

4.1 Good Governance and the Rule of Law

Currently, wider gaps are observed among constitutional ideals and policy practices/implementation in Ethiopian land law and land use and peacebuilding. Recent upheavals and, perhaps, ongoing conflicts as well as ‘silent’ contestations in different parts and inter-/intra-regional border areas of the country bear witness to the causal power of these gaps and the ensuing poor governance and rule of law besides resource scarcity. Therefore, the following are selected as top priority research areas for 2017/18.

- Innovative projects in land use/tenure changes and conflicts: The impacts on security of land rights and livelihood in pastoral areas;
- Conflict prevention and peace building processes in higher education institutions: assessing/exploring the dynamics strategies & challenges;
- Investing in land rights for agricultural/rural transformation
- Indigenous knowledge and laws in protecting fertility and sustainability of the ecology
- Media law and journalism in advancing justice and accountability on land use and protection of ecology

4.2. Society, Culture, Tourism and Development

Development and Change Research that address fundamental/theoretical as well as applied questions related to development and socio-cultural change is crucial for contemporary Ethiopia. Research on Development and Change focuses on the dynamics between the various interacting and mutually dependent fields. Accordingly, the following Development and Change Themes are selected as top priority areas for 2017/18 calls:

- Resources, rights and livelihoods: Focuses on the dynamic interactions between resources and their exploitation, domination and conservation. Resources refer not only to land, food, minerals and the environment but also to knowledge, information and heritage. This theme foregrounds contestations over resources and how these are created and framed through structures of governance, legal and extra-legal frameworks and lived realities
- Crisis, reordering and resilience: Engages with change and re-ordering of systems associated with crises and disasters and their aftermath in which new linkages, institutions and livelihoods may develop. Crises and natural or human-made disasters are seen as complex processes of reordering with historical, present and future dimensions rather than unproblematic, manageable routines of ‘disaster risk reduction’, ‘relief’ and ‘reconstruction’;
- Assessing divides and boundaries: Focuses on the material and discursive dynamics that change old divides and bring about new ones. How ontological, epistemological, empirical or other boundaries are shaped, steered, used, strengthened or weakened and divides such as urban-rural, powerful-marginalized, whole-parts, developed-undeveloped, and crisis-normality are studied. Divides and boundaries are operationalised and studied on all levels, including practical material levels and on the level of knowledge and science, in order to understand their practical, epistemological and ontological consequences for broader process and structures of development and change.

4.3. Educational Advancement and Quality Assurance

Wider theory-policy-practice gaps are observed in the contemporary cultural and educational endeavors of the country. Therefore, the following are selected as top priority areas for the coming research projects in 2017/18.

- The contemporary theory-policy-practice gap in in teacher training and teacher education endeavors
- The contemporary theory-policy-practice gap in training, teaching, learning of/for social sciences and humanities
- Innovative projects that could significantly narrow down or eliminate the theory-policy-practice gap and enhance quality of education from primary to university level.

4.4. Population, Gender, Peace and Development

Under the impulse of globalization and world trade liberalization, private and public investments are quite often considered as valuable development tools to unleash development potentials of a given country. Also, it is widely acknowledged that urbanization is, quite often, considered as the engine of development and is also serves as an indicator to state power. Nonetheless, the statues of multidimensional challenges and opportunities of investment practices in Eastern Ethiopia have been inadequately investigated and addressed so far. Thus, the following are selected as top priority areas for research projects in 2017/18

- Innovative, interventional and randomized controlled studies on empowering women and girls
- Investment potentials, socio-economic and environmental imperatives of investment in Eastern Ethiopia
- Innovative projects bolstering the effectiveness of government institutions regarding pros and cons, etc. of urbanization, investments and development policies and practices
- Global and national investment trend and its Socio-economic & environmental implications regarding private investment in Eastern Ethiopia