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sharing minds, changing lives

Ethiopia

Country Reference Framework

(Updated version of March 2026)

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Country reference framework Ethiopia

Background

In FYP1 the VLIRUOS country strategies presented the strategic niche for future VLIRUOS 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 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 VLIRUOS projects in the country;
(ii) context analysis focused on the Agenda 2030 framework and the higher education sector;
(iii) overview of Belgian 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 and through consultations with both Flemish and local project promotors 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 VLIRUOS 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 VLIRUOS, to be compatible and responsive to evolving/emerging needs and priorities of academic and international actors active in the country/region/sector.

1. VLIRUOS in Ethiopia

1.1. Overview projects & scholarships (2001 – 2025)



Projects 2001-2025		
Type	**Budget (€)**	**Number**
Total	***39.351.242***	***97***
IUC	25.038.329	4
NETWORK	2.562.874	1
TEAM	7.238.057	24
SI	2.312.168	35
JOINT	389.994	3
Crosscutting	1.339.842	25
ITP	469.978	5

Scholarship Type	Finished	Ongoing	Total
ICP	565	31	596
ICPPHD	6		6
ITP/KOI	300		300
REI	1		1
SRS	45		45
Total	917	31	948

Ethiopia is one of the key partner countries of VLIRUOS. From 2001 to 2024 VLIRUOS spent nearly € 40 million in project cooperation 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. Numerous scholars from Ethiopia were supported, the highest number among our ICP students are Ethiopian. In fact , when counting both projects and scholars almost €60 million EUR has been invested in cooperation with Ethiopia.

More detailed information can be found on the VLIRUOS website vliruostats (statistics).

1.2. Ongoing projects and future calls (2022-...)

List of projects in FYP 2022-2027						
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 (VUB)*	*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 (UG)*	*W. Godana*		
Subproject 4		*Reversing land degradation through effective sustainable land management practices in the Abaya-Chamo Lake basins*	*M. Kervyn (VUB)*	*D. Elias*		
Subproject 5		*Improving agricultural productivity in South Ethiopian Rift valley*	*G. Janssens (UG)*	*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*	*V. Draulans (KU Leuven)*	*S. Shaile*		
IUC	2022-2027	Institutional University Cooperation with Bahir Dar University (BDU) – (phase 2)	A. Frankl (UG)	E. Adgo		

Subproject 1		*Transversal Institutional Strengthening Project (TISP)*	*M. Goovaerts (UH)*	*E. Adgo*	Bahir Dar University	2.110.000,00
Subproject 2		*Land resilience*	*A. Frankl (UG)*	*A. Wassie*		
Subproject 3		*Water management and its implications to the hydro-system dynamics in the Tana-Beles area, Upper Blue Nile basin*	*K. Walraevens (UG)*	*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 (UG)*	*M. Kibret*		
Subproject 6		*Socioeconomics, sustainable livelihood and environmental management in northwest Ethiopia*	*S. Van Passel (UA)*	*A. Sewnet*		
Networks	2022-2027	Network Cooperation IQ GEAR coordinated by Jimma University (JU) (phase 2)	B. Levecke (UG)	K. Tushune replaced as of 2024 by Kassahun Eba	Jimma University	1.250.000
Subproject 1		*Higher quality and inclusive postgraduate education*	*F. Vande Velde (UG)*	*T. Gemechu Abessa*		
Subproject 2		*Improved interuniversity and interdisciplinary research collaboration and practice*	*S. Gabriël (UG)*	*Z. Mekonnen*		
Subproject 3		*ICT and Library services*	*R. Gevaert (UG)*	*Y. Teshome*		
Subproject 4		*Network strengthening and stakeholders engagement*	*B. Levecke (UG)*	*K. Tushune*		
TEAM	2019-2023	Zoonosis and pest ecology research for sustainable livelihood at the human-wildlife interface in Omo Basin, Southern Ethiopia	H. Leirs (UA)	A. Megaze	Wolaita Sodo University	53.639

TEAM	2022-2027	Developing an Art Conservation Education and Research program at Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia	N. Ortega Saez (UA)	M. 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	I. Brinkman (UG)	T. Mossissa	Jimma University	299.970,00
TEAM	2024-2028	Eco-friendly postharvest solutions for sustainable income and nutrition security in the Arsi Zone, Ethiopia	M. Vanierschot (KULeuven)	S. Yimenu	Arsi University	299.996,59
TEAM	2024-2028	Harm, silence and shame: Sexual and Gender Based Violence as weapon of war in the armed conflict in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia	S. Murru (KULeuven)	A. Tsegay Beyene	Mekelle University	299.999,82
TEAM	2024-2028	Sustainable solutions to Enhance Soil health and Cowpea and Soybean Productivity in southern Ethiopia (SOSforEthiopia)	S. Goormachtig (UG)	A. Hailu Gunnabo	Arba Minch University	279.991,93
TEAM	2024-2028	CARES: Circular economy based biorefinery concepts for the Agricultural value chain and Resilient Enhancement of Smallholder livelihoods in the coffee growing regions of Ethiopia	L. Diaz Allegue (UA)	A. Jabasingh	Addis Ababa University	290.162,4
TEAM	2024-2028	A multi-pronged approach on transforming WASH and climate resilient agriculture for a sustainable future	M. Chen (VUB)	B. Gebremariam Neka	Arba Minch University	299.989,8
ITP	2022-2025	Development and implementation of an advanced course on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention and control in Ethiopia	J. L. Peñalvo (UA)	A. Addissie	Addis Ababa University	0,00
ITP	2022-2025	ITP Sustainable Land Management	K. Walraevens (UG)	S. 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	B. Levecke (UG)	T. Gemechu	Jimma University	149.993,80
ITP	2024-2026	SELAM project	S. Smis (VUB)and S. Parmentier (KU Leuven)	D. Dagim Wondimu	Arba Minch University (lead coordinator), Addis Abeba Univ., Bahir Dar Univ., Mekelle Univ., Jimma Univ.	Approx. 150.000
SI	2022-2024	Developing a sustainable palliative care network in Ethiopia through co-creation of an interdisciplinary educational programme	S. Janquart (PXL)	E. 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	K. Walraevens (UG)	F. Nigate Abera	Bahir Dar University	69.999,60
SI	2022-2024	The political economy and governance of river sand commodity chains in Ethiopia	B. Suykens (UG)	Si. 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	P. Cools (UG)	A. 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	W. De Malsche (VUB)	Z. 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	F. Amaury (UG)	T. 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	K. Walraevens (UG)	G. Berhane	Mekelle University	69.905,00
SI	2023-2025	Improved diagnostics for visceral leishmaniasis: a prerequisite for elimination	N. Berens-Riha (UA)	T. Degaga	Arba Minch University	69.718,00
SI	2023-2025	A Sustainable Construction for Ethiopia: Integrating Local Resources for Affordable, Resilient and Sustainable Housing	J. Henriques (UH)	J. 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 of Poultry productivity(BHMEP).	J. Paeshuyse (KULeuven)	F. Tadesse Woldemariyam	Addis Ababa University	69.932,40
SI	2025-2027	NeoThiopia: Advancing Neonatal Health Through Affordable Wearable Monitoring and Biomedical Innovation in Ethiopia	B. Tiago da Silva Gomes (VUB)	E. Alemayehu	Jimma University	69135
SI	2025-2027	Enhancing Antimicrobial Stewardship Interventions in Ethiopia: a pivotal strategy to mitigate Anti-Microbial Resistance	V. Foulon (KU Leuven)	H. Haftu Lemma	Mekelle University	69994,86
SI	2025-2027	Bridging Borders in Perinatal Palliative Care: Advancing Collaboration, Awareness, Education, and Policy	I Kortleven (Hogeschool PxL)	E. Hailu Negassa	Jimma University	69841,58

SI	2025-2027	Water Filtration Technologies to Provide Safe Drinking Water: Development of Low Cost Defluoridation	B. Van der Bruggen (KU Leuven)	A. Asgedom	Mekelle University	69999,6
SI	2025-2027	AISLE (AI-Supported Inclusive Learning Environment): Enhancing Academic Outcomes for Students with a Disability through Inclusive Digital Technologies	W. van Petegem (KU Leuven)	A. Teklay Haile	Mekelle University	69990,8
SI	2025-2027	Towards Resilient Beekeeping Practices in Tigray (Ethiopia): Combating the Impact of Honeybee Diseases and Pests and Climate Change	D. de Graaf (UG)	T. Atsbha	Tigray Agricultural Research	69999,22
SI	2025-2027	Assessment of Toxic Trace Element Exposure in Ethiopia: Impacts on Aquatic Ecosystem Quality, Food Safety, and Human Health Risks	G. Du Laing (UG)	D. Abera Denssa; Mathewos Temesgen Kebede	Ethiopian Public Health Institute; Ambo University	69851,1
SI	2025-2027	Establishing a Computational Laboratory for Advanced Materials Science and Engineering Education and Research: A Capacity-Building Collaboration between Mekelle University and Vrije Universiteit Brussel	M. Haile Mamme (VUB)	A. Gebresas Gerezgiher	Mekelle University	69995,2
SI	2025-2027	Partnership for small-scale cultivation and processing of spirulina to fortify complementary food for children in Hawassa, Ethiopia.	D. Mangelings (VUB)	S. Shenkutie	Hawassa University	69909,4
SI	2025-2027	Enhancing Women's Health and Birth Outcomes in Tigray: Tackling malnutrition through sustainable balanced nutrition.	K. Van Ael (TM Kempen)	G. Buruh	Mekelle University	69974,3
SI	2025-2027	Solaqua: Low-Cost, Solar-Powered Membrane System for Point-of-Use Fluoride Removal: A Sustainable Solution for Drinking Water in Arid Regions, Ethiopia	I Vankelecom (KUL)	S. Kassahun	Addis Ababa Institute of Technology	69971

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

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

[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

According to the third Voluntary National Review (VNR 2025), Ethiopia has pursued an integrated and resilient development path—guided by the Ten-Year Development Plan (2021–2030). This long-term ambition operationalized through successive Medium-Term Development Plans, including Home grown economic reforms. It sets out strategic priorities to accelerate progress over the remaining years of the 2030 Agenda.

Ethiopia has made notable strides in reducing poverty, ensuring food security, providing inclusive and affordable health and education services, and Gender equality.

Building an Inclusive and Competitive Economy- Ethiopia's economy grew at an average rate of 7.6% from 2016/17–2023/24. The Homegrown Economic Reform programs continue to address macro-economic imbalances, structural constraints, improve the investment climate, increase productivity and enhanced public service delivery. Among its widely acclaimed successes, the National Wheat Initiative enabled the country to completely substitute wheat imports by 2021/22. Electricity access has tripled in a decade, while clean water coverage reached 70%. Urban transformation under the Corridor Development Program has transformed quality of life at a remarkable pace through upgrading slums and informal settlements.

Green Transition and Building Resilience-Ethiopia has emerged as a regional leader in climate action. Since 2019, the Green Legacy Initiative has planted over 40 billion seedlings, restoring degraded landscapes.

More than 95% of Ethiopia's electricity generation comes from renewables. The 2023 ban on fuel vehicle imports underscores Ethiopia's commitment to shift toward clean, green and sustainable mobility. Investments in early warning systems, climate-smart agriculture, and watershed management have bolstered resilience. However, limited adaptation financing continues to constrain local action.

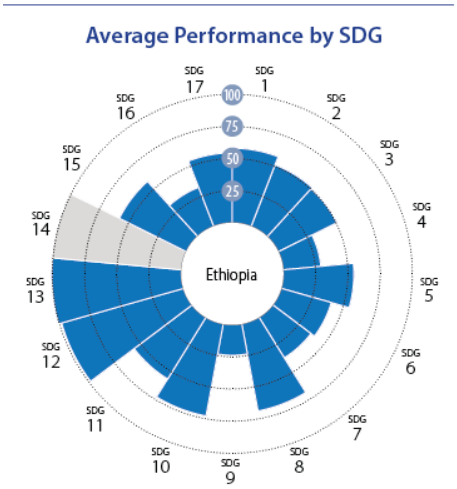
The Pretoria Agreement marked a critical step in ending the two-year conflict in northern Ethiopia, reflecting a commitment to peaceful resolution. As part of building sustainable peace, the National Dialogue Commission is providing structured frameworks to reach national consensus.

Domestic resource mobilization has been strengthened and internationally, Ethiopia's engagement has also deepened by joining BRICS, beyond the usual bilateral and multilateral engagements.

Looking Ahead, Ethiopia's journey toward the 2030 Agenda reflects resilient leadership, reform-oriented governance, and a commitment to inclusive development. People-centered policymaking has driven tangible progress.

Taking into account the global aspect of the SDGs, the sustainable development report assesses where each country stands with regard to achieving the SDGs. The Ethiopia Country Profile shows that the majority of goals is facing significant challenges. Ethiopia ranks 145 out of 167 countries included in the report.





As an umbrella organisation that works with calls for proposals, VLIRUOS 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 VLIRUOS can be found in a large variety of sectors. In line with its major intervention area, VLIRUOS positions itself within the education sector, especially focused on higher education, research and innovation (SDG 4 and 9). However, through its interventions, VLIRUOS intervenes in different sectors as well. VLIRUOS 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 VLIRUOS in Ethiopia covered mainly, apart from SDG 4 and 9, *SDGs 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 15 and 16*. Top sectors for VLIRUOS 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.

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

2.2. Higher education landscape in Ethiopia

As of late 2025 the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE) has effectively consolidated higher education and general education under one umbrella, moving away from a separate Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The country currently has 46 public and 5 private universities, 39 CTEs distributed across and numerous (>1500) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). All these institutions fall under the responsibility of the State Minister for Higher Education Development.

Ethiopia's ongoing social, economic, and political reforms depend strongly on the availability of a skilled workforce. Higher education institutions are central to producing competent professionals to support these reforms, striving to improve quality and relevance through updated curricula, strengthening digital and ICT capacity, reforming university governance, expanding TVET access, and promoting public–private partnerships to better align education, research, and labour market needs.

Despite Ethiopia's advances in education, critical challenges remain. Persistent regional and urban–rural disparities, low teaching-learning quality, and the impacts of recent crises, including armed conflict, have disrupted gains, increased dropout rates, and led to significant losses in educational infrastructure. Only 8.4% of secondary school students passed the university entrance examinations in 2024. The ongoing regional conflicts and displacement continue to disrupt basic education, further shrinking the future cohort of prospective university students.

Quality and relevance also remain core challenges in tertiary education. Studies highlight misalignment between university curricula and labour market needs, reliance on traditional lecture-based teaching, and insufficient digital and physical infrastructure. Many institutions also face limited teacher development opportunities, struggling to produce research at competitive levels, and weak internal quality assurance and governance systems. All Ethiopian higher education institutions also face a critical shortage of qualified academic staff, as only 13% of university teachers hold PhDs—far below the national 30% target—with female PhD holders comprising just 6.9% of academic staff. In response to these challenges, the Ministry is currently implementing major reforms to consolidate university programs and align them with workforce needs. The Ministry has recently started the process off:

- Differentiating universities into 4 categories: research universities, comprehensive universities, universities of applied sciences, science and technology universities and universities of education.
- Merging 147 university programs into 54.
- Establishing a mandatory teaching practice in which university students will be required to engage in a year-long teaching practice after their third year, aiming to bridge the gap in secondary school teacher shortages.
- Digitalization and reform by pushing the Digital Education Strategy and Implementation Plan for Ethiopia 2023-2028 (DESIPE).
- Introducing the National Graduate Admission Test (NGAT) as centralized screening mechanism to standardize postgraduate admissions, assessing general aptitude, reasoning skills, and English proficiency.
- Shifting from enrolment- and history-based university funding to performance-based budget allocations, incentivizing academic quality, research performance, and institutional efficiency through newly signed performance agreements with public universities.
- Shifting to a student choice enrolment model, where students select preferred universities rather than automatic placement.
- Providing more university autonomy to boost performance, linking funding to teaching, research, and governance outcomes.

Despite the intended goals, stakeholders warn of significant unintended consequences of the ongoing reforms. The new selection and entry exam system raises concerns about equity, labour-market relevance,

and institutional sustainability, as it may disadvantage students from under-resourced backgrounds, prioritize exam performance over competencies, and strain universities with limited capacity to compete for students. Centralized NGAT/GAT reforms seek to standardize admissions but risk reinforcing inequities (risk favouring students with stronger test preparation resources), insufficiently capturing research readiness, and straining university administrative capacity as institutions balance autonomy with centralized requirements.

Looking at international rankings like Webometrics, two Ethiopian universities fall within the top 2000 ranking. These are Addis Ababa University (1123rd place) and the University of Gondar (1855th place). They are followed by three partner universities of VLIRUOS, i.e. Jimma University, Bahir Dar University, and Mekelle University.

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.

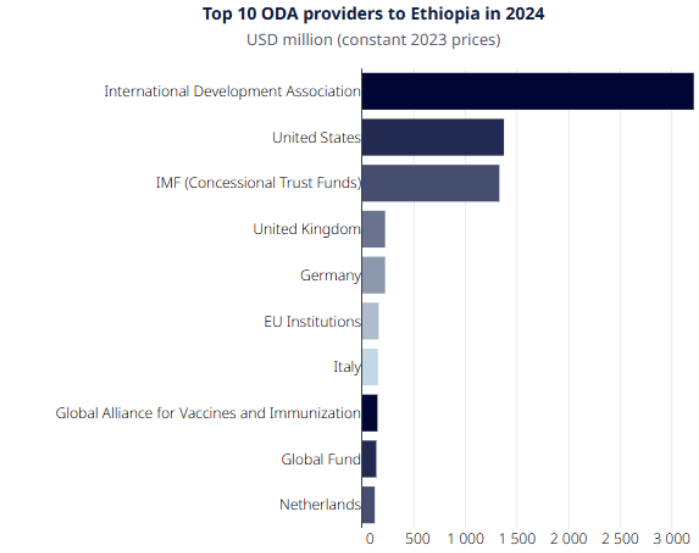
According to the third Voluntary National Review (VNR 2025) and the Development Plan (2021–2030), Ethiopia has pursued an integrated and resilient development path by undertaking substantial reforms to advance peace, reconciliation, and inclusive governance. The ongoing public service and administration reforms are enhancing transparency and efficient service delivery.

Targeted social protection programs such as the PSNP now support 9.7 million people both in rural and urban areas. Community-based health insurance covers 53 million people, steadily advancing toward universal coverage. To ensure resilience and sustained protection, the revised 2024 Disaster Risk Management Policy enhances preparedness and mitigates vulnerability among poor and marginalized groups. Initiatives such as school feeding and the National Nutrition Program have contributed to food security, education outcomes, and child development. Gender equality has improved through legal reforms, targeted investment, and increased access to education.

2.4. Multistakeholderpartnership - Stakeholder analysis

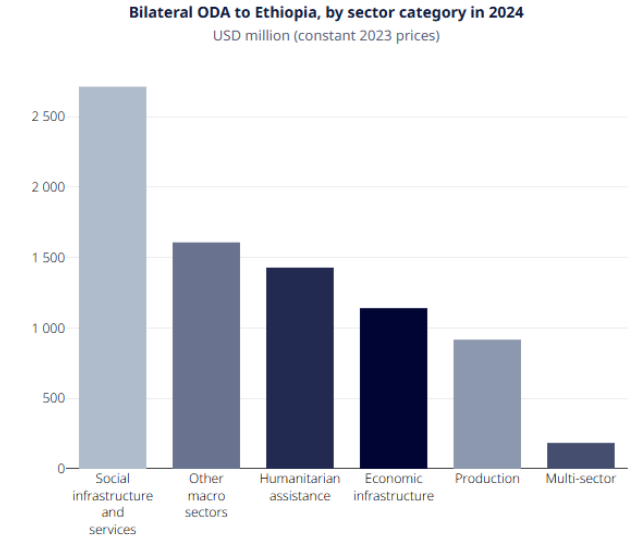
The complexity, scale, and interconnectedness of the current societal challenges that the SDG framework is seeking to address, requires a concerted effort of a wide variety of different stakeholders. As such, the principle of multistakeholderpartnership – which promotes cooperation and partnerships at 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.

Looking at the international partners of Ethiopia, the International Development Association was the main donor of gross official development aid (ODA) in 2024. With the withdrawal of USAID funds since the Trump administration took over in 2025, this situation is expected to change in the following years.



Sources: OECD (2025) , Aid (ODA) disbursements to countries and regions [DAC2a]

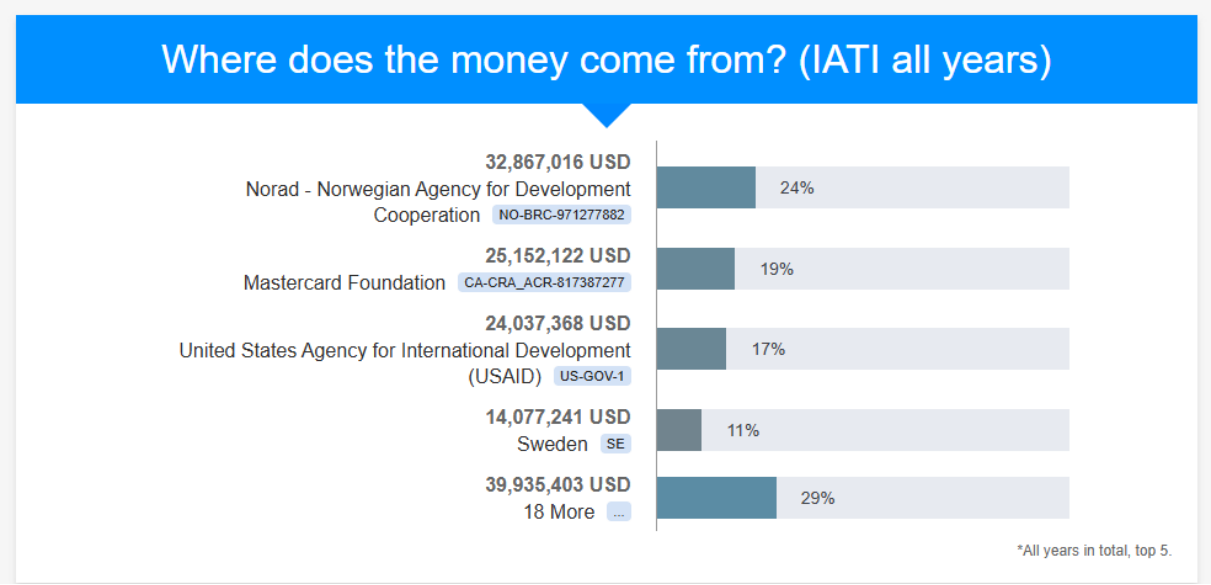
Top sectors for bilateral ODA were social infrastructure and services.



Sources: OECD (2025) , CRS: Creditor Reporting System (flows)

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 D-Portal, NORAD is the main country donor in the higher education sector. Although the considerable contribution of VLIRUOS, it is not listed here because most projects are categorised under multiple sectors and not limited to the HE sector.



Source: http://d-portal.org/ctrack.html?country_code=RW&sector_code=11420#view=main

VLIRUOS 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 VLIRUOS 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 VLIRUOS 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 VLIRUOS selection commissions and follows-up on the VLIRUOS 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 VLIRUOS-projects in Ethiopia will be important

	stakeholders in connecting VLIRUOS 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	VLIRUOS, 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 VLIRUOS are present.
Belgian Actors of the Non-governmental Cooperation	VLIRUOS 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.
Belgian bilateral cooperation (BIO & Enabel)	Since more than 10 years, Ethiopia is no longer a partner country of Belgian bilateral 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.
State owned/Private sector	To ensure that the resource-led sustainable industrialization process is both sustainable and beneficial, the government will work closely with the **private sector**. This includes developing both the private sector and human

	capital to build an educated, skillful, and productive labor force to drive industrialization.
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. According to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, serious rights abuses continued in conflict-affected areas, such as in the Tigray and Oromia regions. Journalists, civil society organizations, and outspoken public figures faced an increasingly hostile and restrictive reporting environment. Impunity remained the norm. Government accountability efforts for past and ongoing abuses, including during the conflict in northern Ethiopia, have been inadequate and lacked transparency and independent oversight.

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

3.1. VLIRUOS approaches to synergy and complementarity

Drawing upon their longstanding common history, VLIRUOS, 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[2] 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 cooperation (Enabel) in Ethiopia

Belgium has no bilateral or governmental cooperation with Ethiopia. However, a Joint Strategic Framework (JSF) for 2027-2031 Ethiopia was developed with four recognised Belgian non-governmental actors (ANGCs): Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM), VLIRUOS, APOPO and Humundi.

A consultation with Enabel helped establish useful connections and created space to further explore where potential synergies may exist. While joint commitments can be defined at a later stage, the exchange already increased mutual awareness of ongoing and planned work in Ethiopia. It may also lay the groundwork for future alignment, including with multilateral institutions based in the Ethiopian capital.

[2] 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 Ethiopia

3.3.1. Thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science

Together with ARES and ITM, VLIRUOS forms a thematic joint strategic framework on higher education and science for sustainable development (JSF HES4SD): hes4sd.be

However, ARES has no project activities in Ethiopia, although it sees Ethiopia as a potential future project country.

Collaboration with the geographic JSF of Ethiopia will be facilitated by systematically sharing information on projects and grants, by allowing Belgian ANGC to submit their needs in applied research or training, and by encouraging multi-stakeholder partnerships through competitive calls for proposals (VLIRUOS) or partnerships (ITM).

3.3.2. Ethiopia Joint Strategic Framework

The Joint Strategic Framework (JSF) for 2027-2031 Ethiopia was developed through a collaborative process among four recognised Belgian non-governmental actors (ANGCs): Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM), VLIRUOS, APOPO and Humundi. Together, they formulated a coherent strategy for 2027-2031 with the following 3 strategic goals.

	Description	Contribution to	Contribution by
JSG 1	Strengthen the construction of sustainable and climate resilient food systems that guarantee the right to healthy, sustainable and sufficient food for all.	SDG2: Zero Hunger SDG 5: Gender Equality SDG12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Humundi VLIRUOS
JSG 2	Enhance early prevention, identification and management of major infectious and poverty related health challenges by expanding research capacity, improving service delivery, and promoting evidence-based practices across the health system.	SDG3: Good Health and Wellbeing	APOPO ITM VLIRUOS
JSG 3	Strengthen higher-education and research institutions as drivers of human capacity development, equity and innovation.	SDG16: Peace, justice and strong institutions SDG 4: Education SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	VLIRUOS ITM *(direct link to thematic JSF HES4SD)*

3.3.3. Other Thematic Joint Strategic Frameworks

Besides collaboration with the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science, there will also be collaboration with the thematic JSF of Decent Work.

This JSF subscribes to the general goal of the thematic JSF Decent Work "*promoting decent work for a sustainable, fair, solidarity-based and inclusive development: creating jobs, guaranteeing labour rights, expanding social protection and promoting social dialogue for all*", and is committed - in the Ethiopian country context – to provide specific visibility to the Decent Work agenda and its 4 pillars.

The initiators of the JSF HES4SD identify additional linkages with the thematic JSF on Decent Work, both at thematic and country level:

- Harnessing academic expertise to drive evidence-based Decent Work policies;
- Expanding inclusive skills and aligning education with evolving labour market needs;
- Championing fair and inclusive workplaces within Higher Education Institutions.