Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION

SOMALIA

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INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: SOMALIA

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Other stakeholders and partners: The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), representatives of the United Nations agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and bilateral and multilateral development partners.

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ACRONYMS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CPD	Country Programme Document
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member State
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HDI	Human Development Index
HDP	Humanitarian, Development, and Peace
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JJCP	Joint Justice and Corrections Programme
JPLG	Joint Programme on Local Governance
JPP	Joint Police Programme
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MoEWR	Ministry of Energy and Water Resources
MOIFAR	Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs & Reconciliation
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NCC	National Consultative Council
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NIEC	National Independent Electoral Commission
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NTP	National Transformation Plan
PCVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
PIP	Project Implementation Plan

RBAS	Regional Bureau for Arab States
REFS	Reconciliation and Federalism Support
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SJF	Somalia Joint Fund
SNBS	Somali National Bureau of Statistics
SRSP	State-building and Reconciliation Support Programme
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	United States Dollar
WED	Water, Environment and Disaster Risk Management
WPP	Women, Peace and Protection

Evaluation Brief: Somalia

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) of UNDP Somalia in 2025. This was the fourth evaluation of the UNDP Country Programme in Somalia. The main purpose of the evaluation was to inform the development of the next UNDP Country Programme and to strengthen accountability to national stakeholders and the UNDP Executive Board.

Somalia's development context remains highly complex and dynamic, shaped by decades of governance fragility and insecurity. Since 2012, the country has made steady progress in advancing its federal governance structures and working towards greater political stability. These positive developments are reflected in the review of the recently concluded Ninth National Development Plan (NDP 9), which set out an important framework for national priorities. Notably, the implementation of NDP 9 was instrumental in enabling debt relief for Somalia in 2023, under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

UNDP supported the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in consolidating progress made on its state-building priorities through the Country Programme of 2021-2025, with a focus on: (a) inclusive politics; (b) security and the rule of law; (c) economic recovery and institutional development; and (d) resilience and climate change.

UNDP's performance during this programming cycle was characterized by significant strengths and distinct challenges, shaped by its long-term vision, strategic positioning, programming approaches, and the operational environment. Its key strength resided in its ability to position itself as a trusted partner of the Somali government, convening partners at local, national, and regional levels, and bringing in expertise and international experience to support policymaking, institutional reforms, and capacity building.

Key findings and conclusions

- UNDP's strategic positioning within ongoing reform processes during the cycle was robust, as it supported policy analysis, institutional reforms, and capacity building in the focus areas of the Country Programme. UNDP maintained its provision of support even in areas where some donors were reluctant, such as constitutional review, community policing, and local government support, leveraging its on-the-ground presence and proven history of engagement. UNDP programming has increasingly shifted towards more participatory and people-centric approaches, which are appropriate for Somalia's fragile and conflict-affected context. Moreover, adaptive management and integrated portfolio approaches were introduced, enabling UNDP to adjust its strategies to fit Somalia's complex and dynamic context as needed, and to remain responsive to contextual changes.
- There was tension between demand-driven programming and the need to address the root causes of Somalia's developmental challenges to bring about systemic change. While UNDP's responsiveness to government needs ensured national ownership, it also led to fragmented interventions and limited outcome-level changes.
- UNDP, along with Somalia's development partners, prioritized inclusive politics because achieving success in this area was seen as having the potential to enable progress in all other areas including the rule of law and security, economic recovery and institutional development, and resilience-building. However, progress was uneven here mainly due to differing views among

national stakeholders on key issues including the path to federalism, the constitutional review process, and universal suffrage in elections. Nonetheless, advances were made in other areas which were less dependent on political processes.

- In resilience-building and climate change adaptation and mitigation, UNDP demonstrated its comparative advantage in policy and institutional development, albeit implementation was hampered by technical and contextual challenges.
- Partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) were recognized as essential but lacked strategic development.
- Gender equality and women's empowerment were mainstreamed across the Country Programme, however effectively addressing deeply rooted gender inequalities in the Somalia context required stronger, more strategic partnerships, and the sustained and genuine commitment of all relevant stakeholders.
- UNDP utilized mixed programme implementation modalities (national and direct) which resulted in high transaction costs and operational difficulties, highlighting the need for more agile and responsive tools.

Recommendations for the next Country Programme

Strengthen systems thinking and adaptive management to address the root causes of fragility and build resilience, balancing responsiveness to immediate needs with a strategic focus on long-term priorities. Deepen conflict sensitivity programming and engage donors at an early stage to support flexible, integrated approaches.

Maintain a dual-track approach to sustain progress in Somalia's state-building process, balancing high-level political engagement with community-level resilience building. Prioritize incremental progress in community-based reconciliation, local governance, and economic recovery, and prepare for the UN Mission's transition by strengthening local institutions and strategic planning.

Strengthen integrated programming across water resources management, environmental governance, and disaster risk reduction (DRR), building on current investments and focusing on implementation support. Address institutional complexities and align efforts with national priorities of climate resilience and environmental management.

Strengthen strategic partnerships to yield broader impact, strong people-centric approaches, gender equality, and knowledge exchange. Deepen collaboration with development partners, CSOs, and government actors, and advocate for structured support to non-political CSOs.

Review and optimize programme planning and implementation to tailor risk control measures to the operational environment. Streamline modalities and tools, assess national institutional capacity, and progressively hand over responsibilities fully to national counterparts to strengthen public financial management and mitigate risks.

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to gather and present evidence of the organization's contribution to national development priorities, as well as the effectiveness of its strategy in leveraging national efforts to achieve these. ICPEs are independent evaluations conducted within the framework of the general provisions of the UNDP Evaluation Policy.[1]

The ICPE has the following three main purposes:

- To contribute to the development of the next UNDP Country Programme;
- To ensure UNDP's accountability to its stakeholders, including the UNDP Executive Board, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), and civil society; and
- To promote organizational learning, particularly at country and regional levels.

This is the fourth evaluation of UNDP's work in Somalia. UNDP has been active in Somalia since 1977[2], providing policy advice and capacity development support to the government. Its Country Programme for 2021-2025 supported the FGS in the areas of inclusive politics, security and the rule of law, economic recovery and institutional development, and resilience and climate change, with a planned budget of US$ 305.7 million.

1.2 Evaluation approach and methodology

The ICPE aimed to capture evaluative evidence of UNDP's contributions to national development results based on the key evaluation questions (Box 1). It assessed the effectiveness of UNDP's programme strategy, including the progress made towards achieving expected outputs and outcomes. The ICPE also examined specific factors that either positively or negatively affected the Country Programme, and gauged UNDP's ability to adapt to the evolving context and respond to emerging national development needs and priorities. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) set out in Annex 1.

The scope of the ICPE encompassed all of UNDP's programmatic activities in the Country Programme Document (CPD) 2021-2024, covering interventions financed through various sources, including core UNDP funds, donors,

BOX 1: Evaluation questions

1. To what extent has the UNDP Country Programme strategically addressed key national development priorities and needs of its main stakeholders, including those at risk of being left behind?
2. To what extent were UNDP's approaches and interventions successful in achieving the intended objectives of the Country Programme and in contributing to broader national development goals?
3. To what extent was UNDP able to adapt its positioning and programmatic response to shifts in context and other changes in the operating environment, and leverage its comparative strengths?
4. To what extent did internal and external factors influence UNDP's ability to deliver its programme efficiently and maximize contributions?

[1] See http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml.
[2] 'Agreement between the Government of the Somali Democratic Republic and the United Nations Development Programme,' 31 May 1977.

and governments (see Annex 2 for the list of reviewed projects). Additionally, the evaluation included all key activities supported by the Country Office (CO) that play a crucial role in advancing the country's development and social objectives.

The data collection and analysis methods included:

i. A desk review of UNDP documents, which explored the scope and scale of the Country Programme and progress made against expected results, as well as the national context;

ii. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions which gathered stakeholders' perceptions of UNDP's role and contributions to national development, including the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the results to which UNDP contributed. Over 215 persons (comprising government counterparts, CSOs, private sector members, donors, UNDP and other UN staff, and community-level beneficiaries of UNDP-supported interventions) were consulted (see Annex 3 for more details);

iii. Programme portfolio and theories of change analyses examined the strategic alignment and contribution of interventions to overarching programme goals and outcomes;

iv. Analysis of gender mainstreaming across the Country Programme and operations using the UN/UNDP gender marker tool and the IEO gender results effectiveness scale (GRES).[3] Where possible, gender-disaggregated data were collected and assessed against programme outcomes; and

v. Project site visits to six locations in Puntland, South-West State, and "Somaliland" assessed the progress and sustainability of interventions.

The ICPE adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, with a particular emphasis on the principles of transparency, confidentiality, respect, and reporting.

1.3 Constraints and limitations

The ICPE process was impeded by several constraints. A compressed timeframe and team restructuring (necessitated by medical reasons) posed challenges at the initial stage of the evaluation. To ensure continuity in data collection, the ICPE shifted from in-person interviews to remote interviews at the federal level. Although the established ICPE protocols helped minimize disruptions arising from the team restructuring, the change resulted in the data collection period being extended.

Large parts of the country, particularly in central and southern areas as well as Puntland, were inaccessible due to security reasons. In "Somaliland", the ICPE data collection mission coincided with the presidential election in November 2024, limiting travel to project sites. These travel restrictions reduced direct engagement opportunities with beneficiaries and stakeholders at sub-national and local levels.

Reliable data and statistics on Somalia are limited, as were outcome-level progress data on UNDP's interventions. The Programme was also implemented in a dynamic context, with some of the initiatives starting later than anticipated. The ICPE took these constraints and limitations into account, ensuring diverse stakeholder representation despite access limitations to deliver a balanced, nuanced, and context-sensitive analysis.

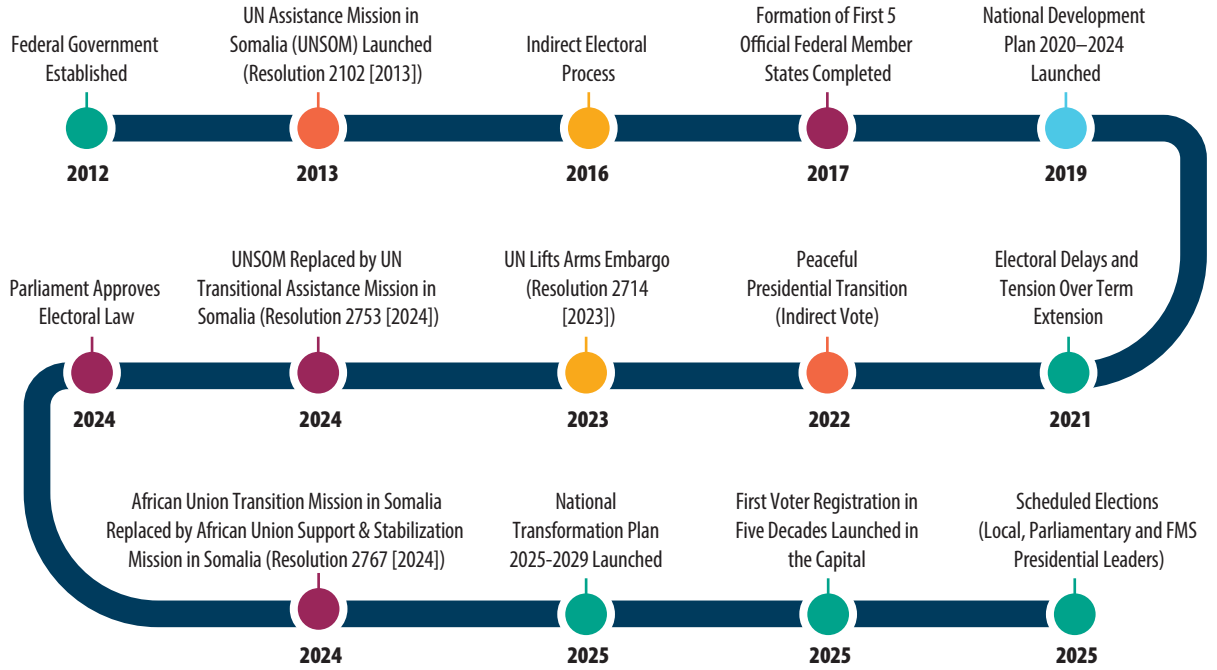
[3] GRES classifies gender outcomes into five categories: gender-negative, gender-blind, gender-targeted, gender-responsive, and gender-transformative. See https://erc.undp.org/pdf/GRES_French.pdf

1.4 Country context

Somalia is emerging from three decades of civil strife. Since 2013, the country has made progress in consolidating the federal system and stabilizing the political and security situation. In 2023, Somalia achieved an historic milestone by reaching the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative Completion Point, resulting in total debt service savings of over $4.5 billion.[4] Somalia was also admitted to the East African Community in the same year.[5] These achievements are expected to unlock substantial financial resources, fostering economic growth, enhancing regional trade, and creating jobs. Despite this progress, the country continues to face multi-dimensional challenges across political, security, economic, and social development spheres. Somalia is recognized as a fragile and conflict-affected state, with its socio-economic transformation occurring amidst significant challenges. These include a contested political environment, a complex security situation, prolonged conflict, and weak institutional capacities.

Governance and political context: The FGS continues to operate amidst tensions with the five existing federal member states (FMSs). Pertinently, the 2012 Provisional Constitution remains unfinished. Draft proposals on the division of powers, resources, and responsibilities between and among the FGS and FMSs have not yet been agreed on. This ambiguity has perpetuated power struggles and disputes, with FMSs often functioning as quasi-autonomous jurisdictions. Puntland and Jubbaland withdrew from the National Consultative Council (NCC) in 2023 and 2024 respectively,[6] while the FGS and "Somaliland", which does not see itself as part of the federal framework, do not have formal relations. At sub-national level, the lack of clarity regarding federalism principles has hindered the establishment and effective functioning of local governance structures. Resolving the ongoing tensions will be crucial if a more favorable environment is to be established to advance state-building and economic growth at all levels.

FIGURE 1: Timeline of Key Political Developments in Somalia Since 2012



[4] UNDP: Results-oriented Annual Report, Somalia. 2024. See also: IMF and World Bank Announce US$4.5 billion in Debt Relief for Somalia
[5] UNDP: Results-oriented Annual Report, Somalia. 2024
[6] The NCC is a de facto high-level forum of the executive leaders of the FGS and FMSs for dialogue and decision-making on national issues.

Somalia's political and state-building challenges have deep root causes, including clan-based societal structures that have traditionally lacked centralized political authority, legacies of colonialism and military dictatorship, and civil war. Recent geo-political dynamics and ideological struggles, such as the rise of non-state armed groups, have further complicated the political and security landscape. Nevertheless, the constitutional review process gained momentum in 2024 as Parliament approved five chapters of the Constitution and enacted electoral reforms according to which the country will transition from a "one person, one vote" system for the next elections, planned for 2025 and 2026.

Security situation: Since 2011, the FGS, with the support of international partners and, more recently, community defense forces, has reclaimed key towns and settlements from the non-state armed group, al-Shabaab. However, the group still controls substantial territory in central and southern areas of the country, enforcing harsh governance such as taxation and justice. Between late 2024 and early 2025, al-Shabaab intensified its attacks in an attempt to recapture previously reclaimed areas.[7] The group continues to pose the most significant threat to peace and security in the country, as it exploits weak governance, the lack of political and social reconciliation, and challenges in implementing and coordinating the national security architecture, which is supported by diverse regional and global actors. As the country prepares to transition away from a dependence on international mission support, its security landscape remains fragile.[8] Somalia also frequently has to contend with clan- and resource-based community conflicts that can have cross-border spillover effects.

Economic context: Somalia's economy has shown signs of recovery in recent years, growing by 4.2 percent in 2023 in constant prices, up from 2.7 percent in 2022.[9] The country has a market-oriented economy with a high level of entrepreneurship; however it is constrained by weak policy frameworks, which discourage investment flows, together with insecurity. The agriculture sector, dominated by livestock, accounts for 60 percent of GDP and 85 percent of exports.[10] Telecommunications and remittances also play crucial roles in sustaining the economy. Somalia is endowed with unexploited natural resources, including minerals, oil, gas, and productive fishing grounds, and has the longest coastline in Africa. During the cycle, the economy remained highly vulnerable to external shocks, such as climate change and global economic downturns. The COVID-19 pandemic also exacerbated existing economic challenges, disrupting supply chains and reducing remittances. Efforts are ongoing to rebuild economic governance institutions to decrease fragility and improve access to development financing. Somalia has several emerging opportunities including increased digital technology use and planned investments in vital sectors like energy, infrastructure, and healthcare.

Poverty declined from 69 percent to 54 percent between 2021 and 2022,[11] but humanitarian needs remain acute. In 2025, nearly half of Somalia's 19.7 million people[12] are affected by conflict, floods, drought, and displacement. More than 4.5 million people were expected to face crisis levels of hunger by mid-2025, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC, March 2025). Agricultural communities, pastoralists, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly from marginalized minorities in the central and southern regions, are disproportionately affected by climate change and conflict, the main drivers of displacement. Somalia has a significant youth bulge with high levels of unemployment and illiteracy, exacerbating socio-economic vulnerabilities.

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7 United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2025/194). March 2025.

8 Both the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (now UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (now the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission) are expected to transfer mandates to the UN Country Team and the national security forces in 2026 and 2029, respectively. The UN Assistance Mission was established under UN Resolution 2012 (2013) and was mandated to provide good office functions supporting the peace and reconciliation process of the FGS, while the Africa Union Mission troops operated in Somalia from 2007 onwards and helped stabilize the government, expelling al-Shabaab from key urban centres and other areas.

9 Somalia National Bureau of Statistics.

10 African Development Bank, Country Profiles, Somalia.

11 Somali National Bureau of Statistics. See also: African Development Bank: https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-east-africa-somalia/somalia-economic-outlook

12 UNFPA: World Population Dashboard -Somalia | United Nations Population Fund

Environment: Somalia is enduring an environmental and humanitarian crisis. Decades of unsustainable land use, driven by overgrazing, poor agricultural practices, and charcoal production, have caused widespread land degradation. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing by foreign vessels continues to damage the country's fragile marine ecosystems, threatening local livelihoods and food security. The country's rainfall patterns are highly erratic, alternating between prolonged droughts and intense flooding. Between 2020 and 2023, Somalia experienced the most prolonged drought in recent history, triggered by five consecutive failed rainy seasons, leading to an estimated 43,000 deaths in 2022 alone.[13] The country's limited capacity to respond to such recurring climatic shocks has perpetuated substantial reliance on international humanitarian assistance. Somalia is considered to be one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the impacts of climate change. These impacts deepen existing socio-economic inequalities and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups and women, especially those from marginalized communities. The country has developed key frameworks, including its National Climate Change Policy, National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and a climate finance coordination mechanism. Somalia also outlined ambitious emissions reduction targets in its 2021 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). However, addressing the root causes of the environmental and socio-economic crises requires sustainable, coordinated long-term solutions beyond immediate aid.

Gender equality: Prolonged conflict and socio-cultural norms curtailing women's roles and positions in society have caused significant gender disparities and outcomes in health, education, and economic and political participation. Women make up 22 percent of the labor force, compared to 48 percent for men.[14] The ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises have disproportionately impacted women and girls, heightening their vulnerability to various forms of insecurity. In addition, they face increased risks of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, and early and forced marriages. Women from marginalized minority groups are at even greater risk of violence and discrimination. Meanwhile, women as a whole are largely excluded from decision-making processes under the existing patriarchal governance structures. The country has yet to ratify key international frameworks, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). Relatedly, national human rights laws do not align fully with international standards. The outdated penal code (1963) inadequately addresses protection against sexual violence, as well as the abuse of minorities, IDPs, and persons with disabilities. Somalia must tackle systemic barriers to achieve gender equity and ensure the protection of women and girls and minority rights.

National development priorities: In March 2025, Somalia approved a new five-year development strategy, the National Transformation Plan (NTP) 2025-2029. The NTP aims to build on the achievements of the Ninth National Development Plan (NDP 9), focusing on four key pillars: inclusive politics and reconciliation; security and the rule of law; economic development; and social development.

The implementation of NDP 9 was instrumental in achieving debt relief under the HIPC Initiative. Its midterm review highlighted the need to enhance political stability and revisit the strategic focus areas, as well as to prioritize climate policies and foster economic growth and improve governance and service delivery by leveraging digitalization.

Also in 2025, Somalia adopted the Centennial Vision 2060, a comprehensive long-term, development strategy designed to guide the country's socio-economic transformation over the next several decades. It provides an overarching framework for development, anchoring successive five-year development plans, such as the NTP 2025-2029. By aligning short- and long-term planning, the Somali government hopes to create a coherent and adaptive roadmap for sustainable development.

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[13] Government of Somalia and partners: From Insight to Action: Somalia Drought Mortality and Impact Analysis. March 2023. See: https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/12316/file/From-Insight-to-Action-Somalia-2023.pdf.

[14] World Bank. See: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.ACTI.FE.ZS?locations=SO.

1.5 UNDP programme under review

The UN's presence in Somalia has been integrated since 2014 with the inception of the UN Mission. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020-2024 further strengthened this integration through alignment with the NDP 9 priorities. The UN has been working within joint programmes across the UN Country Team and UN Mission, particularly in the areas of inclusive politics, security and the rule of law, and gender and human rights.

UNDP's current programme for 2021 to 2025 reflected lessons learned from the previous cycle and the changing socio-economic and political landscape in Somalia. Key differences from the previous programme included alignment with national priorities and a more integrated approach to governance, security, economic development, and social inclusion. The current programme emphasized human rights principles and gender equality to ensure that marginalized groups are included in development processes. It also focused on building resilience in conflict-affected communities and promoting durable solutions for IDPs to address long-term displacement issues. Meanwhile, the enhanced focus on disaster risk management highlighted the increasing impact of climate change and the need for interventions to enable communities to adapt.

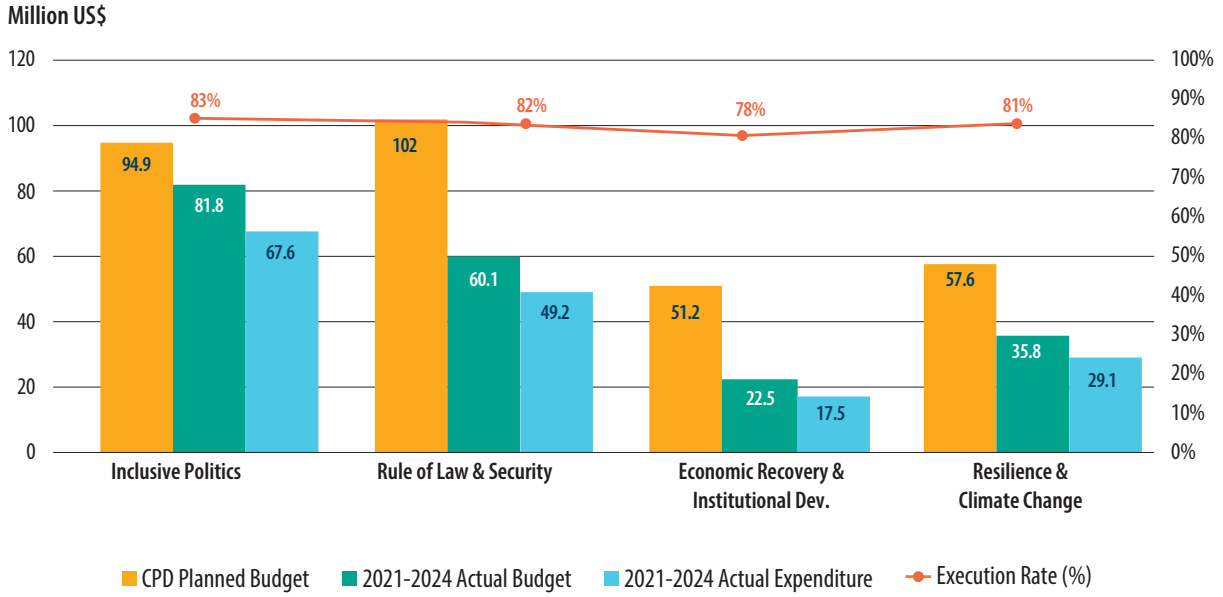
The CPD envisaged UNDP's contribution to national development priorities through the following three interlinked result areas: (a) effective governance, inclusive politics, and reconciliation; (b) enhanced security, rule of law, and access to justice; and (c) sustainable development of natural resources for inclusive economic growth. The three areas were further structured under four portfolios: (a) inclusive politics; (b) rule of law and security; (c) economic recovery and institutional development; and (d) resilience and climate change.

a. **Inclusive politics** was the largest portfolio, accounting for 41 percent of the total cycle expenditure ($68 million). During the cycle under review, the portfolio supported important initiatives aiming to enhance service delivery and social cohesion, as well as strengthen transformative processes in the country, shaping the federalist structure of Somalia. This included consolidating the federal system, finalizing the constitutional review and implementation processes, and enabling democratic direct voting. The portfolio consisted of 46 projects and initiation plans, covering five output result areas (see Annex 5). Most projects were designed or led jointly with the UN Mission.
b. **The rule of law and security portfolio** was the second-largest portfolio, accounting for 30 percent of total expenditure ($50 million). It aimed to strengthen security and rule of law institutions, improve accountability mechanisms, and develop legal frameworks to uphold human rights, gender equality, tolerance, climate security, and environmental governance. This goal was ambitious and required an integrated approach to addressing the core challenges of strengthening Somalia's state structures. The portfolio comprised a total of 52 projects and initiation plans implemented under four output result areas.
c. **The economic recovery and institutional development portfolio** accounted for about 11 percent of total programmatic expenditure ($17 million). It focused on the following three streams of work: (a) institutional capacity development for core government functions; (b) economic development and livelihood recovery for vulnerable populations; and (c) decentralization initiatives. There were 22 projects and initiation plans implemented under six output result areas.
d. **The resilience and climate change portfolio** accounted for 18 percent of total programmatic expenditure ($29 million). The portfolio was based on the premise that Somalia is highly vulnerable to climate change and other hazards, coupled with over-exploitation of natural resources to support livelihoods. Vulnerable communities often lack access to sustainable livelihood options and institutional support systems, limiting their capacity to recover from shocks and build long-term resilience. The country has a weak policy framework with respect to climate change, natural resource

management, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) as well as limited institutional capacity. This portfolio consisted of 12 projects implemented under three output result areas: (a) climate change mitigation and adaptation; (b) sustainable resource management; and (c) disaster risk management. The latter three elements are considered cornerstones for development and building sustainable livelihoods.

Programme resources: UNDP mobilized $200 million against a planned budget of $305.7 million (66 percent) in the first four years of the cycle. Meanwhile, total expenditure stood at $163 million (or 82 percent) (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: Total programme budget and expenditure by portfolio (2021-2024)



Source: UNDP Internal Atlas & Quantum Data, Updated January 2025

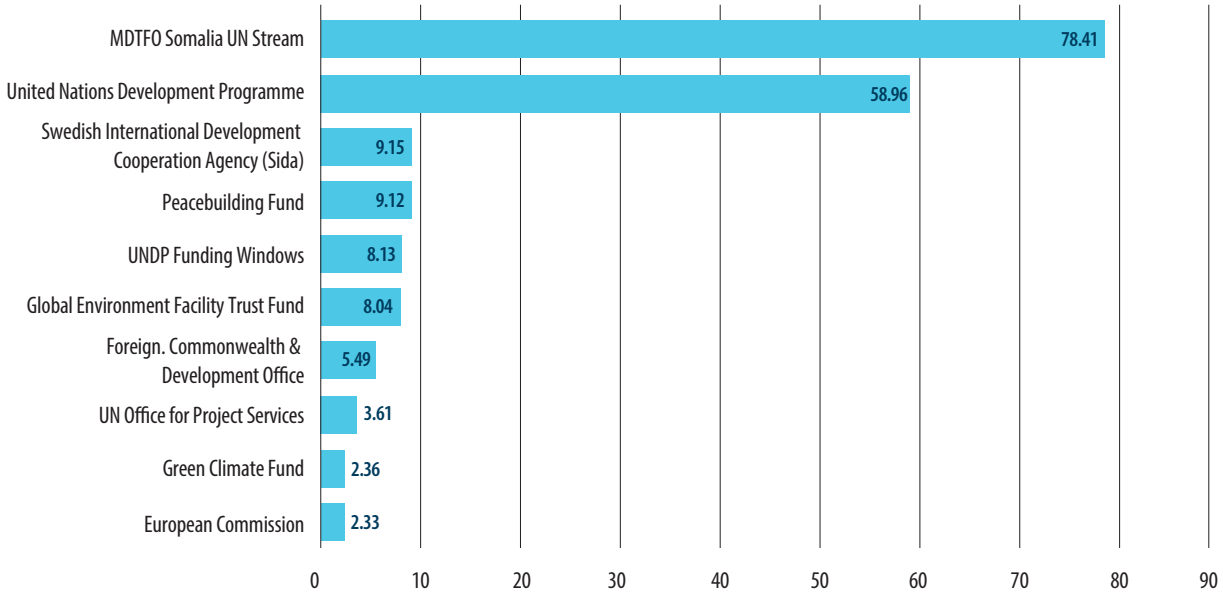
Pooled funding under the Somalia Multi-Partner Trust Fund (now the Somalia Joint Fund (SJF))[15] was the most important funding source for the Country Programme. The SJF (formerly the Multi-Donor Trust Funds Office) has remained the largest contributor since 2012, with its share accounting for 40 percent of total expenditure in the 2021-2025 cycle (Figure 3). The top contributors to the SJF during the current cycle were Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, and Netherlands. The pooled SJF donor resources are allocated to participating UN agencies through joint programmes, with UNDP acting as the main implementing partner during this cycle.

UNDP regular resources provided a stable stream of funding, representing around 23 percent of expenditure in this programme cycle - a notable increase compared to prior cycles. Over the longer term, Somalia has seen a progressive decline in the volume of regular resources as a share of total expenditure—from about 8-12 percent annually during 2012–2016, to a more variable but gradually increasing share in recent years, peaking at over 36 percent in 2024 (Figure 4). Pertinently, UNDP funding windows were first introduced in 2017. Though modest in volume (e.g. $4.2 million in 2023-2024), their emergence signals a gradual shift toward more flexible, pooled funding mechanisms aligned with thematic priorities.

[15] Development financing for Somalia has been coordinated through the Somali Development and Reconstruction Facility (SDRF), established in 2013 under the New Deal for Somalia. The SDRF has served as a strategic platform aligning international support with national priorities, comprising three financing windows: the Somalia Multi-Partner Fund (administered by the World Bank), the Somalia Infrastructure Fund (administered by the African Development Bank), and the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund—now operating as the Somalia Joint Fund (SJF).

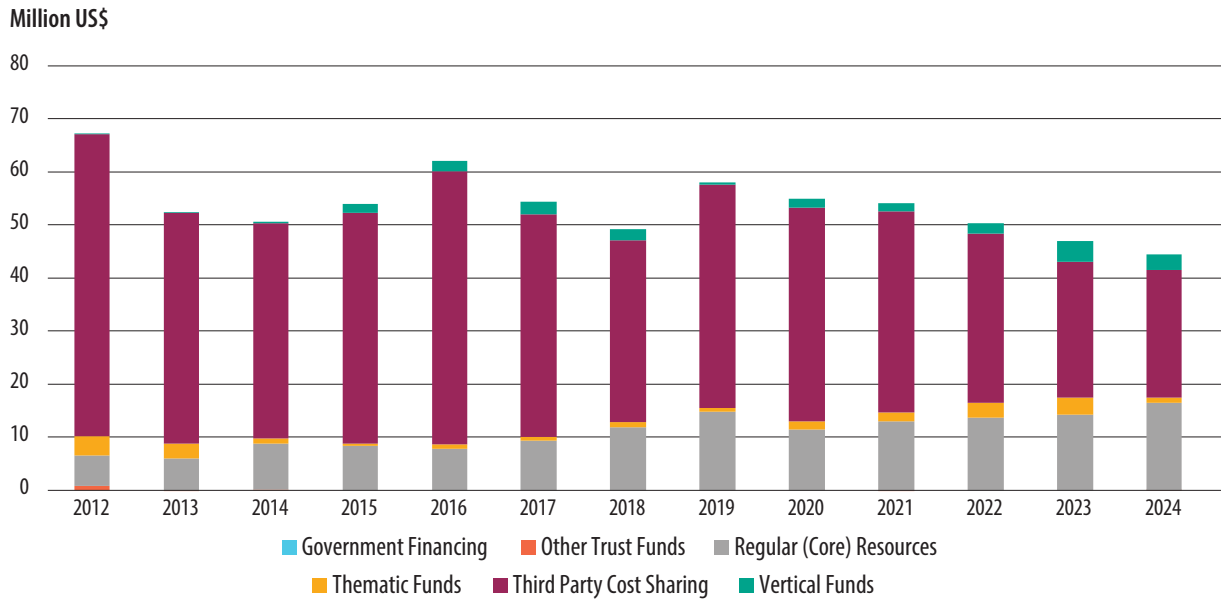
While environmental vertical funds such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) played a modest role over the period under review, their shares have started to increase—reaching nearly $4 million in 2023 and staying above $3 million in 2024, reflecting rising investment in climate resilience and environmental sustainability.

FIGURE 3: Top Donors for All Programmatic Expenditure (2021-2024)



Source: UNDP Internal Atlas & Quantum Data, Updated January 2025

FIGURE 4: Programmatic Expenditure by Funding Source (2012-2024)



Source: UNDP Internal Atlas & Quantum Data, Updated January 2025

CHAPTER 2
FINDINGS

2.1 Programme management and cross-cutting findings

Strategic positioning of UNDP

Finding 1. Government counterparts at all levels recognized and appreciated UNDP's comparative advantage in fostering institutional capacity development, demonstrating adaptability, and maintaining a consultative approach during the latest cycle. As a strategic partner, UNDP incorporated an adaptive management approach across its portfolio, enabling it to respond effectively to changes in political, economic, social, and environmental dynamics.

UNDP's engagement with the Somali government was rooted in a shared commitment to enhancing Somalia's development outcomes, particularly in areas such as federalism, reconciliation, constitutional reform, rule of law, security, justice, and resilience to environmental and climate-related challenges. Its long-term presence and credibility in Somalia enhanced its ability to deliver context-specific programmes effectively. UNDP's wider focus across relevant sectors and its implementation model - working with institutions rather than directly implementing interventions - was perceived by national stakeholders as a comparative advantage over other UN agencies. Moreover, UNDP programming was aligned with NDP 9 and the priorities of FMSs.

National stakeholders recognized that UNDP introduced ideas relevant to the Somali context. In other instances, it helped institutionalize local concepts such as the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism. Its consultative and collaborative approach to programme design was also appreciated by government partners, while UNDP was seen as a convenor and facilitator in strengthening the enabling environment for development processes.

Despite operating in a complex and fragile context, UNDP demonstrated adaptability. For example, in 2021, the organization had to navigate political challenges due to delayed elections. Somalia continues to grapple with tensions between the FGS and FMSs, as well as the global economic downturn following the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of climate change. To position itself strategically, UNDP introduced adaptive management and area- and sector-based approaches, informed by lessons learned and discussions with development partners. However, this approach runs the risk of interventions becoming fragmented and thinly spread.

Stakeholders in Puntland and "Somaliland" highlighted the declining role of UNDP and support being uneven, attributing that to centralized decision making at FGS level. This observation underscored broader issues in Somalia regarding the lack of consensus on a resource distribution formula, which impeded conducive relations. Nevertheless, improvements in security and access at FMS level meant increasing engagement and support at this level. Regions like Puntland and "Somaliland", recognized for their comparatively strong governance institutions and service delivery, are now expected to drive knowledge exchange and capacity-building efforts in lagging regions (as envisioned in the new phase of the Joint Programme on Local Governance (JPLG)). Conversely, Puntland and "Somaliland", owing to their more favorable operational environments, have greater prospects when it comes to demonstrating measurable results, indicating a strategic opportunity for the CO to leverage these regions as anchors for piloting interventions, showcasing best practices and accelerating knowledge transfer.

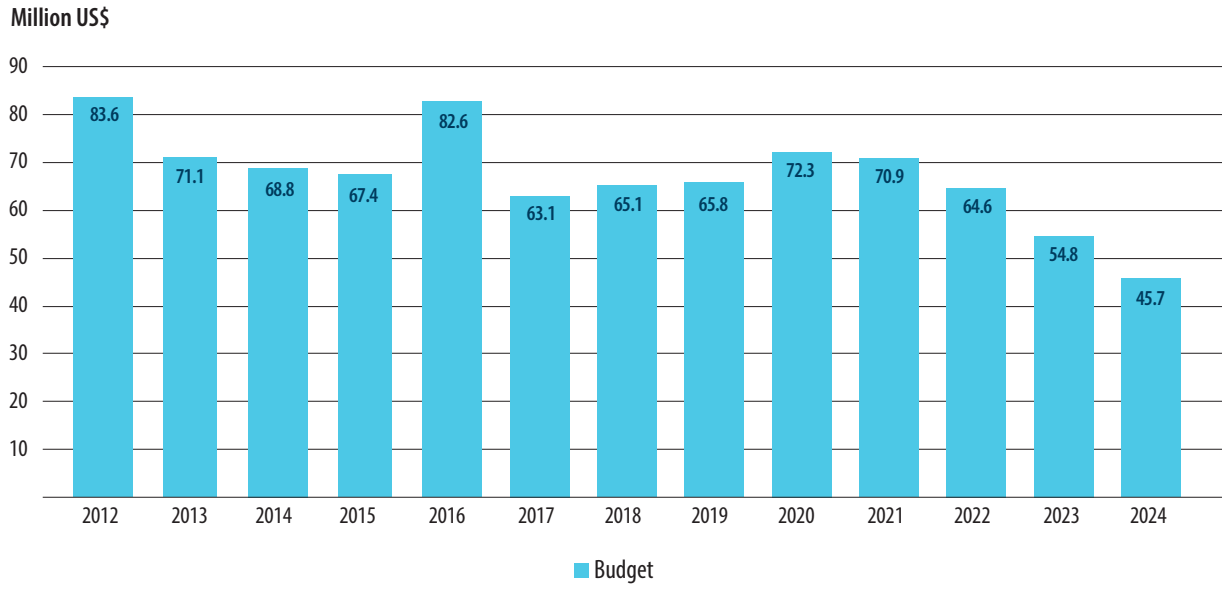
Partnerships

Finding 2. UNDP's partnerships and ability to mobilize resources was influenced by multiple factors during the period under review. Its convening power was instrumental in developing operational and, to an extent, strategic partnerships that underpin its portfolio strategies and programming. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these partnerships has been subject to the political dynamics in Somalia, as well as donor fatigue and re-prioritization. Accordingly, in the latest cycle, UNDP sought to diversity its partnerships, with mixed results.

UNDP's Country Programme for 2021-2025 was designed during the COVID-19 crisis, which brought unprecedented socio-economic challenges globally and locally. However, its design did not fully account for the unpredictability and constraints that the pandemic and related shocks would impose on Somalia's systems, such as disrupted resource flows, mobility restrictions, and the escalating needs for immediate crisis response. As a result, the ambitious goals of the CPD, including on governance reforms and economic resilience, faced setbacks.

Analysis of the programme budget since 2012 showed fluctuation in funding levels, with the highest budget coming in 2012 ($84 million), and the lowest (projected) budget being in 2024 ($46 million), suggesting a probable decline in the scope and scale of future projects and initiatives. UNDP did not achieve its anticipated programme budget target in the latest cycle, which was affected by shrinking aid budgets, ongoing political deadlock, and donor fatigue. Consequently, the sustainability of interventions is now a key concern. The ICPE found many thinly spread interventions (e.g. in Puntland and "Somaliland), with insufficient budgets and multiple implementing partners.

FIGURE 5: Evolution of Programme Budget (2012-2024)



Source: UNDP Internal Atlas & Quantum Data, Updated January 2025

State-building has been a priority since the 1990s, with UNDP's donors largely remaining committed to funding programmes aligned with this priority, especially with respect to inclusive politics. Donors recognized UNDP's high legitimacy in the eyes of the Somali government and their ability to co-create. UNDP's expertise in its focus areas and contributions to results achieved were also recognized.

Vertical funds, primarily the GCF and the GEF, enabled UNDP Somalia to scale-up resilience and climate change interventions, integrate sustainability into programming, and mobilize additional resources through co-financing from government and local stakeholders.

UNDP recognized the need to diversify funding streams beyond traditional donors and vertical funds. It supported several strategic frameworks to mobilize resources for resilience and climate change adaptation, including the NDC Financing Framework. UNDP also mobilized supplementary funding from the Government of Japan for the solar energy for health centers initiatives in Puntland and "Somaliland."

Donors highlighted several reasons for their continued support for UNDP programmes, particularly its flagship ones. Firstly, governance was viewed by donors as a priority, although concerns were raised about maintaining support for the latest phase of the constitutional review process for reasons highlighted in section 2.2 below. Secondly, security remains a high priority for donors, hence the sustained support for it and, possibly, justice programming. Thirdly, the strategic shift towards people-centered approaches to politics, justice, and security reflects donors' interests and intended directions. Fourthly, UNDP's portfolios are aligned with and supported by multi-donor funds such as the SJF. Several key donors preferred to channel their resources through these funding streams, which has both benefited and disadvantaged UNDP's resource mobilization potential.

The planned withdrawal of the UN Mission in October 2026 is expected to impact the level of UNDP support, as it may be required to assume leadership in new areas. This would have implications for UNDP's strategies and capacities.

Other partnerships. UNDP partnered with NGOs and academic institutions in implementing the country programme. NGOs, courtesy of their ability to mobilize communities at the local level, helped UNDP reach marginalized and high-risk areas, conduct technical studies, and implement interventions. Partnerships with universities mainly focused on skills and curriculum development. However, civil society engagement was limited, highlighting the need for UNDP and the wider UN to foster critical and constructive dialogue with the Somali government to address systemic issues. CSOs play an important role in advocating for human rights and supporting the development and provision of aid, however they face restrictions and funding and security challenges.

UNDP partnerships with UN agencies leveraged each organization's unique strengths, minimizing duplication. Indeed, UNDP implemented several high-profile joint programmes (as part of the UN Global Focal Point for Rule of Law mechanism) such as the Joint Rule of Law Programme, the Joint Police Programme (JPP), and the Joint Justice and Corrections Programme (JJCP). UNDP also collaborated with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction on Somalia's National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2021), and with the FAO and the World Meteorological Organization on the Early Warnings for All initiative. However, for UN partnerships in Somalia, alignment and cross-sectoral challenges have commonly impacted the integration of strategies. Despite extensive coordination, there has been limited evidence of actual joint planning and implementation. Each agency tends to manage its own component(s) in a joint programme independently. The integration of the UN and multi-partner trust funds such as the SJF has necessitated a high number of joint programmes in Somalia but the aspiration of a 'One UN' approach in UN joint programmes is dependent upon personalities working together, commitment to a team ethic, clear boundaries, and resources being sufficient for each agency.

Engagement with the private sector was limited, with a few notable exceptions under renewable energy and climate change interventions in "Somaliland" and Puntland. Despite a focus on private-sector-driven development in NDP 9 and a highly privatized economy, especially in sectors like energy and water, Somalia is yet to develop a coherent policy and legislative framework to govern the private sector.

Programme coherence and internal alignment

Finding 3. UNDP enhanced its offer to stakeholders by building internal coherence and alignment with the UN Mission, though not always to the benefit of UNDP.

UNDP attempted to incorporate a systems thinking approach when it comes to understanding and acting on the political, economic, social, and environmental dynamics of Somalia. This is evident in how the four portfolios are designed and implemented. For example, in the rule of law and security portfolio, both FGS and FMS stakeholders commended UNDP programming for promoting engagement with other government ministries during design and implementation. On the other hand, each portfolio could still be seen as a collection of projects rather than an integrated package, due to individual project proposals and reporting. This is both a legacy of the past and reflects donor requirements. Applying a systems thinking approach requires time and investments whereas many interventions are informed by funding opportunities.

UNDP's portfolios were designed in an integrated way, as demonstrated in individual portfolio strategy documents as well as individual proposal documents reviewed during this evaluation. Interviewed UNDP portfolio team members expressed a strong view that the portfolio projects cannot work if they are not designed in a complementary manner allowing them to strengthen each other. The portfolios were not designed in strict accordance with UNDP's guidance (Portfolio Policy 2024) but were instead informed by UNDP global portfolio initiatives, according to the UNDP country team.

UNDP's support for justice and security in "Somaliland" serves as a protype for future interventions, demonstrating the effectiveness of an area-based approach and the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the justice sector. Programme support focused on marginalized or vulnerable communities, reflecting UNDP's commitment to the leave no one behind (LNOB) principle. UNDP and the UN Mission considered community policing a vital approach suitable for the shift in focus. Meanwhile, community policing work has been successful in enhancing community-police relationships and reducing crime rates in areas with community policing stations. This indirect impact on crime rates was also highlighted by FMS stakeholders involved in the JJCP.

Integration was also evident in the inclusive politics portfolio strategy. UNDP efforts to create political space at the FGS and FMS levels have led to more cohesive and integrated projects. For example, the community reconciliation work within FMSs is now informing high-level constitutional reform processes. This development addresses a weakness found in the evaluation of UNDP's governance programming in 2022, namely that key inclusive politics projects were disconnected from each other. Since then, regular meetings and learning sessions within UNDP have facilitated this shift towards greater integration. Despite this integration, a project-focused tendency persists due to practical reasons. For example, federalism and reconciliation programming remain separate from constitutional reform support due to different national partners having different mandates. This practice can lead to higher transaction costs.

UNDP aims to formalize the portfolio approach in the next CPD and secure government and donor buy-in. This approach will need to encompass wider political, economic, social, and environmental elements, linking different programmes to larger political processes, given the transition of the UN Mission. The SJF could be a vehicle for like-minded donors to fund a portfolio approach.

The integrated UN presence in Somalia and the establishment of joint teams and programmes by the UN was recognized as a best-practice example. This integration was critical to the Mission's delivery of its mandate. However, UNDP could be put in a difficult position if the Mission seeks to support a political position that could make programme implementation more challenging. Several development partners opined that the Mission's agenda can occasionally become overly dominant, often favoring political processes which may

inadvertently resist sub-national and community-level consultations.[16] This can result in a representation that does not reflect the interests and perspectives of FMSs, creating tension with respect to UNDP's shift towards more inclusive, participatory, and bottom-up approaches. In addition, as the main implementer of SJF projects, UNDP is sometimes blamed for achievements being limited, even though it is a collective effort.

Humanitarian, development, and peace nexus approach

Finding 4. The UN made progress in integrating humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) efforts during the cycle under review, including outlining collective outcomes and implementing various joint initiatives. Addressing coordination, capacity, and national contextual challenges will be crucial to ensure effective operationalization of the HDP nexus.

Few countries, if any, highlight the importance of the HDP nexus more than Somalia. The approach represents a vital strategy for addressing Somalia's complex and interconnected crises, which include decades of conflict, recurrent climate shocks, and widespread displacement. Integrating humanitarian responses with development activities is essential in a context where recurrent climate shocks, such as droughts and flooding exacerbate food insecurity and displacement, necessitating significant investment in climate change adaptation. Here, the Somali government and its partners have initiated efforts to strengthen synergies between humanitarian and development actions, and collective outcomes have been outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. In addition, a proposed government-led high-level HDP forum would be expected to provide opportunities for improved collaboration and impact.

Despite the progress made, fragmented funding mechanisms remained a significant obstacle to the effective implementation of the nexus. Traditional sector-specific funding models led to siloed funding streams and operational differences across sectors. The lack of multi-year and flexible financing complicates long-term planning and the delivery of integrated programmes. While there has been more funding for resilience and peacebuilding in recent years, funding in Somalia continued to prioritize short-term inclusive politics and life-saving humanitarian responses over resilience-related activities.

Other challenges were encountered in coordination among stakeholders and empowering local actors. The ongoing tensions between the regional and federal administrations also drive competing political interests, often hindering efforts to address humanitarian and development needs.

UNDP's peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and stabilization contributions were central to a nexus approach, demonstrating a strong emphasis on integrated, area-based programming, particularly in South-West State where interventions addressed early recovery needs while laying the groundwork for long-term resilience to conflict and climate crisis. UNDP responded to acute vulnerabilities, particularly those relating to IDPs, while also reviving local economies through market infrastructure rehabilitation and capacity-building initiatives for women and youth (cross-reference this with Finding 14 below). Engaging local leaders and communities in peace dialogues and promoting social cohesion were also important in fostering sustainable peace. There was also a growing emphasis on capacity building and local ownership, which involved strengthening local governance and community structures to manage crises and implement development projects.

[16] The United Nations Security Council Report on the independent strategic review of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (2022) highlighted the challenges and delayed implementation of the Mission's mandate, which is reliant on the political context.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

Finding 5. The Country Programme mainstreamed gender equality across all portfolios, but with inconsistent outcomes.

Gender analysis and mainstreaming was a strong component of the design of the UNDP programme. Most of the projects had a gender 2 marker[17] assignment (i.e. meaningful contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)), while several projects (such as the Women, Peace and Protection (WPP) Joint Programme, the Joint Rule of Law Programme, the Bilan Media, and the area-based programming projects) listed gender equality as their main objective (gender 3 marker). However, achieving actual gender-responsive or gender-transformative results[18] was challenging.

UNDP advocated for more inclusive and participatory political processes including enhancing women's representation in the constitutional review and electoral processes. Despite these efforts, the key target of a 30 percent quota for women's political participation at all federal levels proved unattainable. In fact, there was a marginal decrease in the proportion of female parliamentarians in the federal Lower House in the latest elections in 2022 compared to the previous vote in 2016 (from 24 percent to 20 percent). The gender quota had previously been largely nominal and lacking in legal authority, however the revised Provisional Constitution mandates women's participation in all branches of government, while new electoral and political party laws require that the 30 percent quota be met in candidate lists, party leadership, and parliamentary elections. The effectiveness of these provisions will be tested in the upcoming 2025-2026 electoral cycle, with clan and religious leaders still opposed to the quota.

Puntland saw an increase in female local councilors (from 10 percent to 17 percent) during the 2023 municipal elections. This achievement was supported by the JPLG which trained 68 women candidates in campaign management, equipping them with public speaking, confidence-building, and other skills to enable their effective participation in the electoral process. Stakeholders, including donors, emphasized the importance of UNDP documenting and disseminating the lessons learned from Puntland's experience, as well the Dinsoor district (South-West State), which had set a precedent back in 2020 by achieving a 50 percent gender quota in local government.

Some gender results were visible in downstream activities though. For instance, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the majority of whom are girls and women, were directly empowered through gaining better access to justice and support services. UNDP-supported SGBV centers (in Kismayo, Dhusamareeb, and Baidoa) have continued to provide critical medical, psycho-social, and legal referral services to survivors. In 2024, these SGBV centers collectively supported 314 survivors, of which 303 were women (UNDP report).

The evaluation team visited the Baahikoob SGBV Center in Hargeisa ("Somaliland"). The Center was established with UNDP support in 2008. Although UNDP did not directly support the Center during this programme cycle, it remains the only lifeline for vulnerable SGBV survivors living in this area. In just the first 10 months of 2024, the Center provided critical services to 580 survivors. Importantly, the data represented only reported cases and many stakeholders believe that many incidents went un-reported, highlighting the need for strengthening outreach and engagement with national and UN partners active in the SGBV space to

[17] The gender equality marker is a UN tool for tracking financial allocations and expenditure on gender equality and women's empowerment through assigning ratings. The ratings are: GEN3 = outputs that have gender equality as the main objectives; GEN2 = outputs that have gender equality as a significant objective; GEN1 = outputs that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly; GEN 0 = outputs that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality.

[18] See GRES_English.pdf

improve survivor-centered care services and protection. UNDP's support in previous years was instrumental, covering staff incentives and facilitating community awareness-raising activities. Currently, the Center relies on support from other UN agencies and has not yet been fully incorporated into the government budget.

The development of legal frameworks and sustained capacity building of the human rights actors, including the judiciary ("Somaliland" and Puntland) and the Human Rights Commission ("Somaliland"), have helped raise awareness of human rights and gender equality. As a result, "Somaliland" banned the adjudication of rape cases in the informal justice system through a presidential decree in 2024.

Direct engagement with CSOs and women's networks remained low. However, in 2022, UNDP supported the establishment of Bilan Media, the first all-women media unit in Somalia. While the mainstream media coverage is dominated by political and security issues, Bilan's is purposefully focused on social issues which tend to have a stronger gender dimension. Stories on SGBV incidents feature prominently in Bilan's reporting. UNDP has also supported the use of non-traditional communication tools such as Somali digital storytelling and nonviolent communication to address issues such as gender inequality and to promote behavioral change within communities and partners.

Peacebuilding initiatives such as establishing network of peace actors were gender targeted as they were designed to increase women's participation and voices in these processes. The police training activities also have the potential to not only increase women's representation within the police force, but to improve police awareness of gender issues as well. Similarly, economic empowerment initiatives such as financial inclusion were catered to women and refugees to enhance the capacity of women-led SMEs and boost their access to finance. However, there were limited data and evidence to demonstrate how these initiatives were gender-responsive (i.e. addressed the differential needs of men and women and equitable distribution of resources) or gender-transformative (i.e. contributed to changes in norms and/or cultural values).

In the resilience and climate change portfolio, UNDP supported the Somali government in integrating gender into its development and climate change response through policies, plans, measures, and strategies. For example, the NAP framework is guided by the principle of gender responsiveness in climate change adaptation planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). UNDP developed the Gender and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Toolkit to support planning and implementation of gender inclusive CCA projects and programmes. At community level, climate change adaptation and resilience-building activities were deliberately focused on women, acknowledging their level of vulnerability to be greater than that of men, but actual results were limited. The imposition of a 30 percent female quota in water management committees was supposed to ensure meaningful engagement of women in environmental governance (Water, Environment, and Disaster Risk Management (WED) project). However, the ICPE team was not able to validate this during consultations with water committees in "Somaliland" and Puntland as women were not in attendance. In other projects, women's participation remained low despite deliberate efforts to involve them in capacity building as gender-related budget and activities were not assigned (e.g. cross-cutting capacity development project).

The Country Office (CO) had a strong enabling environment for GEWE, demonstrated through leadership, drive, dedicated personnel, and internal coordination through the gender task team. It had a robust framework to foster GEWE, guided by its gender equality strategy for 2023-2026. The office also developed guidance and tools to facilitate gender gap analysis and action plans. Monitoring and reporting practices, especially in the results-oriented annual reports (ROARs) provided gender-disaggregated data. The CO achieved silver certification in the corporate Gender Equality Seal 2021-2023 for its efforts in institutionalizing gender equality internally and within partner institutions. These efforts included targeted training for UNDP personnel and partners on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH).

UNDP recognized the challenge of integrating the PSEAH agenda into partners' broader public agendas amid the complex national socio-cultural and political landscape. UNDP Somalia was part of the pilot for the corporate misconduct disclosure scheme for sharing information on sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment cases.

FIGURE 6: Gender Distribution of UNDP Personnel

The ICPE analyzed the gender distribution of UNDP personnel. Notable disparities were observed, with women under-represented at higher grades across most personnel categories (Figure 6). In the national personnel services agreement category, the number of males was more than double that of females. The CO implemented a gender parity development plan to promote and enhance gender balance in the workforce.

Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security

The FGS is committed to the principles of UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (UNSCR 1325), and launched a national action plan for the implementation of the Somali Women's Charter and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in September 2022. The national action plan set out to address ongoing and emerging peace and security issues affecting Somali women. These include conflict-related SGBV, access to justice, and women's inclusion in constitutional review processes, state-building, and peacebuilding. The plan also covers national reconciliation, transitional justice mechanisms, and the prevention of violent extremism. In addition, it recognizes the impact of climate change, humanitarian emergencies, and the COVID-19 pandemic on women's security and wellbeing. UN Women is the focal UN agency supporting the FGS in implementing the plan, however the process has been slow due to a lack of resources. UNDP is also supporting the resolution's implementation, along with the Mission, although its role is not well understood according to the ICPE interviews. As Somalia enters the UN Security Council in 2025, there is donor interest to support Somalia advance on this agenda.

Institutional effectiveness and efficiency

Finding 6. Programme implementation faced challenges stemming from a dynamic operational context and rigid bureaucratic processes, prompting the use of mixed implementation modalities and tools which made implementation more complicated and ultimately delayed activities.

While designed as a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), the Country Programme incorporated elements of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) framework, which aligns with the National Implementation Modality (NIM). This hybrid approach added bureaucracy and controls that have since complicated processes.

UNDP signed letters of agreement (LoAs) with national counterpart institutions, enabling them to execute specific activities, which has reportedly helped strengthen their project management capacities. Public entities such as the federal Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs & Reconciliation (MOIFAR), the Puntland Electoral Committee, and the "Somaliland" Parliament reported improvements in financial, procurement, and human resources management practices as a result of implementing UNDP-supported projects. LoAs also helped mitigate risks linked to deploying technical experts deployed within national institutions.

However, challenges arose, such as delays in activity initiation due to LoA preparation coinciding with busy year-end closures, lengthy discussions with national counterparts, and some slow donor funding releases after project document signing. The fluid operational environment, including political transitions, security risks, and shifting priorities, further complicated implementation, requiring frequent revisions to workplans and agreements. For example, the project on promoting resilience through an integrated approach faced challenges in 2022 due to prolonged elections and heightened security risks, as well as a refocus on drought response in 2023. Additionally, institutional changes resulting from leadership transitions at the federal level affected the implementation of activities. Consequently, annual work plans and LoAs were revised and re-negotiated with national counterparts to accommodate priorities and implementation strategies essential to maintaining momentum. Similarly, the Africa Mini-grids project encountered difficulties due to concerned ministries having unclear institutional mandates and undergoing frequent leadership changes, jeopardizing the project's success and complicating the timely execution of key milestones.

Frequent use of project implementation plans (PIPs) instead of project documents delayed processes. PIPs are designed as short-duration implementation tools, valid for a maximum of 18 months, and serve the purpose of exploring ideas. They could also be used to bypass cumbersome, lengthy programme planning requirements. The limited duration of a PIP's validity implies frequent renewals of LoAs.

The use of HACT provisions such as the Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditure (FACE) form, spot checks, and assessments, while intended to enhance accountability, actually extended timelines and did not necessarily provide absolute assurance. For example, while the CO established comprehensive procedures to prevent double payments to technical experts deployed in national institutions, the lack of a comprehensive, joint mapping of all deployed experts in the country makes it difficult to eliminate the risk of duplicate payment entirely. UNDP has oversight of its programme and exchanges information with other UN agencies, but it is unclear whether there is broader coordination among all partners supporting such deployments.

Mixing DIM and NIM modalities and tools created confusion for stakeholders regarding the responsibilities and accountabilities of the counterpart institutions and UNDP. Moreover, errors in the reporting of transactions could be presented if recorded under UNDP instead of the given counterpart institution.

Finding 7. UNDP made efforts to foster improved M&E and results-based management practices, internally and within national institutions, despite operating in a challenging context with limited data availability, underdeveloped statistical systems, and access constraints.

In response to previous ICPE recommendations to strengthen the results-based management culture, the CO conducted targeted training (in 2022 and 2023) that included government counterparts at the national level, with the aim of improving M&E frameworks and systems. UNDP also introduced adaptive management approaches in its programming to generate real-time insights to enable course correction, supported by third-party monitoring data (the latter has been operational for the last three country programmes cycles).

There were tangible examples of UNDP's support for institutional M&E capacity development, notably through the Somali National Bureau of Statistics (SNBS), which produced the country's first Human Development Index (HDI) and Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in over three decades. These are important tools for SDG tracking and evidence-based national planning (see Finding 17). Under the resilience and climate change portfolio, UNDP supported a participatory process to develop a comprehensive M&E framework for climate change adaptation, comprising 120 indicators across five sectors (completed in 2023). This framework was recognized by national stakeholders as instrumental in enhancing institutional capacities to track the NAP's progress. Similarly, UNDP facilitated the development of national environmental standards and GIS infrastructure and the preparation of Somalia's First Biennial Update Report to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). These processes are crucial when it comes to operationalizing climate data systems. The long-term effectiveness of these investments in M&E systems and tools will depend on sustained institutional commitment and integration into national planning and budgets (cross-reference this with Finding 17 on institutional capacity building).

Within the internal UNDP environment, systemic limitations continue to constrain the strategic impact of M&E capacity development efforts. The Country Programme's M&E system and efforts were strongest at project level where substantial activity-level and immediate output results are collected. Evidence of intermediate results and qualitative changes and/or institutional performance was limited though. The emphasis on quantitative targets and indicators, primarily served corporate and donor reporting needs and came at the expense of measuring transformative change and fostering organizational learning. For example, the ICPE encountered challenges in longitudinal analysis of progress, which was complicated by misalignment between some of the indicators in the CPD/project results framework and those reported in the ROARs. Several donors have expressed a need for more real-time information to support strategic engagement with national stakeholders.

UNDP M&E staff were overstretched by compliance-heavy tasks (e.g. HACT/FACE procedures and corporate dashboards), limiting their capacity for strategic analysis and reporting. Despite these constraints, UNDP demonstrated commitment to adaptive management approaches in each portfolio strategy. This has informed the design of new phases of programmes, as evidenced in the security sector reform (SSR) (e.g. the BASIS project (which is introduced under Finding 12), the federalism and reconciliation support, and the constitutional review work. However, without outcome-focused measurement, ascertaining impact remains a challenge.

2.2 Inclusive politics portfolio

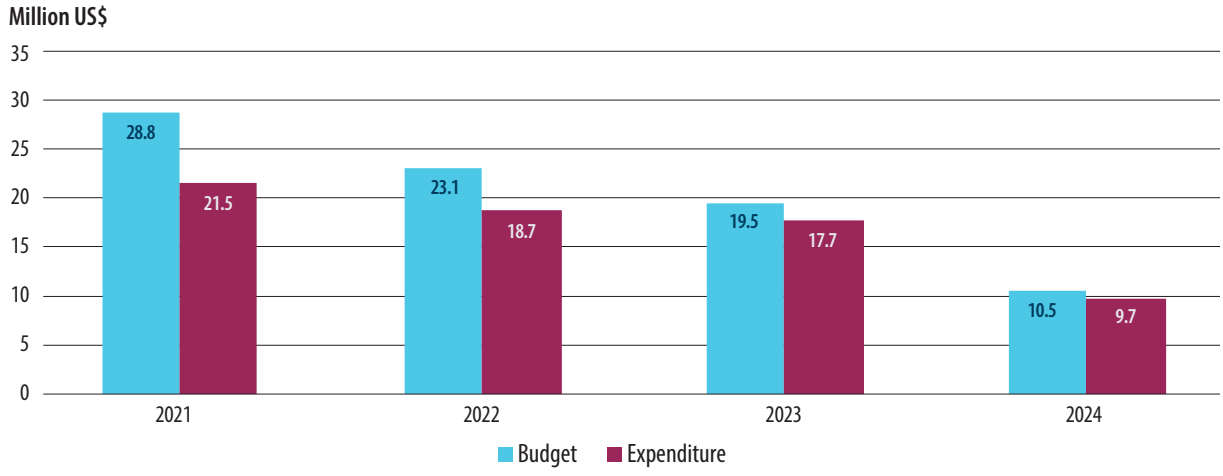
State-building - Federalism

Finding 8. UNDP was a key partner in supporting Somalia on its long path to a working federalism model. It provided technical support and facilitated high-level political dialogue, led by the UN Mission, with the aim of consolidating federalism. Moreover, UNDP support contributed to the emergence of platforms for dialogue and state-building, helping maintain the federal governance model in a challenging political landscape.

UNDP contributed to efforts to build a federal state within Somalia through successive flagship interventions such as the latest State-building and Reconciliation Support Programme (SRSP) (2022-2023) and its predecessor, the Reconciliation and Federalism Support (REFS) project (2018-2022), which was evaluated as highly relevant but not effective as desired in consolidating emerging federal structures and processes.[19] The design of the SRSP therefore recognizes the political challenges faced, with UNDP providing technical support alongside the UN Mission's political engagement. There was a shift in the focus of UNDP's support as demonstrated in the SRSP's move towards intergovernmental engagement between the FGS and FMS government institutions, especially through the NCC.

UNDP's technical support through the REFS and SRSP was highly valued by both FGS and FMS stakeholders, and seen to consolidate political efforts, most noticeably in supporting the NCC processes and agreements. The achievements of the support provided to state-building through federalism was significant given the challenging political context and unrealistic expectations (in terms of the time needed to build consensus) placed upon Somalis to move towards a wholly federal system. These achievements include unblocking broad electoral issues, progress on 'functional unbundling,'[20] as well as support for the constitutional review process and community-based reconciliation efforts.

FIGURE 7: Budget and Expenditure (Inclusive Politics)



[19] Thematic Evaluation of UNDP's Support towards Enhanced Governance in Somalia in the Areas of Constitutionalism, Parliamentarism and Federalism and Reconciliation, July 2022.

[20] Functional unbundling is a term used in the UNDP Somalia Country Programme and by FGS and FMS stakeholders interviewed. It means identifying and agreeing on the different functions of government and who is responsible for these functions at the FGS and FMS levels. UNDP supported the establishment of a working group from all government ministries which detailed the responsibilities of each ministry at the FGS and FMS levels. In total, 124 functions were agreed on. The functions agreed on are now at the negotiation stage and work is being undertaken at local government level in terms of identifying specific service delivery responsibilities at the federal and state levels.

UNDP's support for high-level political dialogue, particularly with the NCC, which was singularly facilitated by UNDP (technical inputs) and the UN Mission (political inputs), helped maintain the federal governance model. This support created space for dialogue and state-building, despite some stakeholders noting that the NCC is not currently inclusive of all FMS actors. Under the SRSP, shifting the main national partner from the Office of the Prime Minister to the MOIFAR was a strategic move, with the MOIFAR seen as being less political and better equipped to deliver on programme activities. The fact that the SRSP also carries a Somali name could also be seen as a positive step in promoting an inclusive form of federalism around the country.

UNDP's contribution consistently supported the federalist governance model, in line with Output 1.3 of the CPD. This prevailed despite the contextual challenges undermining progress towards federalism due to (a) ongoing political disagreements and (b) limited engagement outside government. UNDP's continued technical support for federalism (e.g. facilitating dialogue between the FGS and FMSs and providing technical advice based on the experience of federalist models elsewhere) helped prevent further deterioration in the face of limited social and political reconciliation. It is understood that this is the only major programme supporting a federalist model and constitutional reform, which could explain why Somali government stakeholders consider it to have great significance.

Despite a reduced level of funding, UNDP's support for federalism remained significant. Government actors highly regard UNDP's engagement, seeing it as essential in fostering dialogue on federalism. However, the extent of engagement of civil society, women, youth, and marginalized groups was questioned by several stakeholders.

Support for Parliament decreased during this cycle. Donor support has instead begun to focus more on the above-mentioned governance programmes, which incorporate support for parliaments at national and regional levels, and electoral processes. However, there has not been a specific parliament support project since Parliament Support II ended in 2022 (having started in 2018). This project was seen as relatively successful in building the capacity of parliaments at both the FGS and FMS levels. The ICPE findings corroborated the governance evaluation conducted by the CO.[21] In particular, UNDP's support helped strengthen the capacity of Parliament, which now conducts public engagements in developing new laws, holds open days, and makes use of social media (e.g. in "Somaliland"). Several development partners however pointed to the limited progress made in parliamentary support as capacity-building efforts were challenged by continuous changes in membership.

State-building - Reconciliation

Finding 9. UNDP facilitated reconciliation processes between FGS and FMS actors as part of the state-building process, recognizing that its support delivers political results (led by the UN Mission). UNDP also contributed to community-based reconciliation efforts through innovative methods, although these seemed to be disconnected from other peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts in the Country Programme. This disconnect may lead to opportunities for more effective peace and reconciliation strategy and programming being missed.

UNDP's contribution to reconciliation efforts extended beyond what was reflected in the portfolio strategy and theory of change (ToC). The inclusive politics portfolio included large-scale federalism and reconciliation programmes (as discussed above), a major women's peace and protection project, and two community engagement projects.[22]

[21] Thematic Evaluation of UNDP's Support towards Enhanced Governance in Somalia in the Areas of Constitutionalism, Parliamentarism and Federalism and Reconciliation, July 2022.

[22] The Empowering Communities and Strengthening Institutions to Support Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding for Security and Stability in Somalia project; and the Institutional Strengthening to Support Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding for Security and Stability.

UNDP's combined federalism and reconciliation programmes aimed to connect state-building efforts to reconciliation, a critical pillar in Somalia's state-building process. Through its consensus-building approach, which emerged during the REFS and the SRSP, UNDP facilitated reconciliation approaches to resolve key issues (e.g. electoral disagreements and, to an extent, the ongoing constitutional review). UNDP provided technical and operational support to boost reconciliation efforts, while the UN Mission took the lead on political support and engagement. The ongoing impasse between the FGS and some FMSs, particularly the disengagement of Puntland and Jubbaland with the NCC, could undermine both state-building and reconciliation efforts, highlighting the need for broad-based dialogue and consensus to support opportunities for reconciliation.

UNDP's community-level reconciliation support was one of the main strengths of UNDP's state-building and reconciliation programming. It reflected a shift in the portfolio strategy towards supporting people-centered and community-focused efforts. UNDP therefore focused more on supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding with government actors at both the FGS and FMS levels. This included developing a well-received conflict resolution mapping tool, the "Conflict Navigator," which informs project interventions through mapping and analysis of the structural drivers of conflict to develop preventive strategies. UNDP also supported the MOIFAR in facilitating community-level reconciliation efforts, leading to regional plans and subsequently the anticipated national reconciliation framework (although this framework has not yet been implemented). This led to several community-led peace agreements being reached to ensure greater ownership and sustainability. This 'insider mediation,' supported by UNDP, is based on the Somali model. National stakeholders also confirmed UNDP's contributions to resolving inter- and intra-clan conflicts through inclusive reconciliation and mediation efforts in Galmudug and Puntland (some of these conflicts are longstanding or recurring due to ever-present drivers such as land use, droughts, and migration). During the latest cycle, UNDP also supported a pilot oral history project on Somali peacebuilding and conflict mediation, and engaged CSOs on reconciliation and federalism processes.

Results and learning from the WPP Joint Programme were well documented.[23] It was highly relevant to the needs of women in peacebuilding and political participation, with localization recognized by most stakeholders as the programme's most innovative aspect. It has empowered the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development (MFHRD), as confirmed by interviews. The programme also drew attention to the role of women in peacebuilding processes, particularly at local community level through capacity building and networking. Interviewed stakeholders pointed to synergies created between this programme and other UNDP programmes, and improved coordination with other UN agencies such as UN Women, especially in promoting women's political participation. Nevertheless, there was an actual decline in the number of women in the FGS Parliament after the 2022 elections.[24]

While UNDP's reconciliation support was combined with its federalism programming, there was a disconnect with (i) its women, peace, and security support, and (ii) its peacebuilding and security support under the rule of law and security portfolio. Support in these two areas was provided through separate programmes, demonstrating the ongoing legacy of project-focused support hindering more integrated portfolio efforts (as discussed in Finding 3 above). This disconnect may lead to duplication, missed opportunities, and a lack of lesson learning due to separate approaches being taken.

[23] WPP internal learning exercise report (June 2023) and WPP final evaluation report (July 2024).
[24] WPP final evaluation report (July 2024).

Constitutional review

Finding 10. Despite the reservations of some development partners, UNDP boldly supported efforts to advance the constitutional review process during the latest cycle, recognizing the political will to move forward in 2022. UNDP's role was crucial in supporting FGS and FMS partners, and more importantly community consultations, resulting in partial agreement on some chapters of the Constitution.

UNDP supported constitutional processes for over ten years, with projects[25] shifting from supporting parliaments to supporting constitutional review institutions. UNDP aimed to work with relevant institutions to review, adopt, and implement the Provisional Constitution of Somalia, and harmonize FMS constitutions and legislative frameworks. It also included the uptake of the Women's Charter. However, that objective proved overly ambitious, with only modest progress made under earlier projects and the fragile political context.

The anticipated result (Output 1.2. Provisional Constitution reviewed and adopted) was beyond the remit of the Country Programme. It is only Somalis (governments, parliaments, and citizens) to adopt a constitution.

Despite challenges, UNDP's support nevertheless laid foundations for a comprehensive constitutional review. This included the establishment of two new constitutional review institutions[26] and the provision of support to the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs (MoCA). These institutions played significant roles in formalizing the constitutional review process and the delivery of technical support. UNDP provided technical, operational, capacity-building, and infrastructure support directly and indirectly to all three constitution-making bodies, the MoCA, the Independent Constitution Review and Implementation Commission (ICRIC), and the Oversight Committee.

UNDP also supported review processes and consultations in most FMSs, making the process more inclusive and participatory than before.

Despite progress being made, the lack of political will to engage in the constitutional review process led to the closure of the Constitutional Review Support Project (CRSP, 2025-2022), which was unable to resolve constitutional issues. Donors believed further support would not deliver a new constitution, however UNDP boldly continued to support the constitutional review process after the 2022 elections (through the Support to Democratization and Achieving Social Contract project (2024-2026), initiated after the CRSP).

Significant progress was made towards the end of the latest cycle with five chapters of the Provisional Constitution reviewed and endorsed. This involved participatory consultations within the FMSs, largely supported by UNDP. This is testament to the legacy of UNDP's support and its presence on the ground in maintaining close relationships with the relevant institutions. It also demonstrated UNDP's comparative advantage in thinking and working politically (i.e. acting on opportunities when changes occur in the political context). UNDP was able to step in and provide technical assistance to stakeholders when in the level of political will changed, as seen in the constitutional review process.

UNDP was considered by national partners as a key partner of constitutional review institutions. Its continued support and technical expertise were highly valued. UNDP was also viewed as highly effective in its consultative approach, supporting consultations at the different FGS and FMS levels. It also gained knowledge and experience of working with the FGS. UNDP's support was aligned with the respective institutions' own workplans and priorities, unlike some other actors and donors whose contributions are

[25] These projects include the Constitutional Review and Parliamentary Support; the Joint Constitutional Review Support Programme; and the recent Support to Constitutional Review project.
[26] The Parliamentary Oversight Committee (OC) and the Independent Constitution Review and Implementation Commission (ICRIC).

directed more by their own workplans. For several stakeholders, UNDP acted as a kind of sounding board. In UNDP's cooperation with these institutions, it responded to their needs, provides feedback, maintains a two-way relationship, and was transparent about resource capacity.

However, some national stakeholders were critical of funding gaps and the emphasis placed on elections. The latter was a reflection of donor focus, timing, and support for UNDP programmes rather than UNDP's own programming design and implementation. The future of support for the constitutional review process remains fragile, with donors not yet fully committing to a new constitutional review support programme.[27]

Elections

Finding 11. UNDP's support for elections was highly relevant but faced challenges due to a lack of progress on universal suffrage elections and the absence of an independent electoral dispute resolution mechanism. Nevertheless, UNDP and its development partners successfully pivoted their support towards indirect elections and an alternative dispute mechanism, showcasing pragmatism and adaptive management. The 2022 elections staying peaceful could be partly attributed to these adaptive efforts.

The federalism and reconciliation programmes contributed to high-level policy dialogue, enabling the 2022 elections to go ahead, and these underpinned UNDP's electoral support programmes. UNDP designed and implemented two specific electoral support programmes, one focusing on universal suffrage and the other on electoral dispute resolution mechanisms[28]. The ICPE drew on the evaluations [29] of both projects as neither UNDP and national stakeholders were available to meet with the ICPE team.

The planned significant investment in universal suffrage elections was not fully realized due to a political agreement favoring indirect elections. Despite this, the programme focusing on universal suffrage contributed to the strengthening of electoral institutions, particularly the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), and the establishment of credible electoral processes. However, a lack of political will for universal suffrage and the non-approval of the NIEC as an independent body hindered effectiveness. The NIEC was established and strengthened as an independent electoral body, capable of administering elections and providing independent advice. The Programme also maintained a focus on women's participation in electoral frameworks and processes. However, the absence of a successor project may have undermined these achievements.

The other programme aimed to strengthen the capacity of the NIEC to build a credible and effective electoral dispute resolution mechanism. The evaluation found that this programme was not effective due to a lack of commitment to both universal suffrage and having in place an impartial, independent dispute resolution mechanism. However, the Programme was useful in maintaining relationships with the NIEC and pivoting support to the Electoral Dispute Resolution Committee, which ultimately assumed responsibility for electoral dispute resolution.

[27] According to one interview, only $2m had been committed to a newly designed $14m project (Dec 2024).
[28] The Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in Somalia (2018-2023) and the Support to Electoral Dispute Resolution Mechanisms (2019-2022) projects.
[29] Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in Somalia: Evaluation report (Aug 2021); and PBF project evaluation of Support to NIEC Electoral Dispute Resolution Mechanisms (June 2022).

2.3 Rule of law and security portfolio

The rule of law and security portfolio was designed to strengthen relevant institutions, improve accountability mechanisms, and develop legal frameworks to uphold human rights, gender equality, tolerance, climate security, and environmental governance. The setting of such a goal was ambitious, requiring an integrated approach to address the core challenges related to bolstering Somalia's state structures.

The portfolio had a total of 38 projects and initiation plans implemented under four output result areas. Total expenditure under the portfolio was about $50 million from a budget of $60 million (January 2025).

Security and Policing

Finding 12. UNDP's shift from an institutional focus to a community- and people-centered approach in its work on security and policing demonstrated its adaptability and responsiveness to the complex security landscape in Somalia. This shift has contributed to raising awareness among security actors about the value of having a more people-centered approach.

Support for state-building and, in particular, federalism and reconciliation are considered prerequisites for sustainable security and policing efforts. UNDP's support for the security sector evolved over three projects[30] from an institutional capacity building and coordination focus to a more people-centered approach. In the design of these projects, this noticeable shift in UNDP's focus was demonstrated, and is now at the core of the overall country strategy and the rule of law and security portfolio's ToC.

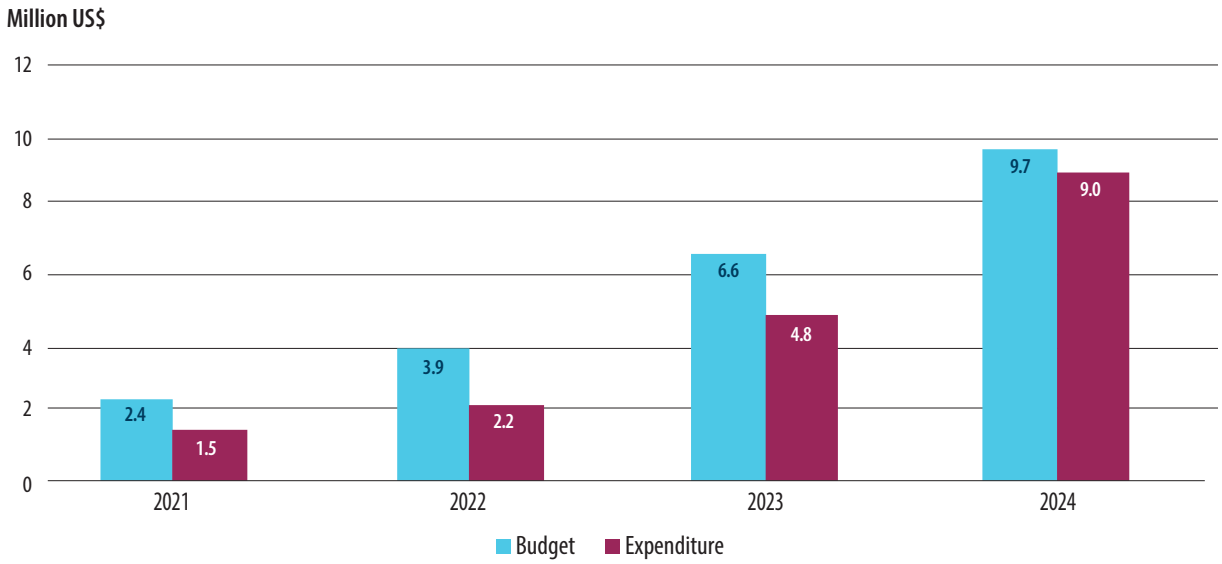
The limitations of institutional capacity building were demonstrated in the evidence gleaned from the Joint Security Sector Governance Programme. This was a flagship SSR project implemented between 2018 and 2021. Ultimately, its focus on institutional capacity was unsustainable due to the high number of staff. Furthermore, it did not add sufficient value to SSR and complementary civil service reform was also lacking. The Programme was criticized for not being sufficiently focused on security, was poorly managed, and had to cover a high volume of staff.[31] The Somali government continued to face challenges in optimizing the size of government, including with regard to retiring personnel and providing them with pensions. Most stakeholders also cited a high number of advisors being employed under the early versions of the SSR programmes, while the alleged presence of 'ghost workers' within the ministries was a specific concern raised by development partners.

The shift towards a people-centered and community-focused approach to security and policing is demonstrated in how UNDP's support has been designed in subsequent projects. Most stakeholders recognized the benefit of this new approach in what can be considered as a 'bridging project' called the Building Accountable and Sustainable Security in Somalia (BASIS project). The BASIS project has supported FMS ministries in assessing the security situation and needs through community consultations. Reports from UNDP's third-party monitoring, managed by the CO, show that ministries are now engaging more with communities and understanding their security issues better.

One of the challenges highlighted in SSR programming was the very political nature of the work when engaging with the relevant FGS and FMS stakeholders and the UN Mission (now UNTMIS). Acting and working politically (i.e. providing technical advice and support where there is political will and momentum) and taking a long-term view requires time and persistence on the part of UNDP staff.

[30] The Joint Security Sector Governance Programme (2019-2021); the Foundations for Sustainable Security Sector in Somalia project (2021-2023); and the Building Accountable and Sustainable Security in Somalia – BASIS project (2022-2025).
[31] Somalia UN MPTF Joint Security Sector Governance Programme final internal report covering April 2019 to June 2021.

FIGURE 8: Budget and Expenditure (Rule of Law and Security)



The flagship project in policing was the JPP, implemented between 2018 and 2024. It provided extensive support to the FGS and FMS ministries of interior. FMS stakeholders highly praised what the project delivered, consisting of hard components (renovating and constructing police offices, providing vehicles, and paying police salaries) and soft components (human rights training and other forms of building capacity for community policing). The combination of these components laid the foundations for the policing model and associated infrastructure.

An evaluation of the JPP found that the first phase (JPP-1) was highly relevant, as its design aligned with the national security architecture, and it reflected international human rights principles.[32] The JPP was seen to be effective in supporting the implementation of the legal, policy, regulatory, and strategic frameworks of police services at FGS and FMS levels, and in developing accountability and oversight mechanisms, which enhanced cooperation and trust between and among the communities and police services. The JPP was also deemed effective in that it integrated an adaptive approach to the changing needs and the security context, although the programme seemed to place more emphasis on establishing a national policing model and police force rather than thinking about the risks (for example, how the level of police salaries could be maintained). Two UN implementing agencies were involved in JPP-1: UNOPS (responsible for infrastructure, stipends, and non-lethal support) and UNDP (responsible for specialized trainings, support for legal and policy frameworks, and community engagement and inclusion). The Programme also partnered with the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM, formerly AMISOM), the United Nations Police (UNPOL) under UNSOM, and the EU Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP), which worked directly with the FGS and FMSs.

The design of JPP-1 lacked national ownership and instead reflected donor priorities. The project did not seek contributions from the FGS to cover police salaries and was focused on establishing a policing model and force without taking the risks of this approach into proper account. There was also a misunderstanding

[32] EU evaluation report on the JPP (August 2023).

between UNDP and the JPP secretariat. Meanwhile, state actors saw a disconnect between the implementing partners, UNOPS and UNDP, with each handling government actors differently from their perspective. Generally, it is important to ensure that a joint UN approach is clearly demonstrated to state actors.

According to UNDP, UN, FGS, and FMS stakeholders, the second phase of the JPP was more consultative at FGS and FMS levels. It involved government stakeholders, project committees, and civil society representatives, such as IDPs and clan leaders in South-West State. This marked a shift from the first phase's focus on hardware and salaries and required fewer resources. UNDP led the process and advocated for a more people-centered approach. State actors, though not entirely on the same page, were consulted and participated in the design. UNDP also played a critical role in supporting the UNOPS position on stipends, with an agreed exit strategy whereby responsibility for salary support was to shift from the JPP to state actors, which was accomplished by all state actors by 2024.

The community policing aspect was widely reported as successful and was integrated into other UNDP projects (e.g. those on federalism and reconciliation), according to interviews. However, the JPP in its second phase had a more limited scope and covered only areas to have recently returned under FGS control (such as in South-West State). Phase 2 was more narrowly focused on capacity building (training) and implementing the community policing concept. This was acknowledged by FGS and FMS stakeholders, however the police numbers required at both federal and state levels and ongoing demands for vehicles and construction represent challenges.

Some FGS stakeholders expressed concern that the shift to a community-centered approach in security and policing might divert resources from the central level and lead to opportunities to support state-building being missed.

UNDP is committed to ensuring national ownership of the new security sector programme. In this context, it is urgent to finalize the Constitution and clarify power- and resource-sharing arrangements among the FGS and FMSs. All in all, the success of SSR efforts depends on the progress of federalism, reconciliation, and the constitutional review process.

Justice

Finding 13. The strategic shift in programming from solely supporting the formal justice system to including the informal justice system represented a pragmatic move in addressing Somalia's complex justice landscape. This change has the potential to leverage the legitimacy and accessibility of informal systems, bridge the gap between the two systems, and strengthen citizen trust. Nevertheless, the informal system has its limitations, particularly when it comes to protecting the rights of women, minorities, and other vulnerable groups, suggesting that concerted efforts are needed to ensure that the rule of law is not undermined. A notable achievement thus far was the development of Somalia's first justice sector strategy.

The Somali justice system is a complex blend of formal, informal, and customary ("xeer") systems that often overlap and interact. Earlier UNDP support under the Joint Justice Programme (JJP) (2018-2022) and its predecessor the Joint Rule of Law Programme focused on strengthening the formal system. Pursuant to that aim, the "Somaliland" rule of law programme (phase I: 2020-2022) was a complementary project that enhanced the capacities of legal professionals and the performance of institutions such as the "Somaliland" Human Rights Commission.

An evaluation of the JJP found it was coherent with international norms and standards. It was also deemed effective in increasing citizens' trust in informal justice processes and judged to have strengthened the connection between the formal and informal justice institutions and mechanisms. The evaluation recommended that UNDP place more emphasis on improving access to justice for all Somalis and improving state legitimacy through supporting ADR and hybrid models. [33]

This change in direction was reflected in the design of the successor intervention, the JJCP. This design is partly donor-led but also reflects the views of FMS stakeholders in their attempts to bring together formal and informal justice actors. While there are concerns at FGS level about the reduced support for formal institutions, this shift towards a people-centered and community-focused approach underpins a long-term vision and goal to achieve national and local ownership of the justice system.

The scope of this shift towards a people-centered focus has to date been somewhat limited, focusing more on specific urban areas. This was partly a design issue, reflecting the first stages of the JJCP and what was viable, influenced by the prevailing security situation, particularly in the areas to have recently returned under FGS control. Interviews with FGS and FMS stakeholders revealed that UNDP's support has positively impacted both formal and informal justice actors. Meanwhile, stakeholders agreed that the JJCP fostered a generative dialogue process and introduced non-violent communication training. Although admittedly only in its early stages, the process has already shown signs of having a positive impact on bringing institutions and communities closer together, as well as leading to positive behavioral change amongst participants such as judges and police officers, which will need to be measured over time.

Until recently, the informal justice system had been dealing with serious crimes like rape, often leading to settlements being reached with the victim's family or the victim being forced to marry the perpetrator. Both FGS and FMS stakeholders recognized that this was a problem, and that serious crimes should be handled by the formal justice system. However, they also acknowledged considerable weaknesses in the formal justice system in Somalia, such as in relation to accessibility, as well as inefficient case management and lengthy and costly procedures. The development of Somalia's First Justice Sector Strategy (2025-2029) was nevertheless viewed as a major success, and seen as a vision and guide for the justice sector for the next six years, bringing together different elements and actors in the justice sector. The strategy was perceived as truly owned by Somali justice institutions, having been developed in a highly consultative way with the participating FMSs and at FGS level. UNDP played a crucial role in this process, supporting the consultation processes and providing technical advice.

Progress on the Justice and Corrections Model (JCM) was slower, suggesting that aligning the diverging views of the FMSs might be challenging, although some stakeholders indicated that some forward steps had been taken. The success of the JCM is linked to the constitutional review process and the adoption of a national model. However, running counter to that, FMSs have set up state-level justice systems without taking the existing federal justice system into consideration.

Lastly, UNDP brought together the joint programmes on justice and corrections and police into one programme in response to the evaluation of the JJP (2021), which noted missed opportunities due to their simultaneous operations. An important finding of that evaluation was that the justice, corrections, and policing programmes operated in parallel to each other and effective coordination between and among different parts of the criminal justice chain was lacking, especially at the operational level in the different FMSs, as well as between institutions and communities.

[33] UNDP: Joint Justice Programme evaluation. 2021.

Peace and reconciliation

Finding 14. UNDP promoted a bottom-up approach, building networks of peace actors including religious leaders and women to counter violent extremism, address community grievances, and foster dialogue and trust. This approach appeared to have strengthened the agency and capacity of community actors to engage in local reconciliation efforts in Somalia.

UNDP promoted a people-centric, bottom-up approach to peacebuilding in Somalia. By integrating traditional Islamic teachings with modern governance, UNDP strengthened trust and aligned its efforts with Somalia's shift toward combining peace dialogue with security measures.

UNDP-supported projects[34] evolved to adopt a bottom-up approach in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) programming. Achievements of the first such project (2018-2021) included the creation of a country-wide network of 240 religious leaders who worked with the Somali government in promoting tolerance and peace and countering al-Shabaab propaganda, hate speech, and incitement to violence. UNDP also facilitated 22 P/CVE platform meetings in 'hotspots' which identified and addressed community grievances that are root causes of violent extremism. These efforts were part of an approach to preventive conflict resolution at the community level.[35]

Subsequent projects continued this focus on a more people-centric, bottom-up approach. Both the support given to religious leaders (training, networking, and community engagement) and community P/CVE platforms have continued and expanded over a series of projects.

UNDP's project trajectory reflected the changing context of security and P/CVE work, recognizing a need for government and religious leaders to engage at community level. Its approach, aligned with the Somali government's approach to P/CVE, moving away from primarily military responses to violent extremism, particularly in the fight against Al-Shabaab. This shift occurred after the election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in 2022, who recognized a need for a peace dialogue approach as well as military efforts.

UNDP-supported projects reflected a link between modern governance measures and traditional Islamic teachings. This helped communities relate better with the initiatives as they understood and connected with traditional teachings. UNDP's support enabled the attraction of suitable scholars and facilitated community meetings and dialogue. The project design emphasized that it was 'independent' of the Somali government which had no role in identifying the *ulama* (Islamic scholars), but they attended the workshops. This was likely to make the approach more effective as it enabled better ownership and buy-in for community-based peace and reconciliation projects. This focus could be elevated to the national level as UNDP sees working with Islamic scholars as fundamental to state-building in Somalia.

2.4 Economic recovery and institutional development portfolio

This portfolio's focus was on the following three streams of work (pathways): (a) institutional capacity development for core government functions; (b) economic development and livelihood recovery for vulnerable populations; and (c) decentralization initiatives. These themes are captured across six output result areas. Gender was mainstreamed and all projects and activities were supposed to embed gendered principles in planning, service delivery, innovation, financial inclusion, and other areas.

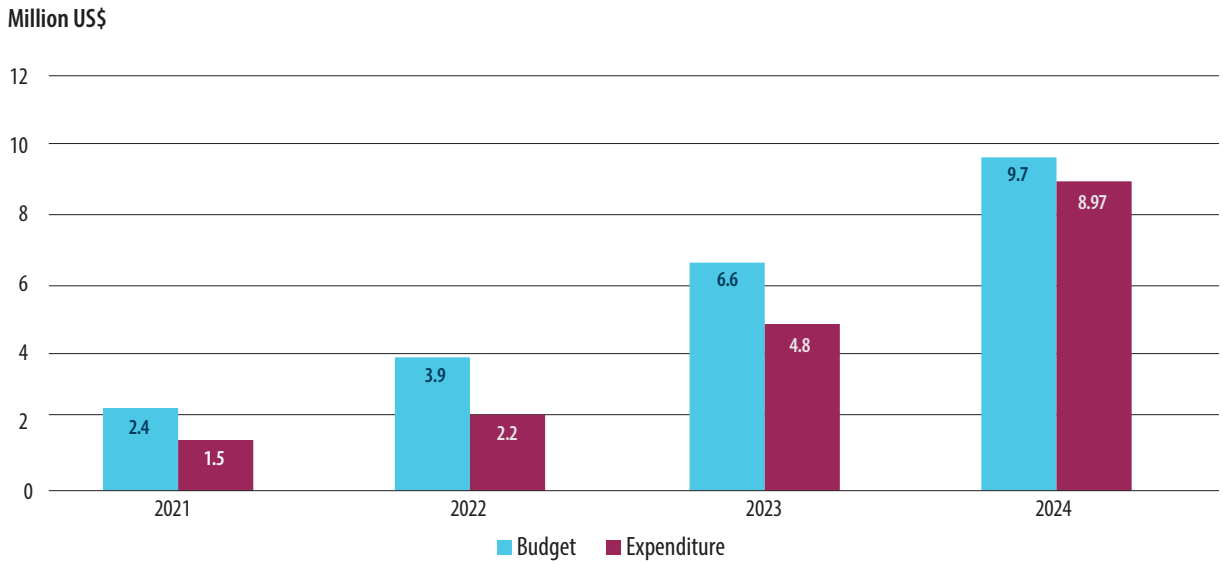
[34] The P/CVE Strategy and Coordination project (2018-2021); the Tolerance and Dialogue for Peace (2021-2023) project; and The Peacebuilding Approach to Address Violent Extremism (2021-2025) project.
[35] UNDP report covering the project period of 28 April 2020 – 30 June 2022.

There were 14 distinct projects and initiation plans deemed relevant to the evaluation's scope within this portfolio. This is the smallest portfolio in the Country Programme with total expenditure of $17 million from a budget of $22 million (January 2025).

Economic recovery – macro level

Finding 15. UNDP supported relevant federal government institutions in enhancing the enabling environment for business development during the latest cycle. However, UNDP-government efforts faced the compounding challenges of insecurity, poor infrastructure, and weak legal and regulatory frameworks. As a result, the results thus far have been patchy and fragile.

FIGURE 9: Budget and Expenditure (Economic Recovery and Institutional Development)



The portfolio's ToC weaved together several strands, which came across as a set of disparate projects covering both economic recovery and institutional development. The ToC was predicated on a hypothesis that strengthening policy and technical support for national and local government and enhancing community participation in problem solving will lead to the restoration of government functions to improve service delivery, mitigate against disasters, and create employment opportunities, especially for vulnerable populations. The portfolio was relatively small so this aim was highly ambitious, assuming a relatively linear and straightforward pathway to impact is taken. However, doing so would require significant investment from UNDP and other donors, a more stable environment for investment, and a change in the national and local power structures. Ultimately, the array of projects supported under this portfolio come across as too disparate for this ambition to be realized. However, the economic recovery interventions were more coherent and integrated in practice, focusing on small enterprise development, women's economic empowerment, and displaced populations at both the national and community levels. Some of the national-level interventions were broadly aligned with these areas, such as strengthening statistics and planning around the SDGs and the LNOB principle.

UNDP contributed to enhancing the planning capacity of government institutions responsible for economic development (for example, through the project on strengthening planning functions in 2023-2024). Moreover, UNDP supported the formulation of NDP 9 and has helped in the capacity development of the SNBS, particularly in data collection and analysis. It is not clear however to what extent the portfolio has

created "platforms for local and international investment promotion" and "employment creation." While economic recovery support has been noted at the local level (Finding 16), there is insufficient evidence to suggest the portfolio's focus on promoting and enabling opportunities for job creation has been strong, beyond framework development.

Private sector growth was challenging, partly due to the context but also a lack of a clear analysis and strategy on the part of either government or development partners. The private sector was dominated by informal actors with micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) accounting for about 95 percent of this sector's employment.[36] Somalia's NDP 9 and the successor NTP 2025-2029 prioritizes and outlines key interventions addressing the structural barriers hindering MSME growth, including strong policy, legal, and institutional frameworks.

Digitalization was seen as a key opportunity in the strategy for this portfolio, but it has not yet been fully developed. The portfolio only supported two relatively small projects, one of which was on digital transformation (2020-2022) and the other on the digital economy (2022-2023). Pilot initiatives supported under these two projects (and others) built on earlier work, but were not completed due to either resource challenges or gaps in the skills needed to operationalize them. For example, digital platforms such as the job creation platform "Shaqoabuur" (https://shaqoabuur.net/jobs) and municipality citizen engagement platforms (for example, "Fariin-Maal" in Baidoa and "Madasha Talo-Wadaag" in Garowe) were not functional. The new CPD will need to re-think its approach to digitalization – which is a key enabler for UNDP and has invested in an accelerator lab in Somalia. The digital sector in Somalia holds potential as a pathway to economic resilience. Leveraging existing digital capabilities, UNDP could drive initiatives that create jobs, enhance financial inclusion, and spur innovation.

There is evidence that this portfolio built capacity in two critical areas identified in the ToC. The first concerns anti-corruption efforts: building institutional capacity and independence to integrate transparency and accountability in service delivery, and spaces created for public participation on addressing corruption. UNDP supported the Somali government in developing an anti-corruption strategy, which was endorsed in 2020, as well as establishing an anti-corruption commission and task force which includes all relevant government arms, to address corruption in the public sector. Through these efforts, Somalia signed the 2021 UN Convention against Corruption. The second critical area concerns digitalization: enhanced government capacity to support a digital economy and enhance innovation hubs. UNDP supported digitalization efforts under the Saameynta project (for example, the above-mentioned digital citizen engagement platforms), a digital platform for the SNBS (including staff capacity building), and the signing of an MOU with Visa Inc. to boost digital financial inclusion for MSMEs. However, it is too early to tell the extent to which the efforts in these two critical areas have strengthened capacity and opened up opportunities.

There is also insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the capacity of ministries at FGS and FMS levels were strengthened to carry out gender-sensitive national planning, monitoring, and reporting (which is one of the outputs in this portfolio's ToC).

Stabilization

Finding 16. UNDP's efforts in stabilization complemented the Somali government's efforts, addressing governance and livelihood challenges in areas to have recently returned under FGS control, focusing on community recovery and infrastructure rehabilitation, social cohesion and reconciliation, as well as expanding the rule of law, security, and access to justice.

[36] Federal Republic of Somalia: National Transformation Plan (NTP) 2025-2029.

UNDP's stabilization efforts were aligned with the National Stabilization Strategy. UNDP implemented several projects[37] focused on community recovery, social cohesion and reconciliation, local governance, and the rule of law, all of which are core areas of said strategy.

UNDP contributed to community recovery efforts through the rehabilitation of essential community infrastructures such as markets, community centers, water facilities, and strategic roads. For example, the rehabilitation of fish and livestock markets in the Barawe district entailed labor-intensive, community-based construction methods, resulting in an immediate cash injection into the community and enhancing community development efforts. Meanwhile, social cohesion and reconciliation interventions supported community-level peace and reconciliation processes and strengthened governance structures through large-scale federalism and reconciliation programmes. This work was crucial in improving relations both between communities and between communities and government authorities, thereby supporting broader stabilization goals. UNDP facilitated the resolution of longstanding community conflicts in various districts such as Bardale, Galkacyo, and Xarardhere. Local governance structures and delivering services were key in addressing local conflicts. The National Stabilization Strategy highlights the need to improve local government capacity to deliver public services and implement interventions in a coherent and sustainable manner. During the latest cycle, UNDP worked towards expanding government presence in areas to have recently returned under FGS control, aiming to enhance legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the population. However, UNDP acknowledges that improving community perceptions of public services requires long-term investment, especially in areas that have been without government services for a prolonged period.

The services provided by federal and district authorities, particularly in the field of justice administration, lacked widespread popular support due to their slow and unenforceable nature. Limited capacity and poor service delivery have diminished faith in government institutions and hindered the resolution of community grievances. To mitigate this, UNDP promoted a people-centered approach to justice and security, combining informal and traditional justice systems with formal systems. Stakeholders recognized UNDP's value added in institutionalizing ADR mechanisms, which improve access to justice, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized communities. These mechanisms provided opportunities to address grievances while strengthening community cohesion, serving as a pathway to achieving peace dividends and enhancing stability. However, despite people's preference for ADR mechanisms over alternative options, their weak harmonization with Somali law risks creating a fragmented and inconsistent justice system, potentially undermining the rule of law.

UNDP helped expand the rule of law and security in remote and areas to have recently returned under FGS control such as Hudur, Beledweyne, and Dhusamareeb, where government systems have been eroded due to prolonged insurgency and a lack of government services. UNDP's capacity-building initiatives, including the provision of equipment to police forces at FGS and FMS levels, have been very effective in improving police services. According to interviews with government authorities, the police training played a significant part in establishing and expanding police forces in FMSs by offering the opportunity to deploy specialized police forces (Darawish) to take over from military forces in areas to have recently returned under FGS control to pave the way for civilian policing.

Overall, UNDP's efforts in this cycle were small in scope, and in some cases served as pilot initiatives implemented in specific areas. However, these initiatives demonstrated potential to be upscaled.

[37] The projects included the Joint Justice and Corrections Programme, the Federalism and Reconciliation Programme, the Joint Police Project, and the Area-based Programme and Stabilization Support to South-West State.

Institutional capacity development

Finding 17. Institutional capacity development was central to UNDP's strategy in Somalia. Its contributions in enhancing the technical and professional skills of line ministries and other partner institutions were widely acknowledged, albeit the process of institutionalizing strengthened capacities continues to be challenging.

An institutional capacity development approach cut across UNDP programming. According to national stakeholders and donors, there were noticeable improvements in institutional performance in Somalia in recent years. UNDP contributed significantly to building the institutional capacity of line ministries both at FGS and FMS levels through the formulation of policies and strategies. In addition, many national stakeholders reported improvements in their financial management, human resources management, and monitoring and reporting practices, which were attributed to their ongoing involvement in implementing UNDP-supported programmes.

An example of tailored capacity building which was highlighted as a considerable success was the support given to the SNBS. In particular, the capacity and reputation of the SNBS was enhanced through UNDP's tailored technical advice. Key achievements here included the development of Somalia's HDI after a long period. The SNBS also produced the first MPI for Somalia and the first-ever Voluntary National Review in 2022. The processes of developing the HDI and MPI helped establish useful baselines (e.g., health, education, employment, gender, and youth) for the future. Furthermore, reporting on the HDI and MPI has stimulated discussions on development issues. As a result of this support, the SNBS is now leading on producing key national reports and providing inputs to development plans and SDG reporting.

In general, it was challenging to institutionalize the capacities increased by the Programme. A key reason for that was the reliance on short-term technical experts deployed in national institutions for specific initiatives. Knowledge transfer was limited to their contract duration, and they often depart when their contracts end because national institutions cannot match their rates. Interviewed development partners criticized this approach, pointing out that it prioritizeed quick wins and was also inefficient and unsustainable due to high costs.

Local governance

Finding 18. UNDP played a key role in establishing the foundations for local governance in Somalia through the longstanding JPLG, which embedded institutional capacities in planning, budgeting, and service delivery. Nevertheless, challenges such as political fragmentation, weak intergovernmental coordination, limited public participation, and dependence on external support all constrained the effectiveness of service delivery, highlighting the need for continued efforts and sustainable exit strategies to consolidate gains.

Local governments play a critical role in strengthening citizen-state relationships through effective service delivery and improving the quality of life for citizens. UNDP has a long history of shaping local governance institutions in Somalia. The UNDP-supported JPLG, implemented from 2008 to 2023, was one of the most well-known programmes to have laid the foundations for local governance in Somalia. Specifically, the JPLG worked with districts to strengthen their capacities. UNDP's areas of focus were policy development, training, setting up structures, and gender mainstreaming (there were four other participating agencies: UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) - supporting the local development fund for infrastructure; UNICEF – devolution of service delivery; and UN Habitat and IOM – fiscal decentralization).

Overall, there is strong evidence of UNDP's effective support in structuring local councils, local administrations, and building capacity, including through training personnel and implementing financial management systems. However, the ability to assess such impacts was limited due to a weak results framework. Notably, capacity-building efforts were more successful in "Somaliland" and Puntland where local governments were stronger and had more of a voice. However, scale-up was slow. There was a concern that achievements could be undermined by gaps in funding and dependence on aid. While capacity-building efforts strengthened local actors, they were not yet ready to take full control. Greater attention needs to be paid to exit strategies to ensure the sustainability of programme achievements. Such strategies should not be seen as 'sunset' strategies but rather as gradual seamless processes which subsequently leave behind a framework of accountability and a strong national investment for programme management and oversight, mainstreamed into government planning and budgeting frameworks.

The JPLG contributed to the development and rollout of policies and regulatory frameworks for local governance, particularly in "Somaliland" and Puntland. These policies gave the district councils the authority to deliver services in the priority areas of education, health, and roads. The development of the district decentralization framework was instrumental in guiding the district authorities to make decisions on planning, finance, and human resources management. The JPLG additionally supported the formulation of strategies including decentralization roadmaps, fiscal decentralization strategies and action plans, service delivery manuals, and revenue mobilization action plans. However, the rollout of the policies and strategies was time-consuming as the concept of decentralization was new to government officials. Moreover, the required inter-governmental coordination to carry it out effectively was absent. Effective public administration in Somalia remains constrained by overlapping and poorly defined institutional mandates, resulting in disputes that hinder implementation processes. While the JPLG's focus on local governance policy and regulatory frameworks was successful, an opportunity to address broader public administration challenges and systemic issues was missed.

The creation of Local Government Associations proved effective in improving communication between local and central governments, particularly in "Somaliland" where the corresponding association reportedly became self-sufficient. In both Puntland and "Somaliland," the associations planned to establish local government institutes. However, these have not been established yet (Puntland) or become functional due to stakeholder disagreement over management arrangements ("Somaliland"). The latter case exemplifies the broader challenges in public administration arising from unclear institutional mandates, as previously noted.

In terms of mainstreaming gender concerns in local governance, the results were less significant considering the depth of gender equality challenges faced in Somalia. Efforts were made to enhance inclusivity by deploying female graduates as technical consultants at the district level, particularly in Puntland. Moreover, the proportion of women in local councils increased during the 2023 elections in Puntland. The female candidates were trained under the JPLG.

Phase four of the JPLG was approved in late 2024. This phase was much smaller as all but one of the donors withdrew their support. It was focused on four FMSs and Benadir Regional Administration. Its footprint in Puntland and "Somaliland" reduced, with a focus on knowledge management. Stakeholders in these regions raised concerns about the decrease in support as it might impact the consolidation of gains and long-term sustainability. However, these areas had stronger institutions and domestic resource mobilization capacities, suggesting that progress could be sustained despite the absence of explicit strategies in the earlier project phases.

2.5 Resilience and climate change portfolio

Policy and institutional development

Finding 19. UNDP's comparative advantage in policy and institutional development was well recognized at both FGS and FMS levels, and by various development partners. UNDP leveraged this advantage in the latest cycle by contributing to the formulation and revision of key policies and strategies related to the environment, natural resource management, DRR, and climate change. However, the implementation of some of these policies remained a challenge due to political complexities and technical capacity issues.

The resilience and climate change portfolio was based on the premise that Somalia is highly vulnerable to climate change and other natural hazards, coupled with over-exploitation of natural resources to support livelihoods. Vulnerable communities lack the capacities to make their livelihoods more resilient. The country has a weak policy framework for climate change, natural resource management, and DRR, as well as limited institutional capacity. This portfolio consisted of nine projects spread under three streams of work (outputs): climate change mitigation and adaptation; sustainable resource management; and disaster risk management. These represent cornerstones of development and building sustainable livelihoods.

BOX 2: UNDP Supported the Development of Numerous Environmental and Climate Policies

1. National Climate Change Policy
2. National Environmental Policy
3. National Charcoal Policy
4. National Forestry Policy
5. National Adaptation Plan Framework
6. Nationally Determined Contributions
7. Comprehensive National Disaster Risk Reduction Guidelines
8. Gender-responsive National Disaster Risk Management Plan
9. Gender-sensitive National Water Resources Strategy
10. Policies in line with Rio Conventions for Puntland, Jubbaland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, and "Somaliland"

UNDP made significant contributions to the development and validation of critical policies (Box 2). This involved technical support and convening relevant stakeholders to achieve an inclusive and government-wide approach[38] coupled with strengthening capacities for environmental management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and DRR.

However, the adoption and implementation of these policies and strategies were constrained. A key challenge in this regard has been the political environment in the country, specifically the diverging opinions of the FGS and FMSs, as well as among FMSs and the international community. Discussions with various government stakeholders at the FGS and FMS levels (in Puntland and "Somaliland") corroborated this challenge. In addition, some stakeholders indicated technical capacity issues, limited advocacy efforts (including civil society efforts) to foster policy implementation, and language barriers (as sometimes policies

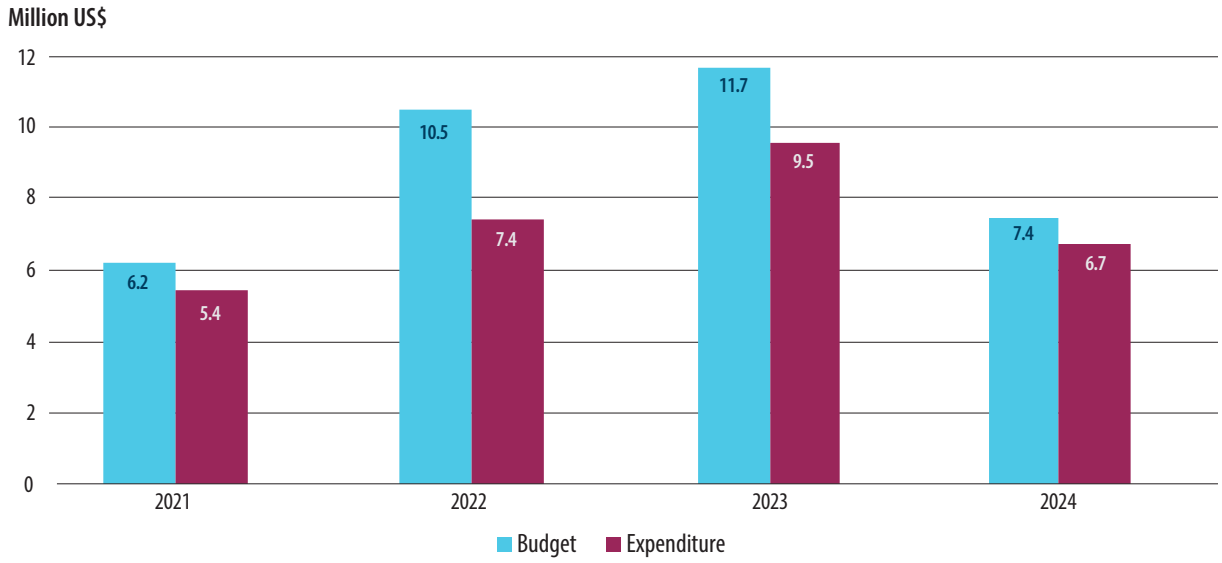
[38] Projects contributing to policy and institutional development included: Preparation of Initial Biennial Update Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2021); Support for Strengthening Climate Change Adaptation Planning for the Federal Republic of Somalia (2023-2024); Climate Promise (2022-2026); Strengthening national capacities for improved decision-making and mainstreaming of global environmental obligations (Cross-cutting capacity development - CCCD Project 2018-2022); and Enabling Activities for the Preparation of Second National Communication under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2023-2025).

are in English) were all limiting the level of policy interrogation. In some cases where policies were developed mainly at the federal government level, negotiations at FMS district level became complicated due to political differences.

Despite these challenges, UNDP's efforts in capacity development for environmental governance paid dividends. For example, by 2021, UNDP reported that over 2 million people nationally (42 percent women) were sensitized on sustainable natural resource management, and efforts have been made to curb over-exploitation of rangeland biomass and elicit charcoal exports. Coordination platforms were established to integrate the Rio Conventions at federal and state levels. Meanwhile, stakeholders reported that institutional capacities and the understanding of the linkages between global conventions and national actions had been enhanced, as evidenced by the cross-cutting capacity-building project (2018-2022) which was implemented nationally. At both FGS and FMS levels, the Rio obligations were incorporated into various environmental and climate change policies based on the guidelines developed under the project. Furthermore, UNDP supported the establishment and operation of the National Emergency Operation Center, which coordinated efforts to address the humanitarian needs of drought-affected people.

UNDP contributed to strengthening early warning systems in Somalia and supported the establishment of the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Center under the Somali Disaster Management Agency, which houses the National Hydro-Meteorological Service (NHMS).[39] The center receives risk-related information collected by several organizations or institutions, such as the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MoEWR), the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, FAO, and Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM). Somalia's progress was further solidified through the implementation of the Early Warning for All initiative,[40] making it one of seven countries globally to respond to the UN Secretary General's call for comprehensive disaster preparedness.

FIGURE 10. Budget and Expenditure (Resilience and Climate Change)



[39] The National Hydro-Meteorological Service (NHMS), was fully functional in 2024, delivering crucial weather forecasts, reaching over 525,000 ago-pastoralists with early warnings for climate shocks (ROAR Data, 2024).

[40] A United Nations programme that aims to provide all communities with effective early warning systems to reduce the risks of disasters and climate-related hazards.

UNDP also supported FGS and FMS disaster management authorities in adapting early warning services (as per the Sendai Framework of Action). The Geospatial Unit was established at the MoEWR and equipment was installed across the FMSs to support dissemination of early warnings.

In 2022, UNDP supported the preparation of municipal DRR plans in four vulnerable cities (Jowhar, Baidoa, Dhusamareeb, and Kismayo), involving a total of 344 officials (32 percent female), and local DRR plans involving 183 (51 percent female) persons in 11 high-risk districts.[41]

National stakeholders credited UNDP's efforts - such as the revised NDCs in 2021 and Somalia's First Adaptation Communication in 2022 - for the increased awareness of climate change adaptation. However, opinions on UNDP's capacity development approach were mixed, with some stakeholders pointing to an apparent lack of a systemic approach to institutionalizing capacities within targeted institutions. This, they asserted, resulted in eroding of capacities, given the high turnover within government institutions due to low levels of renumeration.

Climate change adaptation

Finding 20. Despite progress in climate change adaptation, Somalia's vulnerability to climate-induced hazards, weak institutional capacities at local level, and limited climate change adaptation financing continue to diminish gains.

The climate change adaptation interventions fell under two flagship projects.[42] Through these projects, UNDP helped establish a national climate change adaptation planning framework, assisted in climate adaption planning, coordination, and implementation capacities, promoted nature-based solutions, and supported climate-resilient infrastructure. UNDP also contributed to the enhanced capacity for integrated water resources management (IWRM). For example, nature-based solutions benefited 29,000 households (50 percent female-headed) in 2023. and over 19,500 households in 2024.[43] In "Somaliland", climate-smart water harvesting infrastructures were optimized[44] to adapt to climate change serving 4,600 households (49 percent female-headed) in the Odweyne, Burao and Ainabo districts ("Somaliland") in 2021. [45] While these efforts yielded results, some stakeholders questioned the significance of the contribution given the small scale of UNDP projects and Somalia's challenges with IWRM. Somalia scores low in a number of areas including enabling environment, sub-national water resources policies and regulations, participation of vulnerable groups, gender mainstreaming, and private sector participation, as per the IWRM data portal for tracking SDG indicator 6.5.1 (degree of integrated water resources management implementation).[46]

Although progress was evident in Somalia's NAP and financing mechanisms, sourcing funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation remains a challenge. For example, the total cost of implementing the NDCs and other climate strategies and policies is estimated to be $16.5 billion,[47] and domestic resources are limited. UNDP contributed through the provision of technical support to integrate climate change adaptation into planning and budgetary support, and establishing climate finance coordination mechanisms. UNDP also supported the formulation of a national resource mobilization strategy. Despite improved coordination at FGS and FMS levels, maintaining cohesion among diverse stakeholders and addressing technical capacity gaps remained challenging. Limited awareness and capacity, particularly at the community level, slowed down the adoption of climate-smart

41 These were Dhusamareeb, Adado, Jowhar, Beledweyn, Burhakaba, Hudur, Baidoa, Kismayo, Dollow, Garowe, and Dangorayo.
42 The Support for Strengthening Climate Change Adaptation Planning for the Federal Republic of Somalia project (2020-2024); and the Support for Integrated Water Resources Management to ensure Water Access and Disaster Reduction for Somalia's Agro-Pastoralists project - IWRM (2019-2023).
43 ROAR Data 2023 and 2024
44 These included three shallow wells, one fodder facility, one canal and one water desalination plant.
45 ROAR Data 2021
46 For 2023 data. For more, see: http://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/interactive-map
47 Federal Republic of Somalia. (2024). Somalia Country Programme. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/about-gwp/publications/gcf-outputs/somalia-country-programmemememe---june-2024.pdf#:~:text=The%20total%20cost%20of%20implementing%20the%20NDC,climate%20sensitive%20sectors%20such%20as%20rain%2Dfed%20agriculture.

strategies in some areas. The ICPE field visits also found the institutional capacity of water management committees to be limited in some areas. For example, water catchments in Dangoroyo (Garowe district, Puntland) highlighted shortcomings in institutional capacity with regard to sustaining water infrastructure. Somalia's high vulnerability to climate-induced events, such as floods, continues to undermine adaptation initiatives.

BOX 3. Development and Implementation of Franchise Model Concept for Retailing Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in Major Cities

A total of 2,614 businesses/retailers, including 28 women-owned businesses, were established. This significantly contributed to higher levels of LPG availability and a robust supply chain. As a result, over 14,211 households (95 percent women-headed households) across Somalia successfully adopted clean energy, specifically LPG. The disaggregated distribution by region was as follows: "Somaliland" - 4,914 households; Puntland - 2,800 households; Mogadishu - 3,600 households; Galmudug - 600 households; Hirshabelle - 600 households; South-West State - 600 households; and Jubbaland - 600 households. The subsidy for LPG mainly targeted households who could afford the initial refilling cost of LPG cylinders. This reduced the demand for charcoal and, subsequently, household pollution.

Source: Joint Programme for Sustainable Charcoal Reduction and Alternative Livelihoods (PROSCAL) Final Progress Report [01 April 2016 to 31 March 2023]

Climate change mitigation

Finding 21. UNDP's efforts in climate change mitigation led to increased awareness of the importance and benefits of clean energy and improved access thereto. Nevertheless, investments in renewable energy remained constrained due to limited access to domestic financing, insufficient international investment, and the perception of high investment risks.

UNDP's climate change mitigation efforts were in line with the revised NDCs. The flagship projects in this regard were the UN Joint Programme for Sustainable Charcoal Reduction and Alternative Livelihoods (PROSCAL) (2016-2023) and the national child project under the GEF Africa Mini-grids Programme (2022-2026). UNDP provided technical support promoting sustainable energy sources, such as low-carbon mini-grids, fuel-efficient stoves, and solar solutions, to decrease deforestation and charcoal consumption. It also provided support to reporting systems for anthropogenic GHG emissions and in strengthening measurement.

Key achievements in this regard included the development of national charcoal and forestry policies to regulate charcoal and curb deforestation. UNDP also provided technical support to aid in Somalia's energy transition, conducting various analyses to de-risk renewable energy investments. However, Somalia's energy sector is still highly private-sector-driven, through electricity service providers who primarily depend on inefficient diesel generators, with high fuel costs. Accordingly, exorbitant energy costs have continued to increase reliance on charcoal. Through the Africa Mini-grids Programme, UNDP aimed to increase financial viability and promote commercial investment in low-carbon mini-grids, but security concerns and weak policy and legislative capacities (among both the FGS and FMSs) hinder private sector investments. The De-risking Renewable Energy Investment (DREI) framework, scheduled for completion in 2025, is expected to support the establishment of a mini-grid financing facility. This is expected to attract significant investment from the diaspora and development partners once fully operational, promoting long-term growth in the sector.

At community level, UNDP made some progress in improving the awareness of, and increasing access to, clean energy. Between 2022 and 2023, UNDP supported over 20,000 households (95 percent female-headed) in transitioning to eco-friendly energy sources like fuel-efficient stoves, solar lanterns, and charcoal

alternatives, reducing deforestation, improving health, and generating employment in the charcoal value chain.[48] This reportedly reduced deforestation and charcoal consumption (however the statistics purporting reduced deforestation could not be verified).

Progress was also made in promoting liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) through a franchise model, resulting in the establishment of businesses and improved access to LPG by households (Box 3 above). While these results are commendable, more widespread adoption of clean energy is necessary. The growth of renewable energy remains constrained by limited financing (domestic and international) though, largely due to the perception of high investment risks.

UNDP facilitated the development of Somalia's First Biennial Update Report (BUR) to the UNFCCC in 2022. This report includes a proposal for the development of a measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) system for climate change.[49] However, Somalia still does not have an elaborate MRV system in place.

Resilience-building

Finding 22. Recognizing the complexity of resilience building, UNDP adopted an integrated approach, combining water resources management, environmental governance, and DRR components. While the rationale for the integrated approach was clearly articulated in the design documents, in practice it lacked cohesion. Nonetheless, some results were identified in each component.

The Promoting Resilience through Integrated Approach to Water, Environment, and Disaster Risk Management project (WED project, 2020-2023) had a technically well-grounded rationale, building on existing assessments and analysis (including the 2017 Drought Impact and Needs Assessment (DINA) and subsequent Resilience and Recovery Framework).[50] The project was also informed by the lessons learned from UNDP's CPD programming in Somalia.

The key achievements in the various components of this integrated approach included the revised national DRR strategy, standard operating procedures, and a draft national DRR plan. UNDP also supported the MoEWR in launching an IWRM master's programme at the Somali National University. The availability of 35 graduates (23 percent female) in 2024 from the programme contributed to enhanced national capacity for sustainable water management and climate change adaptation. ICPE interviews confirmed this result, which was achieved with UNDP and SIDA support.

UNDP facilitated community-based early warning systems and disaster volunteerism networks. In "Somaliland" and Puntland, water harvesting infrastructures benefited 111,200 households and contributed to the rehabilitation of 6,285 hectares of rangelands, thereby enhancing the resilience of over 50,000 households. By 2024, the WED project had improved water management for agro-pastoralists, and benefited over 299,500 individuals.[51] These efforts enhanced early warning systems, water conservation, and market access, leading to significant livelihood improvements. However, the extent to which the components of the integrated approach form a holistic picture in practice remained unclear, as even the WED project reports treated these three components separately.

[48] In 2022, UNDP supported the transitioning of 6,410 households (95 percent women-headed households) to access environment-friendly sustainable sources of energy (comprising fuel-efficient stoves, alternatives to charcoal, and solar solutions).

[49] The monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) system is critical for Somalia to meet its global commitment to combat climate change because it provides information on emission sources and trends, allows tracking progress toward climate change-related targets, and directs mitigation actions to meet the targets. It provides for the tracking of adaptation actions and assistance, including funding, capacity building, and technology.

[50] https://www.undp.org/somalia/publications/somalia-drought-impact-and-needs-assessment-dina-executive-summary

[51] UNDP Somalia: Results-oriented Annual Report, 2024

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. UNDP's performance during the period under review was characterized by both significant strengths and distinct challenges, shaped by a long-term vision, strategic positioning, programming approaches, and the complexities of the operational environment.

UNDP's key strength lay in its ability to position itself as a trusted partner to the Somali government. Its strategic positioning within ongoing reform processes was strong, thanks to its ability to convene partners at the local, national, and regional levels. Additionally, UNDP brought in expertise and called upon international experience to support policymaking, institutional reforms, and capacity building.

UNDP programming, in its design, has rightly shifted towards more inclusive and participatory community-based approaches. Somalia's state-building gains remain highly fragile given the ongoing disagreements and political impasse between the FGS and some FMSs, and in particular the decision of some FMSs not to partake in discussions. Taking a people-centric approach to issues such as security and justice is appropriate in this delicate and conflict-affected context and presents an opportunity for UNDP to support a more long-term vision and path strengthening the social contract between the state and citizens in a truly Somali way. While this strategy has generally resulted in a shift towards more inclusive and participatory processes, a top-down approach was also necessary, particularly within the inclusive politics portfolio to advance key aspects of state-building, namely federalism, reconciliation, constitutional review, and elections.

UNDP introduced adaptive management and area- and sector-based approaches, informed by lessons learned and discussions with development partners. A key aspect of adaptive management is the ability of UNDP staff to think and work politically by understanding changes in context and political actors. UNDP has navigated Somalia's complex and dynamic context, adjusting strategies as needed. While UNDP is traditionally risk-averse, the CO management has shown sensitivity to political dynamics and opportunities. UNDP staff saw a clear distinction between the UN Mission 'doing the politics,' and UNDP in providing technical programming support. But in reality, the distinction is not so clear. The way in which UNDP engages with FGS and FMS stakeholders and promotes a people-centered approach may well require a more 'political' approach in the future.

Conclusion 2. There was tension between the demand-driven nature of UNDP programmes and the need to address the root causes of issues to foster systemic change.

UNDP aspired to maintain its strategic focus as per the approved Country Programme outcomes, while addressing and responding to government demands. The approved Country Programme framework was sufficiently broad to allow necessary responsiveness to the Somali government's needs across sectors. This approach was valuable with respect to ensuring national ownership of the Programme. However, while it allowed UNDP to implement an impressive range of interventions, it also led to fragmented interventions and outputs, with limited outcome-level changes across the respective sectors. This reduced the overall effectiveness and impact of UNDP's support across all sectors, with challenges more visible in some sectors (e.g. justice) than others. UNDP's engagement in some areas or subsectors lacked depth and that led to weak transformative potential of the achieved outputs, which were too many and too scattered across the portfolios.

The tendency towards demand-driven interventions posed a risk of short-term goals being prioritized over longer-term results. The focus was placed on addressing the immediate needs or demands of the Somali government which may produce quick results. In this regard, the availability of short-term funding that prioritizes quick and visible outcomes is a contributory factor. Meanwhile, international trends indicate further funding declines are ahead. Accordingly, the overly ambitious and expansive budget developed by UNDP highlights a lesson to be learned, namely making future programming more realistic.

Conclusion 3. UNDP prioritized inclusive politics because success in this area was seen as potentially enabling progress in all other areas including the rule of law and security, economic recovery and institutional development, and resilience and climate change. This prioritization aligned with the objectives of the UN Mission and most international donors. It is however not a linear process, with results achieved even in the absence of some political agreements. This was particularly evident in areas where UNDP has a comparative advantage such as reconciliation, community policing, durable solutions, and climate change adaptation.

UNDP based its CPD on the premise that inclusive politics and reconciliation are necessary in achieving other results like sustaining security, improving access to justice, securing inclusive economic recovery, ensuring equitable access to natural resources, and strengthening resilience. Inclusive politics was deemed very important and other outcomes relied on it. This is reflected in the significant allocation of resources thereto, with more than 40 percent of total programme expenditure between 2021 and 2024. Donors also prioritized inclusive politics, given the ongoing decline in funds available to Somalia.

However, progress in some areas of inclusive politics fell short of expectations due to different views among FMSs on the path to federalism, the constitutional review process, and universal suffrage in elections. Despite these challenges, progress was made in other areas which were less dependent on political processes. This was particularly evident at FMS level, for example in the area-based approach to economic recovery, with substantial contributions to community recovery, the continued rollout of the community policing model (which enhanced local security), and the peace and reconciliation efforts through religious and community leaders, which are largely independent of political processes and are helping foster reconciliation at community level.

Conclusion 4. UNDP's resilience and climate change programming demonstrated a comparative advantage in policy and institutional development with significant contributions made to policy formulation. However, implementation of these policies faced challenges, including technical and contextual issues. This implied a need for more focused efforts to address these challenges.

UNDP's contribution in terms of strengthening institutional capacities for planning, developing local frameworks, and mainstreaming international conventions was evident, and needs to be harnessed to inform future investments. As UNDP moves towards the next CPD cycle, expectations are high among government and other development partners. The National Transformation Agenda will likely pinpoint climate change, environmental management, DRR, and resilience-building as priority areas. The increasing investments made by other key development partners (such as the World Bank and international NGOs), including in renewable energy and resilience-building, call for UNDP to take stock and consolidate its position in policy development to create a conducive ecosystem for these development partners.

Conclusion 5. UNDP boldly maintained support for and built relationships with key actors in areas where some donors were more reluctant to support, such as the constitutional review process, community policing, and local government support. While there has been progress in these areas, challenges and obstacles still exist on the ground. Alongside the UN Mission, UNDP adapted its support accordingly when it saw opportunities to do so and where political commitment was evident, recognizing its comparative advantage.

UNDP leveraged its on-the-ground presence and history of engagement to build partnerships with government partners during the latest cycle. This allowed it to support government-led initiatives when opportunities arose, such as with the constitutional review process which had the backing of political leadership and renewed momentum at national level. However, the progress made towards constitutional review and the reaching of agreements on chapter revisions has been more nuanced.

UNDP also recognized the need to widen its partnership base by engaging with the private sector - a key actor in the energy and economic sectors as well as civil society, and crucial in people-centric approaches like reconciliation, women's political representation, informal justice systems, and community-focused economic recovery. However, so far these partnerships have not been developed in a strategic way, with a clear partnership strategy for the private sector or civil society missing.

Conclusion 6. Women's peacebuilding and political support has been funded separately but has started to be mainstreamed across the Country Programme. Progress on gender equality in most pillars however remained limited during the cycle due to the depth of gender inequality in Somalia and a lack of genuine commitment.

UNDP has built a solid foundation to ensure the systemic integration of gender concerns in all its programming and operations. Gender equality and women's empowerment was treated both as a cross-cutting theme across all programme pillars, as well as stand-alone interventions in UNDP's Country Programme. However, there were substantial challenges in advancing gender equality, including gaps in implementation and inadequate resources. UNDP is a relatively small actor and contributor to larger efforts in Somalia with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment. Its efforts were also affected by a national context of deep gender disparities and inequality. The depth of gender inequality in Somalia requires a higher level of collaborative effort from government and development actors alike, including civil society, in priority setting and identifying transformative opportunities.

Conclusion 7. The CO's use of mixed implementation modalities and tools resulted in an operational framework with high transaction costs. While the application of procedural rigor, such as FACE and HACT procedures, was intended to ensure accountability, it may not necessarily have yet delivered the expected level of assurance.

The implementation modality of the Country Programme aimed to enhance national ownership and strengthen oversight and accountability in a high-risk operational environment. However, it has inadvertently introduced complexities into the implementation process. A key underlying challenge stems from the limited compatibility between the corporate programme management toolkit and adaptive management scenarios, which demand agility and responsiveness in highly complex and dynamic contexts like Somalia. The CO was essentially undertaking NIM without explicitly identifying it as such.

3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Strengthen systems thinking and proactive adaptive management to address the root causes of fragility, and build resilience in collaboration with government and development partners.

As highlighted by the ICPE, UNDP's comparative advantage as a trusted partner of the Somali government was reinforced during the latest cycle through adaptive management approaches, which enabled responsiveness to contextual change. However, this flexibility tended to lean towards addressing immediate, demand-driven needs, resulting in fragmented interventions. Looking ahead, interventions must be adapted to avoid resources being spread thinly across too many activities, which can lead to unsustainable results. UNDP should deepen systems thinking within adaptive management practices, ensuring a more strategic balance between responding to immediate needs and tackling the underlying and root causes of fragility, such as weak governance and limited institutional capacities. This would involve incorporating scenario planning and tiered objectives within each result area, which would ensure that even if timelines shift or broader high-level results are not fully achieved, substantive contributions could still be measured. Engaging

donors early on will be key in securing buy-in for flexible programming. The formalization of the portfolio approach in the new CPD provides an opportunity to institutionalize this shift, enabling a more integrated and sustainable programme that is aligned with longer-term national priorities.

Conflict-sensitive programming skills are limited in Somalia and UNDP should strengthen these to enable the effective mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity in its programming, particularly stabilization efforts to ensure that short-term interventions prioritizing quick wins do not inadvertently exacerbate tensions or hinder long-term sustainability. This would require critical dialogue with government and development partners to ensure interventions address root causes of development challenges.

Recommendation 2. Maintain a dual-track approach to sustain progress in Somalia's state-building, balancing high-level political engagement with community-level resilience building. UNDP should continue to leverage its comparative advantage to navigate the UN Mission's transition and planned withdrawal.

Since the 1990s, state-building has been a priority in Somalia, albeit with only incremental progress. While it remains a critical enabler for broader governance and achieving development goals, UNDP's success in areas such as community policing and reconciliation highlights the importance of fostering resilience and trust at the local level. UNDP should prioritize areas where incremental progress is possible such as community-based reconciliation and local governance and economic recovery at the FMS level (all critical elements in enhancing resilience). UNDP and its international partners should focus on achievable milestones that, if reached, would directly reinforce the governance architecture and sustainable development outcomes.

The transition and planned withdrawal of the UN Mission presents both challenges and opportunities for UNDP. While the reduction in international presence may create gaps in security and governance support, it could also allow UNDP to step into a more prominent role in areas such as institutional capacity building. Strategic planning and partnerships will be critical to navigating this transition, ensuring continuity and avoiding destabilization. UNDP should leverage its comparative advantage in governance and recovery to address emerging challenges and fill potential gaps left by the UN Mission's withdrawal. This includes strengthening local institutions, fostering partnerships with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and ensuring continuity in critical areas like rule of law and security. By aligning donor priorities with Somalia's evolving context and focusing on sustainable capacity building, UNDP can help create a self-sufficient governance framework that would reduce dependence on international assistance and enable Somalia to better withstand future challenges. Institutional reforms will also position Somalia better to take greater advantage of regional integration opportunities, including its recent admission to the East African Community.

While inclusive governance remains important, Somalia's state-building in its current phase requires a focus on strengthening essential government functions, including improvements in operational efficiency and accountability within ministries. UNDP should prioritize core institutional development to strengthen Somalia's state-building efforts, ensuring that government institutions can deliver essential services and operate independently of international aid over time. The new CPD should place greater emphasis on sustainable capacity building at all levels of government, ensuring that programme impacts endure beyond the CPD's lifecycle. By focusing on core institutional strengthening, UNDP and development partners could contribute to creating a self-sufficient framework that reduces dependence on international assistance and enhances Somalia's resilience with respect to future challenges. UNDP should advocate for donor priorities being aligned with Somalia's evolving context, ensuring that funding is directed toward approaches that deliver both immediate and long-term results.

Recommendation 3. Bolster the integrated programming approach (combining water resources management, environmental governance, and DRR) to respond to the complexity of addressing climate change, environmental and natural resource management, and resilience-building. Priority should be given to building on current investments and transitioning towards implementation support.

UNDP's shift towards a portfolio approach presents an opportunity to enhance integration, but its implications for national institutional arrangements and capacity needs require further exploration. Institutional complexities, overlapping mandates, and the need for political buy-in must be carefully managed. Achieving an integrated approach will necessitate paradigm shifts across various levels, including the re-orientation of ToCs, results frameworks, and reporting systems to better capture the interconnected nature of interventions and outcome results.

While UNDP's resilience and climate change portfolio has been effective in developing strategies and policies, the focus must now shift to overcoming implementation challenges. This includes addressing contextual barriers such as limited institutional capacity, resource constraints, and fragmented governance structures. Strengthening local capacities and aligning efforts with the NTP (including scaling-up resilience and community-based adaptation) should be central to this process.

Strategic positioning within the development ecosystem is also crucial, first to amplify UNDP's impact, and, second, to foster coordination with major development actors and establish a unified approach to climate resilience and environmental management. The UN is also working with international partners to facilitate the country's access to global climate funds. Support anticipated through the SJF's Climate and Resilience Window, for example, will play an essential role in laying the foundations for other, larger investments.

Recommendation 4. Tighten strategic partnerships for broader impact and strengthen people-centric approaches, gender equality, and knowledge exchange.

While implementation partnerships are critical for programme delivery, strategic partnerships can amplify UNDP's impact and ensure ownership and sustainability of development results. In the area of gender equality, a multi-faceted approach is required to address gender disparities. This should include legal reforms to institutionalize gender quotas, investments in women's economic empowerment and interventions to reduce SGBV. This will require deeper collaboration with development partners, civil society, and government actors.

Civil society partnerships are essential to advancing people-centric approaches in reconciliation and community-focused initiatives. Accordingly, UNDP should advocate for structured support to non-political CSOs, including capacity building to address their fragmentation and disempowerment in recent years. CSOs have an important role in convening stakeholders, facilitating dialogue, bridging conflicts, and knowledge exchange. In this regard, partnerships with development partners are needed to elevate the role of CSOs in driving sustainable reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts.

Recommendation 5. Review and optimize programme planning and implementation processes to implement risk control measures tailored to the operational environment.

UNDP's use of mixed implementation modalities (DIM and NIM) hindered efficient programme delivery. Moving forward, the CO requires support from its Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) and other relevant offices (including the audit office) to streamline programme planning and implementation tools so that they align with operational realities. This will involve assessing the capacity of national institutions to implement programmes effectively and learn from other UN agencies and development partners that utilize national systems. The goal here is to progressively convey responsibilities to national counterparts, thereby strengthening the nascent public financial management system while mitigating risks.

3.3 Management response

UNDP Somalia welcomes the findings and recommendations of the ICPE and acknowledges both the achievements and challenges highlighted. The conclusions reaffirm UNDP's comparative advantage as a trusted partner of the Somali government, its strong programming in inclusive politics, resilience, and climate adaptation, and its adaptive management approach in a complex operational environment.

UNDP also recognizes the identified areas requiring improvement, including the need for deeper systems thinking, balancing demand-driven programming with longer-term systemic change, strengthening partnerships, enhancing integrated approaches to resilience and climate programming, and optimizing programme planning and implementation modalities.

The forthcoming CPD 2026–2030 offers an opportunity to institutionalize lessons learned from this ICPE. It also presents a critical opportunity for UNDP to strengthen its role in the Somalia transition process, particularly in supporting national institutions to assume greater responsibility in the context of the evolving UN configuration. UNDP Somalia is committed to implementing the recommendations in collaboration with the FGS, FMSs, donors, civil society, and the private sector.

Below, detailed management responses to each recommendation are presented.

RECOMMENDATION 1.

Strengthen systems thinking and proactive adaptive management to address the root causes of fragility, and build resilience in collaboration with government and development partners.

As highlighted by the ICPE, UNDP's comparative advantage as a trusted partner of the Somali government was reinforced through adaptive management approaches which enabled responsiveness to contextual change. However, this flexibility tended to lean towards addressing immediate, demand-driven needs, resulting in interventions being fragmented. Looking ahead, interventions must adapt to avoid spreading resources thinly across too many activities, which can lead to unsustainable results. UNDP should also deepen systems thinking within adaptive management practices, ensuring a more strategic balance between responding to immediate needs and tackling the underlying and root causes of fragility, such as weak governance and limited institutional capacities. This would involve incorporating scenario planning and tiered objectives within each output result area, which would ensure that even if timelines shift or broader high-level results are not fully achieved, substantive contributions can still be measured. Engaging donors early on will be key in securing buy-in for flexible programming. The formalization of the portfolio approach in the new CPD provides an opportunity to institutionalize this shift, enabling a more integrated and sustainable programme that is aligned with longer term national priorities.

Conflict-sensitive programming skills are limited in Somalia and UNDP should strengthen these to foster effective mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity in its programming, particularly in its stabilization efforts to ensure short-term interventions prioritizing quick wins do not inadvertently exacerbate tensions or hinder long-term sustainability. This will require critical dialogue with government and development partners to align interventions with Somalia's medium- and long-term peacebuilding and state-building goals.

Management response: Accepted

UNDP agrees with this recommendation. While adaptive management has enabled flexibility and responsiveness, UNDP recognizes the need to avoid fragmentation and strengthen a systems thinking approach that tackles the root causes of fragility. In the new CPD, UNDP will embed scenario planning, conflict-sensitive programming, and tiered outcome-level objectives to ensure both immediate and longer-term results.

Conflict sensitivity training will be scaled-up across portfolios, with an emphasis placed on stabilization, governance, and resilience interventions. UNDP will also formalize a portfolio-based approach, ensuring coherence across thematic areas and alignment with the NTP and Somalia's peacebuilding priorities.

Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Conduct CPD consultations with key stakeholders to explore potential future trends and risks (e.g., political shifts, climate shocks, and funding fluctuations).	31 March 2026	DRR-P		
1.2 UNDP will support the rollout of the Conflict Navigator tool across all FMSs by end-2026, including exploring its use in UNDP and UNCT programming to enhance conflict sensitivity.	30 November 2026	Senior Management Team		
1.3 Promote the portfolio approach for integrated programming, complemented by comprehensive area-based planning to reduce fragmentation and enhance coherence at the local level.	30 June 2027	Senior Management Team		
1.4 UNDP will promote alternative financing and delivery models such as pooled funding through the SJF, adaptive management approaches with flexible ToCs, and the portfolio approach to strengthen responsiveness, alignment, and long-term impact within short-term donor cycles.	30 June 2027	RR, DRR Programme Team & Partnerships Unit		

RECOMMENDATION 2.

Maintain a dual-track approach to sustain progress in Somalia's state-building process, balancing high-level political engagement with community-level resilience building. UNDP should continue to leverage its comparative advantage to navigate the UN Mission's transition and planned withdrawal.

Since the 1990s, state-building has been a priority in Somalia, albeit with incremental progress. While it remains a critical enabler for broader governance and achieving development goals, the success of the UNDP Country Programme in areas such as community policing and reconciliation highlights the importance of fostering resilience and trust at the local level. UNDP should prioritize areas where incremental progress is possible such as community-based reconciliation, local governance, and economic recovery at the FMS level – critical elements in enhancing resilience. UNDP and its international partners should also focus on achievable milestones that directly reinforce governance architecture and sustainable development outcomes.

The transition and planned withdrawal of the UN Mission presents both challenges and opportunities for UNDP. While the reduction in international presence may create gaps in security and governance support, it nevertheless allows UNDP to step into a more prominent role in areas such as institutional capacity building. Strategic planning and partnerships will be critical to navigating this transition, ensuring continuity and avoiding destabilization. UNDP should leverage its comparative advantage in governance and recovery to address emerging challenges and fill potential gaps left by the Mission's withdrawal. This includes strengthening local institutions, fostering partnerships with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and ensuring continuity in critical areas like rule of law and security. By aligning donor priorities with Somalia's evolving context and focusing on sustainable capacity building, UNDP can help create a self-sufficient governance framework that reduces dependence on international assistance and enables Somalia to better withstand future challenges. Institutional reforms will also position Somalia to take greater advantage of regional integration opportunities, including its recent admission to the East African Community.

While inclusive governance remains important, Somalia's current phase of state-building requires a focus on strengthening essential government functions, including improvements in operational efficiency and accountability within ministries. UNDP should prioritize core institutional development to strengthen Somalia's state-building efforts, ensuring that government institutions can deliver essential services and operate independently of international aid over time. The new CPD should place greater emphasis on sustainable capacity building at all levels of government, ensuring that programme impacts endure beyond the CPD's lifecycle. By focusing on core institutional strengthening, UNDP and development partners can contribute to creating a self-sufficient framework that reduces dependence on international assistance and enhances Somalia's resilience to future challenges. UNDP should advocate for aligning donor priorities with Somalia's evolving context, ensuring that funding is directed toward approaches that deliver both immediate and long-term results.

Management response: Accepted

UNDP agrees with this recommendation. The dual-track approach has proved effective in addressing both high-level political priorities and community-level resilience needs. Moving forward, UNDP will continue to support federalism, constitutional review, and institutional strengthening, while also scaling-up local governance, reconciliation, community policing, and economic recovery at FMS and district levels.

The transition and drawdown of the UN Mission (UNSOM/UNTMIS) provides an opportunity for UNDP to take a more prominent role in capacity building for core government functions. The new CPD will emphasize sustainable capacity development in ministries, independent institutions, and local governance structures, and UNDP will use the UNSOM/UNTMIS transition to scale-up support for sustainable national capacities, focusing on core functions, domestic revenue generation, and public sector accountability.

Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Support national efforts to fill governance and institutional capacity gaps following the UNTMIS withdrawal, ensuring continued delivery of core government functions and alignment with national priorities.	30 November 2027	Governance Unit & UNDP-RBAS		
2.2 Prioritize core institutional strengthening, particularly in public finance, service delivery, and accountability, while working closely with the UNCT through the Transformative Governance Pillar and engaging with international financial institutions (IFIs) to align efforts on the public sector reform agenda.	30 June 2027	Programme Team		
2.3 Scale-up area-based planning reconciliation, community policing, and economic recovery models in FMSs.	30 June 2027	Programme Team		
2.4 UNDP will support alignment of donor priorities with Somalia's evolving context through high-level roundtables, working closely with the RCO and any post-UNTMIS special representative or envoy to ensure coherence with broader UN political engagement.	30 November 2026	SMT, POQA & Partnerships Unit		

RECOMMENDATION 3.

Strengthen the integrated programming approach (combining water resources management, environmental governance, and DRR) to respond to the complexities of addressing climate change, environmental and natural resources management, and resilience-building. Priority should be given to building on current investments and transitioning towards implementation support.

UNDP's shift towards a portfolio approach presents an opportunity to enhance integration but its implications for national institutional arrangements and capacity needs require further exploration. Institutional complexities, overlapping mandates, and the need for political buy-in must be carefully managed. Achieving an integrated approach will necessitate paradigm shifts across various levels, including the re-orientation of ToCs, results frameworks, and reporting systems to better capture the interconnected nature of interventions and outcome results.

While UNDP's environment and energy programme has been effective in developing strategies and policies, the focus must now shift to overcoming implementation challenges. This includes addressing contextual barriers such as limited institutional capacity, resource constraints, and fragmented governance structures. Strengthening local capacities and aligning efforts with the NTP should be central to this process.

Strategic positioning within the development ecosystem is also crucial to amplify UNDP's impact and foster coordination with major development actors, and to ensure a unified approach to climate resilience and environmental management. The UN is also collaborating with international partners to facilitate the country's access to global climate funds. Support anticipated through the SJF's Climate and Resilience Window, for example, will play an essential role in laying the foundations for other, larger investments.

Management response: Accepted

UNDP agrees and acknowledges the need to transition from policy formulation to supporting effective implementation of climate and resilience strategies. The CO will advance an integrated portfolio approach combining climate change adaptation, renewable energy, water resources management, DRR, and livelihood resilience.

UNDP will work closely with the FGS, FMSs, and local authorities to strengthen institutional capacities for environmental governance, align interventions with the National Transformation Agenda, and facilitate access to global climate finance mechanisms. Strategic partnerships with international partners will be deepened to ensure coherent and complementary investments.

Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 UNDP will advance integration of water, energy, DRR, and climate change adaptation into a resilience portfolio, while taking conflict, durable solutions, and economic development into further consideration.	30 November 2026	Resilience & Climate Change Team		

Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.2 Support the FGS and FMSs in implementing climate policies by strengthening their readiness and accreditation processes especially within the Ministry of Finance to improve access to global climate funds.	30 September 2027	RCC		
3.3 Develop a joint climate-resilience programme with major partners.	30 September 2026	SMT & Partnerships Unit & RCC		
3.4 Build capacity of local institutions for environmental governance and policy implementation.	30 September 2026	RCC and POQA		

RECOMMENDATION 4.

Bolster strategic partnerships for broader impact and strengthened people-centric approaches, gender equality, and knowledge exchange.

While implementation partnerships are critical for programme delivery, strategic partnerships can amplify UNDP's impact and ensure ownership and sustainability of development results. In the area of gender equality, a multi-faceted approach is required in addressing gender disparities. This should include legal reforms to institutionalize gender quotas, investments in women's economic empowerment, and interventions to reduce SGBV. This will require deeper collaboration with development partners, civil society, and government actors.

Civil society partnerships are essential to advancing people-centric approaches in reconciliation and community-focused initiatives. UNDP should advocate for structured support to non-political CSOs, including capacity building to address their fragmentation and disempowerment in recent years. CSOs have an important role in convening stakeholders, facilitating dialogue, bridging conflicts, and knowledge exchange. This will require partnerships with development partners to elevate the role of CSOs in driving sustainable reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts.

Management response: Accepted

UNDP agrees with this recommendation. Moving beyond implementation partnerships, UNDP will develop a strategic partnerships framework to engage civil society, the private sector, academia, women's network, youth platforms, and traditional/religious leaders pursuant to enhanced people-centered programming.

In gender equality, UNDP will focus on scaling-up women's political participation, economic empowerment, and gender-based violence prevention and response initiatives in partnership with government, CSOs, and donors. Cross-portfolio gender mainstreaming will be reinforced through dedicated gender advisors and resource allocation.

◀ Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Develop a strategic partnership framework for CSOs, private sector, and academia.	30 September 2026	Partnerships Team & Programme Teams		
4.2 Support the scale-up of women's political participation and economic empowerment programmes.	30 November 2026	Gender Team & Programme Team		
4.3 Provide structured support and capacity building for CSOs in reconciliation and peacebuilding.	30 September 2026	Inclusive Politics & POQA		
4.4 Facilitate regular knowledge exchanges and learning forums with national stakeholders and disseminate resulting knowledge products.	30 November 2026	DRR-P, POQA, and M&E Working Group		

RECOMMENDATION 5.

Review and optimize programme planning and implementation processes to implement risk control measures tailored to the operational environment.

UNDP's use of mixed implementation modalities (DIM and NIM) has until now hindered efficient programme delivery. The CO requires support from the RBAS and other relevant offices (including the audit office) to streamline programme planning and implementation tools so that they align with operational realities. This will involve assessing the capacity of national institutions to effectively implement programmes and learning from other UN agencies and development partners that utilize national systems. The goal here is to progressively transition responsibilities to national counterparts, thereby strengthening the nascent public financial management system while mitigating risks.

Management response: Partially accepted

While mixed implementation modalities (DIM and NIM) were necessary to ensure accountability in a high-risk context, they were also used strategically to support the gradual strengthening of national institutions on the road toward full national implementation. UNDP recognizes the need to streamline processes, reduce transaction costs, and progressively shift greater responsibilities onto national systems, in line with the principles of national ownership and sustainability.

UNDP Somalia will work with the RBAS, the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), and the Bureau for Management Services (BMS) to adapt programme management tools for fragile and high-risk contexts. The CO will prioritize a phased transition toward increased use of NIM, guided by capacity assessments and risk-informed planning. Lessons learned and best practices from other fragile contexts will be incorporated to ensure a context-sensitive yet ambitious transition.

◀ Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 In a bid to strengthen sustainable and robust institutional capacity, review and further calibrate DIM/NIM modalities to reduce transaction costs and enhance efficiency.	30 November 2026	Senior Management, Operations & Programme Teams		
5.2 Conduct capacity assessment of national partners to inform gradual transition.	30 November 2026	Senior Management, Operations & Programme Teams		
5.3 Engage RBAS, BPPS, and BMS to adapt corporate tools to fit high-risk fragile contexts.	30 November 2026	Senior Management Team & Regional Bureau		
5.4 Document lessons learned and best practices from other UN agencies and fragile contexts.	30 June 2027	M&E & POQA		

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database.

UNDP Somalia is committed to implementing these recommendations through institutional reforms, enhanced partnerships, and adaptive programming. The upcoming CPD will incorporate these lessons learned to ensure a more coherent, sustainable, and transformative impact in Somalia's journey towards peacebuilding, state-building, resilience, and inclusive development.

ANNEXES

Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the Evaluation Resource Centre website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/24886

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Projects under review

Annex 3. People consulted

Annex 4. Evaluation matrix

Annex 5. Status of country programme indicators

Annex 6. Documents consulted

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