

Higher
education
cooperation
for
sustainable
development
between

Ethiopia
and Flanders
(Belgium)

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Ethiopia is one of the key partner countries of VLIR-UOS. From 2003 to 2021 VLIR-UOS spent over € 47.5 million in cooperation programmes with Ethiopia, including 4 long-term Institutional University Cooperation programmes, of which those with **Jimma University (JU)** and **Mekelle University (MU)** were finalized and two ongoing IUCs with **Arba Minch University (AMU)** and **Bahir Dar University (BDU)** are at midterm. Next to this also the NETWORK, coordinated by Jimma University and involving 3 other Ethiopian universities and an number of finalizing TEAM/SI projects form the core of cooperation with Ethiopia.



Higher education as a driving force for sustainable development

Through **more than 15 years of successful cooperation**, Ethiopia assured itself a special place in the VLIR-UOS portfolio as one of its main partner countries.

VLIR-UOS revised its country approach towards an 'Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development' centred approach. Moreover, VLIR-UOS wants to facilitate connections between different actors and projects present in a given country. With these objectives in mind, the Country Reference Framework (CRF) for Ethiopia supports 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 Ethiopia, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors active in Ethiopia, their ongoing projects and partners, in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity.

The VLIR-UOS cooperation in Ethiopia fits in with the Ethiopian national strategy to give priority to strengthening of higher education and improving food security (agriculture, livestock production etc.) with attention for sustainability (water, soil, climate change impact) and (human and animal) health. All SDGs have been integrated in the priorities of Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan, which is in line with VLIR-UOS' objective of working towards Agenda 2030.

Institutional Partnerships

Results of long-term cooperation with Mekelle University and Jimma University

Between 2002 and 2013, the Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) with Mekelle University had as central objective **improving living conditions of the mainly farmers population** through intelligent use of land and water resources. As stated by the final evaluation, the programme has enabled communities to better use and manage ground and surface water resources and micro dams, to better manage land, to apply conservation agriculture, to cultivate apples and to catch fish and commercialize it, thus providing opportunities to improve their livelihood and to increase their income.

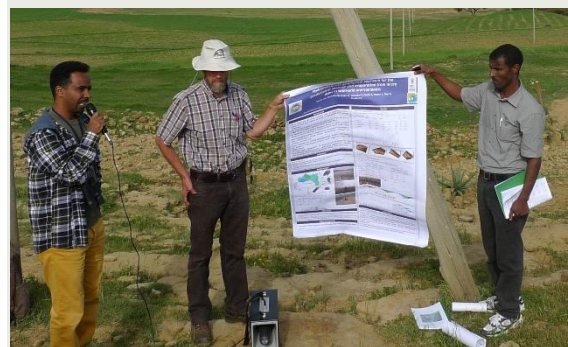
From 2007 to 2017, the IUC partnership with Jimma University focused on issues related to the **livelihood of local rural and urban communities**, for example through projects on child health and nutrition, zoonotic and animal diseases, environmental health and ecology, infectious diseases and soil fertility. Jimma University is a national pioneer in terms of **Community Based Education** benefits and it plays an important role in the Southern part of Ethiopia. Matters of institutional importance such as ICT & library, research coordination and statistical modelling were supported as well.

IUC with Arba Minch University

The ongoing IUC with Arba Minch University (AMU) targets **capacity development** in **teaching** and **research** to empower AMU and its graduates as development actors able to successfully answer the considerable challenges of the region. For example, the partnership contributes to an improvement of agricultural productivity, socio-economic and health status and reversing land degradation which is key to sustaining local livelihoods. Two subprojects on ICT/Library (P1) and livelihood (P2) have an overarching role, while several separate subprojects contribute to sustainable development on their own: health (P3), land degradation (P4), agricultural productivity (P5) and biodiversity (P6).

IUC with Bahir Dar University

The IUC with Bahir Dar University (BDU), titled 'Wisdom at the source of the Blue Nile: Bahir Dar University spearheads Climate Resilient Green Economy research in northwest Ethiopia', aims to contribute to the **Climate Resilient Green Economy** strategy in northwest Ethiopia through research geared towards the solution of bottlenecks related to the environment, water, food security, health and economical and social development. Its subprojects focus on institutional capacity building (P1), land degradation and ecosystem functioning (P2), water resources (P3), productivity and reducing harvest losses (P4), research capacity (P5) and socioeconomic aspects (P6).





National Network on Health: Universities unite

The **Network University Cooperation** programme in Ethiopia is a national-level programme, coordinated by Jimma University and involving Ambo University, Hawassa University and the Debre Zeit campus of Addis Abeba University. The aim is to bring together expertise to strengthen human capacity in health and lead to tangible intervention packages which will **improve the health situation in local communities**.



Focus on sustainable development priorities

TEAM projects and Short Initiatives (SI) projects aim to strengthen the research and education capacity, exploring and building capacity given creating sustainable solutions to local and global development challenges.

Food security and environment

Several projects deal with the link between food security and the sustainable management of natural resources (soil, water,...). The TEAM project with Mekelle University on reconciling fish protein generation and water quality management for example, aims to tackle food shortage in the region of Tigray. A number of water reservoirs are colonized by the small native fish Garra, which are not used as food by the local communities and which cause water quality deterioration. The project wants to achieve a win-win situation combining increased food security and increased water quality in the reservoirs.



Gender

The objective of an ongoing VLIR-UOS JOINT project is to develop a **gender sensitive academic culture** in Ethiopia by increasing the number and improving the skills of young (female) researchers. This is done by organizing **Joint Doctoral Summer Schools**, aimed at both novice male and female promising researchers, belonging to the academic staff, with a consortium of three Ethiopian universities, a Belgian university and a South African university.

Scholarships

Scholarships are powerful tools. It allows Ethiopian students to broaden their horizon, learn to look at problems from the perspective of multiple disciplines and to grow into a skilful researcher. Also Flemish students spend time in an Ethiopian institution and create close ties.



About the Country Reference Frameworks

VLIR-UOS **Country Reference Frameworks** (CRF) 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 within the Joint Strategic Framework of Belgian Non-Governmental Actors active in Ethiopia. On the other hand Belgian HE and Science actors joined in a thematic Joint Strategic Framework (JSF) on HES4SD.

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.

More information:

vliruos.be/ethiopia



Total budget Ethiopia 2003-2021 (in €)

Projects	€ 28.070.297
Individual scholars	€ 19.511.720
Total	€ 47.582.017

Scholars from Ethiopia in the context of VLIR-UOS cooperation (2003-2020)

PhD*	6
Short Term*	324
Study/Master*	497
Total	827



*Only individual scholarships outside project context are shown; a lot of scholarships are embedded in a project context.

In addition to Ethiopian scholars coming to Belgium, 294 Belgian scholars were granted a travel grant (short term) to Ethiopia and another 8 were granted a sandwich Ph.D. scholarship. More information on the scholarships of VLIR-UOS: www.vliruos.be/scholarships.

About VLIR-UOS

VLIR-UOS supports partnerships between universities and university colleges in Flanders (Belgium) and partner countries looking for innovative responses to global and local sustainable development challenges.

VLIR-UOS is part of the Flemish Interuniversity Council and receives funding from the Belgian Development Cooperation. www.vliruos.be

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