Identifying, Explaining, and Solving Ethiopia’s Development Puzzle: an exploratory research

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Abstract

Puzzles are often associated with games. Children are given puzzles to solve and those who solve in the shortest time possible are considered quick thinkers and potential future strategists. When used in development context, puzzles demonstrate the complex relationship between various issues and embody both opportunities and challenges.

The Ethiopian economy has often been described as a puzzle due to its untapped development potential. However, these puzzles have not been systematically identified, explained and solved. The purpose of this exploratory research is therefore to (i) systematically identify and explain the most important puzzles and seek solutions; (ii) demonstrate a methodology for building consensus around strategic issues; and (iii) trigger dialogue on key areas of successes and concerns about the Ethiopian economy. The findings are also expected to inform policy makers.

For the purpose of this research, an initial list of 25 development puzzles was identified based on a review and synthesis of the literature on the Ethiopian economy as well as engagement with several platforms. The puzzles were grouped into five blocks representing key sectors of the economy (i) agriculture, livestock and pastoralism; (ii) disaster risk reduction and climate resilience; (iii) industrial and infrastructure; (iv) business and commerce; and (v) institutions, capacity and gender.

A questionnaire containing the 25 puzzles was distributed to researchers, academics, and development practitioners in government and non-government organizations to agree or disagree with the puzzles on a 5-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). If they agreed, they were asked to provide solutions.

The data were stored in Access Database, filtered and transferred to an Excel sheet for calculating basic scores for each puzzle. Finally, a pairwise technique was used to compare each puzzle using the scores and come up with the top ten most important puzzles that must be solved to transform the Ethiopian economy.

Key words: development puzzles, exploratory research, pairwise, strategies, Ethiopian economy

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2 Exploratory research is defined as a research used to investigate a problem which is not clearly defined. It is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem, but will not provide conclusive results https://www.questionpro.com/blog/exploratory-research/ (accessed 21.1.19).