

# Ethiopian initiative

*Ethiopia is aiming for development with zero net growth in carbon emissions and has committed to building a climate-resilient green economy*

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**E**thiopia has an ambition to become a middle-income country by 2025. It also recognises that traditional development – through carbon intensification and environmental degradation – is not sustainable. The country has therefore committed to building a climate-resilient green economy (CRGE). This economy will be able to withstand the





shocks presented by a changing climate. Moreover, it will be delivered through zero-carbon growth (i.e. no increase in net emissions from today's level). The government understands this vision will require a coordinated and sustained effort by all parts of the Ethiopian society – civil society, academia, and, most importantly, the public.

▼ A worker on the electrified light rail transit construction site in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa. The \$475 million light rail system, contracted by the China Railway Group Limited, should transform the lives of more than five million people in the capital



### Increasing resilience

Ethiopia is extremely vulnerable to climate change. There is a critical need to increase resilience to climate variability and shocks since the country currently depends to a great extent on agriculture. On the other hand, as the country moves towards industrialisation, the need to promote green technologies and solutions in its industries and service sector becomes crucial for sustainable growth.

Therefore, as Ethiopia promotes growth on the one hand, it is also promoting sustainability on the other, thus simultaneously using climate change as an agenda to promote growth and sustainability.

How realistic are the goals and what will be key to the initiative's success? I would say most important is the commitment of the government of Ethiopia, at the highest level, to achieve its ambition to become a middle-income country by 2025 through a green growth path.

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When compared with other developing countries in the same income-level bracket, Ethiopia has set a great example by creating the institutions needed to achieve the goals set out in the CRGE plan.

Moreover, there are concrete strategies that have been developed and rolled out to make sure that these goals are achieved. For example, the country has developed, with the support of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), a climate-resilient strategy for agriculture and forestry.

The beauty of this strategy is that it serves as a great tool for policymakers and practitioners to clearly understand the impacts and costs of the different agriculture and forestry-related plans, and the key hazards and the response measures to combat the negative impacts of climate change.

To make sure that these strategies are translated into implementable actions, different systems and plans that are crucial to responding to climate change are being put in place and existing ones strengthened.

Most importantly, early lessons from implementation are being fed back into the design of plans and systems. However, one of the challenges that remains is that these actions will need a lot of financing to implement. Thus the government has set up a CRGE facility, which is a financing mechanism to implement the CRGE initiative.

### A customised approach

How the Ethiopian model can be translated to other countries seeking to develop out of low-income status is a very important question and one that both local and international experts, governments and development practitioners around the world are asking. The answer is not straightforward.

The fact is that green growth requires a customised approach that takes into account the specific circumstances of each country. It is necessary to find an appropriate combination of a top-down and bottom-up model to best support a country's green growth ambitions. It is also important to consider the level of each country's working scope, and whether planning is done at the national, state, provincial or local levels.

In GGGI, where we are working with several developing-country partners, there is constant engagement with government on a daily basis to support them in designing a process to set clear objectives and mandates for a green growth plan. However, while lessons from success cases like Ethiopia can serve as a reference, there is no one-size-fits-all. ●