Cooperation Programme Somalia

2026-2029

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Context

Somalia remains one of the world's most fragile contexts, shaped by decades of conflict, political fragmentation, and recurrent climate shocks. Since the collapse of the state in 1991, civil war and institutional breakdown have undermined the social contract, limited access to basic services, and driven large-scale displacement. Over the past decade, progress has been made through the adoption of a provisional constitution in 2012, the gradual establishment of national and local institutions, electoral processes, and renewed international engagement and integration. Tensions between federal and state authorities, clan-based rivalries and marginalisation of minorities continue to hamper stability and development. Climate change further aggravates fragility, as recurrent droughts/floods intensify poverty, displacement, food insecurity, and competition over natural resources, in a country where most livelihoods depend on climate-sensitive sectors.

Facts and figures

- Three quarters of the population is under the age of 30, with high youth unemployment.
- 70% of public expenditure is financed through international support, indicating high donor dependency.
- Two thirds of the population live in multidimensional poverty.
- Over 4 million people are internally displaced.
- Somalia ranks among the lowest globally on gender equality, gender-based violence (GBV), while maternal and child mortality rates are high.
- More than 80% of the population depends on agriculture and livestock, sectors highly exposed to climate variability.

Farmer Group in Dololo, transition from diesel-powered borehole to a solar-powered system. © Millenium Water Alliance.

Switzerland's Strategic Engagement

Switzerland has been engaged in Somalia and the wider Horn of Africa since the 1990s, with its commitment strengthened following the 2011 famine. Its engagement covers Somalia, including Somaliland, and the neighbouring Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of north-eastern Kenya and south-eastern Ethiopia, recognizing the close socio-economic ties between the territories and that cross-border dynamics (e.g. in trade and migration) directly affect Somalia's stability and development. Switzerland's international cooperation with Somalia is shaped by local needs and Swiss foreign policy interests and targets (agro-)pastoralist and displacement-affected communities, with a particular focus on women and youth. The Cooperation Programme Somalia (CPS) 2026–2029 focuses on three interlinked and mutually reinforcing outcomes: *Peace and Governance, Human Development,* and *Inclusive and Climate-Resilient Economic Development*. Climate change, gender, and good governance are mainstreamed across the portfolio as transversal themes. Thereby, Switzerland aims to contribute to an inclusive, peaceful, and resilient Somalia.

Intervention Strategy, Partnerships and Modalities

Switzerland's intervention strategy combines peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance, and long-term development through a triple nexus approach. While retaining the ability to respond rapidly to emerging humanitarian crises, the CPS prioritises systemic change and resilience, locally led cooperation, coordination and innovation. Switzerland aims to maintain a balanced mix of partnerships, including public and private entities, civil society, and bilateral and multilateral organisations. The CPS promotes the strengthening of local and country systems and invests in building organisational and institutional capacity. Through flexible, blended and innovative (financing) instruments, joint programming and support to coordination, Switzerland aims to translate operational learning from the ground into system-level reforms, to develop and strengthen sustainable solutions for affordable, accountable and inclusive development.

Main lines of interventions

Peace and Governance

Under the *Peace and Governance Outcome*, Switzerland promotes inclusive, accountable, and affordable governance as a foundation for peace, stability and development. Interventions strengthen local dialogue for peace, inclusion and civic participation, while supporting institutions to deliver equitable services within coherent national and subnational frameworks. Switzerland links bottom-up state-building with top-down reforms by supporting municipalities in planning, public financial management, and service delivery, and by contributing at national level to key reforms including fiscal federalism, constitutional arrangements, and public financial management. Protection of civic space, inclusion of marginalized groups including women and youth, and evidence-based policy engagement are central to strengthening the social contract.

Human Development

Somalia continues to face high humanitarian needs driven by conflict, climate shocks, and weak service systems. Through the *Human Development Outcome*, Switzerland applies a nexus approach that combines life-saving humanitarian assistance with development cooperation and policy dialogue. Interventions focus on reducing aid dependency by strengthening resilient, sustainable service delivery systems while maintaining the capacity to respond quickly to emerging crises. Key sectors of engagement include health (mother and child health, OneHealth), water, protection, migration, and support for durable solutions for displacement-affected populations, delivered in partnership with public and private actors to improve access, quality, and sustainability.

Inclusive and Climate-Resilient Economic Development

Somalia's economy relies heavily on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and livestock, while market fragmentation, limited finance, and weak value chains constrain inclusive growth. Switzerland supports a more equitable and climate-resilient private sector that generates sustainable livelihood opportunities for (agro-)pastoralist and displacement-affected communities. Interventions promote climate-smart production, income diversification, access to clean energy and finance, and MSME development using a market-systems approach. At a structural level, Switzerland advances policy and institutional reforms that promote fair competition, transparency, equitable resource access, and stronger cross-border markets and regional economic integration.

Transversal Themes

Gender equality, climate change resilience, and good governance are systematically mainstreamed across the portfolio. Switzerland aspires to become gender transformative in its cooperation, with a focus on changing unequal power dynamics and harmful norms. Good governance principles such as transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and inclusion are integrated across the portfolio to strengthen institutions and service delivery. Climate risks and environmental impacts are assessed throughout the programme, with interventions incorporating adaptation and mitigation measures to reduce vulnerability and environmental harm. Together, these transversal themes enhance coherence, sustainability, and resilience across Switzerland's engagement.

Target group

Based on the realities on the ground, the CPS targets (agro-)pastoralist and displacement-affected communities with a particular emphasis on meaningful inclusion of women and youth in decision-making at community and institutional level. This target group reflects the fact that over 70% of the population depend on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods. At the same time, Somalia hosts more than 4 million internally displaced people (IDPs), most of whom live in protracted displacement with limited access to services, secure livelihoods, and decision-making processes. Women and youth within these groups face compounded economic, social, and protection-related barriers, yet play a critical role in household economies, community resilience, and peacebuilding.

Coordination

Switzerland believes in joint action and therefore actively engages in local donor coordination mechanisms to enhance coherence, effectiveness, and collective impact. In this highly politicised and fragile context, Switzerland promotes a bottom-up and humanitarian-development-peace nexus-oriented approach that aligns humanitarian response, development programming, and policy dialogue. By working closely with UN agencies, international financial institutions, government counterparts, civil society, and other donors, Switzerland supports joint action, coordinated planning, and co-creation of interventions that reduce fragmentation and strengthen local ownership.

Further Information

Embassy of Switzerland to Kenya, Eritrea, Somalia, Uganda and the United Nations in Nairobi

Embassy of Switzerland to Ethiopia, Djibouti, South Sudan, and African Union