

Sheger River Rehabilitation Project, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



The Sheger River Project presents massive potential to use the 51km stretch of rivers flowing through the heart of Addis Ababa as a structuring element to start to solve some of Addis's most intractable problems: water quality; environmental quality; urban agriculture; sewage; stormwater management; solid waste management; transport and telecommunications connectivity. However, the river and associated infrastructure interventions cannot be viewed as a space that runs from one bank to the other and the municipal boundary to an arbitrary ending point downstream. Just as the river is part of the larger water cycle and hydrological ecosystem, the water supply, sewerage, solid waste, transport, and telecommunication systems are networked into the whole city region, not just the river corridor. Any intervention along the river that seeks to either address service delivery issues that impact on the river quality, or fundamentally address the service delivery issues through the river project, need to view the intervention systemically.

Ian Palmer of PDG was commissioned by the African Development Bank to draft a Terms of Reference for and Investment and Infrastructure Plan to guide the development process. Subsequently, Nick Graham of PDG, was invited to attend a High Level Expert Workshop in Addis Ababa to review the Sheger River development proposals and provide advice and recommendations around a broader development approach and framework.

Following a review of the background studies, a site visit and attendance at the workshop, recommendations were developed for UN-Habitat to put forward to the Mayor and the Prime Minister's office, picking up on some of the more systemic issues faced by the project. These included the



lack of a link between the vision and the development proposals, the lack of city-wide plans for infrastructure networks, a lack of clarity around resettlement of residents and the lack of a comprehensive costing and financing model. PDG also highlighted the disjointed institutional arrangements that were causing the uncoordinated intervention. PDG proposed a Theory of Change for the Sheger project to guide interventions, as well as a framework to understand the land-based finance potential of the site.

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