

# Root cause analysis of food insecurity and livelihood vulnerabilities in the Horn of Africa (HoA)

## The way forward

### Introduction

SDC is implementing the Horn of Africa (HoA) Regional programme in Somalia as well as the arid and semi-arid lowlands (ASAL) of Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya. Following a recommendation from the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Cooperation Strategy Horn of Africa 2018-2021, a root cause analysis on the problems of food insecurity and livelihood vulnerability was conducted for the Food Security (FS) domain in order to define a Theory of Change (ToC) based on the causal pathway for the next programme phase 2022-2025 in June/July 2021. This analysis was done in close collaboration and through regular interactions between the consultants and the Food Security team. The report on the root cause analysis presents the findings and outcomes of a short term assignment (10 days). During the assignment, three workshops and seven meetings were held. Various aspects were discussed and touched upon, but could not all be elaborated in depth. The following points will be followed up on.

### Summary

The root cause analysis identified two root causes: “weak entities” and “inadequate management of natural resources”, both of which are deeply rooted in existing power imbalances, leading to conflict and inappropriate/unsustainable responses to stress and livelihood vulnerability. On the one hand national governments of the three countries so far have not been successful to assure the infrastructure and services to achieve food security in any of the countries and within the programme region, which has been marginalised in the past. On the other hand, livelihoods have been fragile for years, impacting on all assets and the organisational capacity to react to the crisis situation and build up community resilience. In addition, these communities suffer greatly from the effects of climate change which is largely caused by unsustainable industrial production and consumption patterns of the so-called developed countries.

SDC's primary target area is the ASAL region, which appear as the most vulnerable areas within the region. Within those areas, pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, displacement affected communities (DAC) and minority clans are identified as most vulnerable. Within these groups, women and children are more vulnerable than others.

### Recommendations and the Way Forward

As mentioned above, this root cause analysis has been an iterative process where the different root causes have already been discussed. The following are the recommendations the consultants formulated after the establishing of the root causes and the ToC was done in close collaboration with the FS-Team. Not all recommendations are captured here, as some have already been considered, e.g. as they were specific to the FS results framework of the next cooperation programme which has been finalized in the meantime. Other recommendations have been summarized and clustered together to provide a useful overview and the way forward. Please see the final root cause analysis report in annex 1 for the full version.

1	SDC needs to further <b>strengthen its evidence</b> based on an analysis of the specific situation of selected geographic areas as well as actors and their influence (game changers) in the region. This has already happened in the last years with several activities, such as the PEA-process or a minority audit. The knowledge acquired further needs to be linked to the programme implementation and be made available in the respective context analysis.
	<p>We agree, a constant update on the context specific changes is necessary, either through our existing programmes or other assessments / evaluations. The FS domain is part of the regional HoA Cooperation Programme. SDC is implementing its programme in Somalia as well as the ASALs of Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya.</p> <p>A number of evidence-based analysis have been conducted. In 2021, the Political Economy Analysis (PEA), the minority inclusion report, and the Climate Change Assessment have taken place. Prior to this a regional gender evaluation was conducted in 2020. These analysis are being used to further inform the HoA programmes. The Food Security domain also conducted a regional livestock trade and market systems analysis to inform entry points for</p>

	investments in the sector. The new Framework for Risk and Adaptive Management Programme (FRAP) with Kulmis will also contribute to get a more contextual analysis and insight through stakeholder mapping which will be part of the analytical framework and contextual assessments that Kulmis Support Team (KST) offers.
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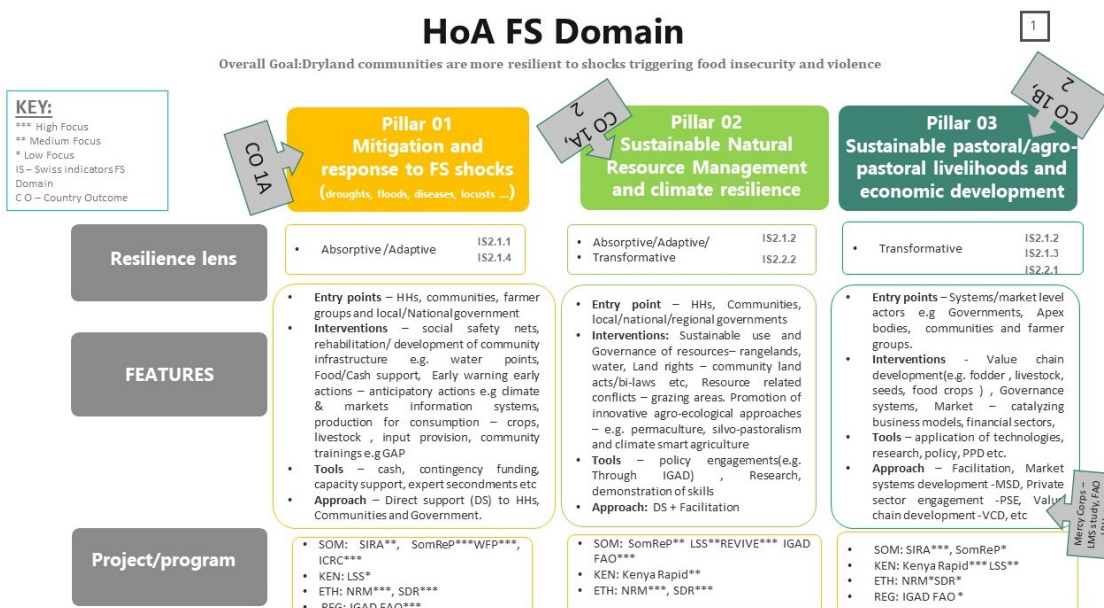
2	Summarize the number of outputs and <b>formulate a strategic result level</b> that gives directions and yet, provides flexibility to allow for the most promising pathway to change. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>'Sustainable practices are promoted and applied'</i>, which could entail policy level actions, advocacy, regulations, and a monitoring of the different steps over the implementation period. This can encompass all elements of natural resources, e.g. biodiversity, land, soil water, rather than looking at rangeland, or heat tolerant seeds, or water resources separately.</li> <li>b) <i>'Identify alternative livelihood opportunities'</i> or <i>'development of markets and marketing opportunities'</i>, could include elements that are now formulated as individual outputs, but would need to include profound assessments of the dynamics, inputs and outputs, expected longer term benefits for the actors. Such evidence will support advocacy, changing behaviour and informing policies, but also to engage and motivate actors towards profitable but sustainable actions. Those strategic directions could then be filled with the concrete and tangible actions that provide opportunities to operationalize and break into smaller projects.</li> </ul>
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	<p>The <b>HoA Cooperation Programme 2022-2025</b> has been finalized.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2 on Food Security</b> reads: Pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in rural and peri-urban areas are climate resilient and have better sustainable livelihoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Outcome statement OS 2.1:</b> Pastoral and agro-pastoral communities have improved their natural resources management, productivity, quality of produce, and access to markets</li> <li>- <b>Outcome statement OS 2.2:</b> System relevant local institutions effectively create framework conditions conducive for improved and sustainable natural resources management, productivity, and market systems.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, the <b>cross sectoral outcomes</b> are relevant for all four domains:</p> <p><b>Overall Goal:</b> To contribute to the realization of a stable and resilient region that supports the wellbeing, inclusion and empowerment of most vulnerable communities, and women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Cross-sectoral OC 1:</b> Improved inclusion and cohesion of and within (agro)pastoral, displacement-affected communities, and women.</li> <li>- <b>Cross-sectoral OC 2:</b> Improved sustainable provision, access and use of quality services for (agro)pastoral, displacement-affected communities, and women.</li> <li>- <b>Cross-sectoral OC 3:</b> Saving lives from natural and anthropogenic hazards</li> <li>- <b>Cross-sectoral OC 4:</b> Improved sustainable natural resource management and better addressed impacts of climate change impacts to build resilience of (agro)pastoral, displacement-affected communities, and women</li> </ul>
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	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Timing</b>
	Food Security team to finalize the draft Food Security Theory of Change (ToC): Now that the Cooperation Programme has been finalized and the outcome statements have been on agreed on, it is time to revisit and finalize the draft Food Security ToC. This includes the link to the overall ToC of the HoA Programme.	Regional Team	FS May 2022
	Annually revisit and update the ToC during the annual FS domain portfolio review in the annual planning period.	Regional Team	FS Yearly annual planning period

3	<p>SDC can build up its own <b>competences and capacities</b> regarding programme implementation, working closely with partners in order to combine this with capacity development at local level.</p> <p>a) Activity areas to <b>enhance understanding on how to strengthen sustainable management of resources</b> and climate resilience could be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Support processes which clarify the status of policies, rules and regulations with a focus on the application of agro-ecological principles.</li> <li>ii. Identify information needs and strengthen information management.</li> <li>iii. Identify sustainable solutions in service provision.</li> <li>iv. Identify training requirements and strengthen entities to provide services building market oriented skills.</li> <li>v. Identify opportunities to strengthen community capacities.</li> <li>vi. Explore opportunities to strengthen business plans for engaging in livelihood alternatives (with particular attention to the potential and roles of women and youth.)</li> <li>vii. Explore initiatives of conflict transformation and peace-building.</li> </ol> <p>b) Activity areas to further <b>promote implementation of agro-ecology or any sustainable form of climate-smart, regenerative and inclusive way of food production and livelihood alternatives</b> could be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Strengthen information and data management systems that are needs based and pertain to natural resources management.</li> <li>ii. Address gaps and strengthen the regulatory environment.</li> <li>iii. Contribute to systems that facilitate the execution of policies and regulations.</li> <li>iv. Strengthen producers' capacities and private sector involvement to sustain profitable markets that generate income opportunities.</li> <li>v. Strengthen access to financial means to establish alternative income sources.</li> <li>vi. Strengthen linkages between humanitarian and longer term development actors using humanitarian aid to stabilize and prevent a deterioration when sudden needs come up.</li> </ol>
	<p>Most of these elements are already being implemented in the current programme for sustainable management of resources and have been captured in the elaboration of the HoA Regional Cooperation Programme (2022-2025) and the outcome of the Mid-term Review (MTR) and the PEA. They are integrated in the design of new programmes.</p> <p><i>(regarding agro-ecology, see point 9)</i></p>
4	<p>Regarding the <b>three pillars of the current FS portfolio</b>: This root cause analysis shows that the second pillar “working on sustainable natural resources management and climate resilience” has the highest transformative potential, while working on immediate better sources of income and market systems can only have a transformative effect if it doesn't lead to unsustainable management of natural resources. It is recommended to take the second pillar (Sustainable Natural Resources Management and Climate Resilience) as a primary and underlying principle into which the other two pillars of intervention have to fit.</p>
	<p>The Food Security Portfolio Review started in 2019 and produced three pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Pillar 1: Mitigation and response to Food Security shocks</li> <li>▫ Pillar 2: Sustainable Natural Resource Management and climate resilience</li> <li>▫ Pillar 3: Sustainable pastoral / agro-pastoral livelihoods and economic development</li> </ul>

These draft pillars were identified to in a next step define a Theory of Change.



Following this root cause analysis which identified two main root causes of food insecurity and livelihood vulnerabilities, namely “weak entities” and “inadequate management of natural resources”, the ToC will be revisited and the FS team will also look at the three draft pillars and finalize them in line with the domain outcomes.

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Annually revisit and update the ToC during the annual FS domain portfolio review in the annual planning period.	Regional FS Team	Yearly annual planning period

- 5 Ideas on how to focus on a **transformative approach** include:
- Agro-ecology** as the sister of the One Health Approach to become the product of the FS domain in the next programme phase.
  - SDC to identify best practices from projects regarding **capacity building**.
  - Follow-up on **ending drought emergencies in line with IDRSSI framework investments** as a good approach.
  - Conduct **stakeholder analysis** for each project regarding how stakeholders can contribute to sustainable resources management.
  - Develop a tool to allow partner rating and monitoring on progress with regard to **implementation of agro-ecological principles**.
  - Review where the role and **responsibility of IGAD** as an intergovernmental and regional player can be enhanced specifically with regard to regional land governance and specific conditions that allow pastoralists to move across borders.
  - Reflect on how the **facilitation approach** as a delivery model can be applied to strengthen agro-ecology as an approach to promote natural resources management.

We agree with the points above. SDC is already implementing a number of approaches, for example when it comes to capacity building, stakeholder analysis, facilitation approach. Regarding agro-ecology, see point 9. To follow a more transformative approach, we believe that the nexus approach as well as resilience programming is key (which includes having a system lens to key things like NRM, livestock, water). Key themes like LNOB (leave no-one behind), gender, improved governance are building blocks of a transformative approach in the Food Security domain.

6	<p><b>Synergies:</b> SDC might want bring the different domains together and organise a workshop in order to specifically discuss options for synergies overall, and options for the FS team to leverage other domains' capacities to contribute to the FS target.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the health domain on ways for <b>up-scaling of the One-Health</b> to the FS-domain and for possibilities to include nutrition sensitivity and diverse diets, as malnutrition is a root cause for diseases of animals and human beings.</li> <li>Issues of <b>reproductive health and rights as well as gender-sensitive approaches</b> to reduce GBV provide areas where health and food security are directly linked, also working closely with the governance team</li> <li>There are potentials for synergies with the governance domain, especially with regard to <b>addressing harmful power relations</b>.</li> <li>The recommendations of the gender assessment include the issue of <b>GBV, women's position in decision taking</b> at different levels: within households, in politics and in the private sector (associations, markets, enterprises), as well as working with men on gender transformation, redistribution of tasks and responsibilities and addressing GBV.</li> <li><b>Land governance</b> is another issue, which closely relates to the responsibility of governments and duty bearers with regard to conflicts, gender and natural resources.</li> <li>Regarding Durable Solutions, especially on <b>sustainable livelihoods for displacement affected communities</b>, synergies could be through regenerative agriculture such as permaculture (this has worked in Uganda with Danish Refugee Council.)</li> <li>For the future <b>better cooperation and synergies are being foreseen with GPFS</b>. GPFS for example advocates for the promotion of agro-ecology.</li> <li>Cross-cutting: Foster <b>gender equality and women's empowerment</b> across all ages to strengthen livelihood assets which contribute to resilience, including shared care work, improved negotiation and responsible leadership, as factors to reduce GBV (such as child marriage) and exclusion.</li> </ol>
	<p>We agree with the points mentioned above. Strengthening synergies is an ongoing process. Cross-sectoral outcomes have been identified in the new HoA Cooperation Programme as well as a number of common indicators. The Food Security Domain falls under the overall goal of the new Cooperation Programme, the ToC and the outcomes.</p> <p>The following concrete elements have already been advanced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– One-Health: An exchange with the health team took place and will continue.</li> <li>– GPFS (Global Programme Food Security): discussions on land governance have been ongoing, but need to be further strengthened.</li> <li>– Women economic empowerment as an entry point to strengthen women decision making and their involvement in food security programmes.</li> </ul>

7	<p>Linked to the results chain and a specific focus on improved management of natural resources and strengthening institutions, it's been suggested that the FS team will identify opportunities to focus on the intended outcomes, <b>adjust actual engagements</b> and de-prioritize or de-emphasis areas that contribute less effectively to the set objectives.</p>
	<p>This will be advanced once the ToC and the pillars are finalized.</p> <p>We agree with the consultants that weak NRM and weak institutions are part of the root causes for vulnerability and food insecurity, but not the only ones. There are other inter-related causes and effects (e.g. conflicts, degraded rangelands, weak markets, and limited education services/quality). We will put more emphasize on capacity building of weak institutions and NRM while also addressing other interlinked causes and effects. The food security domain will use a systems thinking approach to identify constrains that hold back transformative development and design programmatic interventions based on such challenges. The team is cognizant of fragilities and shocks in the region that constantly erode resilience gains, hence will work on nexus modalities to protect the most vulnerable communities from sliding into humanitarian crisis when faced with disasters.</p>

8	<p><b>Monitoring:</b> In line with the root causes identified, it needs to be discussed how changes will be monitored, such as the degree of degradation, successful inclusion of vulnerable stakeholders in governance negotiations or changes in productivity/income related to improved natural resources management.</p>
	<p>The HoA Cooperation Programme 2022-2025 has been finalized.</p> <p>Indicators to monitor changes have been identified both in the Food Security Results Framework (FSRF) as well as the Cross Sectoral Results Framework. These indicators will be included in the design of new programme/phases. A number of food security relevant ARIs and TRIs have been integrated into the FSRF.</p>

9	<p>Given the importance of <b>agro-ecology</b> and its relevance for protecting natural resources while aiming for improved food security in the region, it is advisable to further analyze existing experience applying the approach and the principles of agro-ecology among pastoralist communities in the HoA. Given that the SDC Global Programme on Food Security (GPFS) specifically states agro-ecology as one of its three pillars for improved Food security, SDC HoA is in a good position to further explore the transformative potentials over the next programme phase and develop experiences and competences working with communities and entities.</p>						
	<p>The report zooms into the application of agro-ecology principles as an entry point for production and environmental sustainability. It is not yet clear what model/approach of agro-ecology is feasible for the unique pastoralist ecosystems. We are talking about communally owned land, a water scarce region, a predominantly livestock producing area, characterized by violent inter communal conflicts over resources. Acknowledging agro-ecology principles can be good entry points, but the context of the drylands is more challenging. Rangeland rehabilitation is being pursued. Enhanced livestock mobility for pastoralism is important, not hindering the movement of animals but at the same time safeguarding and improving rangelands. We are looking at the larger pastoralist dryland system and not only agro-ecology principles that work more for settled pastoralists.</p> <p>The intersectionality between agro-ecology and dryland eco-systems will have to be further explored. What elements of agro-ecology are feasible in the case of the HoA? What are the entry points to good agro-ecological practices in a pastoral production system? To explore these further questions, there is a need to strengthen internal competencies of the SDC Food Security team together with GPFS in partnership with the Cluster Green for enhancing the learning and sharing experiences on rangeland management using the principles of agro-ecology and others.</p>						
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Measures</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Responsibilities</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Timing</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Conduct a workshop to strengthen competencies of the SDC Food Security team on agro-ecological principles and rangeland management.</td> <td>Regional FS Team to organize</td> <td>November 2022</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Measures	Responsibilities	Timing	Conduct a workshop to strengthen competencies of the SDC Food Security team on agro-ecological principles and rangeland management.	Regional FS Team to organize	November 2022
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10	<p><b>Livestock</b> production is considered to be an important part of the food system, especially in areas, where 'plant or crop centered' agricultural production is not possible. With regard to the specific situation in the ASAL region, this field certainly needs more investigation.</p>
	<p>Different research can be found on the link of livestock production in the ASALs and its effects on the environment and climate change. A short report capturing literature and research on the topic can be found in the annex 2.</p> <p>In short: It is important to understand that although livestock globally is contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, not all livestock systems are big polluters. Pastoralism and its extensive system of livestock production can be climate neutral under the right conditions. Pastoralist systems can offset methane emissions by carbon sequestration in the grasslands. The drylands ecosystems is suitable for this type of livelihood as a main source of food and income. In some areas there is no alternative since crops cannot be grown.</p>

## **The way forward**

The root cause analysis serves as a good basis to further develop the Food Security Domain. The next HoA Cooperation Programme for 2022-2025 has been finalized.

The main take aways from the root cause analysis are the following: degraded rangelands and weak entities have to be addressed. Regenerative agriculture (agro-ecology) will be strengthened. We will continue to use an overall transformative lens and a nexus approach. Synergies with the other domains will be continued to be strengthened. An exchange and closer collaboration on land governance and agro-ecology will be planned with GPFS. In terms of design: The ToC and the pillars of the Food Security Domain to be revisited and finalized. An annual revisit of the ToC and pillars during the annual planning period will be done by the Food Security team, to be able to adjust based on contextual changes and integrate new thinking and learnings.

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**Annex 1: Final report Root Cause Analysis**

**Annex 2: Pastoralism and livestock and its effects on the environment and economy**