



# Expenditure Analysis for Amhara National Regional State

2012/13 – 2020/21

## KEY MESSAGES

1

**Aggregate nominal regional spending increased more than four-fold, from ETB 14.9 billion to ETB 60.7 billion between 2012/13 and 2020/21. Total spending has also shown an increasing trend in real terms (from ETB 6.1 billion in 2012/13 to ETB 19.8 billion in 2020/21), albeit at a lower rate than the nominal increase. The gap between nominal and real spending is widening due to increasing inflation.**

Recommendation: The federal government should take all necessary measures to keep inflation under control so that the real value of allocated budgets is maintained. Efficiency and effectiveness of spending by the regional government should also be given due attention to get higher returns from public investments.

2

**In 2020/21, 60.8 per cent of the region's total public expenditure was directed towards priority sectors (education; health; water and energy; roads; and agriculture and food security). The regional government continues to prioritise spending on social sectors, with the education sector having the highest share of spending.**

Recommendation: The regional government should continue to prioritise these sectors in terms of increasing its funding allocation, coupled with improved efficiency of spending.

3

**Recurrent spending dominates expenditure in Amhara region, particularly at the woreda (district) level. This makes it challenging to carry out capital investment spending on the construction of primary and secondary schools, and lower-tier health facilities, which adversely impacts service delivery.**

Recommendation: Domestic resource mobilisation within the region should be given due attention to widen the fiscal space to support higher capital budget investments required to improve service delivery.

4

**The region had an average total budget credibility rate of 96 per cent for the period between 2012/13 and 2020/21. Looking at the budget components, there was higher overspend of recurrent budgets in 2020/21. This is mainly due to the conflict in the region, which has resulted in increased recurrent expenditure for security and humanitarian assistance to address the needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) and conflict-affected communities.**

Recommendation: The regional government needs to improve budget planning and utilisation by addressing bottlenecks so that capital budgets can be effectively utilised.

5

**Around 64 per cent of the region's finance comes from the federal government as non-earmarked grants. The share of resources mobilised from within the region is around 36 per cent. Though the share of revenue generated from the region has increased over the years, the federal government's unearmarked blocked grant continues to be the region's main source of financing.**

Recommendation: The region should strengthen its tax administration capacity and explore its revenue-generating potential to increase its financial resource envelope for increased public investment in a way that will not increase inequities and hamper economic growth.

6

**Given the devastating impact the conflict has had on the region, the regular budget will not be able to cover the high reconstruction costs of damaged service delivery facilities.**

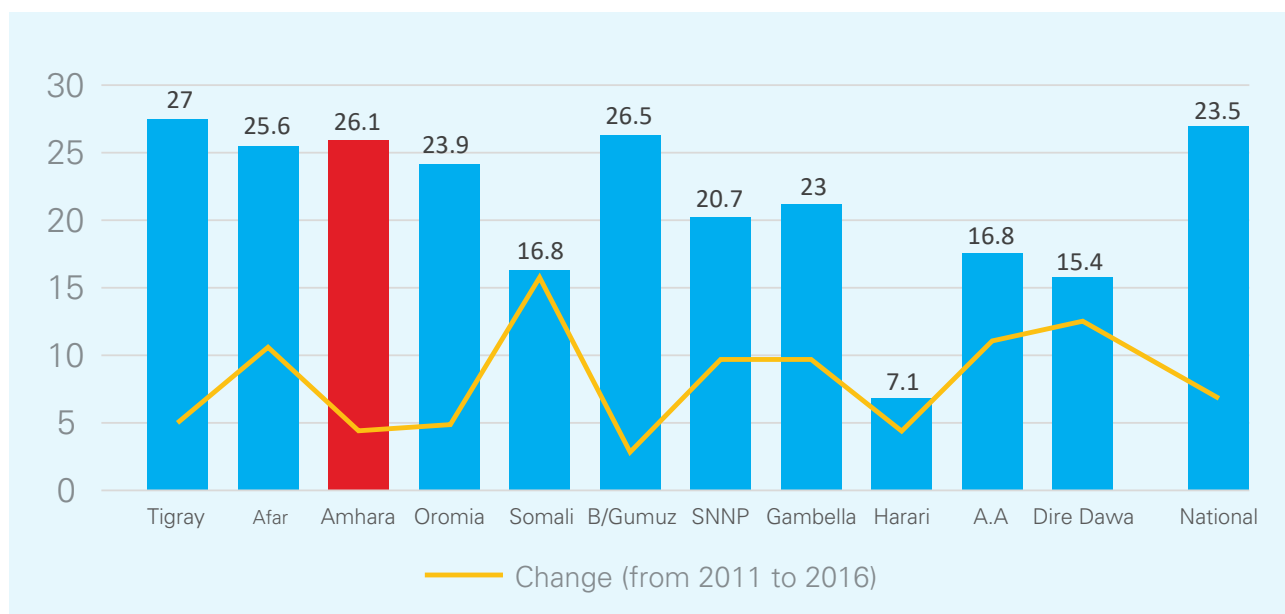
Recommendation: Resource mobilisation from both domestic and external sources should be given due attention to reconstruct damaged facilities and restore basic service delivery in all parts of the region.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**Amhara region is Ethiopia’s second-largest regional state, with a population of 22.54 million in 2020.**<sup>1</sup> Only 20.7 per cent of the region’s population live in cities. Agriculture is the region’s primary economic activity, but there are also agropastoral and pastoralist communities in some areas. The population is young, as in the rest of the country, with 39.7 per cent under the age of 15 and 30 per cent between the ages of 15 and 29.

**The poverty rate in Amhara region is high, with 26.1 per cent of the region’s population living below the poverty line in 2016.** This is higher than the national average of 23.5 per cent for the same year. The poverty rate in 2016 was 4.4 percentage points lower than it was in 2011 (Figure 1). While the poverty rate decreased between 2011 and 2016, it remains very high. There is also a significant disparity in poverty rates between rural and urban areas.

Figure 1. Poverty rate by region (Per cent)



Source: World Bank (2020)

**Despite progress over the years, the region continues to face significant challenges in key social indicators.** According to the Ethiopian Mini Demographics and Health Survey EMDHS (2019), childhood malnutrition (stunting) is among the highest in the country (41 per cent in Amhara, compared to the national average of 37 per cent).<sup>2</sup> Infant and under-5 mortality rates are also high, standing at 85 and 67 per 1,000 births, respectively. Furthermore, only 1.7 per cent of households in the region have improved sanitation, while 35.6 per cent do not have

improved drinking water sources. Increased public investment is required to improve the region’s current development trajectory. Table 1 presents a summary of some key development indicators of Amhara region and national-level figures.

**The conflict in northern Ethiopia has had a significant impact in the region.** The civil war has resulted in the loss of many lives and the destruction of numerous service delivery facilities. Around 1,107<sup>3</sup> health facilities –

<sup>1</sup> WCSA (2007), Population Projections for Ethiopia: 2007–2037. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

<sup>2</sup> Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) [Ethiopia] and ICF. 2019. Ethiopia Mini Demographic and Health Survey 2019: Key Indicators. Rockville, Maryland, USA: EPHI and ICF.

<sup>3</sup> Data obtained from Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health (2022).

including hospitals, health posts, health centres and blood banks – have been damaged in the conflict. This has affected health care service delivery in the region, resulting in more deaths from treatable conditions, low nutrition outcomes for children and women, and the disruption of regular vaccination programmes and campaigns. Moreover, 4,102 schools have been damaged, resulting in an increase in out-of-school children in the region.<sup>4</sup> Since the conflict happened during the most important cropping season, agricultural production was highly affected in the region. The Rural Productive Safety Net Programme was also reduced temporarily in the region due to a lack of

access to some of the conflict-affected woredas that were covered under the programme. These multiple burdens have resulted in increased poverty in the region. According to UNDP Ethiopia, Amhara region has seen its headcount poverty rate rise to 30 per cent, significantly above its pre-conflict poverty rate of 26 per cent.<sup>5</sup> This will have a negative direct impact not only in the short term but also in the medium and long term, as it will affect human capital development, leading to productivity losses and the reversal of some of the human development gains that have been achieved over the past few decades.

Table 1. Selected development indicators

Indicator	Amhara	National	Data source
Total population (in millions)	22.5	103.0	CSA* (2007), projection for 2021/22
Population living in rural areas	79.3%	78%	CSA (2013), projection for 2020
Poverty headcount	26.1%	23.5%	NPC** (2017)
Food poverty headcount	31.3%	24.8%	NPC (2017)
Multi-dimensional child deprivation	91%	88%	CSA and UNICEF Ethiopia (2018)
Under-5 mortality per 1,000 births	85	67	EDHS*** (2016)
Infant mortality per 1,000 births	67	48	EDHS (2016)
Stunting prevalence (children <5 years)	41.3%	36.8%	EDHS (2019)
Wasting prevalence (children <5 years)	21.1%	7.2%	EDHS (2019)
Underweight prevalence (children <5 years)	6%	21.1%	EDHS (2019)
Female genital mutilation in 15–49 age group	61.7%	65%	EDHS (2016)
Households using improved drinking water sources	64.4%	64.8%	EDHS (2016)
Households using improved sanitation facilities	1.7%	6.3%	EDHS (2016)

Sources: \*CSA (Central Statistical Agency); \*\*NPC (National Planning Commission) and \*\*\*EDHS (Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey)

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF (2022), Out-of-school children (OOSC) and schools closure data.

<sup>5</sup> UNDP (2022). Crisis, Resilience and Opportunity: Poverty, Human Development, and the Macro-Economy in Ethiopia, 2020-23. Ethiopia Working Paper Series, No.1, 2022.

### Key takeaways

- Despite a 4.4 percentage point drop in poverty between 2011 and 2016, the region's poverty rate remains high, with 23.5 per cent of the population living in poverty.
- With 91 per cent of children living in multi-dimensional poverty, the region has the highest rate of multi-dimensional child deprivation in the country. The region continues to face challenges due to a high prevalence of stunting, high under-5 mortality and infant mortality rates, as well as a lack of access to improved sanitation and drinking water.
- Overall, although there have been gradual gains in many socioeconomic variables over time, the region still faces challenges due to high rates of stunting, under-5 mortality and newborn mortality.

## 2. PUBLIC EXPENDITURE IN AMHARA REGION

**Amhara regional state has 13 administrative zones, 75 city administrations and 152 woredas (districts).** It has two layers of government: regional and woreda each with legislative, executive and judiciary organs. The region also has a zonal administration that serves as a bridge between the regional and woreda administrations. With a devolved government structure, the region approves its own budget, drawing from its resource envelope, which consists of non-earmarked block grants received from the federal government, as well as domestic resources mobilised in the region.

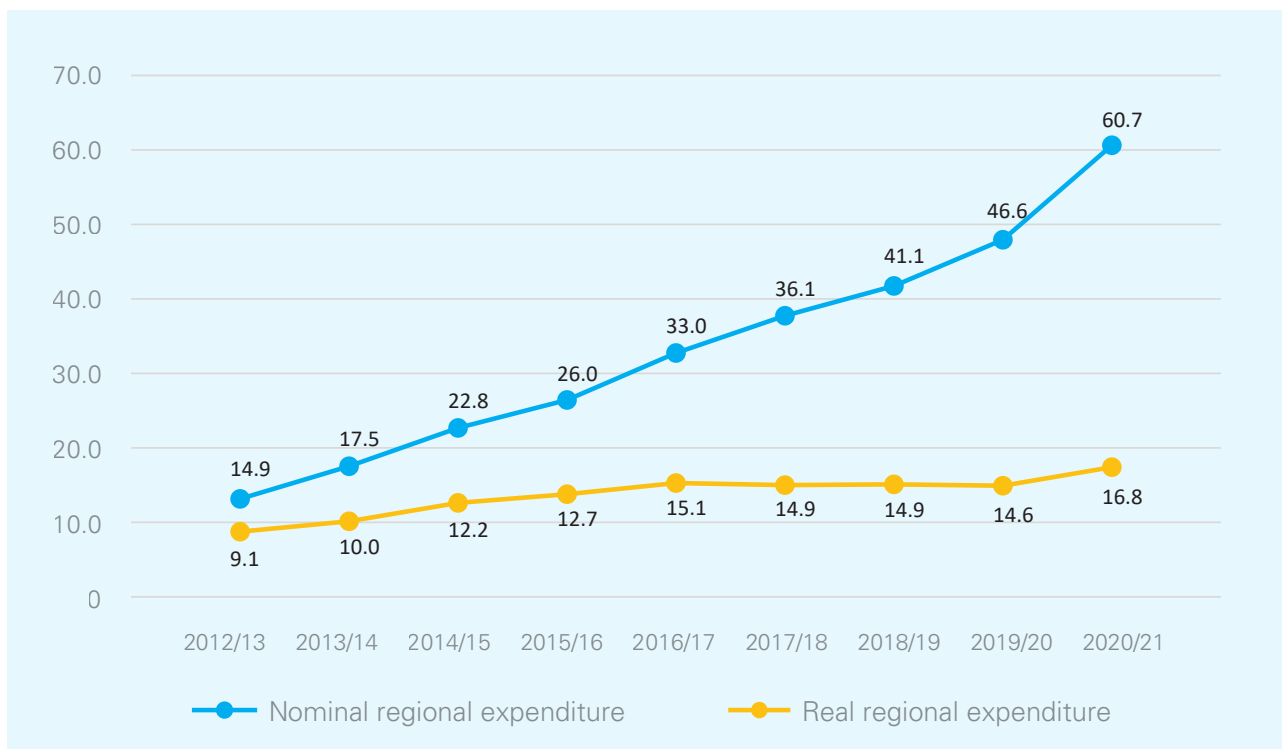
**The fiscal planning process in Amhara starts at the sectoral level, in consultation with woredas and other stakeholders.** The draft report is consolidated by the Regional Bureau of Finance and submitted to the Regional Cabinet. After discussing the budget with the various stakeholders, the Regional Cabinet submits it to the Regional Parliament for approval. The region then allocates its resources to regional sector bureaus and woredas. The woredas allocate the budget to the sectors within their administration.

### Trends in total public spending

**Total nominal public spending in Amhara region increased at an annual rate of 19.5 per cent on average between 2012/13 and 2020/21.** During this time, total nominal spending in the region increased four-fold, from ETB 14.9 billion to ETB 60.7 billion (Figure 2). However, the real value of public spending<sup>6</sup> increased at a much slower rate of 84 per cent, which is an average 8.3 per cent increment per year between 2013/14 and 2020/21, with a slight decline in 2017/18 and 2019/20. This slower rate is because of rising inflation in the country, which undermines the real value of public investment in the region.

<sup>6</sup> The base year used for calculating real values throughout this document is year 2010. The real values are calculated using the national average Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by Ethiopian Statistical Services. (See <http://www.statsethiopia.gov.et>)

Figure 2. Nominal and real public expenditure (ETB billion)

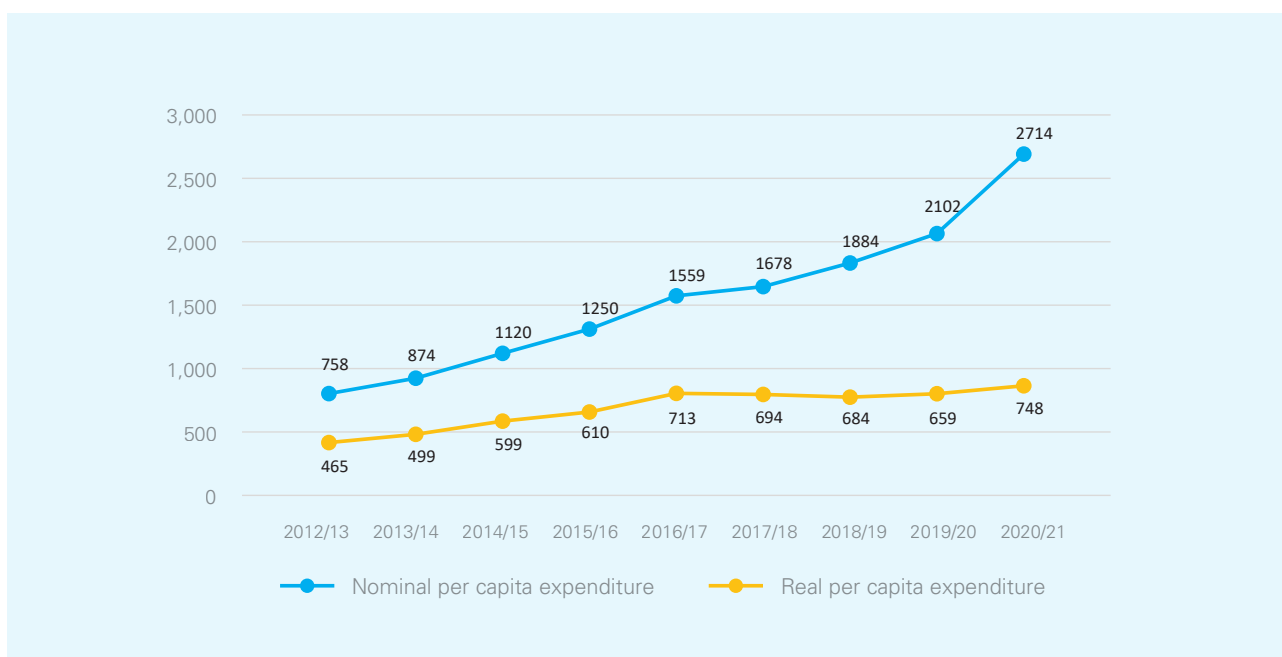


Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

**The disparities between nominal and real spending per capita have grown over time as a result of the country’s recent high inflation rate.** While nominal per capita spending has increased, real per capita spending has decreased since 2017/18, except for 2020/21 (Figure 3). The high rate of inflation in the economy continues to erode the value of

public investment in the region. Furthermore, the region’s and the country’s macroeconomic imbalances – in terms of budget deficit, balance of payment deficit, foreign exchange shortage, structural and institutional bottlenecks, and natural and man-made shocks – directly and indirectly continue to erode the value of public investment.

Figure 3. Nominal and real per capita expenditure (ETB)



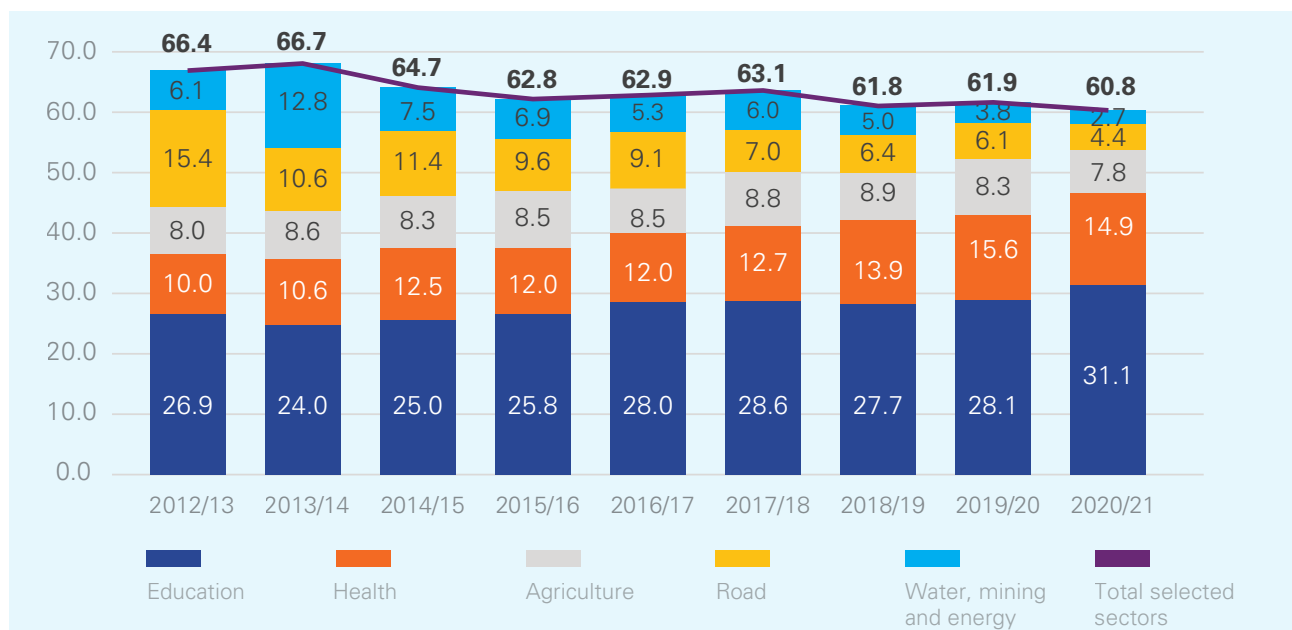
Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

**The region spent, on average, 60.8 per cent of its expenditure on the five sectors prioritised by the government** (Figure 4).

These priority sectors are education, health, water and energy, roads and agriculture and food security. The regional government’s spending pattern over time demonstrates its commitment to improving access and basic services in the region. Over the period under consideration, the education sector remained the largest recipient of public expenditure in the region, accounting for 31.1 per cent of total regional spending in 2020/21. Following education, health received the greatest proportion of spending for the same year, at 14.9 per cent of the region’s expenditure. Agriculture, roads, and water and energy

each accounted for 7.8 per cent, 4.4 per cent and 2.7 per cent of total regional government spending, respectively. However, the share of spending on these priority sectors from the region’s total spending has declined from 66.4 per cent in 2012/13 to 60.8 per cent in 2020/21. The decline in the share of spending is mainly driven by a decrease in the expenditure shares for the road, and water and energy sectors. On the other hand, the proportion of spending allocated to justice and security has risen from 7.3 per cent in 2012/13 to 10.6 per cent in 2020/21.<sup>7</sup> The increase in spending on justice and security in 2020/21 is due to increased instabilities and conflicts in the region. The shares of spending on education and health have shown an increase over the years.

Figure 4. Share of expenditure for selected sectors (per cent of regional expenditure)



Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

**Key takeaways**

- Total nominal spending in the region was ETB 60.7 billion in 2020/21, a four-fold increase compared the amount in 2012/13. The real value of spending has shown an increasing trend until 2016/17, though at a much slower rate, before showing a slight decline from 2017/18 to 2020/21.

<sup>7</sup> Expenditure data from Ministry of Finance.

- The high rate of inflation that the country is experiencing is eroding the value of public investment in the region. Furthermore, factors such as institutional bottlenecks, natural and man-made shocks, and macroeconomic imbalances continue to undermine the value of public investment in Amhara region.
- For all the years under consideration, education received the greatest share of spending, followed by health. The recent increase in spending on justice and security reflects frequent instabilities and conflict in the region, particularly in 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- The share of spending going to what the government considers priority sectors was 65.5 per cent in 2020/21, down from 70.8 per cent in 2012/13. The region's expenditure should continue to prioritise these sectors, with a greater emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness of public spending.

## Composition of spending

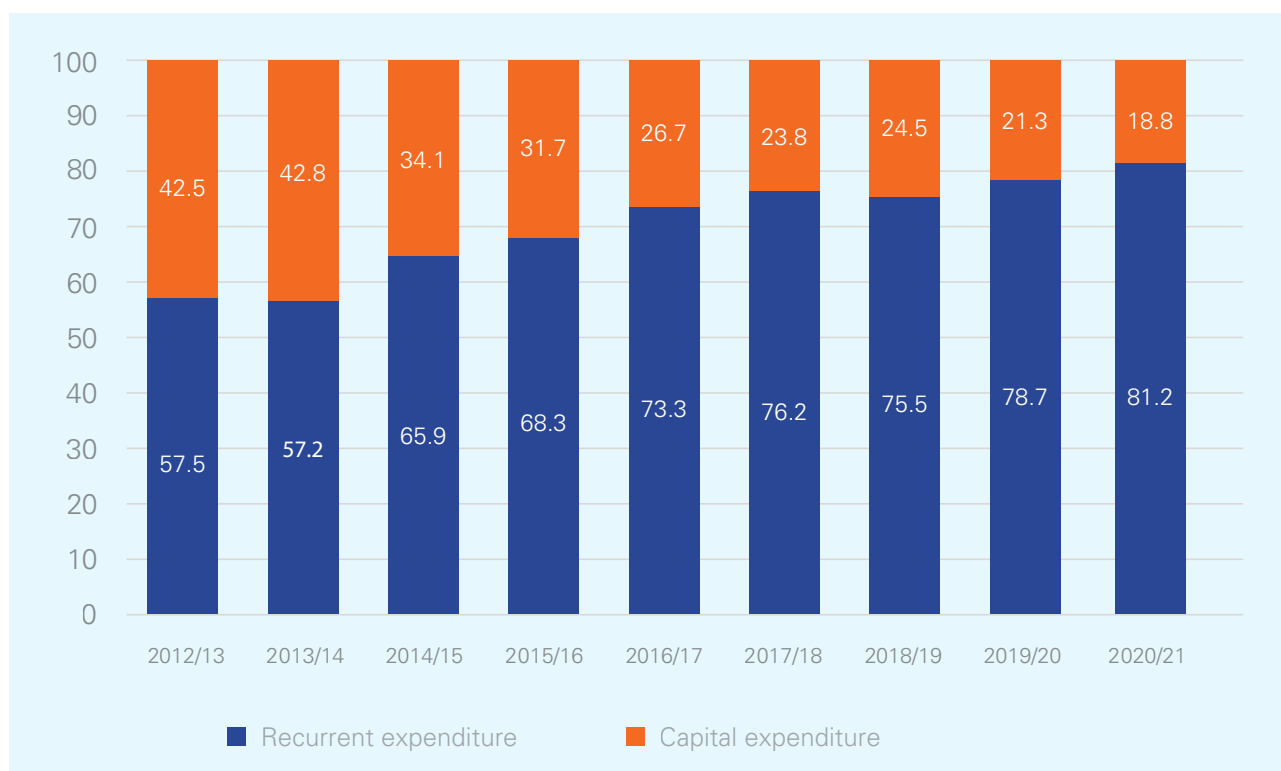
**Throughout the period under consideration (2012/13–2020/21), recurrent expenditure dominated regional government spending.**

Since 2012/13, the proportion of recurrent expenditure has shown a continuous increase, while the proportion of capital expenditure has declined (Figure 5). On average, recurrent and capital spending accounts for 70.4 per cent and 29.6 per cent of total public spending in the region, respectively. The share of capital expenditure in 2012/13 and 2013/14 was higher in comparison to the succeeding years, mainly due to the high level of public investment to build basic infrastructure, such as roads, schools and hospitals. After 2014/15, while both capital and recurrent expenditures increased in absolute terms, the share of capital expenditure has been declining compared to recurrent expenditure. This is driven by the need for salary and operational costs to make infrastructural investments functional.

**Salaries take up the largest proportion of recurrent spending.**

This is understandable, as service delivery is a mandate of regional governments. The high proportion of civil servants, particularly in the education, health and agriculture sectors – at both regional and woreda level – requires large financing in the form of recurrent spending. However, the decline in the share of capital investment has been more pronounced in the past two years due to an increase in recurrent expenses related to conflict and an increase in internally displaced people (IDPs) in the region. As regional governments are responsible for delivering social sector services, the lack of adequate capital budget may limit the accessibility and quality of social services in the region.

Figure 5. Distribution of expenditure by category (per cent of total regional expenditure)

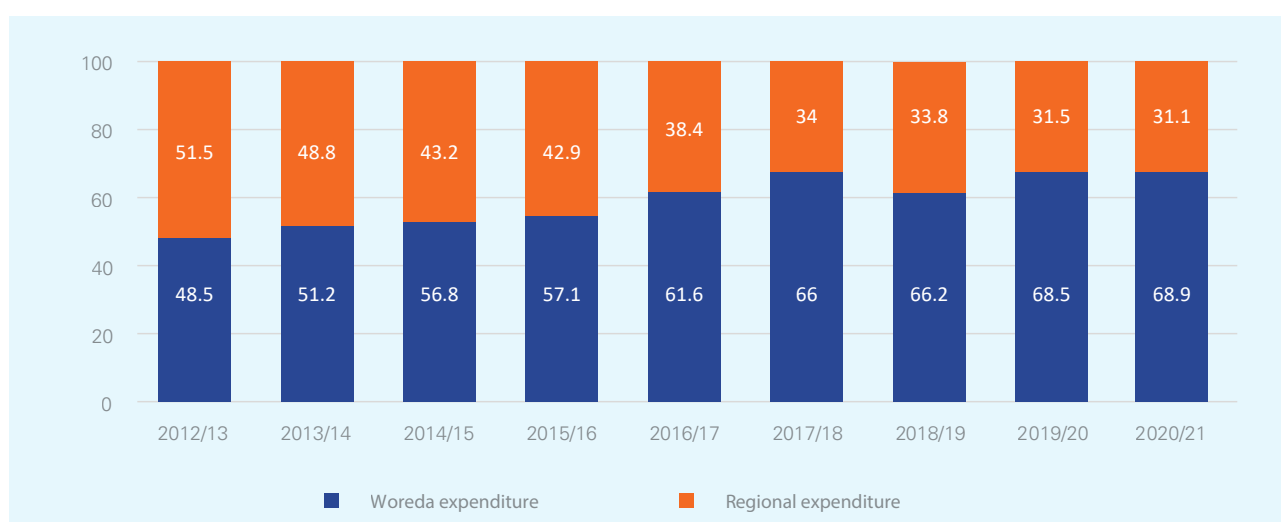


Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

**The majority of public expenditure in the region is spent at the woreda level, in accordance with the region’s decentralised government structure.** Regional-level bureaus now oversee less spending than woredas as a result of fiscal decentralisation. The share of spending at woreda level increased from 48.8 per cent in 2012/13 to 68.9 per cent in 2020/21 (Figure 6). Between 2012/13 and 2020/21, the

average proportion of woreda spending relative to total regional spending was 60.5 per cent. The allocation of a higher share of spending at woreda level is encouraging, as service delivery takes place at the lowest level of government administration. This increased spending at woreda level should continue, with a strong focus on improved composition, efficiency and effectiveness of spending.

Figure 6. Regional bureau-level and woreda-level spending (per cent of total regional spending)



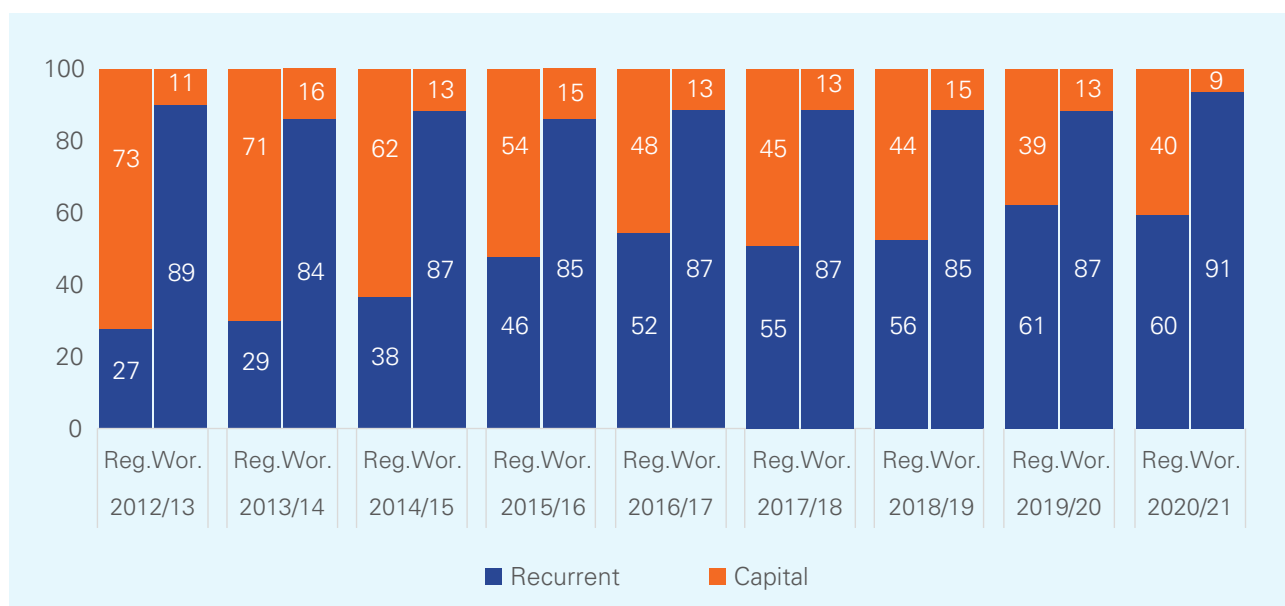
Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

**Regional bureaus spend a higher share of their expenditure on capital projects compared to woreda administrations.**

This is because regional bureau spending is used to address the region’s infrastructure gaps, which mainly require large capital investments, typically water and road projects. Regional-level bureaus undertake large projects that are primarily capital in nature, whereas woreda administrations use the higher share of their resources for recurrent expenditure, which is highly dominated by salary expenses (Figure 7).

Although the regional government still allocates a higher share of its resources (53 per cent on average) on capital expenditure, the share of its capital spending is declining. It declined from 73 per cent in 2012/13 to 40 per cent in 2020/21. On the other hand, woredas spent only 9 per cent of their resources on capital expenditure. Since salary and operational costs take up a significant proportion of their expenditure, woredas are left with little resource to make meaningful capital investments.

Figure 7. Regional-level and woreda-level expenditure as proportions of capital and recurrent expenditure (per cent)



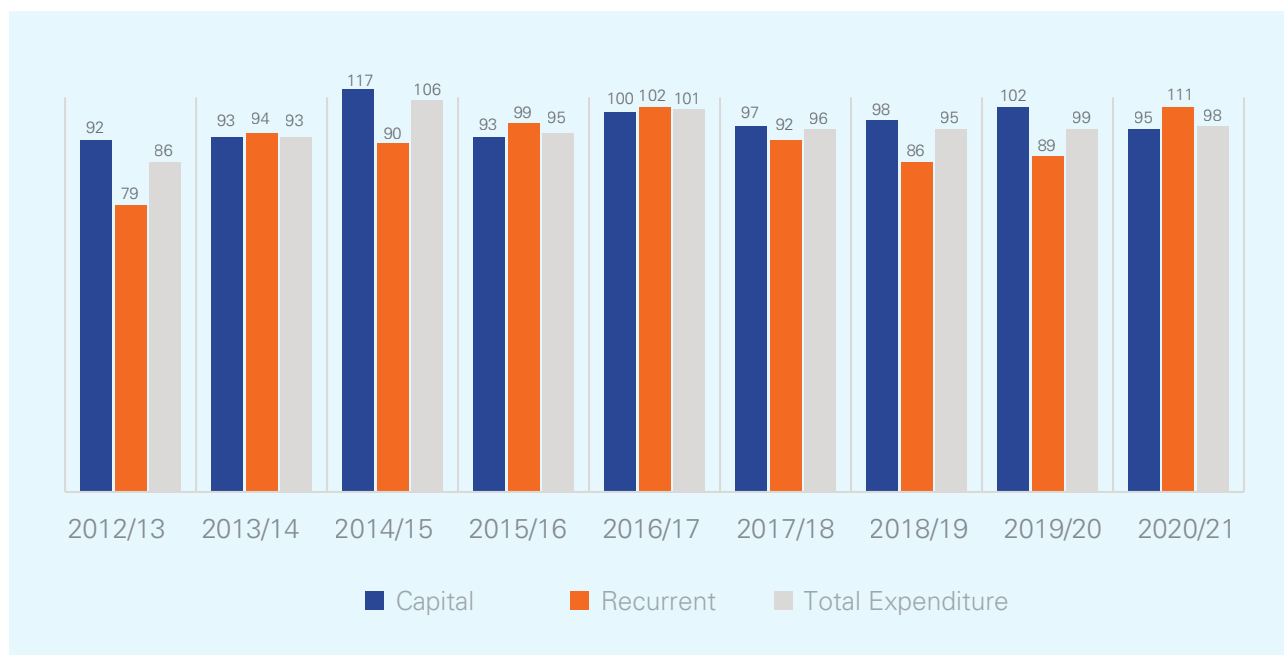
Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

**Budget credibility**

**Between 2012/13 and 2020/21, the region had an average total budget credibility rate of 96 per cent** (Figure 8). The proportion of actual expenditure at the end of the fiscal year to expenditure approved at the beginning of the fiscal year is used to assess expenditure credibility. It describes the government’s ability to meet its expenditure targets accurately and consistently. The total expenditure credibility for 2020/21 indicates that actual total expenditure was 2 per cent less than budgeted expenditure. In terms of budget components,

the capital budget was under-utilised by 5 per cent in 2020/21, while recurrent expenditure was overspent by 11 percentage points over the same period. The overspend in recurrent spending in 2020/21 is due to the increasing recurrent expenditure by the government due to the conflict, which has led to a high number of IDPs in the region. The increased expenditure for humanitarian assistance to address the needs of IDPs and conflict-affected communities has resulted in higher recurrent expenses.

Figure 8. Budget credibility rate



Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

### Key takeaways

- The region’s public spending is dominated by recurrent expenditure, leaving little resource for capital investment in basic service delivery. Because regional governments are responsible for delivering social sector services, the lack of adequate capital budgets may limit the accessibility and quality of social services in the region.
- With fiscal devolution, the proportion of spending at the lowest government level (woreda) is growing over time. However, woreda-level spending is predominantly recurrent, resulting in insufficient funds for capital spending to improve service delivery.

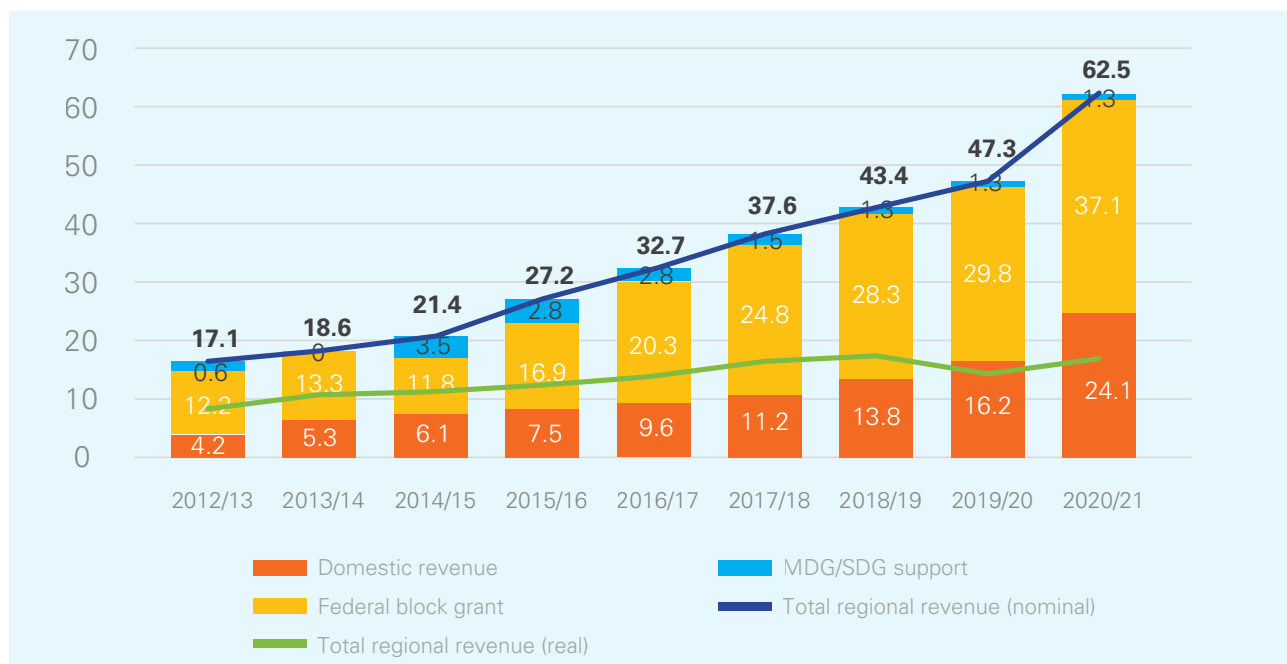
### 3. SOURCES OF GOVERNMENT FINANCING

**With increasing public expenditure, the regional government’s financing requirement has increased over time.** The region’s budget sources consist of the federal block grant, tax and non-tax revenues collected from within the region, transfers from the federal government for food security and other purposes, direct support from federal ministries to relevant sectors in the region, off-budget resources from domestic and foreign non-governmental organizations, and community contributions. However, the region’s declared budget does not include off-budget sources. Accordingly, this budget expenditure report includes significant financial resources from on-budget sources and does not analyse off-budget revenue sources.

**The government financing requirement for the region increased more than three-fold between 2012/13 and 2020/21 in nominal terms, while the increment in real terms was 46 per cent.** The nominal value of government revenue increased from ETB 17.1 billion in 2012/13 to ETB 62.5 billion in 2020/21 (Figure

9). Amhara regional government on-budget revenue consists of non-earmarked block grants received from the federal government, tax and non-tax revenue generated from within the region, and federal government support for the region’s activities in relation to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The federal block grant is a non-earmarked grant that is transferred from the federal government to each region based on an equity formula endorsed by the House of Federation. In addition, the federal government provides capital budget to regional governments to support projects that will help achieve the SDGs. In nominal terms, domestic tax and non-tax revenue increased by 48.8 per cent between 2019/20 and 2020/21, while federal block grants increased by 24.5 per cent, and the MDG/SDG (Millennium Development Goals/Sustainable Development Goals) budget remained unchanged. The amount of budget allocated for SDGs has declined from 2017/18 due to the federal government’s decision to reallocate budget from SDGs to the development of industrial parks.

Figure 9. Total regional government revenue by source (ETB billion)

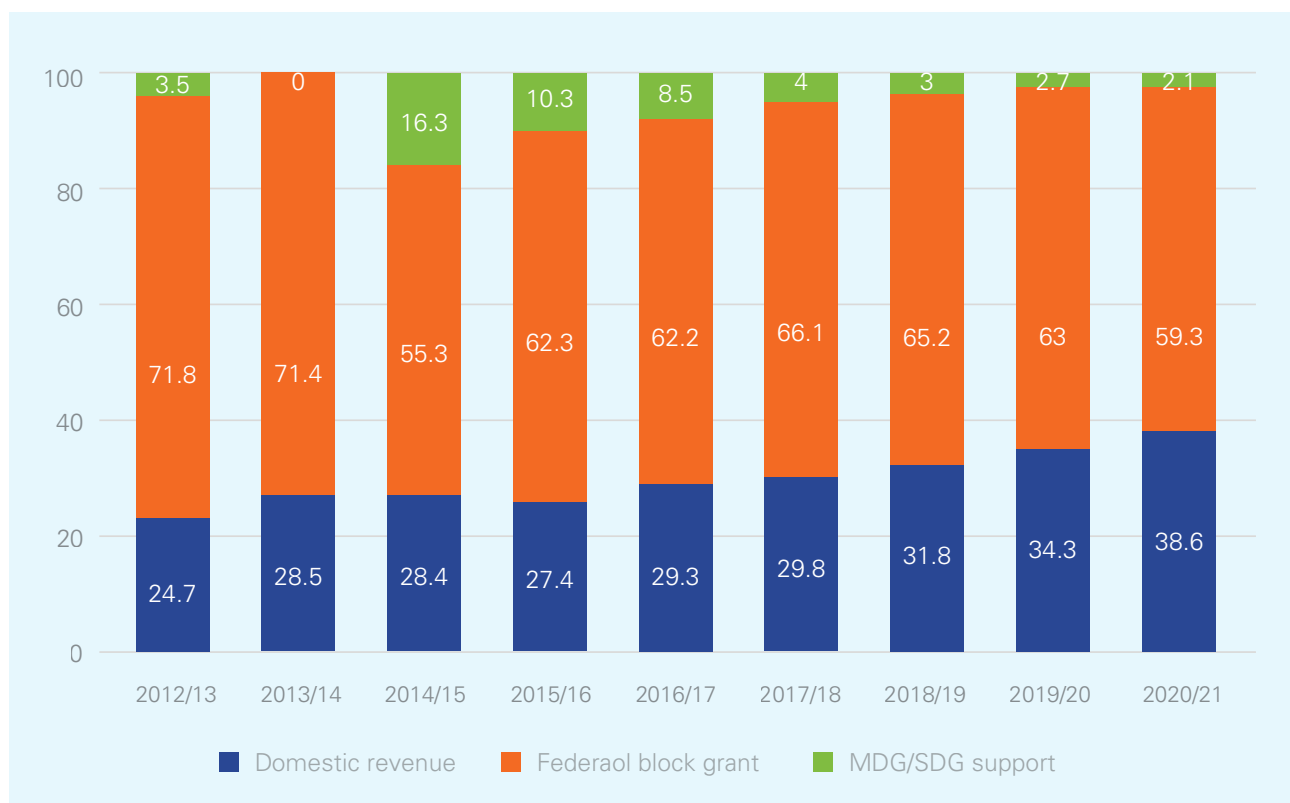


Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

**The region's main source of financing is the federal government's unearmarked blocked grant to the region.** In 2020/21, around 59.3 per cent of the region's financial resources came from the federal government in the form of unearmarked general purpose grants (Figure 10). The share of revenue that was generated from within the region was around 38.6 per cent for the same period, increasing from its share of 24.7 per cent in 2012/13. For sustainable

financing of social sectors, domestic resource mobilisation is key to increasing the share of financing coming from the region itself. The region should strengthen its tax administration capacity and explore its revenue-generating potential to increase its financial resource envelope for increased public investment. The regional government should also expand the tax base in a way that will not increase inequities and hamper economic growth.

Figure 10. Sources of revenue as proportions of total revenue (per cent of total revenue)



Source: Amhara Region Bureau of Plan and Development (2012/13–2020/21)

### Key takeaway

- Though the share of revenue generated from the region has increased over the years, the federal government's unearmarked blocked grant continues to be the region's main source of financing. The region should strengthen its tax administration capacity and explore its revenue-generating potential to increase its financial resource envelope for increased public investment in a way that will not increase inequities and hamper economic growth.

## Annex 1. Amhara Regional State Budget Data Records 2012/13–2020/21

Gregorian calendar	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Ethiopian fiscal year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Regional revenue (in million Birr)</b>									
<b>Total regional revenue</b>	17,050	18,628	21,421	27,174	32,650	37,566	43,379	47,284	62,532
<b>Domestic revenue</b>	4,204	5,313	6,087	7,454	9,559	11,206	13,803	16,216	24,148
<b>Tax revenue</b>	3,152	3,875	4,314	5,483	6,784	8,252	12,952	11,099	16,998
<b>Direct tax</b>	2,758	3,338	2,753	4,890	4,823	5,886	6,430	7,064	14,158
<b>Indirect tax</b>	394	537	1,561	593	1,961	2,366	6,522	4,035	2,841
<b>Non-tax revenue</b>	1,052	1,438	1,773	1,971	2,775	2,954	851	5,118	7,149
<b>Federal block grant</b>	12,248	13,309	11,848	16,931	20,303	24,847	28,281	29,772	37,088
<b>MDGs/SDGs support</b>	599	6	3,486	2,789	2,789	1,512	1,296	1,296	1,296
<b>Regional expenditure (ETB million)</b>									
<b>Total regional expenditure</b>	14,872	17,503	22,844	25,962	32,955	36,090	41,147	46,647	61,161
<b>Total regional recurrent</b>	8,546	10,006	15,064	17,720	24,171	27,516	31,073	36,730	49,659
<b>Total regional capital</b>	6,326	7,497	7,781	8,242	8,784	8,573	10,074	9,917	11,502
<b>Total bureau-level expenditure</b>	7,659	8,543	9,872	11,133	12,667	12,270	13,891	14,675	18,918
<b>Bureau-level recurrent</b>	2,099	2,508	3,783	5,091	6,621	6,799	7,789	8,895	11,277
<b>Bureau-level capital</b>	5,560	6,035	6,089	6,042	6,046	5,471	6,102	5,780	7,641
<b>Total woreda-level expenditure</b>	7,213	8,960	12,973	14,829	20,289	23,819	27,257	31,971	41,829
<b>Woreda-level recurrent</b>	6,447	7,498	11,281	12,629	17,550	20,717	23,284	27,836	37,999
<b>Woreda-level capital</b>	766	1,462	1,692	2,200	2,738	3,102	3,973	4,136	3,830
<b>Regional expenditure for priority sectors (ETB million)</b>									
<b>Total expenditure for priority sectors</b>	9,871	11,675	14,771	16,295	20,716	22,773	25,447	28,885	36,937
<b>Education</b>	3,998	4,205	5,722	6,691	9,219	10,304	11,393	13,102	18,872
<b>Health</b>	1,494	1,858	2,859	3,112	3,947	4,582	5,723	7,291	9,022
<b>Agriculture</b>	1,195	1,508	1,889	2,204	2,790	3,191	3,648	3,862	4,731
<b>Road</b>	2,283	1,861	2,594	2,499	2,998	2,539	2,624	2,864	2,694
<b>Water, mining and energy</b>	901	2,242	1,707	1,790	1,762	2,157	2,059	1,766	1,618
<b>Approved budget (ETB million)</b>									
<b>Total approved budget</b>	17,264	18,753	21,526	27,298	32,768	37,693	43,539	47,322	62,699
<b>Total recurrent</b>	9,263	10,786	12,875	18,989	24,160	28,365	31,823	36,169	52,306
<b>Total capital</b>	8,001	7,967	8,652	8,309	8,607	9,328	11,716	11,153	10,393

Source: Amhara Bureau of Finance (2012/13–2020/21)

This budget brief analysing the public budget and expenditure of the Amhara National Regional State for the period 2012/13 to 2020/21 was produced through a partnership between the Ethiopian Economics Association (EEA) and UNICEF Ethiopia. Technical support and coordination from UNICEF Ethiopia was provided by Fanaye Tadesse Techane [ftechane@unicef.org](mailto:ftechane@unicef.org) and Zeleka Paulos [zpaulos@unicef.org](mailto:zpaulos@unicef.org). EEA is responsible for the data collection and accuracy of the information presented. The main objective of this budget brief is to synthesize complex budget and expenditure information so that it is easily understood by stakeholders, to foster discourse, and to inform policy and financial decision-making processes of the regional government. The analysis presents budget and expenditure that are recorded on-budget by the Amhara National Regional State.

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