



ISF
International Solidarity
Foundation



STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LIVELIHOOD FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROJECT

Final Evaluation Report



DECEMBER 14, 2025
KWALITY CONSULTING SOLUTIONS
Hargeisa, Somaliland

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Acknowledgement

The KCS evaluation team extends its sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions who contributed to the successful completion of this evaluation. We are particularly thankful to the Somaliland National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority (NADFOR), the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, and the University of Burao for their invaluable support, guidance, and engagement throughout the evaluation process.

We deeply appreciate the cooperation of ISF senior staff and ADO senior staff, whose insights and organizational support were crucial in facilitating data collection and access to key stakeholders. Special recognition is extended to the committees, farmers, and women's self-help groups in Boodhley, Midhisho, Xidhxidh, and Gaacidh, whose active participation, openness, and willingness to share experiences made the evaluation rich, informative, and reflective of real community realities.

We wish to give special thanks to Abdinasir Muse of ISF for his continuous support and to Abdinasir Mahamoud of ADO for his leadership at the field level, particularly in guiding and coordinating the data collection efforts across the Sanaag region. Your commitment ensured the integrity and quality of the information gathered.

Our gratitude also goes to the entire Kquality Consulting Solutions team, whose dedication, professionalism, and collaborative spirit throughout the evaluation process were instrumental in delivering comprehensive and reliable findings.

This evaluation would not have been possible without the collective contributions of all stakeholders, whose engagement has provided the evidence base to reflect on progress, impact, and lessons learned.

Ibrahim Abdulrazak
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Acronyms

ADO	Agricultural Development Organization
CAAPs	Community Action and Adaptation Plans
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
H.E.	His Excellency
ha	Hectare
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ISF	International Solidarity Foundation
KCS	Kwality Consulting Solutions
kg	Kilogram
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoA	Ministry of Agricultural Development
MoECC	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
NADFOR	National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SHG	Self Help Groups
UoB	University of Burao
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

1. Executive Summary

This endline evaluation assesses the Strengthening Women's Livelihood for Economic Development and Climate Change Adaptation project implemented from 2022 to 2025 in Togdheer and Sanaag regions. Over the four-year period, the project contributed to meaningful improvements in the resilience of agro-pastoral households, while operating in a highly volatile context characterized by recurrent droughts, episodic flooding, insecurity related displacement, and market disruptions. Communities that previously relied largely on short-term coping strategies progressively adopted more diversified livelihoods, improved planning practices, and climate responsive production methods. However, progress was uneven over time and strongly influenced by external climatic conditions, including a period of excessive rainfall in 2023 that temporarily disrupted farming activities, followed by renewed drought stress in subsequent seasons.

Livelihood diversification emerged as a key resilience pathway, though results varied by location and household capacity. Many households expanded beyond traditional crop and livestock production into poultry, vegetable cultivation, beekeeping, and small-scale trade. These activities increased income stability during favorable seasons, particularly in 2023, when rainfall conditions and full project implementation coincided. Savings groups accumulated significant capital, enabling women to manage household expenditures, respond to shocks, and invest in productive assets. At the same time, droughts, floods, and insecurity constrained market access and production in some areas, limiting income gains and highlighting the continued vulnerability of livelihoods to external shocks beyond community control.

Crop and livestock productivity showed measurable improvement compared to baseline levels, supported by rehabilitated irrigation canals, water reservoirs, and berkads that expanded access to water. Geo membrane lined structures reduced water losses and extended availability during dry periods. Improved seeds and agronomic practices increased yields, although production fluctuated due to climatic variability. Farmers reported that during periods of over rainfall and flooding, fields were inaccessible and crops were lost, underscoring that climate smart practices reduced but did not eliminate risk. Nonetheless, households consistently indicated that recovery after shocks was faster than before the project, reflecting strengthened adaptive capacity rather than complete shock avoidance.

Environmental restoration activities contributed to longer term resilience but remain sensitive to scale and maintenance capacity. Gabions, soil bunds, and floodwater diversion structures reduced erosion and improved soil moisture in targeted sites, with visible regeneration of vegetation reported by communities. These interventions protected farmland and rangeland in specific catchments, though coverage was insufficient to address degradation at landscape level. Sustainability of these gains depends on continued community maintenance and future investment, as extreme weather events could overwhelm existing structures.

Women's empowerment was a significant outcome, extending beyond participation to active leadership and influence. Women raised issues related to household food security, access to water, prioritization of savings use, protection concerns, and equitable benefit sharing within committees. They served as chairpersons, treasurers, and secretaries of self-help groups, cooperatives, and disaster risk reduction committees, managing funds, convening meetings, resolving disputes, and representing groups in engagement with local authorities. Women's income contributions altered household decision making dynamics, with men increasingly consulting women on farm planning, spending priorities, and asset

investments. Dialogue sessions on gender and protection contributed to gradual shifts in attitudes, although deeply rooted norms continue to limit women's influence in some households.

Governance and accountability structures were strengthened through cooperatives, community adaptation committees, seed banks, and savings groups. These structures coordinated activities, oversaw resources, and linked communities with local authorities. Local government validated plans and monitored infrastructure, reinforcing legitimacy without replacing community leadership. Among these structures, savings groups, cooperatives, and water infrastructure are most likely to be sustained, as they are directly linked to daily livelihoods and generate tangible benefits. Committees' dependent on external facilitation may require continued support to remain fully functional.

From an efficiency perspective, the project relied on community driven approaches, use of local materials, and integration with existing structures, which helped control costs and avoid duplication. Infrastructure investments focused on rehabilitation rather than new construction, improving value for money. However, repeated climatic shocks reduced efficiency in some periods by damaging assets and delaying returns on investment. Overall, resources were used carefully within a high-risk environment, though the scale of needs exceeded available funding.

In summary, the project contributed to a clear shift from reactive coping toward anticipatory and adaptive resilience among participating households. While long term sustainability is not guaranteed and remains exposed to climatic and structural risks, the foundations established through diversified livelihoods, women's leadership, improved water management, and community governance provide a credible basis for continued resilience building. The findings present a balanced picture of meaningful progress achieved under difficult conditions, alongside persistent vulnerabilities that require sustained investment and policy support.

2. Introduction

2.1. Background and Context

Somaliland’s agro-pastoral communities, particularly in Togdheer and Sanaag regions, continue to face chronic livelihood vulnerabilities, compounded by recurrent droughts, environmental degradation, and climate-related shocks. These conditions severely limit agricultural productivity, food security, and household resilience. Women, who are pivotal to household food production, income generation, and community wellbeing, often confront structural barriers that restrict their access to financial services, productive assets, markets, and decision-making platforms. Deeply entrenched gender norms, limited opportunities for skills development, and persistent gender-based violence further constrain women’s economic participation and capacity to adapt to climate change.

The final beneficiaries of the intervention are drawn from diverse groups across different communities. Among the irrigated farm owners in Gaacidh, Xidh-xidh, and Midhisho, a total of 2,328 individuals benefit, including 980 female children, 196 female adults, 960 male children, and 192 male adults. In Boodhley, rainfed farm owners account for 960 beneficiaries, with 400 female children, 80 female adults, 400 male children, and 80 male adults. Pastoralist households also form a significant portion of the beneficiaries: in Boodhley, 1,800 individuals are reached, comprising 750 female children, 150 female adults, 750 male children, and 150 male adults; while in Gaacidh, Xidh-xidh, and Midhisho, 1,680 pastoralists benefit, including 700 female children, 140 female adults, 700 male children, and 140 male adults. In addition to these direct beneficiaries, business groups (including self-help groups (SHGs) and cooperatives) indirectly benefit from improved knowledge and access to water resources, with 480 female adults and 350 male adults, totaling 830 individuals. This distribution highlights the broad and inclusive reach of the program across farming, pastoralist, and business communities.

Figure 1 - Target beneficiaries vs Achieved

Groups/Categories of Beneficiaries	Target					Achieved				
	Female Children	Female Adults	Male Children	Male Adults	Total	Female Children	Female Adults	Male Children	Male Adults	Total
Farmers (irrigated farm owners) in Gaacidh, Xidh-xidh and Midhisho (inc. SHG women)	0	180	0	180	360	980	196	960	192	2328
Farmers (rainfed farm owners) in Boodhley (inc SHG women)	0	80	0	80	160	400	80	400	80	960
Pastoralists in Boodhley	0	150	0	150	300	750	150	750	150	1800
Pastoralists in Gaacidh, Xidh-xidh and Midhisho	0	140	0	140	280	700	140	700	140	1680

In response to these challenges, the “Strengthening Women’s Livelihood for Economic Development and Climate Change Adaptation” project was implemented from 2022 to 2025 by the International Solidarity Foundation (ISF) in partnership with the Agricultural Development Organization (ADO). The project was designed with a holistic focus on enhancing livelihoods, promoting gender equity, and building climate resilience. Key interventions included: -

- i. Diversifying income sources through the establishment and support of small businesses, self-help groups (SHGs), and value chains such as poultry, beekeeping, vegetables, and fruits.
- ii. Improving agricultural productivity and adaptive capacity through access to improved seeds, irrigation systems, and climate-smart technologies.
- iii. Strengthening women's participation in household and community decision-making, promoting gender equality, and integrating initiatives to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- iv. Promoting environmental sustainability, land rehabilitation, and biodiversity conservation through community-based adaptation plans (CAAPs) and soil conservation measures.

Evidence from mid-term evaluations and annual monitoring indicates that the project made significant strides in improving livelihoods, financial inclusion, and women's agency. Farmers reported increased agricultural production and income levels, while women demonstrated greater involvement in SHGs, cooperatives, and community committees. Despite these successes, ongoing challenges remain, particularly around sustaining institutional structures, ensuring equitable access to markets, and enhancing long-term climate resilience.

2.2. Purpose of the Final Evaluation

The Final Evaluation aims to provide a comprehensive, independent, and evidence-based assessment of the project's performance, outcomes, and overall contribution to the resilience and empowerment of target communities. It builds on the insights gained from the inception and mid-term reports and provides an in-depth analysis to guide future programming. Specifically, the evaluation sought to: -

- i. Assess the relevance of project objectives, strategies, and implementation approaches in meeting the needs of communities, advancing gender inclusion, and supporting climate adaptation priorities.
- ii. Examine the effectiveness and efficiency of project delivery, including achievement of planned results, resource utilization, and coordination mechanisms across implementing partners and local stakeholders.
- iii. Evaluate the tangible and intangible impacts of the project on livelihoods, income diversification, adaptive capacity, social cohesion, and gender relations.
- iv. Analyze the sustainability of project interventions, considering institutional, financial, environmental, and community-based dimensions.
- v. Generate actionable recommendations to inform ISF's strategic planning, strengthen future programmatic interventions, and support the replication and scaling of best practices across Somaliland and the wider Horn of Africa region.
- vi. Assess relevance by examining the extent to which project objectives, strategies, and implementation approaches addressed community priorities, gender inclusion, and climate adaptation needs.

- vii. Assess effectiveness by determining the degree to which planned outputs and outcomes were achieved, including improvements in livelihoods, income diversification, adaptive capacity, social cohesion, and women's economic and social empowerment.
- viii. Assess efficiency by analyzing the use of financial, human, and material resources, implementation timelines, and coordination mechanisms among implementing partners and local stakeholders.
- ix. Assess impact by evaluating the project's tangible and intangible contributions to household resilience, production systems, income stability, gender relations, and community level adaptive capacity.
- x. Assess sustainability by examining the likelihood that project benefits will continue beyond the project period, considering institutional ownership, financial viability, environmental stewardship, and community capacity.
- xi. Document lessons learned and good practices and generate actionable recommendations to inform ISF's strategic planning, improve future interventions, and support replication and scaling across Somaliland and the wider Horn of Africa.

The final evaluation provides a structured and participatory assessment of the project's performance, ensuring that lessons learned, successes, and challenges are systematically documented and translated into practical guidance for ongoing and future interventions.

3. Evaluation Design, Approach, Methodology

3.1. Overarching Evaluation Approach

The final evaluation of the Strengthening Women's Livelihood for Economic Development and Climate Change Adaptation project was conducted using a utilization-focused, participatory, and mixed-methods approach to generate evidence-based, actionable, and contextually relevant findings. The evaluation combined quantitative and qualitative methods to capture measurable outcomes as well as transformative changes in the lives of women, men, and communities.

The evaluation emphasized active participation of beneficiaries, community-based structures, and implementing partners throughout the process so that their perspectives informed both the analysis and recommendations. Gender sensitivity was a core principle with careful attention to equitable representation of women, men, youth, and marginalized groups in all stages of data collection and analysis. Learning and accountability were prioritized to produce insights that could directly inform ISF, ADO, and other stakeholders for future programming. Triangulation of multiple data sources was employed to validate results and enhance reliability. This approach aligns closely with OECD-DAC evaluation criteria which include relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and reflects ISF program-specific indicators.

3.2. Conceptual Framework

The evaluation was guided by a results-based conceptual framework linking project inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and long-term impacts. This framework allowed a systematic assessment of the full project cycle. Inputs and activities were examined to understand resources invested and interventions implemented including training sessions, and seed distribution, and rehabilitation of irrigation systems. Outputs were assessed in terms of immediate results such as the number of beneficiaries trained, SHG and cooperative activities, and rehabilitation of water and soil conservation infrastructure. Outcomes focused on changes in livelihoods, income diversification, women's empowerment, climate resilience, and adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. Impact analysis considered long-term transformative effects on household welfare, institutional sustainability, environmental resilience, and community gender norms.

Cross-cutting themes including gender equality, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability were integrated throughout the framework to assess both direct and indirect contributions of the project.

3.3. Evaluation Domains

The evaluation examined seven key domains aligned with OECD-DAC criteria and the Terms of Reference. Relevance assessed the extent to which project objectives, strategies, and activities addressed community needs, priorities, and gender and climate considerations. Coherence examined the alignment with national, regional, and district policies and coordination with other interventions. Effectiveness focused on the achievement of intended outputs and outcomes including the functionality of CAAP committees, cooperatives, and SHGs, as well as stakeholder engagement and the use of project guidance materials. Efficiency considered the optimal use of financial, human, and material resources and integration of local knowledge and practices. Impact measured changes in livelihoods, adaptive capacity, gender relations, and environmental outcomes including unintended positive or negative effects. Sustainability analyzed the likelihood of continued benefits post-project, viability of cooperatives

and SHGs, and the systems established for sustained community ownership. Cross-cutting issues reviewed how gender, social inclusion, and environmental considerations were addressed throughout implementation.

3.4. Methodological Design

The evaluation followed a three-phase approach. The inception phase involved comprehensive document review of project proposals, log frame, baseline and mid-term reports, monitoring data, financial records, and previous evaluations to understand project logic, achievements, and gaps. Stakeholder consultations with ISF, ADO, and key local actors clarified expectations, refined evaluation questions, and provided insight into field realities. Quantitative and qualitative tools including surveys, focus group discussion guides, key informant interview protocols, and observation checklists were developed, piloted, and refined. Sampling frameworks were adjusted to ensure representation across gender, age, location, and project interventions.

Field data collection was conducted in Burao and Erigavo using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data included structured household surveys to capture income, production, access to services, and participation in project interventions, alongside cooperative and SHG records and agricultural production data. Qualitative data included key informant interviews with government officials, partner organizations, and community leaders, focus group discussions with women, men, farmers, and pastoralists, case studies exploring community experiences and sustainability perspectives, and direct observation of infrastructure and CAAP activities. ADO led quantitative data collection while KCS focused on qualitative methods. Field teams received training on ethical conduct, gender-sensitive facilitation, and data handling.

While the evaluation applied a mixed methods approach combining document review, KIIs, FGDs, and field observations, several methodological limitations were encountered. Access to some remote sites was constrained by distance, security considerations, and seasonal conditions, which limited the number of physical visits and reduced direct observation in a few locations. Participant availability was also inconsistent, particularly during the evaluation period (whereby some farmers were away in the farms or market and women were also doing the same), resulting in smaller group sizes in some FGDs and reliance on available community representatives. In addition, the evaluation relied partly on project monitoring records and partner reports to supplement primary data, which may introduce reporting bias and affect data triangulation.

These limitations may have influenced the representativeness of the sample and the depth of evidence available for certain outcomes. To mitigate these risks, the evaluation triangulated multiple data sources, cross checked findings across communities and stakeholder groups, and validated emerging conclusions through KIIs with local authorities and implementing partners. Findings should therefore be interpreted as indicative of overall trends and outcomes rather than statistically generalizable results.

3.5. Data Analysis and Synthesis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, percentages, averages, and trends and disaggregated by gender, location, and intervention type. Qualitative data were thematically coded to identify patterns, experiences, and stakeholder perceptions. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative

findings with secondary sources ensured reliability and minimized bias. All evidence was synthesized into coherent narratives highlighting achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and actionable recommendations.

3.6. Sampling Framework

A multi-level sampling strategy captured micro, meso, and macro perspectives. At the micro-level, household surveys and focus group discussions included eight groups with eight participants each covering both farmers, cooperative members, and women beneficiaries across all target locations. Meso-level key informant interviews engaged project management, community leadership, and local government representatives. Macro-level interviews included regional government officials from relevant ministries. Sampling ensured representation by gender, age, social status, and inclusion of marginalized groups, covering all project interventions.

The KCS evaluation team conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders, including NADFOR, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, University of Burao, ISF senior staff, ADO senior staff, the Boodhley committee, farmers in Boodhley, and women smallholder farmers' groups in Boodhley. Meanwhile, the ADO field team collected the remaining data from Midhisho, Xidhxidh, and Gaacidh.

The sampling design was as follows: -

i. Micro-Level

Household-level data were collected by ADO at each site (Midhisho, Xidhxidh, Gaacidh, Boodhley). The sample size per site was determined by ADO based on their established annual data collection procedures. Eight FGDs were conducted, with a minimum of 8 participants for each FGD; 2 per target location: 1 with farmers and cooperative groups and 1 with women beneficiaries. This approach carries a potential risk of positive reporting bias, as data were generated by an implementing partner with direct involvement in project delivery. To mitigate this risk and strengthen objectivity, the evaluation applied multiple bias reduction measures, including triangulation of household data with FGDs, key informant interviews, direct field observations, and independent review of project documentation. Findings were first of all checked across different respondent groups, including women, farmers, cooperative leaders, and local authorities, to identify inconsistencies or overly positive narratives. This was done during the validation workshop whereby ISF, ADO, the lead evaluation consultant, and representatives from the different line ministries attended. These steps helped ensure that conclusions reflect balanced and credible evidence rather than single source reporting.

ii. Meso-Level

7 KIIs were conducted to capture community and organizational perspectives, distributed as follows: -

- 2 KIIs with Project Management and Implementing Partner staff
- 4 KIIs with Community Leadership and Committees (Midhisho, Xidhxidh, Gaacidh, Boodhley)
- 1 KIIs with representatives from the University of Burao

iii. Macro-Level

3 KIIs targeted regional government officials from relevant ministries (Burco or Erigavo) to capture policy and strategic perspectives. The 3 KIIs were with Local Government and District Authorities (MoA, MoECC, NADFOR)

Sampling ensured disaggregation by age, gender, and social status, providing adequate representation of women, men, youth, and marginalized groups, while covering all targeted project interventions.

3.7. Ethical Considerations and Risk Management

The evaluation adhered to strict ethical standards. Participants provided informed consent and were briefed on the evaluation's purpose, their rights, and confidentiality measures. Data collection respected local norms and gender dynamics, and risk mitigation strategies addressed access constraints, recall bias, and community sensitivities.

3.8. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance measures included internal peer review of tools and findings, stakeholder validation workshops with ISF and ADO, and continuous coordination through communication channels including a dedicated WhatsApp group. Daily field team briefings ensured real-time learning, reflection, and problem-solving. Access to all relevant project documents facilitated comprehensive review and verification. Orientation sessions prepared enumerators with a clear understanding of evaluation objectives, expectations, and procedures.

This methodology provided a robust framework to assess project relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability while embedding gender sensitivity, social inclusion, and actionable learning for ISF, ADO, and the communities served.

3.9. Evaluation Constraints and Mitigation

Access Constraints

Access to certain locations, particularly the more remote villages in Sanaag region, including Midhisho, Xidhxidh, and Gaacidh, was occasionally restricted due to security concerns. These limitations affected the evaluation team's ability to directly reach all target communities, creating challenges in ensuring comprehensive data coverage. To mitigate this constraint, the ADO field team conducted data collection in these hard-to-reach areas under the guidance and supervision of the KCS lead consultant. This approach ensured that essential information from remote communities was captured, while maintaining adherence to methodological standards and data quality, despite the logistical and security challenges.

Leadership Turnover

Frequent changes in government leadership following the Somaliland Presidential Election in November 2024 affected access to personnel familiar with project details, limiting institutional memory critical for the evaluation. After H.E. Abdirahman Cirro assumed office on December 12, 2024, several cabinet positions and regional ministry directorates were reshuffled, which resulted in the replacement of representatives who had prior knowledge of the project. While the new staff were subsequently briefed and brought up to speed on ongoing project activities, their initial unfamiliarity posed a temporary challenge for the evaluation process.

Stakeholder Availability

Some community leaders or participants were unavailable due to competing livelihood activities, which reduced participation in focus group discussions and key informant interviews and yet the Evaluation was conducted within a tight deadline and timeframe and could not afford to reschedule meetings of appointments if the respondents were not available. KCS team worked with ADO and ISF to interview the respondents that were available.

4. Project Description and Logical Framework Analysis

The project, titled Strengthening Women's Livelihood for Economic Development and Climate Change Adaptation, was implemented from 2022 to 2025 by the International Solidarity Foundation (ISF) in partnership with the Agricultural Development Organization (ADO). The intervention targeted women and men in agro-pastoral communities across Togdheer and Sanaag regions, aiming to enhance livelihoods, strengthen climate resilience, promote gender equality, and support environmental sustainability. The project was structured around four key components; each aligned with the logical framework to ensure measurable outcomes and long-term impact.

Economic Empowerment Opportunities and Income Diversification

Under Outcome 1 Economic empowerment and income diversification, key indicators focused on increased income sources, access to savings and loans, and improved market participation. Evidence from household surveys and FGDs indicates strong achievement. Over 90% of farmers reported increased production volumes, and women in SHGs demonstrated measurable growth in savings, loan uptake, and small business expansion. This outcome is assessed as largely achieved, with strong alignment between planned outputs and observed results. .

Sustainable Crop and Livestock Productivity through Climate Adaptation

For Outcome 2 Sustainable crop and livestock productivity, indicators included yield improvement, access to water, and adoption of climate smart practices. Progress was strong but uneven. Crop and livestock productivity peaked in 2023 due to favorable rainfall combined with full project implementation. While yields declined slightly in 2024 due to drought and insecurity, recovery in 2025 indicates strengthened resilience rather than short term gains. Persistent gully erosion and climate shocks limited full achievement, meaning this outcome was partially achieved but on a positive trajectory beyond 2025..

Agricultural Innovations and Environmental Sustainability

Under Outcome 3 Agricultural innovation and environmental sustainability, indicators tracked adoption of new practices, access to extension services, and land rehabilitation. Evidence confirms that innovations such as seed banking, farmer field schools, early warning systems, and soil conservation structures were adopted and sustained across all four communities. The rehabilitation of 46 hectares of degraded land through gabions and soil bunds demonstrates tangible environmental gains. This outcome is assessed as achieved, although long term land restoration remains a risk requiring continued investment..

Gender Equality and Social Change

For Outcome 4 Gender equality and social change, indicators focused on women's income opportunities, influence in household decisions, participation in committees, and attitudes toward partner violence. Qualitative findings show clear progress in women's economic agency and decision making power, with men confirming shifts toward joint planning. Committee representation improved but remained below parity, indicating partial achievement. Normative change around partner violence showed positive movement but requires sustained engagement to consolidate gains.

Key assumptions in the log frame included relative security, predictable rainfall, and stable market access. These assumptions were partially disrupted by civil conflict, displacement, drought, and flooding, particularly in 2024 and early 2025. These risks affected production stability and slowed progress in some

locations. However, the project design proved adaptive, with DRR committees, early warning systems, and diversified livelihoods helping communities absorb shocks and recover. This analysis demonstrates that while not all targets were fully achieved, the logical framework remained valid, and most outputs and outcomes were delivered as planned, with strong evidence of resilience building and gender transformative change under highly volatile conditions.

5. Performance Against Results Framework

5.1. Goal

The project's overarching goal of strengthening livelihood resilience among women and men farmers in Togdheer and Sanaag was achieved through a combination of diversified income strategies, climate-smart practices, and strengthened community institutions. From a baseline of vulnerability to repeated droughts and shocks, households transitioned to more stable and adaptive production systems that enabled them to withstand stressors and recover more quickly.

By 2023, households reported significant improvements in production and income. 92% of farmers noted increased yields compared to the previous year, while annual sales rose from a pre-project range of \$100 - 350 to \$400 - 1,650. Women's savings groups accumulated \$4,788, providing both contingency reserves and investment capital for small businesses, farm expansion, and livestock purchases. These financial gains translated into tangible resilience, allowing households to acquire productive assets and buffer against seasonal variability.

The midline evaluation confirmed that communities had begun to move beyond crisis-driven coping toward deliberate planning. Households improved food security, stabilized income, and strengthened decision-making capacity. Women and men adopted climate-smart practices such as seed banking, rotational grazing, and structured farm planning, which positioned them to manage shocks more effectively. The integration of weather information into farming decisions further enhanced adaptive capacity, enabling communities to anticipate drought cycles rather than react belatedly.

By 2025, qualitative interviews across target communities highlighted a cultural shift in resilience behavior. Farmers in Xidhxidh and Gaacidh described how planning ahead had become routine, supported by savings groups and preparedness committees. Reliable irrigation, improved seed access, and climate-smart methods created a safety cushion that did not exist before. Even in Midhisho and Boodhley, where drought and displacement posed severe challenges, households reported faster stabilization due to stronger production systems and collective preparedness.

Women's economic empowerment played a central role in resilience gains. Savings groups not only diversified household income but also strengthened women's decision-making power within families. Their contributions to school fees, food purchases, and livestock investments reinforced household stability and shifted financial governance toward more collaborative models. This inclusive approach ensured that resilience was shared across genders, enhancing both household and community wellbeing.

The project also reinforced social cohesion and institutional capacity. Preparedness committees and cooperative structures provided platforms for collective action, enabling communities to manage natural resources more efficiently and respond to shocks with coordinated strategies. These institutions became critical anchors of resilience, ensuring that gains were not limited to individual households but extended across the wider community.

The project achieved its goal of building stronger, more resilient livelihoods in Togdheer and Sanaag. Households now demonstrate improved adaptive skills, diversified income streams, and greater capacity to anticipate and manage shocks. The transition from reactive coping to proactive planning marks a

fundamental shift in resilience behavior, laying the foundation for sustained food security, income stability, and community development.

In conclusion, the final evaluation confirms that resilience in the target regions is no longer fragile or crisis-dependent. Women and men farmers are better equipped to withstand climate variability, recover from shocks, and sustain their livelihoods. The project's investments in diversification, climate-smart agriculture, and community institutions have created a durable legacy of resilience that will continue to benefit households and communities beyond the project's life.

Negative Deviations and External Shocks

The evaluation recognizes that project implementation and outcomes were influenced by several negative deviations and external shocks, most notably recurrent droughts, localized flooding, displacement, and market disruptions linked to insecurity and access constraints. These factors did not affect all locations uniformly and, in some cases, slowed or temporarily reversed progress.

Prolonged drought periods reduced water availability and pasture regeneration, particularly in Boodhley and parts of Midhisho, increasing pressure on livestock assets and limiting planting cycles. This resulted in delayed crop production and higher household expenditure on water and fodder, which constrained savings accumulation during certain seasons. Flood events, although less frequent, damaged sections of irrigation canals and farmland in low lying areas, requiring additional community labor and resources for rehabilitation before production could resume.

Displacement and mobility restrictions disrupted participation in trainings and group activities, especially for women, as households prioritized immediate survival and relocation. In Gaacidh, beneficiaries reported periods where access to Bosaso markets was restricted due to political and clan related tensions, leading to reduced sales, delayed input procurement, and price volatility. These market disruptions affected income consistency and limited the ability of some households to fully capitalize on increased production.

Importantly, these negative deviations also tested the robustness of project interventions. While they constrained short term gains, they provided a real stress test for resilience outcomes. Households that had access to savings groups, diversified income sources, rehabilitated water infrastructure, and weather information were better able to absorb shocks, adjust production plans, and recover once conditions stabilized. The slower growth observed in 2024 and early 2025, compared to the 2023 peak, reflects these constraints rather than implementation failure.

The presence of external shocks moderated the pace of progress but did not negate outcomes. Instead, they highlight the relevance of the project design and explain why some indicators show partial or uneven achievement across locations. This analysis underscores that observed results represent resilience under stress, rather than ideal conditions, strengthening the credibility of the evaluation findings.

5.2. Outcome 1

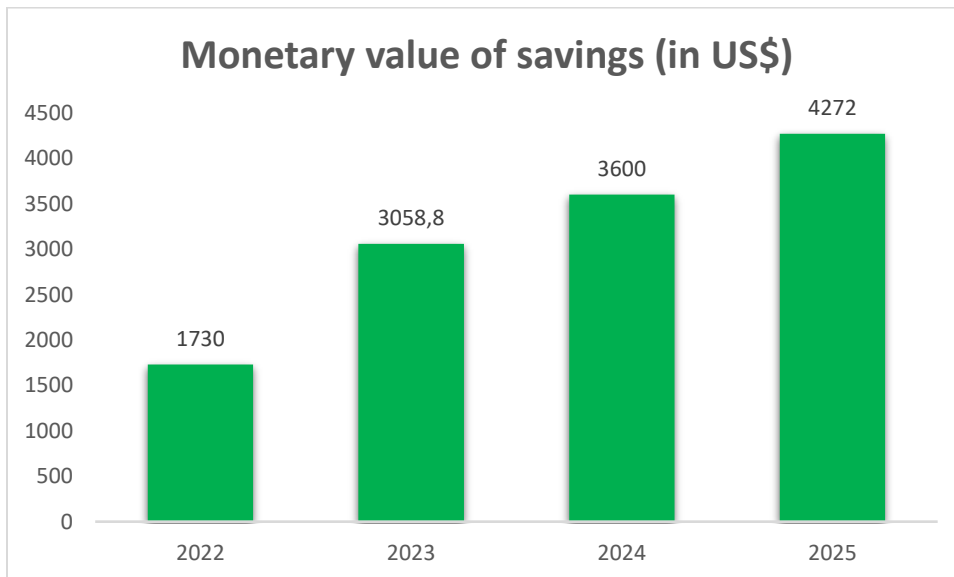
Outcome 1 demonstrated clear progress in diversifying household income streams and strengthening economic empowerment across target communities. From a baseline of \$100 - 350 in yearly gross sales, households expanded their earnings to \$400 - 1,650 by 2023, before stabilizing at \$200 - 1,450 by 2025. Focus group discussions highlighted that new income streams (particularly vegetable, poultry, and small

livestock enterprises) were pivotal in reducing household vulnerability. Women in Boodhley explained that steady weekly sales eliminated the stress of emergency borrowing, while men involved in fruit and crop sales noted improved liquidity through better market information. Although occasional interruptions in access to Bosaso market persisted due to local tensions, overall income diversity reduced exposure to shocks.

Savings and loan groups (SHGs) emerged as critical platforms for economic empowerment. Of the SHGs supported across Togdheer and Sanaag, 100% remained fully functional at project close. Governance structures were robust, with regular monthly meetings, transparent leadership roles, and accurate record keeping. Loan repayment performance was strong, averaging 95% on time, while savings grew steadily from \$1,730 in 2022 to \$4,272 in 2025. SHGs fostered social cohesion, collective decision-making, and enhanced bargaining power, creating platforms for knowledge sharing, market intelligence, and joint problem-solving. The high functionality and repayment rates indicate strong long-term viability of these groups beyond project support.

Savings groups (SHGs) emerged as a cornerstone of empowerment. Women reported that regular saving strengthened their control over household expenses and reduced dependency on husbands or relatives. Savings grew steadily from \$1,730 in 2022 to \$4,272 in 2025. Training on financial literacy and climate awareness closed critical knowledge gaps, enabling women to pay school fees, buy seeds, and purchase household goods independently. SHGs also fostered unity and trust, creating platforms for exchanging market intelligence and boosting bargaining power. Women in Gaacidh emphasized that these groups enhanced their confidence in networking and fund-seeking, while Boodhley participants highlighted the empowerment gained from collective financial action.

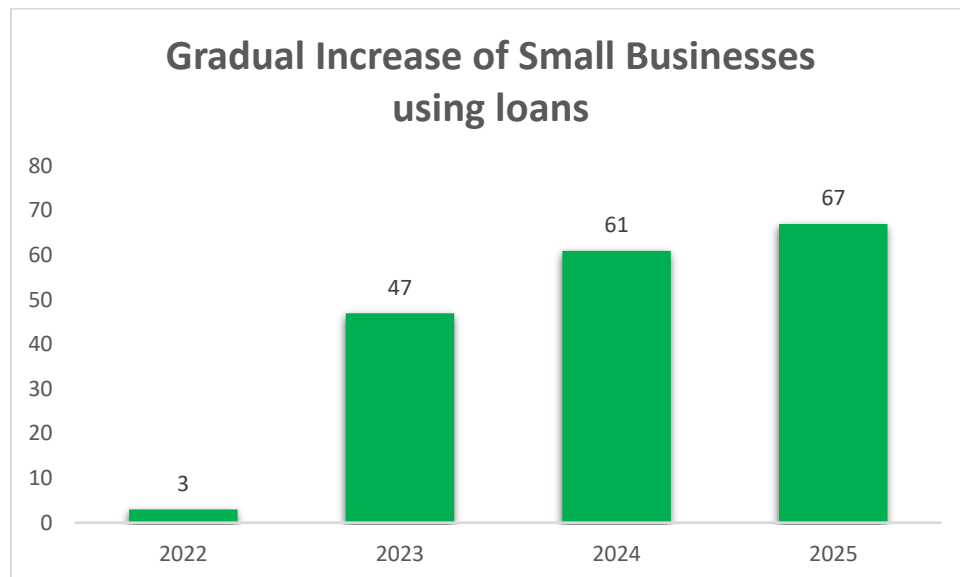
Figure 2 - Monetary value of savings (in US\$)



Access to loans further expanded economic opportunities. From just 3 small businesses in 2022, loan uptake rose to 47 in 2023, 61 by 2024, and with a cumulative total of 67 businesses supported by 2025. Beneficiaries explained that loans enabled them to expand shops, purchase poultry and livestock, and invest in seeds and tools. Women in Midhisho reported that SHGs created real financial traction, allowing

members to launch new businesses and strengthen farm output. Farmers also benefited from tools and production support, which reinforced both crop and livestock productivity. Demand for continued loan services remains high, reflecting the strong appetite for sustained economic growth.

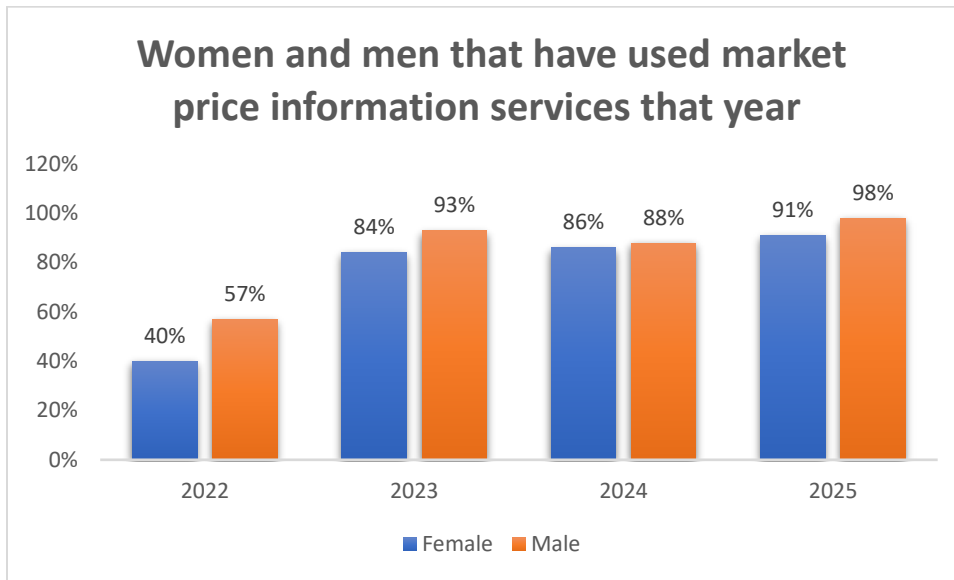
Figure 3 – Gradual Increase of Small Businesses using Loans



Market information services transformed trading practices. Usage rose sharply from 40% of women and 57% of men in 2022 to 91% of women and 98% of men by 2025. SHG members explained that access to daily price trends allowed them to negotiate more effectively and avoid selling during low demand periods. Farmers described greater confidence in engaging with traders, armed with real-time figures. Training on climate-smart agriculture, pest control, and land restoration further enhanced efficiency, helping households minimize crop losses and address water scarcity. These inputs elevated overall productivity even under drought conditions.

Information was delivered through multiple channels, including SMS alerts, direct phone calls, and in-person updates during SHG meetings, ensuring accessibility for all members, including women with limited mobility or technology access. By receiving daily market prices and trend information, farmers were able to make informed decisions on when and where to sell their produce, avoid low-demand periods, and negotiate better prices, thereby enhancing income, market participation, and overall resilience. The service was facilitated by ADO, which linked farmers to local traders and coordinated with the NADFOR.

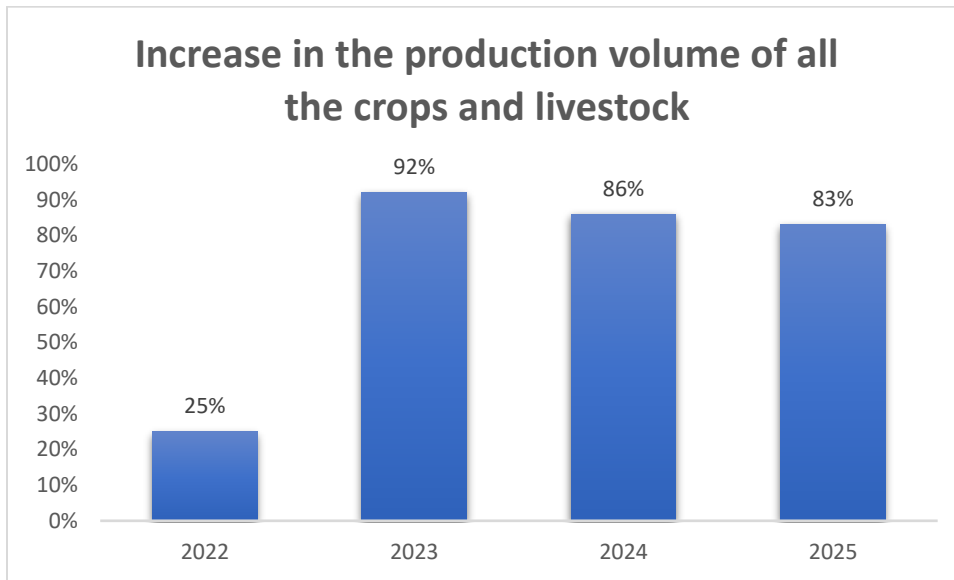
Figure 4 – Women and Men that have used Market Price Information Services



'When the price update displayed tomatoes rising in Burao we held our stock for 2 days and sold at almost double what local buyers were offering,' said an FGD male respondent from Boodhley

Production volumes also increased significantly. From a baseline of 25% of a normal year's output, farmers reported 92% of normal production by 2023, before stabilizing at 83% in 2025. Improved seed varieties, irrigation access, and farm planning were central to these gains. In Midhisho, the establishment of a community seed bank managed by ADO with support from the Development Fund addressed a critical bottleneck. Cooperatives showcased seed varieties and crop production during World Food Day, earning recognition as strong performers. These achievements underscored the project's role in strengthening agronomic capacity and boosting yields.

Figure 5 - Increase in the Production Volume of all the Crops and Livestock



The cumulative evidence demonstrates that households are now less dependent on single income streams and better equipped to manage financial and production risks. Women’s empowerment through savings, loans, and market information has shifted household dynamics, enabled more independent decision-making and reduced vulnerability. Men and women alike benefited from improved liquidity, stronger bargaining power, and enhanced production systems.

Challenges remain in sustaining peak income levels, which were highest in 2023 due to favorable rainfall. Market access interruptions, particularly in Gaacidh, highlight the need for continued investment in infrastructure and conflict-sensitive programming. Ensuring the sustainability of loan services and expanding seed bank initiatives will be critical to maintaining momentum.

In conclusion, Outcome 1 confirms that diversification and empowerment strategies have delivered measurable improvements in household stability, income resilience, and gender equity. By embedding savings groups, expanding loan access, and strengthening market information systems, the project positioned women and men farmers to sustain livelihoods and reduce vulnerability to shocks. These gains represent a durable foundation for continued economic empowerment in Togdheer and Sanaag.

Figure 6 - The Seed Banking System

The Seed Banking System

Community seed banks were set up and managed by a local seed bank committee who were established by ADO. The committee first received good-quality seeds and training in how to select, store, and manage them, including bookkeeping and record-keeping. Farmers could then access seeds in two ways; either by buying them at a fair price or by borrowing them.

When a farmer borrowed seeds, they agreed to return double the amount after harvest. The committee carefully checked the returned seeds to ensure they were healthy, disease-free, and of good quality. Only then were the seeds stored properly for future use. This system allowed the seed bank to grow over time, ensuring a steady supply of reliable seeds for the community.

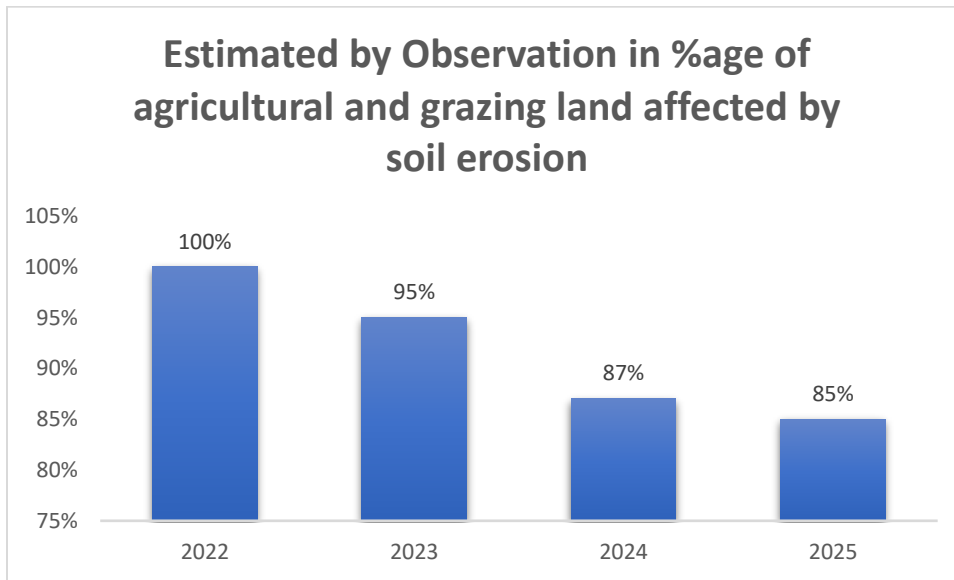
Money collected from seed sales was used to cover the committee's operating costs and maintain the seed bank. In this way, the seed bank became self-sustaining; farmers had dependable access to seeds each season, while the community built a shared reserve that strengthened food security and resilience against climate shocks.

By the end of the project, households demonstrated significant progress against the log frame indicators. Average income sources per household increased from 1.2 at baseline to 2.7 by 2025, reflecting a clear diversification of livelihoods. Women's empowerment also showed marked improvement, with 85% of women reporting active participation in household and community decision-making, surpassing the 70% target. Leadership roles within SHGs and cooperatives expanded, enabling women to exercise greater financial autonomy and influence over local economic activities. Market access similarly improved, with 60% of households successfully reaching new markets, exceeding the target of 50%, while increased confidence in negotiating prices contributed to higher sales revenue. Despite these achievements, challenges remain. Income levels peaked in 2023 due to favorable rainfall, highlighting ongoing vulnerability to climatic variability. Interruptions in market access, particularly in Gaacidh, emphasize the need for continued investment in infrastructure and conflict-sensitive programming. Sustaining loan services, SHG functionality, and seed bank initiatives will be essential to preserve the gains and maintain momentum in household economic empowerment.

5.3. Outcome 2

Outcome 2 focused on strengthening the ability of farmers and pastoralists to sustain crop and livestock productivity despite recurring climate shocks. At baseline in 2022, nearly all agricultural and grazing land was prone to erosion, particularly in Boodhley and Midhisho. By 2025, rehabilitation efforts had reduced the proportion of degraded land to 85%, with 15% restored through gabions and soil bunds. While these interventions slowed gully expansion and stabilized farmland, authorities from the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment emphasized that the scale of erosion remains beyond community-level capacity, requiring larger regional investments. Farmers confirmed that while hotspots were contained, entire valleys remain unstable, underscoring both the effectiveness and limitations of project interventions.

Figure 7 - Estimated by Observation in Percentage of Land Affected by Soil Erosion



Crop and livestock production showed remarkable improvement over the 4-year period. From modest gains of 30% in crops and 25% in livestock at baseline, production peaked in 2023 at 96% and 88% respectively, driven by favorable rainfall and full project momentum. Farmers credited rehabilitated canals, improved seeds, and timely farm inputs for reducing losses and expanding planting capacity. Even when drought and displacement disrupted operations in 2024 - 2025, production rebounded to 86% for crops and 78% for livestock, illustrating resilience rather than reliance on luck. Community narratives consistently described 2023 as a turning point, but emphasized that subsequent recovery reflected the strength of new systems rather than weather alone.

Figure 8 - Percentage increase of crop and livestock 2022-2025

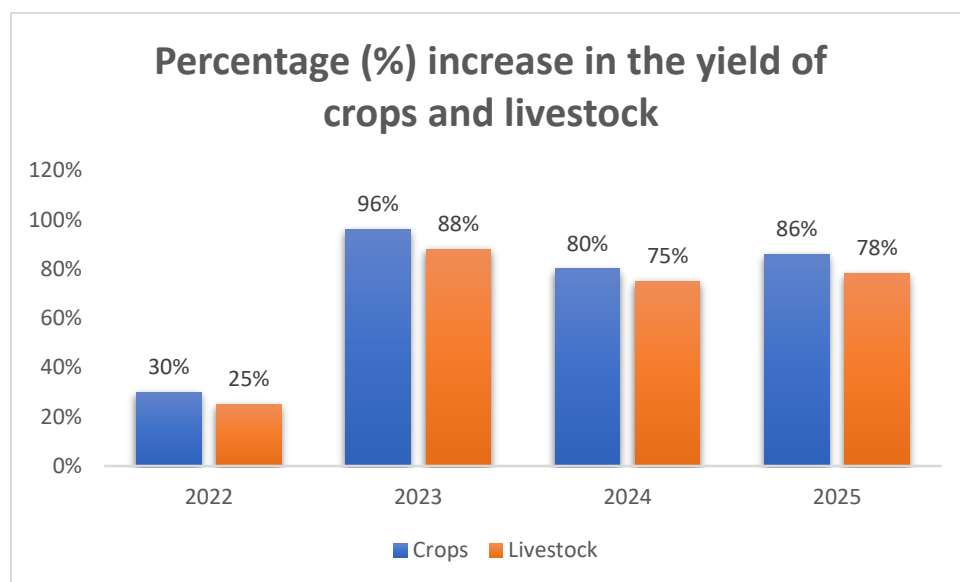
Production Type	2022 (Increase from 0)	2023 (Change from 2022)	2024 (Change from 2023)	2025 (Change from 2024)
Crops	+30%	+66%	-16%	+6%
Livestock	+25%	+63%	-13%	+3%

The reported yield increases represent relative production change indices based on beneficiary self-reporting and project monitoring rather than absolute tonnage measurements, as quantitative yield baselines were not established at project inception. Baseline data from 2022 captured production levels under recurrent drought and limited irrigation, and follow up assessments tracked changes over time to illustrate direction and consistency of progress. While favorable rainfall in 2023 clearly contributed to the production peak, the evaluation does not attribute these gains solely to the project. Rainfall is treated as an external enabling factor, and greater analytical weight is placed on production performance in 2024 and 2025, when drought, flooding, and displacement affected livelihoods. The ability of farmers to stabilize and recover crop and livestock production during these less favorable years is interpreted as

evidence of strengthened adaptive and bounce back capacity supported by irrigation rehabilitation, improved inputs, and climate smart practices rather than weather driven gains alone.

“Our land was losing soil every season but after the canal repairs we managed to keep water inside the farms. My vegetable harvest has maintained because the soil stayed moist,” said an elderly farmer in Xidhxidh

Figure 9 - Percentage Increase in the Yield of Crops and Livestock



Improved access to water and farm inputs was central to these gains. Training on rainwater harvesting and geo-plastic membranes provided practical solutions for water storage, enabling vegetable production during dry months. In Boodhley, farmers reported that membranes allowed them to extend water use, while in Midhisho, improved seeds and tools enabled earlier planting before drought conditions intensified. These interventions stabilized production and improved food availability across seasons, reducing vulnerability to erratic rainfall.

Irrigation access expanded significantly. By 2023, 99% of farmers in Xidhxidh, Gaacidh, and Midhisho had reliable irrigation, while Boodhley improved from 52% to 63% by 2025. The distribution of geo-membrane in Boodhley was highlighted as a transformative achievement, reducing dependence on costly water trucking and creating new irrigation opportunities. More than 8 kilometers of rehabilitated canals and geo-membrane lined storage structures improved water distribution and soil moisture retention, protecting crops during dry spells. Farmers consistently credited these facilities for stabilizing productivity and enabling consistent planting cycles.

Infrastructure rehabilitation further reinforced resilience. Between 2022 and 2025, the project rehabilitated nearly 8 kilometers of canals, five berkads, and 65 geo-plastic sheets for rainwater harvesting. Households reported that these facilities improved water flow and soil moisture, protecting vegetables,

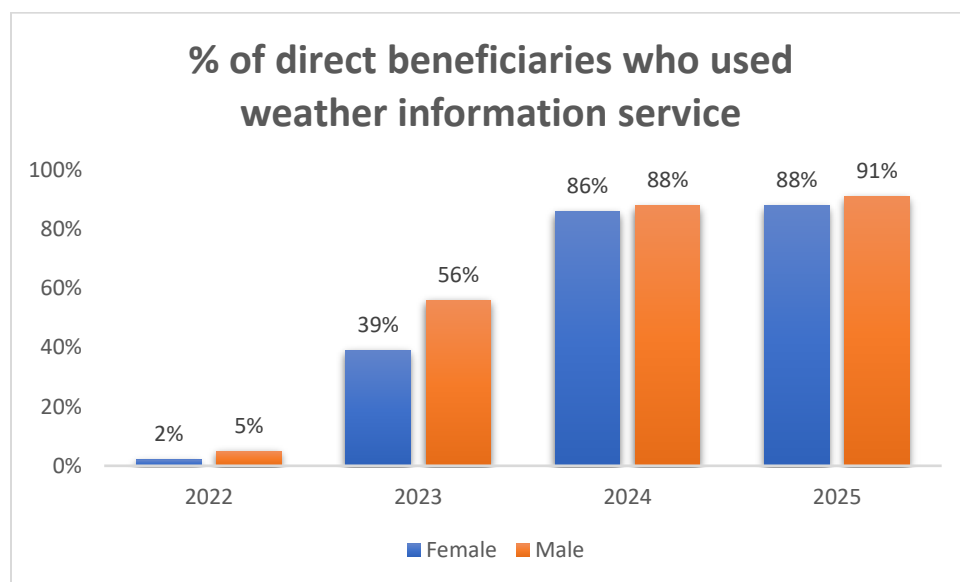
fruits, and maize during dry periods. Key informants confirmed that expanded irrigation and water harvesting structures directly boosted farm productivity and reduced seasonal losses.

Infrastructure sustainability was assessed qualitatively through FGDs, key informant interviews, and discussions with water development committees. Across Xidhxidh, Gaacidh, Midhisho, and Boodhley, canals, berkads, and geo membrane lined structures are managed by trained community committees operating under project supported guidelines and bylaws. Committee members confirmed that responsibilities for routine maintenance such as canal cleaning, leak monitoring, and water allocation are clearly defined and supported through user contributions and collective labor. While financial capacity for major repairs remains limited and larger scale rehabilitation exceeds community resources, local authorities noted that the presence of trained committees, governance structures, and strong community ownership substantially improves the likelihood of sustained functionality compared to pre project conditions. Overall, infrastructure sustainability is assessed as moderate but improving, with long term durability dependent on continued technical support and future investment beyond the project scope.

Climate-smart and nature-positive practices were widely adopted. By 2025, 95% of women and 97% of men reported applying resilience-strengthening skills and knowledge gained through project training. These skills included soil and water conservation through gabions and soil bunds, rainwater harvesting using geo plastic membranes, improved farm planning based on seasonal forecasts, use of drought tolerant seed varieties, rotational grazing, and rehabilitation of degraded land. Farmers in Xidhxidh and Gaacidh explained that these practices helped retain soil moisture, reduce erosion, and protect crops during dry spells, while households in Boodhley described how water harvesting structures reduced pressure on rangeland and groundwater sources. In this context, nature positive refers to practices that restore rather than deplete natural resources, such as gully stabilization, regeneration of vegetation on rehabilitated land, and farming methods that reduce soil loss and improve long term land productivity. Case studies from Midhisho demonstrated how women's leadership expanded through SHGs and gender training, with two women joining the water development committee for the first time. Their participation in technical and governance roles challenged traditional norms and demonstrated that women can manage resource allocation effectively. Local authorities expressed confidence that these gender gains will sustain, given women's growing technical skills and visibility in decision-making platforms.

The use of weather information services also increased dramatically. From minimal uptake at baseline (2% of women, 5% of men), usage rose to 88% of women and 91% of men by 2025. Farmers explained that monthly updates guided planting decisions, soil conservation, and disaster preparedness. In Boodhley, households reported preparing seedlings and protective measures in response to forecasts of rain or locust infestations. This proactive use of information reflects a cultural shift toward long-term land stewardship and climate adaptation.

Figure 10 – Percentage of Direct Beneficiaries who used the Weather Information Service



Outcome 2 achieved substantial progress in stabilizing crop and livestock productivity through improved water access, climate-smart practices, and erosion control measures. While the scale of environmental degradation remains a challenge, communities now demonstrate resilience, planning capacity, and adaptive skills that enable recovery from shocks. The combination of infrastructure investments, technical training, and gender-inclusive governance has positioned farmers and pastoralists to sustain livelihoods under increasingly variable climate conditions.

5.4. Outcome 3

Over the 4-year implementation period, Outcome 3 demonstrated significant progress in embedding agricultural innovations and strengthening community resilience to climate variability. Farmers and pastoralists across Gaacidh, Midhisho, Xidhxidh, and Boodhley transitioned from experimental practices to routine application of climate-smart methods, with adoption rates rising from zero at baseline to 83% in 2023 and 87% in 2025. Seed banking, rotational grazing, and structured farm planning are now standard operating practices, ensuring households can manage climate risks with greater autonomy and foresight.

Access to professional development and innovation services emerged as one of the strongest pillars of success. By 2023, 100% of targeted women and men reported permanent access to training through farmer field schools and extension agents (ADO technical staff, Ministry of Agriculture staff, community-based facilitators, etc.), a level sustained through 2025. Beneficiaries consistently emphasized the value of ongoing demonstrations in soil management, pest control, and climate adaptation. The repeated and reinforced nature of these trainings ensured that nature-positive practices such as mulching and contour planting became widely adopted, strengthening long-term resilience.

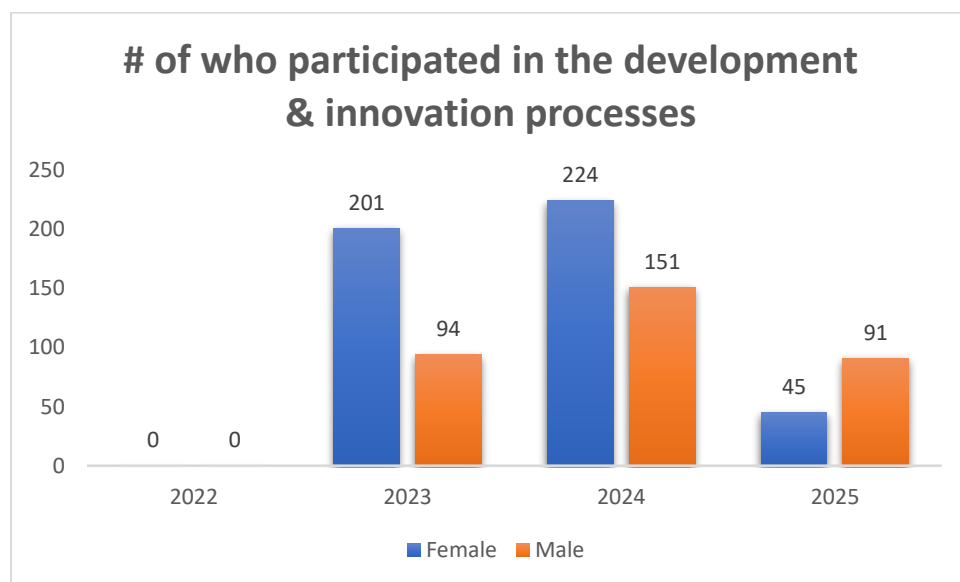
Participation in innovation processes expanded rapidly in the early years, with female and male engagement peaking in 2024. Although participation numbers slightly declined in 2025, focus group discussions revealed that the quality of engagement deepened. Farmers highlighted the practical, hands-on nature of demonstration plots and cooperative sessions, which improved teamwork, planning

discipline, and problem-solving capacity. Women's self-help groups in Gaacidh reported increased confidence to engage in community development and leadership, underscoring the broader social impact of innovation activities.

Figure 11 - Percentage increase of beneficiaries from target to achieved

%age increase of number of beneficiaries from 2022 to 2025	female children	female adults	male children	male adults
Farmers (irrigated farm owners) in Gaacidh, Xidh-xidh and Midhisho	+100%	+8%	+100%	+6%
Farmers (rainfed farm owners) in Boodhley	+100%	0%	+100%	0%
Pastoralists in Boodhely	+100%	0%	+100%	0%
Pastoralists in Gaadrich, Xidh-xidh and Midhisho	+100%	0%	+100%	0%

Figure 12 - Number of who Participated in the Development & Innovation Processes



The project also achieved tangible results in land rehabilitation. From an unmeasured baseline in 2022, soil conservation structures expanded to cover an estimated 23 hectares by 2023 and 46 hectares by 2025. Communities pointed to hundreds of gabions and thousands of meters of soil bunds as visible evidence of recovery, with degraded land showing signs of grass and shrub regeneration. Farmers confirmed that these interventions slowed water flow, reduced erosion, and protected farmland, marking a clear success in biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability.

Institutional strengthening of farmer cooperatives was another notable achievement. Governance resources evolved from basic by-laws in 2023 to comprehensive technical and business manuals by 2025, including climate adaptation action plans, natural resource management manuals, and small business guidelines. Cooperative leaders reported that these documents are actively applied in daily decision-making, clarifying roles, guiding environmental management, and standardizing procedures. This shift from theoretical frameworks to practical directives has enhanced accountability and efficiency in both land management and cooperative operations.

Although illiteracy posed a potential barrier, especially for women, its impact on access to cooperative governance tools was limited through inclusive implementation approaches. Manuals and by laws were translated into the local Somali language and applied through verbal explanations, group discussions, and practical demonstrations rather than reliance on written materials. The manuals were also more picture-centric so that it can be easily understood by people of all literacy levels. Cooperative leaders and peers supported interpretation during meetings, allowing women and other members with limited literacy to actively participate in decision making and implementation. As a result, governance resources were accessible and functional for all members, though continued use of oral facilitation and visual methods remains important to sustain inclusive cooperative management.

The cumulative evidence demonstrates systemic change. Agricultural innovations are now embedded in community practice, extension services are institutionalized, degraded land is visibly rehabilitated, and cooperative governance has matured into a structured, accountable system. Women's participation has extended beyond farming into leadership, reinforcing inclusivity and social cohesion. These achievements collectively strengthen community resilience and sustainability in the face of climate variability.

Nonetheless, challenges remain. Data gaps in 2024 weaken continuity of evidence, and the decline in participation in 2025 requires contextual explanation, possibly linked to project phase-out or external shocks. Addressing these gaps will be critical to ensure the credibility of findings and to inform future programming. Sustaining the gains beyond project life will depend on continued support for extension services, cooperative governance, and community-led innovation processes.

In conclusion, Outcome 3 stands out as a cornerstone of the project's legacy. It demonstrates how agricultural innovation, institutional strengthening, and inclusive participation can converge to deliver lasting resilience and sustainability. The final evaluation confirms that communities are better equipped to anticipate climate disruptions, manage natural resources, and sustain biodiversity, ensuring that the project's investments yield long-term impact.

"When we were told by ADO that they would conduct a seed banking training, I did not believe it would change anything, but now we plan our planting with confidence and we no longer lose our best seeds in bad seasons," said a farmer in Gaacidh

5.5. Outcome 4

Over the course of the project, Outcome 4 demonstrated a clear expansion of women's economic and social influence within households and communities. Women reported a measurable shift in their opportunities to generate income, moving from limited participation to active economic contributors with growing confidence and market presence. Access to savings groups provided direct pathways to capital, enabling investments in small businesses, vegetable production, and poultry. In Midhisho, women highlighted how their first loans allowed them to purchase seeds, tools, and livestock, immediately diversifying household income. Reliable water from rehabilitated canals and training in climate-smart agriculture further stabilized production, ensuring consistent yields and reinforcing women's ability to reinvest in their farms.

This economic empowerment translated into stronger roles in household financial governance. Focus group discussions across four villages confirmed that women's opportunities to influence family spending decisions had notably increased. Families shifted from a single-voice financial model to a shared planning approach, with husbands recognizing the essential role of women's earnings in covering school fees, food purchases, and livestock investments. Self-help groups (SHGs) accelerated this transformation by equipping women with budgeting, expense tracking, and savings planning skills, which enhanced their credibility in financial discussions. As household incomes stabilized, families experienced fewer financial shocks, reducing stress and encouraging more collaborative decision-making.

'I can now decide how to spend the money I earn from my poultry and vegetable sales. Before, my husband made all the decisions, but now we discuss and plan together,' expressed a female farmer during FGD session in Gaacidh.

Women's inclusion in community governance structures also marked a significant achievement. Representation in water development committees, though modest at two women, symbolized a departure from past exclusion. These women contributed directly to decisions on water distribution, maintenance, and seasonal planning, offering insights rooted in their daily responsibilities for household water use and small-scale irrigation. Their participation challenged entrenched norms and demonstrated women's capacity to contribute meaningfully to technical and governance roles. This milestone planted the seeds for more balanced leadership structures in the future.

Qualitative evidence from FGDs and key informant interviews shows that women's participation in governance structures went beyond symbolic representation and translated into practical influence on decisions that directly affected their livelihoods. For example, in Midhisho water development committees, women raised issues closely linked to their daily responsibilities, including equitable water distribution for household use and gardens, prioritization of irrigation during dry months, maintenance schedules for canals and geo membrane structures, and protection of water points from overuse. Women in all 4 target locations also reported that these concerns were discussed during committee meetings and, in several cases, incorporated into seasonal planning decisions, particularly around water rationing and maintenance timing. Before meetings, women committee members often consulted informally with other women in SHGs and farmer groups to gather concerns and agree on priorities, which they then presented at community forums. This internal consultation process helped ensure that women were not speaking only as individuals but as representatives of broader women's interests.

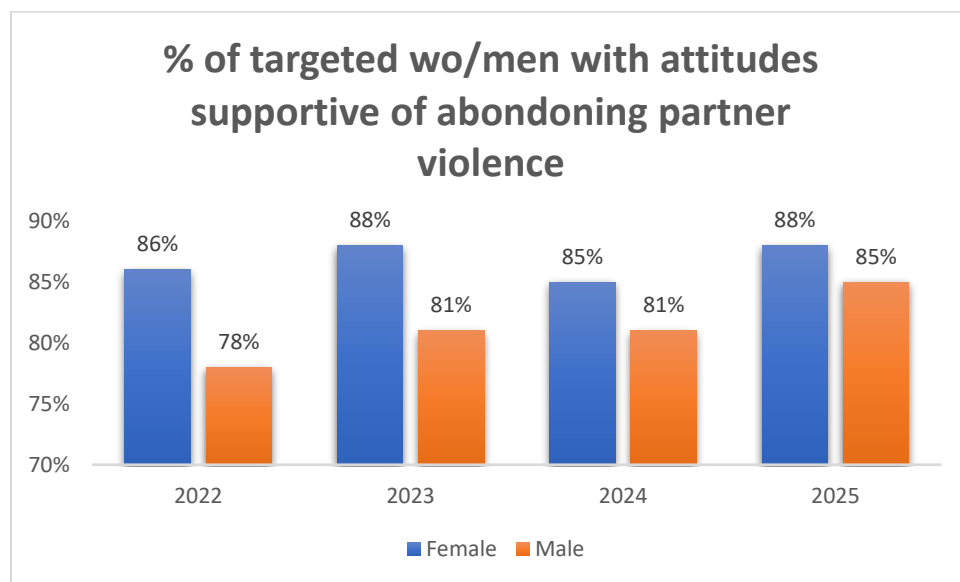
Within cooperatives, women's roles expanded mainly in areas related to production, savings, and marketing. Women participated in cooperative discussions on crop selection, use of improved seeds, and timing of sales, especially for vegetables, poultry, and small livestock. Several women confirmed that they benefited directly from cooperative assets such as shared tools, access to seed banks, irrigation infrastructure, and collective market linkages. In Midhisho and Xidhxidh, women explained that cooperative membership enabled them to access quality seeds from the community seed bank and use rehabilitated canals, which directly increased their production and income. While the men continued to dominate senior leadership positions, women's economic contributions strengthened their voice within cooperatives, and their input on issues affecting household food security and small-scale production was

increasingly recognized as valuable. Women’s economic empowerment through SHGs and improved production created a clear pathway for more meaningful participation in governance and cooperative decision making.

‘The savings group has changed everything for us. I used to worry about school costs like books and uniform for my children and medical costs, but now we pool resources and help each other when shocks come. I feel more respected in my household,’ said a female SHG member in Boodhley

Attitudinal change regarding partner violence further reinforced women’s expanded influence. Survey data showed steady progress, with female support for abandoning partner violence rising from 86% to 88%, and male support increasing from 78% to 85% over the evaluation period. Families attributed this shift to awareness-raising sessions, community dialogues, and improved household communication. As women’s economic standing grew, their visibility and respect within the home increased, discouraging controlling or violent behavior. Men reported that better communication made disagreements easier to resolve without aggression, while women described calmer, more cooperative household environments. Although risks were not fully eliminated, the project initiated a cultural shift toward safer and more respectful relationships.

Figure 13 - Percentage of Targeted Women and Men with Attitudes to Abandon Partner Violence



The cumulative evidence demonstrates that women’s sphere of influence expanded across three critical domains: economic participation, household decision-making, and community governance. Women moved from marginal roles to central actors in income generation, financial planning, and cooperative leadership. Their strengthened position within households and communities not only improved living standards but also contributed to broader social cohesion and resilience.

Challenges remain, particularly in sustaining women's representation in formal governance structures, where numbers are still low. Continued investment in leadership training, mentorship, and policy advocacy will be essential to consolidate gains and ensure women's voices are consistently included in decision-making processes. Similarly, while attitudes toward partner violence have shifted positively, ongoing community dialogue and reinforcement are needed to embed these changes in cultural norms.

In conclusion, Outcome 4 highlights the transformative impact of women's empowerment on household stability, community governance, and social wellbeing. By unlocking income pathways, strengthening financial decision-making, and challenging harmful norms, the project positioned women as active agents of change. The final evaluation confirms that women's expanded influence is both measurable and sustainable, laying the foundation for more equitable and resilient communities.

6. Discussion of Key Evaluation Findings

6.1. Cross-Cutting Issues

From inception, the project embedded gender, protection, inclusion, and accountability as core pillars rather than secondary considerations. Women's economic empowerment was prioritized, ensuring their active participation in livelihood activities, decision-making, and leadership roles. Mechanisms to prevent gender-based violence were integrated into community dialogues and trainings, promoting equitable household dynamics. Inclusion extended to marginalized groups, youth, and persons with disabilities, ensuring that all community segments were represented in planning, implementation, and benefit-sharing. Accountability was reinforced through coordination with local authorities, functional committees, and transparent reporting structures, enabling communities to monitor outcomes and influence project decisions. These principles aligned with global standards such as the Sphere Humanitarian Standards and IASC Quality Principles, reflecting a commitment to rights-based, participatory, and high-quality programming.

Available qualitative evidence indicates that persons with disabilities participated primarily through adapted inclusion within existing community structures rather than through stand-alone activities. FGDs and key informant interviews confirmed that individuals with physical disabilities were included in SHGs, farmer groups, and community consultations where meeting locations and timing were adjusted to allow access. In Midhisho and Gaacidh, community leaders reported that persons with limited mobility engaged mainly in small scale income activities such as poultry keeping, vegetable gardening close to homesteads, and savings groups, where labor demands were manageable. These participants benefited from the same financial literacy training, savings mechanisms, and access to inputs as other members, enabling them to contribute economically at household level.

Key informants further noted that accountability and inclusion committees deliberately invited persons with disabilities to planning meetings and information sessions, ensuring they were informed of project opportunities and grievance mechanisms. While participation in physically demanding activities such as canal rehabilitation was limited, persons with disabilities contributed to decision making discussions, monitoring of resource use, and savings group governance. Local authorities acknowledged that inclusion was pragmatic rather than perfect, but emphasized that the project made a conscious effort to avoid exclusion by adapting participation modalities instead of sidelining affected individuals. This approach aligns with a functional inclusion model, where persons with disabilities participate meaningfully according to their capacities while still benefiting from and influencing project outcomes.

The project achieved tangible progress in gender transformation. Women expanded their roles in economic, social, and leadership spaces, particularly through self-help groups (SHGs) and cooperatives. Access to credit and savings schemes enabled investments in poultry, vegetable gardening, honey production, and small businesses, directly supporting household needs and enhancing women's social standing. Men increasingly supported these ventures, leading to more equitable household decision-making and reduced tensions. Women assumed leadership positions in disaster risk reduction (DRR), natural resource management (NRM), and violence against women and girls (VAWG) committees, actively influencing community planning and resource allocation. Families began jointly deciding on income use, education, and farm planning, reflecting deeper social cohesion. Awareness of gender-based violence improved through targeted trainings, creating safe spaces for women to discuss sensitive issues and encouraging men to engage constructively in preventing partner conflict.

Environmental considerations were systematically integrated across interventions. Land rehabilitation through gabions, soil bunds, and floodwater diversion structures reduced erosion, improved soil fertility, and strengthened moisture retention. Rehabilitated reservoirs, canals, and berkads expanded water access for irrigation and livestock, directly contributing to increased crop and livestock productivity. Demonstration plots and hands-on training reinforced climate-smart agriculture practices, including improved planting methods, integrated pest management, and water conservation techniques. These practices enabled communities to mitigate the impacts of droughts, seasonal floods, and locust invasions. Communities reported visible regeneration of grasses and shrubs in rehabilitated areas, signaling long-term environmental benefits and strengthened resilience of agro-pastoral systems.

Governance and accountability were reinforced through well-functioning local structures. Village Development Committees, farmer cooperatives, SHGs, Climate Adaptation Action Plan (CAAP) committees, and DRR committees actively oversaw project implementation, monitored infrastructure, and coordinated with local authorities. In all four target locations (Boodhley, Midhisho, Xidhxidh, and Gaacidh) cooperatives organized labor for land rehabilitation, facilitated access to market information, and maintained seed banks such as the one in Midhisho. SHGs supervised financial management and distributed loans, while local authorities validated activity plans, monitored reservoirs and soil conservation structures, and provided supervisory support without displacing community leadership. These coordinated efforts ensured transparency, promoted joint problem-solving, and strengthened community ownership.

By embedding gender, environmental stewardship, and governance into project design and practice, the initiative achieved results that cut across all outcomes. Women's empowerment underpinned diversification of income sources (Outcome 1), strengthened resilience to climate shocks (Outcome 2), reinforced adoption of agricultural innovations (Outcome 3), and expanded influence in household and community decision-making (Outcome 4). Environmental sustainability measures directly supported productivity gains and land rehabilitation, while governance structures ensured accountability and sustainability.

The project's cross-cutting approach not only delivered immediate results but also laid a durable foundation for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development. By integrating gender equality, protection, inclusion, and accountability into every stage of implementation, the initiative ensured that communities are better equipped to sustain livelihoods, manage natural resources, and uphold equitable governance practices well beyond the project's life.

6.2. Relevance

The project, implemented by the ISF in partnership with the ADO from 2022 to 2025, was designed to address complex and interlinked socio-economic, environmental, and gender challenges that constrained resilience and development in Midhisho, Xidhxidh, Gaacidh, and Boodhley. Prior to project implementation, communities faced persistent livelihood pressures. Water scarcity limited both crop cultivation and livestock care, while soil erosion, degraded rangelands, and depleted vegetation cover reduced land productivity and increased vulnerability to climate shocks. Agro-pastoral households struggled with access to seeds, farming tools, and irrigation infrastructure, and women faced structural barriers in participating in economic activities, decision-making, and climate adaptation practices. These challenges created a cycle of low productivity, limited income diversification, and heightened exposure to recurrent droughts and seasonal floods. Against this backdrop, the project's interventions were tailored

to the contextual realities of the communities, integrating climate-smart agriculture, land rehabilitation, environmental conservation, and women's economic empowerment in a coordinated approach.

The project was highly relevant to the intervention areas when assessed against the ToR relevance criteria of alignment with policies, responsiveness to unmet needs, and avoidance of duplication. It addressed clearly documented structural drivers of vulnerability in Midhisho, Xidhxidh, Gaacidh, and Boodhley, namely water scarcity, land degradation, low agricultural productivity, and gender-based exclusion from economic and governance systems. These challenges were consistent with district and national priorities on climate adaptation, agricultural recovery, and women's empowerment, positioning the project squarely within existing policy frameworks rather than operating in parallel to them.

From a design perspective, the project made a deliberate strategic choice to focus on integrated, community level interventions rather than large scale infrastructure or market led solutions. This choice reflected contextual realities including insecurity, weak public service coverage, and limited absorptive capacity of local institutions. Small scale irrigation rehabilitation, soil and water conservation, and climate smart agriculture were appropriate entry points for addressing root causes of vulnerability while remaining feasible within time, budget, and risk constraints. In this sense, the design demonstrated strong contextual intelligence rather than technical ambition detached from operational realities.

The relevance of the design was reinforced through alignment with government priorities and technical validation by academic institutions. Collaboration with district authorities and the University of Burao reduced duplication risks and ensured that interventions complemented, rather than substituted, public mandates in agriculture, environment, and gender equality. However, the project also implicitly compensated for systemic gaps in public service delivery, particularly in extension services and land management, which underscores both its relevance and the fragility of the enabling environment in which it operated.

At the same time, the evaluation identifies clear design gaps that limit the scope of relevance claims. Market access constraints, value chain development, and post-harvest handling were only partially addressed, despite being critical determinants of income sustainability. Similarly, while extension support was provided through the project, the absence of a fully institutionalized and resourced public extension system means that long term continuity remains uncertain. These gaps do not invalidate the relevance of the design, but they do indicate unmet needs that the project could not realistically address within its mandate.

Alternative design options existed, including stronger engagement with private sector traders, cooperative led aggregation models, or larger scale irrigation schemes. However, these alternatives would have required significantly higher financial investment, stronger security guarantees, and more mature institutional partners than were present in the target areas. Given these constraints, the chosen design represented an efficient use of resources to achieve meaningful resilience gains, even if it did not tackle all structural bottlenecks affecting livelihoods.

Gender focused interventions were particularly relevant in addressing long standing exclusion from economic and decision-making spaces. The integration of women into self-help groups, cooperatives, and community adaptation planning directly responded to documented gender gaps and aligned with national gender policies. However, relevance would have been strengthened further by a more explicit

articulation of how women's economic gains could be safeguarded beyond the project period, particularly in relation to asset ownership, market participation, and legal protections.

According to a key respondent from the University of Burao, the project's relevance was evident in its strong alignment with local environmental and agricultural priorities. The construction of soil bunds, gabions, and water reservoirs addressed critical soil erosion and groundwater depletion, while the introduction of seeds, farming equipment, and small-scale irrigation infrastructure enabled communities to improve agricultural productivity. University researchers validated community observations, conducting field visits, gathering evidence, and guiding technical measures to ensure interventions were grounded in practical knowledge. Capacity-building activities, such as training farmers in the construction and maintenance of soil bunds and systems to redirect seasonal floodwaters into reservoirs, were well-targeted and immediately adopted by communities, with nearly 70% of members expressing early support for these innovations. These interventions bridged traditional agro-pastoral practices with sustainable and climate-smart approaches, promoting both environmental resilience and productive livelihoods.

ISF senior staff highlighted the project's responsiveness to both gender and livelihood priorities. Interventions such as rehabilitating cemented water canals, repairing berkads, distributing agricultural inputs, and promoting improved irrigation practices directly enhanced food security and household resilience. Women and girls were actively involved in all stages of project activities, from planning to implementation, strengthening their voice and decision-making power in household and community matters. Participation in self-help groups, cooperatives, and community-based adaptation plans (CAAPs) enabled women to engage in income-generating activities, access financial resources, and adopt climate-smart agricultural practices. Innovative methods for community engagement, including culturally rooted communication strategies like storytelling, community drama, and participatory demonstrations, further enhanced the adoption of sustainable practices and shifted social norms around gender roles and farming.

Government respondents reinforced these assessments, noting that the project aligned closely with district and regional development priorities. The interventions directly supported national mandates for agricultural revival, climate adaptation, and gender equality. Key activities (including seed distribution, water reservoir construction, land rehabilitation, gabion installation, and formation of women's savings groups; addressed priority needs that exceeded government capacities, particularly in resource-constrained areas like Boodhley. By complementing public programs, the project added significant value to ongoing national efforts and strengthened local governance and oversight mechanisms, ensuring alignment with policy frameworks and long-term development objectives.

Farmers themselves confirmed the practical relevance of the interventions. The creation of farm cooperatives, demonstration farms, and hands-on training allowed households to test and adopt improved agricultural techniques. These initiatives enhanced teamwork, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving capacity, while increasing crop yields and improving produce quality for market access. Cooperative structures facilitated timely exchange of market information, better pricing strategies, and stronger bargaining power, particularly benefiting women who were able to manage livestock sales, reinvest earnings, and improve household income. Community members also emphasized the participatory approach, noting that their involvement in identifying priorities and shaping interventions

increased ownership and ensured activities were aligned with seasonal cycles, crop calendars, and local land-use patterns.

'Learning climate-smart techniques and joining the self-help group has allowed me to diversify my income. I can invest in crops and livestock and participate in decisions I never had a say in before,' said a female agro-pastoralist in Boodhley during FGD session of the endline evaluation.

Women participants highlighted the project's relevance in addressing long-standing economic and social constraints. Training in climate-smart agriculture, savings and loan management, and small enterprise development equipped women with the skills to manage their own income and engage in household and community decision-making. Self-help groups and cooperatives created platforms for leadership, collective action, and access to financial and market resources. Women reported enhanced confidence, independence, and agency, with tangible improvements in household income, livelihood diversification, and participation in governance structures. Interventions also strengthened awareness and prevention of gender-based violence, supporting broader social change and empowerment objectives.

Across all respondent groups, the project demonstrated a clear alignment with community needs, regional climatic realities, and national development frameworks. Its integrated approach addressed environmental degradation, agricultural constraints, gender inequities, and economic vulnerability through participatory design, evidence-based interventions, and capacity building. By combining technical support, practical training, and community engagement, the project not only improved agricultural productivity and household resilience but also fostered inclusive social dynamics, strengthened institutional capacity, and laid the foundation for sustainable, community-driven development beyond the project period. Communities recognized the value of the interventions and expressed a strong desire for future programs to expand land restoration, climate adaptation measures, and economic empowerment initiatives, highlighting the enduring relevance of the project's approach.

6.3. Effectiveness

The "Strengthening Women's Livelihood for Economic Development and Climate Change Adaptation" project demonstrated high effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes across multiple dimensions of agricultural productivity, climate adaptation, and social empowerment. For example, University of Burao researchers highlighted the critical role of students and field teams in supporting the project through validation of local observations and guidance on technical measures, ensuring that interventions were grounded in local realities and practical needs. Technical interventions, including gabions, soil bunds, and seasonal floodwater management systems, successfully reduced land degradation, protected crops, and enhanced soil fertility. Farmers received targeted, hands-on training on these methods, which allowed them to adopt and sustain practices beyond the immediate support period, utilizing simple and accessible construction materials and tools.

From ISF's perspective, activities were implemented largely as planned and within projected timelines, with minor adjustments in Erigavo due to security concerns. Water access improvements were

particularly impactful, boosting both crop production and livestock management, while capacity-building initiatives strengthened women's leadership and participation in community decision-making. Self-help groups, cooperatives, and CAAP committees were central to effective implementation, receiving ongoing coaching, technical guidance, and operational support to ensure consistent delivery of results. Coordination among ISF, ADO, local authorities, and other partners was responsive and timely, fostering an environment in which women, girls, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups could participate fully. Midterm evaluation recommendations were systematically applied, refining operational processes and improving efficiency throughout the project cycle.

The project demonstrated strong effectiveness when assessed against its outcome level indicators, particularly in agricultural productivity, adoption of climate smart practices, and women's participation in livelihood and governance systems. Compared to baseline conditions in 2022, where land degradation, limited irrigation access, and low uptake of improved practices constrained production, the project achieved measurable progress by 2025. Outcome indicators related to increased use of soil and water conservation measures, improved irrigation coverage, and application of climate adaptive farming practices were largely met or exceeded. However, effectiveness is best understood as contribution rather than attribution. While increases in yields and food consumption were observed, these outcomes cannot be fully attributed to project inputs alone due to external factors such as favorable rainfall in 2023. The evaluation therefore applies a contribution logic, triangulating trends across multiple years, beneficiary practices, and system level changes such as sustained use of techniques during drought periods, rather than claiming direct causality.

Some targets were only partially achieved, reflecting contextual constraints. For example, while water access and land rehabilitation expanded significantly, the scale of environmental degradation exceeded what community level interventions could fully address. Similarly, while cooperatives and self help groups functioned effectively for savings, training, and coordination, their ability to consistently link members to markets and extension services remained limited. These gaps do not undermine overall effectiveness but indicate structural constraints beyond the project's scope. The application of midterm review recommendations improved implementation quality, yet limitations in market access, public extension coverage, and security related access in Erigavo constrained full achievement of some intended outcomes.

Early warning committees contributed meaningfully to project effectiveness but also faced clear limitations. Committees relied on a combination of traditional knowledge and emerging modern information sources. Traditional indicators such as rainfall patterns, livestock behavior, and seasonal winds remained central to local forecasting. These were supplemented by modern weather information disseminated through SMS alerts, phone calls, and coordination with local authorities and project partners. However, committees reported challenges in the timeliness, coverage, and precision of formal weather data, reflecting the nascent state of weather information systems in Somaliland. Gaps in network coverage, irregular updates, and limited localization of forecasts reduced reliability. Despite these constraints, the combination of traditional and modern systems enabled earlier preparation and risk mitigation than at baseline, supporting adaptive decision making even if early warning systems remain underdeveloped.

Government stakeholders confirmed tangible improvements in community resilience, noting that households increased agricultural yields, adopted climate-smart practices, and improved food consumption patterns, with some families now accessing three meals daily. Rehabilitation of irrigation systems, construction of water reservoirs, and land restoration structures, including gabions and bunds, enhanced water security, improved soil fertility, and expanded cultivation opportunities. Early warning committees operated effectively, providing timely alerts during climatic shocks and enabling proactive mitigation measures. Farmers reported substantial adoption of improved crop management techniques, integrated pest management, safe chemical use, and climate-smart methods, demonstrating a clear shift in agricultural practices. Early warning committees operated effectively within the constraints of Somaliland's still nascent formal weather information systems. The committees primarily received weather and climate related information from the National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority (NADFOR), including seasonal forecasts, rainfall updates, and alerts related to drought and flood risks. This information was shared through SMS messages, phone calls, and coordination with local authorities, and then disseminated at community level through meetings and informal networks. In addition to these modern information channels, committees continued to rely on traditional early warning practices such as observation of rainfall patterns, pasture conditions, water availability, and livestock movements. Committee members acknowledged challenges related to the timeliness, consistency, and geographic specificity of formal weather data, reflecting the early stage of national forecasting systems. However, by combining NADFOR updates with local knowledge, committees were able to issue practical alerts and advise farmers on planting dates, pest management, and risk mitigation measures. This hybrid approach strengthened preparedness and enabled farmers to adopt climate smart crop management, integrated pest control, and safer chemical use despite systemic limitations in the national early warning infrastructure.

'Communities are now seeing real changes. Households are harvesting consistently, practicing climate-smart farming, and many families can afford 3 meals a day. The improved irrigation systems and land restoration work have made a tangible difference in water security and crop productivity,' said a government representative of Togdheer region during KII.

The creation and strengthening of cooperatives and farm groups enhanced teamwork, coordination, and access to market information, which improved bargaining power, reduced post-harvest losses, and facilitated collective problem-solving. Vegetable and cereal yields increased due to enhanced soil fertility, collective labor, and application of improved techniques. Women, in particular, experienced significant gains through participation in savings groups and financial management training, enabling them to reinvest earnings, manage household resources, and engage actively in farm planning and community leadership. Participation in SHGs, DRR committees, and cooperatives strengthened women's confidence and autonomy, translating into more equitable household decision-making and broader social empowerment.

Climate-smart and environmentally sustainable practices were effectively integrated into daily farming routines. Communities adopted land rehabilitation methods, soil and water conservation structures, and improved water management techniques. Weather information services were used to adjust planting

schedules, manage pest threats, and optimize crop production, demonstrating practical application of early warning systems. Both men and women reported enhanced decision-making, resource allocation, and knowledge application, which collectively improved household resilience, agricultural productivity, and community capacity to cope with environmental and climatic challenges. Overall, the project achieved substantial and measurable progress toward its objectives, leaving communities better equipped, more knowledgeable, and empowered to sustain gains beyond the project period.

6.4. Coherence

The project demonstrated a generally strong level of coherence at internal, local, and national levels, while also revealing some coordination gaps that influenced implementation efficiency rather than overall outcomes. Internally, coherence between ADO's field implementation and government systems was strong, supported by ADO's continuous field presence, routine engagement with district authorities, and alignment of annual workplans with district development priorities. However, coherence between ISF's strategic oversight and ADO's field level planning was less formalized. The absence of structured joint planning forums at operational level occasionally limited real time alignment between donor reporting priorities and evolving field realities. While this did not undermine delivery of core outputs, it reduced opportunities for adaptive programming and joint problem-solving during periods of climatic and security related disruption.

External coherence with government institutions was outstanding especially with ministries like Ministry of Agricultural Development, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, and NADFOR who confirmed this during the interviews with the evaluation team. The project aligned closely with national and regional priorities on food security, climate adaptation, natural resource management, and gender equality. Local authorities played a validation and supervisory role, approving activity plans, monitoring selected interventions, and ensuring regulatory compliance. This alignment reduced duplication risks and strengthened institutional legitimacy. Government stakeholders confirmed that project activities complemented public programs, particularly in under resourced rural areas where state capacity for land rehabilitation, irrigation, and extension services remains limited.

Coordination with non-governmental actors and the wider development ecosystem was present but largely informal. The project did not operate within a formal sector cluster structure; however, it maintained practical coherence with other NGO interventions through information sharing, geographic deconfliction, and alignment of technical approaches. No cases of overlap or contradictory programming were reported by respondents. Donor coherence was reflected in alignment with Finnish MFA priorities on resilience, gender equality, and climate adaptation, though stronger triangulation with other donor funded initiatives could have enhanced learning and scalability.

A notable element of external coherence was collaboration with the University of Burao. University staff and students contributed technical validation, field observations, and applied research support, particularly on soil conservation, water management, and climate smart agriculture. This cooperation strengthened the evidence base of interventions and improved technical quality, while also linking community level practice with academic knowledge. Although not institutionalized through a formal memorandum, stakeholders viewed this collaboration as value adding and relevant to future programming.

At community level, coherence was strengthened by working through existing structures such as Village Development Committees, cooperatives, self-help groups, DRR committees, and CAAP committees. These platforms predated the project and ensured continuity, local ownership, and accountability. Most relevant stakeholders at community and district level were involved in a meaningful way, particularly farmers, women's groups, local leaders, and extension actors. Identified gaps included limited engagement with private sector market actors and constrained involvement of other NGOs in joint planning, which may have limited opportunities to address broader market access and scaling challenges.

We can conclude that the project achieved good internal and external coherence by aligning with government systems, community structures, and national priorities, while avoiding parallel mechanisms. The main coherence weakness related to the lack of formalized joint planning between ISF and ADO and limited structured coordination with other development actors. These gaps affected efficiency and learning rather than effectiveness, and addressing them in future programs would strengthen adaptive management, collective impact, and sustainability.

6.5. Impact

The "Strengthening Women's Livelihood for Economic Development and Climate Change Adaptation" project delivered profound and complex impacts on livelihoods, social dynamics, environmental management, and gender equity in the target communities. According to a representative/respondent from the University of Burao, the project interventions, including the provision of improved seeds, farming tools, and water reservoirs, significantly bolstered agricultural productivity while simultaneously reducing vulnerability to climate-related shock such as droughts and seasonal flooding. Beyond improving outputs, these measures fostered stronger social cohesion as community members worked collectively to implement gabions and soil bunds for land restoration and erosion control. These technical solutions were widely accepted by communities because they relied on accessible materials and simple tools, which enabled households to maintain them independently, ensuring sustainability beyond the period of direct donor support. The participatory approach to project design and implementation, supported by university researchers and student field teams, allowed local observations, practical knowledge, and evidence from field data to guide technical measures, ensuring that interventions were both relevant and feasible within the agro-pastoral context. Farmers received tailored, hands-on training in soil and water conservation, floodwater control, and climate-smart agricultural techniques, which facilitated immediate adoption and long-term integration into daily farming practices.

The project generated significant livelihood, environmental, and social impacts when compared against baseline conditions in 2022, though these impacts should be understood as contribution based rather than solely attributable to the intervention. At baseline, crop production stood at approximately 30% and livestock production at 25% of optimal capacity, with widespread land degradation, limited irrigation, and weak adaptive practices across all four communities. By 2023, production peaked at 96% for crops and 88% for livestock, influenced by both favorable rainfall and full project implementation. Importantly, production levels remained substantially above baseline in subsequent stress years, reaching 86% for crops and 78% for livestock in 2025 despite drought, flooding, and displacement. This sustained performance relative to baseline demonstrates a durable improvement in adaptive capacity rather than a short-term weather driven gain. Quantitative trends in income and savings further support this impact, with annual household sales increasing from approximately US\$100 - 350 at baseline to US\$400 - 1,650

by project end, and women's savings groups accumulating over US\$4,788, strengthening household buffers against shocks.

Environmental impacts were also measurable relative to baseline. In 2022, nearly all farmland and grazing areas in Boodhley and Midhisho were assessed as erosion prone. By 2025, approximately 15% of previously degraded land had been rehabilitated through 681 gabions, over 3,000 meters of soil bunds, and nearly 8 kilometers of canal rehabilitation. While this did not reverse landscape level degradation, it slowed gully expansion, stabilized priority farmland, and protected key production zones. Government and University of Burao respondents confirmed that these interventions improved soil moisture retention, reduced seasonal crop losses, and restored vegetation cover on 46 hectares of land. The reliance on locally available materials and community labor increased maintenance feasibility, though authorities emphasized that larger scale investments are still required to address erosion at watershed level.

Social and gender impacts were substantial and supported by both quantitative participation data and qualitative evidence. Women's participation across project interventions reached 55% of all direct beneficiaries by 2024, compared to marginal involvement at baseline. Women constituted 30% of cooperative membership, 37% of DRR committee members, and 28.5% of water committee members, marking a clear shift from previous exclusion. Women's income generating activities expanded through SHGs, poultry, vegetable production, and small trade, translating into increased influence over household expenditure decisions. Both women and men consistently reported a move toward joint financial planning, corroborated by FGDs and key informant interviews. While these gains were widely accepted, some women initially reported increased workloads due to expanded production responsibilities, highlighting the need for continued attention to labor balance and household negotiation.

The project also produced positive but nuanced social change outcomes. Awareness sessions on gender and household dialogue contributed to reduced acceptance of partner violence and improved communication, though respondents acknowledged that deep rooted norms have not been fully transformed. No systematic cases of elite capture or exclusion were reported; however, cooperative leaders noted that more vocal and literate members initially dominated discussions, requiring facilitation to ensure inclusive participation, particularly for women with low literacy. Environmentally, while increased cultivation raised concerns about water pressure in dry periods, the adoption of water saving practices such as geo membrane lined storage, mulching, and planned irrigation mitigated immediate risks. The impact of the project is best characterized as a strengthening of resilience systems rather than a complete transformation of structural vulnerabilities. Compared to baseline conditions, households demonstrated higher and more stable production, diversified income sources, improved savings and assets, stronger governance participation, and enhanced capacity to absorb and recover from shocks. While favorable rainfall in 2023 contributed to peak outcomes, the ability of communities to sustain gains through adverse conditions in 2024 and 2025 provides credible evidence of lasting impact, tempered by realistic acknowledgment of remaining risks, scale limitations, and the need for continued investment.

ISF monitoring confirmed that project activities were largely implemented as planned and on schedule, with only minor disruptions due to security constraints in Erigavo. Components that proved most effective included improved water access through rehabilitated canals and reservoirs, which directly increased agricultural production and household food security, and capacity-building initiatives that strengthened women's leadership, decision-making roles, and participation in community governance. Self-help groups (SHGs), cooperatives, and DRR committees who developed the Community Action & Adaptation

Plans (CAAP) committees played a central role in delivering project outcomes, receiving continuous coaching, technical guidance, and monitoring to ensure consistent execution of activities. Coordination between ISF, ADO, local authorities, and partner organizations was timely, responsive, and adaptive to emerging challenges, while inclusive approaches ensured participation from women, girls, persons with disabilities, and marginalized households. Midterm evaluations were effectively integrated into the workplan, refining activities and improving operational efficiency.

‘Women who were once sidelined are now leading SHGs, cooperatives, and community committees. They actively participate in household budgeting, farm planning, and decision-making, and men are increasingly supportive of their roles. This shift has strengthened social cohesion and promoted more equitable resource management,’ said a community leader in Midhisho during KII

6.6. Efficiency

The “Strengthening Women’s Livelihood for Economic Development and Climate Change Adaptation” project demonstrated a high level of efficiency in the use of both financial and human resources, optimizing inputs to achieve significant outputs across its target communities. ISF observed that staffing, logistical support, and technical expertise were appropriately matched to the project scope, allowing activities to proceed largely without disruption. Budget limitations did not compromise results, and collaboration between ISF and ADO proved cost-effective due to complementary strengths and coordinated planning. Despite a brief delay in 2024 caused by European financial regulations, which required rerouting transfers through Lithuania, project activities resumed smoothly with minimal impact on overall timelines. Efficiency was further reinforced by leveraging existing community knowledge, local leadership structures, and practical solutions, ensuring that interventions were grounded in local realities and delivered maximum value for the resources invested.

From a cost-efficiency perspective, while formal unit cost comparisons and efficiency ratios were not conducted, evidence suggests that the project delivered strong value-for-money. Infrastructure works such as canal rehabilitation, reservoir construction, and gabion installations were implemented at relatively low transaction costs by leveraging community labor and supervision. Training sessions and cooperative meetings were timed to coincide with seasonal cycles, reducing opportunity costs for farmers and women’s groups. This strategic scheduling ensured that human and economic resources were used efficiently in relation to the project’s achievements, with outputs consistently outweighing inputs.

Information distribution and dissemination methods were relevant and efficient. Progress updates were shared through community meetings, cooperative structures, and district-level reporting channels, ensuring transparency and predictability. Communication between project staff and communities was strong, enabling timely mobilization of collective labor, input distribution, and scheduling of activities. Peer-to-peer learning platforms and cooperative forums amplified knowledge transfer, while local leadership ensured that information reached intended beneficiaries quickly and effectively.

The project also succeeded in combining local knowledge and experience with capacity development actions. By embedding training within existing farming routines and seasonal cycles, interventions were grounded in community realities. Local leaders and SHGs contributed indigenous knowledge on water management, crop cycles, and pastoral practices, which was integrated into technical training and demonstration plots. This blending of external expertise with local experience enhanced relevance, ownership, and sustainability of outcomes.

Government respondents highlighted that the project's operational efficiency was strengthened by careful alignment with existing systems despite limited government capacity and financial visibility. ADO played a central coordination role, integrating project activities with district-level development plans, scheduling field visits within logistical constraints, and sharing progress through timely reporting mechanisms. While ministry-level human resources, particularly technical experts, were thin, the project maintained steady oversight and ensured quality execution. The reliance on community leadership structures, such as Village Development Committees, self-help groups (SHGs), and cooperatives, further enhanced efficiency. These structures oversaw beneficiary selection, supervised infrastructure works, monitored progress, and facilitated knowledge sharing, reducing transaction costs and shortening feedback loops between communities and project staff.

At the community level, farmers and women's groups confirmed that the project optimized time, labor, and material resources to achieve tangible results. Training sessions, demonstration plots, and cooperative meetings were strategically timed to coincide with seasonal patterns, planting cycles, and local farming routines, ensuring minimal disruption to ongoing agricultural activities. These forums provided platforms for peer-to-peer learning, labor pooling, and coordinated access to markets, amplifying the impact of limited technical and financial inputs. Infrastructure interventions, such as canal rehabilitation, reservoir construction, and gabion installations, were efficiently implemented, addressing long-standing barriers to production and water access. Communication channels between project staff and communities were strong, creating predictability in scheduling, input distribution, and mobilization of collective labor. Overall, the project's efficiency was reflected in its ability to maximize outputs relative to resources invested, achieve timely and measurable outcomes, and maintain consistent operational performance even in the face of droughts, floods, and intermittent insecurity, demonstrating a pragmatic and resource-conscious approach to sustainable development.

6.7. Sustainability

Sustainability was treated as a core design principle rather than an add on, and was operationalized through mutually reinforcing technical, institutional, and social measures intended to endure beyond the project lifecycle. Technically, the project prioritized practical, low cost, and locally manageable interventions such as soil bunds, floodwater management structures, gabions, and climate smart farming practices. These were deliberately selected to match local skills and resource constraints. Training and hands on demonstrations enabled farmers and pastoralists to internalize these practices and incorporate them into routine production systems. As a result, outcomes related to land rehabilitation, erosion control, and water management are likely to persist and continue contributing to soil fertility, crop protection, and climate risk reduction.

From an institutional perspective, the project strengthened community level governance mechanisms including cooperatives, self-help groups, CAAP committees, and EW committees. These structures assumed operational responsibility for shared assets such as seed banks, irrigation systems, and

reservoirs, while also developing leadership capacity, governance norms, and routines for collective action and market coordination. Women led groups proved particularly influential, driving savings and lending activities, household resource management, and advocacy for inclusive priorities. The provision of locally translated manuals and training materials further supported continuity by embedding knowledge within the community rather than external actors.

Social sustainability was reinforced by anchoring project activities within existing governance frameworks such as Village Development Committees and DRR structures. This alignment reduced dependency on external support and strengthened accountability through community led monitoring and supervision. Tangible short-term benefits including improved water access, higher yields, livelihood diversification, and stronger social cohesion created clear incentives for communities to maintain interventions over time.

Sustainability prospects are not without risk. Stakeholders consistently flagged leadership turnover within local government and technical institutions as a potential disruption to continuity. Community capacity to maintain large scale environmental rehabilitation remains limited in the absence of external technical and financial inputs. Recurrent climate shocks such as droughts, floods, and pest outbreaks continue to pose systemic threats that could erode gains if not addressed through broader resilience measures. Financial sustainability is another pressure point. While self-help groups and cooperatives have demonstrated value in savings mobilization and coordination, their ability to scale operations and sustain market linkages without donor support remains uncertain. This reflects a wider structural gap in Somaliland, where landscape level programming and extension services are nominally government led but remain underdeveloped.

Accordingly, long term sustainability depends not only on community ownership and low-cost practices, but also on sustained engagement from local institutions and external stakeholders such as universities, NADFOR, and NGOs. Continued technical backstopping, problem solving support, and market information will be critical for communities to respond to challenges that exceed their current capacity.

The project also strengthened practical recovery mechanisms that enabled households to rebound more quickly from shocks. Improved irrigation and water storage systems reduced vulnerability to drought. Savings groups provided rapid access to liquidity during crises. Early warning committees improved preparedness for floods and pest outbreaks. Cooperatives helped reduce post-harvest losses and stabilize food availability, while women led groups functioned as informal social safety nets through lending and collective action. Together, these mechanisms translated into faster recovery trajectories compared to baseline conditions, indicating meaningful resilience gains beyond immediate outputs.

However, gaps persist within these recovery systems. Financial reserves held by self-help groups are modest and easily depleted during prolonged shocks. Cooperatives continue to face barriers to accessing broader markets and extension services. Early warning systems rely on a mix of traditional indicators and emerging formal weather information that remains insufficiently localized and reliable. Large scale environmental rehabilitation such as watershed restoration remains beyond community capacity, underscoring the need for sustained institutional and government investment.

In summary, sustainability should be understood as a layered outcome. Communities now possess the knowledge, organizational infrastructure, and motivation to sustain core practices, but their ability to adapt, scale, and respond to escalating climate risks depends on continued institutional linkages and

higher-level support. The project has established a credible foundation for resilience. Closing systemic gaps in financing, institutional continuity, and climate risk management through longer term, landscape-oriented programming will be decisive in determining whether gains are merely sustained or strategically amplified over time.

Figure 14 - Bounce back mechanism

Bounce Back Mechanisms and Remaining Gaps

Across the evaluation stages, households described a clear improvement in their ability to recover more quickly from shocks such as drought, erratic rainfall, displacement, and market disruptions. Several interlinked bounce back mechanisms emerged consistently. First, diversified income sources reduced reliance on a single livelihood. Income from vegetables, poultry, small businesses, and cooperative activities allowed households to absorb shocks without selling core assets. Second, savings accumulated through self-help groups functioned as an immediate buffer, enabling families to cover food, school fees, farm inputs, or health costs during crises without resorting to debt. Third, improved and more reliable water access through rehabilitated canals, berkads, and geo membrane lined structures allowed households to resume production soon after shocks, rather than waiting for the next rainy season. Fourth, access to improved seeds, community seed banking, and climate smart practices enabled faster replanting and reduced crop losses, shortening recovery time. Fifth, early warning information provided through NADFOR and community committees supported anticipatory action, such as adjusting planting dates, preparing fields, or protecting seedlings before hazards materialized. Finally, strengthened social and institutional networks, including cooperatives, CAAP committees, and DRR structures, facilitated collective problem solving, labor sharing, and coordinated responses during stress periods.

At the same time, important gaps remain. Recovery mechanisms are still constrained by the limited scale of land rehabilitation relative to widespread erosion, weak market access during insecurity, and dependence on rainfall patterns beyond community control. Early warning systems, while increasingly used, remain basic and rely heavily on external information flows rather than locally generated forecasts. Women's participation in governance, although improving, is not yet fully institutionalized across all committees. These gaps reflect structural constraints and resource limitations rather than design failure, but they indicate that bounce back capacity, while strengthened, is not yet sufficient to fully offset large scale or compound shocks.

6.8. Lessons Learnt

The project underscored the profound value of integrating academic research with community knowledge to strengthen learning and ensure practical, context-sensitive interventions. Both the University of Burao and ISF highlighted how students, researchers, and field teams used the project as a living laboratory, producing case studies, guiding technical measures, and validating interventions against local realities. This collaboration created a dynamic feedback loop in which community observations informed project design and implementation, while technical expertise and scientific methods reinforced the relevance and effectiveness of activities. Participatory, bottom-up approaches emerged as a critical factor in achieving meaningful outcomes with limited resources, ensuring that interventions were not only technically sound but also socially grounded, widely accepted, and sustainable over time.

A major learning point from the project was the central role of water infrastructure. Investments in rehabilitated canals, reservoirs, and irrigation systems produced immediate and highly visible benefits, demonstrating that strategic, practical interventions can generate tangible change quickly and inspire community confidence. Equally important was the emphasis on community ownership, which emerged as a decisive driver of success. By actively engaging farmers, women, youth, and vulnerable households in planning, monitoring, and management, the project avoided the fragmentation that often undermines rural development initiatives. This sense of ownership strengthened accountability, enhanced adoption of new techniques, and fostered social cohesion around shared goals such as land rehabilitation, water management, and sustainable agricultural practices.

The project also reinforced the value of experiential learning through demonstration plots, practical training, and cooperative-based knowledge exchange. Farmers were able to observe, experiment, and integrate climate-smart techniques, improved crop management methods, and soil and water conservation practices into their daily routines. SHGs, cooperatives, and CAAP committees became essential platforms for peer-to-peer learning, facilitating ongoing exchange of insights, market information, and adaptive strategies for resilience. Communities emphasized that aligning interventions with seasonal cycles, agricultural calendars, and climate realities, while providing accessible tools and hands-on guidance, greatly enhanced the uptake and effectiveness of new practices.

Despite these successes, persistent challenges were identified as key learning points. Climate shocks, limited market access, and mobility barriers for remote households continue to constrain development potential and require ongoing attention in program design. Sustainability of infrastructure and interventions depends not only on community engagement but also on structured training, access to financing, and continued partnerships with government institutions to provide oversight, technical support, and policy alignment. Transparent communication, predictable scheduling, and consistent coordination between implementers and communities were consistently cited as critical operational strengths that underpinned project efficiency, trust, and credibility.

Looking ahead, recommendations for future interventions emphasize the need to maintain regular reviews of Community Action Plans, update activities based on emerging needs, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and integrate environmental impact assessments into program design. Expanding land restoration initiatives, installing additional erosion-control structures, broadening the reach of SHGs, and sustaining technical and financial support were all highlighted as essential for consolidating gains, promoting innovation, and scaling up impact. Continuous collaboration between academic institutions and implementing agencies emerged as a key pathway for fostering innovation, knowledge exchange, and environmentally sustainable practices, ensuring that both learning and practical outcomes continue to evolve in tandem with community priorities and ecological realities.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings and suggestions from the respondents, the following recommendations were cited. The expansion of water infrastructure emerged as a critical recommendation from all respondent groups. Communities highlighted the transformative impact of reservoirs, canals, and floodwater management systems on agricultural productivity, household food security, and resilience to climate shocks. Future interventions should prioritize scaling these systems to underserved and remote villages to ensure equitable access to water for both irrigation and livestock, thereby strengthening livelihoods and mitigating vulnerability to seasonal and climatic variations.

Building on the success of climate-smart agricultural interventions, the project should continue to expand the distribution of improved seeds, irrigation systems, and relevant technologies. These inputs must be paired with practical, hands-on training tailored to local conditions, including soil conservation, integrated pest management, and water-efficient practices. Strengthening technical capacities at the community level will enhance adoption rates and enable farmers to sustainably maintain productivity improvements over time.

Sustaining and deepening the functionality of farmer cooperatives, self-help groups, and women-led enterprises is essential to maintaining economic gains. Provision of revolving funds, business coaching, market linkage strategies, and financial literacy training will enable these groups to expand income diversification, stabilize production, and reinforce community ownership of interventions. Particular attention should be given to ensuring women continue to play active leadership roles within these structures, consolidating the gender transformation achieved through the project.

Enhanced government engagement in monitoring, infrastructure maintenance, and environmental stewardship is necessary to support long-term sustainability. This includes developing a regional seed policy, enforcing environmental protection bylaws, and ensuring technical experts are systematically involved in project design and implementation. Such alignment will ensure interventions complement national priorities, strengthen local governance structures, and maximize value for resources invested.

Participatory planning and community engagement must remain central to project design and implementation. Continuous collaboration with local stakeholders, including village development committees, DRR committees, and SHGs, ensures that interventions are socially grounded, technically feasible, and responsive to local needs. This approach enhances local ownership, accountability, and the likelihood of sustained results beyond donor support.

Investments in early warning systems, localized climate preparedness, and disaster risk reduction measures are recommended to safeguard existing gains and protect households from shocks. Access to timely weather alerts, market information, and adaptive strategies will allow communities to anticipate hazards, adjust cropping patterns, and mitigate losses, thereby strengthening resilience in the face of recurrent droughts, floods, and other climate-related challenges.

Promoting greenhouse models and grouped household production systems, particularly targeting women and vulnerable households, can stabilize production across seasonal fluctuations. These interventions not only support food security and income generation but also reinforce the project's gender empowerment objectives, providing women with predictable, manageable, and profitable production opportunities that enhance both economic independence and social recognition.

Collectively, these recommendations reflect a holistic approach where sustainable livelihoods, environmental stewardship, gender empowerment, and community governance are mutually reinforcing. By integrating technical innovation, participatory decision-making, and inclusive planning, future initiatives can build on the strong foundations established by the project to achieve long-term impact and resilience at the household and community levels.

8. Conclusions

The final evaluation of the Strengthening Women's Livelihood for Economic Development and Climate Change Adaptation project 2022 - 2025 demonstrates that the programme successfully achieved its overarching goal of enhancing livelihood resilience among women and men farmers in Togdheer and Sanaag. Communities that were initially vulnerable to climate shocks, limited income sources, and declining agricultural productivity have progressed to a more resilient and adaptive state. Households now adopt proactive coping strategies, diversify income streams, and integrate climate-smart practices, while women increasingly participate in household and community decision-making.

Outcome 1 showed that economic empowerment and income diversification were deeply transformative. Farmers and pastoralists expanded their earning potential, with annual gross sales rising significantly across the programme years and women's savings increasing steadily to create financial buffers for household needs and enterprise development. Loan uptake moved from minimal usage to mainstream adoption, while market information became a standard decision-making tool, enabling strategic sales and production choices. These gains indicate that households now operate with enhanced financial literacy, stronger liquidity, and greater resilience to shocks.

Outcome 2 highlighted improvements in climate adaptation capacity and sustained production. While widespread land erosion remains a structural challenge, the project delivered targeted rehabilitation through irrigation canals, water storage structures, and soil conservation measures. Crop and livestock productivity increased and stabilized across the project period, with the adoption of climate-smart and nature-positive practices becoming routine. Farmers and pastoralists in villages such as Boodhley, Xidhxidh, Gaacidh, and Midhisho consistently applied weather and market information in decision-making, demonstrating embedded adaptive capacity.

Outcome 3 confirmed that innovation systems and environmental sustainability practices were successfully institutionalized. Households adopted seed banking, land use planning, and farmer field school methods, transforming seed banks into reliable community assets. Professional development services and cooperative support structures reached full uptake, and the construction of 681 gabions and 3,000 meters of soil bunds stabilized 46 hectares of degraded land. Cooperatives implemented disaster risk reduction plans, sustainable land use strategies, and governance frameworks, reflecting strengthened institutional capacity and long-term stewardship of natural resources.

Outcome 4 emphasized the sustained expansion of women's agency and influence. Women reported increased opportunities to generate income and significantly strengthened their voice in household decision-making and governance structures. Female representation reached 55% across project interventions and over 30% in natural resource management committees. Positive attitudes toward gender equality and the abandonment of partner violence were reinforced, signaling a cultural shift toward more equitable household and community dynamics.

Despite these achievements, the evaluation also identified ongoing challenges. Soil erosion, particularly gully formation, remains an unresolved issue, requiring further rehabilitation and protective measures. Market access continues to be unequal across some value chains, and communities such as Gaacidh cited civil conflict and persistent drought as barriers to consistent production and cooperative functionality. Addressing these gaps will be critical for sustaining and scaling the programme's gains.

The final evaluation confirms that the programme delivered lasting and measurable impact on livelihoods, climate adaptation, innovation adoption, and women's empowerment. Communities transitioned from reactive coping to proactive resilience, embedding financial stability, production continuity, and adaptive capacity in daily practice. The evidence strongly suggests that the momentum achieved through 2022 - 2025 positions the target regions for long-term growth, inclusive governance, and continued resilience to future shocks.

9. Annexes

9.1. Update Results Matrix

Figure 15 – Updated results matrix

Results Matrix	Indicators	Baseline Oct 2022	Mid-line Evaluation 2023	Follow-Up 2024	Final Evaluation 2025
GOAL: Women and men farmers' improved livelihood resilience in Togdheer and Sanaag Regions	Positive change in women's and men's/families' resilience response to shocks and stressors (qualitative interviews)		Households diversified income, boosting resilience to drought. Farmers saw higher yields, sales rose, and women's savings groups-built funds that supported small businesses and faster recovery from shocks.		The project built a more resilient community production system, improving food security, income stability, and household decision-making. Women and men boosted agricultural output, strengthened adaptive skills, and adopted climate-smart practices, enabling them to manage shocks more effectively and sustain their livelihoods
OUTCOME 1: Women and men have diversified income sources and economic empowerment opportunities	Yearly value of gross sales in supported value chains (honey, eggs, poultry meat, fruits, vegetables) among targeted women and men	\$100-\$350	\$400-\$1,650	\$250-\$1,100	\$200-\$1,450
Output 1.1: Women and men have improved access to finance and market information	Monetary value of savings in the past 12 months	\$1,730.00	\$3,058.80	\$3,600.00	\$4,272.00
	Number of small businesses that used loans in past 12 months	3	47	11	6 (67 cumulative 2022-2025)
	% of women and men that have used market price information	Female 40%, Male 57%	Female 84%, Male 93%	Female 86%, Male 88%	Female 91%, Male 98%

	services in past 12 months				
Output 1.2: Increased production of crops and livestock	Increase in production volume of all crops and livestock	25%	92%	86%	83%
OUTCOME 2: Farmers and pastoralists sustain crop and livestock productivity through improved capacity to adapt to climate shocks	% of agricultural and grazing land affected by soil erosion	Estimation by observation: 100%	Estimation by observation: 95%	Estimation by observation: 87%	Estimation by observation; 85%
	% increase in yield of crops and livestock population	Crops 30%, Livestock 25%	Crops 96%, Livestock 88%	Crops 80%, Livestock 75%	Crops 86%, Livestock 78%
Output 2.1: Women and men agro-pastoralists have improved access to water and farm inputs	Number of farmers trained and given inputs	Female 9%, Male 23%	Female 45%, Male 58%	Female 12%, Male 13%	Female 15%, Male 45%
	% of beneficiaries with irrigation water all year	Female 29%, Male 36%	99% (Xidhxidh, Gaacidh and Midhisho) and 52% Boodhley	NA	99% (Xidhxidh Gaacidh and Midhisho) and 63% Boodhley
	# of irrigation facilities rehabilitated	6.5 km of water canals and 3 Berkads	1.5 km of water canals were rehabilitated	2 Berkads	7.98 km linear meters of water canals, 5 berkads and 65 geo-plastic sheets for rainwater harvesting
Output 2.2: Women and men apply climate-smart and nature-positive practices	Direct beneficiaries applying resilience skills	0	Female 93%, Male 89%	NA	Female 95%, Male 97%
	% using monthly or more weather info service	Female 2%, Male 5%	Female 39% Male 56%	Female 86%, Male 88%	Female 88%, Male 91%
OUTCOME 3: Farmers and pastoralists apply agricultural innovations and sustain biodiversity	% households applying agricultural innovations	0	83%	NA	87%

	% with permanent access to professional development and innovation services	0	100%	NA	100%
Output 3.1: Improved access to skills development and innovation services	# of women and men participating in innovation processes	0	Female 201, Male 94	Female 224, Male 151	Female 45, Male 91
Output 3.2: Improved capacity of farmer cooperatives	Area using soil conservation methods (ha)	0 ha (about 10 km of galvanized boxes but the project team cannot estimate the size of the protected area)	3 km of soil bunds and 265 boxes of gabion boxes about 13 km (mid-evaluation: estimation 23 ha)	NA	681 galvanized gabions and 3 km of soil bunds contributed that covers 46 hectares of land
	Plans actively applied (DRR, land use)	0	DRR Plan and Cooperative by-laws	SHG by-laws, Sustainable land use plans	CAAP plan in Boodhley, GAP manual, NRM manual, Soil and water conservation manual, Small Business management and Entrepreneurship guideline, water development Committee operational guideline
OUTCOME 4: Women's sphere of influence expanded	Perceptions of women on opportunities to generate income	NA	Women can generate household income when supported by education, financial services, loans, and market access. Greater income and decision-making power improve living standards, education, healthcare, and community development, though outcomes depend on cultural and socioeconomic conditions.	NA	The project unlocked stronger income pathways for women and positioned them as active economic contributors with growing confidence and market presence.

	Perceptions of women on influencing family decisions	NA	Women's influence in family spending decisions has grown, supported by greater gender equality, education, economic empowerment, and enabling legal reforms. These shifts have strengthened women's rights, skills, and agency in household financial matters	NA	The project strengthened women's role in household financial governance and shifted families toward more collaborative and transparent decision making.
	% of women members in village/cooperative committees	0	Female 81%, Male 80%	Female 55%, Male 45% across all project interventions	Water development committee; Female 2 (28.5%), Male 5 (71.5%). Project invited trainings, workshops women to activity attend and participate.
Output 4.1: Women and men's attitudes against partner violence strengthened	% of targeted women/men supportive of abandoning partner violence	Female 86%, Male 78%	Female 88% Male 81%	Female 85%, Male 81%	Female 88%, Male 85%

9.2. KII Respondents

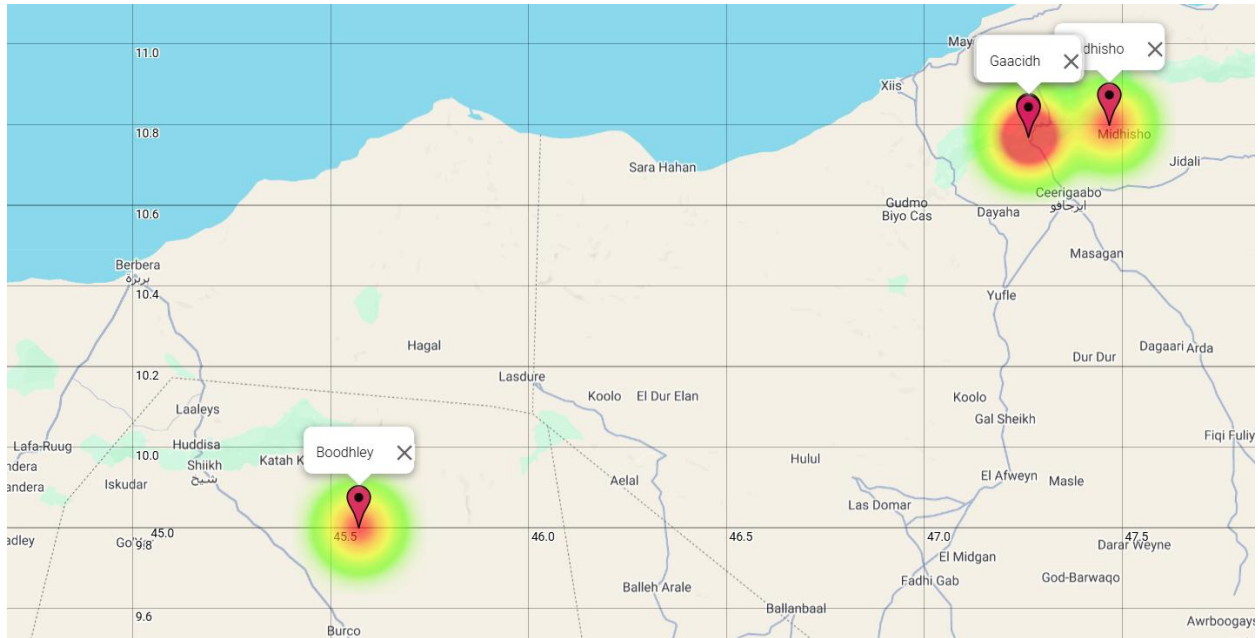
List of the KII respondents that participated in the evaluation

Figure 16 - List of the KII respondents

Names	Organization	Position	Mobile Contacts
Khadar A Awed	University of Burao	Dean of Agriculture	(63) 421-9766
Muhidin Abdi Yusuf	Ministry of Agriculture	Regional Director	(63) 405-5875
Abdinasir Mohamoud	ADO	Project Manager	(63) 420-4747
Abdinasir Muse	ISF	Project Manager	(63) 436-1033
Abdilaahi Ali Dirie	MoECC	Regional Director	(63) 443-9308
Abdinasir Ibrahim Adan	NADFOR	Regional Director	(63) 434-9155
Mohamed Sicid Mohamed	Midhisho	Village committee member	-
Salad Salah	Xidhxidh	Village head	-
Hodan Aidiid	Gaacidh	SHG member	-

9.3. Map Showing Project Locations

Figure 17 – Map Showing Project Locations



9.4. KIIs

9.4.1. Local Authorities

Purpose

To capture the perspectives of local authorities on the project’s alignment with government priorities, coordination mechanisms, resource use, and the sustainability of outcomes related to livelihoods, climate adaptation, gender empowerment, and institutional capacity.

Respondent Categories

- Regional/District Agriculture Officers/Livestock Officers, NADFOR (National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority) representatives, Gender and Social Affairs Officers, Burco Local Government Officers, Burco Water Agency, Resource Officers, Representatives from local councils involved in project oversight

Section 1. Background Information

1. Respondent name, title, and department
2. Administrative level (region or district)
3. Duration of service in current position
4. Role and level of involvement in the ISF/ADO project

Section 2. Relevance and Policy Alignment

1. How does this project align with regional or district development priorities, particularly those concerning livelihoods, climate adaptation, and gender equality?
2. To what extent did ISF and ADO coordinate with your office during project planning and implementation?
3. Which elements of the project best addressed local socio-economic or environmental challenges?
4. How does this project complement other government or donor-funded initiatives in your area?

Section 3. Implementation and Coordination

1. What was the role of your office in supporting or supervising project activities?

2. How effective was coordination between ISF, ADO, and your department in terms of planning, resource allocation, and activity execution?
3. Were local technical staff (agricultural extension officers, livestock experts, or environmental officers) adequately involved?
4. How did you ensure that project activities were harmonized with local development plans or budget frameworks?
5. Were there any administrative or logistical challenges during project implementation?

Section 4. Outcomes and Impact

1. From your perspective, what key outcomes or changes have resulted from this project in your district or region?
2. Have you observed improvements in agricultural productivity, income diversification, or water management as a result of the project?
3. How has the project influenced local approaches to climate change adaptation and natural resource management?
4. Have there been any policy or institutional shifts resulting from project engagement or lessons?
5. How would you describe the impact of the project on women's economic empowerment and participation in local governance?

Section 5. Gender, Inclusion, and Social Transformation

1. What role has local government played in promoting gender equality through this project?
2. Have women taken on more active roles in community or cooperative leadership as a result of the project?
3. Has the project contributed to improved attitudes or reduced tolerance toward partner violence or gender-based violence?
4. How can local authorities further strengthen inclusion of women and marginalized groups in development initiatives? What are the changes in attitudes and actions (e.g. access to services) towards women's economic participation?

Section 6. Efficiency, Partnership, and Institutional Capacity

1. How efficient were project operations in terms of coordination, reporting, and responsiveness?
2. Did ISF and ADO share information and reports regularly with your office?
3. Were financial and material resources used transparently and effectively from your perspective?
4. What institutional capacities (skills, tools, systems) were strengthened in local government as a result of project collaboration?
5. Are there mechanisms in place for knowledge sharing or replication of successful approaches?

Section 7. Sustainability and Continuity

1. How is the local government planning to sustain the outcomes of this project beyond 2025?
2. Have community committees, cooperatives, or adaptation plans been integrated into local governance structures?
3. Is there a budgetary or policy provision to maintain rehabilitated infrastructure or continue capacity-building initiatives?
4. What are the main risks to sustainability (political, financial, institutional), and how can they be mitigated?
5. What additional support do local authorities need from ISF, ADO, or other partners to ensure continuity?

Section 8. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

1. What are the key lessons for government - NGO collaboration from this project?
2. How could coordination between development partners and local government be strengthened in the future?
3. What aspects of the project could be scaled up or replicated across other districts or regions?
4. What policy or institutional reforms could enhance livelihood and climate resilience programs in Somaliland?

Section 9. Closing

- Do you have any final reflections or additional feedback on the project's relevance, results, or sustainability from a government perspective?

9.4.2. University

Purpose

To gather insights on the technical relevance, research collaboration, and potential for sustainable knowledge transfer and innovation in the project.

Target Respondents

Academic staff and researchers from University of Burao, Sanaag University, and ISTVS with experience in agriculture, climate adaptation, gender, and livelihood programs.

1. How well does the project fit the real needs of communities in this area
2. How well do the agriculture and livelihood activities match local conditions
3. How well were local ideas and practical knowledge used in designing the project
4. How effectively did the project use research or technical evidence in its work
5. What specific support did your university provide to the project
6. How useful was the training or technical guidance given to farmers or groups
7. How much did the project help introduce new ideas or new ways of working
8. How widely were these new ideas shared with students or community members
9. How much interest do students or researchers have in the project activities
10. How realistic is it for communities to continue these technical practices after the project ends
11. How strong are the local institutions that will maintain these practices in the long term
12. What opportunities exist for your university to partner again on similar programs
13. What would help improve cooperation between universities and community projects
14. What changes would make future projects stronger in research, innovation, and training

9.4.3. Project Management and Implementing Partner

Purpose

To gather strategic and operational perspectives from project management and implementing teams (ISF and ADO) on project performance, challenges, lessons, and sustainability over the 2022 - 2025 period.

Respondent Categories

- ISF Country Representative/Programme Manager/M&E
- ADO Project Coordinator/Livelihood Officer/Gender and Social Inclusion Officer
- ADO Field Officers (Togdheer and Sanaag)

Section 1. Background Information

1. Name of respondent and position
2. Organization / Department
3. Duration and nature of involvement with the project
4. Location of operations (region/district)

Section 2. Project Relevance and Design

1. How would you describe the overall relevance of this project to the needs of target communities (especially women and agro-pastoralists)?
2. To what extent were community priorities, gender issues, and climate adaptation needs considered during project design?
3. How well did the project align with regional or national development frameworks (e.g., National Development Plan, Climate Adaptation Strategy, Gender Policy)?
4. What aspects of the project design do you consider most innovative or unique?

Section 3. Implementation and Effectiveness

1. How effectively were project activities implemented according to plan and timelines?
2. Which components (livelihoods, financial inclusion, climate adaptation, gender empowerment) were most successful, and why?

3. Were there any activities or approaches that did not perform as expected? Please explain.
4. How were SHGs, cooperatives, and CAAP committees supported to achieve project outcomes?
5. How effective was coordination between ISF, ADO, local authorities, and other partners during implementation? Were all the relevant stakeholders
6. How did the project ensure participation of women and marginalized groups at all stages of implementation?
7. To what extent were mid-term evaluation findings used to adjust or improve project implementation?

Section 4. Efficiency and Resource Utilization

1. Were project resources (human, financial, material) used efficiently?
2. How adequate was the staffing and logistical support for field operations?
3. Did the partnership between ISF and ADO promote cost-effectiveness and timely delivery?
4. Were there delays in fund disbursement or activity implementation? If yes, how were they addressed?
5. What lessons were learned regarding project management and efficiency?

Section 5. Impact and Outcomes

1. What key changes have you observed in women’s livelihoods and household resilience? For men as well.
2. How has the project contributed to improved agricultural productivity or diversification of income sources?
3. What examples can you give of communities or groups that have successfully applied climate-smart or nature-positive practices?
4. How has access to finance, market information, or irrigation infrastructure improved through the project?
5. What unintended (positive or negative) effects have emerged as a result of project activities?

Section 6. Sustainability and Exit Strategy

1. What mechanisms have been established to sustain the project results beyond 2025?
2. How are cooperatives, SHGs, or CAAP committees being strengthened for continuity?
3. What is the role of local government and community structures in ensuring sustainability?
4. How is gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment expected to continue after project closure?
5. What are the main sustainability risks, and how might they be mitigated?

Section 7. Learning and Recommendations

1. What are the three key lessons learned from implementing this project?
2. What would you recommend for scaling or replicating similar interventions in other regions?
3. How could ISF and ADO improve partnership coordination and adaptive management in future programs?
4. What additional technical, institutional, or policy support would strengthen livelihood resilience initiatives?

Section 8. Closing

- Is there any other information or reflection you would like to share regarding the project’s design, implementation, or long-term impact?

9.4.4. Community Structure and Leaders

Purpose

To collect insights from community-level leaders and structures on project relevance, inclusiveness, coordination, climate adaptation, and sustainability of interventions. This includes CAAP Committees, Village Development Committees, Farmer Cooperatives, SHG leaders, and traditional or religious leaders who influenced implementation and community mobilization.

Respondent Categories

- CAAP (Community Adaptation Action Plan) Committee members, Village Development Committee leaders, Cooperative and SHG chairpersons, Traditional and religious leaders, Women’s group representatives, WASH or Natural Resource Management committee members

Section 1. Background Information

1. Name and position in the community structure
2. Name of village, district, and region
3. Duration of service in current leadership role
4. Level of involvement in the ISF/ADO project (planning, implementation, monitoring)

Section 2. Project Relevance and Community Needs

1. How did this project address the key livelihood and climate-related challenges faced by your community?
2. To what extent were local communities, including women and youth, consulted during project design and planning?
3. Which activities or support components were most relevant to your community's needs?
4. Were there any groups that benefited less or were excluded from participation? Why?

Section 3. Implementation and Coordination

1. How were community structures (CAAP committees, cooperatives, SHGs, VDCs) involved in implementing project activities?
2. How did you coordinate with ADO field officers, ISF staff, and local government representatives?
3. Did the project activities (trainings, demonstrations, infrastructure) take place as planned and on time?
4. Were community members involved in monitoring or decision-making during project implementation?
5. How were conflicts or disagreements about project activities resolved?

Section 4. Outcomes and Impact

1. What noticeable changes have occurred in household livelihoods since the project began (2022)?
2. Have women and men experienced different benefits or challenges from the project? Please explain.
3. How has the project influenced women's participation in community decision-making and leadership?
4. Have community members adopted new agricultural or climate-smart practices introduced by the project?
5. What impact has the project had on the local environment, rangelands, or water resources?
6. What examples can you share of successful cooperatives, SHGs, or adaptation initiatives?

Section 5. Gender, Inclusion, and Social Norms

1. How have community attitudes toward women's leadership and economic participation changed over time?
2. What role did men play in supporting women's involvement in the project?
3. Have there been any changes in how families make decisions about income use, resource management, or education?
4. How has the project addressed issues related to gender-based violence or partner violence awareness?

Section 6. Sustainability and Continuity

1. What measures are in place to continue project activities after the project ends?
2. Are community committees or cooperatives functioning independently and meeting regularly?
3. How do you plan to maintain infrastructure such as irrigation systems, seed banks, or soil conservation areas?
4. How will SHG continue after project closure?
5. What type of support (technical, financial, or institutional) would help ensure long-term sustainability?
6. How committed are local authorities and community members to continue the project's objectives?

Section 7. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

1. What aspects of the project worked particularly well in your community?
2. What challenges or constraints did you face during implementation?
3. What recommendations would you give to ISF and ADO for improving similar projects in the future?
4. How could communities like yours be more effectively engaged in planning and monitoring future programs?

Section 8. Closing

Do you have any additional reflections or examples you wish to share about how this project affected your community?

9.5. FGDs

9.5.1. Women

Purpose

To explore women's experiences and perspectives on empowerment, income generation, gender relations, and the impact of project interventions on their social and economic wellbeing.

Participants

8–12 women who are members of women's groups, SHGs, cooperatives, or participants in project-supported income-generating activities.

Facilitator Instructions

- Conduct sessions in safe, comfortable environments for women.
- Use female facilitators and translators whenever possible.
- Encourage participation from all women, including young and less vocal members.
- Respect cultural norms while promoting open discussion.

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Explain the purpose of the evaluation and assure confidentiality.
2. Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves (first name, main income activity, and how they joined the project).

Section B: Relevance of the Project

1. What were your main challenges before the project started (e.g., income, workload, decision-making)?
2. How relevant were the project activities to your needs as women?
3. Did the project respond to your community's specific livelihood and gender needs?
4. Were you involved in planning or decision-making about the project activities?

Section C: Economic Empowerment and Livelihoods

1. Which training or support did you receive from the project (e.g., poultry, savings groups, vegetable gardening)?
2. How has your income changed since joining the project?
3. Do you have control over your earnings and household spending decisions?
4. What difference have savings or loans made in your life?
5. Have you started or expanded any small businesses? Probe – How do your family members perceive your income-generating activities?

Section D: Gender Equality and Social Change

1. How has the project affected your confidence and participation in community affairs?
2. Are more women now involved in leadership positions or committees? How did women have participated and what issues they have raised, what topics are important to them. And have they succeeded to influence something?
3. How have men's attitudes toward women's participation changed?
4. Have you observed changes in household decision-making or sharing of responsibilities?
5. Are issues like gender-based violence discussed more openly in your community?

Section E: Climate Resilience and Environmental Adaptation

1. What changes have you seen in farming, water access, or land management because of the project?
2. Have you adopted any new practices for coping with droughts, floods, or poor soils?
3. Are you using weather or market information to make livelihood decisions?
4. What role do women play in community-level resilience or environmental committees?

Section F: Sustainability and Lessons Learned

1. Do you think the benefits of this project will continue after it ends?
2. What makes it difficult for women to sustain the progress achieved?
3. How can women groups or savings groups be supported to continue their work?
4. What would you advise ISF and ADO for future projects?

Section G: Final Reflection

- What are you most proud of as a result of your involvement in this project?
- What is your hope for women in this community over the next five years?

9.5.2. Farmers

Purpose

To assess the impact of project interventions on farmers' productivity, resilience, and adaptation practices; to understand their perceptions of project effectiveness, sustainability, and relevance to their livelihood needs.

Participants

8 - 12 male or mixed farmers who participated in the project (crop and livestock producers, members of cooperatives, or farmer groups).

Facilitator Instructions

- Encourage open discussion and participation from all members.
- Ensure representation from different age groups and livelihood types.
- Use local language and culturally appropriate expressions.
- Record sessions (with consent) and take detailed notes.

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Welcome participants and introduce the evaluation purpose.
2. Explain confidentiality and seek consent to participate.
3. Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves (first name, village, main farming activity).

Section B: Relevance of the Project

1. What were your main livelihood challenges before the project started?
2. How relevant were the project activities to your farming and livelihood needs?
3. Were you consulted or involved in identifying the project priorities and activities?
4. How well did the project align with local farming practices and seasonal patterns? **Probe** - Did the project respond to challenges such as drought, soil erosion, or market access?

Section C: Effectiveness and Livelihood Changes

1. Which project activities or trainings did you participate in?
2. What specific changes have you experienced in your crop or livestock production since the project began?
3. Have you noticed an increase in yields, quality, or market access for your products (e.g. honey, eggs, fruits, vegetables)?
4. Have you received or used market price information? If yes, how has it helped?
5. Did you receive any loans, grants, or savings support? How have these affected your income? **Probe** - What examples show improvements in farming or business practices?

Section D: Climate Change Adaptation and Environmental Sustainability

1. What environmental or climate challenges affect your production (e.g. drought, floods, pests)?
2. What new climate adaptation techniques or innovations have you learned or applied through the project?
3. Have you used weather information services? How reliable or helpful are they?
4. What changes have you observed in soil quality, irrigation, or land management practices?
5. Have community members or groups continued these practices on their own?

Section E: Functionality and Sustainability of Farmer Groups

1. Are your cooperatives or farmer groups still active and functional?
2. What benefits do you get from belonging to the group?
3. How do you share knowledge and market information among members?
4. What are the main challenges in maintaining the groups after project support ends?
5. What recommendations do you have for sustaining these gains?

Section F: Overall Perception and Recommendations

1. What have been the most positive outcomes of the project for your community?
2. Are there any negative or unintended effects?
3. What would you suggest to improve future projects like this one?