Country reference framework

Ethiopia

February 2024

Content

Country reference framework Ethiopia

Background

In FYP1 the VLIR-UOS country strategies presented the strategic niche for future VLIR-UOS cooperation in a specific country, leading to strategy-based calls for proposals.

In FYP2, however, we shift towards an approach whereby a country reference framework provides information rather than strategic guidance. The country reference frameworks will be used mainly to support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in a given country, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors, their ongoing projects and partners in that country in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity.

The country reference frameworks consist of three components:

(i)   overview of VLIR-UOS projects in the country;
(ii)   context analysis focused on the Agenda 2030 framework and the higher education sector;
(iii)   overview of Belgian development actors (ANGCs involved in thematic or geographic JSFs & Enabel), their local partners and their regional/thematic focus.

The frameworks have been elaborated based on information available at the time of drafting this actor programme (1st half of 2021) and through consultations with both Flemish and local project promotors in 2020-2021, and with geographic JSFs, when applicable, to ensure relevant information for coherent project formulation is included.

Prior to the launch of competitive calls, the ANGCs active in the country/region will be invited to list a number of research themes/questions that can be addressed by HE&SIs in the framework of VLIR-UOS funded projects or scholarships. Synergy and complementarity will be integrated as an element in the selection of project proposals, more in particular when discussing the (developmental) relevance and coherence of the proposals and the extent to which the multi-stakeholder partnership principle has been reflected in the project's implementation set-up. By this mode of operation, the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development links up with the other geographic JSFs.

Evidently, the frameworks will be updated regularly in consultation with the HEI&SI stakeholders and with the respective geographical JSFs and, where appropriate, also with ARES, and especially prior to the launch of competitive calls by VLIR-UOS, to be compatible and responsive to evolving/emerging needs and priorities of academic and development actors active in the country/region/sector.

1 VLIR-UOS in Ethiopia

1.1 Overview projects & scholarships (2003 – 2023)

Legend

University	Color
Jimma University	🟡
Mekelle University	🟢
Addis Ababa University	🔵
Bahir Dar University	🔴
Arba Minch University	🟠
Ambo University	🟤
Ethiopian Civil Service University	🟣
Dire-Dawa University	⚫
Haramaya University	🔵
Wolaita Sodo University	🟢

Projects 2003-2023		
Type	**Budget (€)**	**Number**
Total	*31,378,381*	*84*
IUC	21,297,345	3
NETWORK	1,812,874	1
TEAM	4,705,755	16
SI	1,378,147	24
JOINT	389,994	3
Crosscutting	965,833	31
ICT Infrastructure	199,709	0
RIP	498,330	5
ITP	130,394	1

Scholarships 2003-2023		
Type	**Budget (€)**	**Number**
Total	*20,121,424*	*1,184*
Ph.D.		
Subtotal	*1,863,056*	*14*
ICP PhD	624,594	6
VLADOC	1,238,462	8
Short term		
Subtotal	*2,108,039*	*631*
ITP	1,359,980	228
KOI	122,991	60
REI	295,491	294
Other scholarships	329,577	49
Study		
Subtotal	*16,150,329*	*539*
ICP	16,150,329	539

Ethiopia is one of the key partner countries of VLIR-UOS. From 2003 to 2023 VLIR-UOS spent around € 51 million in cooperation programmes with Ethiopia, including 4 long-term Institutional University Cooperation partnerships, of which those with Jimma University (JU) and Mekelle University (MU) were finalized and two ongoing IUCs with Arba Minch and Bahir Dar University are in Phase 2 of cooperation. Next to this also the NETWORK IQ GEAR on capacity building related with Phd trajectories, coordinated by Jimma University and involving 3 other Ethiopian universities (Hawassa, Ambo and Addis Abbeba / College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture) and several TEAM/SI projects form the core of cooperation with Ethiopia.

Soon, our website will be reorganised and more detailed information can be found on our Ethiopia country page.

1.2 Ongoing projects and future calls (2022-…)

List of projects 2022-…						
Type	**Runtime**	**Title**	**Flemish promoter**	**Local promoter**	**Local institution**	**Total budget (FYP 2) (€)**
IUC	2023-2027	Institutional University Cooperation with Arba Minch University (AMU) (phase 2)	R. Merckx (KU Leuven)	G. G. Sulla	Arba Minch University	2.680.000
	Subproject 1	Improving AMU's education, research and outreach processes by enhancing ICT and library and by facilitating community uptake of new knowledge	F. Questier (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)	H. Seid		
	Subproject 2	Rethinking rural livelihoods in the Southern Ethiopian Rift Valley: Fostering prosperity, sustainability and resilience	M. Maertens (KU Leuven)	A. Duguma		
	Subproject 3	Improving maternal and child health in south Ethiopian Rift Valley	S. Abbeddou (University of Ghent)	W. Godana		
	Subproject 4	Reversing land degradation through effective sustainable land management practices in the Abaya-Chamo Lake basins	M. Kervyn (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)	D. Elias		
	Subproject 5	Improving agricultural productivity in South Ethiopian Rift valley	G. Janssens (Ghent University)	Y. Kechero		
	Subproject 6	Biodiversity conservation for sustainable development in the South Ethiopian Rift Valley	L. De Meester (KU Leuven)	S. Getaneh		
	Subproject 6	Empowering AMU institution to become truly inclusive, embracing SDG 5 and beyond, leaving no one behind	Veerle Draulans (KU Leuven)	Senait Shaile		
IUC	2022-2027	Institutional University Cooperation with Bahir Dar University (BDU) – (phase 2)	A. Frankl (Ghent University)	E. Adgo	Bahir Dar University	2.110.000,00
	Subproject 1	*Transversal Institutional Strengthening Project (TISP)*	*M. Goovaerts (Hasselt University)*	E. Adgo		
	Subproject 2	*Land resilience*	*A. Frankl (Ghent University)*	A. Wassie		

List of projects 2022-…						
Type	Runtime	Title	Flemish promoter	Local promoter	Local institution	Total budget (FYP 2) (€)
	Subproject 3	*Water management and its implications to the hydro-system dynamics in the Tana-Beles area, Upper Blue Nile basin*	*K. Walraevens (Ghent University)*	*M. Dessie*		
	Subproject 4	*Postharvest and food processing in northwest Ethiopia*	*B. Nicolai (KU Leuven)*	*G. Alemayehu*		
	Subproject 5	*Aquatic ecology and waterborne diseases in the Lake Tana basin*	*E. Verleyen (Ghent University)*	*M. Kibret*		
	Subproject 6	*Socioeconomics, sustainable livelihood and environmental management in northwest Ethiopia*	*S. Van Passel (University of Antwerp)*	*A. Sewnet*		
Networks	2022-2027	Network Cooperation IQ GEAR coordinated by Jimma University (JU) (phase 2)	B. Levecke (Ghent University)	K. Tushune replaced as of 2024 by Kassahun Eba	Jimma University	1.250.000
	Subproject 1	Higher quality and inclusive postgraduate education	Fiona Vande Velde (Ghent University)	Teklu Gemechu Abessa		
	Subproject 2	Improved interuniversity and interdisciplinary research collaboration and practice	Sarah Gabriël (Ghent University)	Zeleke Mekonnen		
	Subproject 3	ICT and Library services	Rudy Gevaert (Ghent University)	Yonas Teshome		
	Subproject 4	Network strengthening and stakeholders engagement	Bruno Levecke (Ghent University)	Kora Tushune		
TEAM	2019-2023	Zoonosis and pest ecology research for sustainable livelihood at the human-wildlife interface in Omo Basin, Southern Ethiopia	H. Leirs (University of Antwerp)	A. Megaze	Wolaita Sodo University	53.639
TEAM	2022-2027	Developing an Art Conservation Education and Research program at Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia	Natalia Ortega Saez (UA)	Manendante Mulugeta Seyoum	Bahir Dar University	279.840,00
TEAM	2022-2027	Storytelling and Young People Coping with Crisis: Oral Narratives and Crisis Management in Kenya and Ethiopia	Inge Brinkman (UG)	Teshome Mossissa	Jimma University	299.970,00
ITP	2022-2025	Development and implementation of an advanced course on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention and control in Ethiopia	José L. Peñalvo (UA)	Adamu Addissie	Addis Ababa University	0,00

List of projects 2022-…						
Type	Runtime	Title	Flemish promoter	Local promoter	Local institution	Total budget (FYP 2) (€)
ITP	2022-2025	ITP Sustainable Land Management	Kristine Walraevens (UG)	Seifu Tilahun	Bahir Dar University	0,00
ITP	2023-2026	Ethiopian SuperStars: Strengthening the advisory and coaching skills of academic staff at Ethiopian higher education institutions	Bruno Levecke	Teklu Gemechu	Jimma University	149.993,80
SI	2022-2024	Developing a sustainable palliative care network in Ethiopia through co-creation of an interdisciplinary educational programme	Sara Janquart (PXL)	Endalew Hailu Negassa	Jimma University	65.300,40
SI	2022-2024	Shallow groundwater and its sustainable use for safe water supply and irrigation in rural communities of the Lake Tana basin	Kristine Walraevens (UG)	Fenta Nigate Abera	Bahir Dar University	69.999,60
SI	2022-2024	The political economy and governance of river sand commodity chains in Ethiopia	Bert Suykens (UG)	Siyum Adugna Mamo	Jimma University	69.997,40
SI	2022-2024	Improving maternal health outcomes in Ethiopia by integrating of point-of-care testing for sexually transmitted infections in antenatal care	Piet Cools (UG)	Abel Abera Negash	Armauer Hansen Research Institute	69.997,40
SI	2022-2024	Single Image Parasite Quantification (SIMPAQ): a New Diagnostic Technique using Microfluid-ics to Manage Soil-Transmitted Helminthiases towards Elimination	Wim De Malsche (VUB)	Zeleke Mekonnen	Jimma University	69.951,20
SI	2023-2025	Quantifying resilience of traditional smallholder farming systems and natural resources in the context of conflict and war: A case study of Northern Ethiopia	Frankl Amaury (UG)	Tesfaalem Ghebreyohannes Asfaha	Mekelle University	69.999,00
SI	2023-2025	Implications of the Tigray War on the Sustainability of the Water Supply and Hydro-Systems: An Insight for Reconstruction and Development	Kristine Walraevens (UG)	Gebremedin Berhane	Mekelle University	69.905,00
SI	2023-2025	Improved diagnostics for visceral leishmaniasis: a prerequisite for elimination	Nicole Berens-Riha (UA)	Tamiru Degaga	Arba Minch University	69.718,00
SI	2023-2025	A Sustainable Construction for Ethiopia: Integrating Local Resources for Affordable, Resilient and Sustainable Housing	José Henriques (UH)	Jemal Jibril	Jimma University	68.836,40
SI	2023-2025	Enhancing poultry Biosecurity and Health Management through capacitating farmers, veterinarians and researchers in Central and Northern Ethiopia: towards improvement	Jan Paeshuyse (KUL)	Fanos Tadesse Woldemari-yam	Addis Ababa University	69.932,40

Abbreviations (type): IUC=Institutional University Cooperation; SI=Short Initiatives; ITP= International Training Programme. Abbreviations (Flemish institutions): KUL= Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; UG=Ghent University; UA=University of Antwerp; PXL=Hogeschool PXL; VUB=Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Table 1 Ongoing VLIR-UOS projects (FYP II)

Competitive calls for new SI and TEAM projects will be launched and announced on our website. Nationals of Ethiopia are eligible[1] to apply for scholarships for the International Master Programmes (ICP) and International Training Programmes (ITP).

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[1] Admission requirements, application procedures and selection procedures differ across the programmes and host institutions.

2 Ethiopia and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2.1 Ethiopia and the Sustainable Development Goals

The vision of Ethiopia is becoming a lower middle income country by 2025. The framework for the realisation of this vision is the Growth and Transformation Plan (currently GTPII; 2015 – 2020; GTP III in elaboration. This development policy aims at benefiting the people of Ethiopia at all levels and elicit the need for accelerated and comprehensive economic growth, economic infrastructure development, social development and expediting the building of democratic systems. The implementation of the policies are envisaged to ensure food security in the whole country and at every household level to eradicate poverty in all its forms, to ensure gender equality, to withstand climate change and bring about prosperity of the nation.

Ethiopia accepted and approved the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda during the UN member states' meeting in 2015. All SDGs have been integrated in the 10 priority areas of the GTP II:

1. Agricultural sector development continues to be the major source of an accelerated economic growth and development.

2. Bringing about concrete structural transformation in the economy through the development of the manufacturing industry.

3. Increasing efficiency and focusing on the productivity, quality and competitiveness of the productive sectors to achieve high economic productivity.

4. Focusing on the imbalance of demand and supply by accelerating growth and correcting the imbalance in the macro economy.

5. Implementing the construction industry policy and strategy framework in order to be able to achieve developmental and successful project management.

6. Prioritizing urban administration and management to bring about accelerated urbanization and structural change in a manner coping with the accelerated industrialization.

7. Prioritizing the transformation of domestic investors.

8. Prioritizing the development of human resources supported with technological capacity building.

9. Given priority to building climate resilient green economy.

10. Eliminating rent-seeking behaviors and ensuring the predominance of developmental frame of mind.

Ethiopia has reported on progress made in implementing the sustainable development goals through the 2017 Voluntary National Review report (VNR). The preparation of the VNR report followed a consultative approach and provides information on Ethiopia's progress, challenges and lessons learned along a number of focussed SDG's.

- SDG 1: **End poverty** in all its forms everywhere

Despite a severe climate change induced drought in the beginning of GTPII period, which affected more than 10 million Ethiopians, the Ethiopian economy grew by 8% in real terms in 2015/16. Poverty in Ethiopia progressively reduced over the years; it was 44.2% in 2000, 38.7% in 2007, 29.6 % in 2011, and it is projected to further reduce to 16.7% by the end of 2020. To support poverty alleviation, the GTP II envisaged allocation of 70 percent of the total budget for interventions that accelerate economic growth in poverty-focused sectors (health, education, clean water and sanitation, agriculture, and rural roads). Moreover, the safety net programs are an important mechanism to reach vulnerable groups (leave no one behind).

The VNR report points out that capacity building through research in particular through research in agriculture and industries and through innovating technologies and importing and adopting/adapting technologies that pertain to the objective realities in the country, in light of increasing productivity, is highly desired.

- SDG 2: **End hunger**, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Productivity of food crops in Ethiopia has been on the increase assisted by efforts made to increase produces and productivity of the agricultural sector through trainings, research and the supply of agricultural extension services. Main food-crops' produces reached 270.3 million quintals in 2014/15, a volume well over the national food self-sufficiency requirements. To achieve the goal of eliminating hunger as set in the 2030 sustainable development agenda, most attention needs to be given among others to (1) the strategy to expand agriculture (2) increasing the productivity and produces of small-holder farmers and pastoralist and (3) encouraging increased engagement of the private sector in agricultural development. In order to make fundamental changes in the agriculture sector, agricultural research and capacity building of the farming and pastoral communities are essential.

- SDG 3: **Ensure healthy lives** and promote well-being for all at all ages

The goal of the National Health Policy is to provide all citizens with easy access to basic health services. To realize this objective, health infrastructure has been expanded and human capital in the health sector has been improved, especially through the health extension program where 38.000 health extension workers were trained and deployed to implement the program. Thanks to this, the health service coverage of Ethiopia in 2015/16 reached 98 percent, and for most diseases (HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria) numbers are decreasing. Infant and under five child mortality, however, increased from 2015 to 2016, which highlights the need for corrective measures.

- SDG 5: Achieve **gender equality** and empower all women and girls

According to the Ethiopian constitution, all persons are equal before the law and women have equal rights with men in all economic, social and political affairs. The main objective of the Women Policy is creating enabling environment for women to actively participate at all levels in the economic, social, and political activities. The government provided capacity building programmes to women (in agriculture, industry, loans etc.) and gender issues have been mainstreamed in all development sectors' plans and programs. Affirmative actions have also been taken by the government to compensate women and girls for opportunities denied to them in the past. For example, the threshold pass marks for university entrances have been lowered for female candidates.

Women's political participation in Ethiopia is growing. About 38.7% of members of the House of People Respresentatives (HPR) are women. At lower levels, 50% of the representatives are women. Major implementation strategies in the Women Policy and Strategies of the government include elimination of

harmful traditional practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and childhood marriage. However, abolishing harmful traditions pertaining equality of women, encountered challenges. Moreover, failure to respect the rights of female-headed households to the use of land resources have been observed and shortage of loan services in particular to poor women have been experienced. Male-biased attitudinal behaviours and practices exist in every section of the society, which needs to be addressed.

The VNR reports expresses the wish of Ethiopia to learn from other countries experiences with achieving SDGs pertaining to women, e.g. from ways of increasing participation of women in secondary and higher education and successful experiences in generating, collecting, capturing and utilizing gender-disaggregated data.

- SDG 9: Build resilient **infrastructure**, promote inclusive & sustainable **industrialization** & foster **Innovation**

Development of strong human resources, creating enabling environment for developmental investors, building a green-manufacturing industry compatible with sustainable environmental development which supports social development and does not harm the environment are the policy directions set by the government. The VNR identified incompetences in project management (planning, delivering, controlling and contract administration) as a severe challenge.

- SDG 14. Conserve & sustainably use the **oceans, seas & marine resources** for sustainable development

The water resources policy and strategy of the country gives directions for the efficient and appropriate harnessing of the water resources including embarking on development interventions that would respond to droughts and flood control effectively. Successful results were registered in water ecosystems' development, raising productivity in agriculture, enhancing the capacity of food security, expediting the eradication of poverty. Limitations in availability of data on the water ecosystems posed serious challenges. Extensive studies and research have to be made to avail the data. There is a need research and capacity building in this area.

The most critical challenge the Ethiopian economy is encountering during the implementation of SDGs is the climate change induced drought with negative impacts on the economy and human capacity, declining market prices of major Ethiopia's export commodities in international market, lack of commitment on the part of international community in mobilizing financial resource for implementation of SDGs, particularly for infrastructure financing , and global unpredictability of peace and security which can affect aid, loan and foreign direct investment flows. Addressing these challenges requires more integrated and coordinated national effort and strong and effective global partnership.

Ethiopia is committed to the enhanced delivery and realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is acknowledged in the VNR that the SDGs should be better integrated in the forthcoming GTP III & IV (2020-2030).

Taking into account the global aspect of the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Report of 2021[2] assesses where each country stands with regard to achieving the SDGs. Ethiopia ranks 136 out of 165 countries included in the report. The Ethiopia Country Profile shows that the majority of goals is facing major or significant challenges.

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[2] Sachs et al. (2021): The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Report 2021. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dashboards: ● SDG achieved ● Challenges remain ● Significant challenges remain ● Major challenges remain ● Information unavailable

Trends: ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement ↗ Moderately improving → Stagnating ↓ Decreasing •• Trend information unavailable

As an umbrella organisation that works with calls for proposals, VLIR-UOS supports interventions for and through higher education institutes, supporting them in the areas of education, research and uptake and thereby strengthening them in their role as development actor. Doing so, the impact of the interventions supported by VLIR-UOS can be found in a large variety of sectors. In line with its major intervention area, VLIR-UOS positions itself within the education sector, especially focused on higher education, research and innovation (SDG 4 and 9). However, through its interventions, VLIR-UOS intervenes in different sectors as well. VLIR-UOS recognises that given the complexity, scale and interconnectedness of current societal challenges, meaningful social, economic and ecological transformations can only be realised by starting from a holistic and integrated approach to the SDGs. When translated into SDGs, the projects that were financed by VLIR-UOS in Ethiopia covered mainly, apart from SDG 4 and 9, *SDGs 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 15 and 16* . Top sectors for VLIR-UOS in this country for the past decade are water supply and sanitation, agricultural land resources and development, forestry policy and development, bio-diversity and agro-industries and environmental policies.

Finally, reference is also to be made to the current very complicated political (mainly Tigray Region) with warfare and killings. The position of the Ethiopian government is that the situation is being stabilised, however references to persecutions continue and in the Tigray Region a major food security crisis/famine is noted. It remains to be seen how the situation in the country will evolve and what effects this will have on cooperation.

Additional sources on progress related to higher education & science (SDG 4)

- UNESCO-UIS: overview data resources indicators related to SDG4
- Our World in data:
  - Indicators related to educational mobility and inequality
  - Indicators related to tertiary education
  - Indicators related to projections of future education (demand)
  - Indicators related to science and research
- Student mobility: UIS-data showing shifting demand for higher education caused by COVID-19

2.2 Higher education landscape in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has been undergoing significant social, economic, and political reforms in recent years, with the aim of becoming a beacon of prosperity in Africa by 2030. The success of these reforms relies heavily on the availability of a competent workforce across various sectors. Higher education institutions in Ethiopia play a crucial role in producing competent professionals and driving the desired multi-sectoral reforms.

In 2018, the education roadmap prepared by the Ministry of Education, aiming at reforming the Ethiopian educational system in accordance with the national vision and development goals, was implemented by splitting the previous Ministry of Education into two separate entities i.e. a Ministry of Education and a Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE). In 2018, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) was created, responsible to lead the development of science, higher education as well as the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Ethiopia. A five-year strategic plan for Higher Education of MoSHE was introduced in 2019 and puts forward the following ambitions for the higher education sector. According to our information however, it seems that mid 2021 the authority in terms of HE was reinstalled at level of the Ministry of Education, under the form of a department for Academic Affairs, with a CEO as director. In fact, the CEO of Academic Affairs took part in a (inter)national-level meeting of the VLIR-UOS funded IQ Gear Network programme early October 2023.

With regard to education, the focus was to ensuring accessibility, attain Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), provide quality education and contribute to sustainable socioeconomic development through generating the required knowledge and skills. Accordingly, positive results have been registered specifically in ensuring universal access to primary education. Some quality improvements have also been registered, although achievements fell short of the planned target, primarily owing to the failure to effectively and comprehensively execute the educational quality improvement packages at all levels. In this context, emphasis need to be given to teachers' training, curriculum development, sufficient supply of text books, civic education, setting examination and school administration, and information technology. At the centre of all these packages is ascertaining public ownership and leadership of the school system through promoting organised community participation.

During the GTP I period, huge public resources have been allocated to expand higher education. Accordingly, undergraduate enrolment in regular programs in both public and private higher education institutions has increased from 207,179 (public 190.043, private 17,136) in 2009/10 to 418,738 (public 375, 416; private 43,323) by 2014/15. In the same period, the overall undergraduate enrolment in all programs (regular, evening, summer and distance) of higher education institutions has increased from 420,387 to 755, 244. Enrolment in postgraduate programs (both public and private institutions) has increased from 14,272 in 2009/10 to 33,915 by 2014/15. The share of female students in undergraduate programs has increased from 29 percent in 2009/10 to 32 percent by 2014/15 while the share of female students in the postgraduate program reached 19 percent by the end of 2014/15.

To enhance the relevance of higher education to the needs of the country, 70 percent of undergraduate students were enrolled in Science and Technology programs and 40 percent of them were enrolled in engineering and technology programs. This is well in line with the policy objective of the government. However, to improve quality of education farther, the on-going higher education quality improvement program needs to be fully implemented. In addition, to link the higher education and training systems with development activities to keep up with technology development, the momentum to strengthen existing linkage of university with industries needs to be continued. This combination of activities will help increase the enrolment capacity of public higher education institutions undergraduate students to

600,000. In addition, the number of postgraduate students will increase to 63,000 by the end of the growth and transformation plan period. To improve equity in undergraduate programs, the percentage of female students will increase from 32 percent in 2014/15 to 45 percent by the end of 2019/20. Similarly, in the second and third degree programs, the percentage of females will increase from 19.5 and 11 percent in 2014/15 to 25 and 20 percent by 2019/20, respectively.

The direction of the next five years plan is to ensure quality and relevance in the public and private higher education institutions. To achieve this, the management and administration system of universities will be strengthened, while the Higher Education Strategic Centre and the Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency will be capacitated to achieve their missions. In addition, the capacity of other relevant stakeholders will be built. On the other hand, through continuous monitoring and support, higher education institutions will become more effective and efficient and provide a student friendly environment especially for young women students. The research system in higher education institutions will be guided by the role they play in economic growth and development of the country.

To further expand access to higher education, it was foreseen that 11 new universities would be established during the second growth and transformation plan period. Accordingly, it will focus on the development of university teachers, and on equipping research, laboratory and workshop facilities to ensure the quality of higher education.

The number of public higher education institutions and their admission capacity was foreseen to be increased. In order to improve the achievement of preparatory secondary school students admitted to higher education, universities and preparatory secondary schools was to work in collaboration mainly with emphasis on improving the achievements in mathematics and science subjects.

Update information IQ Gear Network on HE in Ethiopia (Oct. 2023) : Ethiopia currently has 51 public universities and six private universities, responsible for producing academic staff and professionals for development sectors. According to the report in 2020 by the then Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE), now Ministry of Education (MoE), there were 39,392 academic staff members in public universities, with a Bachelor:Masters: PhD ratio of 20:67:13. Of the 51 public universities, 16 offered PhD programs with a gross enrolment of 3,994 candidates across 263 PhD programs. However, the existing numbers indicate a pressing need to further expand of PhD programs and increase in student enrolment to meet the growing demand for PhD holders.

The Home-Grown Collaborative PhD Programs (HCPP) initiative was launched in December 2020 by MoE—then MoSHE—to address the need for expanding PhD programs and increasing student enrolment. The HCPP initiative was launched with an ambitious objective of training 5,000 PhD holders in five years, aiming to raise the proportion of PhD holders in Ethiopian public universities from 13% to 30% by 2025. To ensure efficient resource utilization, the program emphasizes local and international collaboration and partnerships. The HCPP aims to complete the PhD studies within four years, recognizing the importance of timely completion to meet the workforce demands.

Most PhD programs in Ethiopian higher education institutions are designed to be completed in four years. The first year involves attending courses that provide a comprehensive understanding of contemporary issues in the specific discipline and prepare PhD candidates for their research work. The two middle years focus on the PhD research and the development of transferable skills. The fourth year is dedicated to writing and defending the thesis. Today many candidates face challenges in adhering to this timeline.

The expansion of HEI and the implementation of diverse academic programs, including doctoral studies, in Ethiopia are confronted by several challenges. These encompass issues such as inadequate infrastructure, limited faculty capacity, financial constraints, and the need for curriculum development to align with global standards. Notably, there exists a paucity of research concerning trends and obstacles pertaining to PhD enrolment and attainment within the Ethiopian context. Addressing this gap, the present study attempts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing challenges in the realm of PhD education and achievement within the country.

Looking at international rankings like Webometrics, only Addis Ababa University falls withing the top 2000 ranking, followed by and Jimma University, Bahir Dar University, Gondar University and Mekelle University (strongly affected by the Tigray war). In total 12 universities are ranked in the top 10.000 (update July 2023).

2.3 Leaving no one behind

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community pledged to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. The principle of leaving no one behind can be defined as a three-part imperative: to end absolute poverty in all its forms, to stop group-based discrimination that results in unequal outcomes for disadvantaged populations, and to take action to help the furthest behind.

In the 2017 VNR report the main theme of the Sustainable Development Agenda viz. Leaving No One Behind was incorporated in each of the themes selected for the voluntary national review with respect to policy directives, implementation mechanisms, lessons learned and challenges. These themes were: financial inclusiveness, road safety and traffic management, children's welfare, and participatory monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

The UNESCO data on Deprivation and Marginalization in Education (DME)[3] presents the following scheme, showing that challenges remain between the two sexes, between rural and urban, as well as between   regions.
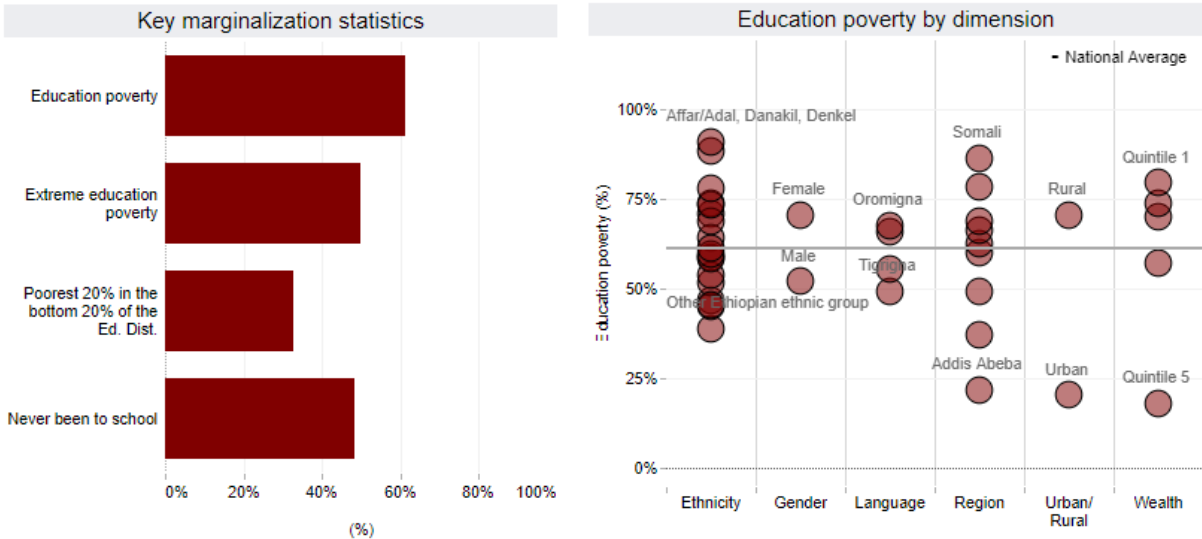
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- Education poverty: the proportion of the population with less than 4 years of education
- Extreme education poverty: the proportion with less than 2 years
- Poorest 20% in the bottom 20% of the Ed. Dist.: what proportion of the poorest 20% are also in the bottom 20% of the education distribution
- Never been to school: what proportion of 7-16 year olds have never been to school
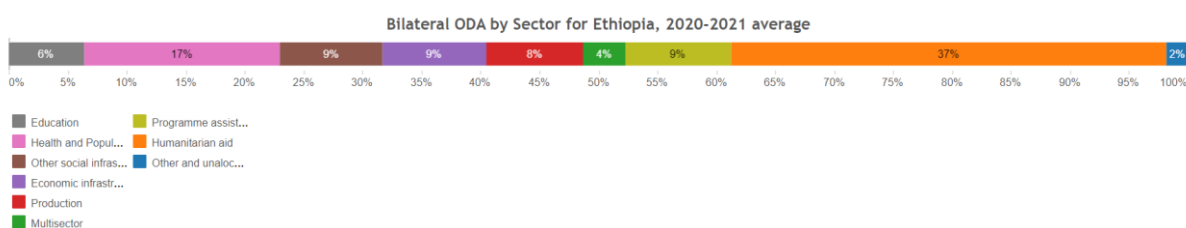
2.4 **Multistakeholderpartnership - Stakeholder analysis**

The complexity, scale, and interconnectedness of the current societal challenges that the SDG framework is seeking to address, requires a concerted effort of a wide variety of different stakeholders. As such, the principle of multistakeholderpartnership – which promotes cooperation and partnerships at different stages and spanning the boundaries of civil society, private sector, government, and academia – is ubiquitous across the 2030 Agenda. An analysis of these stakeholders is essential for each partnership.

Taking a look at the **development partners** of Ethiopia, the International Development Association and the United States were the main donors of gross Official Development Aid (ODA) in 2020-2021. Top sectors for bilateral ODA were humanitarian aid (37%), health and population (17%) and economic infrastructure (9%).

Source: http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm

Based on data from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), Norway, USA and Germany are the main country donors in the higher education sector. VLIR-UOS is also listed in the top 10, including other type of doners such as Mastercard Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates foundation, etc.
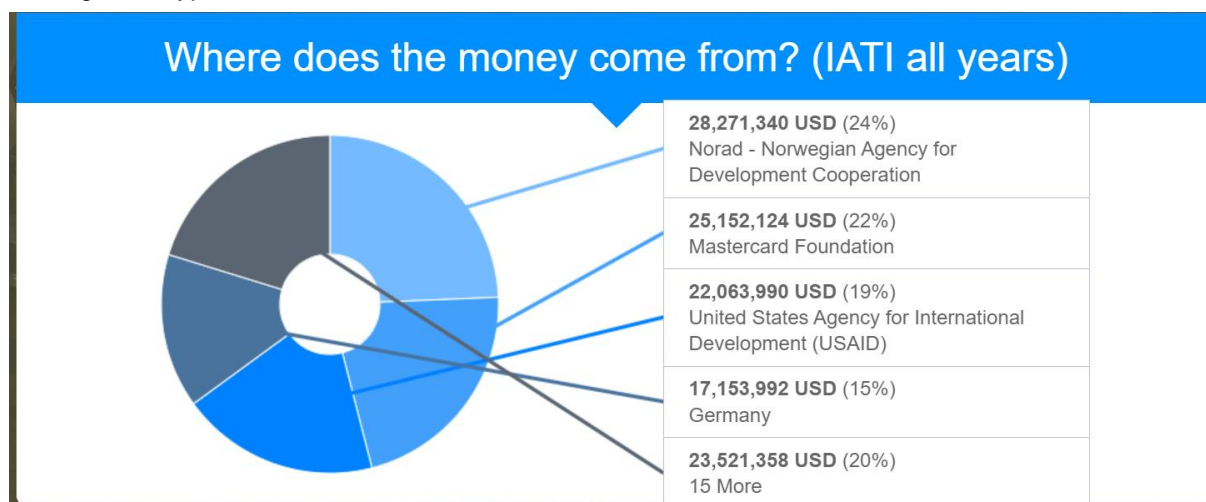
VLIR-UOS contributes to the 2030 agenda by realizing a societal impact, implying an impact on local communities, civil society, governments, private sector or other higher education institutions. In what follows we list the role and the desired change among the main actors involved in the change process that VLIR-UOS envisages to support through *its interventions.*

Actor	Role and interest/influence
Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia	HEIs in Ethiopia are important boundary partners in the realization of VLIR-UOS outcomes in terms of its contribution to Agenda 2030, and the potential contribution to local sustainable development. As project owners they are expected to contribute to HEIs' enhanced institutional performance in the core tasks relating to education, research and societal service delivery strengthening the HEI's visibility and recognition as a centre of excellence. In the long-term, partner HEIs are also expected to have a multiplier effect on the higher education system and development sector in the country or region through their engagement in (global) knowledge-driven partnerships with academic and non-academic stakeholders.
DGD (incl. Belgian embassies in partner countries)	DGD has an advisory role in the VLIR-UOS selection commissions and follows-up on the VLIR-UOS portfolio and the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development. The Belgian Embassy in Ethiopia can play a role in facilitating the uptake of knowledge, the identification, mobilisation and relation building with other stakeholders (e.g. links with European Union, national government, other donors), the contextual updates etc.
Students, professionals, and alumni	**Students** can be direct (e.g. as a recipient of a PhD scholarship within a project) or indirect beneficiaries (e.g. enjoying improved/innovative didactical approaches) of the projects. As direct beneficiary, their changed role will be about the generation and use of newly acquired knowledge, competences (e.g. global citizenship) and networks in view of sustainable development. Alumni from VLIR-UOS-projects in Ethiopia will be important stakeholders in connecting VLIR-UOS projects with each other, with other actors, etc.
Academics/researchers	As direct beneficiaries of the projects, academics and researchers affiliated within Flemish and partner HE&SIs play an important role in co-creating, disseminating and creating conditions for uptake of knowledge relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in line with the needs, policies and priorities of the partner HE&SIs, local/national or regional stakeholders.
Members of the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development	VLIR-UOS, ITM and ARES have initiated the JSF on HESD4SD to further unlock the developmental potential of higher education and science cooperation for sustainable development and make it accessible to other local, Belgian and international partners as scientific advisor to other partners' projects, partners or policy bodies, as a platform for sharing state of the art scientific results, information, expertise and experience and for exploration of possibilities for synergy and complementarity. In Ethiopia ITM and VLIR-UOS are present.
Belgian Actors of the	VLIR-UOS continuously tries to identify and encourage synergy and complementarity between Belgian ANGCs and academic stakeholders. Through the uptake of research

Non-governmental Co-operation	results, mobilisation of local stakeholders, participation in trainings or courses, identification and communication of relevant research questions/opportunities, hosting of international internships, facilitating student mobility… these actors play a critical role.
Belgian bilateral cooperation (BIO & Enabel)	Since more than 10 years, Ethiopia is no longer a partner country of Belgian bilateral development cooperation. However, in case opportunities via Belgian foreign affairs or BIO should appear, synergy and complementarity with academic projects of the partner HEIs (e.g. through country reference frameworks, JSF platform) will be looked into.
International organizations and other donors (e.g. WHO, UNESCO, World Bank, European Commission…)	Interventions undertaken by international organisations like UN agencies such as FAO or international donors active in higher education cooperation can be complementary in the achievement of the objectives of projects. They can, for instance, play a role in the use and upscaling of new knowledge or practices or serve as seed money for bigger interventions financed by these international organisations.
Academic/science (inter)national and regional networks	Regional or (inter)national academic/science networks (e.g. CAMES, IUCEA) are among the potential indirect beneficiary as targeted HE&SIs strengthened in their research/educational capacities can improve the functioning of the networks they are part of through the co-creation, exchange and uptake of knowledge among academic stakeholders. Similar effects can be realized in the case of alumni and scholarship networks/associations when former scholarship students act as agents of change within these networks.
Public sector: Local or central government and political community	Engage in evidence-based governance that puts knowledge to the test by being a stakeholder in the co-creation of inclusive (innovative) solutions and effective user of research results to foster good governance for sustainable and coherent policies.
Private sector	Individuals and companies who operate for profit and which are not controlled by the state can play a role within projects as users of the knowledge, applications and services (co-)created as result of the project and therefore contribute in particular but not only to SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure.
Civil society, social movements and local communities	Civil society actors, social movements and local communities are expected to co-create, access and use the knowledge and research products generated within the framework of *projects* thereby making a potential contribution to the entire range of SDGs.

3 Synergy and Complementarity with other (Belgian) development actors in Ethiopia

3.1 VLIR-UOS approaches to synergy and complementarity

Drawing upon their longstanding common history, VLIR-UOS, ARES and the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) jointly developed the thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development (JSF HES4SD). Through cooperation with civil society, private and public sector, the JSF initiators[4] aim to further unlock the huge developmental potential of higher education and science cooperation for sustainable development and make it accessible to other Belgian, local and international partners, in different ways: as partner in a multi-actor partnership, as scientific advisor to other partners' projects, partners or policy bodies, as a knowledge broker for sharing state of the art scientific results, information, expertise and experience and for exploration of possibilities for synergy and complementarity. This reference framework for Ethiopia will feed into the **platform** that the initiators of the JSF HES4SD plan to create to proactively communicate opportunities and facilitate such cooperation. More precisely, the platform can be used to:

(i)   communicate about the launch and results of competitive calls for projects;
(ii)   communicate other opportunities for projects or scholarships;
(iii)   gather/exchange on collaboration opportunities (e.g. requests for scientific advice);
(iv)   share information about ongoing projects, events and seminars in the country/region.

3.2 Bilateral development cooperation (Enabel) in Ethiopia

Apart from some humanitarian assistance in 2019 Belgium has no bilateral or governmental cooperation with Ethiopia. All cooperation will Belgian partners is non-governmental (+/- 3 Mio EUR a year).

Currently the Belgian Embassy in Addis has been engaged in a dialogue with its Ethiopian counterparts on potential cooperation in the health sector.

With a view of future cooperation amongst actors present in Ethiopia and potential partnerships between Ethiopian an Belgian actors active in the healthcare system (including R&D), the Embassy of Belgium *received a concept note from the Ministry of Health where the following area for potential cooperation with Belgian actors are highlighted :*

Pillar 1: Enhancing local production of medical products (pharmaceutical, vaccine and medical supplies and equipment)

The Government of Ethiopia identified the following components of the healthcare ecosystem to be strengthened and supported:

- *Building the capacity of national and regional regulatory bodies*

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[4] The three JSF initiators represent 60 Belgian higher education institutions (HEIs), being 11 universities, 32 university colleges, 16 school of arts, and ITM.

- *Create platform to co-promote the suitability of Ethiopia to Belgian investors*

- *Building the capacity of regional bioequivalent center located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

- *Support to facilitate technology transfer to local pharmaceutical industries*

- *Support on building the National metrology institute to enable to calibrate, qualify and validate the instruments in local pharmaceutical ,medical supplies industry and instruments in medical Laboratories*

- *Technical and financial support to realize the setting o vaccine manufacturing plant in Ethiopia*

Pillar 2: Emergency preparedness

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that the world is under prepared to provide response to pandemics at the same time giving essential services. Hence this is high time to re-think health systems and make them resilient. In this regard some of areas of collaboration includes:

- *Improve leadership, governance and management capacities of the leadership at MoH, Regional Health Bureaus and various agencies*

- *Identify areas of improvement for the health system to respond to future epidemics*

- *Collaborate on improving emergency logistics management*

- *Improve Primary health care to respond to the future emergencies while providing essential health care*

- *Improve multi-sectoral response to outbreaks through better and proactive coordination mechanisms at national and regional level by brining all stakeholders*

Pillar 3: Research and Training

The Ministry is establishing a new Research, Strategy and Policy unit that directly reports to the Minister. But as this is a new unit, support is required to:

- *Identify research priorities of the ministry*

- *Capacity building of staff and the unit*

- *Health system research topics and conducting the studies together*

- *Initiating exchange programs of students with MoH and other universities in Ethiopia*

- *Writing policy briefs on public health issues of interest for the Ministry*

3.3 Belgian actors of the non-governmental cooperation in Ethiopia

3.3.1 Thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science

	Belgian HE&SI	Partner HE&SI	Topic/ thematic focus	Contact person
ITM	ITM	Gondar College of Medical and Health Sciences (GCMHS), at the University of Gondar (UoG)	Institutional Capacity Strengthening	Jan Coenen

ARES has Ethiopia as a potential future project country but up to date no projects have been foreseen/identified.

3.3.2 Ethiopia Joint Strategic Framework

There is no geographic JSF for Ethiopia submitted for the second FYP 22-26.

3.3.3 Other Thematic Joint Strategic Frameworks

ANGC	JSF	Local partners	Contact person
BOS+	Resilience	Mekelle University University of Arba Minch	To be added

Thematic JSFs Sustainable Cities and Decent Work are not present in Ethiopia.