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technology could be easily implemented in low-tech environment and many developing countries that suffer from infectious diseases. It may take six years to launch the product in the market and we don't have the ecosystem in Egypt to bring ideas to the market," he pointed out.

For a year-and-a-half, Azzazy and his team followed the learning-by-doing process to explore the market in Egypt and what should be done to commercialize the product. "As researchers, we have never learned how to do a business plan or to estimate the product cost and the expected market share or if the market is ready for it. The most frustrating part was the lack of mentors or venture capitalists to guide us," he noted.

To change this culture, Azzazy suggested that researchers should receive business training to be more market-oriented. University laws should change to facilitate further spin-off companies. More importantly, scientists should learn to collaborate with engineers, businessmen and patent attorneys to bring their ideas to the market. "I hope one day we would have in Egypt a one-stop shop per specialization for any innovator who wants to start an SME," he added.

"Solutions By Our Minds"

This initiative was taken by the National Academy of Scientific Research and the Masr El-Kheir Foundation to fund

creative ideas and solutions that may solve problems facing the Egyptian society. Dr. Alaa Idriss, head of the scientific unit at the foundation, said the initiative came from within the framework of a strategic plan to support scientific research and develop science and technology in Egypt. "With a grant of EGP 2.5 million, we finance researchers to transform their inventions to commercial products. Among the eight projects, we are funding two in the medical technology project. One is for the innovation of an advanced wheel chair mechanism and the second is a new implant for mitral valve replacement operations that would reduce the failure of heart operations by 30 percent," Idriss noted. ■