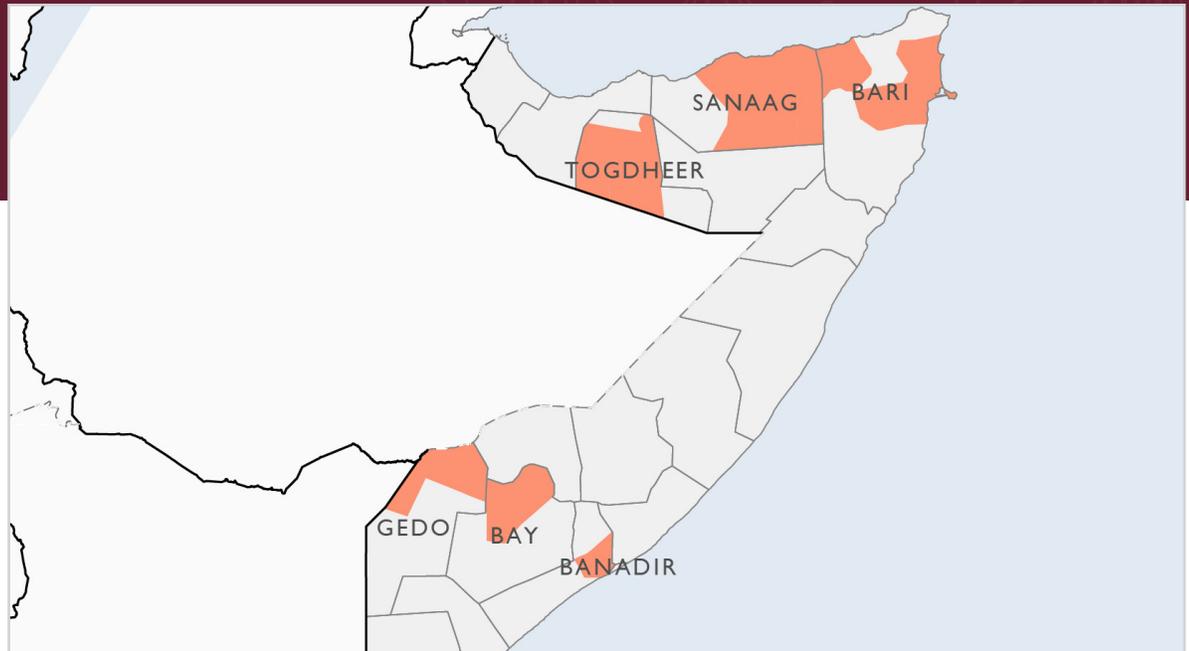


USAID Somalia Resilience Fact Sheet

Resilience
Focus Zone



Background/Risk

Somalia has been without a unified government and beset by violent conflict for more than 30 years. In this void, a new normal has formed, characterized by complex social systems for survival alongside glaring deficits in resilience systems common elsewhere in the world. It has a complex mix of recurrent shocks and stresses from conflict, environmental degradation, poor governance and fractured rule of law, drastic social and gender-based inequality, and undiversified livelihood strategies. In this context, a drought in Somalia can quickly lead to catastrophic displacement events. In 2021, Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FSNAU/FEWS NET) estimated that one-third of the population was food insecure, 13 percent were in acute or extreme food and livelihood insecurity, and one in six people were internally displaced. COVID-related economic slowdown, severe locust infestations, and flooding along the riverine areas were recent compounding factors.

While the northern half of the country remains accessible to USAID partners, only a small portion of the southern half is under government control and accessible, as Al-Shabaab remains a constant threat. Faced with continued

natural and man-made shocks and persistent humanitarian needs, approximately 90 percent of the USAID's funding for Somalia goes to humanitarian assistance.

Somalia's population is growing quickly. Currently at 16 million, it is expected to be above 35 million by 2050. Its urban population is already at 45 percent and increasing rapidly, made up in part by 2.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). These displaced populations are reliant on international emergency assistance, while many more are vulnerable to becoming so if displaced in the next shock.

Somalia is the second most vulnerable country in the world to climate change, with additional detrimental changes expected. Already, a climate change-related drought contributed to the 2011 famine, killing 260,000 people, half of whom were children. A similar climate change-triggered disaster in 2017 displaced over 1.1 million people. The accelerated rate of change is due to years of instability and a lack of investment in sustainable resilience systems needed for climate adaptation, family planning, urbanization, natural resource management, and perhaps most notably, a lack of investment aimed at diversifying away from climate-sensitive sectors, such as traditional farming and pastoralism.

Program Strategies

USAID has identified “enabling marginalized Somalis to more effectively withstand shocks and stresses” as one of just two Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) objectives. USAID’s approach to resilience aims to reduce the humanitarian caseload by promoting durable solutions for existing IDPs while stopping recurrent shocks from creating even more. Social capital, particularly bridging between people in areas facing different risks—such as urban and rural communities—has proven crucial. This notably requires impact in rural areas, including for food systems, to be largely achieved through improved agricultural practices, investments in urban integration, and domestic remittances.

USAID intends to support marginalized, rural households to withstand the next weather shock while working toward diversifying their livelihoods away from practices and activities exposed to climate risks. This includes migration to urban areas by at least some members of a vulnerable household. Once in these urban areas, increasing human and financial capital required to grow urban livelihoods is essential and must be met with an enabling environment for productive integration into urban society.

Crucially, enhancing two-way social and financial investments between urban and rural social networks increases resilience during the most widespread crises and provides opportunities for diversified investment during times of stability. These investments will result in more resilient households that have the capacity to rebuild their lives and livelihoods for a Somalia context that is evolving rapidly.

Activities and Strategic Partnerships

The Mission is currently procuring a new flagship Feed the Future award, aimed at building resilience through market systems approaches in partnership with private sector actors.

An example of a resilience-framed activity is Transitioning from Emergency Assistance to Multi-Sector Systems

Resilience (TEAM-R) in southwest Somalia. Through Feed the Future Resilience Challenge Fund, TEAM-R supports the Somalia Resilience Partnership (SRP), a bottom-up collaboration platform that brings together all USAID implementing partners and other major resilience actors within USAID’s Resilience Focus Zone. The SRP provides a platform for activities to layer and integrate at a granular level and a structure for field-level staff to powerfully communicate and influence higher-level decision-makers. The SRP allows for partner staff with diverse sectoral mandates to identify and mainstream common-sense, resilience-building approaches within their existing programs.

Evaluation and Learning

USAID supports the Resilience Population-Level Measurement (RPM) activity, which aims to develop and lead a resilience measurement system at the population level and build the capacity of participating stakeholders to estimate individual contributions to collective resilience outcomes in the USAID CDCS Focal Zone. RPM will establish a common measurement and analytics process among diverse actors in Somalia to link single-program-focused resilience capacity measurement methodologies previously piloted in Somalia and advance analytics to link diverse, stakeholder-level contributions to collective, population-level resilience outcomes.

Ultimately, the RPM will inform and improve stakeholder activities that strengthen the resilience capacities that matter most for populations in the target zone. This will be achieved through two objectives: 1) participating stakeholders have the ability to estimate individual contributions to collective resilience capacities and 2) population-level change in resilience is assessed through an innovative, mixed-methods measurement system. The mixed-methods measurement system will consist of: 1) population-level panel surveys, 2) recurrent monitoring surveys (RMS), and 3) humanitarian assistance averted (HAA) analysis.

Contact John Meyer, Senior Strategy and Impact Advisor, Center for Resilience at johnmeyer@usaid.gov to learn more.

Data: Data come from the World Bank’s 2019 Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) Surveys in Malawi and Uganda and 11 rounds of phone interviews conducted by the World Bank in 2020/21. The phone survey samples drew from households interviewed during the 2019 data collection.

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