

VLIR-UOS

Flemish University Council

University Development Cooperation



Country evaluation Ethiopia



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September, 2010

sharing minds, changing lives

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Foreword

This report is the end product of a participatory process which began in April, 2010. The process was characterised by a significant level of ownership by northern and southern stakeholders, itself a reflection of how VLIR-UOS has created a highly professional reputation in support for higher education in Ethiopia.

The report contains the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation commission which consisted of Professor Alan Penny and Dr Damtew Teferra. Its work has been much facilitated by a number of factors. These include:

- the quality of the briefing support given by the Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (VLIR-UOS) / Flemish Interuniversity Council secretariat in Brussels;
- the level of enthusiasm and dedication of Flemish and Ethiopian academic stakeholders who met the consultants in Brussels and in Ethiopia;
- the efficiency of staff in the VLIR-UOS programme offices in Brussels and at Mekelle and Jimma universities;
- the quality of the background documentation provided to the consultants which outlined the principles of the programme for university cooperation, the programme's management modalities and management cycle process, and the programme's quality assurance procedures. The IUC Tool Box provides participating institutions with guidance on customising documentation, planning, implementation, evaluation, record keeping and reporting procedures and phasing activities. Documentary support is also provided to enable institutions to undertake self-assessment output to purpose reviews.
- the level of ownership of the programme exhibited by all stakeholders, and their willingness to share their commitment to the programme and overall enthusiasm for it;
- the quality of the organisation, coordination and logistics support provided to the evaluation mission by the VLIR-UOS secretariat.

Producing this account has required the cooperation and willing active support of many people. We wish to thank all the individuals who shared their ideas and enthusiasm for their work with us, and also those who responded to our questioning by e-mail and telephone. The two northern coordinators and their counterparts in Ethiopia are examples to us in terms of their insights, vision and abilities. In particular we wish to thank Kristien Verbrugghen, Luc Janssens de Bisthoven, Peter Delannoy, Frederik Dewulf, Nicky Haezebrouck and Hans Bauer without whose professional engagement and enthusiasm, we would have been unable to fulfil our contract.

Alan Penny (Team Leader)

Disclaimer

This report represents the views of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of VLIR-UOS or the stakeholders interviewed over the course of the evaluation.

The authors bear full responsibility for the content of this report.

Alan Penny and Damtew Teferra

Executive summary

Overview

The purpose of the country study was:

- To review the impact and sustainability of the VLIR-UOS Ethiopia Programme
- To position VLIR-UOS Activities within the broader context of International Development Cooperation in Ethiopia
- To make recommendations regarding VLIR-UOS' future action in Ethiopia

The work of the evaluation commission was guided by the Terms of Reference, and in particular the centrality of quality, efficiency, impact and development relevance to our considerations.

The VLIR-UOS UOS programme in Ethiopia currently comprises:

- Institutional University Cooperation (IUC), at Mekelle University and Jimma University.
- Own Initiatives (OI), at Debre Zeit, Bahir Dar and Arba Minch.
- International Scholarship, Training and Travel Grants averaging around 75 per year.
- Two year North-South-South institutional links programmes (3).

Additional support is provided through ICT transversal initiatives which include the highly successful *Close the Gap* provision of refurbished computers programme.

The review process included documentary study, interviews with northern and southern stakeholders, surveys and field visits.

Headline findings

The following characterises the Ethiopia Programme:

Shared Priorities, Alignment, and Complementarity

The Programme is aligned with the Government of Ethiopia Higher Education (HE) policy and priorities to stimulate research, build capacity and improve the quality of outputs from H.E. The Minister of Education remarked specifically that the VLIR-UOS programme model is that which he is encouraging all donors in the sector to follow.

Impressive Capacity Building in Research, Education, and Service to Society

The review shows that these priorities are being met through a series of impressive research initiatives involving northern and southern scholars. Scientific grounding is being provided with an impact on the quality of teaching; local capacity is being built as is evidenced by the number of PhDs at Mekelle University (36), and 30 at Jimma University, and the number of publications in international journals (66 at Mekelle, 8 at Jimma and 6 at Debre Zeit). 3 special issues of peer-reviewed journals have also been produced as output from two international Congresses.

Number of PhD scholars at Mekelle: 36 distributed as follows:

- Pre-IUC (over 3 VLIR – Own Initiative projects): 5 (3 Ethiopian and 2 Flemish)
- IUC: Finished PhD's: 10 (8 Ethiopian and 2 Flemish) / Presently running PhD's: 21 (19 Ethiopian and 2 Flemish)

A positive research culture is being stimulated, one which includes both external and local peer review of activities and findings. Reciprocal learning is occurring with both northern and southern partners benefitting from the shared learning. Of particular value is that all this integrated research has direct

development outcomes, as for example that on sleeping sickness research at Debre Zeit, various community-based research activities around the Gilgel Gibe Dam at Jimma University, and soil and water conservation research at Mekelle University. In addition the programme has had diverse outcomes and spin-offs which include honey production, re-engineering of tractors to suit local conditions, improved land management, and apple production in Hagere Selam in Tigray.

Providing a catalyst for policy and strategic engagement and extended intervention

The programme is providing a catalyst for policy and strategic engagement and extended intervention at the local and regional level and, to lesser extent, at the national level. For example, land management policy and practice is being changed in Tigray on the basis of the evidence emerging from the work being carried out at Mekelle University, whilst at Jimma University, the work on siltation of the Gilgel Gibe dam is not only providing a regional data base but also encouraging and supporting evidence-based decision making at a local and national level. All research projects currently being undertaken and all spin-off activities have been derived from local needs and have development outcomes.

Value for Money

Whilst it is difficult to assess the efficiency of the UOS programmes as so many variables are involved, people costs are low, especially as the involvement of the Northern Belgian University academics comes as part of their normal academic work, and therefore does not incur additional consultancy costs. It is estimated that this saves an additional €350,000.00 annually, and probably more, to the programme cost. The PhD sandwich programme is also a cost-effective way of supporting the two institutions as scholars are not away from their institutions and families for extended periods. It furthermore guarantees the scholars to root their research locally which is an effective recipe to combat brain drain.

Promoting entrepreneurship.

Many of the research activities are promoting entrepreneurship. This is occurring in two main ways; through improved grant applications and through the spin-off activities already mentioned.

Unique partnership modality.

The programme embodies a unique partnership modality, with a blend of scholarly activity derived from local and national development needs. It is characterised by enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of players and stakeholders.

VLIR-UOS in Ethiopia and the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)

The ToR specifically required the consultants to offer advice on applying the principles of the PD and AAA. Using the key indicators of aid effectiveness included in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action as a framework, the following summary of the VLIR-UOS' programme in Ethiopia is presented.

INDICATOR	ETHIOPIAN VLIR-UOS-IUC PROGRAMME STATUS
Ownership	<p>The Evaluation Commission found a very high level of local ownership of the programme. The two institutions concerned have set up local management structures and management systems.</p> <p>Key to the issue of ownership lies in the system of joint PhD and MSc research supervision, and at PhD level the fact that a 'sandwich course' structure is used. Both Northern and Southern partners have a vested interest in ensuring the success of the programmes, as 'rewards' in the form of published papers, copyrights and patents are shared. Whilst Northern institutions benefit from registering and ultimately graduating high achieving Ethiopian scholars, Southern institutions benefit from the capacity building that occurs. All the actors involved benefit from the development impact of their work.</p>
Alignment	The VLIR-UOS-IUC's focus on research capacity building through support for PhD training and research is fully aligned with the Government of Ethiopia's policy of increasing the number of

	PhD and MSc research degree graduates.
Harmonisation	<p>The intention behind the PD and AAA declarations on harmonisation relate to aid flows and activities to avoid duplication and incurring additional transaction costs. VLIR-UOS is not a donor agency. However at the level of programme harmonisation, that is, harmonisation with similar activities undertaken by other agencies, the Evaluation Commission found that this occurs more by chance than design. Shared use of equipment and other facilities occurs on the ground.</p> <p>Present efforts under the EU's Bologna Process to achieve symmetry between higher degree structures and programmes in Europe have led to increasing harmonisation between different programmes in Europe, and by default this is influencing provision in Ethiopia.</p>
Results	<p>The PD and the AAA especially shifted thinking beyond a concern over aid modalities and the management of international development to a discourse based on results; i.e. from a discourse about donor processes to a concern with development effectiveness (results). In this regard, VLIR-UOS is well ahead. Partners use a shared results framework which focuses on performance in six qualitative results areas (quality, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, development relevance, sustainability), and seven measurable key results outcome areas (Research, Teaching, Extension and Outreach, Management, Human Resources Development, Infrastructure Management and Mobilization of additional resources/opportunities). The Evaluation Commission believes this package of instruments represents the best in international practice. The VLIR-UOS results framework provides both summative and diagnostic evidence.</p> <p>However, the Evaluation Commission suggests that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the Programme and individual Project Logframes should reflect more clearly the measurement of results; and ii) Qualitative indicators could reflect the 'Southern voice' more explicitly.
Mutual Accountability	The Evaluation Commission found that a clear 'win-win' situation exists. Mutual accountability is a strong feature of the VLIR-UOS-IUC programme and finds expression in the management systems used, especially N-S stakeholder meetings, common reporting procedures and in the fact of joint supervision of PhD and a mutually beneficial publications' agreement which 'protects' individual researchers.
Predictability	<p>This indicator was included in the PD and the AAA as a means of encouraging donors to make their funding predictable. A key feature of VLIR-UOS funding is that it is guaranteed for two periods of five years each.</p> <p>The Evaluation Commission has expressed concern over the decision of the DGD to impose three year funding cycles on VLIR-UOS. A three year cycle does not fit the normal PhD cycle of five years.</p>
Country systems	<p>This indicator was included in the PD and AAA to encourage donors to use recipient government financial systems and not to set up parallel in-country systems.</p> <p>VLIR-UOS' project funding uses institutional financial systems where possible. Clear evidence of the effectiveness of shared management systems is to be found in the manner in which the two programme offices function at Mekelle and Jimma universities.</p>
Conditionality	Given the partnership nature of the VLIR-UOS- IUC programme, funding conditionality does not apply in this programme. Both northern and southern partners are required to meet the same conditions for the award of programmes and funds.

Table 1

To sum up, the Evaluation Commission believes that VLIR-UOS is to be highly commended on developing and implementing an impressive partnership programme which is meeting specific Ethiopian Higher Education needs. The programme is aligned with Government priorities and is regarded by it as the benchmark for such interventions. It has stimulated a research culture in the two IUC and OI project

institutions, and is acting as a catalyst for other development initiatives and spin-offs. The enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of all players involved are impressive. The Programme's impact is being felt across various levels of Ethiopian society. Above all the programme is cost-effective and provides reciprocal benefits to Northern and Southern partners. VLIR-UOS has a long and successful engagement with the HE sector in Ethiopia. Not only are the VLIR-UOS PCM systems results orientated, thereby fitting in strongly with the current results-orientated discourse, but also capacity building is at the heart of the programme, and building capacity leads to sustainability. The Evaluation Commission believes that the VLIR-UOS partnership modality represents some of the best in international development practice. Key to the programme's success is that a long-term collaboration partnership is intended, giving partners certainty and predictability of funding and support. Further, by encouraging arrangements that build upon existing structures and practices at the level of the partner university, increased ownership is encouraged.

Risks to the programme and possible mitigation strategies

Three risks have been identified:

1. Examples from elsewhere in both the north and south leave the evaluators less sanguine about future trends in Higher Education in Ethiopia, certainly in the short to medium term. Government of Ethiopia Higher Education expansion plans, both within institutions and the massification of higher education, pose serious potential risks to quality, and to the quality agenda embodied in the VLIR-UOS UOS programme. What the GoE may consider to be desirable may not be affordable. Expansion will lead to a growing demand for qualified staff. This will dilute the critical mass of these persons in the two IUCs especially. It is unlikely in a context of increased teaching and supervision demands that research time will be protected. These risks may be mitigated through an improved policy and strategic dialogue with the MoE where VLIR-UOS has a comparative advantage, having created the desire by Ministry that other donors adopt the VLIR-UOS methodology in their intervention in the HE sector.
2. At various points during the review, northern partners mentioned a growing difficulty in their own institutions to interest staff and students alike to engage in this kind of work. There are very few incentives to do so, and considerable disincentives, especially in terms of progressing one's career. This is an institutional matter, and needs to be raised at the highest level within the participating universities.
3. With all the research activities development focused, additional funding will be needed to take many of the activities to scale within Ethiopia. It is difficult knowing how VLIR-UOS might facilitate this except by raising the matter with the GoE and perhaps assisting research teams to identify additional resources. However, this will be a more difficult task for the communities involved, lacking the kind of lobbying skills and opportunities which northern partners have and are familiar with.

Recommendations/suggestions

At various stages in the report suggestions rather than recommendations have been made. These are limited on the principle that one does not attempt to 'fix' something if it is not broken!

The Evaluation wishes to suggest that consideration be given to the following:

- Reviewing the management responsibilities of the Ethiopia Programme Country Office, and as part of this, prioritising the ToR of the Country Representative.
- Improving the visibility of the VLIR-UOS Ethiopian Programme.
- Seeking ways of addressing specifically the gross gender imbalance in Ethiopian post-graduate education.
- Encouraging DGD to review the introduction of three year cycle planning to accommodate the normal five year PhD cycle.
- Consider introducing greater flexibility in project budgeting, and in particular allowing the viring of funds, or part thereof, from one year to another.

1. Introduction

This report is the product of an evaluation of the Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - University Development Cooperation (VLIR-UOS) interventions in Ethiopia. Started in 1996, the VLIR-UOS programme for Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) has provided Belgian Government programme funding for North-South, North-South-South and South-South inter-university programmes geared towards the development of the teaching, research, institutional management and community service functions of the southern partner university.

The specific purpose of this evaluation is to inform the development of VLIR-UOS' Ethiopian country policy and strategic plan in view of the growing need for compliance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD) (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) (2008) development principles. These two agreements commit Belgium¹ to the basic principles of enhanced ownership by beneficiary countries, the harmonisation of aid, results-orientated management and mutual accountability between partners.

In undertaking this work, the authors are mindful of the fact that development planning may follow the political climate of both recipient and donor countries and the dictates of current planning modalities, yet in its execution, life and outcomes, it is likely to be less predictable. In practice, development is often a mixture of responses to unrealistic planning, more appropriately perceived needs and of course the strong influence of players, both national and international.

1.1. The Country Context

Demography

Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa with a population of approximately 80 million people, between 80% – 85% of whom live in rural areas. Despite economic growth and a range of natural resources, it is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an annual per-capita income of less than US\$180 in 2007.

The provision of education is the concurrent responsibility of federal, regional, and local governments. The federal government plays a dominant role in the provision of post-secondary education, while also setting standards and providing overall policy guidance and monitoring and evaluation for the entire sector. Total sector financing in 2007/08 was close to 10 billion birr (US\$ 720 million). Of this, 55% is spent on general education (grades 1 – 12), primarily by decentralised levels of government. The costs of higher education (around 41% of the total education budget) are largely met by the federal government. Community and private contributions constitute around 6% of total expenditure. External donor contributions constitute around 20% of the education budget (Public Expenditure Review, June, 2010).

Primary education in Ethiopia lasts 8 years and is divided into grades 1-4 (primary first cycle) and grades 5 – 8 (primary second cycle). Secondary education (4 years) is also divided into two cycles, each with its own specific goals. Grades 9 – 10 (secondary first cycle) provide general secondary education and upon completion, students are streamed, based on performance in the secondary education completion certificate examination, either into grades 11 – 12 (secondary second cycle) as preparation for university, or into technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Government Priorities

The main development objective of the Ethiopian Government is poverty eradication. In Ethiopia the poorest 20% of the population tends to be socially and economically marginalized, partly because they live in the least accessible areas, while urban dwellers tend to benefit disproportionately from available,

¹ A full review of Belgium's international development cooperation may be found in:
www.oecd.org/dac/peerreviews/belgium

though limited, public resources (World Bank, 2004). Primary enrolment rates are slightly higher for those in the richest 20% of the population but relatively evenly spread among the rest, with much of the difference resulting from rural-urban differentials. In secondary education, the benefits are concentrated in the upper income quintile, with children from the richest 20% being more than twice as likely to attend secondary school as those from the poorest 20% (World Bank, 2004, pp.49-50).

The 2010 Public Expenditure Review noted that the actual distribution of primary education benefits across income groups is more equal than suggested by the enrolment ratios alone, since poor households have more children on average, and more over-aged children in school. The distribution of benefits appears to have been improving, suggesting that the middle-poor, if not the poorest, are benefiting more than the rich from increased public spending.

Since 2000 the country's development policies and strategies have been geared specifically towards addressing poverty reduction. The present Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) is Ethiopia's second phase of the earlier Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSP) process, which was begun under the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (SDPRP) for the period 2002/03-2004/05. This was largely a process developed between Government and donors. The PASDEP provides the over-arching framework for all national and local sectoral and annual programming and policies and carries forward strategic directions pursued under the SDPRP related to infrastructure, human development, rural development, food security, and capacity-building, but it also embodies some new directions (PASDEP, 2005/06-2009/10). Foremost among them is a major focus on growth in the coming five-year period; on greater commercialization of agriculture and enhancing private sector development, industry, urban development and a scaling-up of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). PASDEP is the national plan for guiding all development activities over the forthcoming five years, and, as such, it outlines the major programme and policies in each of the major sectors.

Education Sector Expenditure

Ethiopia spends a considerable amount of its national resources on education. Education's share of the national budget for 2004/05 and 2008/09 amounted to 17% and 20% (projected) respectively, though the actual figure for 2008-09 was 24%.

Expenditure on the education sector has seen considerable growth over the years. According to the Educational Annual Statistics Abstract 2010 (MOE, 2010), the average annual growth of educational expenditure hovers at 25%. The government's own contribution has grown steadily from 27 billion Birr (16.7%) in 2004-05 to 48 billion Birr (23.6%) in 2008-09. (One USD is equivalent to 13.75 Birr.) The Public Expenditure Review (PER, 2010) noted that education has maintained its share of about 21% of total government expenditure in a period of high double digit inflation. General Education's share rose from 48% to 55.5% in nominal terms and to 61.5% in real terms. Higher Education's share rose in nominal terms to above 40% while declining in real terms to 35%. It also noted that Higher Education has witnessed the fastest rate of expansion among all sub-sectors. The forthcoming Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) envisages the further expansion of 8 existing universities and the creation of 10 new institutions that will evolve into universities.

The Public Expenditure Review (PER) also notes that capital budgets for HE have been much higher than the Federal Government has been able to execute, and that the persistent shortfall in capital budget execution is a sign of inefficiency in public expenditure. In addition, the PER notes that cost overruns have been largely due to rises in prices and poor project management. It therefore argues that there are strong reasons for the Federal government to slow down the pace of public investment in HE in the forthcoming review period. It also encourages the government to enhance the space for private financing to contribute to the sub-sector. Finally, it also argues that, given the substantial private returns to higher education, the case is strong for enhancing cost-recovery and private participation at university level.

Education Sector Institutions and Enrolment

Basic and Secondary Education

In 2008-09, there were some 15.55 million basic education and 1.59 million secondary education students. Of these, the female student population in basic education accounted for 47% and in secondary education, 40%. This represents an impressive improvement in enrolment over the previous four years. Enrolments in 2004-05 for basic were 11.49 million (44% female) and just under 1 million for secondary education (39% female).

Access to education remains problematic, however, and is influenced by a number of factors, including geographical location, gender, and disability. The two most underserved regions (Afar and Somali Region) have net enrolment for primary of 24% and 33% respectively, compared to an overall Net Enrolment Rate (NER) of 83%. Alternative Basic Education has been the key policy intervention by government to address this disparity, but there are concerns with quality and access to upper primary.

While the Gross Enrolment rate (GER) now stands at 93% for primary education, girls are still less likely to complete secondary education than boys (of the 205,000 students in grades 11 and 12, only around 25% are girls). Girls also perform less well on tests of achievement (NLA, 2007). There are only around 41,500 students with special needs enrolled in primary school out of a total enrolment of 15,000,000, all of which constitutes a gross under-representation. (Education Statistics Abstract, March 2010)

Overall, however, the growth in enrolments in basic education and secondary education in the four years up to 2009 of 35% and 60% respectively is impressive, although it has major implications for tertiary education, and accounts for the government of Ethiopia's decision to expand that sub-sector.

Tertiary Education: Public Institutions

The Ethiopian higher education system has seen dramatic developments in the last several years. The opening of 13 new universities and the planning of 10 more reflects this dramatic development. Currently, there are 23 public universities with a total enrolment figure of around 319,217. Of these 29% are women. At postgraduate level the participation of women drops markedly with 11% at Master's level and 0.08% registered for PhD. (Statistical Abstracts, 2010). Four delivery modes exist; regular, evening, summer and distance education, although a recent ministerial instruction put some restrictions on the use of the distance education route. The oldest university in the country, Addis Ababa University, enrolls the largest number of students totaling 50,000 across all the delivery modes. Public Universities with over 10,000 enrolments in regular programmes include Arba Minch, Bahir Dar, Gondar, Haramaya, Hawassa, and **Jimma**.

It is generally agreed that universities suffer from serious shortages of qualified staff and the physical and technical capacities to implement many of the reform measures. The rapid expansion in higher education has brought about an increase in the demand for academic staff. Hence, expatriate staff will continue to be recruited and will remain employed until a sufficient number of qualified Ethiopians become available through training and staff development efforts. Higher education is largely dependent on federal government funding. Of the total education budget, about 41% is allocated to higher education, (Public Expenditure Review, June, 2010).

The Higher Education Proclamation calls for diversification of funding sources to ease the financial burden. The resources may include:

- income generated from such services as research, continuing and distance education, consultancy, art and medical services as well as from sports and other activities of the institution;
- government subsidies in cash and kind;
- donations and different contributions;

- loans and other income generating activities, such as the provision of training courses, contract research, farm activities and the launching of commercial enterprises, are encouraged.

Jimma University

With an institutional history going as far back as 1952, Jimma University was constituted as a fully-fledged university through the amalgamation of the College of Agriculture and the Institute of Health Sciences. Jimma University is now organized into two colleges: Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine; eight faculties: Public Health, Medical Sciences, Business and Economics, Technology, Education, Law, Social Sciences and Humanities, Natural and Information Sciences, and a School of Graduate Studies.

Jimma University has a total of 975 academic staff servicing the needs of 23,700 students in all the four delivery modes at the University. Of those in the regular programme 13,780 students are undergraduates and 290 postgraduate. 21% of the student population in the regular undergraduate programme is female, reflecting national trends. With 14% of the postgraduate students female, this is slightly higher than the national average. With the advent of the VLIR-UOS Programme, the university's Ph.D. registrations have risen from zero to 30.

According to HERQA-31 (2008) the University has long been notable nationally for its innovative and pioneering strategy towards outreach using an integrated, highly structured approach in Community-based education (p. 3). On the other hand, that report also notes that parts of the university are "not sufficiently well resourced, with laboratories accommodating more students than is warranted, and with a staff profile with fewer local PhD graduates than the MoE specifies". It also regards as 'inadequate' the very high proportion of local academic staff who are first degree holders. Research activity is also described as 'inadequate'. The report attributes this to the exponential growth in student numbers.

Mekelle University

Mekelle University was established in 2000 from the merger of two former colleges; Mekelle Business College and Mekelle University College. The University currently has three campuses with the following entities: Faculties of Business and Economics; Dryland Agriculture and Natural Resources; Education; Law, Science and Technology; Veterinary Sciences and the College of Health Sciences. The University offers 36 fields of study for regular students at undergraduate level and 6 graduate programmes.

According to Educational Statistics Annual Abstract (2008-09), Mekelle University currently enrolls 12,700 students in all modules in the regular programme. Of these, 10,000 students are undergraduate and 155 are postgraduate students. 21% of the student population in the regular undergraduate programme is female which is lower than the national average. The number of female postgraduate students has grown over the last three years, from 1 in 2007 to over 20 currently. Academic staff number around 900.

The University's stated vision is to be a centre of excellence in teaching and research (HERQA-028). Further, the institution aspires to feature in the top 500 world universities. Clearly it faces enormous challenges to achieve this, especially with regards the poor qualifications of the academic staff which fall short of that specified by MoE. Much of the teaching in some of programmes is undertaken by first degree holders, whilst poor access to academic journals and limited access to the Internet compound these difficulties.

Tertiary Education: Private Institutions

According to Educational Statistics Annual Abstract (2008-09) and HERQA--37 (2008), there are about 50 private colleges that enrol a total of 55,000 students in the regular, evening, summer (Kiremt) and distance programmes. Most of these institutions enrol under a thousand students each, and there are only three, St. Mary's University College (15,000), Alpha (7,200), and Admas (6,200), that enrol more than 5,000 each. Unlike the state HE sector, 35% of the student population in these institutions is female. (It

should be noted that according to anecdotal evidence the number of institutions and enrolment figures is much larger.)

Two major initiatives

Two major initiatives have been launched in the HE sector within the last two years; the Business Process Re-Engineering (BPR) initiative designed to address the quality agenda in HE, and the Engineering Capacity Building Programme (ECBP).

The BPR requires all undergraduate programmes to meet stated quality criteria, and declares the minimum inputs required to achieve these (staff-student ratios, semester length, contact hours and mode of delivery). The intention of the MoE is to develop a National Framework for all degrees. However, the Evaluation Commission was later informed that BPR also requires institutions to adopt a 'zero attrition' policy, to set up remedial measures to assist students failing to meet minimum standards and to help them to re-submit unsatisfactory work. A serious threat to the quality agenda lies in the decision to require HE institutions to increase the size of their first year intake significantly in the area of engineering. For example, Mekelle University has been instructed to increase its intake from around 800 students (their maximum intake capacity) to 2433 students, an increase of over 300%.

The Engineering Capacity Building Programme (ECBP) has reconstituted 10 former engineering faculties into Institutes of Technology under the leadership of Managing Directors and Scientific Directors, the majority of whom will be German nationals. GTZ is providing support for this initiative. At Mekelle University 40% of the new student intake will enter the Civil Engineering stream, between 25% and 30 % will enter the Electrical and Computing Engineering stream, and 20% will enter the Computer Science stream. The rest will be distributed between the Architecture, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering streams. Given the increase in teaching commitments, at least in the short term until adequate numbers of expatriate staff (mainly from India) can be recruited, current staff in these areas will have less time to devote to research.

The Donor Landscape

Ethiopia enjoys a rich and diverse assortment of bilateral and multilateral donors whose activities and engagements span from developmental support to humanitarian aid. The donor community in Ethiopia generally operates under an umbrella organisation known as the Development Assistance Group (DAG). The DAG was established in 2001 to foster information sharing and policy dialogue, and to harmonise donor support to Ethiopia in order to enable the country to meet the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The DAG also assists in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) (DAG, 2010).

The DAG comprises 25 donor agencies providing development assistance to Ethiopia within the Paris Declaration principles of aid effectiveness and harmonization. Members of this group include the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Austrian Development Cooperation, Belgium, Canada (CIDA), Denmark, the United Kingdom (DFID-UK Aid), the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, GTZ-Ethiopia, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India, Irish Aid, Italian Cooperation, Japan JICA, KfW, the Netherlands, Norway (NORAD), Sweden (SIDA), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States (USAID) and The World Bank (DAG, 2010).

Since the post-election (2005) violence and political crisis, the DAG group has changed the way it supports the development agenda of the country. DAG members now employ a host of aid modalities to support the various development sectors such as education, health, agriculture and forestry, among others. A major change to the pre-2005 modalities is the decline in the number of development partners contributing aid to a general pooled fund. Some development partners, including DFID, provide direct budgetary support and basic service provision and maintenance to either the national or regional sectors.

According to an ongoing mapping exercise of the donor landscape, Ethiopia will have received an estimated one billion USD for the education sector between 2004 and 2012. The major contributors include DFID, the Netherlands, and USAID.

Aid Effectiveness

As noted above, the extensive donor community in Ethiopia operates under the general umbrella body of the Development Assistance Group (DAG). The group has more than 10 thematic working groups (TWGs) and concurrent sector groups (CSGs).

Operationally, the DAG relies on the technical expertise of its working groups in the preparation of policy papers, reviews of the PASDEP progress reports, updates of the policy matrix and more. The DAG Thematic Working Groups participate actively in the evaluation of progress in PASDEP implementation and in providing recommendations for the way forward. There are currently 11 DAG Thematic Working Groups on education; gender equality; governance; health, population and nutrition; HIV/AIDS; monitoring and evaluation task force, private sector development, trade and financial issues; public finance management and macroeconomic issues; rural economic development and food security; water and transport .

At the end of 2007, the Ethiopian Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) informed the DAG of the establishment of five Sectoral Working Groups (SWGs). These are: the Rural Development and Food Security Sector Group, the Private Sector Group, the Transport Sector Group, a Gender Group and a Water Sector Group. Some DAG TWGs have already transformed themselves into SWGs, while others are engaged in discussions with their Government counterparts. According to the DAG, the establishment of the SWGs is expected to enhance policy dialogue between the Government and donors. The DAG decided to retain the existing TWGs as donor-only forums to facilitate discussions with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) on agreed policy issues. The DAG is assisting the Government of Ethiopia to meet its MDG objectives as articulated in the major international conferences held in Dakar and Accra, especially that of achieving universal basic education for all by 2015. The constituent members of DAG support the sectors and sub-sectors prioritized by their governments whose engagement is largely based on pre-existing and historical forms of partnerships.

Several forms of partnership currently exist. The first is the Basic Services Protection Programme that provides block grants to particular service sectors. The second is the General Education Quality Improvement Programme for grades 1 to 12 and involves DAG members that include the UK's DFID, and the Dutch, Italian, and Finnish Cooperation. This arrangement provides support to several programmes including text books, curriculum and assessment, and teacher and school development programmes. The Education Pooled Fund (EPF) is generally used for providing harmonized support to the implementation of Ethiopia's Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP). The fund is meant to strengthen efficiency and effectiveness of education development initiatives as well as policy formulation within the framework of ESDP. A third category of partnership supports common programmes but does not use the pooled funding modality.

Although Belgium is a member of the DAG, it is not a member of the Thematic Working Group on Education, which comprises 14 of the 25 DAG members.

1.2. VLIR-UOS' engagement with Ethiopia

The VLIR-UOS Programme for Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) is an interuniversity cooperation programme between Flemish Universities and selected partner universities in the South. Each partnership covers a maximum of two five year periods and comprises a coherent set of interventions aimed at

developing research and teaching and, more widely, institutional reform and meeting local and national development goals. The IUC is a development cooperation programme and not an investment programme in the traditional form of international development assistance. Funding is managed locally within a clearly defined Project Cycle Management framework. It may not be used for recurrent expenditure, except during the initial stages of the programme when a share of the budget may be used for capital expenditure.

To provide additional support to the programme, VLIR-UOS has created an ICT Fund which supports a range of ICT activities, including the *Close the Gap* programme in the two Ethiopian partner universities, Mekelle University and Jimma University.

VLIR-UOS also provides support to the International Foundation for Science (IFS) in its programme of support to deserving young researchers from IUC partner universities. All five Flemish Universities and some of their associated university colleges (total of 23 in Flanders) are involved in the Ethiopian VLIR-UOS Programme².

An extensive literature exists on VLIR-UOS³ Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) in Ethiopia⁴. The Programme was initiated in Ethiopia in 1996 with the overall objective of empowering first Mekelle University and then Jimma University to fulfil their role as development agents in their local societies. The IUC programme provides a framework for institutional capacity building driven by academics and supported by professional managers and non-academic experts. Leadership, ownership and overall responsibility rest with the academics involved, with Northern and Southern stakeholders arriving at a jointly owned framework for cooperation that meets the wider programme objectives. The programme aims at strengthening institutional policies and management, and improving local education, research and societal service delivery.

Key to the programme's success is that a long-term collaboration partnership is intended, giving partners certainty and predictability of funding and support. Further, by encouraging arrangements that build upon existing structures and practices at the level of the partner university, increased ownership is encouraged.

The programme comprises two successive five year periods, with a further three years during which non-monetary support and competitive funding is proposed. This clearly encourages the investment of time and energy by both southern and northern partners. It also sends out a strong message that building the capacity of academic institutions will enable societies to find solutions to local development problems.

Next to the IUC programmes, 3 Own initiatives are present as well (see table), and some 80 Ethiopian students per annum visit Flemish universities to complete a Master or a PhD.

The motto *Sharing minds, Changing lives* aptly sums up the underlying vision of the programme.

VLIR-UOS currently supports the following programme in Ethiopia:

Programme	Description	Total Average Annual estimate
Two Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) programmes.	Long-term multidisciplinary institutional cooperation between Flemish academics and Mekelle University and Jimma University .	€745,000.00 X 2 = €1.49 million
Own Initiatives programme:	Own Initiatives are research and training	Between €50,000-80,000.00 X 3

² Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (K.U.Leuven)

Universiteit Gent (UGent)
Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Universiteit Antwerpen (UA)
Universiteit Hasselt (UHasselt)

³ The Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (VLIR-UOS) / Flemish Interuniversity Council

⁴ Readers are encouraged to visit the VLIR-UOS website: www.vliruos.be

3 projects - Debre Zeit (1), Bahir Dar (1), Arba Minch (1) Former programmes include Mekelle (3), Addis Abeba University (1), Alemaya University (1) and Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organisation (1)	projects initiated by one or more Ethiopian academics and one or more Flemish counterparts The project is aligned with the priorities of the local partner institute (department or faculty), and contributes to the development priorities of the country. They can last up to 5 years.	= up to €240,000.00 Each OI amounts to €300000 euro each for 5 years
Scholarships Average of 75 per year	These provide support to: (i) Ethiopian students who undertake a Master's, PhD (sandwich programme) or short training programmes in Belgium. (ii) Belgian students who conduct research in Ethiopia (VLADOC).	€1 million total cost
ICT interventions including Close the Gap.	Provision of equipment and capacity training.	€120,000.00
Three North-South-South Cooperation Fund (NSSCF)	Link programmes lasting for 2 years.	€105,000.00
Other: Country Office	Funding the VLIR-UOS Country Representative and office.	€60,000.00
Total Average Annual Estimate		€3,145,000.00

Table 2

1.3. The evaluation methodology applied by the Evaluation Commission

Evaluating the impact and sustainability of any project is not a precise science as it is seldom possible to attach a quantifiable value to the direct and indirect added value of an intervention, but it is possible, through an iterative process in which one adds evidence incrementally from a range of sources, to arrive at a sound professional judgement as to the value and impact of a programme. In this particular piece of work, given the depth of documentation and the availability of hard evidence in the form of outputs in each of the Key Results Areas (KRA), even if as in the case of Jimma University the programme is still in its relatively early years, it is possible to obtain a reasonably clear professional sense of the Programme's added value, its progress, and its impact. Further confirmatory evidence is provided by personnel involved, all of whom have views as to progress and impact. Indeed, they were very keen to share their perceptions with the evaluators, and to provide evidence to support their claims, which they did through structured interviews, the completion of schedules and an opinionnaire, and through informal discussion.

It is also possible to arrive at a professional judgement of the Programme and its constituent projects through an analysis of the Programme's records and from evidence gained during field visits. In particular, the evaluators endeavoured to identify key milestones in the process and to understand the perceptions of a range of key actors.

However, one of the main challenges faced by the evaluators when reviewing the output of the VLIR-UOS Programme concerned assessing the level to which VLIR-UOS inputs can be attributed to the outcomes. Another difficulty is trying to track changes that have occurred, as change rarely occurs in a linear developmental fashion.

One way of assessing the sustainability of intended outcomes is to assess the quality of the enabling environment; be that at the international, national or local institutional level. Where each nurtures the other; where national policy and strategy frames and supports local and institutional policy and strategy, and in particular ensures a predictable budgetary framework, then there is the strongest chance of

success. Consequently, the Evaluation Commission took time to come to an understanding of VLIR-UOS and its activities, the national Ethiopian context, the macro institutional contexts of the Ethiopian Universities involved, and the micro contexts of the various projects. To do this the evaluators spent time reviewing documents, interviewing key stakeholders (both north and south), and observing the facts on the ground for themselves.

The classical evaluation framework derived from the VLIR-UOS Evaluation Commission documentation emphasises the three E's of performance management and assessment (Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness) as they impact on the Inputs, Throughputs and Outcomes of the programme and its constituent projects (fig.1).

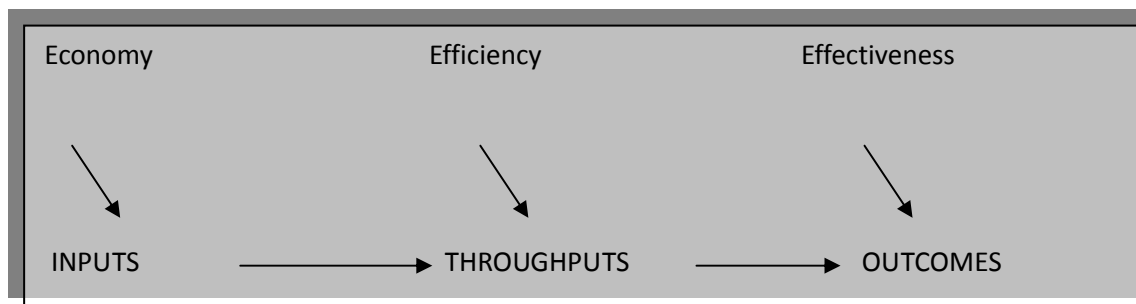


Figure 1

In any evaluation exercise it is important to assess the degree to which each of the above elements (Inputs, Throughputs and Outcomes) has created the necessary conditions to facilitate effective sustainable development. However, it has also to be borne in mind that the primary intention behind evaluation is to encourage lesson learning and to provide the basis for growth in a programme. In this assignment this applies primarily at the policy and strategy level where the key concern is the degree to which the VLIR-UOS Programme is realising development goals as understood by the International donor community. However, also engaging at the programmatic level enabled the team to put the documentation into context. Consequently, an effort was made to encourage joint ownership of the evaluation process and the evaluation report.

The VLIR-UOS review process comprises:

- a system of internal quality assurance which is the responsibility of the universities and academics involved (N and S),
- a monitoring system whereby local university and Flemish coordinators report annually to the VLIR-UOS on the results obtained and the plans for the following year, and
- a process of independent international evaluation.

The review of documentation provided the Evaluation Commission with considerable confidence in the VLIR-UOS quality assurance process, and made it possible for the Commission to adopt the following combination of strategies:

- Briefing discussions with the VLIR-UOS secretariat in Brussels.
- A comprehensive review of all relevant documentation provided by the VLIR-UOS Secretariat and the universities, a detailed review of selected country and institutional data, including selected budgetary data.
- A review of supplementary documentation provided by the partners.
- Interviews and discussions with stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- On-site visits and visits to facilities developed under the VLIR-UOS-IUC and OI programmes.

- Observation of activities being undertaken as part of the programme.
- Presentation of findings to North-South stakeholders and receipt of verbal and written comments from them.

In addition, the Evaluation Commission indicated its willingness to include, where appropriate, minority reports and comments on its draft report beyond those which provide elucidation or correction.

In-depth interviews with Northern and Southern stakeholders made use of a structured interview schedule (Annex 2) and an opinionnaire (Annex 3).

Five areas were covered in the interviews and discussions:

1. Origins and conception of their particular VLIR-UOS partnership programme.
2. Understanding of the goal and objectives of the VLIR-UOS Programme.
3. How their VLIR-UOS Programme has developed and been implemented.
4. The management of their VLIR-UOS programme.
5. The Coherence, Relevance, Quality Assurance, Institutionalisation, Sustainability, Impact and Added Value of the Programme.

On the basis of views expressed, an Opinionnaire (Annex 3 was constructed for use by Northern stakeholders only). Had more time been available to interview fully all Southern stakeholders, and not as was achieved, group interviews, then a similar kind of assessment might have been possible with them as well and comparisons made. The Opinionnaire was used to establish a range of response tendencies and was limited. A structured self-evaluation form was also sent to all students who had participated in the Programme although few replied.

The field visit to the two universities and one Own Initiatives institution (Debre Zeit, Jimma and Mekelle) included interviews, observations and further documentary analysis, and allowed for a more complete assessment of impact through a process of triangulation (interviews, documentary analysis and observation). The visits allowed the evaluators an opportunity to seek clarification and elaboration of claims made in reports and self-assessment returns. During the course of the field work numerous discussions were held mainly with groups of stakeholders representing all levels of the programme including the farmers. One of the most productive was that with groups of PhD students, most of whom are members of staff, at the three sites visited.

In addition, meetings were held with four members of the DAG (The World Bank, the Netherlands, DFID-UKAID and Italy) at which policy, strategic and budgetary issues were discussed.

2. Evaluation

2.1. Macro-analysis of Impact and Sustainability

2.1.1. VLIR-UOS in Ethiopia, the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)⁵

The Paris Declaration expresses a broad international consensus developed in the 15 years up to 2005, stipulating that new partnership relationships and ways of working between developed countries and partner countries are essential if development results are to be assured, aid well spent and aid volumes maintained.

The ToR specifically require the consultants to offer advice on translating the principles of the PD and AAA into university development cooperation. (See ToR 2C)

The Context

Belgium is a signatory of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD) (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) (2008) which commits it to the basic principles of enhanced ownership by beneficiary countries, the harmonisation of aid, results-orientated management and mutual accountability between partners. However, as the OECD (2010) has pointed out, harmonisation of aid and the international governance of global development are splintered into many different arrangements; from stand alone, highly donor controlled projects of limited duration and questionable sustainability, managed by project implementation units which set up separate institutional systems, to government to government direct budget support which, whilst seemingly being strongly 'owned' by recipient governments, is often characterised by high risks of funding fungibility and difficult to assess in terms of direct results for the people for whom the aid and assistance are intended.

In spite of the good intentions behind international agreements like the PD and AAA, no consensus has been arrived at for making development aid more effective, or indeed, where high level principles are agreed as in the PD and AA, of making these decisions stick. Current aid architecture is meant to meet the needs of the poorest countries, yet critics argue that it does not build on the will of their citizens, and at best these countries have to hope that international power-brokers have their best interests at heart when they decide on development programmes. Too frequently, it is argued, power imbalances between donors and recipients combine with widespread conflict of interests to make development aid a challenging and often less than satisfactory exercise, especially for the people of recipient countries.

Over the last two to three years, therefore, whilst continuing to emphasise the importance of local ownership, it is notable that the discourse over aid and development has shifted beyond a concern over modalities and the management of international development to a discourse based on results; i.e. from beyond donor processes to a concern with development effectiveness (results). The discourse is focusing increasingly on the need for:

- Information sharing (transparency, predictability and coherence);
- Promoting better behaviour (mutual accountability);

⁵ The Paris Declaration⁵ was endorsed at the 2nd High Level Forum held in Paris in 2005 by 52 donors/agencies and partner countries and 30 other actors in the development cooperation field (United Nations and other multilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations). The Declaration consists of 56 "Partnership Commitments", and aims to strengthen "partnerships" between donor countries and countries receiving aid in order to make aid more effective and to maximize development results.

The full Declaration can be found at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf> and the Accra Agenda for Action at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/58/16/41202012.pdf>

- Learning from results (development effectiveness);
- Identifying and addressing gaps (improved overall targeting and allocation of resources).

Interviews with VLIR-UOS northern stakeholders in Brussels in June, 2010 and southern stakeholders in Ethiopia in September revealed that, whilst the discourse of academics and development professionals may appear to be different, the intended outcomes of their activities for both are capacity building and development. It was strongly evident in the interviews that the discourse was clearly framed by a focus on results and value for money, and how best to achieve these. There is a strongly held view that good quality scientific research, no matter where it is carried out, has both scientific and developmental outcomes. It was *sine qua non* for all interviewees that good quality applied scientific work in a developing country context forms the basis of sound development practice and vice versa. Given the concerns expressed to the Evaluation Commission Team Leader about the development focus of the VLIR-UOS programme, on the basis of the evidence gathered over the course of this evaluation, the Evaluation Commission believes that development practitioners might wish to articulate better the scientific grounding of their practice, and that scientists, both northern and southern, who are working as partners in Ethiopia might articulate better the development impact of their work. In this way, any claims that the programme operating in Ethiopia does not constitute good development practice will be effectively countered. The situation on the ground in Ethiopia proves the developmental nature of VLIR-UOS' work in Ethiopia very clearly and also how it is grounded in solid applied scientific work. The key challenge, as identified in the ToR, is for VLIR-UOS to continue challenging partners to review their curricula and research activities so as to ensure that they are responsive to the development needs of communities and the labour market. The Evaluation Commission was able to confirm that this is taking place in Ethiopia and that conditions exist for continued progress to be maintained.

In April this year (2010) the Belgian Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGD), VLIR-UOS and its counterpart organisation, CIUF-CUD, signed an agreement aimed at reforming university development cooperation. It intends to limit the VLIR-UOS and CIUF-CUD programmes to six or nine years in duration (two or three three-year action plans), each aligned to the principles of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action, and each applying the principles of result-orientated management and complementarity and synergy with other national and international players.

Implications

In examining the possible implications of this context on current VLIR-UOS programme in Ethiopia, the Evaluation Commission found that VLIR-UOS' current way of 'doing aid' currently sits uneasily with the wider international aid efficiency debate as reflected in the PD and the AAA, and with discussions since then⁶. Although VLIR-UOS' UOS programme and activities in Ethiopia strongly reflect an emphasis on developing local capacity, facilitating local ownership and result-orientated management, and are strongly harmonised between each other in terms of conception, governance and management⁷, they are essentially stand-alone projects less harmonisation with programmes supported by other donors.⁸ However, Southern partners tend to see this somewhat differently and argue that what is central is the work of their respective academic areas, and that they 'mix and match' facilities and equipment from one project supported by one donor with that of another. In this sense it can be argued that what

⁶ VLIR-UOS' situation is not unique. For example, coordination was discussed frankly at the Norway Conference on University Development in February, 2010, with little overall consensus.

⁷ A series of consultations between MU and JU led to consensus on the need and benefit of mutual cooperation in the area of capacity building and research. A MoU to this effect was signed in March, 2008.

⁸ Indeed, in the area of ICT considerable difficulties have occurred at Mekelle University when a Spanish supported e-learning system was introduced using a different ICT platform to that which had been developed under the VLIR-UOS programme. This is now being successfully resolved.

complementarity exists with other donor supported programmes has occurred largely by chance and not through prior planning. However, at Jimma University especially, considerable progress has been made with merging the management of the programme into those of the host institution, although this has not occurred to the same level at Mekelle University. Both institutions have Vice Presidents heading up the IUC, and this in itself indicates the level of institutional commitment to the programme. The Evaluation Commission was impressed by the level of local ownership of their respective IUCs in spite of some differences of approach to external support between the two institutions.

Concerning aid efficiency, the fact that that VLIR-UOS' current way of 'doing aid' currently sits uneasily with the wider international aid efficiency debate is not surprising for the following reasons:

First of all, the VLIR-UOS programme was conceived at a time when the main modality for delivering aid was through stand-alone projects. Indeed, even now over 60% of international development aid continues to be delivered through project modalities.

Second, the VLIR-UOS Programmes (IUC and OI) are essentially academic capacity building programmes delivered through inter-university links. It aims at developing high-level scientific knowledge and skills through collaboration between a group of Flemish Universities, which lead the programme, and Ethiopian universities. The aims are development in outcome; namely improved quality of teaching, research and development through applied research and outreach in Ethiopian universities. Flemish Universities receive no direct funding, apart from limited project operational support, for their work. VLIR-UOS' development funding is used directly by partner institutions in Ethiopia.

Third, the PD and AAA protocols were arrived at in the context of government to government aid assistance, whereas VLIR-UOS focuses on interuniversity collaboration. This kind of programme would normally reside under a government to government (bilateral) Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), but as Ethiopia is not one of the Belgian government's priority international development partners, no such agreement exists. It is suggested that an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) be developed between the two governments which demarcates the specific area of support.

Fourth, the key intended outcome of the PD and AAA is for donor and partner governments to come together around an agreed set of financial management frameworks and systems (medium and long term budget frameworks derived from a regularly revised national Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan, PRSP). Such agreements are intended to lead donors towards direct budget support in which donor governments use partner country financial management, procurement and quality assurance systems. The intended goal is harmonised donor-donor, donor-partner government systems and processes, thereby enhancing local ownership, reducing transaction costs and increasing aid efficiency levels. A deepened engagement with civil society is also intended. The object is for recipient governments to have more control of predictable resources.

At present no such agreement exists between Ethiopia and Belgium nor, it appears, is one intended. This means that Belgium's participation in the deliberations of the 25 member DAG operating in Ethiopia is limited, and, for example, it cannot engage fully in discussions on important policy and strategic issues such as the extent to which the expansion of HE impacts negatively on achieving MDG 2, universal primary education, or threatens the quality of HE provision, or, indeed, on attempts to narrow the differences between unit costs of each education sub-sector⁹ (MoE Education Statistics, 2010). The VLIR-UOS proposal to engage with the Higher Education donor group is an important step forward, although its impact depends largely on how the Government of Ethiopia engages with such a group. At present the HE group is moribund and whilst this may present an opportunity for VLIR-UOS, donors consulted urged

⁹ Secondary Education receives twice per capita than Primary Education. TVET receives a factor of 21 times that of Primary Education whilst Higher Education receives 32 times

caution given the GoE's attitude to outside interference. Had VLIR-UOS' priorities not matched those of the Government of Ethiopia in the Higher Education sub-sector, then real difficulties would have arisen, but as the Evaluation Commission has found, currently the match is extremely good with both the Government of Ethiopia and VLIR-UOS prioritising capacity building and research, and this is likely to remain the case for some time.

Fifth, a further key outcome of the PD and AAA is the intended shift in emphasis by the donor-partner country from an input focus to an outcomes focus, with donors and partners being mutually accountable for development results within a mutually agreed national, sector and sub-sector results framework. In this regard VLIR-UOS has a comparative advantage, particularly through the Programme's Project Cycle Management (PCM) requirements. The downside concerns the extent to which the Programme's good practice is impacting on institutional practice within the two partner universities, and from this level, could possibly impact on national practice across all of Ethiopia's universities. Evidence from this evaluation suggests that there has only been a partial take up of the Programme's good management practice across the two universities, although the GoE is undertaking a major drive to improve management practices across its universities. Both Jimma and Mekelle Universities are, therefore, ahead of the game.

Sixth, allied to this is the PD's and AAA's principle of untied aid. In purist terms, the VLIR-UOS Programme is tied aid, with only select Flemish HE institutions involved. Widening the competitive call system could loosen present requirements, but not significantly. However, were VLIR-UOS to adopt a nuanced approach to providing advice to the GoE on the basis of its very successful record to date, it might be possible to regenerate the Higher Education donor group, and thereby increase opportunities for VLIR-UOS to play a more significant advocacy role regarding national policy and practice. On the other hand, with Ethiopia not a Belgium partner country, VLIR-UOS' impact will depend more on how the value of the UOS programme are perceived by the GoE and not, as is often the case in development circles, also on the political influence of the donor country.

Finally, donor funding for Higher Education in Ethiopia remains problematic in spite of an earlier World Bank grant of around USD40 million around seven years ago. Activities under the umbrella of the PD and AAA focus primarily on achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and in the education sector, Universal Primary Education (UPE). The fact that it is likely that around 40% of countries will not achieve UPE by 2015 will continue to focus the mind of donor governments on basic education and not on Higher Education. It is unlikely in the short to medium term that support for Higher Education will become a donor government priority.

2.1.2. The aid efficiency of VLIR-UOS in Ethiopia in view of policies, development, capacity building, synergies, spin offs and resources

Addressing this issue has not been easy as the Evaluation Commission has had to base its findings on what it has read and observed during the visit, and not on actual 'hard' aid efficiency evidence established by more in-depth research. The collection and compilation of 'hard evidence' on all VLIR-UOS projects is an area which should be addressed, perhaps by the Country Representative. The evaluators did have references to published articles and government reports, including the recently conducted Public Expenditure Review. A similar difficulty exists when one endeavours to assess VLIR-UOS' contribution to national policies. Little hard evidence exists and the Evaluation Commission has had to draw on inferential evidence drawn from examples encountered during the visit, from annual reports and similar data and from interviews with policy makers.

The Evaluation Commission soon became aware that the Government of Ethiopia jealously guards its sovereignty in respect of the development of national higher education policy and strategy. The implications of this for donors should be weighed very carefully and the lessons of the failure of the

earlier World Bank Higher Education Project taken on board.

However, in one respect there is evidence of impact. Over the last year the VLIR-UOS representative was actively involved in the successful establishment of the Consortium of Higher Education Public Universities (CEPU). Similarly in both IUCs their multi-disciplinary approach to pressing research issues in their local environments, and especially the focus on soil and water conservation, crop production, land management and animal husbandry, have begun to attract national attention. The engagement of the Bureau of Agriculture in these activities too is important, but it has not been without its challenges, as research findings and taking these up by implementing changes in practice by farmers revealed inconsistencies and weaknesses in current national policy and practice. For example, the practice of ploughing fields four or more times a year, common across the country, has evidently led to a decline in the fertility of the soil. Ato Araya's (Mekelle) research is turning this practice on its head but disseminating this evidence has been difficult not least because it runs counter to traditional practice¹⁰. Another area where one can confidently draw positive conclusions concerns the impressive number of PhDs and MSc degrees that have been achieved, or are in the process of being achieved, in the two universities. This too is being noted by the MoE and the Evaluation Commission were asked by the Minister of Education to encourage VLIR-UOS to continue with what he regards as a most successful partnership between Northern and Southern academics and institutions.

One notable example of a single development with widespread synergies and spin-offs, with implications for national, regional and local policy, is being shaped just west of Mekelle. A drive down the Hagere Selam road in Tigray provides the visitor with a surprise. Apples are being cultivated, and as a spin-off honey production is to be found too. Following extensive research, an apple project has evolved which has engaged the interest of four other stakeholders, as the picture below reveals.



¹⁰ Ato Araya tells the delightful story which went the rounds in the Hagere Selam area when he began his field work which led him to advocate far less tilling of the soil. One farmer is believed to have said to another: "Who owns that farm up there, is he dead, look how scruffy it looks? His friend replied, "He is clearly a lazy farmer. He only turns over his soil once a year". "But how does he get such wonderful yields, just look at his field?" asked the first farmer? "I don't know, maybe he is using a lot of fertiliser" his friend replied. "No he doesn't. He has bought very little from the Bureau" came the sharp reply. "This is very strange" his friend continued, "we must ask him". As Ato Araya says, how does one encourage people to be 'lazy'?

Figure 2

In Jimma the essential work of focusing on the Gilgel Gibe Dam, and particularly that dealing with siltation and water quality, has also been noted by government. It will have a profound impact on national policy in a number of areas.

As indicated earlier in this report, all VLIR-UOS supported projects and programmes contribute to development. This is nowhere more clearly evident than in the institutional capacity building that is taking place in the following areas:

Research

VLIR-UOS' contribution to capacity development in areas of research in the two "new" and expanding institutions, Jimma and Mekelle, is considerable. As mentioned above, the impact of VLIR-UOS' intervention in addressing the needs of these and other institutions is particularly evident in the large number of post-graduate students that have graduated, the number of scientific papers that have been produced, and the number of conferences that have been attended and organized at the local level.

Material support in terms of providing up-to-date equipment for laboratories and certain key pieces of field equipment including vehicles, and offering training opportunities to the technical staff at home and abroad, has been vital in nurturing the research culture in these institutions. Through this research culture partnerships both nationally and internationally are fostered and sustained.

One of the challenges that Ethiopian institutions face is access to major journals. With the development and expansion of the internet through the ICT initiative and "Close the Gap", institutions are beginning to access several thousand e-journals, to which they can subscribe, at least for the time being, cheaply through the national Ethiopian Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) of INASP and to some minor extent their own subscriptions.. These journals are currently used widely by graduate students and faculty alike. Impact is difficult to measure, but students and supervisors alike comment favourably on the influence of these initiatives, and on the research and knowledge production that is taking place in general.

Some impressive achievements and breakthroughs have been made in the Own Initiative Programme. In one a team of experts at Debre Zeit was able to isolate trypanosomes from horses and to characterise it as *Trypanosoma Equiperdum* by serological and molecular techniques. Some are engaged in further development-based research, such as Dr Hagos Asharafi and colleagues who are involved in research on the Dodala Strain of *Trypanosoma Equiperdum*. The parasite afflicts equines in large areas of South and South Western Ethiopia. They would not have been able to do the analytical and molecular work without the academic support, training and equipment supplied as part of the VLIR-UOS OI programme. A similar example is the development of the geological map for Tigray. Academic support, equipment and training as part of the IUC led to this significant achievement, albeit one which took longer than expected. This outcome has significance both at the national and international level.

One of the most commonly attributed impacts of VLIR-UOS support is the development of a research culture in the IUC institutions. Partner organisations recognise this and seek the support of similar university development cooperation programmes too. These include South – South links with universities in Kenya and Tanzania in addition to ever strengthening links with universities in Belgium.

In its meetings with international donors, professional and academic stakeholders and government ministers the Evaluation Commission found that VLIR-UOS' reputation for having established programmes with measurable outcomes, that bring together capacity building, research and outreach in a context of thematic programme, is very high. This will probably be the lasting legacy of the VLIR-UOS programme.

Education

The training of staff to masters and PhD levels has facilitated the development of new programmes as well

as revising older ones. The capacity of staff involved to develop curricula and programmes has grown as their experience and confidence has grown. The MU-IUC alone has produced 15 PhDs and this is acknowledged by ministry and senior university management to have set the standard for the sub-sector. Through the opportunities the VLIR-UOS programme is offering, the university is finding it possible to produce a new cadre of academic staff to offset potential shortages as the age of existing staff increases. As institutions have expanded, so too has the volume and diversity of educational delivery, thereby increasing the importance and impact of better trained faculty. The number of PhD and master's degree graduates emerging from this Programme is therefore very significant.

The ICT programme has brought about major changes in the teaching and learning in both institutions. In Jimma, for instance, a clear link between ICT and teaching methods was reported. A largely chalk and talk teaching methodology has been replaced by the more interactive screen and white boards with classroom instruction integrated on an electronic platform. Increasingly, lecture notes will be made available online, whilst the wireless environment and its effective management have transformed the institution, and played a vital role in changing the atmosphere of it too.

Service to society

Unlike many other university development cooperation initiatives, virtually all the programmes that have been conceived and implemented in the VLIR-UOS programme have direct and applied community and societal benefits. All projects are developmentally grounded. For example, it is reported that the way the Jimma programme in malaria has been approached has led to significant declines in infection, with widespread consequences across the country. Unfortunately no hard data is available, but what makes these VLIR-UOS programme initiatives unique is the way it addresses several concurrent developmental challenges facing Ethiopia. The Jimma based IUC programmes address a number of complex issues which have arisen since the construction of the Gilgel Gibe Dam, a vital power source in the country. The same is true for Mekelle based IUC projects where significant research and development has occurred aimed at increasing food security. It may seem a little churlish to criticise the management of these initiatives, but hard data and results should be collected on them and communicated to VLIR-UOS and more widely.

Maintenance of an established course, research centre, and set of management practices

Several Masters (Number of graduates: css (3), ICT (2), Crop (5), Hydro (13), Land (17), Socio (6)) and the development of the first new PhD in Soil Science at Mekelle University, have been made possible by the long-term interventions of the VLIR-UOS programme. These and other spin-offs are contributing to the development of a research and development culture at Mekelle University. The university is a young institution founded just over ten years ago. Since then it has become one of the major universities in the country. The university leadership attributes this achievement to university development cooperation, singling out the VLIR-UOS projects as having been significant in this. As the university Vice President proudly said, "Do you know that ten years ago we had no PhDs or any research on this campus".

It is difficult to attribute the development of a research environment entirely to VLIR-UOS' interventions, but it can be said that government's own actions and those of VLIR-UOS have complemented each other, and are leading to a situation where the whole is greater than the parts. In the process of achieving this, it is evident that a positive enabling environment is evolving, and indeed will continue to evolve as further government pressure for post-graduate research and development grows.

Synergies, exchanges with policies of other external donors

VLIR-UOS engages with several external donors directly and indirectly both at a policy and programme management level. These primarily include NUFFIC and NORAD with the former aiming at capacity building and the latter PhD research. Earlier this year VLIR-UOS helped organize the first *Access to Success* conference of the European University Association. It was funded by the European University Association in Brussels, and was organised in Addis Ababa on the suggestion of VLIR-UOS. This event attracted

numerous higher education players and other development stakeholders from Ethiopia, the rest of Africa and Europe.

Nonetheless, whilst the relationship between VLIR-UOS IUC partners is good and represents the benchmark for effective and successful partnerships between North-South, and South – South cooperation, and for the production of PhD and Master’s graduates, the synergies and exchanges that exist between development partners in Ethiopia within the HE sub-sector are occurring more by chance than as a result of prior planning. Developing a more pro-active set of synergies and exchanges will be enhanced through the work of the VLIR-UOS Country representative and the good offices of the Belgian Embassy. Persons who attended the lunch hosted by the Ambassador on the occasion of the Evaluation Mission report-back (VLIR-UOS, World Bank, NUFFIC, GTZ) resolved to maintain contact.

Emergence of competitive or complementary activities and spin-offs by other actors

At the level of programme synergy and the generation of cross-cutting issues there has been much progress as the diagram below listing activities at Mekelle University reveals, although detail on the nature of the synergies was not made available.

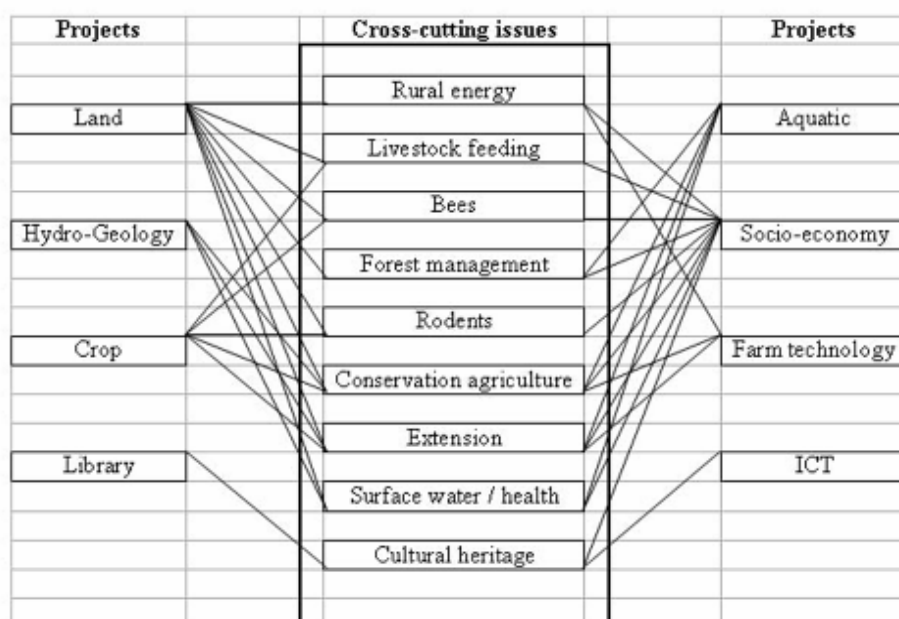


Figure 3 2009-10 Mekelle University IUC Annual Report.

Over the course of the review, the Evaluation Commission encountered a number of other research and development opportunities that have been created on the VLIR-UOS platform within the two IUC institutions. For example, at Jimma University the development of Participatory Rural Appraisal methodologies underpin most of the studies on the impact of the Gilgel Gibe Dam. The very nature of PRA engages the local community, thereby setting up more opportunities for outreach. The University’s *Community Based Education* mission further enhances this, and most notably includes the setting up of Community Resource Centres. Similarly, at Mekelle University, a ‘rash’ of spin-off activities includes a ‘Trees for Farmers’ programme, bee-keeping, the three wheel tractor project, the CUD project and the Apple Project mentioned earlier.

When it is realised that one is talking about a period of less than seven years, in the case of Mekelle University, and three years in the case of Jimma University, this kind of progress is remarkable, and points to the catalytic impact of the VLIR-UOS programme.

But probably more important than anything else is the fact that the IUC programme is facilitating the growth of young and energetic staff, able to stand on their own two feet in designing, developing, and implementing research of a comparable standard to be found throughout Africa and beyond.

Resource utilisation (worth for money in North and South, evolution of allocated budgets in Ethiopia over the years as a function of KRAs)

The Evaluation Commission acknowledges that the largely Ethiopian government funded expansion of the higher education sector in Ethiopia over the past few years is impressive. More than 10 new institutions have been established, and others are planned in the next half decade or so. Critics argue that much of this has been spent on buildings, which leaves capacity building and the provision of essential equipment very much in the hands of institutions themselves. This is why, for example, NUFFIC is targeting capacity building and institutional governance, and other donors involved in the sector, PhD and MSc training. VLIR-UOS' contribution includes funding for essential equipment and the provision of laboratories and ICT support.

It is obvious in both universities visited that what VLIR-UOS can provide will not meet institutional needs. Scholars share donor funded equipment from whatever source. Without a detailed study of institutional resource and equipment needs, however, it is impossible to assess 'worth for money', but it can be said that no VLIR-UOS provided material resources were found to be sitting idle, and that in many instances it was the only equipment of that sort that the institution has.

Senior administrators were asked how they planned to handle the decline of VLIR-UOS funding in years 8, 9 and 10. First, of course, no new VLIR-UOS PhD students will be registered; although Mekelle University, with only three years of the IUC remaining, hopes that some form of transitional funding can be provided for those taking slightly longer to complete their PhDs. Second, institutions are anticipating further funding from other donors, and are actively seeking such funding. Primarily, however, institutions are relying on increased government funding to assist them to cushion the increased intake of students being required by government. Third, many VLIR-UOS projects have entered into arrangements with different governmental and non-governmental institutions, and university development organisations to share technical, logistical and human resources in a reciprocal manner. For instance, VLIR-UOS funded researchers regularly partner those who are working with CUD (Belgium), NORAD, Italian cooperation, and regional development offices. There is a growing drive to create synergies in resource utilisation and mobilisation.

On balance, however, the Evaluation Commission is less sanguine that such funding will meet demand, and believes that over the next few years the careful nurturing of Jimma and Mekelle universities into research institutions of some standing could be threatened by the wider lack of resources for research. Government has a massive HE expansion programme planned, but the Evaluation Commission is of the view that this currently focuses more on infrastructure and not on the quality agenda. It has yet to find a balance between quantity and quality in terms of funding higher education.

On the positive side, the human capital that is being built up is unlikely to be lost, whilst VLIR-UOS' programme of providing essential equipment in the form of laboratories, field equipment, and other important facilities appears to have been the correct course to have followed in spite of the risks associated with poor maintenance and a potential failure of the GoE to create a sufficiently large replacement budget.

Summing up

To sum up, the Evaluation Commission believes that for the following reasons a major opportunity continues to exist for VLIR-UOS in Ethiopia in HE capacity development:

1. The Government of Ethiopia has prioritised higher education, although this is unlikely to attract significant donor funding until perhaps after 2015. The policy environment is positive even if the expansion that is occurring could come at a severe cost to quality¹¹.

¹¹ Ethiopia's HE system has seen unprecedented expansion over the last 18 months. It has come with some cost to quality across the entire range of institutional activities (research, teaching, learning, management, curriculum development etc.) Beyond the need for increased financial resources, the system requires considerable capacity,

2. VLIR-UOS has a long and successful engagement with the HE sector in Ethiopia. Not only are the VLIR-UOS PCM systems results orientated, thereby fitting in strongly with the current results-orientated discourse, but also capacity building is at the heart of the programme. The results achieved to date have attracted the attention of Government which should encourage VLIR-UOS to consider expanding its current activities in Ethiopia. VLIR-UOS' activities provide a model for addressing quality issues.

3. In May, 2010, the World Bank (WB)¹² announced the development of a new Ten Year Education Strategy. Whilst the WB's primary concern will remain poverty reduction in Africa, and its education focus primarily basic education, the proposed new WB strategic plan is intended to address *inter alia* the growing demand for secondary and tertiary education. Amongst issues being examined will be the environment, ICT and the impact of education capacity issues to meet the increasing demand for secondary and tertiary education. This was followed by a call from the African Union for members to strengthen its Pan-African University Development effort, an issue reiterated at the *Access to Success* initiative in June, 2010. Informed opinion is that this call is likely to remain a dream in the short-term at least.

2.2. Micro-analysis of impact and sustainability

2.2.1. The present implementation of the programme/projects

Review Evidence

In undertaking this evaluation, the Evaluation Commission reviewed the Programme's Annual Reports and other documentation and interviewed Northern and Southern stakeholders. In addition, Northern stakeholders completed an opinionnaire. Twenty student questionnaires were sent out by e-mail. Four completed questionnaires were returned.

Table 1 lists the coverage of the interviews and surveys.

Northern stakeholder interviews (Brussels)	17
Southern stakeholder interviews/discussions (Ethiopia)	50
Opinionnaire (Northern Stakeholders)	17
Student interviews (Brussels)	4
Student interviews (Ethiopia)	4
Student questionnaire	2

Table 2

Seventeen interviews were undertaken with Northern Stakeholders in early June, 2010, and thirty nine interviews with stakeholders in groups in Ethiopia during September, 2010. In addition, the Evaluation Commission spent a total of 10 days with the northern teams in Ethiopia, during which they benefitted from a number of formal and informal discussions. Interviews and informal discussions centred on the

technical, managerial and logistical support.

¹² The WB's stated priorities for 2020 are to:

- i) Strengthen education systems by building national capacities, develop systems of performance measurement and ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently.
- ii) Invest in global knowledge and understanding of education challenges and policy effectiveness.

World Bank, May, 2010.

following five areas:

- Origins and conception of their particular VLIR-UOS partnership programme
- Understanding of the goal and objectives of the VLIR-UOS Programme
- How their VLIR-UOS Programme has developed and been implemented
- The management of their VLIR-UOS programme
- The Coherence, Relevance, Quality Assurance, Institutionalisation, Sustainability, Impact and Added Value of the Programme

All interviewees outlined the work they were undertaking and issues that had arisen in the course of implementing it. Of significance is that where issues and difficulties have arisen, project leaders and staff in the two universities provided timely, effective and professional support to resolve them. Further, northern academics all pointed to the support they received from VLIR-UOS and from their respective programme leaders. The appointment of Dr Hans Bauer as the VLIR-UOS Country Representative in Ethiopia was generally applauded. Similar positive views were expressed about the way VLIR-UOS Brussels manages the UOS programme in the north, although it was mentioned that northern academics generally had to rely on secretarial support provided by the universities. Criticisms of this support by one of the northern Programme leaders would suggest that the roles and duties of these persons could benefit from a review. The only other area where negative comments were received from some northern stakeholders related to the use of logframes, required as part of the Project Cycle Management process. (ref: section 2.2.4).

One of the two Northern Programme Coordinators expressed considerable appreciation for the professional manner in which VLIR-UOS supports and works with him. Of particular significance is the strongly held view that VLIR-UOS senior management in Brussels are perceived to trust project groups to get on with implementing their work programmes. The role and leadership of the local Ethiopian Programme Coordinators and Project managers and the local VLIR-UOS office staff received much praise.

The Opinionnaire

On the basis of discussions in Brussels, an opinionnaire was constructed and distributed to Northern respondents with the request to complete it. It asked respondents to indicate agreement or disagreement with 25 statements about the Programme. As indicated earlier, the Opinionnaire was developed out of discussions held and posed a series of polarised statements. Respondents were asked to react to them by indicating their full or partial agreement or disagreement with them. Responses were tallied, giving a series of response tendencies. The instrument provides nothing more than this.

Respondents were also asked to identify the three main factors which they believed might threaten the sustainability of the VLIR-UOS programme in Ethiopia. Finally they were asked to assess their own partnership programme in terms of its perceived level of impact on their own and their partner Ethiopian institution over a range of areas which included research, teaching, professional development and capacity building and institutional reform.

The replies largely confirmed the views expressed in the interviews, but gave the Evaluation Commission a set of clearly dichotomised responses.

On the basis of 17 returns, the findings are that Northern interviewees are *strongly of the view* (over 70%) that:

- The VLIR-UOS Programme has been able to generate a coherent and efficient research and capacity building environment in both universities.
- The emphasis on research does not threaten the teaching and extension dimensions of the N-S partnership; rather complements it considerably.

- The emphasis on scholarship is as important as developing relationships, trust and mutual respect.
- Building high level capacity in the sciences and information technology will not increase the brain-drain from Ethiopia.

A simple *majority* of respondents (55%) believe that:

- Academics from Belgium generally feel they are better placed to know what is more academically appropriate than their counterparts in Ethiopia, which explains why they usually take the lead in the research projects being undertaken as part of the programme.
- Focusing on research and academic goals is as important as focusing on development goals and outcomes.
- The relative lack of resources of Ethiopian partner institutions poses a serious threat to the sustainability of existing partnership programmes.
- Without harnessing the scientific and educational power of Belgian Universities, Jimma and Mekelle universities will fail in their mission to become first rate universities, but the gains from the present programme are unlikely to be sustained without reforms in the enabling environment (mainly governance) of the two institutions.
- Providing Belgian scholars with grants to undertake collaborative scientific research and capacity building would raise the level of impact, and that VLIR-UOS should consider the NUFFIC model for supporting this.
- Do not believe Ethiopia is more high risk as regards health and safety than working in Belgium.

Opinion is almost *equally divided* with no clear tendency on whether:

- Given its size as a development programme, it is unrealistic to expect that the VLIR-UOS programme will have a significant impact on Ethiopian society.
- In the context of Ethiopia, interdisciplinary Action Research is more appropriate than in-depth single area research. (It surprised the Evaluation Commission that clearer support for the statement was not evident, given the success of the IUCs).
- Because of the relatively small scale of the Ethiopian VLIR-UOS programme, outcomes are unlikely to have much impact on university policy, strategy and governance at Mekelle and Jimma universities. (This too surprised the Evaluation Commission, given the manner in which the Programme was 'talked up' by university senior management in both institutions).
- There is quite a lot of duplication of resources and effort across each university occasioned by the presence of different donors and funders (This contradicted the views of Southern partners who share donor resources across activities).
- In the core area of research, the outcomes could be greater, especially with regards the number of published papers in internationally refereed journals (In other words outcomes could equally be significant).

Overall assessment based on the interviews, observation and the opinionnaire:

(i) Impact

Three key dimensions have emerged

The first related to the infrastructure and facilities available. It is inevitable that a facilities deficit exists, and that the impressive ICT interventions and *Close the Gap* especially has gone some way to addressing

IT needs. The impact at Jimma University is particularly evident. Attempts presently underway in Mekelle University to harmonise its IT platform have been welcomed. The impressive provision of laboratory and other equipment as part of the programme has enabled work to be undertaken that would not have been possible without it.

The second dimension concerns aspects of institutional governance and the enabling environment created, and how external support is perceived. The importance of establishing a positive enabling environment was emphasised by the two university presidents and their deputies in public statements made during the Evaluation Commission's visits. Good progress in this regard in both institutions was reported to the Commission. Both institutions held Programme Steering Committee meetings during the Commission's visit. At Jimma University an impressive research poster event was held which showcased research being undertaken as part of the VLIR-UOS programme. At Mekelle, the Evaluation Commission was privileged to attend the Steering Committee meeting as observers, as well as a progress meeting of current PhD students at which individual research projects were shared and preliminary finding from them discussed.

The third dimension related to the UOS Programme's focus on Capacity Building, Research and Extension with a strong emphasis of building multi-disciplinary thematic research groups. Some impressive development research was on view on both campuses, all with emphasis on development goals. It is clear, as one senior academic pointed out, that the region's development needs and demands have given rise to an impressive range of scholarly research. More than this is occurring, however. A process of reciprocal learning is taking place and from what was said to the Commission, it is evident that northern partners are learning much beyond their immediate academic interests.

(ii) Relevance

A clear consensus amongst interviewees (north and south) exists over what the N-S programme is about:

- *Scientific and educational quality.* This is especially important to the academic stakeholders as much is contingent upon the need for the institutions, departments and individuals involved to develop and maintain an effective research and publication record and profile. Some northern partners consider this to be more important for Southern academics as they, the northern counterparts, already have international reputations. However, it was mentioned that some of their institutions value less their engagement in the VLIR-UOS programme, than do those of their Southern counterparts. Interviewees all mentioned the necessity for scientific rigour and quality across their work, especially as the primary means of securing additional resources, tenure and professional promotion lies in this.

- *Development relevance:* This is seen to be a natural outcome of the VLIR-UOS programme, no matter whether the work has a more theoretical or an applied emphasis. Comments made to the Evaluation Commission confirm this. The suggested distinction between an academic/scientific research or teaching programme on the one hand, and a development programme on the other, was widely challenged. It was argued that not only did the VLIR-UOS programme meet established scientific norms and standards, but also that all learning and research can be deemed to be applied, whether this research is undertaken in a developing or a developed world context. Indeed, it was *sine qua non* for all interviewees that good quality applied scientific work in a developing context forms the basis of sound development practice and *vice versa*.

Of particular interest to the Evaluation Commission is the observation that academic researchers and teachers frequently use a different discourse to describe their work to that used by international development professionals, yet the activities of both are aimed at capacity building through the application of science. In the VLIR-UOS Programme, sustainable development is seen as the ultimate goal of both development and education, with good quality scientific research underpinning all development outcomes

- *Reciprocal learning*: Those interviewed believe that inter-university cooperation for development must embody, and indeed does embody, reciprocity in the learning process, and in building scientific capacity, even in situations where there is an acknowledged imbalance between the capacities of the partners. With regards academic subject content and technical expertise, this has largely occurred in a north-south direction, whereas the application of this work is largely southern driven.

The direct impact of the VLIR-UOS programme on institutional governance is unclear, especially as the Government of Ethiopia embarked on a process of institutional governance reforms nearly two years ago, although this is still work in progress. Examples of how the VLIR-UOS Programme has influenced university QA systems and processes were mentioned, as well as the use of programme planning strategies. Further, examples of how the universities have engaged in the process of project review suggest that the Programme has been influential. The two Northern programme coordinators rated the institutional impact of the Programme on the two Southern Universities at a score of 7 out of 10. Senior management interviewed at Jimma University, in particular, were able to point to where and how the VLIR-UOS procedures and management practice have been integrated into the institution's practice, especially the use of programme cycle management.

- *Ensuring local ownership and engaging closely with local communities*. This is the most significant feature of the Programme, particularly as it has brought together the power of a range of disciplines to address the needs of a local community. A striking example is the research development work around the Gilgel Gibe Dam near Jimma, which incorporates work on zoonotic and animal diseases, environmental health and ecology, child health and nutrition, epidemiology and modelling in parasitology, malaria, tuberculosis and HIV, and soil fertility, together with substantive work setting up an ICT system and data base. At Mekelle University, activities centre on developing sustainable livelihoods in Geba Catchment (5000 square km) of Tigray Region. The Evaluation Commission was privileged to share in discussions and to observe the outcomes of the projects making up the VLIR-UOS Programme there. It is the view of the Evaluation Commission that significant local ownership of these projects, which engage the local community very closely, portends well for the sustainability of these projects.

(iii) Sustainability

- On the issue of *sustainability*, however, there is no clear consensus. Concern has been expressed by persons interviewed over what might happen to the Programme outcomes, especially the spin-offs, once it comes to an end. The Evaluation Commission regards this as a legitimate concern, especially as the success or otherwise of the Programme depends largely on how effectively it can influence the commitment of the two institutions to maintain the values embodied in it. Currently the Programme is seen to be high value, but circumstances in the manner in which the two institutions are managed and governed can change. The leadership of both universities and that at Debre Zeit regard the Programme very highly. They also point to the fact that risks to sustainability are mitigated by the Programme's long time-frame of 10 to 15 years, together with the provision of reliable funding support for 10 years. These are key principles in the Paris Declaration and Accra Accord for Action.

The recent proposal to reduce VLIR-UOS' programme cycle to two three-year action plans could weaken this risk mitigation strategy (*Agreement on Reforming University Development Cooperation, 22nd April, 2010*). A three year cycle does not fit a normal five year PhD cycle. The new agreement does not preclude renegotiating a further two three-year programme with the same institution, but this does not fit the usual five year PhD cycle either.

The other risk mitigation strategy adopted by VLIR-UOS programme is the application of a rigorous Project Cycle Management (PCM) However, not all project leaders find it of significant value, although its value as a planning and management instrument is acknowledged by the two IUC university presidents.

(iv) Threats

Four main *threats* to sustainability have been identified.

These are:

1. That the decision by the Government of Belgium not to include Ethiopia as a development partner country could reduce the chances of securing sufficient funding to guarantee the follow-up of projects and also reduce the influence Belgium will have in the DAG and with the Government of Ethiopia.
2. That without further Ethiopian Government support for reforms in the enabling environment of both Jimma and Mekelle universities, and across HE within Ethiopia generally, the gains in scholarship research capacity and in the provision of resources (ICT especially) arising from the present partnership programme are less likely to be sustained¹³.
3. The relative lack of resources and the current absence of an equipment and facilities replacement budget in Ethiopian partner institutions will increasingly pose a serious threat to the sustainability of existing partnership programmes¹⁴.
4. The decision of the Government of Ethiopia to expand HE provision, particularly by insisting on an immediate increase in numbers registering for science and technology based programmes.

However, as has been mentioned earlier, in mitigation the VLIR-UOS programme is building capacity and creating a viable research culture. Further, it is having an impact especially with regards the development of specific scientific knowledge as well as on the development of a host of transferable academic, professional and development skills. On balance, therefore, the Evaluation Commission concurs with the stakeholders they met, especially the two northern Programme Coordinators, that the VLIR-UOS Programme itself is sustainable although the wider, long-term impact and sustainability could be threatened by exogenous factors.

a. The involvement of the Belgian Embassy

There is no doubt that the VLIR-UOS Programme in Ethiopia is seen as the Belgian Embassy's development flagship, and whilst involvement in the VLIR-UOS Programme is limited by the fact that Belgium no longer includes Ethiopia as one of its development partner countries, the Ambassador and staff see the presence of VLIR-UOS as an opportunity to maintain close relations with the Government of Ethiopia. The Evaluation Commission notes that whilst the additional support that could be provided via bi-lateral development aid to Ethiopia is no longer available, it regards VLIR-UOS' decision to set up a Country Office in Addis Ababa as a very positive development.

b. The overall status of implementation.

A review of the logframe and an overview of progress to date in the Key Results Areas in the two IUCs give clear evidence that both IUCs are on track to meet, if not exceed, the targets stated. Similarly with the OI at Debre Zeit where the scholarly output from the small team involved is very impressive.

¹³ Whilst it is difficult for the Evaluation Commission to comment on this in the absence of an Ethiopia-wide review of university governance, the Commission wishes to argue that the absence of university autonomy will restrict institutional development.

¹⁴ Indeed, this could be exacerbated by the current policy of expanding the HE sector further.

2.2.2. The nature of the programme/projects

a) Quality, efficiency, efficacy, impact, development relevance and sustainability

(Reference has already been made to these issues in section 2.1.1)

In discussing the above issues, the Evaluation Commission is concerned that it should be acknowledged that each of the above concepts is contested and highly problematic, especially as they are contextually related. Something that may be regarded to be of quality or to have high relevance in one context may not be so in another. For example, from one perspective the circumstances in which animals are being kept in one of the stables visited requires attention; a view not shared as fully by others involved in this research. The Evaluation Commission, however, sees the risks or embarrassment to VLIR-UOS were something like this to be raised by animal welfare groups in Belgium. Similarly with student living accommodation which when viewed from a northern perspective is overcrowded and inadequate. Notions of relevance are equally problematic, relevant to whom, as are terms like quality, efficiency, efficacy, impact, development relevance and sustainability and what they mean in this context? Consequently, in judging the VLIR-UOS programme, it is necessary to attempt to mediate one's judgements. This does not lessen the usefulness of the indicators provided in Annex (ii) of the ToR, but it is hoped that they will become a starting point for a wider discussion between Northern and Southern partners on them.

The evaluators acknowledge that developing a comprehensive set of indicators which are context related and which reflect stakeholder voice could be a time-consuming process, and whether investing more time in deriving more sensitive indicators would be of value. The Evaluation Commission's view is that perhaps it would not be, and that rather that VLIR-UOS should consider a shift to more clearly defined measurable outcomes in the logframe be considered instead (ref: 2.2.4).

Nonetheless, using the documentation provided, this report will summarise the Evaluation Commission's overall findings.

Indicator	Findings
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Project documentation is comprehensive. It has been produced by Northern partners with the involvement of Southern partners. The discourse is very much a northern one and evidence of southern voice is limited. ii) Project reporting and the poster displays reflect considerable levels of local ownership and a great deal of pride in what is being achieved (see photo below).iii) Systems, processes and mechanisms exist in both IUCs for assessing outcomes as per the KRA format.iv) Northern supervisors provide regular support and advice to PhD students including written progress reports.v) ICT systems meet Northern specifications and standards as well as immediate needs of Southern users.
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i) It is difficult to judge the efficiency of the IUC programme as so many variables are involved. However, respondents speak of improved collaboration and cooperation between and across departments and units in each institution and, indeed, between them.ii) The provision of an estimated 150 professor hours engagement on this work per Northern professor per year at no consultancy cost to VLIR-UOS is an extremely efficient use of resources. It is estimated that the VLIR-UOS IUC modality saves VLIR-UOS approximately €19,000.00 per professor engaged in this programme per year or an estimated €350,000.00 per year. In comparison, NUFFIC has calculated that it will spend around 45% of its €18 million NICHE budget on consultancy fees over four years of that project.ii) On the basis of comments by Northern partners and observations made, the Evaluation Commission suggests that VLIR-UOS' central management costs are also extremely cost

	<p>effective given the complexity and size of the IUC and other programmes being run in Ethiopia, and the level of staffing at headquarters in Brussels.</p> <p>iii) Laboratory and other equipment supplied by VLIR-UOS is used across project areas where relevant which increases the efficiency thereof. However, wear and tear decreases the lifespan of this equipment.</p> <p>iv) ICT equipment and systems are contributing to efficiency gains in research, teaching and institutional administration.</p> <p>v) Other efficiencies in terms of outcomes have been created by the various spin-off activities that the IUCs have generated.</p>
Impact	<p>i) Impact, both directly planned and indirectly achieved through the generation of various spin-off activities, appears to be high and positive, although without measurable indicators of impact the Evaluation Commission had to rely largely upon observation and anecdotal evidence to come to this conclusion.</p> <p>ii) Scholarly and academic impact is evidenced by the number of PhD degrees completed (15 completed at Mekelle University, and 21 on-going. Jimma –(1 completed and 29 on-going), the number of MSc degrees completed and the positive impact this has had on generating a research culture in the institutions concerned. The number of publications in international journals (Mekelle 66, Jimma 8, Debre Zeit 3), and the impact on curriculum reform and development is also impressive.</p> <p>iii) Extension impact is evidenced by the growth in demand-driven and rural centred activities, of which there are many.</p> <p>iv) The impact on institutional development especially through the development of an effective ICT platform, and on institutional management and systems is not only widely acknowledged by the institutions themselves, but also by the Ministry of Education itself.</p> <p>v) The alignment of VLIR-UOS activities with the GoE's HE priorities, and with those of the institutions themselves, has led the MoE to regard the VLIR-UOS IUC modality as the national benchmark for such engagement.</p> <p>vi) It is difficult to assess the direct impact of VLIR-UOS' IUC activities on poverty reduction, except with regards the growth in income generating spin-off activities. These suggest strongly that local economic activity is being stimulated by the IUC programme. In the absence of specific rate of return studies in Ethiopia, what can be concluded is that generally the individual rate of return on investment in HE is known to be high, although investment in basic education has a higher common good rate of return.</p>
Development relevance	<p>i) Based on what was observed in the three locations visited, the development relevance of both IUCs and OI is high. Both IUC programmes focus on capacity building and applied research to underpin a range of extension/outreach programmes. The two foci of the IUCs are of national importance and relevance, each likely to have long term significance for the economic and social development of the two regions concerned.</p> <p>ii) Mekelle University's IUC focus is on activities designed to increase sustainable food security in Geba catchment which is representative for the dry lands of Ethiopia. Each of the 8 projects and the various spin-off activities aim at enhancing income generation and are thereby contributing to achieving sustainable rural livelihoods.</p> <p>iii) Jimma University's IUC is applying a multi-disciplinary research and development approach to the study of the impact of the Gilgel Gibe Dam project. This includes three core elements: applied scientific research, human and social research and development, and ICT development.</p>
Sustainability	<p>i) From a human capacity building perspective the sustainability of the IUC programme is high. This applies equally to both the academic and the extension facets of the programme. The research culture that has been established appears to be embedded in institutional culture.</p>

	<p>ii) However, in the context of Ethiopia's drive to expand the provision of HE, a serious threat exists to sustaining the professional and academic quality of the VLIR-UOS programme.</p> <p>iii) The Evaluation Commission believes that the GoE has not sufficiently addressed the quantity – quality debate in its decision to increase intake numbers at first year level. The decision to apply a 70% of student intake to science/technology programmes and 30% for all other programmes at the same time as increasing first year intake numbers by around 300% does not appear to be supported by an adequate analysis of the staffing, materials and equipment implications thereof.</p> <p>iv) The Evaluation Commission was unable to establish whether HE institutions are going to be able to sustain and maintain appropriate financial commitments to maintain and replace infrastructures. Responses to questions to the MoE on how the GoE funds Higher Education and intends to fund institutional research and equipment replacement budgets were decidedly guarded, whilst an attempt to probe the possible introduction of formula funding as distinct from historical block grant funding received a cool response¹⁵.</p>
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Table 3

Jimma University Poster Conference: Sharing one's findings



b) Overall management structure of the programme/projects

i) The North and South management organograms for both IUCs were consulted and questions concerning the management structures and effectiveness were posed to the Northern and southern coordinators and programme managers.

The general consensus is that the two northern university-based management offices are pivotal in ensuring the smooth running of the various projects. The Evaluation Commission is aware of concerns expressed in this regard by one of the two programme coordinators, although details were not provided to it. In contrast the other Northern Programme Coordinator was fulsome in his praise for the quality of support and the management work of the Programme Support Unit and that of the VLIR-UOS central office. Similarly, comments on the functioning of the two southern university offices were extremely positive, and so was the satisfaction of the two Southern Programme Coordinators and Programme Managers with current management arrangements. In the IUC office visited, documents appeared to be properly filed and information was easily accessed.

¹⁵ Traditional historical budgeting of adding a simple percentage increase to budget lines annually generally represents an inefficient use of resources, whereas using formula funding enables governments and individual institutions to focus more precisely on priorities as they emerge. Formula funding is more responsive to demand.

ii) Flemish universities presently manage the IUC programme with support from VLIR-UOS. This clearly makes the role and function of the Country Office a sensitive one. The Country Representative's ToR lists a range of activities to be undertaken but it appears that the Country Representative has no role in reviewing and collating returns from each of the two in-country IUC institution offices. Each IUC institution separately prepares its reports in conjunction with their Northern Programme Coordinator who then submits the annual report to VLIR-UOS in Brussels for further analysis and comment. In other development agencies such as DFID or NUFFIC when a Country Office is established, some level of devolution of responsibility occurs, and depending on the circumstances this often includes responsibility for channelling all in-country matters and reporting to headquarters (in this case it would be to VLIR-UOS, Brussels) which would receive a distillation of institutional reports in the form of an annual Country Report. In DFID's case, this report also includes confidential annexes relating to country policy, strategic and financial/funding issues, including recommendations for action to be taken in the event of underperformance in any individual project area, or widespread underperformance of programmes as a whole. Such a model would bring the Country Office more directly into play in the management of the VLIR-UOS programme in country, although it is acknowledged that introducing it would involve changes in current practice within the Belgian universities too. There is no reason that such a model would cut across the normal academic performance reporting a supervisor makes to the relevant academic board on a student's academic performance, but it would separate out the academic and development dimensions of the IUC, and thereby clearly identify the development relevance and impact of each IUC. It might also reduce the Brussels based programme manager's workload and counter any criticism from the DGD concerning an insufficient development focus in the Programme (ref-2.2.3 (b))

iii) Concern was expressed by project teams over VLIR-UOS' strict application of annual budgeting. Whilst the need of budgetary discipline is appreciated, it was argued that were it possible to shift an element of the annual funding into the following year, it would allow budget holders to respond more effectively to peaks and troughs in spending, something which is a feature of any project's life cycle.

2.2.3. The added value/outcome of the VLIR-UOS activities within the international cooperation activities of the partner university and the country

a) The Country

Donor support to the higher education sub-sector is generally fragmented with mainly small players engaged in relatively uncoordinated action. VLIR-UOS' engagement is seen by the donor community as one of the more significant interventions; a view shared by the Minister of Education and some of his senior ministry officials. It is also a view shared by the senior management and staff of the two IUC universities. Research capacity building is a GoE priority area.

Other actors in the HE sub-sector include NORAD, the Italians, the Swedes, the Spanish and the Finns. All of the latter invest smaller sums of funding than VLIR-UOS. The Italian representative indicated that with an investment to HE of €2.7 million over three years, in the form of scholarships, laboratory equipment and research funding, serious consideration is being given to moving out of the Education Sector and to concentrate on the Health Sector.

The Dutch through NUFFIC heads the list of investors in HE with an investment of around €18 million over 4 years for Capacity Development (NICHE). This programme provides capacity building in the area of university leadership and management, and in strengthening quality assurance procedures. In addition support is also given to the development of HE commercial agriculture programme.

An earlier World Bank HE project valued at US\$40 million had been suspended and funding reallocated when less than \$22 million had been utilised. The WB's opinion is that without a broad policy and strategic dialogue on HE between the donors and the GoE, there is little likelihood of significant donor investment in HE in the immediate or mid-term future.

In this context the Evaluation Commission believes that the added value is considerable, and that VLIR-UOS holds a unique position in support to the HE sub-sector for three reasons.

First the programme is unique insofar as it is based on a partnership between Belgian universities and Southern partners which focuses on capacity building at the highest academic level; the PhD.

Second, all PhD research being undertaken is extension based and therefore has credibility with the GoE and communities who are ultimately benefiting from it. The Programme is extremely cost effective.

Third, the manner in which the partnership is funded, with the programme based on academic and international development interest and not on institutional income generation interests, is also unique. *The Evaluation Commission is unaware of any other international development programme of this complexity that is as cost effective.* Yet, the very strengths of the Programme could also be its greatest threat, for it essentially relies on the interest and goodwill of the Northern academics involved, all of whom having expressed concern about the growing difficulty of getting younger academics involved.

b) The added value of the VLIR-UOS Country Office/representative

The Evaluation Commission reviewed the ToR of the Country Representative and the expectations VLIR-UOS has for the office. The VLIR-UOS Country Approach paper which discussed proposed new modalities was also consulted. Putting the two together it is evident that VLIR-UOS wishes to enhance both its visibility and its level of engagement in Ethiopia.

Nothing in the Country Representative's ToR *per se* or in the management and operational expectations listed raised any major questions, except for two issues; the manner in which the Country Representative's workload has been broken up and the priorities this reflects, and the fact that overall programme management responsibility is unclear.

Concerning the multiple priorities the ToR reflect, they are very wide-ranging and it is suggested they could benefit from being prioritised. For example, each of the areas listed under Information Management, Representation and Know-How could keep the representative fully engaged. Similarly, organising seminars on the VLIR-UOS methodological framework and project related opportunities, organising, "*on demand*", seminars on project cycle management, and promoting programmes of the Flemish universities in the framework of 'Study in Flanders' could each consume one person's time.

Concerning the management of the VLIR-UOS programme, the evaluators believe this is too vague and as is discussed in section 2.2.2, greater management authority for the Country Representative over both IUCs might be considered.

Enhancing visibility and networking of VLIR-UOS with other development partners is an area which requires attention, and it was pleasing to note the positive response of major donors in the HE sector (especially The World Bank and NUFFIC) to VLIR-UOS over the course of this evaluation.

As is mentioned below, the Belgian Embassy is extremely positive about developments.

Over the course of two weeks it was difficult to assess adequately the added value of the Country Office but the Evaluators believe on the basis that VLIR-UOS has a programme which is aligned to GoE priorities, as confirmed by the MoE and Honourable Minister of Education himself, and involves a modality which is working effectively, that there is added value in having a representative lodged in the MoE. However, expecting that that person should endeavour to create opportunities to engage in a policy dialogue with senior officials concerned is easier to include in a ToR than might be to deliver especially given the particular policy and strategic environment of the MoE, where openness is somewhat at a premium. It is the Evaluators view that this engagement will need to be nuanced and not appear to be critical of present government plans and actions in the HE sub-sector, around which there is much sensitivity.

The Evaluation Commission believes that the strength of VLIR-UOS' presence lies in the fact that a

successful modality and programme is delivering what the Government wishes for, even if this is not on the scale it would hope for.

2.2.4. The Monitoring and Evaluation tools (PCM and LFA, mid-term and final evaluations, steering committee reports) used in the VLIR-UOS programme

A range of documents and manuals have been consulted in order to comment on the monitoring and evaluation tools used. These include tools used in annual and mid-term reviews, the country management manuals and steering committee guidelines. What is evident from them is that the object is to record development against targets identified. Essentially the tools used are a set of monitoring instruments rather than evaluation instruments as they only weakly allow for a more nuanced approach to evaluation even with the inclusion of statements about qualitative change. Having said this it is difficult in any programme management to achieve the latter in macro management reporting especially as claiming direct causality between inputs and outputs in most instances is notoriously difficult.

It is understood that supervisors provide individual evaluation progress reports to their students, and it is suggested that where these are effective, no change in the present system should be considered.

The Evaluation Commission has nothing to say about the use of Annual Report and Mid-Term evaluation processes, except to add that descriptive indicators, for example in the form of number of case studies produced, or, indeed, media presentations using them, would add to a better understanding of overall programme scoring and intended action to follow such events.

In the area of comprehensive programme development, VLIR-UOS requires the use of Project Cycle Management tool of which the use of Logframes is central. The Evaluation Commission supports this, as it believes the use of logframes can be used as a dynamic, living tool for clarifying thinking, and identifying change. However, it may not be being used as such.

The value of using logframes has been questioned by some participants, particularly on the grounds that it is difficult to claim direct causality between inputs and outputs in many instances and that logframes are not a sufficiently sensitive tool for the use intended. No one wishes to feel compelled to use a planning tool that is perceived to have relatively little real value in their area of activity. On the other hand, the practice of revising annual action plans is something regularly undertaken, as is subsequent action to address issues which arise. What seems to be needed, therefore, is a device which combines annual action plan revision with reflection on overall goal and purpose, and an assessment of the impact of the programme and project. The Evaluation Commission suggests that VLIR-UOS examines how PCM generally and the use of logframes in particular are perceived by programme and project leaders, with a view to developing an agreed nuanced approach to monitoring and evaluation by programme and project leaders. It is essentially a matter of agreeing upon what planning and management tools are needed for what purposes.

The Evaluation Commission is sympathetic to both sides of the argument. At this stage it might be wise for VLIR-UOS to note that logframe methodology has moved on from where it was when the current VLIR-UOS logframe structure was developed. The introduction of clear milestone statements and the requirement for more explicit linking of outcome to action, purpose to goal, and an overall emphasis on results and value for money is reflected in logframe models now used by the World Bank and DFID, for example. The need for specificity, especially with regards quality, quantity and time in the statement of indicators continues to be important.

2.2.5. The scholars

a) Role of IUC Scholars and OI scholars at local and regional level.

Currently all IUC and OI scholars are full-time academics engaged in university teaching and supervision at the PhD and MSc level, as well as in some undergraduate level teaching. In addition, those that met the Evaluation Commission are engaged in publishing their research work, or completing their current research projects.

Reports from the Steering Committee meetings that took place during the visit of the Evaluation Commission indicate that overall progress of the research being undertaken, and of the spin-off activities is good with only minor instances where action is required to get scholars back on track. Some are engaged in further development-based research. Others are preparing manuscripts for publication, whilst others are launching MSc programmes. One group at Mekelle is launching the first PhD programme in Soil Science in Ethiopia.

Although exercising no direct influence on local and regional policy, it is evident that through the various projects comprising the two IUCs, and by holding poster events and disseminating research findings, it is highly likely that the attention of local and regional officials, and indeed some national officials is being attracted. Influencing policy makers and then strategy is clearly a slow and difficult process as a culture of 'top down' policy making and management exists in Ethiopia. By providing greater visibility for the programme, through for example, issuing press statements from the Country Office, it may be possible to 'short cut' present procedures.

b) Role of Flemish travel grants played in the context of VLIR-UOS programme in Ethiopia.

Travel grants are seen as an essential opportunity for advanced training, general capacity building and providing an opportunity to undertake activities for which equipment is not available in Ethiopia.

c) The role of alumni: organisation, potential and bottlenecks

Obtaining an up-to-date list of alumni would appear to be the first thing that needs to be done for as the Evaluation Commission found when trying to contact former students, only two on the list that was provided to it responded to the invitation to contact it.

The Evaluation Commission had the pleasure of meeting Ato Fasika Kelemework, chairperson of the Belgium Alumni Association. This is a formally registered association under the Ethiopian Civil Society Law. It has approximately 100 members and it is developing a database of members. It sees its role primarily as a social/professional organisation which might ultimately have a further role of inducting and orientating potential scholars to Belgium into what is and might be expected of them. It plans to have regular professional gatherings and to maintain close contact with the Belgian Embassy. Under its constitution it also sees itself supporting local charities and having regular social get-togethers. Its future role and value to VLIR-UOS is unclear, but the Belgian Embassy is maintaining contact with it, and if anything, it is a source of considerable goodwill in Ethiopia.

d) The database of VLIR-UOS is containing listings of BTP-students (ICP Masters and PhDs, Annex 5) with mention of name, nationality and type of study. This information provides numbers of students and gender balance in the different masters in Belgium, as well as succes rate.

e) Finally, VLIR-UOS made a study¹⁶ on alumni in Ethiopia in 2006. The evaluation commission found not enough time to analyse in depth this study and to compare with actual conditions. The main conclusions were that most students were attending masters with a majority at Ghent University. 60% of them were not a member of Ethalbel and most of them found their study in Belgium useful for their career and the dissemination of knowledge in Ethiopia and internationally (see inbox).

Information inbox (text edited by VLIR-UOS)

VLIR-UOS is convinced that the future of both the North and the South are inseparably interconnected, and that closing the current knowledge and information gap will contribute substantially to securing this common future. The Flemish universities believe that knowledge and insight are important instruments which a society uses to define and shape its own development. Ethiopian and Belgian Universities have a long-standing tradition of close cooperation, with many common projects and intensive capacity building. The real test, however, is in applying the knowledge that alumni acquired in Belgium to

¹⁶ Amdamu, Consultancy Management, 2006. Academic session with alumni and tracer study report

contribute to the development of Ethiopia. Only then the intervention of VLIR-UOS is considered to be a good investment from the perspective of development cooperation. An alumni association can help in the achievement of this objective, by fostering links between alumni and between alumni and their Belgian former colleagues.

ETHABEL is an association of Ethiopian Alumni of Belgian Universities. The goal of the association is to meet former students from various disciplines, to organize and engage in social and cultural events, facilitate networking for professional development, and share academic experience in Belgium.

A report compiled in 2006 revealed the **key statistics** of Ethiopian scholars who studied in Belgium. A total of 45 Ethiopian Alumni participated in the survey collection about their experiences in Belgium. 36% of the participants studied in Ghent University, both University of Antwerp and Vrije Universiteit Brussel had 20% of the participants, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven had 18% of the attendees and Hasselt University had 3%. Among these participants, 49% of the students were in the field of public health, 10% were in human settlement, environmental sanitation and food science whereas less than 10% of the students were engaged in soil science and other fields of study.

Many students received scholarships from various programs. 60% of the scholarships were granted by VLIR-UOS, 16% were from ABOS (former DGD) and 7% of the students got scholarships from BTC while the other 17% got other different types of scholarships. Majority (63%) of the students received Masters' degree, 20% of them received certificate, 9% of them received PhD, 7% received postgraduate diploma about 1% of the participants did not indicate their level of degree.

Students reported the significance of the program for career advancement in different levels. 93% have said increase in knowledge, 91% reported new insight, 89% said broader horizon, 82% said increased confidence and skill, 67% reported increase in influence, inspiration and change in attitude, 60% said to have changed their research approach and 56% said access to literature and increase professional contacts.

The objectives of ETHABEL for Ethiopia are:

- To provide orientation to Ethiopian students departing to Belgium
- Establish and strengthen cooperation between Ethiopian and Belgian institutions of higher learning, research centers and other societies.
- Supply information to Ethiopian students enrolled in Belgian Universities and scholars at Belgian Universities doing research on Ethiopia.
- Coordinate and harmonize the activities of alumni and enhance their role in the development of the relations between Ethiopia and Belgium.
- Increase career development.

The Objectives of ETHABEL for VLIR-UOS are:

- To bridge diversity and enhance cultural and economical collaboration
- To have cultural integration
- To increase networking among institutions of higher education in order to facilitate research

Final reflections

An alumni association can enhance career development and can decrease brain drain, if it offers networking opportunities. To this end, ETHABEL has a strong mandate to organize events and act as a communication platform. It should first increase awareness about the association so that more people can benefit. ETHABEL receives some support from the Belgian Embassy, but within the country policy there will be support as well, inter alia by sponsoring meetings to achieve common developmental goals.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

i) VLIR-UOS is to be commended on developing and implementing an impressive partnership programme which is meeting specific Ethiopian Higher Education needs. The programme is aligned with Government priorities and is regarded as the benchmark for such interventions. It has stimulated a research culture in the two IUC and OI project institutions, and is acting as a catalyst for other development initiatives and spin-offs. The Programme's impact is being felt across various levels of Ethiopian society. Above all the programme is cost-effective and provides reciprocal benefits to Northern and Southern partners. The VLIR-UOS partnership modality is unique and represents some of the best in international development practice. The enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of all players involved is impressive. Key to the programme's success is that a long-term collaboration partnership is intended, giving partners certainty and predictability of funding and support. Further, by encouraging arrangements that build upon existing structures and practices at the level of the partner university, increased ownership is encouraged.

ii) Key indicators of aid effectiveness are included in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action. The following table lists these, and based on the Evaluation Commission's findings, summarises the performance of the Ethiopia-VLIR-UOS IUC against them.

INDICATOR	ETHIOPIAN VLIR-UOS-IUC PROGRAMME STATUS
Ownership	<p>The Evaluation Commission found a very high level of local ownership of the programme. The two institutions concerned have set up local management structures and management systems.</p> <p>Key to the issue of ownership lies in the system of joint PhD and MSc research supervision, and at PhD level the fact that a 'sandwich course' structure is used. Both Northern and Southern partners have a vested interest in ensuring the success of the programmes, as 'rewards' in the form of published papers, copyrights and patents are shared. Whilst Northern institutions benefit from registering and ultimately graduating high achieving Ethiopian scholar, Southern institutions benefit from the capacity building that occurs. All the actors involved benefit from the development impact of their work.</p>
Alignment	<p>The VLIR-UOS-IUC's focus on research capacity building through support for PhD training and research is fully aligned with the Government of Ethiopia's policy of increasing the number of PhD and MSc research degree graduates.</p>
Harmonisation	<p>The intention behind the PD and AAA declarations on harmonisation relate to aid flows and activities to avoid duplication and incurring additional transaction costs. VLIR-UOS is not a donor agency. However at the level of programme harmonisation, that is, harmonisation with similar activities undertaken by other agencies, the Evaluation Commission found that this occurs more by chance than design. Shared use of equipment and other facilities occurs on the ground (e.g. with the CUD project at Mekelle University).</p> <p>Present efforts under the EU's Bologna Process to achieve symmetry between higher degree structures and programmes in Europe have led to increasing harmonisation between different programmes in Europe, and by default this is influencing provision in Ethiopia.</p>
Results	<p>The PD and the AAA especially shifted thinking beyond a concern over aid modalities and the management of international development to a discourse based on results; i.e. from beyond donor processes to a concern with development effectiveness (results). In this regard, VLIR-UOS is well ahead. Partners use a shared results framework which focuses on performance in six qualitative results areas (quality, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, development relevance, sustainability), and seven measurable key</p>

	<p>results outcome areas (Research, Teaching, Extension and Outreach, Management, Human Resources Development, Infrastructure Management and Mobilization of additional resources/opportunities). The Evaluation Commission believes this package of instruments represents the best in international practice. The VLIR-UOS results framework provides both summative and diagnostic evidence. However, the Evaluation Commission suggests that:</p> <p>i) the Programme and individual Project Logframes should reflect more clearly the measurement of results; and</p> <p>ii) Qualitative indicators developed by stakeholders together could reflect the 'Southern voice' more explicitly.</p>
Mutual Accountability	The Evaluation Commission found that a clear 'win-win' situation exists. Mutual accountability is a strong feature of the VLIR-UOS-IUC programme and finds expression in the management systems used, especially N-S stakeholder meetings, common reporting procedures and in the fact of joint supervision of PhD and a mutually beneficial publications' agreement which 'protects' individual researchers.
Predictability	<p>This indicator was included in the PD and the AAA as a means of encouraging donors to make their funding predictable. A key feature of VLIR-UOS funding is that it is guaranteed for two, five year periods.</p> <p>The Evaluation Commission has expressed concern over the decision of the DGD to impose three year funding cycles on VLIR-UOS. A three year cycle does not fit the normal PhD cycle of five years.</p>
Country systems	<p>This indicator was included in the PD and AAA to encourage donors to use recipient government financial systems and not to set up parallel in-country systems.</p> <p>VLIR-UOS' project funding uses institutional financial systems where possible. Clear evidence of the effectiveness of shared management systems is to be found in the manner in which the two programme offices function at Mekelle and Jimma universities.</p>
Conditionality	Given the partnership nature of the VLIR-UOS- IUC programme, funding conditionality does not exist in this programme. Both northern and southern partners are required to meet the same conditions for the award of programmes and funds.
Untying Aid	This indicator is irrelevant to the VLIR-UOS-IUC programme.

Table 4

iii) A major reason for the evaluation is for VLIR-UOS-IUC to open its ideas on new modalities of cooperation for debate in the context of a country programme evaluation.

The Evaluation Commission is of the view that:

(a) The establishment of a Country Office represents a useful test bed to assess the effectiveness of moving towards a country approach. The role and function of this office will emerge over the next year or so, as will the specific role and duties of the Country Representative, about which comment has been made in this report (ref-2.2.3 (b)).

(b) Given the potential increase in management capacity, consideration should be given to expanding the IUC programme to include another one or two Ethiopian Universities. It is known that the MoE is keen that more IUCs should be included, but given the capacity of the Northern universities to manage this, and the risks associate with over-extending that capacity, alternative models might be considered.

One option might be to consider developing a South-Ethiopia-Belgium IUC modality with the Southern institution mirroring the current support that Belgian institutions currently provide. The downside of this concerns the capacity of the Southern partner, and indeed whether the Belgian partners would have

confidence in the Southern partner's capacity to provide the scientific support that is currently being provided to the two IUCs in Ethiopia¹⁷.

Another option could be to create a Belgian-Mekelle-new Ethiopian university IUC which would use capacity built in Mekelle in partnership with that from Belgian Universities. The downside of this option is that the GoE is requiring Mekelle to expand its current provision, thereby weakening its overall capacity. The risk is that this option could destroy much of what has already been built up under the present IUC arrangement.

c) In these circumstances, therefore, the Evaluation Commission urges caution, and advises VLIR-UOS not to put at risk the existing Ethiopian Programme. If after a thorough capacity assessment of its own capacity and that of the Northern Universities, it is possible to add one or two more IUCs to the Ethiopian portfolio then an expansion should be considered in cognate areas already being developed at Mekelle and Jimma so that synergies could occur. This would not preclude the development of South – South links and other kinds of inter-university cooperation.

iii) At various stages in this report suggestions rather than recommendations have been made. These are limited on the principle that one does not attempt to 'fix' something if it is not broken!

The Evaluation wishes to suggest that consideration be given to the following:

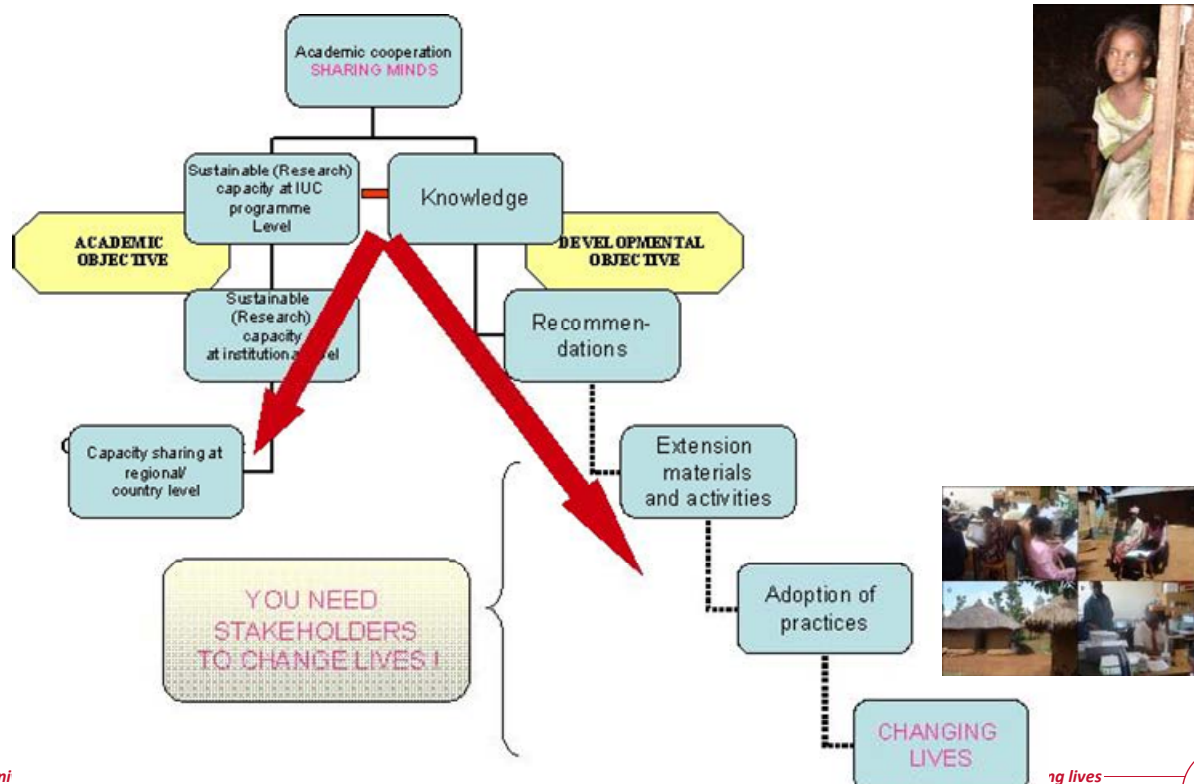
- Consolidating management of the Ethiopia Programme in the Country Office, vesting the Country Representative with management authority for all VLIR-UOS activities in the country. As part of this the ToR of the Country Representative would benefit from being prioritised.
- Improving the visibility of the VLIR-UOS Ethiopian Programme.
- Addressing specifically the gross gender imbalance in Ethiopian post-graduate education.
- Encouraging DGD to review the introduction of three year cycle planning to accommodate the normal five year PhD cycle.
- Consider introducing greater flexibility in project budgeting, and in particular to allow the viring of funds, or part thereof from one year to another.

¹⁷ Attempting to get South African universities with capacity to support those with less capacity has had very limited success, especially as all South African Universities are endeavouring to cope with expansion demands, so the prospect of finding a Southern University able to perform this role is limited.

Annexes

1. The VLIR-UOS Programme Model and IUC Cycle in Summary

Sharing Minds, changing Lives



uni

ng lives

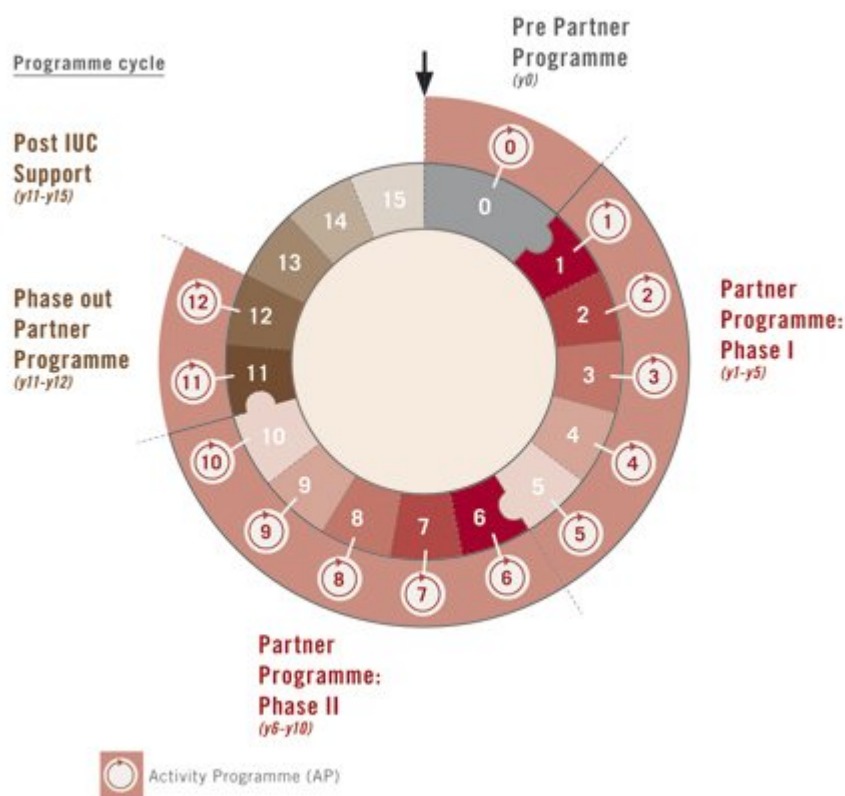
6

IUC Programme Cycle

Longstanding Partnerships

With reference to the figure underneath, VLIR-UOS engages in IUC partnerships covering approximately 17 years. This period is characterised by different phases which varying roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders involved.

The figures underneath, provide a summary overview of the IUC programme cycle. For more details reference is made to the IUC leaflet.



Phase In

The phase-in of an IUC partnership is marked by the following successive steps:

- a call for proposals followed by a pre-selection of IUC partner institutions
- the commission of an external evaluation resulting in a programme mission report on the basis of which the final partnership selection is made
- signing of a pre partner programme agreement provided resources to support the preparatory process that covers 15 to 24 months and consists of the following steps:
 - training and orientation of all stakeholders including the programme manager who is recruited by the concerned partner university
 - formulation of an identification phase partner programme
 - match making mission to Flanders
 - appointment of Flemish project leaders
 - formulation mission to the partner concerned
- review and expected approval of a phase I partner **programme: 2 successive 5-year programme**

An IUC Partnership is framed by 2 successive Five-year Partner programme (Phase I and Phase II). A Phase II Partner Programme is granted subject to a positive midterm evaluation in year 3-4 of phase I.

A Phase II Partner Programme may necessitate an additional more modest match making and formulation process.

Phase Out

Following a 10-year period of earmarked funding, IUC partnerships enter into a 5-year period of post IUC support. In this regard a distinction is made between:

- the phase out programme (year 11 and 12 if considering Phase 1 & 2 as Year 1-10)

- post IUC support

In order to facilitate the termination of the partner programme phase, limited support is provided such that scholars can graduate, and the financial reporting cycle can closed. In addition, a closing event during which the results of the final evaluation are discussed, as well as equipment handover is organised, marks the end of this phase. Administratively, this is framed by a Phase Out Activity Programme.

Post IUC support consists mainly in providing access to a number of mostly competitive IUC funds and/or activities. Among others, post IUC support is provided through:

- the IUC Research Initiatives Programme (RIP)
- the North South South Cooperation Programme (NSSCP)
- CTG programme for outreach initiatives
- ongoing support through the IUC Alliances (CTG, INASP, IFS)
- participation in partner level meetings and transversal training and exchanges/workshops
- Own Initiatives are possible for departments which did not benefit from IUC funding during Phase 2 of a IUC partner programme.

2. Interview Schedule

VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME EVALUATION

SURVEY ON THE DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABILITY and IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

All personal information gathered from this survey will be kept confidential and not divulged to your institution or VLIR-UOS.

Objective: To assess the impact and sustainability of the VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME.

Focus of the survey

The focus of this survey is to establish the key lessons learned for future policy and practice.

Please could you provide the following background information?

Your name. (Optional)	
Name of your university, department / unit.	
Name of the partner university, department / unit.	
Your position in the university, department / unit. (Optional)	
Title of your project.	
Number of years the joint project has been running.	

SECTION 1: Origins and conception of the VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME

1. Where did the ideas for your VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME application come from? How was the need for the application arrived at?
2. What particular features of the VLIR-UOS Programme made it attractive to you?
3. Who were the key stakeholders involved in conceptualising and securing the VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME? What role did you play, if at all?
4. Do you think there were any stakeholders who were not involved in developing the programme but who you now think ought to have been involved? If yes, who were they and what difference do you think their closer involvement might have made to the Programme?
5. Are there any features you would wish to change? Please elaborate.
6. Has the roll-out of Programme faced any resistance? If yes, where did the resistance come from? As far as you were aware, what was the rationale behind/reason for the resistance? How did resistance manifest itself? How, if at all, was it overcome?
7. Who in your institution are the key supporters of the VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME? How do they 'sell' it to your colleagues?

SECTION 2: Development and Implementation of VLIR-UOS

Programme/Project

8. Please describe your VLIR-UOS Project and how it has been rolled out in your Faculty/ Department/Unit.
9. What key factors most facilitated the development of the VLIR-UOS

PROGRAMME in your institution?

10. What key factors most facilitated the development of the VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME in your partner institution?
11. What successes have there been in your institution?
12. What successes have there been in your partner institution?
13. What disappointments have there been in your institution?
14. What disappointments have there been in partner institution?
15. Have there been any specific factors which have made facilitating your programme difficult? If yes, please list them and indicate how they were overcome, if at all?
16. In summary:
 - What problems have you encountered?
 - What have been the major challenges?
 - Were they foreseen at the beginning?
 - How were they addressed, if at all, in your own institution and in the partner institution?
17. What have been the key lessons learned in terms of:
 - Any strengths of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
 - Any weaknesses of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
18. In summary, has the VLIR-UOS Programme been successful so far? Yes/No - Why?
What do you consider are the critical factors in this?
19. Are there any major changes you would recommend should be made to the VLIR-UOS Programme?

SECTION 3: VLIR-UOS Programme Management

20. What is your overall impression of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
What factors have you found particularly important in the management of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
Have there been any major issues with regards the funding of the VLIR-UOS Programme? If yes, please list them.
How were they handled? Have they been successfully handled?

4. SECTION 4: Sustainability and institutionalisation

21. What measures are you taking to ensure the sustainability of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
22. How and in what ways has VLIR-UOS Programme influenced the rest of your university?
23. What risks do you see in the future sustainability of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
24. What might your university do to assure the development and sustainability of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
 - (a) Through funding arrangements and their disbursement?
 - (b) In terms of management, both at the centre and in the faculties/departments?
25. What might your partner university do to assure the development and sustainability of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
 - i. Through funding arrangements and their disbursement?
 - (b) In terms of management, both at the centre and in the faculties/departments?
26. How do you see the VLIR-UOS Programme moving forward in the future?
27. Are the influences of the VLIR-UOS Programme sustainable in your university as regards:
 - (a) teaching and learning?
 - (b) the University's Mission (outreach and equity agenda)

28. Are the influences of the VLIR-UOS Programme sustainable in your partner university as regards:
- (a) teaching and learning?
 - (b) the University's Mission (outreach and equity agenda)
29. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Section 5: IMPACT (KRA and Qualitative criteria)

30. On a scale of 1-10, please could you indicate the level of impact of your project on the following areas:

Areas	Scale 1 - 10
Research	
Teaching	
Extension and outreach	
Academic capacity building	
Staff professional development/HR development	
Institutional Management and Development	
Mobilisation of additional resources and opportunities	

31. On a scale of 1-10, please could you indicate the level of Impact of your project on the following areas:

Areas	Scale 1- 10
Quality	
Effectiveness	
Efficiency	
Impact	
Development Relevance	

32. Please add anything further you wish to raise.

Thank you.

3. Opinionnaire and Results

Dear Colleague

During our interview in June I mentioned that I would be sending you the following survey with an invitation to complete it and to return it to me. Your advice was to keep it relatively short and to use a tick box format. I may have strayed a little with regards length, for which I apologise, but I hope you find simply ticking boxes captures your views adequately.

Please find on the next three pages statements derived from the interview we had at VLIR-UOS in June. It would be much appreciated if you could go into TRACK CHANGES and then complete the survey and return it to me not later than 5th September, 2010.

Thank you

North-South IUS Ethiopia Partnership

The purpose of this opinionnaire is to obtain a snapshot of views on the aspects which emerged during the interviews with Northern Partners.

Please explain the meaning of the scores

Please could you indicate whether you AGREE, AGREE IN PART, DISAGREE IN PART, or TOTALLY DISAGREE with the statement by placing a cross in the appropriate box.

List of Aspects which emerged from the interviews.	I <u>agree</u>	I <u>agree in part</u>	I <u>disagree in part</u>	I <u>totally disagree</u>
1. Academics from Belgium generally feel they are better placed to know what is academically more appropriate for their counterparts in Ethiopia	4	6	7	0
2. Academics from Belgium take the lead in the research, whilst their Ethiopian counterparts play less important roles.	3	6	4	4
3. It is difficult for northern partners to find areas of research which enable Ethiopian counterparts to take the lead.	0	5	6	6
4. Ethiopian scholars registered with Belgian institutions are more obligated to the Belgian institution than to their own home institution.	0	7	4	6
5. Building high level capacity, especially in the sciences and information technology, will increase the brain-drain from Ethiopia.	2	5	8	2
6. Focusing on research and academic goals and outcomes in Ethiopia is more important than focusing on development goals and outcomes.	3	3	7	4
7. When working in Ethiopian universities, a top-down approach is the most effective way to get things done.	1	5	6	5
8. Given its size, it is unrealistic expecting the VLIR-UOS Ethiopian programme to have a significant impact on Ethiopian society.	3	7	2	5
9. In the context of Ethiopia Interdisciplinary Action Research is more appropriate than in-depth single area research.	2	9	4	2
10. A strong emphasis on research threatens the teaching and extension dimensions of	0	0	9	8

the N-S partnership.				
11. Focusing on scholarship is more important than developing relationships, trust and mutual respect.	0	2	9	6
12. The relative lack of resources in Ethiopian partner institutions poses a serious threat to the sustainability of existing partnership programmes.	4	8	3	2
13. Without harnessing the scientific and educational power of Belgian Universities, Jimma and Mekelle Universities will fail in their mission to become first rate universities.	4	7	4	2
14. Because of the relatively small scale of the Ethiopian VLIR-UOS programme, outcomes are <u>unlikely</u> to have much impact on university policy, strategy and governance at Jimma and Mekelle Universities.	3	4	4	6
15. Jimma and Mekelle Universities see the VLIR-UOS programme as simply one of a number of externally supported projects, and not significant in changing strategic planning and programme implementation practices within their institutions.	5	2	4	6
16. There is evidence of a lot of duplication of resources and effort across each university, occasioned by the presence of different donors and funders.	4	6	7	0
17. In the core area of research the outcomes are limited, especially with regards the number of published papers in internationally refereed journals.	3	4	6	4
18. Providing Belgian scholars with grants to undertake collaborative research in Ethiopia would raise the level of impact.	11	2	2	2
19. Contracting and funding Flemish universities to undertake scientific capacity building programmes in Ethiopia, as for example NUFFIC does, is an option VLIR-UOS should seriously consider.	3	5	7	2
20. Without reforms in the enabling environment of both Jimma and Mekelle universities, and within Ethiopia generally, the gains in scholarship and in the provision of resources (ICT especially) arising from the present partnership programme are unlikely to be sustained.	3	7	4	2
21. The VLIR-UOS programme has been unable to generate a coherent and efficient research and capacity building environment in either university.	0	0	8	9
22. Third institution scholarly linkages are very popular, but presently yield little scholarly work of any value.	0	3	9	5
23. Working in Ethiopia is more high-risk in terms of health and safety than in Belgium.	1	3	7	5

24. Ethiopian scholars coming to Europe cannot afford the costs.	4	5	4	4
25. Belgian academics and institutions feel obligated to provide financial support to visiting Ethiopian students.	4	5	5	3

Please list in order of importance the three main factors which you believe threaten the sustainability of the VLIR-UOS Ethiopian programme.

RANK	SUSTAINABILITY THREAT FACTOR
1. Item 12	The relative lack of resources in Ethiopian partner institutions poses a serious threat to the sustainability of existing partnership programmes.
2. Item 20	Without reforms in the enabling environment of both Jimma and Mekelle universities, and within Ethiopia generally, the gains in scholarship and in the provision of resources (ICT especially) arising from the present partnership programme are unlikely to be sustained.
3. Item 5	Building high level capacity, especially in the sciences and information technology, will increase the brain-drain from Ethiopia.
Added item	That the decision by the Government of Belgium not to include Ethiopia as a partner country could reduce the chances of securing sufficient funding to guarantee the follow-up of projects.

Other possible factors listed (in no order of priority):

- Too little interest from the Northern side.
- Rapid expansion of Ethiopian Universities (quality issues).
- Too much administration.
- Failure to keep contact with Ethiopian scholars (lack of resources to do so).
- Failure to provide specific support to the Ethiopian Research Council (creation of an East African knowledge bank).

Impact of your partnership

On a scale of 1-10 (1=lowest, 10 =highest) please could you assess the level of impact of your project on your Ethiopian partners in the following areas:

Average

Ranking

Areas	Ranking 1 - 10
Research	8
Teaching	5
Extension and outreach	7
Academic capacity building	7
Staff professional development/HR development	7
Institutional management and development	4
Mobilisation of additional resources	4

On a scale of 1-10 (1=lowest, 10 =highest) please could you assess the level of impact of your project on your Ethiopian partners in the following areas:

Average Ranking

Areas	Ranking 1 - 10
Quality Assurance	8
Effectiveness	7
Efficiency	7
Scholarly Impact	8
Development Relevance	6

On a scale of 1-10 (1=lowest, 10 =highest) please could you assess the level of impact of your project on your own institution in the following areas:

*Average**Ranking*

Areas	Ranking 1 - 10
Research	7
Teaching	3
Extension and outreach	5
Academic capacity building	5
Staff professional development/HR development	3
Institutional management and development	2
Mobilisation of additional resources	3

On a scale of 1-10 (1=lowest, 10 =highest) please could you assess the level of impact of your project on your own institution partners in the following areas:

Average Ranking

Areas	Ranking 1 - 10
Quality Assurance	3
Effectiveness	2
Efficiency	4
Scholarly Impact	5
Development Relevance	5

4. Student Survey

VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME - Ethiopia

Sharing minds, changing lives

VLIR-UOS Programme Students' Survey

Dear Colleague

Alan Penny and Damtew Teferra have been commissioned by VLIR-UOS to evaluate the VLIR-UOS Ethiopian Programme.

As a participant in the VLIR-UOS programme, you are kindly invited to complete the following survey and to return it to one of us by August, 15th.

All information provided by you will remain confidential.

Please could you return the completed form to Professor Alan Penny (alanjpenny@hotmail.com) or to Dr Damtew Teferra (teferra@bc.edu)

If you go into *Track Changes* you can write on the document if you wish. Otherwise if you use the numbering provided, you can provide your responses in numbered paragraph form.

Your participation will be much appreciated.

With thanks,

Alan Penny and Damtew Teferra

VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME EVALUATION

STUDENT SURVEY ON THE DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABILITY and IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

All personal information gathered from this survey will remain confidential and not disclosed to your institution or VLIR-UOS.

Objective: To assess the impact and sustainability of the VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME.

Focus of the survey

The focus of this survey is to establish the key lessons learned for future policy and practice.

Please could you provide the following background information?

Your name. (Optional)	
Name of your university, department / unit.	
Name of the partner university, department / unit.	
Your position in the university, department / unit. (Optional)	
Title of your project.	

Number of years you have been registered on the joint project.	
--	--

SECTION 1: Origins and conception of the VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME

1. Where did the topic for your VLIR-UOS PROGRAMME come from?
2. During the proposal development stage, what kind of contact, if any, did you have with your partner institution?
3. Did you have any contact with VLIR-UOS at the proposal development stage?
4. How did you go about applying for the Programme? –
5. What would you change or improve at this stage?
6. What particular features of the VLIR-UOS Programme made it attractive to you?
7. Who sponsored your application? What role did you play, if any?
8. Are there any features of the programme of study/research you would wish to change? Please explain.
9. Who in your institution are the key supporters of your programme? pto

SECTION 2: Focus on Development and Implementation of VLIR-UOS

Programme/Project

10. Please briefly describe your VLIR-UOS Project and what you have done so far.
11. What key factors are most facilitating the development of your project in your institution?
12. What key factors are most facilitating the development of your project in your partner institution?
13. What successes have there been in your institution as a result of your project?
14. What successes have there been in your partner institution as a result of your project?
15. What disappointments have there been in your institution as the project is implemented?
16. What disappointments have there been in your partner institution?
17. Has there been anything which has made doing your project difficult? If yes, please list the difficulty/difficulties and indicate how they were overcome, if at all?
18. In summary:
 - 18.1 What problems have you faced?
 - 18.2 What have been the major challenges?
 - 18.3 Were they foreseen at the beginning?
 - 18.4 How were they addressed, if at all, in your own institution and in the partner institution?
19. What have been the key lessons you have learned about:
 - 19.1 The strengths of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
 - 19.2 The weaknesses of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
20. In summary, has the VLIR-UOS Programme been successful so far? Yes/No – Why/Why not?
What do you consider are the main reasons for this?
21. Are there any major changes you would recommend should be made to the VLIR-UOS Programme?

SECTION 3: VLIR-UOS Programme Management

22. What is your overall impression of the programme management: poor, satisfactory, good, or excellent?

23. Have there been any major issues with regards the funding of the VLIR-UOS Programme? If yes, please list them.
Have these been successfully handled? If yes, how?
24. What factors have you found particularly poor or discouraging in the management of your VLIR-UOS Programme?

SECTION 4: Sustainability and institutionalisation

25. Do you think the work you are doing on the VLIR-UOS Programme (that is, your project), is sustainable and will continue once VLIR-UOS support for it ends? Why – Why not? What measures can be taken to ensure the sustainability of it?
26. More generally, what risks does the VLIR-UOS Programme face regarding its sustainability?
27. How and in what ways has the VLIR-UOS Programme influenced the rest of your career?
28. What might your university do to ensure the development and sustainability of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
- (a) Through funding arrangements and their disbursement?
- (b) In terms of management, both at the centre and in the faculties/departments?
- (c) In terms of policy development with regards partnership and cooperation?
29. What might your partner university do to ensure the development and sustainability of the VLIR-UOS Programme?
- (a) Through funding arrangements and their disbursement?
- (b) In terms of management, both at the centre and in the faculties/departments?
- (c) In terms of policy development with regards partnership and cooperation?
30. How would you like to see the VLIR-UOS Programme moving forward in the future?
31. Do you think the influence (on teaching and learning, research and publishing and community development) of the VLIR-UOS Programme are sustainable in your partner university?
- (a) teaching and learning? Yes/No
- (b) research and publishing? Yes/No
- (c) community development? Yes/No
32. Do you have any other comments to make on the sustainability of the work you have been doing?
33. On a scale of 1-10, please could you indicate the level of impact of your project with regards ...

Areas	Scale 1 (smallest) – 10 (highest)
Your ability to undertake research	
Your ability to teach others about your area of research	
Project impact on the wider scientific and national community	
Your personal academic enhancement (publishing capacity, attending professional meetings)	
Institutional capacity to manage and develop students such as you	
Project capacity in mobilising additional resources and opportunities	

34. Overall, how would you describe the level of impact of the project: poor, satisfactory, good, or excellent?

35. On a scale of 1-10, please could you rate the level of your academic experience whilst on the VLIR-UOS Programme?

Areas	Scale 1 (smallest) – 10 (highest)
Quality of the programme	
Effectiveness of the programme (Is it achieving its stated goals?)	
Efficiency (Could it be executed more effectively?)	
Impact (Will your project add to scientific knowledge?)	
Development relevance (Will your project make a difference to the lives of others?)	

36. Please add anything further you wish to raise.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS SURVEY

5. Data on ethiopian and Belgian scholars (VLIR-UOS database)

5.1. Ethiopian scholars with ICP Masters and ITP training

Overview of Ethiopian scholars with Masters (ICP) or training (ITP) scholarships in Belgium (2003-2010)
(exerpt from database VLIR-UOS)

(The data were anonymised)

Year	Programme	Title of ICP or ITP	Number of scholars per programme and per year
2003-10103	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	2
2004-10230	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	2
2005-10362	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	2
2006-10444	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	2
2007-10635	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	1
2008-17602	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	1
2009-20845	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	2
2010-27055	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	2
2010-35086	ICP	Master of Aquaculture	1
2003-11936	ICP	Master of Biology – Specialisation Human Ecology	1
2005-12316	ICP	Master of Biology – Specialisation Human Ecology	1
2006-12437	ICP	Master of Biology – Specialisation Human Ecology	1
2007-12634	ICP	Master of Biology – Specialisation Human Ecology	1
2008-18525	ICP	Master of Biology – Specialisation Human Ecology	1
2009-20757	ICP	Master of Biology – Specialisation Human Ecology	2
2003-8764	ICP	Master of Biostatistics	3
2004-8986	ICP	Master of Biostatistics	2
2005-9238	ICP	Master of Biostatistics	2
2006-9518	ICP	Master of Biostatistics	4
2007-9825	ICP	Master of Biostatistics	3
2008-18011	ICP	Master of Biostatistics	4
2009-20212	ICP	Master of Biostatistics	7
2010-26888	ICP	Master of Biostatistics	4
2006-26654	ICP	Master of Development Evaluation and Management	2
2007-13079	ICP	Master of Development Evaluation and Management	2
2008-18887	ICP	Master of Development Evaluation and Management	2
2009-19662	ICP	Master of Development Evaluation and Management	4
2010-29014	ICP	Master of Development Evaluation and Management	2
2003-7152	ICP	Master of Environmental Sanitation	2
2004-7346	ICP	Master of Environmental Sanitation	2
2005-7595	ICP	Master of Environmental Sanitation	2
2006-7872	ICP	Master of Environmental Sanitation	2
2007-8203	ICP	Master of Environmental Sanitation	2
2008-17659	ICP	Master of Environmental Sanitation	2
2009-21247	ICP	Master of Environmental Sanitation	4
2010-27726	ICP	Master of Environmental Sanitation	3

2003-14779	ICP	Master of Food Technology	1
2004-15014	ICP	Master of Food Technology	2
2004-15042	ICP	Master of Food Technology	2
2005-15325	ICP	Master of Food Technology	1
2006-15477	ICP	Master of Food Technology	2
2007-15787	ICP	Master of Food Technology	2
2008-17846	ICP	Master of Food Technology	2
2009-20266	ICP	Master of Food Technology	3
2010-29823	ICP	Master of Food Technology	2
2006-26636	ICP	Master of Globalisation and Development	4
2007-12804	ICP	Master of Globalisation and Development	2
2008-19234	ICP	Master of Globalisation and Development	2
2008-19249	ICP	Master of Globalisation and Development	2
2009-22589	ICP	Master of Globalisation and Development	2
2009-26609	ICP	Master of Globalisation and Development	
2010-28427	ICP	Master of Globalisation and Development	2
2006-26649	ICP	Master of Governance and Development	2
2007-12710	ICP	Master of Governance and Development	1
2008-19281	ICP	Master of Governance and Development	4
2009-21487	ICP	Master of Governance and Development	3
2010-27338	ICP	Master of Governance and Development	2
2003-11417	ICP	Master of Human Settlements	2
2004-11538	ICP	Master of Human Settlements	1
2005-11626	ICP	Master of Human Settlements	1
2006-11766	ICP	Master of Human Settlements	1
2007-26625	ICP	Master of Human Settlements	2
2008-18408	ICP	Master of Human Settlements	1
2009-22293	ICP	Master of Human Settlements	3
2003-6532	ICP	Master of Molecular Biology (IPMB)	5
2004-6563	ICP	Master of Molecular Biology (IPMB)	4
2005-6685	ICP	Master of Molecular Biology (IPMB)	1
2006-6609	ICP	Master of Molecular Biology (IPMB)	3
2007-6252	ICP	Master of Molecular Biology (IPMB)	3
2008-17617	ICP	Master of Molecular Biology (IPMB)	3
2009-20836	ICP	Master of Molecular Biology (IPMB)	3
2010-27368	ICP	Master of Molecular Biology (IPMB)	3
2003-13159	ICP	Master of Nematology	2
2004-13250	ICP	Master of Nematology	2
2005-13434	ICP	Master of Nematology	1
2006-13453	ICP	Master of Nematology	1
2007-13566	ICP	Master of Nematology	2
2008-18462	ICP	Master of Nematology	3
2009-20984	ICP	Master of Nematology	3
2010-27992	ICP	Master of Nematology	2
2003-10686	ICP	Master of Nutrition and Rural Development, Main Subject: Human Nutrition	3
2004-10825	ICP	Master of Nutrition and Rural Development, Main Subject: Human Nutrition	1
2005-10936	ICP	Master of Nutrition and Rural Development, Main Subject: Human Nutrition	1
2006-11026	ICP	Master of Nutrition and Rural Development, Main Subject: Human Nutrition	2
2008-17522	ICP	Master of Nutrition and Rural Development, Main Subject: Human Nutrition	1

2009-25398	ICP	Master of Nutrition and Rural Development, Main Subject: Human Nutrition	2
2003-4004	ICP	Master of Physical Land Resources	3
2004-4301	ICP	Master of Physical Land Resources	1
2005-4725	ICP	Master of Physical Land Resources	1
2006-4927	ICP	Master of Physical Land Resources	1
2007-5126	ICP	Master of Physical Land Resources	2
2008-18548	ICP	Master of Physical Land Resources	3
2009-21119	ICP	Master of Physical Land Resources	3
2010-30872	ICP	Master of Physical Land Resources	3
2003-2811	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	3
2004-3035	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	3
2005-3370	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	3
2006-3582	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	2
2007-3879	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	3
2008-17824	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	1
2009-20289	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	3
2009-20987	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	3
2010-28600	ICP	Master of Water Resources Engineering	2
2005-2423	ICP Ph.D.	Master in Nematology	2
2007-2466	ITP	AudioVisual Learning Materials – Management, Production and Activities (AVLM)	2
2008-17918	ITP	AudioVisual Learning Materials – Management, Production and Activities (AVLM)	2
2009-19602	ITP	AudioVisual Learning Materials – Management, Production and Activities (AVLM)	5
2006-6916	ITP	Beekeeping for Poverty Alleviation	1
2007-6940	ITP	Beekeeping for Poverty Alleviation	2
2007-6971	ITP	Beekeeping for Poverty Alleviation	3
2009-19822	ITP	Beekeeping for Poverty Alleviation	4
2010-27986	ITP	Beekeeping for Poverty Alleviation	3
2004-14571	ITP	Dairy Technology, from Rural to Industrial Level	2
2006-14746	ITP	Dairy Technology, from Rural to Industrial Level	2
2008-17455	ITP	Dairy Technology, from Rural to Industrial Level	3
2010-27532	ITP	Dairy Technology, from Rural to Industrial Level	3
2004-14347	ITP	Engendering Development Policy, Projects and Organisations	2
2005-14369	ITP	Engendering Development Policy, Projects and Organisations	4
2006-14480	ITP	Engendering Development Policy, Projects and Organisations	1
2007-14524	ITP	Engendering Development Policy, Projects and Organisations	2
2005-14278	ITP	Environmental Impact Assessment and Information and Communication Technology Applications (EIA-ICT)	1
2006-26696	ITP	Governing for Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Development actors under the Paris Declaration	2
2007-26712	ITP	Governing for Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Development actors under the Paris Declaration	1
2010-36322	ITP	Governing for Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Development actors under the Paris Declaration	2
2009-24678	ITP	International Training Programme in Food Safety, Quality Assurance Systems and Risk Analysis	2

2003-13658	ITP	Management and Evaluation of Participative Projects	1
2004-2641	ITP	Optimisation in Diagnostic Radiology	3
2005-2673	ITP	Optimisation in Diagnostic Radiology	1
2006-2726	ITP	Optimisation in Diagnostic Radiology	2
2007-2766	ITP	Optimisation in Diagnostic Radiology	1
2008-17502	ITP	Optimisation in Diagnostic Radiology	3
2010-27177	ITP	Political Economy of the Great Lakes: Towards inclusive Development	2
2003-16156	ITP	Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries	1
2004-16372	ITP	Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries	1
2005-16469	ITP	Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries	1
2006-16665	ITP	Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries	1
2007-16772	ITP	Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries	1
2008-17515	ITP	Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries	2
2009-22536	ITP	Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries	1
2010-33837	ITP	Scientific and Technological Information Management in Universities and Libraries	4
2003-16105	ITP	Training in physics of Medical imaging	5
2005-16039	ITP	Training Programme in Webmaster	2

5.2. Ethiopian IUC and ICP PhDs

The number of PhD scholars within the IUC programmes with Mekelle and Jimma Universities are mentioned in the text.

The names of the PhD students are mentioned in the team member lists.

The Ethiopian scholars having benefitted from a ICP PhD scholarship:

NICP2005-0011	Argaw Ambelu Bayih	UGent	Ethiopia
2005	Wobalem Workneh Yonas		Ethiopia
NICP2010-005	Meron Teferi Taye	KULeuven	Ethiopië

5.3. Flemish VLADOC PhDs

A number of Flemish students have a VLADOC PhD scholarship for field work in Ethiopia.

VLADOC-2003	Raf Aerts	K.U.Leuven	Ethiopia
VLADOC-2004	Kaatje Segers	K.U.Leuven	Ethiopia
VLADOC2005-005	Reubens Bert	K.U.Leuven	Ethiopia
VLADOC2005-013	Marijke Van Moorhem	Ugent	Ethiopia
VLADOC2009-1	Bouckaert Kimberley	UGent	Ethiopia

5.4. Flemish students having benefitted from a travel grant to Ethiopia, mostly in the context of their Master's thesis

2003	8
2004	8
2005	12
2006	14
2007	3
2008	13
2009	23
2010	23
Total	104

6. References: Articles, Books and Documents consulted

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7. Persons Interviewed

Brussels

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Professor Jan de Sitter	University of Antwerp
Professor F. de Smedt	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Mr R. Gevaert	University of Ghent
Professor J.Vercruysse	University of Ghent
Professor B.Goddeeris	University of Ghent
Professor S. Deckers	University of Leuven
Professor F.Lambein	University of Ghent
Professor L. Lens	University of Ghent
Professor J. Nyssen	University of Ghent
Professor J. Diels	University of Leuven
Professor M. Thoelen	University of Hasselt
Professor J. Maes	University of Leuven
Professor P. Kolsteren	University of Ghent
Professor B. Muys	University of Leuven
Professor L. Duchateau	University of Ghent
Professor E. Mathijs	University of Leuven
Professor Z. Shkedy	University of Hasselt
Professor L. de Meester	University of Leuven
Mr D. Leysens and Mr P Manderick	Close the Gap
Ms V.Dermauw	PhD student

Ethiopia

H.E Gunther Sleewagen.	Belgian Ambassador to Ethiopia
Dr H. Bauer	VLIR-UOS
Dr Solomon Mugus	Ministry of Education (MoE)
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Dr S. Shiferaw	MoE
H.E Demeke Mekonnen	Minister of Education
Mr Franta Wijchers	Dutch Embassy
Dr H. Adhana	State Minister, Higher Education
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Mr G. Gentile	Italian Cooperation
Dr E. Rose	German Cooperation
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Mr B. Kumsa	Debre Zeit
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Mr A. Tola	Debre Zeit
Dr R. Dhoj Joshi	The World Bank
Mr F. Kelemework	European Commission
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Dr M. Tefera	Jimma University
Dr M. Wondafrash	Jimma University
Mr S. Tiku	Jimma University
Dr S. Argaw	Jimma University
Mr A. Abdissa	Jimma University
Mr A. Nebiyu	Jimma University
Mr G. Ketema	Jimma University
Mr Y. Getachew	Jimma University
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Dr Tadele	Jimma University
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Dr Feyesa	Jimma University
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Mr H. Goitom	Mekelle University
Mr S. Ayelew	Mekelle University
Dr K. Amare	Mekelle University
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Mr A. Tsegay	Mekelle University
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Publisher: Flemish Interuniversity Council, University Cooperation for Development (VLIR-UOS)

Design: VLIR-UOS

Registration: D/2011/10.960/2