

EthioLics foundation workshop Report

Nov. 10, 2022, Adama, Ethiopia



Acknowledgement

The organizing committee would like to thank Adama Science and Technology University for sponsoring and hosting the EthiopiaLics foundation Workshop events. The committee also extends its heartfelt appreciations to the AfricaLics secretariat for backing the creation of EthiopiaLics as a national chamber of AfricaLics. Finally, we extend our deepest gratitude to all our distinguished speakers and session moderators, facilitators, and stakeholders for their commendable work during the material day of the workshop.

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1. Background of the Workshop

1.1. Introduction

On November 10, 2022, Adama Science and Technology University's (ASTU) department of Technology and Innovation management (TIM), in collaboration with Addis Ababa University, University of Gonder and Haromaya University, had taken the initiative of establishing the Ethiopian Network for the Economics of Learning, innovation and competence Building systems (EthiopiaLics) as a network of Ethiopian researchers and scholars in the area of Innovation and Development. EthiopiaLics is as an Ethiopian chamber of AfricaLics. The workshop was designed to be held back-to-back with the 5th AfricaLics Conference which took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 9 to 11th November 2022.

The initiative was based on the AfricaLics secretariat's strategy of establishing 'NationaLics' or national hubs through encouraging and supporting its alumni and members in each country. Accordingly, there have been ongoing discussions among Ethiopian AfricaLics alumni and founding scholars, and key AfricaLics scientific Board (ASB) members about establishing an Ethiopian as part of the initiatives to create 'nationalists'. However, there was no any practical steps taken until October 2022 when the current founders started preparation for the foundation workshop. The AfricaLics Visiting fellows (AVFs) workshop held in Nairobi from Aug. 22- 25, 2022 that created opportunities for the fellows to make face-to-face discussions with home supervisors and mentors helped lay the basis for the birth of EthiopiaLics. The occasion offered Ethiopian AVFs, their home supervisors and mentors the opportunity to reach consensus on establishing EthiopiaLics and the way forward to realize with the support and encouragement of the ASB members. The foundation workshop was, thus, organized at ASTU as a culmination of the ongoing discussions and the commitments made during the Nairobi workshop.

EthiopiaLics envisions bringing together scholars, researchers, and policy analysts within the area of development, innovation, learning, and competence building to tackle challenges and facilitate solutions confronting Ethiopia and the region at large. To this end, EthiopiaLics is committed to promote research activities/projects dedicated to innovation and economic development; provide networking opportunities and increase access to quality training to enhance self-actualization and sustainable economic development in Ethiopia; provide opportunities for young and established innovation development scholars through conferences and dedicated online networking platforms; bridge the knowledge gap and facilitate competence building and transfer between established and upcoming scholars through training and mentorship.

1.2. Objective

The specific objectives of holding the Workshop at ASTU was:

- To officially launch the birth of ‘EthiopiaLics’ as a platform of Ethiopian scholars and researchers in the area of Innovation and Development
- To engage potential stakeholders and create awareness about what EthiopiaLics is and the background where it has descended from
- To create awareness about how EthiopiaLics would contribute towards National development strategy which puts the role of technology and innovation at the core of the journey towards Prosperity
- Convene policy makers and potential stakeholders to identify and discuss key areas of national interest where EthiopiaLics’s collaboration is needed. This was targeted towards shaping the future research and capacity building agenda, and finally
- To put the foundation of EthiopiaLics on strong institutional and social basis

1.3. Founding members and stakeholders

Founding members of the EthiopiaLics are Adama Science and Technology University, University of Gonder (UoG), Addis Ababa University institute of technology (AAiT), and Haromaya University (HU). Table 1 depicts the founding universities, their physical addresses, and respective representatives. Though these are founding members, other interested universities and policy think-tanks are expected to join later.

Table 1. Founding member Universities

S.N.	University	Physical address	Representative
1	Addis Ababa University, institute of Technology (AAiT)	Addis Ababa, Central Ethiopia	1) Dr. Ameha Mulugeta 2) Dr. Eng. Eshete Berhan
2	Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU)	Adama, Central Ethiopia	1) Dr. Abdi Yuya 2) Dr. Birku Reta
3	University of Gonder	Gonder, Northern Ethiopia	Dr. Demis Alamirew ¹
4	Haromaya University	Haromaya, Eastern Ethiopia	Dr. Getachew Shambel

In addition to the founding institutions, various potential stakeholders were invited to attend the foundational workshop namely Space Science Institute, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, Artificial Intelligence Institute, Oromia State University, Oromia Science and Technology Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, Gada Special Economic zone, and other invited institutes and centers

¹ Unfortunately, Dr. Demis could not participate due to family related emergency case that forced him to cancel his flight

from ASTU including entrepreneurship and incubation centers. The names of the invited potential stakeholders' institutions, representatives and their respective positions are listed below (table 2).

Table 2. Stakeholders and invited delegates

S.N.	Institution	Name	Position
1	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MiNT)	Dr. Bayisa Bedada	State Minister
2	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education	Dr. Eba Mijena	Director General
3	Consortium of Universities and Colleges in Oromia regional state (CUCO)	Dr. Fufa Esaya	Secretary
4	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Institute of Artificial Intelligence	Dr. Taye Girma	Deputy General Director
5	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Space Science and technology Institute	Mr. Abdissa Yilma	Director General,
6	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Agriculture	Mr. Efa Muleta	State Minister
7	The national regional government of Oromia Geda Special Economic Zone Authority	Mr. Motuma Temesgen	Managing Director
8	Ethiopian Public Administration Association; Oromia State University	Dr. Bacha Kebede	President
9	The national regional government of Oromia Science and Technology Development Agency	Dr. Lijalem Ayele	Deputy General manager
10	Oromia State University	Dr. Kokeb Demeke	Vice president

The justifications for inviting the potential stakeholders listed above relate to the links their organizational missions may have with EthiopiaLics. The specific roles and hence the importance of inviting representatives of three ministries and one university consortium can be given as follows.

1. **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MiNT):** It is the national body in charge of designing and implementing Ethiopia's technology and innovation policies which are believed to transform industrialization and national development. It is supposed to be the primary stakeholder and partner in any national initiatives by academia, policy think-tanks, development partners and other bodies. The invited representative was Dr. Bayisa Badada, state minister of the ministry.
2. **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education** is the main regulatory organ to which all higher education institutions are accountable.
3. **Ministry of Agriculture** is the ministry that shoulders the responsibility of leading the Agriculture sector, the backbone of Ethiopia's economy. Consequently, the ministry is among the top strategic partner with whom EthiopiaLics could collaborate. There are many ongoing projects under the ministry which have been financed under USA's 'Feed the Future' program and EU's 'innovation funds'.
4. **CUCO (Consortium of Universities and Colleges in Oromia regional state)** is a consortium established by over a dozen of public universities and colleges found in Oromia region, the largest

and the most populous of the 11 administrative regions in Ethiopia. CUCO has been institutionalized as a platform where researchers and academia from multi-disciplinary backgrounds convene towards a common goal of supporting regional and national developments through conducting problem-oriented research and consultancy services. The highest administrative organ of the consortium is a board constituting presidents of member universities and led by a chairman. The coordination office of CUCO has been designated a secretariat status and is headquartered in Addis Ababa. Dr. Fufa Esayas is a secretary in charge of leading the operational tasks of CUCO and coordinating the activities of consortium members. Therefore, the intention of inviting Dr. Fufa into the foundational workshop was to create the opportunity to link up with Innovation and Development scholars from all member universities and colleges under CUCO. The following are among the universities that can be accessed through CUCO.

- i). Ambo University
- ii). Bule Hora University
- iii). Arsi University
- iv). Haramaya University
- v). Jimma University
- vi). Madda Walabu University
- vii). Mettu University
- viii). Oromia State University...
- ix). Wollega University
- x). Oda Bultum University
- xi). Borena University
- xii). Dembi Dolo University

The remaining seven stakeholders have either joint Ph.D. programs with ASTU or have signed MoU to collaborate in community service and conducting research in the area of science, technology and innovation. Consequently, they were identified as potential partners for EthiopiaLics's future activities. All of the invited representatives participated and had active contributions in the workshop except Dr. Bayisa (MiNT), and Dr. Eba (MoE) who could not join the due to program overlap. With regards to the former, fortunately, we had Dr. Lijalem from Oromia Science and Technology Development Agency, the regional structure of Ministry of Innovation and Technology who acted on and promised to take the responsibilities on behalf of the ministry in addition to representing his own office.

In total, the workshop convened about 50 participants including the stakeholders invited from the federal and regional institutions. Among ASTU's community who participated in the workshop were 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students from the Technology and Innovation Management department of Adama Science and Technology University, department heads, school deans, directors and the university's high level management. Invited guests who made important contributions as panelists and active discussants include his excellency Mr. Abdisa Yilma (Director General, Space Science Institute), His excellency Mr. Muluken Kere (Director general, Artificial intelligence institute), his excellency Mr. Motuma Temesgen (CEO, Geda Special Economic Zone), and

2. Details of the Workshop activities

Session 1. Welcome speech

The foundation workshop began at 9:00 o'clock in the morning with a warm welcoming speech by Dr. Birku Reta, Dean of School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SoHSS). The dean appreciated invited guests, the university management, the president and vice presidents who availed themselves for the workshop sacrificing from their busy time schedules. Having said these, Dr. Birku invited Dr. Lemi Guta, president of Adama Science and Technology University to make an official opening speech.



Session 2. Opening speech

Following the welcoming speech, his Excellency Dr. Lemi Guta, president of Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU), made an opening speech with warm welcome to all the participants convened for the EthiopiaLics foundational workshop. In his speech, the President told the invited stakeholders and guests to have felt proud in hosting the historical event aimed at establishing EthiopiaLics, as a national chamber of AfricaLics, the African Chamber of 'GlobeLics', the larger network of innovation and development scholars around the Globe. Dr. Lemi explained his personal experiences and involvement with GlobeLics referring back to the 12th GlobeLics international conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2014 in which he was among the leading local organizers representing ASTU as the then research vice president.



The president emphasized the crucial roles that GlobeLics and AfricaLics would have in capacity building and then shaping innovation policies and strategies in countries like Ethiopia based on which he and his management had decided to support and allocate resources for hosting the workshop aimed at establishing the Ethiopian chamber. In his final remark, Dr. Lemi congratulated and thanked the organizing committee for organizing the event. The president concluded by expressing ASTU's commitment to support EthiopiaLics help realize its mission which he believed to be related to the university's mission.

Session 3. Overview of AfricaLics and the need for EthiopiaLics

In addition to his initial welcoming address, Dr. Birku made a short presentation on the justifications for having EthiopiaLics workshop at ASTU. He stated his talk by giving an overview of Globelics and AfricaLics from which EthiopiaLics has descended. He mentioned about AfricaLics's contributions in opening ASTU's graduate program in Technology and Innovation Management at SoHSS based on which he elaborated the communalities that the regional and national scholarly networks have with ASTU's mission and by extension to national development efforts. According to his speech, the level of commitment and support that the school discharged in realizing and operationalizing the initiative to establish EthiopiaLics emanated from these fact and the understandings reached about its future benefits. The simplest cases he used to explain was the issues that TIM department has in finding qualified professors to tech technology and innovation courses to Ph.D. students and supervision.

Dr. Birku envisioned that EthiopiaLics would help connect ASTU with other regional and global networks and platforms which could help in the teaching and supervision services required to run the School's Ph.D. program in TIM with better quality. To this end, Dr. Birku unfolded opportunities open for all Ethiopian Universities, think-tanks, practitioners and other related governmental and nongovernmental institutions to join the network both to contribute and make the best out of it. Finally, he expressed his hope to see EthiopiaLics founded on strong basis and become an independent platform where policy makers and scholars meet and exchange their ideas in addition to the expected roles in research and capacity building functions.

Session 4. Keynote Address

Following the opening speech, Dr. Bacha Kebede, founder and president of Ethiopian Public Administration Association made a keynote address to the participants. Dr. Bacha framed his speech around three topics: namely Why Inclusiveness and Co-innovation Matters? Higher Education (HE) Network and Scholarly relation for Sustainable Development; and the scholarly network (GlobeLics- AfricaLics- EthiopiaLics(localics) Pathways.



With regards to the question ‘Why Inclusiveness and Co-innovation Matters?’ Dr. Bacha elaborated his justifications on:

- Lessons from unintended consequences of one-size-fit all system and development programs (international, regional and national..... community) – wicked problems (climate change, inequality)
- Changing contexts and shift in development approach
- UN SDGs (2030) 17 Goals- No one left behind
- Africa Union Agenda 2063- 20 goals- Pan Africanism
- The fourth industrial revolution and limited African R&D infrastructure
- National development plans, politico-administrative and socio-economic challenges

Corresponding to the role of HE networks and scholarly relations such as GlobLeLics, AfricaLics, EthiopiaLics, and other ‘LocoLics’ (as he described), Dr. Bacha explained his thoughts in reference to the following four points:

- Agenda 2030 (UN), agenda 2063 (AU) and National Education policy and ESDP -provide the framework for teaching and research.
- Agenda 2063-promotes Pan-African education and research (African knowledge society) - investments in universities, science, technology, research, and innovation.
- But African universities remained Eurocentric and focus on teaching with little attention to research.
- Many challenges to integrate principles of SD in teaching and research even in the west.

Session 5. Experience sharing regarding University/academic research versus social problems

The morning session was concluded with two paper presentations and a panel discussion. The topic of the experience sharing session was ‘the role of academic research and think-tanks in addressing socio-economic problems.’ The presentations were made by Dr. Getachew Shambel from Haramaya University (presenter#1) and Professor Dr. Oliver Scholz from HTW University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, Germany (presenter#2). Summaries of their presentations are given below.

Presenter#1. Dr Getachew Shambel, Haramaya University, Ethiopia

The experience sharing session started with Dr. Getachew Shambel’s presentation about the ‘ARiHub’ innovation lab being led by him. It is an innovation incubation lab founded by Dr. Getachew himself using a small grant he had secured from MasterCard foundation. He passionately presented the successes he had in over seven startup beneficiaries who have managed to develop new products using locally available cheap materials and on the process of producing at commercial scale.



The presentation was extremely fascinating to all the participants who later suggested as something worth scaling up. Among the products that managed to penetrate the market are the sweet potato jam, hatchery machine made of cheap local materials, canned juice made of ‘Casimir’ fruit which is rarely used by locals, and the small-scale rabbit farming using innovative and easy farm practices.

Dr. Getachew explained the importance of collaborations, administrative supports, perseverance, extension works and awareness creation in getting the buy-ins of stakeholders. He underlined that partnership and networking are extremely useful if one needs to get a project succeed. After his presentation, several interesting issues were raised by participants and discussed. Some of the invited potential stakeholders promised to work with Dr. Getachew in areas where they have similar projects and initiatives.

Presenter#2. Prof. Dr. Oliver Scholz, HTW University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, Germany

In the week the work shop was held, Prof. Oliver Scholz was teaching advanced research to Ph.D. students of the Technology and Innovation management department as a visiting professor at ASTU. Prof. Oliver was invited to share his university’s experiences in relation to the ongoing workshop to establish EthiopiaLics. In spite of the surprise invitation he was offered, Professor Oliver Scholz kindly welcomed and made an exciting presentation on “How to make an impact for society”.

He started his speech what HTW University of Applied Sciences has contributed since its foundation in 1991. He shared the experiences under the title ‘One strategy three elements’. In perfect alignment with the workshop’s objective, the presenter shared the HTW University’s experiences over the last 3 decades in terms of the three elements: knowledge transfer, partnership and networking, and research services. The experiences he shared about the role of partnership and networking was, particularly, useful which he happened to explain the benefits HTW University had gotten as an active member of European Universities Association, the largest university associations in Europe.

In conclusion, Prof. Oliver unveiled the learnings they have driven from experiences which he summarized into the following six ingredients:

- Science needs decentralized commitment but requires institutional coordination
- Having a common understanding helped to shape ONE strategy
- We started early on to get buy-in from all relevant stakeholders
- Truth to be told: It does need funding. So you need to know where to find it *and* how to get it.
- Partnerships are grassroots movements. But you need an institutional backbone to perpetuate your networks
- Applied Sciences means also value add for industry and business. Getting them on board early is key.

At the end, the participants appreciated the values of the presentation to the newly established network and the aspired partnership with stakeholders at large.

Session 6. Panel discussions

The two experience sharing presentations were followed by a panel discussion on “How to influence Science, Technology and Innovation Policy and practices in Ethiopia” which was facilitated by Dr. Abdi, Department Head of Technology and Innovation Management in ASTU and focal person for establishment of EthiopiaLics. The Panelist were Dr. Tsegaye Mulugeta (Assistant Professor of Economics at Adama Science and Technology University), Mr. Muluken Kere (Director of Artificial Intelligence), Mr. Moruma Temesgen (CEO, Geda Special Economic Zone), and Dr. Eshete Berhan (Associate Professor at Addis Ababa University, Institute of Science and Technology).



The panel discussion started by a brief presentation of about Ethiopia’s status in terms of innovation indicators as compared to other comparators in Africa and the current policy landscape. The presentation was aimed to trigger discussions so that participants could get insights about the opportunities and challenges worth understanding for designing better policies. Representatives of all the stakeholders including Mr. Efa Muleta, Ministry of Agriculture, and Mr. Abdisa Yilma (Director General, Space Science Institute) made active participations during the panel discussion.

Session 7. Stakeholders’ reflections on the event

The afternoon session began with Stakeholders’ and collaborators’ discussions on EthiopiaLics’s foundation, its possible opportunities and the way forward. Dr. Abdi Yuya (HoD, Technology and Innovation Management) introduced the agenda and opened up for discussion. The discussions mainly focused on practical issues about the way forward including steps and procedures required to institutionalize EthiopiaLics and potential areas of future collaborations. The session started with brief introduction about the experiences of GlobeLics and AfricaLics by Abdi Yuya, an AfricaLics alumnus.

The introductory briefing focused on how these global and regional networks were founded and how they had managed to reach out to Ph.D. students and early career researchers all over the world and Africa to help them develop their knowledge and research capabilities in the areas of innovation and development along with the corresponding impacts. The speaker stressed his personal case as a person who has benefited the most explaining how AfricaLics had helped him overcome the difficulties encountered along

his Ph.D. journey. Then, on behalf of the founding members, Mr. Abdi went on elaborating the aspirations behind establishing EthiopiaLics as an Ethiopian chamber tasked with not only doing similar things like AfricaLics and GlobeLics, but committed to do more along the common missions, if needed. Finally, the floor was opened for the stakeholders to reflect on and discuss by throwing the following key questions to be focused:

1. How much does the initiative make sense to you and the institutions you represent?
2. Given the aspirations attached to EthiopiaLics's foundation, how can the potentials be exploited towards national and regional development efforts?
3. What advises do you have towards institutionalizing and operationalizing EthiopiaLics from the point of views of Ethiopia's legal and institutional framework?
4. How can we put EthiopiaLics's foundation on strong base and make it sustainable (Commitments from the point of view of the tradition of Ethiopian scholars' perspectives and resources required)
5. What are the key recurring gaps in research and capacity building EthiopiaLics can help fill? How can we make the best out of it?
6. What immediate issues do you want EthiopiaLics incorporate in its 2023?



During the discussion, all the stakeholders and guests expressed their appreciations and gave their testimonies about the importance of having such scholarly networks. Their reflections were extremely encouraging and filled with many issues of practical importance and applications with respect to each stakeholders' organizational missions. All the speakers expressed their appreciations about the establishment of an independent network of multidisciplinary backgrounds that can help fill knowledge gaps in the field of technology and willing to contribute to national innovative efforts. Among the major areas participates would like to be emphasized are: Tapping the power of innovation and technology in

natural resource and environmental conservation, development and use of modern technologies to boost agricultural productivity and hence food security, green energy technology and circular economy, Smart city development and resource planning and any projects that would feed into the national goal of building digital Ethiopia in 2025 (E.C). Finally the participants had signed the workshop minute as an indicator of confirmation of their commitments to engage with EthiopiaLics in areas where they think are gainful to collaborate.

Session 8. Virtual Meeting with AfricaLics Scientific Board

At first it was hoped that workshop participants would virtually attend one of the events of the AfricaLics conference that was undergoing in Yaoundé. After realizing that wouldn't be possible, it was suggested to have a short meeting with ASB members, who were attending the ongoing conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon, over their lunch time. Accordingly, the organizing committee of the EthiopiaLics foundation workshop had booked to a smart room that would help all participants attend the planned meeting. However, the virtual meeting could not be made due to difficulties encountered in internet connection.

Session 9. Closing remark

Towards the end of the foundational workshop, formation of EthiopiaLics was officially declared; a certificate was awarded to organizing committee members (Namely Dr. Birku Reta, Dr. Abdi Yuya, Dr. Alemgena, Ms. Meskerem Tadesse, Dr. Yadeta, Mr. Shibiru Ayalew, Mr. Husen Woyo, and Dr. Diriba Eticha), paper presenters, and panelists.

Then, a closing remark was made by Dr. Alemu Disasa, V/P for Research and Technology Transfer of Adama Science and Technology. In his remark, Dr. Alemu appreciated the active participation of the stakeholders, the efforts made by the workshop organizing committee, and reaffirmed ASTU's commitment to support EthiopiaLics. A cake ceremony was also held to celebrate the foundation of EthiopiaLics at Adama Science and Technology University, Adama as of 10th Nov. 2022. Finally, group photos were taken as the workshop's concluding event at 5:00 pm.

The workshop's activity schedules is given in table

Table 3. EthiopiaLics Foundation Workshop Schedule, November 10, 2022

Sessions	Major Activities	Time	Responsible person	Facilitator
	Registration of participants	8:30-9:00	Woinishet and Asnaku	
1	Welcoming Speech	9:00-9:10	Dr. Birku Reta, Dean SoHSS	Dr. Diriba
2	Opening Remark	9:10-9:20	Dr. Lemi Guta (President)	Dr. Diriba
3	Introduction to EthiopiaLics Workshop	9:20-9:35	Dr. Birku Reta, Dean SoHSS	Dr. Diriba
4	Keynote Addresses			
	Keynote Address 1	9:35-9:50	Dr. Eba Mijena (MoE)	Dr. Diriba
	Keynote Address 2	9:50-10:05	Dr. Bacha Kebede (EPAA)	Dr. Abdi
5	Experience Sharing presentations on the role of academic research and think-tanks in addressing socio-economic problems			
	Presentation#1: Experience of the 'ARiHub' innovation center at Haromaya University	10:05-10:20	Presenter: Dr. Getachew Shambel (HU)	Dr. Diriba
	Health Break	10-20-10:35	All participants	
	Presentations#2: Experience of the HTW University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, Germany on how to make impact for society.	10:35-11:00	Presenter: Prof. Dr. Oliver Scholz	Dr. Diriba
	Reflections & discussions on the two presentations	11:00-11:15	All participants	Dr. Diriba
6	Panel Discussion <i>Topic: How to influence Science, Technology and Innovation Policy and practices in Ethiopia</i>	11:15-12:30	Panelists: Mr. Motuma Temesgen, Mr. Muluken Kere, Dr. Eshete Berhan, Dr. Tsegaye Mulugeta	Dr. Abdi
	Lunch break	12:30-2:00	All participants	
7	Stakeholders' Discussions & the way forward	2:00-3:00	Participants	Dr. Abdi
	Health break	3:00-3:15	All participants	
8	Meeting with AfricaLics Scientific Members	3:15-4:15	ASB Members & participants	Dr. Abdi
9	Closing ceremony			
	Certificate Award	4:15-4:30	Dr. Alemu D. & Dr. Birku R.	
	Closing Remark & cake ceremony	4:30-4:50	Dr. Alemu Disasa, V/P of ASTU	
	Group photo	4:50-5:00	Participants	