored the progress of policy-level steps and the potential for carbon finance to become a primary source of income for farmers engaged in carbon-negative agriculture.

UAE Pavilion

Ms. Naglaa Ahmed, Project Manager & Consultant at EBDA, participated in a fruitful conversation at the UAE Pavilion through introducing (EoL) standard as a solution to climate change. The conversation also involved Sadhguru, who advocated for organic practices to save the soil, emphasizing the importance of soil revitalization and the need to increase the organic content of soils through sustainable farming practices.





DECEMBER

Green Zone

Driving Africa's Just Transition

Mr. Mohamed Anwar, Director of the Rural Development Centre, participated in the "Driving Africa's Just Transition" session at the DP World Centre. This session, organized by the Climate Champions Team and the Africa Business Leaders Coalition (ABLC). The session marked a significant juncture for the coalition to intensify its endeavors, reinforce its dedication to a sustainable and fair future, and promote cooperation among businesses, governments, and civil society leaders to propel impactful climate initiatives and guarantee a Just and Fair Transition for Africa.



Blue Zone

Producers Trust x Sekem x EoL

Mr. Justus Harm, Co-executive Director at EBDA & Economy of Love (EoL), Ms. Naglaa Ahmed, Project Manager & Consultant at EBDA and Dr. Thorya Seada, Director of Carbon Footprint Center (CFC) joined the "Producers Trust x Sekem x EoL" panel. Our team showcased the upscaling of the 40,000 farmers model which demonstrates a commitment to addressing climate change, promoting biodiversity conservation, and improving livelihoods through sustainable agricultural practices and knowledge transfer. The team explained how the model serves as an example to utilize collaboration and innovation to build a more sustainable and equitable future.

Adapting to the Escalating Consequences of Climate Change

Mr. Helmy Abouleish joined as a speaker at the "Adapting to the Escalating Consequences of Climate Change" session at the IETA Business Hub Pavilion. The session was co-organized by the World Economic Forum and the Global Center on Adaptation to discuss the challenges and opportunities for businesses to effectively participate in and contribute to accelerating climate adaptation. The event emphasized the necessity for the global community to reduce emissions, but also highlighted the acute impacts of climate change and the need for climate adaptation. However, governmental financing for climate adaptation lags, and businesses struggle to participate effectively. The event aimed to understand the unique contributions of businesses and how to scale their role to better align with adaptation needs.



DECEMBER

Day seven of the international “4 per 1000” Initiative

Mr. Helmy Abouleish, CEO of SEKEM and Councilor of the World Future Council, was invited to give a speech on the 7th Day of the international “4 per 1000” Initiative. The initiative, which has been active since 2020, focuses on environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and desertification, as well as food security and health. However, due to the withdrawal of countries and increased energy, raw material, and fertilizer prices, there has been a shift in focus towards self-sufficiency and autonomy for food supply. This has led to soil health taking a back seat, despite its importance for addressing climate change, biodiversity erosion, desertification, and food insecurity. The Initiative continues to call for sustained efforts to improve soil health, and it was hoped that COP 28 would bring soil health to the forefront of the international agenda set by the Rio Conventions.

Cash Collation Round Table Discussion

Thoraya Seada, Director of the Carbon Footprint Center at Heliopolis University, participated in a roundtable discussion on developing a market for smallholder farmer carbon credits with CASH Coalition members. The discussion aimed to:

- Bring together a select group of innovators, funders, buyers, and policymakers to discuss the value and viability of creating a market for smallholder farmer carbon credits.
- Showcase the potential of the CASH Coalition to aggregate large numbers of farmers and local communities to adopt regenerative and climate-smart practices to access and benefit from carbon markets and Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES).
- Contribute to the development of a smallholder-based carbon market that supports regenerative agricultural transformation, invigorates smallholder livelihoods, and delivers a large quantity of high-quality carbon credits.

The CASH Coalition is a collaborative initiative working with smallholder farmers, indigenous communities, and other local populations in the Global South to accelerate the smallholder regenerative transition and catalyze climate action at scale.





DECEMBER

 **Emirates Bio Farm Visit**





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

Credits for Cultural, Social & Economic Regeneration (People Credits)

Mr. Helmy Abouleish, SEKEM Group CEO, and other prominent members of our team, including Mr. Justus Harm, Co-executive Director at EBDA & Economy of Love (EoL), Ms. Naglaa Ahmed, Project Manager & Consultant at EBDA, Dr. Thorya Seada, Director of Carbon Footprint Center (CFC), Mr. Mohamed Anwer, Director of the Rural Development Center, and Ms. Buthaina Elhosieny, Project Coordinator at EBDA, participated in the Solutions Dialogue session: Credits for Cultural, Social & Economic Regeneration (People Credits). The session focused on the transformation of People Credits and emphasized the need for partnerships, trust, and deeper human connections to realize their full potential. Global leaders and decision makers from the private and public sectors discussed the impact of People Credits on societal well-being and the planet. The event facilitated meaningful connections among the participants and highlighted the significance

of People Credits in fostering social equity and resilience, positioning them prominently on the COP28 Presidency agenda.





DECEMBER

Green Zone

Strengthening Offer and Demand for Regenerative Products

During the Evening Solutions Dialogue Series session titled 'Strengthening Offer and Demand for Regenerative Products,' Mr. Helmy Abouleish participated in a discussion on how farmers, businesses, and regions can enhance the supply and demand for regenerative products. The session also explored how finance and policy can provide support. The transition towards farming and economic models that prioritize both economic success and the regeneration of people and the planet is already underway.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

Credits for the Water, Energy, Food Nexus: Financing the Transition to Regenerative Agriculture and Food and other Industry Systems

Mr. Helmy Aboulesih was a speaker at the Solutions Dialogue session titled “Credits for the Water, Energy, Food Nexus: Financing the Transition to Regenerative Agriculture and Food and other Industry Systems.” This session brought together global leaders and decision-makers from the private and public sectors to discuss the impact of food and water security on the response to the climate and biodiversity crises.

The UNESCO Session at the Egyptian Pavilion

Mr. Helmy Abouleish, CEO of the SEKEM Group, and Ms. Naglaa Ahmed, Project Manager & Consultant at EBDA, joined the UNESCO session discussion at the Egyptian Pavilion. The session, organized in partnership with FAO and WMO, aimed to bolster

climate resilience by integrating scientific and local farmer knowledge systems to enhance the adoption of climate services in traditional agricultural systems. The panel, which included speakers from various countries, underscored the significance of a user-centered approach in creating agrometeorological advisory services through co-design, co-development, and co-production, with a specific focus on meeting the needs of Indigenous and rural communities.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

Community-Powered Regeneration: The Playbook

During the “Community-Powered Regeneration: The Playbook” session, Mr. Helmy Abouleish joined other participants in exploring regenerative thinking and sustainability. The session was part of a series of events hosted by Engin Ayaz, aimed at contributing to a more regenerative future. The 28-page Regenerative Playbook, which includes a foreword by Josie Warden, Head of Regenerative, offers questions and challenges to help businesses and organizations develop regenerative support programs.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

Potential Impact Of Utilizing Carbon Credits For Cultural, Social, And Economic Regeneration

Mr. Helmy Abouleish, alongside SEKEM Group team members, including Mr. Justus Harm, Co-executive Director at EBDA & Economy of Love), Ms. Naglaa Ahmed, Project Manager & Consultant at EBDA, Mr. Mohamed Anwer, Director of the Rural Development Center, and Ms. Buthaina Elhosieny, Project Coordinator at EBDA, in a 'Solutions Dialogues' discussion on the potential impact of utilizing carbon credits for cultural, social, and economic regeneration. The team explored how this approach could contribute to transforming societal well-being for people and the planet.





DECEMBER

Green Zone

The Impact of Arts for Climate Initiatives in Rural Area Schools

Dr. Ahmed El Shazly, Director of Sponsored Programs and International Relations, and Mr. Mohamed Anwar, Director of the Rural Development Center, participated in a session titled: "The Impact of Arts for Climate Initiatives in Rural Area Schools." The session was organized and facilitated by Heliopolis University to highlight the crucial role of arts in addressing climate challenges in rural communities.





DECEMBER

Sustainability Pavlion

Economy of Love (EoL) has officially signed a contract with ICPM Group, their new validation and verification body for their whole system carbon credits. This partnership is a significant step for (EoL) in ensuring the credibility and integrity of their carbon credit system. The collaboration with ICPM Group will likely enhance the transparency of EoL's carbon credit program, benefiting local organic farmers and contributing to sustainable development





DECEMBER

Green Zone

Mainstreaming Regenerative Agriculture on the Road to COP30

Mr. Helmy Abouleish participated in the “Mainstreaming Regenerative Agriculture on the Road to COP30” session, which was part of the Evening Solutions Dialogue Series. This session focused on regenerative farming methods in various geographies and scales, aiming to surpass the current chemical-based mainstream of agriculture in all aspects, including productivity, farmers’ incomes, health, biodiversity, and climate.





DECEMBER

Blue Zone

NASA Hyperwall Talk

Dr. Thoraya Seada, the Director of the Carbon Footprint Center (CFC) at Heliopolis University, participated at the COP28 NASA Hyperwall Talk. Dr. Thoraya emphasized the crucial role of data in monitoring carbon dioxide reduction levels from various climate activities. Additionally, she discussed Heliopolis University's significant efforts in addressing climate issues in Egypt and promoting sustainable development through regenerative agriculture.



Other Meetings & Events



SEKEM Group’s meeting with the World Future Council to discuss potential cooperation.



Climate Resonance Music Show in Dubai Opera. The show aims to raise awareness about the climate change crisis and global warming, as well as brainstorm innovative solutions!