



## SUCCESS STORY

# Cooperation on Canal Brings Better Life

### Farmers help residents install septic tanks to keep canal clean



Photo: USAID/Mirna Luka

The El-Goda canal is cleaner and flows freely, now that residents no longer dump sewage and garbage into it.

***“The water quality equipment helped us identify the source of pollution,” said Ahmad Mahmoud, an engineer and director of an integrated water management district.***

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It all started one day when a handful of farmers noticed a change in the color and odor of the canal water in El-Goda, in Egypt’s eastern El-Sharkia province. They reported their findings to Mohamed Hussein, the head of the El-Goda canal water user association. Mr. Hussein then arranged a meeting with Ahmad Mahmoud, an engineer and the director of the integrated water management district to identify the problem.

The canal water user associations and the integrated water management districts are a new phenomenon in El-Goda. USAID has been working with Egypt’s government to address environmental issues related to agricultural irrigation throughout Egypt. As part of the project, they helped farmers using those canals form canal water user associations. The government then formed integrated water management districts, which work with the associations to identify and resolve problems. Before, if there was a problem with the canal, the farmers did not know where to turn. Now, they knew their canal was in good hands.

The integrated water management district’s engineers tested the water in the area, using equipment provided by USAID, and tracked pollution coming from a large residential area on the canal. It turns out that all of the households there had started dumping sewage and garbage into the water. The water user association used this information to raise the awareness of the problems and the diseases resulting from water pollution among farmers and inhabitants along the canal. The association also suggested that septic tanks could be a way of solving the problem, and offered to help the residents install the tanks. Once this was done, and trash was cleaned out of the canal, there was a noticeable improvement in the water. Most importantly, it was once again suitable for irrigation, the key to crop production and improved livelihoods for the farmers and their families living along the canal.