ANALYSIS OF V4 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA

Kacper Kosowicz
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Introduction

Ethiopia has one of the fastest growing economies in Africa, recording an average GDP growth around 8.5 percent annually for the last three years. Despite this, development challenges are still prevalent as Ethiopia is recognized as the least-developed country according to the United Nations (UN) classification. Also, in 2011 it was ranked 174th out of 187th countries in the Human Development Index. Simultaneously, for many years Ethiopia has been one of the world’s largest recipient countries of Official Development Assistance (ODA). It is the leading recipient country on the African continent and the second, after Afghanistan, in the whole world. However, ODA in per capita terms (average $43, between 2008-2010) is not significant enough in order to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by Ethiopia.

In recent years all four nations from the Visegrád Group (V4) have provided ODA to Ethiopia. The Czech Republic, for instance, has intensified its development assistance since the beginning of 2001. Poland did the same after 2006. The first mentioned country justifies its engagement in Ethiopia as a natural choice regarding both the historical ties and valuable opportunities for Czech NGOs and business to help Ethiopia with full realization of MDGs, especially taking into account the huge EU involvement there. These reasons can be common for all V4 countries.

A place of Ethiopia in development cooperation policy of V4 countries

Nevertheless, strategic documents show that Ethiopia is treated differently by each V4 country. Beginning with the Czech Republic, Ethiopia is recognized as a program country in the Strategy for 2010-2017, while Poland prioritizes the whole Eastern African region, which, according to the Polish documents, consists of eight countries, including Ethiopia. In the Medium Term Strategy for ODA 2009-2013, the Slovak Republic has approved Ethiopia as one of the so-called project countries, however, since 2011 we have observed the process of reducing priority countries by the Slovak Republic in order to increase aid effectiveness. In the National Programme of the Slovak ODA for 2011 and 2012 only two sub-Saharan countries (Kenya and South Sudan) are stated. Hungary has undergone a similar tendency, and in consequence, this country will narrow its priority partners in Africa.
V4 Aid in Ethiopia in numbers

In the graph above, described differences can be seen in the quantitative analysis of ODA of V4 countries to Ethiopia. Aggregated data shows that they provided around $3 million within two years, $1.43 million in 2009, and $1.51 million in 2010. The most striking feature is the fact that the Czech Republic was responsible for around 77 per cent ($2.25 million) of total ODA provided by V4 countries. Poland and Hungary constituted 13 and 9 per cent, respectively. The Slovak Republic, the last country from the Group, delivered only 2 per cent. Furthermore, it is worth noting that ODA of Visegrád states to Ethiopia amounted to 7 per cent of their total foreign aid dedicated to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2009 and 11 per cent in 2010. In comparison to other donors, the amount of V4 countries ODA, even in aggregate term, is limited since it constitutes 0.04 per cent of total ODA to Ethiopia.

Figure 1: ODA of V4 countries to Ethiopia 2009-2010 (million of USD)

Figure 2: ODA provided by V4 countries to Ethiopia in comparison with total ODA of V4 countries to SSA, 2009-2010 (millions of dollars)
V4 Projects in Ethiopia

Since 2001 the Czech Republic has provided aid in the areas of education, hydrogeology, and water management as well as aid to the protection of soil resources and social development. In 2010 the Czech Republic started implementing six projects on a multi-annual basis. Two of them were located in the education sector, one in health, and another one involving environmental protection. The last two focused on water supply and sanitation as well as the social sector. Currently, there are thirteen Czech development projects in Ethiopia. The largest share (5) is implemented in the sector of agriculture, forestry, and fishery. There are also two projects in the water supply and sanitation sector, and one in disaster prevention and preparedness. Current sectorial composition of Czech ODA in Ethiopia also consists of sectors such as health (1 project), education (2 projects), environmental (1 project), and social (1 project). It is worth remembering that besides official aid there are Czech projects funded by non-governmental donors in Ethiopia from private resources. People in Need is a vivid illustration of this phenomenon. Furthermore, Czech NGOs have carried out projects in Ethiopia that have been funded by institutional donors like, for instance, the European Commission or the United Nations.

In the last three years, Hungarian aid to Ethiopia was concentrated on the education sector, mostly taking the form of scholarships and exchange of teachers. The biggest project in that matter concerned the FAO scholarship programme. Hungary also financed the building of a water pump and irrigation system that was finalized, but never officially opened. The Hungarian MFA is planning to do it in the very near future.

During the entire 2009-2011 period, there was only one approved ODA project in Ethiopia implemented by the Slovak Republic. Its aim was to build a pediatric ambulance for the poor families in the city of Debre Zeit (Addis Ababa region). Apart from ODA there are other projects supported by Slovakian NGOs (eRko, Integra Foundation) and academic institutions (St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Science). They have financial resources from public collections and other donors.

Poland put a strong focus on education, environmental, and health sectors by implementing four, three, and two projects, respectively, between 2009-2011. As far as the environmental sector is concerned, almost all aid activities were devoted to eco-hydrological issues, which seem to be the so-called flagship theme of Polish aid to Ethiopia. According to the Polish Multiannual Aid Programme, Poland can provide foreign assistance in East Africa within the following sectors: education, environmental protection, health, and ‘professional and social activation’.

Table 1: Distribution of ODA by all V4 countries Across Sectors in Ethiopia (amount of projects)

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1 Because of the lack of appropriate data it is hard to compare the sectorial priorities of ODA of V4 countries in Ethiopia between different years. That is why we cannot consider all V4 countries together in collective data, in this respect.
Geographical areas

The Czech Republic has been providing its ODA mainly in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region (“SNNPR”). It does not coincide with the regions in which Poland has been the most active. Majority of its projects were carried out in Oromiya region, including following zones: North Shewa, West Shewa, East Shewa, Arsi and Addis Ababa. Slovak projects are present in Debre Zeit, Addis Ababa, Arsi, Adigart and Kibere Mengist. It should be emphasized that striving for optimization and effectiveness of ODA provided to Ethiopia, requires projects focused on a certain region in which the particular country has already had an experience. The size and ethnic diversity of Ethiopia make the issues even more complex because if even one succeeds in implementing an aid project in one zone, it does not mean that it can be transmitted easily to another one.

Common programming

The significant differences between foreign assistance systems in each V4 country raise the fundamental question about prospective cooperation between them in Ethiopia. We could consider both common programming and common implementation. Taking into consideration the fact that only the Czech Republic has a programmatic approach toward Ethiopia, including an agreed and signed document with the Ethiopian Government, the first option is not very likely to be carried out in the near future. Vast majority of Polish aid is provided by the Embassy and, in spite of the existence of the multiannual development cooperation programme, most of the projects are random. Furthermore, even attempts of Italy, Ireland and Austria at common programming in Ethiopia have been met with defeat. Realistically, every V4 country has a different timeframe for preparation and implementation of their strategic documents, including National Official Development Assistance Programme. Moreover, what has already been stressed, Hungary and the Slovak Republic have decided to narrow their priority countries and therefore the future position of Ethiopia in their development cooperation framework is still unknown.

What is more, Poland is not ready to pool funds, because of limited resources and it is doubtful that Poland would react enthusiastically to implement the same timeframe of planning, implementing, and evaluation as well as common methods of providing aid. Therefore, currently common programming of ODA of V4 countries is highly unlikely in Ethiopia.

Common implementation

Most of the Czech Republic’s projects in Ethiopia are managed by the Czech Development Agency and implemented by Czech NGOs and academic institutions whereas 70 per cent of the Polish projects in the last five years were implemented by the Embassy of Poland in Addis Ababa as small-scale projects. It can be assumed that this situation will not change in the near future. Three out of four Visegard countries have Embassies in Ethiopia and they could jointly finance projects via small grant funds (microgrants). However, there is a little evidence for to date activity of Slovakian Embassy in this particular field. On the contrary, the Czech Republic and Poland have been providing small grant projects for a long time. Also, it is important to note that the Hungarian Embassy accredited to Ethiopia is located in Nairobi.

Although Hungary has not undertaken small-scale projects via its Embassy, it’s worth recognizing that other Hungarian actors are experienced in this type of aid. Hungarian Interchurch Aid, for instance, has has had small water projects in the Southern Part of Ethiopia. It could be a so-called point of departure for Hungary if they decided to take up the small grant funds aid via official channels.

There could be either the scenario in which the funds from the embassies would be pooled or the opposite one, in which V4 countries would be responsible for a particular segment of the project, coordinated by a particular Embassy. There are two main advantages of this joint-action that should be pointed out. Firstly, it would allow the mobilization of more significant funds and the ability to conduct projects on a larger scale. Secondly, it would be a good foundation for a more comprehensive and prospective cooperation between NGOs and academic institutions from the V4 countries. The challenging aspect of pooling funds by Visegard countries is to answer questions like: which member country would play the leading role in this process?; on which basis would pooled funds be used?; or even more general- on which stage should funds be pooled?
**Hydrology as potential common denominator?**

Generally speaking, the most prominent aid activity of three out of four Visegard countries is related to hydro-geological studies. The Czech Republic and Poland have been working on this thematic area in Ethiopia for many years. The first-mentioned, has a lot of experience in hydro-geological mapping of various regions in Ethiopia, especially in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region (‘SNNPR’). For instance, in 2010, the Czech Republic carried out an ODA project aimed at implementation of anti-erosion measures in the Awassa Lake area. Because of the good outcomes of these projects, the Czech Republic decided to prolong its engagement in the hydrology sector. Furthermore, between 2010 and 2012, the project of training workers of Geological Service of Ethiopia (GSE) in terms of engineering geology and hydrogeology was financed by the Czech Development Agency. It was focused on the compilation, editing, presentation, and practical interpretation of maps of groundwater resources and natural hazards. During the last decade, the Czech Republic built a long standing relationship with the Ethiopian Ministry of Water and specialized in the broad based water sector in Ethiopia. For next two years, starting from 2012, it will be implementing the project of building the capacity in the field of geology, geological risk evaluation, and hydrogeology. It is expected that this will contribute to the sustainable use of water.

Four years ago, the Embassy of Poland in cooperation with the European Regional Centre for Ecohydrology (ERCE) from Lodz (Poland) inaugurated the eco-hydrology project in Ethiopia. Since then it has been prolonged every year, except for 2011. To this date, two representatives of the Ethiopian water sector have been trained in ERCE in Poland, and another one started his PhD studies in Poland. Moreover, Polish specialists have done the hydrographic map of Gumera River and eutrophication analysis of Lake Tana. They have also launched the pilot program concerning implementation of eco-hydrological methods in Asella. In 2012, the hydrological project is going to be the one that will receive the largest funds from Polish aid in Ethiopia. It must be emphasized that Poland got full support and cooperation of the Ethiopian Ministry of Water Resources during the implementation of the project. There is a strong belief within the Embassy of Poland that this sector combined with environmental protection would be the most effective for both Poland and Ethiopia.

Hungary, in addition, was involved in the water sector in Ethiopia. It completed its project of water and irrigation system at the beginning of 2010. Hungary was even named in the Country Strategy Paper 2008-2013, signed by Ethiopia and EU, as the responsible side for the Joint Response in water related issues. According to this document Hungary should ‘continue to build on the gains made in hydro-geological studies, the design and implementation of a potable water supply scheme, and pressurized irrigation system’. However, after changes within priority countries made by Hungary, it is unlikely it will resume their water projects in Ethiopia. At the same time, Hungary has its know-how and experience in the hydrological sector in Ethiopia, which should be employed and shared with other V4 countries.

Slovakia (especially Slovak private companies) has been active in water management projects, mostly in the Balkan Peninsula, but also in Sudan, Mozambique, and Kenya. Obviously, there are huge differences between each country in the matter that determines the application of Slovak to-date methods, patterns, and experience. However, if Slovakia decided to carry out water projects in Ethiopia then it wouldn’t start from nowhere.

Summing up, the hydrological sector, or rather water, seems to be the most feasible area in which bigger projects could be jointly implemented by at least two Visegard countries – the Czech Republic and Poland - but ultimately it is possible for all of them. The problematic or rather challenging issue could be the differences in the regions and zones in which hydrological projects from both countries are implemented. Further assessment of plausibility of this idea needs more in-depth studies and maybe the creation of a team of experts from each V4 country. The Czech Republic, after signing an agreement with the Ethiopian government and conducting the general ‘field’ assessment of their development cooperation in the WASH sector in Ethiopia, could be a leader of this process.
Conclusions

- To this date, there are no joint aid projects between the four Visegard Countries in Ethiopia.

- In the entire 2009-2010 period, the vast majority of ODA of V4 countries in Ethiopia came from the Czech Republic (77 per cent). Poland, Hungary, and the Slovak Republic constituted 13, 9, and 2 per cent, respectively.

- Recently, the Slovak Republic and Hungary are in the process of narrowing the priority countries for their ODA. Therefore the future position of Ethiopia in their development cooperation framework is unknown. If both countries decide to reconsider their territorial priorities Ethiopia should be well-analyzed in this respect.

- The Czech Republic, Poland, and the Slovak Republic could use the small grant funds (microgrants) existing within their Embassies in order to jointly carry out small-scale projects in the Addis Ababa region. In this regard, there is a need to increase the capacities of some embassies to provide the microgrants.

- Hydrology and water resources are the most feasible sector of cooperation between Visegard Countries in Ethiopia. The Czech Republic and Poland could initiate the talks regarding this theme among Visegard Group. In consequence, it could be established that a four-man team of experts from each V4 country would assess the real possibilities of cooperation in Ethiopia.

- The better cooperation between Embassies of V4 countries/or Aid Agencies is needed to make the idea of V4 joint work in Ethiopia more real. V4 countries should take advantage of Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, according to which 66 per cent of country analytic work should be done jointly. Based on this, the Czech Republic could share its findings from the programming mission conducted in Ethiopia in the autumn 2010, as well as findings from other evaluation and general assessments, especially those concerning the WASH sector with the other V4 countries.

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Abbreviations

ERCE European Regional Centre for Ecohydrology
EU European Union
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GSE Geological Service of Ethiopia
MDGs Millennium Development Goals
NGOs Non-Governmental Organizations
ODA Official Development Assistance
SSA sub-Saharan Africa
SNNPR Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region
USD United States dollar
UN United Nations
WASH Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
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