

# Country reference framework

## Ecuador

**November 2023**

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# Country reference framework Ecuador

## 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. These country strategies created a framework for project formulation, but could limit project identification to geographical and/or thematic foci and/or to a limited number of partner institutions. Country strategies also aimed at enabling synergy and complementarity between VLIR-UOS projects and projects from other (Belgian) stakeholders working in that country.

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.

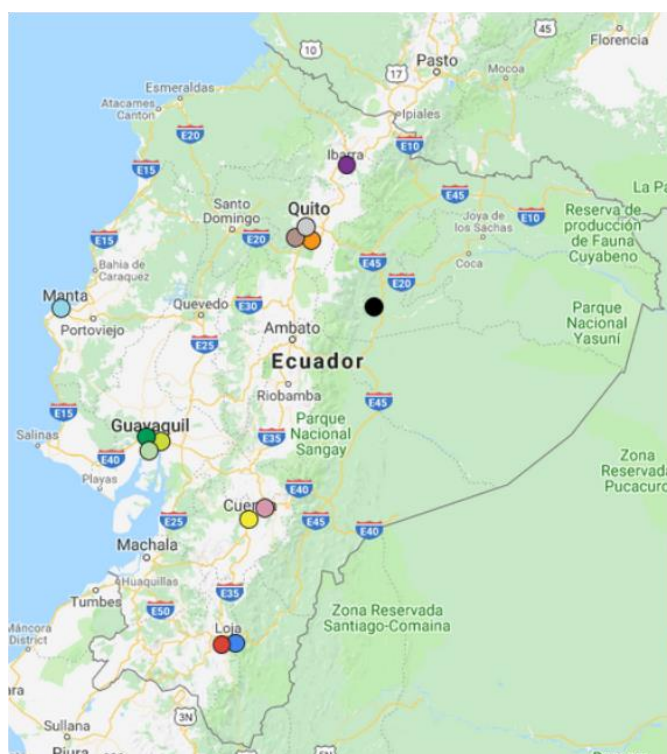
The frameworks have been elaborated based on information available at the time of drafting this actor programme (1st half of 2021) and through consultations with both Flemish and local project promoters in 2020-2021, and with geographic JSFs, when applicable, to ensure relevant information for coherent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

## 1.1 Overview projects & scholarships (2003 – 2023)



### Legend

- Universidad de Cuenca
- Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral
- Universidad Nacional de Loja
- Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja
- Universidad San Francisco de Quito
- Universidad Técnica del Norte
- Universidad Politécnica Nacional
- Universidad de Guayaquil
- Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar
- Universidad Regional Amazónica IKIAM
- Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí
- Universidad Nacional de Educación
- Universidad casa Grande

Projects 2003-2023		
Type	Budget (€)	Number
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,594,687</b>	<b>87</b>
IUC	10,763,937	1
NETWORK	2,610,433	1
TEAM	4,529,195	19
SI	2,557,146	42
ITP	79,991	1
JOINT	655,814	4
Crosscutting	767,593	14
ICT Infrastructure	199,983	0
RIP	430,594	5

Scholarships 2003-2023		
Type	Budget (€)	Number
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,326,949</b>	<b>617</b>
<b>Ph.D.</b>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>380,152</b>	<b>3</b>
ICP PhD	65,928	1
VLADOC	314,224	2
<b>Short term</b>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>677,140</b>	<b>535</b>
ITP	35,428	5
KOI	90,243	43
REI	483,037	477
Other scholarships	68,432	10
<b>Study</b>		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,269,657</b>	<b>79</b>
ICP	2,269,657	79

**Ecuador is a longstanding partner of Flemish HEIs and one of the top VLIR-UOS partner countries.** From 2003 to 2023 VLIR-UOS spent 25,9 million Euros in cooperation with Ecuador, including **3 long-term institutional partnerships: the IUCs with Escuela Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL) and University of Cuenca (UCuenca), and an inter-institutional NETWORK project on biodiscovery and national resources, coordinated by ESPOL, in collaboration with EPN, UTN and Ucuencia.**

More detailed information can be found on the [Ecuador country page](#) on the VLIR-UOS website.

## 1.2 Ongoing FYP 2 projects (to be complemented based on future project calls (2024-...))

Table 1 Ongoing VLIR-UOS projects that will continue in FYP II ( 2022-...						
Type	Runtime	Title	Flemish promoter	Local promoter	Local institution	Total budget (FYP 2) (€)
Networks	2019-2023	Network Biodiversity Ecuador (biodiscovery and water resources) – Phase 2 (2019-2022) (ESPOL, UCuenca, UTN and EPN) + Phase Out (2023)	P. Goethals (Ghent University)	P. Herrera	Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral	290.000
	<i>Subproject 1</i>	<i>Enhancing national capacities in biodiscovery</i>	<i>W. Vanden Berghe (University of Antwerp)</i>	<i>J.M.C. Cevallos</i>		
	<i>Subproject 2</i>	<i>Enhancing Ecuadorian national capacities on water management</i>	<i>G. Wyseure (KU Leuven)</i>	<i>L. Dominguez</i>		
	<i>Subproject 3</i>	<i>Enhancing national capacities in education and outreach innovation</i>	<i>P. Goethals (Ghent University)</i>	<i>P. Herrera</i>		
TEAM	2019-2022	Innovative governance systems for built cultural heritage, based on traditional Andean organisational principles in Ecuador	K. Van Balen (KU Leuven)	F. Cardoso	Universidad de Cuenca	59.637
TEAM	2022-2027	A Comprehensive Investigation on the Rationale of Corruption and its Liabilities in Ecuador (CIRCLE)	Siegfried Dewitte (KUL)	Paúl Arias-Medina	Universidad de Cuenca	299.997,32
TEAM	2022-2027	Enhancing the AGRI-fOod Supply chain towards Industry 5.0 (AGRO5) in the Ecuadorian Andes	Alexandra Van den Abbeele (KUL)	Lorena Sigüenza Guzmán	Universidad de Cuenca	299.998,40
TEAM	2022-2027	Sustainable water management under climate change in Southern Ecuador	Patrick Willems (KUL)	Ana Ochoa-Sánchez	Universidad del Azuay	299.992,00
TEAM	2022-2027	Community engagement and novel technologies: a winning team for the integral management of cervical cancer in a rural context.	Veronique Verhoeven (UA)	Bernardo Vega	Universidad de Cuenca	279.059,00
TEAM	2022-2027	Recovery and conservation of Andean tropical mountain forest to benefit livelihood of local communities	Hans Verbeeck (UG)	Selene Baez	Escuela Politécnica Nacional	296.692,00
TEAM	2022-2027	A multidisciplinary approach to design active, safe and inclusive parks in the Andean region of Ecuador	Delfien Van Dyck (UG)	Angélica Ochoa Avilés	Universidad de Cuenca	280.000,00
TEAM	2022-2027	Sharing Insights in Statistical Thinking. A Roadmap towards Integrated Data Science Approaches in Research.	Luc Duchateau (UG)	María Nela Pastuizaca Fernández	Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral	234.014,00
SI	2022-2024	Multi-stakeholder and Sustainable Expansion of the Ecuadorian Transmission Power System	Dirk Van Hertem (KUL)	Santiago Torres	Universidad de Cuenca	69.902,80
SI	2022-2024	Preventing/mitigating water and mudflows and floods in urbanized mountainous hydrological catchments through avoidance of deforestation of critical tree covered locations and afforestation of critical tree-less locations	Jos Van Orshoven (KUL)	Pablo Vanegas Peralta	Universidad de Cuenca	70.000,00

Table 1 Ongoing VLIR-UOS projects that will continue in FYP II ( 2022-...						
Type	Runtime	Title	Flemish promoter	Local promoter	Local institution	Total budget (FYP 2) (€)
SI	2022-2024	A high-impact professionalization trajectory for UTN (and PXL)-lecturers to promote educational inclusion while respecting 'cultural identity'.	Dorien Jansen (PXL)	Ramiro Núñez Gómez	Universidad Técnica del Norte	69.999,62
SI	2022-2024	The interaction of Indigenous Local Knowledge and scientific knowledge as a catalyst for sustainable development. The case of food systems in the Ecuadorian Amazon.	Joost Dessein (UG)	Maria Gabriela Zurita Benavides	Universidad Regional Amazónica IKIAM	69.977,60
SI	2022-2024	Ecuadorian chocolates: Implementation of a sensory panel for the design of fine flavored chocolates.	Xavier Gellynck (UG)	Julio Bonilla	Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral	69.839,00
SI	2022-2024	Development of local devices for telemedicine services in remote areas of Ecuador	Johan Stiens (VUB)	Federico Dominguez	Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral	69.806,00
SI	2023-2025	On the prediction and prevention of toxic algae blooms in a tropical setting - AlgaePredict	Christine Van der heyden (HoGent)	Julio Bonilla	Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral	69.971,00
SI	2023-2025	Wastewater Valorisation through biological trEatment and Reduction of its impact on the aquatic enviRonment (WAVERR)	Bjorge Decostere (HoGent)	Jorge Celi	IKIAM	69.902,80
SI	2023-2025	Critical problems, opportunities and good practices to prevent and respond to gender-based violence against students in higher education institutions - Ecuador	Veerle Draulans (KUL)	Fernanda Soliz	Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar	69.974,30
SI	2023-2025	Stimulating Ecuadorian preschoolers' and kindergartners' mathematical development: learning-supportive interactions using picture books	Hilde Van Keer (UG), Joke Torbeyns (KUL)	Gina Bojorque	Universidad de Cuenca	69.999,60
SI	2023-2025	Smart Farming methodology for efficient and sustainable cultivation of dragon fruit in Ecuador's Amazon: Pilot evaluation of the impact of technology on poverty and inequality reduction	Patrick Vandewalle (KUL)	Esteban Valencia	Escuela Politécnica Nacional	69.998,99
SI	2023-2025	Revaluation of Andean ancestral knowledge on medicinal herbs through the development of a phytotherapeutic product	Yvan Vander Heyden (VUB)	Eugenia Peñaherrera-Wilches	Universidad de Cuenca	70.000,00
ITP	2023-2026	Enabling HEI educators and professionals to advance urban design and planning justice through socio-ecological sustainability	Viviana d'Auria (KUL)	Edgar Gonzalo Gordillo Gordillo	Universidad Politécnica Salesiana (Cuenca)	149.881,56

Abbreviations (type): SI=Short Initiatives, TEAMS=TEAM projects, ITP= International Training Programmes. Abbreviations (Flemish institutions): KUL= Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; UG=Ghent University; UA=University of Antwerp; UH=University of Hasselt; VUB=Vrije Universiteit Brussel, PXL=PXL University College.

Competitive calls for new SI, TEAM, ITP projects will be launched and announced on our website. Nationals of Ecuador are eligible to apply for VLIR-UOS scholarships within the International Master Programmes (ICP Connect).

## 2 Ecuador and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

### 2.1 Ecuador and the Sustainable Development Goals

Promising to leave no one behind, Ecuador reaffirms its commitment to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals by presenting for a second time its **Voluntary National Review 2020** ([report in Spanish](#) and [executive summary in English](#)). A third review is foreseen for 2024 and will be published here: <https://hlpf.un.org/vnrs> . The situation in the world has changed and thus the levels of implementation of the SDGs. COVID-19 and the indirect effects of isolation mean that economic revival establishes a mechanism conducive to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The challenges of the international community can only be overcome within the framework of the principles of cooperation and solidarity, without isolated visions of development and aimed at strengthening the multilateral system.

The challenges for Ecuador as a result of COVID-19 were accentuated by the dramatic drop in the price of oil and the decline in foreign exchange revenues from the export of other products and services. With a dollarized economy, greater flexibility is required from multilateral financial bodies active in Ecuador to address its commitments on better terms. These flexibilities would facilitate the implementation of policies that reduce poverty, an objective of 2030 Agenda. According to ECLAC, poverty in the Latin American region and the Caribbean could increase by 3.5% and extreme poverty by 2.3% due to the pandemic. While mobilizing resources to implement the SDGs has been a challenge Ecuador has incorporated in its economic and financial policy the strengthening of public, aimed at being efficient in public finances.

Ecuador sees in the 2030 Agenda an opportunity to generate synergies between various actors for true sustainable development at the economic, social and environmental levels. It has issued two Executive Decrees and a Ministerial Agreement that allow the incorporation of the 2030 agenda in public policy and laying the groundwork for the governance of this Instrument. Strengthening public health systems and provision of essential services must prevail in order for the recovery against COVID 19 to not to jeopardise the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Ecuador considers it essential to promote mechanisms of linkage and articulation between key players, such as representatives of academia, civil society, public enterprises and private governments, among others. The participation of these actors has contributed to the 350 initiatives at the national level by 2020, which contribute to the construction of the 2030 agenda in the country. These processes have become mechanisms for identifying opportunities that promote transparency and accountability.

Taking into account the global aspect of the SDGs, the [Sustainable Development Report](#) of 2021<sup>1</sup> assesses where each country stands with regard to achieving the SDGs. Ecuador ranks 53 out of 165 countries included in the report. The [Ecuador Country Profile](#) shows that most goals remain with challenges. However, Ecuador is improving in a number of SDGs such as clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities, climate change action and quality of education.

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<sup>1</sup> Sachs et al. (2021): The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Report 2021. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.





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 Ecuador covered mainly, apart from SDG 4 and 9, SDGs 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 15. Top sectors for VLIR-UOS in this country for the past decade are health, biodiversity/environment and natural resources (in particular water resources), quality of education and innovation.

More background information and context analysis on Ecuador can be found in the **geographic Joint Strategic Framework** for Ecuador, which will be shared with (potential) project promoters when new calls are launched.

#### 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 Ecuador <sup>2</sup>

Higher education is provided by universities, polytechnics and, at non-university level, “Institutos Pedagógicos” and “Institutos Técnicos Superiores”. All universities whether public or private, are autonomous. Higher education institutions are now supervised by [CES](#) / [SENESCYT](#), but an important stepping stone to the preparation of a thorough reform of the higher education sector was the 2008 CONEA report. The National Council on Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEA) elaborated a technical report with respect to the level of performance of the superior education establishments to guarantee quality. Indicators used by CONEA for the assessment of Universities and other higher education establishments were: (i) Teacher training, (ii) Budget for scholarships, (iii) Mobility of students and credit acknowledgment, (iv) Investment in libraries, (v) Financial resources and budget performance, (vi) Coherence between academic processes and mission and objectives of the University, (vii) Use and creation of extensions to guarantee academic quality and infrastructure (classroom spaces).

Subsequently, on November 10, 2009, CONEA’s final report was published. In this report, five categories were distinguished for the classification of 68 universities and poly-technical high schools. The CONEA evaluation ranked all 73 universities in five categories A to E. A new Law on Higher Education (LOES), which was issued in October 2010, which promotes the democratization of access, quality and relevance of higher education, demanded the closure of the 26 institutions in the poorest category E within 18 months. Besides the closure of the weakest universities the new law also calls for an evaluation (accreditation) of all existing careers, every five years; a university categorisation in 1) Universities of Teaching; 2) Universities of Teaching and Research and 3) Research Universities. In order to be accredited Education and Research University, 60% of university staff must in two years have full time appointments (now an average 3%) and 60% must have a PhD degree within 7 years (this percentage is now under 10%).

With LOES, new policies to strengthen programs and scientific research in higher education institutions, with the generation of scholarships for international postgraduate courses, student loans, research centers, and the promotion of links between universities and the productive sector. The former CONESUP (Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior) was dismantled in October 2010. Functions were partially overtaken by the CES (National Council of Higher Education), a more central and official body, directly dependent of the Presidency.

As of 2012, free higher education for Ecuadorian students was implemented. In Ecuador, the Constitution of the Republic (2008) establishes in its Articles 28 and 356, that public education will be universal and secular at all levels, and free up to the third level of higher education inclusive. Higher education in the country brings together technical institutes, universities and polytechnic schools and the intention of the measure is to increase equal opportunities to access university (Rivera, 2019).

The Consejo Nacional De Evaluación y Acreditación de la Educación Superior del Ecuador (CEAACES) was created with the mandate of evaluating and accrediting Universities in Ecuador. It was created to assure higher education quality, due to the fact that the former responsible body (CONESUP) in practice was not in a good position to do so, amongst others due to its composition (universities and institutes) with peer evaluations proving not so productive. An important achievement is the ranking of Universities, based on both an auto-assessment and an external evaluation. Meanwhile CEAACES became Consejo

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<sup>2</sup> Information updated with info from the Final Evaluation report of the Network programme Ecuador, coordinated by ESPOL, and funded by VLIR-UOS. Report elaborated by Leandro Echt and Montserrat Creamer.

de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (CACES). The categorisation of universities in A-E was cancelled in 2018 and replaced by 'accredited' or 'not accredited'.

In 2013, the universities (public and private) were classified between the letters A to D. By 2018, after improvement and re-evaluation processes, all the universities that were in category D were reclassified to C. Later, in 2019 categories were eliminated and universities were accredited according to the quality of the three functions: teaching, research, and community outreach. Currently there are 52 public universities and 30 private ones. In recent years, various reforms have been implemented in the higher education system with the aim of improving quality and equity in education, including coverage and access. Some of these reforms included:

However, private higher education enrollment increased by 10% while public enrollment fell by 3% and students from vulnerable sectors have been affected by the difficulty of accessing higher education. High school completion rate increased to 97% and demographic pressures on access to higher education. Therefore, since 2012, an average of 200,000 students finished high school and seek to achieve a place, above all, in public educational institutions (Ramos, 2023). While students can enter public universities only if they pass standardized exams (in 2022, new SENESCYT regulations offer greater autonomy to universities in relation to entrance exams), private universities diversified the offer and student loans. In addition, due to the exams, the admission of students from vulnerable, rural, low-income and ethnic minority sectors to both public and private higher education was strongly affected.

Regarding Ecuadorians studying abroad, the scholarships included the requirement of returning to the country for a few years, leading young professionals to accumulate debt as they decided not to return due to the increase in unemployment in Ecuador and the increase in opportunities abroad. The lack of competitiveness of wages, the difficulty that scholarship holders face to get a job when they return to the country, and the disparity between the scholarship holder's area of knowledge and the job they get once they finish their studies are critical issues. These factors have affected reaching the objective of training human capital that generates favorable conditions for the productive sector of the country (Vaca, 2021).

While research in higher education institutions has increased, no research agenda aligned with country needs was established. Moreover, the scholarship holders were not institutionalized as professors of the national higher education system (Ramos, 2023). SENESCYT scholarships are focused on post-graduate studies abroad, which means that the research carried out is not necessarily focused on offering solutions to the country's problems. On the other hand, at the end of the studies and returning to the country, there are no follow-up, support and reinsertion mechanisms in the academic system in order to strengthen the academic quality and national research projects. In Ecuador, there is insufficient link between higher education and the external environment, limited quality of academic activity, low levels of self-management, scarce university financing; and lack of social accountability (Silva-Tarqui, 2022).

In this context, CES presented in 2021, together with SENESCYT and CACES, the Plan of the Higher Education System 2021-2026. Its main objectives are to establish mechanisms to improve student access to universities, with more and better opportunities; with the promotion of scientific research and technologies that generate innovations with a social impact; the empowerment of public policies aimed at the needs of the productive and economic sectors, prioritizing sustainable development, among others. In turn, in 2018 and 2019 there have been partial reforms to the Organic Law of Higher Education (LOES) with the common objective of promoting university autonomy, access and research. In addition, the Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples was created. In 2021, President Guillermo Lasso presented the LOES reform project to the National Assembly, with the aim of strengthening university autonomy, the academic offer and the admission processes. However, it was shelved

by a majority vote in the National Assembly in 2023 due to lack of political support and ideological differences regarding issues such as quality and financing.

In terms of Higher Education Institutes, [the following webometrics link](#) provides the ranking of Ecuadorian universities worldwide. None rank in the top 2000 worldwide. No specific recommendations can be drawn from this apart from the fact that regional and local institutions away from the Guayas, Azuay and Pichincha (Quito) regions often received less funding, and are situated in environments of more structural poverty (Esmeraldas, Amazonas, ..).

At the time of LOES 2010, the political focus was to link up with the National Plan 'Buen Vivir', which was also presented in 2010 and which proposes a paradigm change from 'development' to 'good living', aiming at ambitious objectives through concrete strategies in various domains. The transformation of higher education and the transfer of knowledge in science, technology and innovation is one of the strategies. The important principles of this national plan seem to be continued in the current development plan 2017-2021 '[Toda Una Vida](#)'

An interesting development is the recent agreement (Senescyt News, June 2021) of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (Senescyt) and the European Union to create new Higher educational technological centres in eight provinces of the country. Seven of the institutes, which will be financed by the European Investment Bank, will be located in Atacames, Guayaquil, Cuenca, Riobamba, Sucúa, Quito and Quevedo; while the eighth, which will be in the city of Portoviejo, will be built with funds from the Latin America Investment Facility. The total investment exceeds 80 million dollars.

## 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.

Specifically for Ecuador the concept of reducing inequalities in a multi-diverse society with strong indigenous roots and a variety of populations, including well-being, education access for all and zero hunger are a top political priority. Also the national development plan 2017-2021 '[Toda Una Vida](#)' which makes a strong reference to the importance of an inclusive society and the principle of plurinationality. Leaving 'no one behind' is strongly integrated in those concepts.

In the context of the Pandemic, strengthening the public health system for all and with specific attention for gender and diverse disadvantaged groups is again high on the agenda.

### Additional sources on Leaving No One Behind

- *Gender parity index*
- *ODI leaving no one behind index: summary [report](#) index 2019; annex [index 2019](#)*
- *Disparities in higher education attendance ([UNESCO-GEM-UIS-WIDE](#))*
- *Danish institute for human rights: Human rights data explorer ([here](#))*

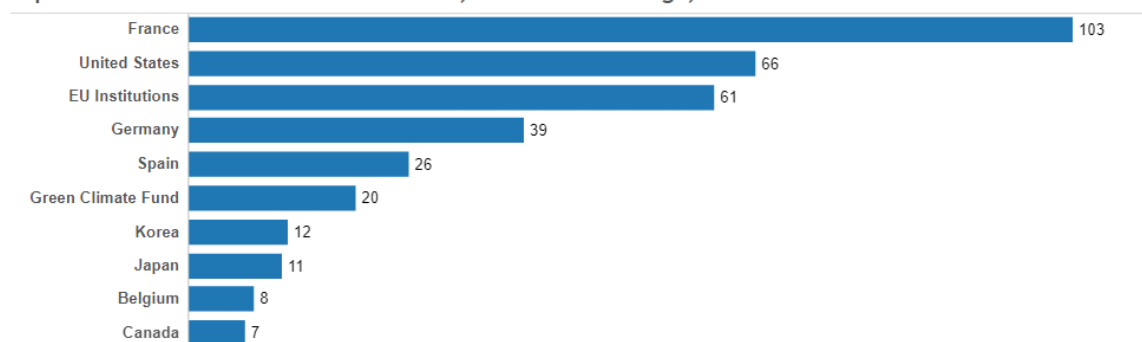
## 2.4 Multistakeholderpartnership - Stakeholder analysis

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 multi-stakeholderpartnership – 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.

An analysis is included in the geographical JSF and all national documents reflect strongly the decentralised character of the Ecuadorian territorial and societal organisation, referring strongly to the different societal actors and emphasizing the importance of inclusion and plurinationality.

Taking a look at the **development partners** of Ecuador, France is the main donor of gross official development aid (ODA) in Ecuador, followed by the USA and EU institutions.

Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Ecuador, 2020-2021 average, USD million



Bilateral ODA by Sector for Ecuador, 2020-2021 average



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

The sectors receiving the biggest funding are humanitarian aid and Economic infrastructure.

Based on [data from the International Aid Transparency Initiative \(IATI\)](#), Belgium (ARES larger than VLIR-UOS due to the institutional university cooperation funds) is the main donor in the higher education sector, followed by Canada, UK and Plan international Netherlands.

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
<b>Higher Education Institutions in Ecuador</b>	HEIs in Ecuador 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.
<b>DGD (incl. Belgian embassies in partner countries)</b>	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 Embassies (e.g. for Andes Embabel Lima – Peru) 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.
<b>Students, professionals, and alumni</b>	<b>Students</b> 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 Ecuador will be important stakeholders in connecting VLIR-UOS projects with each other, with other actors, etc.
<b>Academics/researchers</b>	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.
<b>Members of the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development</b>	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 Ecuador ARES and VLIR-UOS are present.
<b>Belgian Actors of the Non-governmental Cooperation</b>	VLIR-UOS continuously tries to identify and encourage synergy and complementarity between Belgian ANGCs and academic stakeholders. Through the uptake of research 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.
<b>Belgian bilateral cooperation (BIO &amp; Enabel)</b>	VLIR-UOS will regularly exchange with Enabel and BIO to identify and communicate opportunities for synergy and complementarity with academic projects of the partner HEIs (e.g. through country reference frameworks, JSF platform). In the case of Ecuador however bilateral cooperation and Enabel activities are already outphased but quite some important bilateral contacts remain and potential links with BIO can be further investigated.
<b>International organizations and other donors (e.g. WHO, UNESCO, World Bank, European Commission...)</b>	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.
<b>Academic/science (inter)national and regional networks</b>	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.
<b>Public sector: Local or central government and political community</b>	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.
<b>Private sector</b>	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.
<b>Civil society, social movements and local communities</b>	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 <i>projects</i> thereby making a potential contribution to the entire range of SDGs.



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

### 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<sup>3</sup> 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 Ecuador will feed into to 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 Ecuador

The bilateral development cooperation agreements between Ecuador and Belgium were outphased. However, Ecuador has a longstanding history of cooperation with Belgium at level of bilateral cooperation and the country continues to be a very important country in the Belgian indirect development cooperation. Belgium ranks only 7<sup>th</sup> on the [ODA overview](#) for Ecuador and education is the largest part of cooperation for the period 2017-2021.

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<sup>3</sup> The three JSF initiators represent 60 Belgian higher education institutions (HEIs), being 11 universities, 32 university colleges, 16 school of arts, and ITM.



### 3.3 Belgian actors of the non-governmental cooperation in Ecuador

#### 3.3.1 Thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science

	Belgian HE&SI	Partner HE&SI	Topic/thematic focus	Contact person
<b>ARES</b>	Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE)	Renforcement des Espaces de Médiation Communautaire des jeunes dans les situations de violence et de souffrance psychosociales (PRD 2017 – 2022)	Zé Oumou
<b>ARES</b>	Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)	Escuela Politécnica Nacional (EPN)	Linking global change with soil and water conservation in the high Andes (PRD 2017 – 2022)	
<b>ARES</b>	Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)	Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL)	Paving the way towards biotechnology and Bioeconomy in Ecuador : Oil polluted ecosystems as a model of microbial diversity and reservoir for bioremediation processes and bioeconomy (PRD 2019 – 2024)	
<b>ARES</b>	Université de Liège (ULiège)	Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas - ESPE)	Mise en place d'une plate-forme d'appui à la formation et à la sensibilisation, au diagnostic et au développement d'une stratégie de contrôle de la Brucellose et de la Trypanosomiase en Équateur (PRD 2019 – 2024)	
<b>ARES</b>	Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)	Universidad Central del Ecuador (UCE)	Socio-eco-epidemiology of ticks, tick-borne parasites, acaricide resistance, and residual effects to acaricides in tropical Ecuadorian livestock: environmental, animal and public health impacts (Acronym: Ticks & TBD) (PRD 2020 – 2025)	

#### 3.3.2 Ecuador Joint Strategic Framework

Description of the strategic goal	Approaches	ANGCs
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SG1	Human rights and gender equality/equity (Derechos humanos y la igualdad/equidad de género)	1A Defensa de los derechos humanos 1B Formación de un entorno cívico favorable 1C Igualdad/equidad* de género 1D Derecho de la Niñez 1E Derechos de niñas y mujeres 1F Derechos sexuales y reproductivos	11.11.11, ACTEC, VVOB, Rikolto, Plan internacional, TRIAS
SG2	Environmental and climate justice (Justicia ambiental y climática)	2A Promuevan la preservación, restauración y el uso sustentable de la biodiversidad y los ecosistemas y (2) sensibilicen sobre la importancia y la emergencia de estas acciones. 2B Acompañamiento de comunidades locales, activistas y movimientos sociales 2C Observación e implementación de los acuerdos y tratados 2D Impulsar estrategias y mecanismos de transición a la agricultura regenerativa a través del: - <b>desarrollo de capacidades técnicas...</b> ; - <b>prácticas productivas sustentables y sistemas de comercialización inclusivos y sostenibles</b> 2E empleo y autoempleo dignos y amigables con el medio ambiente 2F medidas eficaces y equitativas contra el cambio climático	
SG3	Agro-food systems (Sistemas agro-alimentarios)	3A sistemas y prácticas agrícolas sustentables y regenerativas 3B comercialización y distribución inclusiva de productos sustentables 3C Desarrollar competencias, habilidades y destrezas en jóvenes rurales mediante procesos de capacitación 3D Emprendimientos agroalimentarios sostenibles y acceso a productos financieros adaptados para jóvenes y mujeres. 3E profesionalización de organizaciones de agricultores y la articulación con todos los actores de la cadena 3F Facilitar espacios multi-actor 3G Apoyar iniciativas públicas y privadas de promoción y educación ciudadana	
SG4	Economical justice and distribution of wealth (Justicia económica y redistribución de la riqueza)	4A reducción de asimetrías y desigualdades económicas 4B modelo de desarrollo más armónico con los derechos humanos y la naturaleza. 4C política comercial justa, equitativa y sostenible	

<b>SG5</b>	Educational system	<p>5A inserción laboral de jóvenes, adolescentes y adultos, con énfasis en mujeres.</p> <p>5B procesos de diálogo multiactor entre la sociedad civil, las instituciones y actores del sistema de educación, y entidades gubernamentales</p> <p>5C valorización de la educación técnica y/o profesional accesible, inclusiva, equitativa y de calidad</p> <p>5D desarrollo profesional de docentes y/o equipos directivos en estrategias, conocimientos, habilidades y destrezas</p> <p>5E Capacitar a las madres y padres de familia ..</p> <p>5F Promover la vinculación del sistema educativo con sus entornos locales</p>	
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The following overviews will be added/complemented based on the information in the JSF Ecuador and if needed the actor programmes per ANGIC that will become available after 01/08/2022.

ANGIC	JSF - Strategic goals	Approaches		
		Local partners	Geographic region	Contact person
<b>11.11.11</b>	SG1 to SG5	In Ecuador 11.11.11 works together with organizations that stand up from a rights perspective for sustainable development. 11.11.11 works together with organizations and networks that are active at national level on democratization and rights, environmental issues, climate justice, and social and economic justice.	To be added based on Programme 2022-2026 11.11.11	National, however partners focus on the Amazon region and South Eastern Ecuador  Freya Rondelez
<b>Rikolto</b>	SG1 to SG5	The challenge of Rikolto (formerly VECO) Andino in Ecuador is to contribute to improving the quality of life of small agricultural producers, through an effective linkage to the market, through intervention strategies that	To be added based on Programme 2022-2026 Rikolto	Northern Ecuador (Pichincha, Esmeraldas, ..)  Ricardo Garcés, Johanna Renckens

		professionalize their organizations, to market quality products that generate more stable income for families.			
<b>ACTEC</b>	SG1 to SG5	Since 2014, ACTEC is supporting Salesians secondary colleges in order to improve the quality of the technical education (level: Bachillerato técnico) provided to vulnerable young people from low-income families residing in Guayaquil and Esmeraldas cities.	Unidad Educativa Salesiana Domingo Savio, Unidad Educativa Fiscomisional María Auxiliadora, Unidad Educativa Montepiedra	Guayas and Esmeraldas Province	Michel Garcia
<b>VVOB</b>	SG1 to SG5	VVOB Education for development is committed to quality education in Ecuador. In close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, VVOB supports teachers and school leaders to create environments where their students can develop to their full potential.	MINEDUC and various subsecretaries	Esmeraldas, Manabí y Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas	Claudia Cadena
<b>Plan International</b>	SG1 to SG5	Plan International works directly with girls, boys, adolescents, families and communities in 9 provinces of the country. Plan works with children from birth to adulthood. Projects focus on several domains such as education, entrepreneurship, sexual and reproductive rights, early childhood, risk management, participation and leadership.	To be added based on Programme 2022-2026 Plan		Catalina Vaca, Sofia Sainz de Aja,
<b>Trias</b>	SG1 to SG5	Taking control of value chains: In recent years, the urban population in Ecuador has benefited from economic growth. The effects of this increase in wealth don't quite extend to the Andes, however. Poverty and malnutrition are still a concern in our intervention zones.	To be added based on Programme 2022-2026 Trias	South and Central Andres	Paola Mercado, Lieve Van Elsen

		TRIAS supports farmers' organisations in developing profitable production chains.			
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### 3.3.3 Other Thematic Joint Strategic Frameworks

#### Thematic JSF Resilience

Miembros del MEC	Socios / tipos de socios	Grupo Beneficiario	Local partners	Persona de contacto
<b>WWF Ecuador</b>	ONG nacionales, Organizaciones Indígenas, Asociaciones de productores, Instituciones Públicas, Universidades; Federaciones; confederaciones; ministerios	Comunidades indígenas y campesinas; Manejadores de áreas protegidas		Jorge Rivas
<b>Join For Water</b>	ONG nacionales, asociaciones de productores, organizaciones indígenas, ONG internacionales; autoridades	Comunidades locales e indígenas, sus organizaciones cupulas y asociaciones de productores		Johan Slimbrouck
<b>BOS+</b>	ONG nacionales, asociaciones de productores, organizaciones indígenas, ONG internacionales	Comunidades locales e indígenas, sus organizaciones cupulas y asociaciones de productores		Debbie Eraly
<b>VIA Don Bosco</b>	Oficinas de Planificación y Desarrollo y centros de capacitación de los salesianos	Jóvenes vulnerables y sus familias; personal de los centros; inspección		Amélie Janssens

#### Thematic JSF Sustainable cities

Los ANGS belgas	Organización asociada de los ACNG belgas en Ecuador	Grupo objetivo	Enfoque/tema operativo	Local partners	Persona de contacto
<b>Rikolto</b>	Cooperativa de consumidores y productores de Quito y su región  Organizaciones de la sociedad civil	Consumidores en Quito-Sur Organizaciones de agricultores Gobiernos locales (Conquito)  Ciudadanía en la provincia de Manabí Organizaciones de consumidores Gobiernos locales	Sistemas Alimentarios locales y sustentables  Ambiente alimentario  Dieta sostenible		Johanna Renckens, Ricardo Garcés
<b>VVSG</b>	Hermanamientos entre autoridades locales de Bélgica y Ecuador:  - Bierbeek – San Felipe de Oña - Evergem – Guaranda	Funcionarios, hombres políticos y la sociedad civil de Oña y Guaranda	El manejo sostenible de agua y tierra		Karliën Gorissen

**Thematic JSF Decent Work** is not present in Ecuador.