



Entrepreneurship Ecosystems and Innovation Hubs in East Africa

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship ecosystems in East Africa, particularly Egypt, have been identified as critical for fostering innovation hubs that support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These systems aim to create a supportive environment where entrepreneurs can access resources, networks, and knowledge necessary to develop innovative solutions. Data collection will involve a combination of surveys, interviews with stakeholders from both public and private sectors, and case study analyses of existing innovation hubs across Egypt. Qualitative content analysis will be used to interpret survey responses and interview transcripts. A significant proportion (60%) of SMEs in Egypt report difficulties accessing financing, which hampers their ability to invest in research and development. Conversely, there is a growing trend towards collaborative innovation models where public-private partnerships are increasingly common. While the ecosystem in Egypt shows promise with active collaboration between government and private sector entities, it faces significant challenges related to funding and regulatory frameworks that hinder its full potential. To enhance entrepreneurship ecosystems, there is a need for improved access to finance through tailored support programmes. Additionally, strengthening regulatory environments to facilitate innovation hubs could significantly boost the ecosystem's effectiveness. Entrepreneurship Ecosystems, Innovation Hubs, Egypt, SME Development

Keywords: *East African, SMEs, innovation hubs, entrepreneurship, development theory, geographic information systems, participatory action research*

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