



Hybrid DREAM Event 21 June 2022

Mapping development interventions in the lowlands: supporting coordination at Woreda level

Proceedings

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Abstract

Considerable development efforts take place in the Ethiopian lowlands – to use the development potential of the lowlands and to work on their resilience. The amounts spent are very substantial, but more is needed to achieve lasting impact. There is a general feeling that more progress could be made, if efforts were better coordinated, if there would be more planning and direction at woreda level and if development systems were systematically built up. The current drought emergency is testimony that there is much distance to cover yet. As a tool to an effective coordination process, a start has been made with mapping the interventions under different programs in the different lowland woredas.

The hybrid DREAM event on 21 June presents the first results of this mapping. In the hybrid event of 21 June, discussions on how such mapping can be made as useful as possible for coordination by woreda teams, how efforts in the same woredas can reinforce one another, how mapping can be linked with planning, how to validate and update information and whether additional data may be added in the mapping to support woreda planning and coordination took place. This event took place in the larger program for Coordination, Cooperation and Capacity Building for Lowland Development under DREAM. The most recent event was the DREAMII Conference from 15-18 March 2022 in Adama, that brought together 180 participants, galvanized coordination and cooperation around the lowland programs, and worked on integrated capacity building. During this DREAMII event, the mapping of development programs in the lowlands was also started, on which this event builds.

Welcome

Frank van Steenbergen welcomes all to today's DREAM event via a brief introduction to the whole DREAM program on lowland development, coordination, cooperation, and capacity building. Today's event discusses the important topic of mapping as an instrument for coordination; who's where, who's doing what and in which place? This topic follows from the DREAM event that took place in March 2022 in Adama, which 180 people attended. The proceeding of that event can be found on the DREAM website.

Today's meeting is hybrid, with physical gatherings in Jigjiga and Semera. Frank van Steenbergen mentions being grateful for the event to take place in the current challenging times. The program starts with a keynote speech followed by two presentations on mapping. The first presentation is given by Dr. Taye Alemayehu on the processed maps from the DREAMII Conference. The second presentation is given by Dr. Paul Roden, who is working within the GIZ-SDR team to strengthen local level planning. Furthermore, reflections will be provided by BoFED Afar and BoFED Somali Region. Thereafter, group discussion will take place based on five questions, around mapping. In today's event, there will also be a presentation by Dubale Admasu (USAID) on where mapping fits into improved woreda planning. Frank van Steenbergen gives the floor to Tezera Getahun to provide today's opening speech and wishes all participants a fruitful event.

Key note – Tezera Getahun (Executive Director, Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE))

Tezera Getahun provides a keynote as the opening of the Hybrid DREAM event.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear representatives of distinguished organizations, good morning.

I am pleased to deliver this opening speech to this new DREAM Hybrid Event.

As you may know, the DREAM process supports the coordinated development of the lowlands of Ethiopia. This hybrid event discusses the mapping of our development efforts in the lowlands, in particular at woreda level. What is necessary, is not only that we exert all our capacities to enhance the drought resilience of the lowlands, but also that we do this together in a coordinated way. Considerable development efforts take place to make use of the unique development potential of the lowlands and to work on the resilience of the lowlands. The amounts that are spent are substantial, but to achieve lasting impact more is needed than finance. There is a general feeling that more progress could be made, if efforts were better coordinated, if there would be more planning and direction at woreda level and if development systems were systematically built up. The current drought emergency is testimony that we need to do a lot better.

It is here that the mapping of all our different development interventions can make a very useful contribution. Mapping of all ongoing activities will tell us who is active where and what is being done in different places. With mapping we do not lose track of all the important efforts being done under different programs. This helps to connect the ongoing programs to the overall development vision of the woreda. It also helps to see how different activities can complement one another and come to better results. Mapping also allows us to see where activities are concentrated and which woredas are relatively left out. Given our still high vulnerability of droughts in the lowlands, this is very important.

This hybrid event follows up from the recent DREAMII Conference, organized from 15-18 March 2022 in Adama. This meeting brought 180 participants together to discuss and galvanize coordination and cooperation around the lowland programs and work on integrated capacity building. During this DREAMII event the mapping of development programs in the lowlands was started as well, using the inputs of representatives from many organizations active in the lowlands. In the dedicated sessions, all participants worked to highlight their programs in the different lowland woredas. Today we will present the full results of this work. The aim is to see what is where, who is where and whether the overview is reliable, and what parts are missing.

This hybrid events take place in both Semera, Jigjiga and online. I hope that during this DREAM event we can come to a joint opinion and plan on several questions. From my side there are five issues in particular that are important:

- 1) How can mapping improve the coordination of development activities under different lowland programs?*
- 2) How to best link mapping of development interventions with planning at woreda level?*
- 3) How to organize and improve mapping of development interventions?*
- 4) Would additional data sets be useful, or should we keep it basic?*
- 5) How can we further strengthen the coordination and planning at woreda level?*

I hope we can get these questions discussed and make a contribution to the coordination and better programming to create prosperity and lowland development. Finally, I am speaking to you as a person of the field, as a seasoned pastoralist advocate and as the representative of the Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE). PFE is dedicated to bringing positive changes in the livelihoods of pastoralist through capacity building, networking and partnership, good governance and climate change adaptation. At the same time, I speak as a Secretary of Core Advisory Team (major donors' consortium for lowland development) under the Ministry for Irrigation and Lowland Development. In all these capacities, I see that the critical mass of joint effort is so important – that we need each other to reinforce the impact of the development efforts and to move from aid dependency to strong resilient pastoralist livelihoods.

I wish you a productive DREAM session! Thank you very much.

Frank van Steenberg reflects on the keynote speech and thanks Tezera Getahun for his inspirational words. Then, the floor is given to Dr. Taye Alemayehu, who will present the mapping done on the DREAMII Conference.

Mapping Resources and Development Interventions in the Lowlands: Supporting Planning and Coordination at Woreda Level – Dr. Taye Alemayehu (MetaMeta)

Taye Alemayehu mentions that mapping has been important in his career and that it has become easier to make maps over time.

In the introduction of his presentation, he mentions that climate variability, resource degradation and drought are getting increasingly severe in pastoral and agropastoral Ethiopia, and that that demands a more coordinated effort. Data about the lowlands of Ethiopia are very scarce, even though the lowland communities have a deep understanding of the resources and know the area very well. In the lowlands, considerable development efforts are taking place, but more coordination is needed to bring resilience. This is in line with the general feeling that more progress could be made if there is proper planning and efforts are better coordinated. Mapping can serve as one of the powerful tools to assist in effective planning and coordination processes. In his presentation, he:

- Highlights the importance and methods of resource mapping and preparation of spatial district development plans.
- Elaborates on the results of the intervention mapping exercise during the DREAMII conference.
- Provides insights on visualization, validation, updating information and modification.

A few facts about (making) maps are provided:

- Almost everything in our day-to-day activities involves location.
- Maps are powerful visualisation tools. They can be easily understood with limited education. They can be explained quickly to decision-makers, for whom maps are helpful as an easy and fast communication tool with minimum bias.
- Today, maps can be made easily. Some data are freely available, while other data are available at low-cost. Also, open-source software and fast processing capacity have eased the tedious and difficult mapping process prevailing a few decades ago.
- Before making a map, it is important to think of the objectives one has.

Then, resources mapping for a district development plan is discussed. Its objectives are to:

- Identify available resources and assess the potential for development.
- Know the level of development and identify gaps.
- Use spatial information and community interest to develop a future plan by integrating findings with biophysical conditions.

It is crucial to select an acceptable/manageable planning unit: e.g. watershed, administrative unit, clan/sub-clan. Per case, what works might be different. The importance of a top-bottom approach in reaching consensus is discussed. This is needed as policymakers' interests are vital. In line with this, preparation of resource mapping is very important. The following points are important to consider regarding preparation:

- Prepare a base map based on the mission objective, e.g. administrative or watershed-based. Such a base map should show all necessary features that help stakeholders to identify intervention areas on the base map.
- Identify and invite community groups for the mapping exercise (elders, community leaders, women, youth). The interests of different groups might vary. Discussions might need to take place separately initially, to ensure all voices are heard.
- Use locally available materials to symbolize features, such as pebbles, sticks, leaves, etc.
- Agree on symbols.
- Carefully identify topics to be discussed during the PRA sessions:
 - Defining land and its purposes at the plenary.
 - Develop a resource map within the planning boundary.
 - Drawing the planning boundary (towns, villages, roads, rivers, natural resources).
 - Map existing land uses/landcover.
 - Discuss development challenges associated with current development, and issues such as land use/land cover, effects, causes and solutions.
 - Plan future developments.
 - Discussion development challenges – policy, regulatory framework etc.

The data gathered at the communities is then combined with the biophysical conditions. Multi-criteria analyses are undertaken to develop a spatial development plan for each planning unit based on the agreed country's development policy. The spatial plans of each planning unit are then merged to generate a district-level development plan.

Validation of the maps can take place via oral and secondary sources. Regarding field validation, one should consider sufficient control points and think of using high-resolution recent satellite images. While the planning process was top to bottom, this is the opposite for the validation process, as what is agreed by the community is a good guide for decision making. This contributes to creating a sense of ownership by introducing a new plan addressing the stakeholder's interests and also facilitates the signing of an MoU that ensures cooperation and policy support. Then, an implementation guideline and plan need to be developed. All actors can use the map as a planning tool.

The objective of the mapping exercise was to know who is doing what and where, and to thereby identify possible areas of cooperation and reduce the duplication of efforts, as well as use all spatial information to develop a future plan. This resulted in a map full of post-its of ongoing projects and efforts (Figure 1). It is important to use clear colours, large enough maps with enough details, and ensure sufficient facilitation of the process.

Outputs of the mapping exercises are maps in GIS and image formats, and interactive and editable maps (Figure 2). The attribute data can also be provided in an Excel / Word table, accompanied by a summary/analysis report. In the DREAMII Conference, 427 ongoing interventions in the pastoral and agropastoral lowlands of Ethiopia were identified in 1 hour by the 180 participants.

In the last part of his presentation, the use of commercial and open-source GIS packages is discussed, as well as Google Earth. However, Google Earth is subject to locational error, and it is hard to enter all acquired data there.



Figure 1 Part of the results of the mapping exercise at the DREAMII Conference

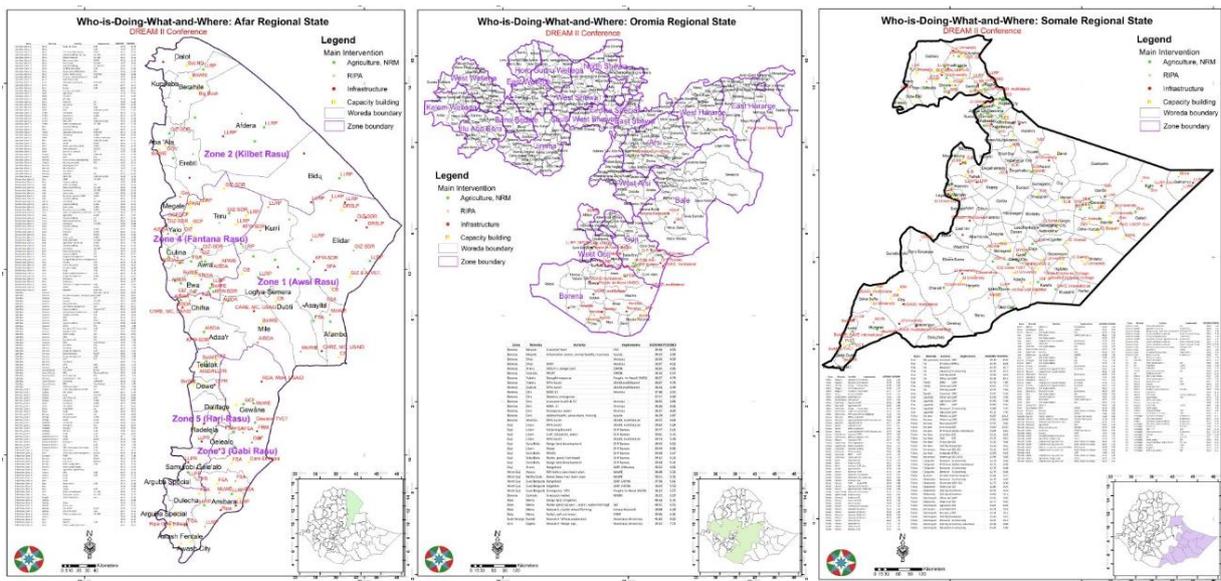


Figure 2 Maps per region

Data can be shared in multiple ways; e.g. via hardcopies, via the email option on Google Earth, via email (zipped GIS file, attribute data) and via USB sticks. Visualisation can take place as pictures, pdf, Google Earth, or GIS software, via which one can also update and improve the maps. Also on the DREAM website, one can download files to see the maps produced at and after the DREAMII Conference.

The presentation can be downloaded [here](#).

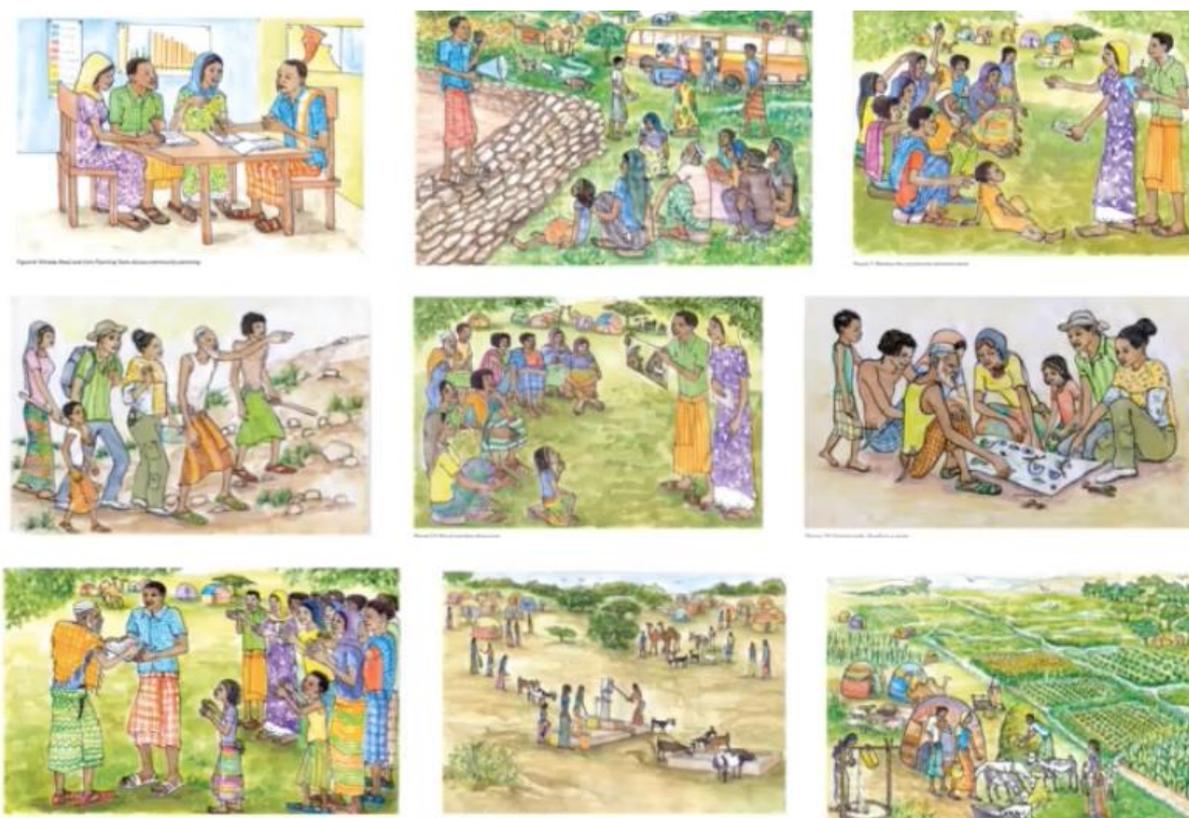


Figure 4 Infographic on lowland community planning approach

To support woredas in the planning process, technical advice is provided as well as the Participatory Community Activity Planning field guide, which supports informed and inclusive decision-making and budget allocation, covering a broad range of topics and approaches. Also, PRA tools in participatory community planning are provided via a manual as well as via trainings, via which the fundamental principles of participation are promoted.

Furthermore, regarding the DVRPU planning process, remote sensed and GIS data, and training on these tools for informed decision making are provided. Maps combine biophysical as well as social characteristics. This allows for the identification of dry valleys that are suitable for land rehabilitation via satellite imagery and a suitability matrix. Overall, this helps to identify the most suited areas for rehabilitation.

At the regional level, the planning process is supported too. There, a decision support tool is developed to coordinate land rehabilitation interventions. This tool is based on a geo-spatial database of DVRPU-related activities, actors and, community status. It is to be used for informed planning, identification and monitoring of interventions, and their impact (also via high-resolution maps) as well as improved efficiency and prioritization in resource use, both money and time.

Paul Roden concludes his presentation by addressing the serious gap in capacity, in the ability to coordinate activities amongst the different stakeholders and also to facilitate cooperation. It is not just about understanding who does what where and when, it is also about bringing about changes in organisational culture. What often happens at the woreda and regional level, is that staff is coming and going, which affects planning efforts. It is really about ensuring that planning is an integral part of development in the lowlands.

The presentation can be downloaded [here](#).

Responses from Afar and Somali Regions

Usman Mohammed (Afar region, Bureau of Agriculture, Livestock and Natural Resources Management (BoLAND)) thanks the presenters for their important presentations on mapping. He mentions that it is crucial to work with a small planning unit, especially in the lowlands, where planning is difficult due to the landscape. That is why the ministry of agriculture works in two ways; one is the community micro watershed and rangeland development. These are the smallest units to plan. Due to capacity, resources, and time constraints, it is difficult to map at larger scales. Another challenge is related to the community development map, which is difficult to make and needs to be converted in a digital map. Reflecting on the presentations from Dr. Taye Alemayehu & Dr. Paul Roden, it is mentioned that there are more approaches beyond PRA, which are also very important. Furthermore, capacitation is important in order to facilitate any mapping activities in which communities should be at the starting point. Their own maps and ways of thinking should be considered there. Community participation is very vital, especially in the light of today's challenges. Mapping can help to create collaboration, but time and resources are needed to enable this.

Badal Kenedi (Somali region, bureau of Agriculture (BoANRD)) thanks the organisers and participants of today's hybrid DREAM event. He mentions the importance of collaboration, cooperation and coordination and the importance of mapping in the lowlands at woreda level.

Plenary discussion

Following the presentations and reflections from Somali and Afar, there is room for an open discussion.

Ahmed Adem mentions that in the presentation by Dr. Paul Roden he talks about sustainability, but that the social aspects and the environmental aspects are also important. Furthermore, he mentions that it is important to let the relevant stakeholders participate in events, such as today's hybrid event. Lastly, he mentions that graphs and pictures might be more useful in communication than formal PowerPoints. He also advises to having translations to local languages of the English that is spoken in the DREAM event and used in documentation.

Dubale Admasu asks if the Somali and Afar teams could reflect on the links between the presentations and LLRP, PNRM, and the USAID-supported programs.

Tesfa Manaye asks about the plan of distributing maps to the woredas. He mentions that it can be downloaded from the websites, but that might not be sufficient for the communities in the woredas. Also, he wonders if the datasets will be updated accordingly in the future and what the role of the woredas will be here. He thinks that woredas should be included in the updating.

Dr. Paul Roden reflects quickly on the points made earlier about success stories, local languages and environmental aspects. He firstly reflects on the mapping of what is there now and what might be there in the future, and the challenges faced in there, as criteria need to be used. Regarding sustainability, he mentions that environmental, social and economic aspects are all very important. He also mentions that local languages will be used in some of the further communications and documents.

Dr. Taye Alemayehu reflects on the differences between mapping what is done now and how the future might look like (planning) and the boundaries of woredas-related challenges in planning. Dr. Taye Alemayehu reflects on the current implementation of district plans which seems to work well. He tells about his experience in map-making on a watershed level and mentions that maps can be used in problem-solving, when communities are involved. Maps are essential in dialogues. A good planning exercise is done by a multi/inter-disciplinary team, because many different aspects need to be considered. He also mentions that, in the past, flyers in local languages with clear maps and a bit of text worked very well. Also, regarding updating the database, he mentions that that can be done quickly via an app or SMS. Then, he shows Google Earth and how it has been used in previous mapping exercises, which is very user-friendly and which makes it very easy to share location data. More professional tools (such as QGIS, ArcGis) can be used for real map making, for which a few days of training would be needed.

In the chat, it is meanwhile mentioned that it also worth to consider the mapping and planning experiences of the past, and on what works and what does not work. Working with communities and traditional leaders might be even more critical in the light of the high turnover rates at the woredas.

Parallel group discussion in Semera, Jigjiga and virtual

Following the presentations and reflections, the parallel group discussions take place in Semera, Jigjiga and online. After the 30 minutes discussions, the outcomes of the three groups are shared in the plenary session.

How can mapping improve the coordination of development activities under different lowland programs?

- Mapping will contribute to coordination by having more information on what is happening on the ground. This will limit overlapping, lead to better spending of resources, or avoid gaps and overlaps and contribute to investing in the right time and place.
- Maps can help to find the complementarity between projects from different organisations.
- It will improve the linkages of different stakeholders. Their relationships will improve with maps as an information sharing platform.
- Different stakeholders and partners are present in the different woredas. Mapping is a crucial element to show and know which activities are happening where, and to know who is doing what, where and when. This also helps to identify gaps.
- Maps can be the foundation for an MOU with local governments. This then improves the accountability. Mapping can engage decision-makers and communities.
- A joint plan where all sign of on is a good basis for cooperation, creating continuity.
- Preferably use a standard format.
- It is important to spread maps widely and make them accessible.

How to best link mapping of development interventions with planning at woreda level?

- Make community mobilisation
- Make inclusive planning at woreda level in which all stakeholders are involved.
- Use mixed approaches (bottom-up & top-down), which will complement each other.
- Use well-reachable websites and printed maps so woredas can easily access the maps.
- Mapping and planning need a clear purpose.
- Communication to all and with all is important. Maps are a great communication tool themselves.

- The planning unit is of vital importance and is different for lowlands compared to other areas. Working with Kebele / watersheds did not work optimally, while working with rangeland, landscape level, and grazing unit worked best. Under the right unit, it can be led by communities.
- Mapping can be used beyond NRM, such as for example for social services and monitoring.
- Maps can be further developed given the development of mapping technology.

How to organize and improve mapping of development interventions?

- Link existing traditional mapping systems and indigenous knowledge with GIS / Google mapping system or/and other tools
- Some of the discussions have been around for a long time and are not easy to solve. That is a constant struggle, but, over the past decades several things have improved.
- Dealing with high turnover rates of staff needs to be addressed too. This is very important in capacity building as invested capacity might not stay. There are two ways to deal with this; by reducing turnover (think of recruitment, salary packages, educational incentives) or by reducing the impact of turnover. That can be done by anchoring woreda mapping at BOFED (higher level) but also by:
 - Open access databases
 - Acknowledge the importance of traditional leaders
 - Acknowledge the institutional memory of NGO staff and making them follow standard unified approaches in terms of mapping.
- Platforms, networking and information help to achieve improvements in organising and improving mapping of development interventions.

Would additional data sets be useful, or should we keep it basic?

- Additional data sets are needed for verification.
- Additional data sets are needed, including dynamic data.

How can we further strengthen the coordination and planning at woreda level?

- There should be more connections between programs, projects, and offices existing at woreda level in the form of a cluster level collaboration. The cluster should have a platform for information sharing either by weekly, biweekly, or monthly meetings.
- A TOR and working tools should be developed.
- A joint and inclusive action plan, including communities, should be produced.
- Commitment and regular flow should exist.
- Technology should be considered, and the data sets should be updated when needed.
- Universities and research institutes could take part in strengthening and updating data sets and maps, as well as contribute to policy making.

The backbone program and the role of improved woreda planning: where does mapping fit it? - Dubale Admasu & Jennifer Karsner (US-AID)

Frank van Steenberg invites Dubale Admasu & Jennifer Karsner to present the backbone program and the role of improved woreda planning, including a reflection on the outcome of the discussion groups.

Jennifer Karsner explains that USAID has, in the past 1.5 years, taken part in codesign and cocreation methodology of a unified, comprehensive development plan at the national, regional, and woreda level, in the light of the needed improvement in planning and coordination. Working at all these levels and building on work what has already been done by ministries is acknowledged as important. This has led to a design workshop with the following main objectives (to be clarified jointly with the Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland and GIZ):

- Create a common understanding on national pastoral development policy its vision and major strategies for pastoral areas resilience building
- Agree on root causes for lack of strong coordination and partnership in lowlands for resilience building
- Identify strategic actions to improve resilience coordination and partnership in lowland,
- Agree on roles/responsibilities of leading and participating organizations to establish /strengthen and manage cross sectoral strategic and programing coordination and partnership for lowland areas resilience building at different level,
- Develop action plan to strengthen/establish active Technical Working Groups at different levels, other approaches to be defined
- Identify and agree on major steps to establish learning and knowledge management for resilience building

Dubale Admasu goes through the agenda of the design workshop, which includes keynote speeches, presentations, a gallery walk, and several discussions. Stakeholders (including governments, universities, and NGOs) will build and design the program together in the workshop. Aimed is to build on what is already there and what has been learnt in other projects. Therefore, there will be presentations, e.g., from the Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands, on several policies and programs in the workshop. Also, outputs from the DREAM conferences will be considered in the workshop to build the backbone program. Specifically, developing the backbone project's concept note is central on the second day.

Wrap-up and closure

Frank van Steenbergen summarises today's conference; he mentions the presentation on mapping efforts at the DREAMII Conference, the importance of mapping in bringing people together and identifying opportunities, and the constraints and challenges faced.

Adrian Cullis emphasises the importance of coordination to avoid duplication, especially as resources are scarce. Coordination requires people to be committed, and it is good to see this reflected in the initiative from amongst others USAID, GIZ, and the World Bank. More coordination might require us to take a step back and work differently if needed. A long way to go, but this webinar has been a good one to discuss this important topic.

Frank van Steenbergen thanks all participants for their active involvement in the hybrid event.

The presentations of the Hybrid Event can be found on the website: <https://sdr-africa.com/>

The maps and datafiles of the interventions can be accessed [here](#).

