

Dilla University hosted a workshop on policy inputs drawn from various large-scale research projects findings. A policy brief input workshop on selected large-scale research project findings jointly organized by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer and the Directorate for Research Publication, Ethics, and Dissemination, which are funded by Dilla University, was held at Oda Ya'a campus on June 27, 2025 G.C.

Misganu Legesse (PhD, Asso. Prof.), director for the Research, Publications, Ethics, and Dissemination Office at Dilla University, in his opening speech mentioned that various research projects were conducted at the university in the fiscal year and many goals were achieved. He also recalled that various research conferences, workshops, reviews, researchers' capacity-building trainings, research management system digitalization, research thematization activities that align with the vision and missions of the University of Applied Science, research ethics and incentive packages policy guideline development, collaboration and partnership establishment with other institutions, researchers incentives for those who have published in reputable journals, and securing the reputability of the three Dilla University-hosted journals, namely AJHSM, DJU, and EJED, and other related activities had also taken place. Different research conferences, namely, the 14th National Research Conference, the mathematics conference, the 8th National and International Research Conference, and research validation workshops, were also held during the fiscal year. Lastly, he invited Habtamu Temesgen (PhD) to deliver opening speech remarks on the workshop.

Habtamu Temesgen (PhD, Asso. Professor), Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer at Dila University, in his opening remark, welcomed the audience and made a brief remark on local, national, and international impacts achieved by Dilla University. He also mentioned that the university is conducting numerous studies and research projects to alleviate the existing problems. He has mentioned that the university is working on research projects and activities by thematizing, digitalizing, and collaborating on the research based on the differentiation mission of Dilla University as an applied university. He expressed his satisfaction that the sector has fully accomplished its annual plan by preparing five policy briefs for the fiscal year, calling it a delightful achievement. He also emphasised that digitalizing the research management system has a paramount significance in assuring the visibility, transparency, and workability of research activities in an accountable fashion to enhance outcome-based professional responsibilities and the wise use of existing resources. He has also added that the university is working for the benefit of the community, the nation, the scientific community, and the policymakers as well. Cognizant of this, the university is working in line

with the African Prosperity goal for the betterment of the future of African society in particular and the world in general.

Dr. Habtamu also emphasized that presenting research findings in a format suitable for policymakers and implementing bodies is a crucial aspect of the recent research goals. He specified that Dila University is a leader among institutions in the country for its research finance management, as evidenced by its receipt of a global quality assurance certificate from the African Academy of Sciences. He indicated that this achievement demonstrates the institution's commitment to continuously modernizing its practices. Saying this, Dr. Habtamu has invited Mr. Shimelis Lema, the delegate of the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Shimelis Lemma, a senior expert for research and Dissemination in the higher education development sector who is a delegate from the Ministry of Education, recalled that past research efforts had yielded unsatisfactory results because the ministry and higher education institutions focused primarily on teaching and learning. He also mentioned his appreciation for participating in such a remarkable policy brief, which is a new paradigm that should flourish in Ethiopian research practices. He mentioned that, due to recent reforms that give high priority to research on education, health, and agriculture, encouraging results are now being recorded, and he stated that Dila University is making a significant contribution of its share.

The policy brief workshop, which was drawn from the five large-scale research projects outputs funded by Dilla University and other stakeholders, was presented. Firstly, Berhanu Mekonnen (PhD, Asso. Prof.) and Mr. Adane Hailu (PhD Fellow) and their team presented their large-scale research project findings-based policy brief under the theme title “Human Capital Development in Ethiopia: Sustaining the Unsustainable.” The key lesson drawn from this project policy brief is ‘Graduate Employability in Ethiopia.’ As a problem, the high graduate unemployment is driven by a systemic disconnect between university curricula and labor market needs, not a lack of graduates. The current system produces graduates the economy cannot readily absorb. So, the higher education system in Ethiopia has substantial potential to improve graduate employability, but this requires strategic and coordinated reform.

So, the policy brief is aimed at addressing curriculum misalignment, empowering higher education institutions, promoting job-driven program development, enhancing inclusivity and access, and establishing a measurement framework for employability. A commitment to these reforms will strengthen the link between higher education and the labor market, ultimately enhancing the employability of graduates and contributing to national development.

Secondly, Mr. Fetene Balise has also presented his research team's large-scale research output titled "Bridging Governance Gaps and Adapting to Change: Climate-Resilient and Institutional Pathways to IWRM in the Genale Dawa River Basin." The summary of the key messages for policymakers is addressing the water crisis, stopping water pollution, protecting the water source, supporting pastoral livelihoods, building climate resilience mechanisms, improving management to prevent, and driving coordinated action.

Thirdly, Dr. Henok Mekonnen presented his research team's large-scale research output policy brief titled "Strategic Water Management in Abaya-Chamo Sub-Basin: Ensuring Equitable and Sustainable Allocation through Modeling-Based Scenarios." The key message of the brief was, 'The Abaya-Chamo Sub-Basin holds sufficient annual water resources to meet its growing demands, but only with deliberate and coordinated action. The Abaya-Chamo basin policy brief warns that while the Abaya-Chamo Sub-Basin has sufficient annual water resources to meet its needs, a growing crisis of water scarcity is emerging due to mismanagement, inefficient use, and a lack of coordinated planning. The report urges policymakers to take immediate, deliberate action to secure the region's water future. Researchers highlighted several critical areas requiring intervention and called for access to water storage infrastructure, maximizing the efficiency of irrigation systems that are operating at less than 50% efficiency, implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), effective planning and monitoring for the centralized system to monitor water availability, usage, and population trends, and availability of data, which is hindered by a critical lack of data. And finally, the report calls for strengthening local institutions, noting that local authorities often lack the training, resources, and authority to implement sustainable water strategies. The authors conclude with a clear call to action, stating that a commitment to these measures today "will ensure that water remains a driver of equitable growth and climate resilience for generations to come."

Finally, the workshop meeting was adjourned by the Research Vice President, Dr. Habtamu Temesgen, who thanked all participants for their constructive input.