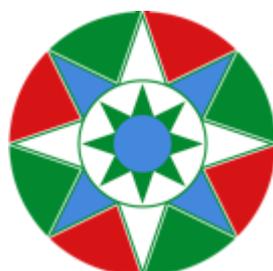


DREAM II – Pre-Conference 3 – Proceedings – 26-11-2020

‘Capacitation for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in lowland areas’



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Abstract

The Third DREAM II Pre-Conference took place on November 26th, 2020. More than 80 participants came together online and at venues in Semera and Jijjiga. The Pre-Conference discussed the capacitation and enabling of improved coordination and cooperation in the lowland programs. The program started with a welcome by the program manager of the GIZ SDR-ASAL program, followed by a kick-off presentation on behalf of the Lowland Livelihood Resilience Program (LLRP), one of the largest programs operational in Ethiopia's lowlands. The meeting continued with a plenary discussion – led by the Initiative Group formed after the Second DREAM II Pre-Conference. This discussed current coordination structures and based on this overview what would be priorities in improved coordination and cooperation. Next three break out groups discussed specific ways forward: the composition of a task force, its agenda and the platform to use. The meeting was closed by an outlook towards the future activities up to the DREAM II conference and a closing speech by HE State Minister Ato Sani Redi.

Opening remarks – Dr. Kaba Urgessa Dinssa

Dr. Kaba Urgessa Dinssa welcomed all participants and speakers to the 3rd Pre-Conference. He explains the focus of the conference and goes through the program of the Pre-Conference. He mentioned in his opening remarks that the Pre-Conference will help in preparing for the DREAM II Conference in 2021.

Opening speech - Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker (GIZ SDR-ASAL)

Dr. van den Akker opened the Third DREAM II Pre-Conference, emphasizing that: This time the focus is on capacitation in the Pre-Conference: focusing on what is needed to capacitate an effective coordination and cooperation between all stakeholders and their activities, for the benefit of the lowland areas with their pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. She explained that all stakeholders would need to work together as in an orchestra, the music band and the dancers. For a performance to become a real performance, all the different dancers and musicians have to practice and keep practicing. They musicians and dancers also need the space and to have the physical condition to go through a whole dance and deliver a performance without losing breath. She made the point that whilst we are in a good mood working here, we need to discuss how to get the necessary tools for really good coordination.

“The last two Pre-Conferences we heard a lot about extremely interesting initiatives, through governmental projects, through NGOs, through platforms, representing pastoral issues for the national development partners, even for the German Development Cooperation. In the meantime, an overview was created about what we can find on the ground. And, very astonishing, we found platforms, platforms and again platforms, at least following their names, with the mandate to coordinate. What is important now is to take critical stock of these and see how all is directed. Is it delivering a joint and good future, that helps to raise the treasures that the lowlands have to offer?

She asked: “How could we come to a coordinated cooperation between all stakeholders and beneficiary where it is necessary? What is needed for that? What tools, perhaps tools are missing, to allow the regional government to be strong directors of the concert, dance performance? We will not be able to finalize the topic today, but we will start diving strongly into it. And there comes the condition, the performance condition, we have to work that we can go on after this Pre-Conference. I think that, like me, you will also be overwhelmed when seeing, in a few minutes, the multitudes of coordination already existing, at least in theory. To ensure a real outcome of the Pre-Conferences,

we need to go one step further, not only discussing and taking together what we have, but also coming into an action to overcome the questions and the bottlenecks we are all feeling.”

Kick-off presentation Lowland Livelihoods Resilience Program (Ato Seid Omer – National Coordinator LLRP)

Ato Seid Omer (and Esayas Nigatu Gebremeskel) presented the LLRP (Lowland Livelihoods Resilience Program). This six-year project started in 2019 is implemented by the Ministry of Peace (see figure 2 for project implementation arrangements). The objective is to improve livelihood resilience of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Ethiopia. The project, funded by IDA, IFAD, GoE and communities will build resilience through absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacity. It will address four major bottlenecks:

1. Low productivity and limited market linkages
2. High vulnerability of prevailing livelihoods
3. Limited livelihood diversification opportunities
4. Limited social and economic service delivery

The program is active in 6 regions, in which 100 woredas have been selected (figure 1). Three main components of the program are:

1. Integrated Rangeland Development and Management
2. Livelihoods Improvement and Diversification
3. Improving Basic Services and Capacity Building

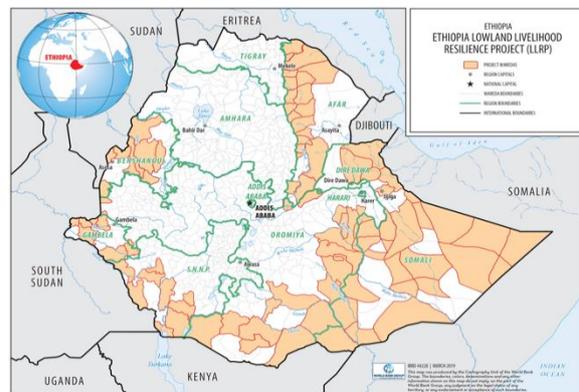


Figure 1 LLRP Geographical locations (national)

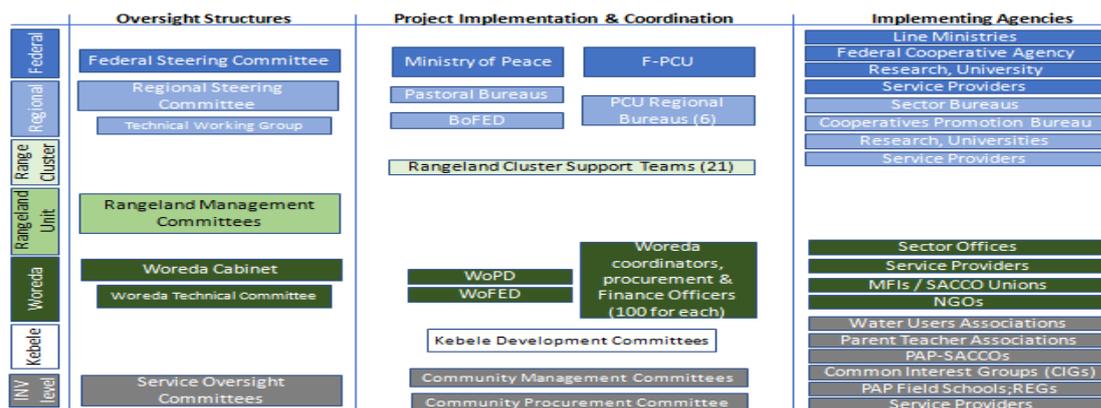


Figure 2 Project Implementation Arrangements

Plenary discussion existing coordination structures

Following the Third DREAM II Pre-Conference an Initiative Group was formed bringing together government, development partners, civil society and research organizations. Sara Worku (Alliance2015) - Ato Abenet Mengistu (Ministry of Agriculture / PSNP) - Ato Dubale Admassu (USAID) on behalf of the Initiative Group. Sara Worku (Alliance2015) opens this presentation by explain that following the first two Pre-Conferences, an Initiative Group has been set up which started to map the current coordination structures at different levels (see figure 3 – incorporating the participants suggestions). She explains that for the picture to be completed input from participants is appreciated.

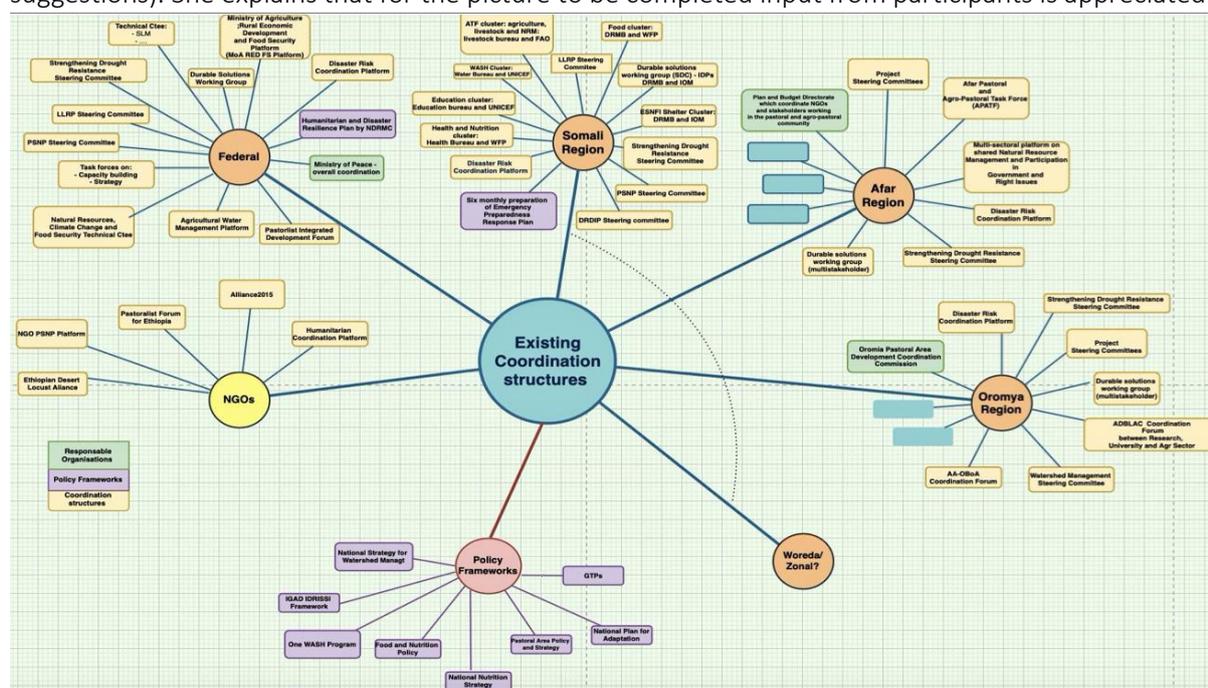


Figure 3 Current Coordination Structures - elaborated by Meta Meta with input of the Initiative Group and participants of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Pre-Conference

Ato Abenet Mengistu (Ministry of Agriculture / PSNP) continues the presentation, after which there is time for feedback, discussion and comments which are listed below.

- Project steering committees in Somali region were missing from the mind map and were updated, such as PSNP Steering Committee and DRDIP Steering Committee.
- Need to differentiate between project and program coordination
- It is good to document all available coordination structures, but we also to start small and not suffer from too great an "ambition"

After the input from the participants, Ato Dubale Admassu (USAID) continues the presentation from the Initiative Group. He presents the main challenges, one of them being a lack of an overall framework for coordination in the lowlands, towards coordination and cooperation. Others are:

- Roles and Responsibilities: we need to clarify roles and responsibilities and strengthen leadership among the government ministries for coordination and collaboration:
- A main level for improved coordination is at regional woreda (and zonal) level – here structures and planning needs to be strengthened for instance in the shape of Woreda Integrated Development Plans. Local traditional leaders could be part of woreda level coordination

- Some coordinating structures may be best combined – such as Steering Committees of main Investments Programs
- Academic and research organizations are largely absent from coordination structures – yet could play an important role in knowledge management, capacity building and facilitating role for improved coordination and collaboration
- NGOs appear though active appear less present at regional level in the different co-ordinating structures
- Private sector in spite of a larger role is absent from co-ordination and cooperation mechanism
- Connection between humanitarian and resilience/development programs may need to be improved

In the subsequent discussion the need for more cooperation is emphasized, with the government in the lead. We need to move beyond coordination and into cooperation. All this requires a lot of engagement, for which commitment and responsibility are essential. The different stakeholders need to be accountable to the greater common good for the lowlands rather than projecting their own project activities.

Discussion groups

Following the earlier discussion on the existing coordination ‘landscape’ and the areas for improvement, the Pre-Conference continued with discussion in break-out groups on the operational steps to move to closer coordination and cooperation. Three parallel groups (online and physically in Jijiga and Semera) discussed the details of the formation of a task force, of which the Initiative Group is a first step, as well the immediate actions and use of a platform. To provide food for thought the key elements of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and The Accra Agenda for Action (2008) were highlighted: more coordination is needed to prevent overstretching of the system and we need to harmonize and simplify our management systems.

The breakout groups each discussed 5 questions in particular:

(1) What should be role of task force (in strengthening coordination considering existing mechanism?)

- Improve and strengthen the coordination based on existing mechanisms
- Make an assessment of existing platforms + their effectiveness and also ensure functioning of existing mechanisms and find opportunities for further integration. This includes identifying gaps in cross-sectoral and multi-level coordination, focus on (prevention of) overlap, and thinking of how to make up for the missing high-level coordination. The task force can also function as type of think tank
- For doing so, the task force may hire consultants for example, if resources allow.
- ToR is very important for higher level resilience coordination, clearly defining roles and responsibilities – roles for governments, institutions and academics and thus to define roles of stakeholders. Also, a general framework for how to continue as a general task force is important and the preparation of common platforms
- Ensure/ promote accountability and commitment of the stakeholders
- Task force should also look for additional best practices from elsewhere and for resources – especially on how to pool together resources

- The task force can work with the responsible ministries to come to an overall plan of strengthened coordination support government in integrating plans.
- Furthermore, a task force can do some analysis on financial procedures and ask government about procedures.
- Also, as cross-sectoral is difficult to achieve, single, to be shaped, topics could be followed.

(2) Who should be in the task force (to make it inclusive but also effective)?

- Government should lead, also according to Paris declaration.
- MoP, MoA, all ministries having a resilience mandate.
- Per region: all (relevant) government bureaus.
- Academic and research institutions (i.a. Universities of lowland, Haramaya University)
- Involvement at woreda/community level (community based organisations)
- Clan leaders – authorities and representation for the communities
- Women and youth associations
- NGOs
- Development partners
- Private sectors
- All implementing partners

(3) What would be the road map of activities for the task force in the six months to strengthen coordination?

- Get to know the different actors
- Development of a comprehensive, task identification, action/work plan with a timeline
- Stakeholder analysis followed by multi-stakeholder workshops, including decision makers
- Stock taking of existing platforms and experiences and gaps and weaknesses identification
- Draft ToR with involved institutions → comprehensive plan development (time, place and task division)
- Decide who will lead national, regional resilience efforts → organizing structure
- Create a common understanding between stakeholders
- Get to know different actors (implementing or donors) active in lowland areas → stakeholder mapping
- Make inventory of projects in these areas
- Organize multi-stakeholder workshops – including decision makers
- Establish means of information exchange and promote cooperation
- Monitoring tool development like technologizing platforms

(4) What practical platform meetings could be organized in the next six months to support coordination and to promote exchange?

- Apart from the importance of a spirit of cooperation, exchanges around topics of common interest in the lowlands could be organised.
- Introduction meeting to present identified gaps and way forward
- Specific meetings with decision makers to communicate what is being done by the task force and what they need to do to support. Involvement from government side is thus needed.
- Establishing and linking regional, zonal and woreda level coordination

(5) Who do you suggest being contacted by the task force?

- Main decision makers to be informed, i.e. the Ministries (Peace, Agriculture, Education, Health and Water) and regional bureaus.

- Regional steering and technical committees
- Other stakeholders including line bureaus
- Local leaders, elders, women and youth groups and religious leaders

Wrap-up (Dr. Frank van Steenberg)

Many ideas have been presented and shared today, and what has emerged is the important need for a task force, in order to understand what is happening and go beyond the project level. Also, it has become clear that active engagement with everybody is important. Regarding the task force and its composition, there seems to be consensus on members and its leadership; the government. This role needs to be cherished and very strong. Regarding the road map, several important things have been mentioned; to understand what is happening, identify good practices in setting up effective coordination mechanisms and also good practices on what is happening on the ground in the lowlands. We should not forget we are all doing important and dignified work in the lowlands, representing a huge potential, as was said, but this is also on the area where most people live on the hard edge, as said in the first Pre-Conference. Next steps will be taken, based on all contributions and the Initiative Group, that should be applauded for putting a lot of depth into the discussion of today, being a first corner stone of a Task Force.

Way forward (Dr. Martin Maurer & Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker)

Dr. Martin looks back to the DREAM Conference in 2019 and the three Pre-Conferences in November 2020. He furthermore proposes a timeline towards the physical DREAM II Conference September 2021. Before this Conference, three follow-up hybrids Pre-Conference are proposed to take place, as well as meetings, presentations and discussion (physical, online, or hybrid) on a variety of topics, to keep the momentum after the Pre-Conferences up to the next main event.

Furthermore, there are plans to formalize the Initiative Group into a task force, by the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Peace.

Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker states that we now need to work on keeping the momentum and emphasized the taskforce, being set up, and creating a road map and milestones to achieve a better coordination of all our activities, respecting and taking as a background the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. She mentioned that It would be a real good performance of this group if the effects and the different milestones could be presented during the DREAM II Conference, which will hopefully be possible in September in 2021 in Jijiga.

Closing Speech H.E. Ato Sani Redi

H.E. Ato Sani Redi, State Minister of Agriculture, closed with the following speech:

“Dear distinguished guests, dear representatives from the international organizations, development cooperation organizations, the regional government representatives, NGOs, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed.

It was a pleasure for me to follow your discussions during the 3rd Pre-conference of DREAM II - “Capacitation for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in the lowland areas of Ethiopia”.

I highly appreciate the engagement of you all to bring forward this important initiative, with the involvement of the stakeholders that play such a key role in the lowlands.

I perceive a sense of high energy and willingness for active engagement, especially to mention the initiative group members, with all participants showing inspiring examples and potentials for scaling, and research organizations disclosing their abilities to also play a larger role in a coming task force.

As mentioned at the end of the 1st Preconference: ‘we need to have commitment – we owe it to the people of the lowlands. Every milestone on the road will be rewarding, though it will take effort to realize it. And the Ministry of Agriculture does not stand alone - specially to mention the initiative of USAID and the Ministry of Peace.

To achieve our targets along the road map outlined today, I would like to highlight important aspects for the next part of the process:

- *A broad task force strengthening effective and inspiring coordination;*
- *A review of the different coordination arrangements narrowing the focus on what platforms are probably most effective to use.*

Saying this I would ask you not to wait - start with exchanges between you and the different programs in a common task force. Utilize the DREAM vehicle for linking between all actors at all levels.

The Ministry of Agriculture is prepared to commit itself to take over leading responsibilities, with the following guiding principles:

- *Using the rules of good coordination;*
- *Treating all involved platforms and organizations as allies;*
- *Not going alone – we understand the world of others;*
- *Give and take – working within overall framework and goals;*
- *Get going quickly – we will be active in continuous DREAM meetings, heading for the next physical conference in Jijiga in September 2021;*
- *Giving the Task Force all support and wish them to very much succeed.*

Let me finish with some thoughts on DREAM(s), which is the conferences title and inspiration at the same time. How do you we now transfer DREAMs into practice? To achieve a big dream, you need to believe in yourself - you all proofed this by joining here. Furthermore, dreaming is nothing without action. If we have a look on our today’s achievements, we are on a very good way to realize our ‘dreams’, and therefore I want to close with the following recommendations:

- *Make it concrete and tangible*
- *Put a Time Frame to It*
- *Dream Big and Vividly*
- *Ignore the Naysayers*
- *Share Your Dream with Others.*

I therefore wish the participants of the Pre-Conference to keep this spirit during the following DREAM and task force activities, on behalf of our ministry and the government of Ethiopia.”

