



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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**SWISS COOPERATION
PROGRAMME IN
SOMALIA AND
ADJACENT ARID AND
SEMI-ARID LANDS**
2026–2029



Background

Switzerland has been engaged in Somalia and the Horn of Africa since the 1990s, with its commitment further strengthened after the famine of 2011. Building on its long-standing presence and partnerships, Switzerland supports peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance, and long-term development with a strong focus on inclusion and local ownership. The engagement covers Somalia, including Somaliland, and the adjacent arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) of Northeastern Kenya and Southeastern Ethiopia.

Challenges

Somalia remains one of the world's most fragile contexts. The state collapse in 1991 triggered decades of civil war, institutional breakdown, and political fragmentation. Armed conflicts, including violations of International Humanitarian Law, continue to impact livelihoods and drive displacement. Climate change further aggravates Somalia's fragility. Recurrent droughts and floods are felt strongly in a country where most

people's livelihoods depend on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and livestock. Consequently, climate-induced shocks further exacerbate vulnerabilities, with two thirds of the population living in multidimensional poverty, amplifying displacement, food insecurity, and competition over scarce resources. Inclusion remains a challenge. The country ranks near the bottom of the global Gender Inequality Index, with widespread Gender-Based Violence and some of the highest maternal and child mortality rates worldwide. Women, youth, and minority groups stay underrepresented in political and economic decision-making as the country still faces major obstacles to lasting peace and stability including political tensions and clan-based rivalries.

... and Opportunities

Over the past decade, however, notable progress has been made including the gradual establishment of national and local institutions, and Somalia's renewed

international diplomatic and economic engagement. Somalia can count on a very vibrant and well-connected private sector and diaspora, both investing in human resources and infrastructure. The challenge and the hope lie with the youth. Somalia's population is one of the youngest worldwide, with nearly three quarters under the age of 30. In an environment marked by high levels of unemployment, rapid urbanization and willingness to shape the future of the country, a strong focus on youth is key.

The Cooperation Programme Somalia and the adjacent ASAL 2026–2029 adds Swiss value where it has the biggest impact and fosters innovation, inclusion, and coordination for a peaceful, prosperous and thriving environment for the people of Somalia. The Cooperation Programme is implemented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).



Results and lessons learnt in 2022–2025

During the Cooperation Programme 2022–2025, Switzerland supported good governance, food security, health, migration and protection to promote the wellbeing, inclusion and empowerment of the most vulnerable including women. Switzerland's support during the period was assessed as relevant, effective, and well aligned with national and regional priorities. Although effects are visible within the supported communities and institutions, the overall outcomes were adversely affected by repeated crises, including severe climatic shocks, armed conflict, and political instability.

Preventing crisis and building resilience

The programme contributed to national and international efforts to avert large-scale famine during the 2021–2023 drought. Through multilateral, national and international partners, Switzerland supported the broader emergency response during which millions of children were

treated for malnutrition. The programme also strengthened the resilience of vulnerable communities by investing in data-based forecasting systems, establishing sustainable water management and promoting the socioeconomic inclusion of forcefully displaced persons.

Inclusive, accountable and affordable systems

Switzerland strengthened local actors by supporting community-led peacebuilding initiatives and local governance structures that foster dialogue, trust and social cohesion. It also promoted more inclusive policies and decision-making processes, enabling women, youth and marginalized groups to have a greater voice in shaping their communities. In parallel, Switzerland worked with Somali authorities to increase local revenues, improving access to services and helping Somalia invest more sustainably in its own development.

Private sector collaboration

Building on successful partnerships, Switzerland expanded its collaboration with private sector actors to create jobs and increase incomes, particularly along the livestock value chain. Between 2022 and 2024, Switzerland helped mobilize nearly CHF 10 million in private-sector investment through innovative initiatives. It also launched the world's first market systems development project in the health sector and supported 177 women-led businesses operating in conflict-affected areas.

Inclusion

Switzerland is committed to reducing inequality and promoting inclusion. However, further efforts are needed at all levels to achieve lasting change and ensure the meaningful inclusion of marginalised groups, particularly women and young people.

Switzerland's commitment – focus areas for 2026–2029

Switzerland's international cooperation is shaped by local needs, Swiss added value, and Swiss foreign policy interests. A peaceful political transition in Somalia, as well as Somalia's commitment to reforms aimed at building an inclusive, accountable, and financially sustainable state, is crucial in shaping Switzerland's future partnerships and support modalities. The programme continues to integrate development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding approaches.

Somalia, including Somaliland, as well as the neighbouring ASAL regions of Northeastern Kenya and Southeastern Ethiopia share centuries-old cultural and socio-economic ties. Developments in these cross-border areas are closely interconnected and directly influence Somalia's stability. To contribute to an inclusive and peaceful Somalia through the promotion of

sustainable economic and human development and bottom-up state building, benefiting the most vulnerable segments of the population, Switzerland focuses on three key transboundary migration and trade corridors that link productive rural hinterlands with urban centres. The engagement particularly targets (agro-)pastoralist and displacement-affected communities, with a strong focus on women and youth, who face heightened vulnerability, restricted access to services, and limited economic opportunities.

Following the need for greater coherence, coordination and effectiveness, Switzerland has consolidated its engagement into three focus areas, while gender equality, good governance, and climate change are integrated throughout Swiss-supported interventions:

Peace and Governance

Switzerland promotes peaceful coexistence as a precondition for inclusive, accountable and affordable governance and state building. It strengthens communities' capacity to engage in dialogue, participate in decision-making and hold authorities accountable, while supporting institutions to deliver equitable services within conducive national and subnational frameworks. Interventions place strong emphasis on localisation, combining support for local dialogue for peacebuilding, the protection of civic space and evidence-based policy engagement.

Human Development

Somalia continues to face high levels of humanitarian needs, driven by conflict and recurrent climatic shocks, while access to essential services remains very limited. To advance human development, Switzerland

applies an approach that combines humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and policy dialogue, enabling coherent and locally led support. The aim is to reduce aid dependency by building resilient service delivery systems while ensuring the ability to respond quickly and effectively to emerging humanitarian crises. A strong focus is placed on health and water services as well as on finding durable solutions for displacement-affected populations. The programme also strengthens migration management to promote safe and regular migration.

Climate Resilient Economic Development

Somalia's economy depends heavily on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and livestock, while market fragmentation, limited access to finance and weak value chains constrain inclusive growth.

Switzerland supports more equitable and climate-resilient economic development with a private sector that generates lasting livelihood opportunities. Interventions help households and enterprises adopt climate-smart production practices, diversify income, and expand access to clean energy and sustainable finance. Using a market-systems approach, Switzerland strengthens key economic sectors, particularly agriculture and livestock, supports the development of small businesses, and promotes the economic participation of women and young people. At a structural level, Switzerland advances policy and institutional reforms that promote fair competition, transparency, equitable resource access, stronger cross-border markets and regional economic integration.

Transversal Themes

Switzerland places strong emphasis on gender equality, climate resilience, and good governance. Particular attention is given to strengthening the role of women and young people and ensuring their meaningful inclusion in decision-making, as well as their economic empowerment by promoting their role as entrepreneurs and active contributors in key value chains and local markets. Good governance is systematically integrated to promote transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions and processes. Climate risks are assessed, and interventions include measures to adapt and mitigate climate change, while avoiding negative environmental impacts.

Climate Resilient Economic Development



Focus
Areas

Peace and Governance



Human Development





Approach and partners

Switzerland continues efforts to maintain a balanced mix of partnerships, selecting partners based on their capacities and risk profiles. Originating in 2011 as a crisis-driven humanitarian programme largely implemented through multilateral contributions, the programme has evolved into a more comprehensive and balanced humanitarian and development portfolio. This includes an increasing number of partnerships with local actors and the private sector. Switzerland further promotes the integration and leadership of local organisations in strategic decision fora, continue investing in organisational capacity strengthening, and channel funding directly to local partners.

Switzerland prioritizes contributions, including co-creation and cost-sharing models both with public and private sector actors. Jointly designed interventions provide opportunities to attract additional funding, create ownership and promote synergies.

Policy dialogue and coordination are further strengthened at all levels to enhance the impact of Switzerland's programme.

In a fragile political and security context such as Somalia, a high degree of flexibility is applied in portfolio management and implementation. Switzerland therefore applies a conflict-sensitive approach to programme management. In response to persistent inequalities, Switzerland is placing greater emphasis on youth and women across its entire portfolio.

Swiss financial commitments remain relatively stable at around CHF 28 million per year, covering bilateral development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The Swiss cooperation programme is reviewed annually and adjusted as needed. Its strategic management is guided by three dimensions: analysis of the evolving context, available resources and the programme's results.

Cooperation Programme Somalia and adjacent ASAL

Budget 2026-2029

CHF 114 Mio *

Geographic Focus

Three selected cross-border trade and migration corridors

Focus Areas

Peace and Governance

Human Development

Climate Resilient Economic Development

Transversal Themes

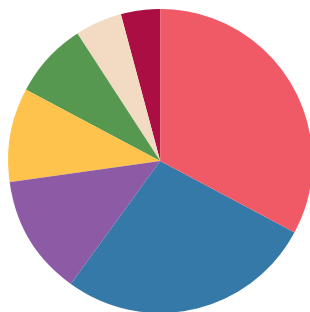
Gender

Good Governance

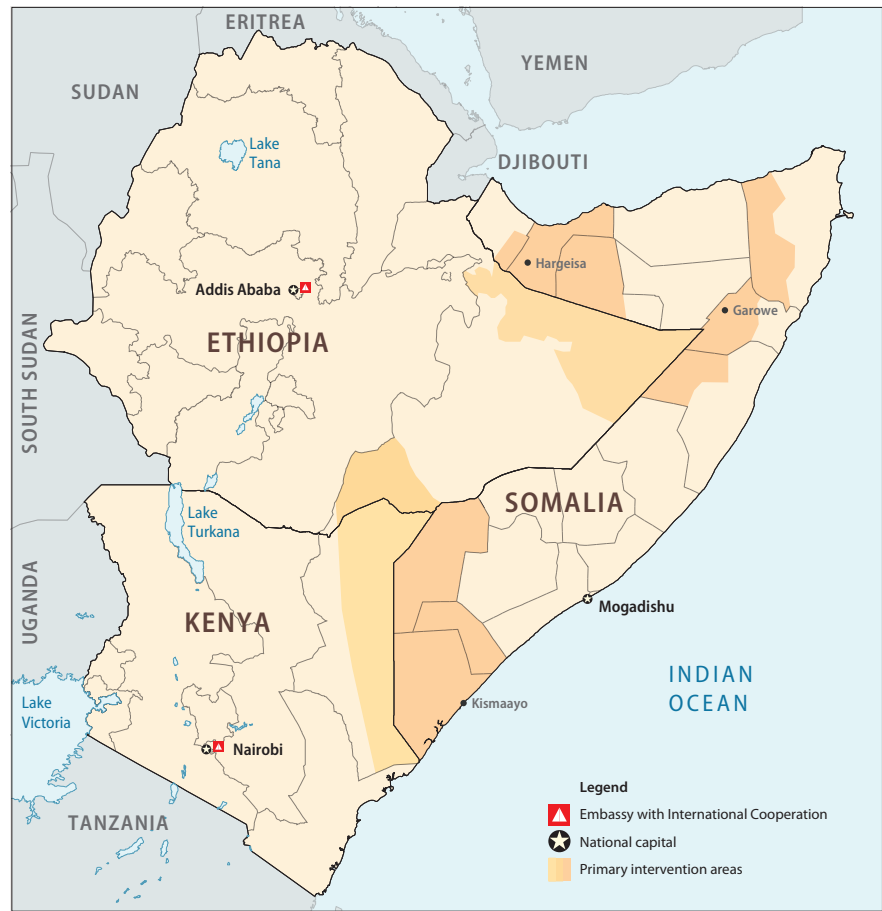
Climate Change

* The financial envelope is indicative and serves as a basis for the provisional expenditure plans, which are reviewed annually by the Federal Council and the Swiss Parliament.

Breakdown per partners 2026–2029



- NGOs
- United Nations Organisations
- Private Sector
- Swiss Non-profit Organisations
- Other
- Academic & Research Institutions
- State Institutions





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