
Green economy: a pathway to sustainable economic growth in Egypt

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Abstract

Since the eruption of 2011 Revolution the Egyptian economy is suffering its worst economic crisis. Indeed, Egypt has experienced a drastic fall in both foreign investment and tourism revenues, followed by a 60% drop in in foreign exchange reserves, a 3% drop in growth and a rapid devaluation of the Egyptian currency. Generally, the country is facing a series flaw in the performance of the productive sector, which affects the economic performance of the country as a whole. Therefore, major reforms should be undertaken to restore stability, restore tourism and restore confidence of investors. Moreover, there is growing recognition worldwide among policy- makers and private sector decision- makers the current economic growth is socially, environmentally and economically unsustainable. This has motivated international community to make a committed transition towards a green economy. Since 2011, Egypt is taking steady steps to adapt Green Transformation Strategy. This strategy embraces many of the principles and objectives of green economy. Therefore, this research focus mainly on Egyptian tourism in the green economy and how investing in the greening of tourism can reduce the cost of energy, water, and waste and enhance the value of ecosystems and cultural heritage. This research analyses how the concept of green economy is perceived in Egypt. It aims to explore the massive transformation process needed. These two questions will be answered using Delphi technique. The research concluded that tourism is a main economic activity in that process both as a potential catalyst of change and as a component of transformation.

1. Introduction

Usually after revolutions, countries face a fall in the performance of productive sectors; which definitely has a negative impact on the economic performance of the country as a whole. Egypt is passing through this phase since January 2011. Indeed, political and institutional uncertainty, a perception of rising insecurity and unrest continue to negatively affect economic growth. There is also increase in employees' claims and demonstrations and protests that accompanied the transitional phase. As a matter of fact, the Real GDP growth was just 2.2% in 2012; and the economic slowdown contributed to rise in unemployment which reached 13% at the end of 2012, with 3.5 million people out of work (World Bank, 2013). Additionally, Egypt faced downgrading of its international credit rating followed by an increase in the interest rates of domestic and foreign loans. Finally, the country is experiencing loss of investment opportunities, sharp decline in tourists' numbers and drop of cash reserves.

According to the World Bank report in 2013, Egypt's economy is still suffering from a severe down turn and the government faces numerous challenges as to how to restore growth, market and investor confidence. The Egyptian economy faces the need for massive new sources of growth, in the face of fiscal and economic instability. Indeed, economic, societal, and ecological crises are interrelated. These crises are profound and will not be resolved by policy change, or by technological innovation alone. Additionally, there are continuous efforts to improve the economic conditions and several recovery policies are going to be implemented. This would provide benefits to an expanding middle class and may contribute to poverty alleviation. However, there are a number of significant risks associated with these trends. The rising level of consumption and production will put increasing stress on the Egyptian resources and ecosystem, accelerating the historic trends of pollution and the depletion of natural capital. Egypt requires adaptation of a new economic vision.

One of the main pillars of the Egyptian economy is tourism. Tourism has always been one of the main sources of income in Egypt, but the January 25th revolution in 2011 disrupted the industry. In fact, Egypt's tourism sector underwent unprecedented circumstances and experienced a huge crisis, which resulted from the dramatic regional and local political changes. According to the UNWTO (2011), in 2010, the year before the revolution began; 14 million international tourists visited the country, leaving behind the equivalent of 13 billion U.S. dollars. Egypt's tourism industry accounted for 11% of the country's G.D.P. that year. The same report shows that in the first quarter of 2011, international tourism declined by 45%. Additionally, the country witnessed a sharp decline in the operation of all the tourism industry sectors from hotel accommodation to car rental agencies. Tourism provides direct jobs for nearly 3 million people and critical income to more than 70 industries. However, about 1.5 million people lost their jobs and thus increased the rate of unemployment. Therefore, the Egyptian government should take actions to promote the tourism industry. Indeed, tourism is expected to grow faster than most other sectors; and, without green investments, its environmental impacts would be much higher.

With Egyptian government today seeking effective ways to lead the nation out of these related crises whilst also taking into account these ecological limits; green economy (in its various forms) has been proposed as a means for catalyzing renewed national policy development and international cooperation and support for sustainable development. In fact, transitioning to a green economy has sound economic and social justification. As a result of this, Egypt is promoting green economy in five integral sectors of the Egyptian economy; agriculture, tourism, water, energy and waste management. Due to tourism's cross-cutting nature and close connections to numerous sectors at destination and international levels, even small improvements toward greater sustainability will have important impacts in the shift towards more sustainable, cleaner and low-carbon economic growth (OECD, 2012a).

This research suggests a solution for the economic crisis in Egypt. It is important to find an approach for sustainable economic recovery solution. The best solution is the green economy approach. This is because it can sustain economic benefits for current and future generations with limited environmental impacts. As previously mentioned, tourism is a key economic driver in Egypt. Therefore, the implementation of green economy practices on Egyptian tourism

industry is essential. This is due to the negative impacts generated by traditional forms of tourism. Indeed, with adequate policies and investment, the tourism sector can be at the forefront of the transformation to a green economy.

Moreover, the research uses Delphi techniques to answer two important questions:

1. How is the concept of green economy perceived by the Egyptian decision-makers?
2. What are the steps recommended to transfer to green economy practices?

Furthermore, the the concept of green economy has only recently gained significant attention in Egypt, green economy policies have not been discussed or analyzed by economists and academics, especially in the fields of environmental, ecological economics and green economy practices in tourism. Therefore, this research is considered to be one of the first researches dealing with the concept of green economy approach in Egyptian tourism industry.

The research is structured as follows: the next section reviews the literature concerned with the concept of green economy and its application on Egyptian tourism. The following section is concerned with the methodology used to answer the research questions. A further section is devoted to discuss the research findings proposed by the expert panel. The final section stated the research conclusions and research limitations.

2. Literature Review

2.0 Meaning of Green Economy

With the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2007 and the failure of most countries to move onto a sustainable development path, it has become evidently clear that the current development paradigm is not yielding the desired outcomes on all fronts economic, social, and environmental (UNEP, 2012). In the context of the financial crisis and concerns of a global recession, UNEP championed the idea of “green stimulus packages” and identified specific areas where large-scale public investment could kick-start a “green economy” (UNEP, 2011c). The need emerged to build a new economic paradigm. Multiple crises – in climate, biodiversity, fuel, food, water and the economy as a whole – have led to calls for a new development model: a “green economy” (EEA, 2011). Indeed, green economy does not favour one political perspective over another. It is relevant to all economies, be they state or more market-led. The concept of a “green economy” does not replace sustainable development, but there is now a growing recognition that achieving sustainability rests almost entirely on getting the economy right. Decades of creating new wealth through a “brown economy” model have not substantially addressed social marginalization and resource depletion (UNEP, 2011a). Finally, this inspired several governments to implement significant ‘green stimulus’ packages as part of their economic recovery efforts.

Additionally, recent years have seen the emergence of a range of closely related concepts in the field of sustainable development, notably those of the “Green New Deal”, “Green Growth” and “Green Economy”. They are all related though used in different ways and arguably have different roles and meanings. To offer a simplified picture – “Green New Deal” can be seen as a catalyst and “Green Growth” an approach contributing to a “Green Economy”, which in turn is an essential means of achieving the objective of sustainable development (Brink

et al, 2012). In fact, green growth is about fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies. To do this it is necessary to foster investment and innovation, which will underpin sustained growth and give rise to new economic opportunities (OECD, 2012a).

UNEP defines a green economy as one that results in "improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities" (UNEP, 2010).

In its simplest expression, a green economy is low-carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in income and employment are driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services (UNEP, 2011b).

Furthermore, the EEA State and outlook 2010 argues that the transition to a green economy depends on meeting the twin challenges of maintaining the structure and functions of ecosystems (ecosystem resilience) and finding ways to cut resource use in production and consumption activities and their environmental impacts (resource efficiency) (EEA, 2010).

The key aim for a transition to a green economy is to enable economic growth and investment while increasing environmental quality and social inclusiveness. Critical to attaining such an objective is to create the conditions for public and private investments to incorporate broader environmental and social criteria. In addition, the main indicators of economic performance, such as growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) need to be adjusted to account for pollution, resource depletion, ecosystem services degradation, and the distributional consequences of natural capital loss to the poor (UNEP, 2011b).

There are ten key sectors considered to be driving trends of the transition to a green economy. Those sectors are divided into three groups. Those sectors derived from natural capital, like agriculture, fishing, forests and water. First, there are that have a material impact on the economy as they form the basis for primary production, and because the livelihoods of the rural poor depend directly upon them. Second there are sectors that may be characterized as "built capital", traditionally considered the brown sectors of the economy. These sectors are like transportation, energy and manufacturing. In these sectors there are large opportunities for energy and resources savings. Third, there is service sector, which include tourism. This sector depends on the other two sectors. Because, tourism is a complex sector that combine several sectors of the economy. Indeed, tourism is one of the most promising drivers of growth for the world economy and key to driving the defining trends of the transition to a green economy (OECD, 2012a).

After reviewing literature concerned with the green economy concept several points were observed. First, the main driver behind the development of this concept has been the move towards a more integrated and holistic approach to incorporating environment and development in economic decision making, policy and planning. Second, the definition of green economy is having sustainable development as its ultimate objective and being a means to

reconcile the economic and environmental pillars, without ignoring social aspects. Third, there are risks associated with green economy include that it may attempt to treat countries in the same manner (i.e. be based on a one-size-fits-all approach), that it may result in trade protectionism, that through it some countries may attempt to gain enhanced market access for their products, achieving commercial advantage, and that it may place new conditions on developing countries for aid, loans and debt relief. Finally, a key benefit of the emergence of the green economy concept has been that it has stimulated international attention and renewed global efforts to transform current unsustainable economic model into one which better aligns with the overarching goals of sustainable development.

2.1. Green Economy in Egypt

The shifts in the Egyptian political and economic conditions are expected to have different- either positive or negative impacts on sustainable development in general and on transition to a green economy in particular. It is necessary to closely monitor those changes and assess their potential impact on the management of natural resources in the region, and particularly on (available) oil resources and (scarce) water resources(OECD, 2012c).

Egypt faces multiple pressures and challenges threatening the sustainability of its water resources. Indeed, the main source of water supply in Egypt now is the River Nile, and it is threatened by the Ethiopian Dams. In fact, natural water scarcity, coupled with dry and semi-dry climate, increases water evaporation and loss of water resources. Besides, unsustainable consumption rates, especially in agriculture, contribute to the depletion of water resources. Around 30-50% of drinking water is lost due to out-dated and poor distribution networks. Additionally, Egypt is adversely affected by the global food crisis as it relies on imported food products, especially wheat, to cover 50% of their food needs. Moreover, Egypt is suffering from shortage in the energy sector (OECD, 2012b).

Furthermore, despite the low contribution of Egypt to global greenhouse gas emissions, the country is expected to be the most exposed to the potential effects of climate change which is also likely to have an equal impact on environmental, social, and economic aspects in it. Therefore, the effects of climate change will undermine the implementation of national development policies, pose a threat to human security and livelihoods), and are more likely to affect vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, elderly people, children, and the poor. Anticipated climate change effects include the following: increased temperature, decreased soil humidity, increased evaporation and transpiration, changes in rainfall patterns in terms of time and spatial distribution, severe annual and seasonal fluctuation of extreme climate events, increased droughts and floods, and, sea level rise and seawater intrusion into coastal zones. Climate change is expected to affect many sectors such as agriculture, health, public safety, biodiversity, water desalination, tourism, hydroelectric power generation, fluvial navigation and others (UNEP, 2011b).

Moreover, the rapid demographic increase, rural migration, and some subsidy policies (particularly for oil products) result in an increased demand on natural resources in Egypt , and encourage economies to adopt unsustainable consumption and production patterns, thereby

having an impact on economic growth but causing environmental degradation. The existing gaps and inconsistencies of policies aimed at achieving growth have aggravated unsustainable consumption and production in Egypt (OECD, 2012c).

Furthermore, tourism is undoubtedly an important domain for economic development in Egypt and should be properly encouraged and promoted. Egypt's interest in sustainable tourism development is essential because the country is quickly learning the need for balancing between the environment and development, amid concerns that tourism is stressing the country's fragile ecosystem. Indeed, Paskova (2008) stated that unregulated tourism is usually unfriendly towards the natural environment because with an excessive intensity and pace, it consumes especially non-renewable resources. Additionally, the Egyptian tourism industry invokes changes in the environment directly, it is dealt with changes invoked directly by development of tourism, but also indirectly, by consumption of resources which were produced, created and exploited for tourism Antouskova et al (2009).

According to the Egyptian government, tourism is one of the important sectors to be transformed in the green economy practices. Tourism in a green economy refers to tourism activities that can be maintained, or sustained, indefinitely in their social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts: "sustainable tourism". Sustainable tourism is not a special form of tourism; rather, all forms of tourism may strive to be more sustainable (UNEP and UNWTO 2005). Indeed, the sustainability principles should apply to all types of tourism activities, operations, establishments and projects, including conventional and alternative forms (UNEP and UNWTO, 2012).

According to UNEP and UNWTO (2012), the tourism industry faces a multitude of significant sustainability-related challenges. There are four challenges that need to be resolved through the greening of the industry.

- First, the tourism sector's growing consumption of energy, especially in travel and accommodation, and its dependence on fossil fuels has important implications for global GHG emissions and climate change as well as for future business growth. The sustainability and competitiveness of tourism depends partially on energy efficiency (reductions in overall energy use) and a more intensive use of renewable sources. In fact, aviation and tourism are expected to account for a large share of emissions unless a major change in the emission trajectories is achieved (Peeters and Dubois, 2010).
- Second, water use by tourism is far less important than agriculture, industry, or urban domestic use. However, tourism can increase pressure on already diminished water resources and compete with other sectors as well as subsistence needs of local populations. Tourism can also directly affect water quality, for instance through the discharge of untreated sewage or freshwater abstraction (Gossling, 2010).
- Third, waste management is another increasing and well-recognized challenge in the industry. Tourism activities leave waste that are being disposed and burned randomly in some instances. Spread of diseases related to the problem of wastes, poor awareness of the rural residents of public health matters and hygiene.

- Fourth, large-scale tourism has detrimental effects on biodiversity, including coral reefs, coastal wetlands, arid and semiarid ecosystems and mountainous areas (UNWTO, 2010). Coral ecosystems have suffered strong adverse impacts from the use of coral for construction materials for hotels, over-fishing to feed tourists, sewage dumping and sedimentation from improperly managed runoff from buildings, parking lots, and golf courses. Coastal wetlands, particularly mangroves, have routinely been damaged or destroyed to build beach resorts.
- Fifth, interest in unique cultures by tourists can result in adverse impacts and severe disruption for communities. There are cases of communities overrun by large numbers of visitors, commercialization of traditions and threats to cultural survival from unplanned and unmanaged tourism. This leads to conflicts that make cooperation and mutual benefits nearly impossible to achieve, and practices that negatively affect the local communities and the tourism destination. Frequently, the cultural issues overlap and are aggravated by environmental issues such as access to water, coastal resources and wildlife (Wild, 2010).

Moreover, green tourism economy in Egypt would ensure significant environmental benefits including reductions in water consumption, energy use and CO₂ emissions. Given tourism's sheer size and reach, even small changes towards greening can have significant impacts. With adequate policies and investment, the tourism sector can be at the forefront of the transformation to a green economy. Greening the growing tourism sector would strengthen its capacity to generate economic growth, jobs and development worldwide, while protecting the environment for future generations.

As the regulating body for the Egyptian tourism industry, the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) is currently active in establishing the necessary structure within both the Ministry and the tourism industry itself. Key policy areas include the establishment of a green unit within the Ministry to focus on implementing a number of projects for "Green Transformation" in the sector, and the establishment of a dedicated secretariat for the "Supreme Council for Tourism". The Council is headed by the Prime Minister and includes a number of relevant Ministers on its board, and this high level support will help to support and co-ordinate future efforts in the green transformation of tourism (OECD, 2012a).

To conclude, this literature was reviewed to explore the meaning of the green economy approach and how it could be utilized to achieve sustainable development. Additionally, the concept of green economy is still in its early stages in Egypt. It is stated as an initiative. Few decision-makers find it a miracle solution to achieve economic growth. It is not yet implemented on a wide scale. This is because some parties involved think it might be a high cost initiative. However, this is due to lack of information concerning the concept. Moreover, the tourism industry was chosen for this research because it is a major source of national income and if it is poorly developed it could destroy the environment. Thus, the tourism industry has massive economic and environmental impacts.

3. The Methodology

This research focuses on the adapting green economy approach in Egypt. It uses Delphi technique as a method of assessment of the views of selected actors of specific connections among economics, environment, tourism, and tourism related policies.

This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. *How is the concept of green economy perceived by the Egyptian decision-makers?*
2. *What are the steps recommended to transfer to green economy practices?*

The main reason for using Delphi is because it is reported to be the achievement of consensus in a given area of uncertainty or lack of empirical evidence. The feedback gained from experts can widen knowledge and stimulate new ideas and in itself be highly motivating and educational for the participants. Murphy et al. (2001) noted that Delphi participants bring a wide range of direct knowledge and experience to the decision-making processes. The success of a Delphi study clearly rests on the combined expertise of the participants who make up the expert panel (Hasson et al. 2000).

Moreover, the research considers views on this topic for two groups of actors: actors who might be involved in developing public policies related to green economy and tourism, and diverse managers working in the tourism industry, largely in the private sector such as tour operators and hotel managers. This involved the use of semi structured interviews and also "official" policy statements and advice. Semi-structured interviews were used to examine views on the concept of green economy in tourism industry in Egypt and on the preferred transformation process and the time needed for it; and finally the challenges and opportunities observed by interviewees. The interviews were administered in April, May and June 2013 to two groups of actors on the country: policy makers and tourism industry managers, the latter largely being in the private sector.

Ten policy makers in government and ten key private sector industry associations and businesses, were interviewed. They were selected to include organizations with strategic influence on policy making that directly or indirectly affect the economy, environment and tourism sector. They were actors who might be involved in developing future public policies related to tourism, economics and environment. Included from the government were policy makers from the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, and from the private sector there were tour operators, and Hotel and Resort managers. These policy makers were interviewed using a semi-structured approach to give them the opportunity to express their opinions, with the interviews being tape recorded. In addition, reports and studies by the Egyptian government were examined for "official" explanations of potential green economy practices. These include documents on green economy produced by the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), which is responsible for preparing the necessary plans for Environmental protection and Environmental development projects.

4. The Findings

4.1. The concept of green economy as perceived in Egypt

All the respondents interviewed perceived green economy as follows:

- Green economy is still a novel concept in Egypt, which is not widely known. Indeed, it is not yet applied on several sectors.
- Greening the economy would provide solutions to two major concerns, namely the scarcity of water and energy resources.
- Greening of the economy would have a favorable impact on all Egyptian industries as they compete on the basis of modern, global and environmental standards.
- Green economy foster the concept of economic growth and development, while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which community well- being relies.
- Green economy is the best means to attract more investment, more income and create more job opportunities. However, these investments should reduce carbon emission and pollutes. These investments should enhance energy and resource efficiency and prevent loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Green Economy is not a state but a process of transformation and a constant dynamic progression. Additionally, it is a long- term process.
- Green economy stresses the importance of integrating economic and environmental policies in a way that highlights the opportunities for new sources of economic growth while avoiding unsustainable practices on natural assets.
- Green economy can contribute to reducing poverty and disparity by increasing competitiveness through the creation of jobs, the access to energy and utilities, the transfer of technology and knowledge and an efficient utilization of resources.
- Green Economy is transparent and engages all involved and affected actors, with powerful actors having clearly defined responsibilities and forms of accountability, while making sure other stakeholders are empowered to act both as beneficiaries of and contributors.
- More than any other sector, tourism has the ability to impact (both positively and negatively) the country's resources upon which it depends. Tourism is vital catalyst in the green economy process. Tourism in a green economy refers to tourism activities that can be maintained, or sustained, indefinitely in their social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts.
- The first initiative that has been taken in green economy in Egypt was taken in the tourism industry.

4.2. Transformation to Green Economy in Egypt

The respondents suggested a set of requirements for the green economy transformation process in Egypt. These are as follows:

- Adopting a participatory approach involving relevant stakeholders in policymaking is essential in policy development and implementation. It ensures that policies reflect the concerns and priorities of the public, particularly the target group and affected communities. It also ensures the support and contribution of the general public and local communities in the implementation of proposed policies, plans, and programs. Involvement of relevant stakeholders in policy formulation provides a better chance for the implementation and success of the proposed policies.

- Ensuring inter- and intra-generational equity and poverty reduction is one of the main underlying principles of Green Economy. Designed policies should in the first instance ensure that the interests of the poor and marginalized communities are catered for. It should ensure that wealth generated should trickle down to the poorer segments of the population and that there is an equitable distribution of wealth between the current generation. It should also ensure that development activities now do not comprise the welfare of future generations.
- Governance is an essential prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. In order to encourage local and foreign investment, it is essential to have a stable and predictable macroeconomic environment. Such an environment will also need to be transparent and accountable. In the absence of a good and strong governance structure, the likelihood of moving onto a sustainable development path would be meager. Efficient institutions and governance structures are critical in ensuring the effective implementation of policies, plans, and programs.
- Investing in research, technology development, innovation, and the continuous enhancement of knowledge are essential for transitioning to a Green Economy. Countries that have allocated sufficient resources and invested heavily in research and development are countries that have managed to accelerate the pace of their economic growth. However, there is a need to clearly identify areas of research to be in line with and support sustainable development objectives. Research and technology innovation efforts need to be directed towards resource efficiency, and areas such as wastewater treatment and desalination, renewable energy, solid waste recycling and recovery, green construction and buildings, and environmentally friendly equipment and industrial technologies.
- The financial sector both public and private should be encouraged to support financing projects and activities that contribute to sustainable development. Governments should ensure that funding to support government policies in pursuit of sustainable development objectives. Commercial banks should also be encouraged to support sustainable development projects through regulatory and incentive measures. Appropriate measures should be introduced to discourage banks from providing loans that encourage land speculation, or the funding of environmentally damaging and polluting activities.
- Public education system should focus on encouraging self-awareness, tolerance, understanding, care and service more than acquiring certificates and earning money. This will help individuals who go through public education system to understand the significance of service for the benefit of fellow human beings and the planet we all live in.
- There is a need to change the current energy mix especially that Egypt is currently facing depleting gas resources. Promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency are necessary objectives to be adopted by the government and supported by the private sector.
- Usual use of Egypt's water supply will lead to a massive gap between demand and supply. Transitioning to a green economy is therefore essential to achieve water security in Egypt. Entrepreneurship and innovation could be the answer to Egypt's ailing water sector.
- Building and promoting good practices, providing information and effective financial regulations as a pathway to a green economy

- The move toward more sustainable tourism can increase job creation. Additional employment in energy, water, and waste services and expanded local hiring and sourcing are expected from the greening of mainstream tourism segments.
- Private and public investment in tourism includes infrastructure (roads, airports, national parks, private reserves, hospitality installations and other sites facilities), environmental protection (natural attractions, beaches, mountains, rivers, biodiversity conservation, natural barriers, and endemic species), education (labor force skills including the “greening” skills base), capacity building, and technology improvements (cleaner production, sustainable management). Investments toward tourism sustainability offer a wide range of opportunities that can generate significant returns.
- A cost-benefit analysis is necessary to evaluate the net investment required to reach set targets, by actor or sector or across the whole economy. This analysis would generally compare investment and benefits (including avoided costs), depending on the issue to be solved.
- The government policy of subsidizing the consumption of water and the use of traditional energy sources works against the green transformation. Therefore, the government should reduce subsidies in these two sectors; thus enabling community and business to use alternative green energy sources and reduce water consumption.
- Green economy is not a short- run initiative. However, it is a long- run process that requires several steps to be implemented and several indicators to be set to achieve its main goals.

5. Summary and Conclusions

In Egypt, the issue of a Green Economy appears to be appreciated by all the relevant economic agents. Hence, with active support from government, the private sector, and local community, it is positioned to lead the economic growth process. By adopting green initiatives, Egypt could in return compromise a little on short-term growth to gain long-term benefits in order to make overall growth sustainable. Green economy approach shows how green practices and clean technology can generate new kinds of business opportunities, conserve natural resources and add value and create green jobs along the supply chain, as well as abate health and environmental hazard effects. Since, tourism is a leading Egyptian economy industry, responsible for a significant proportion of Egyptian production, trade, employment, and investments. Indeed, it is the most important source of foreign exchange and foreign direct investments. Tourism growth, environmental protection, and social wellbeing can be mutually reinforcing. All forms of tourism can contribute towards a green economy transition through investments leading to energy and water efficiency, climate change mitigation, waste reduction, biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation, and the strengthening of linkages with local communities.

Making tourism businesses more sustainable will foster the industry’s growth, create more and better jobs, consolidate higher investment returns, benefit local development and contribute to poverty reduction, while raising awareness and support for the sustainable use of natural resources. Additionally, the expert panel clearly answers the research questions. Moreover, tourism could be the starting point to transform to green economy in Egypt, because it is connected with all other sectors in the country. It is also important to mention that this

research eliminate the practices of green economy in any other industry or in any country other than Egypt. It is only concerned with the Egyptian tourism industry. Finally, to promote sustainable tourism in a green economy, economy should first provide a good investment climate, featuring security and stability, regulation, taxation, finance, infrastructure, and labor. Green economy is a long-term initiative for current and future generation. It is the main path to sustainable economic growth.

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