

General

Vision “Sustainable development towards a future where every human being can unfold his or her individual potential; where mankind is living together in social forms reflecting human dignity; and where all economic activity is conducted in accordance with ecological and ethical principles.”
Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish

Mission The SEKEM Initiative was founded to realize the vision of sustainable development, the development of the individual, society and environment through a holistic concept integrating economic, societal, cultural and ecologic life. Above all, SEKEM aspires to be an impulse for continuous development in all parts of life, to be not only a model for, but also a contribution to the development of the entire world.

History In 1977, Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish started the SEKEM initiative on an untouched part of the Egyptian desert (70 hectares) 60 km northeast of Cairo by using Biodynamic agricultural methods, desert land was revitalized and a striving agricultural business developed. Today, these soils form the very basis for the successful cultivation of herbs, fruits, vegetables, cotton and other crops. The raw materials are further processed by the companies of the SEKEM Group to create high quality food and medicines, which are sold in national and international markets. The returns of these companies are partly reinvested into the social and cultural activities. Over the years, SEKEM became the umbrella of a multifaceted agro-industrial group of companies and NGOs. Today, SEKEM is regarded as a leading social business worldwide.

The name SEKEM means according to an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph „vitality and life power to transform.

Alternative Nobel Prize In 2003, the Schwab Foundation selected Dr. Abouleish as one of the world’s outstanding social entrepreneurs. In the same year, SEKEM and Dr. Abouleish received the prestigious “Right Livelihood Award”, also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize. The awarding committee stated that “SEKEM demonstrates how a modern business model combines profitability and success in world markets with a humane and spiritual approach to people while maintaining respect for the environment”. Find more awards that SEKEM received in the SEKEM Fact Sheet.

The Four Dimensions of Sustainable Development

SEKEM works to support the community in all dimensions. The four aspects represent the essential pillars to create a sustainable future. SEKEM envisions the successful circle of life embedded in within four sections that cannot be separated or, survive without the other:

Societal Life SEKEM engages with all its stakeholders in a holistic and transparent way. It promotes human rights and its main purpose is to enhance the human values. To ensure respect for the dignity of humankind and guarantee the equality of everybody in the community, a cooperative of SEKEM Employees was developed aiming to raise the consciousness of the concepts of humanity and sustainability and the importance of sharing and mutual trust among the employees of all SEKEM companies. The SEKEM Code of Conduct explicitly states SEKEMs commitment to protect and advocate for human rights in all its activities and spheres of influence.

Cultural Life Sustainable cultural development means individual human development. The people need to be guided to their individual inspirational sources, whether these are sciences, philosophy, religion, arts or beauty. This can only be achieved through freedom in cultural life through the establishment of connections with other local cultures through a global network. Lifelong learning enables the individual to improve living conditions and contribute to the development of the community and country. Children who have been given the opportunity to receive a holistic education are likely to become free-spirited and responsible individuals.

Ecology SEKEMs governing principle is not only to reduce the ‘ecological footprint’, but to spread life and to contribute towards a better and healthier condition of the land and the people that SEKEM work with. This is the only way to create and sustain conditions for a planet with more than seven billion people. SEKEM thus commit itself to sustaining and further developing all ecological spheres. Through Biodynamic agricultural principles, quality standards and efficiency improvements, the application of new technologies and education of all our stakeholders, “eco-literacy” shall be achieved. This means keeping the environment in balance and taking the scarcity of all resources into consideration. To assure that the environmental management system works effectively, SEKEM has aligned it with the ISO 14001 standard. The responsibilities related to corporate environment protection (e.g. water, energy, waste) are organized centrally under the General Compliance Manager.

Economical Life The core businesses of the SEKEM Group are Organic farming, food, phyto-pharmaceutical, and textile production. The SEKEM companies include the largest packer of Organic tea and the leading producer of herbs in the Middle East. The SEKEM Group has implemented a comprehensive management system, integrating the four dimensions of sustainable development and annually reports on progress and achievements. SEKEM operates in accordance with Organic agriculture and fair trading principles that ensure healthy food and eco-systems and represent the basis for a positive and sustainable development. Since its foundation in 1977, SEKEM follows in its economic activities the principles of fairness towards all people involved in the production chain. This includes everybody from the producer to the consumer all over the world. SEKEM guarantees fair prices and long term cultivation contracts to the farmers. This makes them more independent from the rapidly changing world market prices, ensures their daily life throughout the year and gives them a perspective for a positive future.

Sustainability

SEKEM was founded with the idea of sustainable development and building of a prosperous future for the surrounding communities and Egypt. Like a compass, the vision, mission and values guide the employees in the everyday work in all SEKEM companies.

Sustainability Flower The sustainability flower reflects the fourfoldness of sustainable development, with the ecological dimension broken down into separate elements and spheres. The Sustainability Flower represents a management, assessment and communication tool symbolizing the concept of sustainable development in its four dimensions (economic life, societal life, cultural life and ecology with its six sub dimensions). It was developed within a network of international organizations from the Organic/Biodynamic movement cooperating under the umbrella of the „International Association of Partnership for Ecology and Trade“ (IAP). Each dimension consists of several performance aspects, defined in detail through performance indicators. These are, wherever possible and applicable, linked on the international standard for sustainability reporting, the GRI G3.1 of the Global Reporting Initiative.

Sustainability Report Since 2007 SEKEM publishes an annual Sustainability Report in order to measure its performance within the different aspects of sustainable development. This report is meant as an internal reporting and measurement tool, however share it transparently with whoever is interest to read it. The Sustainability Report is published by SEKEMs Sustainability Department that is managing, monitoring and improving sustainable development in SEKEM and Egypt.

Partnership

SEKEM has a strong network of partners all over the world.

SEKEM Friends Association

The five associations of SEKEM Friends in Europe (Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Scandinavia, Switzerland) were established to mainly support the cultural work of the SEKEM Initiative and to build a bridge between Europe and the Egyptian initiative by promoting the vision of SEKEM.

IAP

The most important partnership network is the International Association for Partnership in Ecology and Trade (IAP). In 1996, established by SEKEM and several of its long-term European business partners, in order to create a dynamic interaction between farmers, producers and traders, with the goal to provide consumers with high quality Organic products.

Partners (Selection)

DEG (German development Cooperation)
GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation)
Bio-Verbraucher e.V.
Egyptian Bio-Dynamic Association (EBDA)

Membership (Selection)

Demeter International
United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)
World Future Council (WFC)
International Association of Partnership in Ecology and Trade (IAP)
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM)
Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Shareholder (Selection)

GLS Beteiligungs AG
Triodos Ventures B.V.
Oikocredit Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society U.A.

Awards (Selection)

“Stauffermedaille” by the German Governorate Baden-Württemberg (2015)
“Land for Life Award 2015” by the United Nations to Combat Desertification (2015)
“Award for Excellence in Positive Change” by the Global Thinker Forum (2013)
“Business for Peace Award 2012” by Business for Peace Foundation and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) (2012)
“IMPACT Business Award 2011” by GIZ and BMZ (2011)
“New Sustainability Champion/Sustainability World Leader” by the World Economic Forum (2011)
“Ethics in Business” Award for Outstanding Individual by European Parliament (2008)
“Right Livelihood Award” by Right Livelihood Award Foundation (2003)
“Outstanding Social Entrepreneur 2003” by Schwab Foundation (2003)
“Award of Acknowledgement for outstanding contribution to the business community and modernization of Egyptian industry “ by German Arab Chamber of Industry and Commerce (2002)

General

Established	1977
Head Quarter	3 Belbes Desert Road, P.O.Box 2834 El Horreya Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt
Other SEKEM Farms	El Wahat El Bahareya, Minya, Sinai
Number of Employees	More than 2000
Vision	Sustainable development towards a future where every human being can unfold his or her individual potential; where mankind is living together in social forms reflecting human dignity; and where all economic activity is conducted in accordance with ecological and ethical principles
Main Business	SEKEM works in the four dimensions of Sustainable Development: Economy, Ecology, Societal Life and Cultural Life
Economy (Companies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISIS Organic - Organic FMCG ATOS Pharma - Phytopharmaceuticals NatureTex - Organic Cotton Textiles and Garments Lotus - Dried Organic Herbs and Spices SEKEM Health - Healthcare Products SEKEM Agriculture - Landreclamation and Organic Farming El-Mizan - Seedlings Libra - Cattle Management and Compost
Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Landreclamation Organic Farming Biodynamic Farming Renewable Energies Sustainable Water Management
Societal Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Research SEKEM Bio-Dynamic Association (EBDA) International Association of Partnership (IAP) Corporate Social Entrepreneurship Empowerment of Women
Cultural Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEKEM Development Foundation (SDF): Kindergarten School (Primary, Preparatory, Secondary) Special Education Community School Vocational Training Center (VTC) Illiterate Children's Program Adult Training Medical Center Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development SEKEM Environmental Science Centre (SESC)

Certificates (Selection) EN45011 for product certified systems
ISO 90001 for quality safety
ISO 14001
OHSAS 18001 for workers' safety
ISO 22000 for food safety
Demeter for European standards
BioSwiss for Switzerland exports
Fair Trade
GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard)

Founder/President Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish

CEO Helmy Abouleish

Deputy CEO Dr. Mamdouh Abouleish

Short Description The SEKEM Initiative is a model for sustainable development in Egypt. In 1977 Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish started to reclaim desert land into vital soil by Organic and Biodynamic agricultural methods and built up SEKEM as a holistic initiative that is working in four dimensions: economy, ecology, cultural and societal life. Besides its commitment to Organic agriculture SEKEM produces and processes food, natural health care products and textiles. SEKEM has been widely praised as an "Egyptian organic pioneer" and has received the 2003 Right Livelihood Award ("Alternative Nobel Prize") as a „Business Model for the 21th Century" and its "economy of love". With part of their profits the SEKEM companies co-finance the social and cultural activities of the SEKEM Development Foundation that runs different schools, a medical centre and other institutions. In 2012, Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development was established under the umbrella of SEKEM.

144 words, 956 characters

Website www.sekem.com

Contact In case you have further questions or you would like to schedule a visit or interview, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us:

SEKEM Public Relations
Ms. Christine Arlt
christine.arlt@sekem.com
(+20) 2 265 88 171

Images If you require images for your publication, please visit our picture database at our main website: www.sekem.com/pictures.html