



Ethiopia

Ethiopia, Africa's [second-most populous country](#), has made significant strides in economic reforms and infrastructure development. About 66% of the country's population relies on agriculture for employment, and the sector contributes to roughly 34% of Ethiopia's GDP. However, agricultural productivity remains low, hindered by limited access to inputs, technology, finance, and extension services. Climate-related shocks, including recurring drought and flooding, further compound these issues and contribute to food insecurity and limited access to basic services. Rates of unemployment are persistently high, especially among youth and women.

SNV has been working with the Government of Ethiopia since 1974, offering strategic support in implementing its development priorities. Over the past five years, SNV's programmes in the agri-food, energy, and water sectors have impacted more than 4.26 million people in the country. These initiatives have contributed to improvement in livelihoods, increased market access, and enhanced the availability of safe and reliable basic services such as water and energy, particularly for vulnerable communities.

All efforts follow a systems approach that connects farmers, entrepreneurs, and service providers to markets and finance, and works with local governments to strengthen institutional capacity. SNV prioritises climate resilience, youth employment, and women's inclusion—in alignment with the SDGs and Ethiopia's Ten-Year Development Plan.



Over 3.1M people

with improved food security and nutrition through stronger farming systems and market linkages (2019-2025)



36K biogas digesters

constructed across nine regions, improving energy access and reducing emissions (2017-2025)



Over 555K youth

gained meaningful employment, with most opportunities going to young women (2017-2025)



Nearly 560K people

have gained from improved access to expanded clean water supplies and strengthened WASH systems (2018-2023)



Responding to the climate crisis

Ethiopia is at a critical point in its climate journey. With over 95% of crop production dependent on increasingly unpredictable seasonal rainfall, agriculture and rural livelihoods remain highly vulnerable to climate shocks. Land degradation, declining soil fertility, and limited access to renewable energy further constrain sustainable growth.

Despite these challenges, momentum for climate action is building. The government is advancing climate-smart agriculture and agro-ecology through national strategies, such as the Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy, which targets net-zero emissions by 2050. In support of this, SNV promotes market-based, regenerative systems that strengthen productivity, resilience, and ecosystem restoration.

Horti-LIFE III | Seven regions | 2023-29 | €53.67M

Ethiopia generated US\$565M (approximately €489M) in [exports](#) in 2024, and the development of the horticulture sector can further sustain this growth momentum. However, smallholder farmers face mounting stress from declining soil fertility, reliance on rain-fed agriculture, and other climate shocks. The Developing Ethiopia's horticulture sector III (Horti-LIFE III) initiative addresses these challenges by institutionalising Farmers' Field Schools (FFS) within the country's national extension system, where farmers can learn water-efficient irrigation, soil health restoration, and reduce chemical dependence. The initiative strengthens seed systems, professionalises nurseries, and promotes bio-fertilisers and biocontrols that cut emissions and boost soil fertility. By linking farmers to finance and renewable energy for irrigation and cold storage, Horti-Life III builds adaptive capacity and enhances food, water, and income security.

Partners: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ethiopia (EKN), SNV, and Ministry of Agriculture

NBPE+ | Eight regions | 2017-24 | €22.85M

The NBPE+ Biogas Dissemination Scale-Up Programme aimed to improve rural livelihoods and promote sustainable practices by encouraging the adoption of biodigesters and providing clean energy and organic fertiliser to farming communities. The programme impacted more than 186,000 rural residents and facilitated the installation of 25,461 biodigesters. These efforts have helped save 96,800 tonnes of firewood and reduced CO₂-equivalent emissions annually by 107,433 tonnes. In addition, it has generated 1,782 jobs in the biogas sector and enhanced over 140,000 hectares of land by using bio-slurry as an organic fertiliser, supporting both climate action and sustainable agriculture.

Partners: EU, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, SNV, and Ethiopian Clean Cooking Association (ECCA)

SEE Clean Cooking-HTCC | Addis Ababa | 2023-25 | €1M

Across the country, 96% of households still [rely on biomass](#), exposing many residents to deadly indoor air pollution. Partnering with and investing in youth- and women-led enterprises, the Strengthening Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Clean Cooking (SEE Clean Cooking-HTCC) programme provided technical assistance, access to finance, and market linkages, enabling local businesses to scale up the production and distribution of clean cookstoves and fuels. It introduced households to clean-cooking alternatives and distributed 20,000 higher-tier stoves, reaching 100,000 people. By reducing dependence on traditional biomass fuels, projections suggest a 107,000-tonne reduction in CO₂ emissions annually. This market-based approach supported efforts to reduce deforestation, cut carbon emissions, and contributed to significant health benefits and the creation of green jobs.

Partners: EU, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, SNV, and ECCA

Accelerating inclusive development

Ethiopia's journey towards inclusive development faces persistent challenges, including youth unemployment, gender gaps in key sectors, and low agricultural productivity. Although 60-65% of the [workforce](#) is engaged in agriculture, limited access to inputs, finance, and technology continues to constrain growth—disproportionately affecting women, young people, and rural communities.

To address these barriers, the government has earmarked a budget of nearly ETB 2 trillion (€10.86B) for [2025-26](#) for infrastructure, productivity, and job creation. Reforms such as the new Startup Proclamation further aim to catalyse innovation and digital transformation across sectors. SNV partners with government, businesses, and communities to strengthen the agency of groups at the margins and structurally open opportunities for them to engage in markets and contribute to leadership and decision-making processes.

BRIDGE+ | Ten regions | 2023-29 | €38.65M

Ethiopia's dairy sector faces several roadblocks, including low productivity (with an average milk [yield per cow](#) of under two litres per day in 2025), limited access to quality feed and veterinary services, and weak market linkages. The BRIDGE+ programme employs an inclusive business model to revitalise this sector by connecting smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, to profitable markets. So far, it has impacted over 112,000 farmers, with 40% of participants being women and 23% owning enterprises. BRIDGE+ has strengthened extension services, improved food safety systems, and expanded private sector partnerships. Milk yields for 70% of farmer partners have increased, boosting incomes. Eighty-two dairy cooperatives have been strengthened, with more women leading cooperatives and participating in decision-making to shape Ethiopia's dairy future.

Partners: EKN, Ministry of Agriculture, SNV, Agriterra, and WUR

“When I joined the programme, I had no clear direction. Through the training and support, I gained confidence and started my own poultry business. Today, I not only earn an income, but I also employ others. RAYEE changed my life and gave me hope for the future.”

Gebrehiwot Fentabil
34-year-old entrepreneur
Dessie, Amhara Region



LIWAY | Addis Ababa | 2017-26 | €23.2M

Women and youth still face considerable hurdles to [labour market](#) entry, with youth unemployment reaching 27% and women holding a 16 percentage point (pp) lower share of overall employment than men. To address this, the LIWAY programme aims to expand economic opportunities for 257,000 women and youth by strengthening skills and labour systems and boosting micro and small enterprise (MSE) market engagement. To date, LIWAY has helped remove barriers to finance, technology, and skills training, enabling more than 276,509 people to secure the means to improve their livelihoods. By increasing the presence of young people and women in the labour market, SNV and its partners contribute to closing the gender gap in the labour market.

Partners: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, SNV, Mercy Corps, Ministry of Labour and Skills

RAYEE II | Seven regions | 2025-30 | €97.7M

The Realising Aspiration of Youth in Ethiopia through Employment II (RAYEE II) programme builds on the success of its predecessor by expanding coverage to 1 million youth across 200 woredas by 2030. SNV collaborates with local partners to secure dignified employment for 800,000 rural young women through five strategic components: skills to grow, empowering young women, facilitating finance, markets that work, and an enabled environment. This initiative follows three pathways: incubating new businesses (creating 320,000 jobs), accelerating existing enterprises (280,000 jobs), and placing women within lead firms (200,000 jobs) across the poultry, dairy, and horticulture value chains. In its first phase (2020-25) and with an €18.85M budget, RAYEE operated in 110 woredas, created over 39,000 MSEs, and secured 278,760 jobs, 72% of which went to women.

Partners: Mastercard Foundation, Ministry of Labour and Skills, Ministry of Agriculture, SNV, Professional Alliance for Development, Development Expertise Centre, New Millennium Women Empowerment Organisation, and International Livestock Institute

Building more resilient systems

Ethiopia continues to strengthen its governance and institutional frameworks as part of its broader development agenda. While coordination and capacity remain areas for ongoing improvement, efforts are underway to enhance service delivery and policy implementation. The government has increased national budget allocation for institutional development and is advancing digital transformation to improve transparency and efficiency. Decentralisation initiatives and partnerships are fostering more inclusive governance. With its partners, SNV collaborates with the government to co-create resilient, robust foundations that align with national interests and local government development priorities.

TLI | Multi-country | 2021-2025 | €4.8M

The Transformative Land Investment (TLI) initiative, implemented across Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, improved land-based investment governance to ensure fair access to resources, ecosystem protection, and rural resilience. It applied the principles of Responsible Agricultural Investment and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, reducing land conflicts, securing tenure rights, and fostering biodiversity-friendly, agro-ecological production. These approaches have since been integrated into national land and agricultural policies, while multi-stakeholder platforms now influence governance and investment decisions. The programme offered investors technical support, advanced Global GAP certification, finalised contract farming directives, and delivered training on agro-ecology, Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and gender and social inclusion. Through these efforts, TLI connected local reforms with broader sustainability goals focused on livelihoods and resilience building.

Partners: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, SNV, and RECOFTC

TLI and ILMWA, 2020-25



€4.8 million allocated to strengthen governance for responsible land-based investments

65,000 people reached by improved water services through strengthened governance

162,562 people gained access to a reliable supply of clean water

100% household sanitation coverage achieved in the Kunzila watershed

ILMWA | Kunzila | 2020-2027 | €8.2M

The Integrated Landscape Management and WASH (ILMWA) programme addresses weak water governance and fragmented WASH service delivery in Ethiopia, where limited accountability and planning hinder access to services. By enhancing decentralised systems and building capacity at regional and local levels, the initiative has impacted over 65,000 people. It has helped strengthen institutional frameworks, enhance participatory decision-making, and improve resource management. These efforts foster sustainable WASH services and resilience in vulnerable communities, and in the longer term, empower local actors and contribute to social equity.

Partners: EKN, Regional Water Bureaus, and SNV

SNV is a global development partner deeply rooted in the African and Asian countries where we operate. With 60 years of experience and a team of approximately 1,600 people, we strengthen capacities and catalyse partnerships that transform agri-food, energy and water systems. Working on the core themes of gender equality and social inclusion, climate adaptation and mitigation, and strong institutions and effective governance, we tailor our approaches to different contexts to achieve large-scale impact and create sustainable and more equitable lives for all.

Contact SNV in Ethiopia

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that matters