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Status of mobility of livestock in Ethiopia: Mapping of livestock routes and case studies on mobility blockages

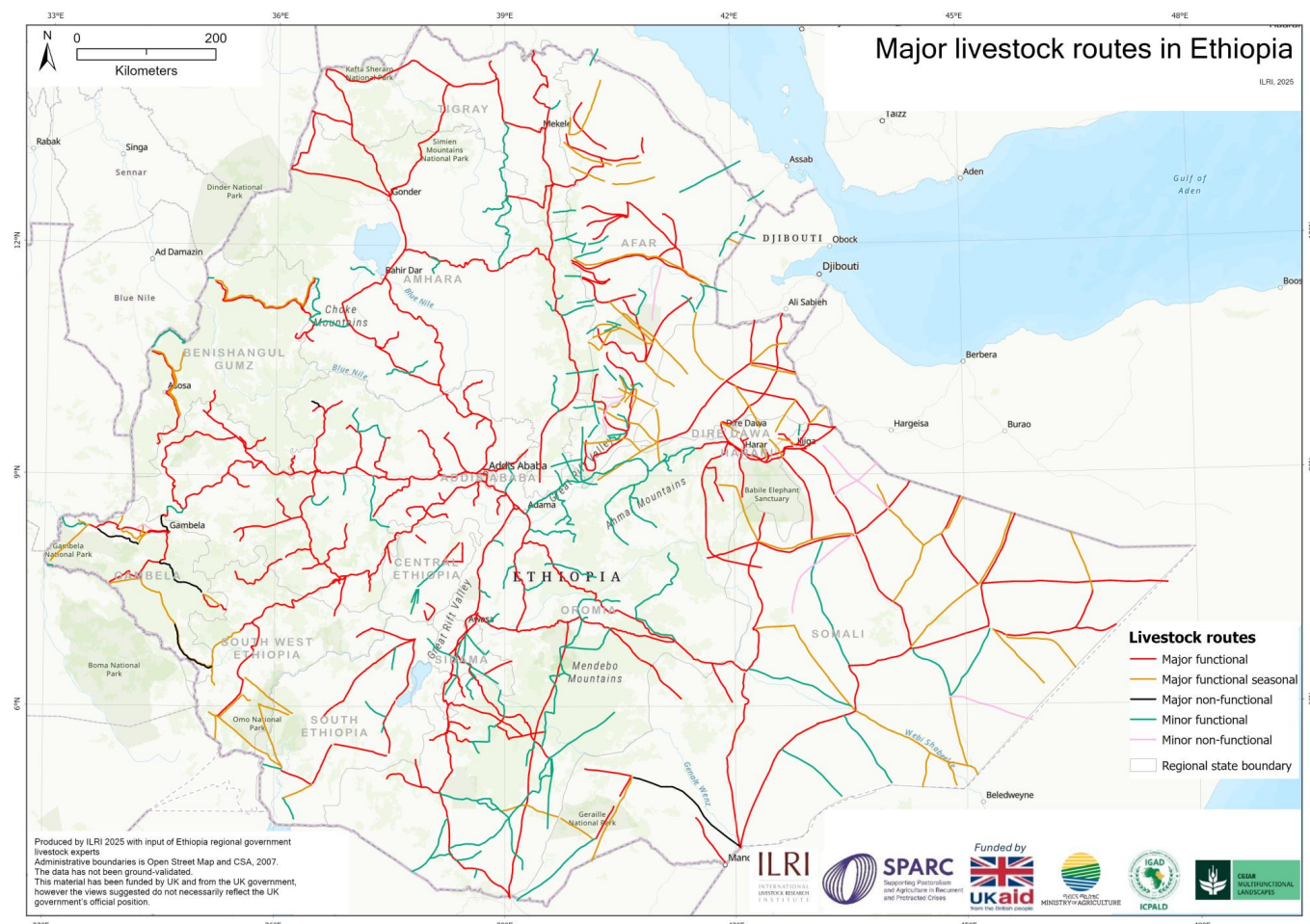
This brief assesses the status of livestock routes and mobility in Ethiopia. It sets out steps policymakers can take to protect these vital corridors.

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Livestock in Ethiopia plays a critical role in the economy, contributing to food security, employment, and income generation, particularly in pastoral areas. Livestock mobility is increasingly being restrained, however, compromising livestock production. In this brief, we assess the status of livestock routes and mobility in Ethiopia.

Livestock routes, supporting infrastructure and services were mapped by government experts from each region on topographical maps and later digitised. Blocked routes were noted, and case studies selected for follow-up local-level qualitative research on causes of these blockages.



Major livestock routes in Ethiopia - ILRI 2025

Findings:

- Mapping identified approximately 25,500 kilometres of arterial livestock routes across Ethiopia in both pastoral lowlands and mixed crop-livestock highlands.
- Routes are concentrated in the Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions, with additional important corridors traversing Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, and parts of the south-western regions.
- Six routes were no longer functional owing to land conversion for agriculture, urban expansion, invasive species, increasing conflict and infrastructural development.
- Facilities to support livestock mobility, such as veterinary posts, abattoirs, holding grounds and loading ramps are few, particularly in pastoral areas.

Policy implications:

- To preserve these vital corridors, government should set policies that recognise and legally protect livestock routes, and invest in veterinary services, abattoirs, holding grounds and loading ramps.



A woman milks a cow near Gonder, Amhara region, Ethiopia – Image by Niels Van Iperen - CC BY-SA 4.0 – Wikicommons images

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