SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PEACEBUILDING FUND
PROJECT DOCUMENT TEMPLATE

PBF PROJECT DOCUMENT

United Nations
Peacebuilding

Country(ies): Somalia
Project Title: Religious Scholars (*Ulema*) as insider mediators building peace in Somalia **Project Number from MPTF-O Gateway (if existing project):**

PBF project modality: ☐ IRF ☒ PRF	**If funding is disbursed into a national or regional trust fund (instead of into individual recipient agency accounts):** ☐ Country Trust Fund ☐ Regional Trust Fund **Name of Recipient Fund:** N/A

List all direct project recipient organizations (starting with Convening Agency), followed by type of organization (UN, CSO etc.): UNDP (lead agency) and United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) as non-recipient strategic partner during its 2-year transition mandate (November 2024 to October 2026). **List additional implementing partners, specify the type of organization (Government, INGO, local CSO):** Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs – MERA (FGS and FMS), Office of National Security – ONS, civil society organizations in areas where the network works
Project duration in months[1][2]**: 36 months** **Geographic zones (within the country) for project implementation:** Banadir, Jubaland, Southwest, Hirshabelle, Puntland, Galmudug
Does the project fall under one or more of the specific PBF priority windows below: ☐ Gender promotion initiative[3] ☐ Youth promotion initiative[4] ☒ Transition from UN or regional peacekeeping or special political missions ☐ Cross-border or regional project
Total PBF approved project budget* (by recipient organization): UNDP: $ 2,572,304.18 **Total: $ 2,572,304.18** Any other existing funding for the project (amount and source) UNDP Track funding: $ 720,000.00 (already contributed to the start-up of the project) Finland: $ 100,000.00 (already contributed in 2024) ETH Zürich & FDFA Switzerland: $ 100,000 (estimate) as in-kind contribution (already contributed) **Total (including PBF funding):** $ 3,492,304.18 SL

PBF 1st tranche (40%):	**PBF 2nd tranche* (30%):**	**PBF 3rd tranche* (30%):**
UNDP: $ 1,028,921.67 SL	UNDP: $ 771,691.25 SL	UNDP: $ 771,691.26 SL
Total: $ 1,028,921.67	Total: $ 771,691.25	Total: $ 771,691.26

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[1] Maximum project duration for IRF projects is 24 months, for PRF projects – 36 months.

[2] The official project start date will be the date of the first project budget transfer by MPTFO to the recipient organization(s), as per the MPTFO Gateway page.

[3] Check this box only if the project was approved under PBF's special call for proposals, the Gender Promotion Initiative

[4] Check this box only if the project was approved under PBF's special call for proposals, the Youth Promotion Initiative

Brief project description (main project goal): The project's overarching objective is to contribute to reducing ideologically justified violence within the Somali society by advancing dialogue between Islamic scholars and other actors to constructively address disputes and reduce violence. This proposed PBF intervention agreed with the Government (MERA and ONS) will build capacities of the religious scholars' network to act as a bottom-up infrastructure for peace in Somalia. It will do so by enabling the network (1) to expand its role in mediating and transforming local disputes and reduce violence; (2) to build its legitimacy and influence gradually to play a larger role to reduce violence in Somalia in the future; and (3) to formalize its consultation mechanisms to establish nation-wide consensus among Islamic scholars and actors of different doctrinal orientations on contentious governance issues, drawing from the peaceful message of Islam. If called upon by the Government in the future, the network can also play a critical role in a conflict transformation process addressing the protracted conflict between the Somali Government and Al-Shabaab (AS). The project will reinforce and expand Somali religious scholars' and actors' ability to challenge the legitimization of political violence based on interpretations of Islamic Scripture. It does so through trust- and consensus-building, inclusive dialogue across political divides, and agreement on the peaceful message of Islam. Moreover, it will convene community-based social dialogues as part of a mechanism for establishing consensus on contentious governance issues that can be grounded in shared interpretations of Islamic Scripture.

By promoting religious dialogue, and by working with MERA and ONS, and other UN AFPs, this project will contribute to the transition of UNTMIS to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMS). Security Council Resolution 2753 (2024) specifies that support to the FGS to implement Somalia's National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism should be completed during the first year of UNTMIS transition (until the end of October 2025).

Summary of in-country project consultation process: DPPA, Switzerland and Finland organized an annual UN Religion and Mediation Course (UNRMC) in 2021. Following the UNRMC attended by the UNSOM PCVE Adviser, contact was made with the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs (FDFA) Senior Advisor on Religion, Politics and Conflict. Since then, a Swiss team composed of representatives from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Cordoba Peace Institute and the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich (a top-ranking polytechnical University) have been accompanying the development of this intervention, providing valuable expertise and conducting two process design workshops in 2023 and July 2024 in Mogadishu. The recent visit of the Swiss-Finnish delegation in July 2024 also enabled the project team and the mission to continue consultations with Government counterparts as well as UN senior leadership. Governmental stakeholders were supportive of this approach. The Finnish-Swiss delegation stressed its commitment to continue supporting the project's approach. This proposal is focusing on one outcome of a larger joint programme built on the lessons learnt of previous UNDP-UNSOM programming at FMS and district levels, interacting with various Somali stakeholders, women and youth CSOs, religious scholars, FMS and FGS (MERA, ONS as well as the FGS Justice and Religious Affairs Parliamentary Committee). From the UN side, consultations included the following UNSOM (now called UNTMIS) sections: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), Rule of Law and Security Institutions Group (ROLSIG), Human Rights and Protection Group (HRPG) and Political Affairs and Mediation Group (PAMG) as well as UNDP. The project was also presented and discussed at the UNCT's Programme Management Team (PMT) meeting in September 2024. It will be presented for approval during Somalia's first ever PBF portfolio-level Steering Mechanism meeting in early October 2024. The project document of the larger Joint Programme "Islaamku wa Nabad: A Peacebuilding Approach to Address Violent Extremism in

Somalia" (which served as the basis for the preparation of this PBF Proposal) was translated into Somali language and closely consulted and edited with MERA and ONS. After a UNDP Local Project Appraisal Committee meeting, it was signed by MERA and ONS in 2022.

Project Gender Marker score[5]: 2
Specify % and $ of total project budget allocated to activities in pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment: 32.97 % and USD 848,214.68
Major intervention(s) of the project to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment [6]: The project has dedicated output 2 ("Empowering Women into Faith Leadership") to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment among religious scholars who are women. The output activities are designed to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of women within local communities towards faith leadership which, in turn, has the potential of increasing trust and community support to the evolving network of religious actors and deepen the network's own ability to involve all parts of communities into social dialogues and consensus-building, ensuring that both, perspectives of men and women are considered. This will include from the outset conversations on the roles and responsibilities of women in contributing to and shaping the Somali society – not least considering that AS already invests into the economic empowerment of women otherwise sidelined by patriarchal social structures. Currently, 20 per cent of religious scholars in the network are already women, which already is a unique achievement of the network which the project wants to further build on towards strengthening the role of women in faith leadership, resolving disputes and reducing violence. By ensuring representation and active participation of women in the network, their voices and views will be included, allowing for a more empathic and conducive reflection on women's participation in Islam from within the network.

Project Risk Marker score[7]: 1

Is the project piloting new approaches: Yes ☒ No ☐
Does the project design incorporate climate, peace and security related considerations:
Yes ☒ No ☐

Select PBF Focus Areas which best summarizes the focus of the project: 2.3 Conflict prevention/management.
If applicable, **SDCF/UNDAF outcome(s)** to which the project contributes: All Somalis live in a peaceful, inclusive, and cohesive society – Outcome 1.3
Sustainable Development Goal(s) and Target(s) to which the project contributes: 5 & 16

Type of submission:	If it is a project amendment, select all changes that apply and provide a brief justification:
☒ New project ☐ Project amendment	**Extension of duration:** ☐ Additional duration in months): **Change of project outcome/ scope:** ☐ **Change of budget allocation between outcomes or budget categories of more than 15%:** ☐ **Additional PBF budget:** ☐ Additional amount by recipient organization: USD XXXXX

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[5] **Score 3** for projects that have gender equality as a principal objective and allocate at least 80% of the total project budget to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)
Score 2 for projects that have gender equality as a significant objective and allocate between 30 and 79% of the total project budget to GEWE
Score 1 for projects that contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly (less than 30% of the total budget for GEWE)
[6] Please consult the **PBF Guidance Note on Gender Marker Calculations and Gender-responsive Peacebuilding**
[7] **Risk marker 0** = low risk to achieving outcomes
Risk marker 1 = medium risk to achieving outcomes
Risk marker 2 = high risk to achieving outcomes

PROJECT SIGNATURES:

Representative of National Authorities	Representative of National Authorities
Hussein Sheikh Ali *National Security Advisor* *Office of the President* *The Federal Government of Somalia* *Signature* ▮ *Date & Seal* 18/12/2024	*Sheikh Mukhtar Robow Ali* *Minister of Endowments and* *Religious Affairs* *The Federal Government of Somalia* *Signature* ▮ *Date & Seal* 18/12/2024
United Nations Development Programme	**Head of UN Country Team**
Christopher Laker *Resident Representative - OIC* *UNDP Somalia* *Signature* ▮ *Date & Seal* 17-Dec-2024	*for* *George Conway* *Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia* *Signature* ▮ *Date & Seal* 19.12.2024
Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)	
Elizabeth Spehar *Assistant Secretary-General for* *Peacebuilding Support* *Signature* ▮ *Date & Seal* 24 December 2024	

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I.   Peacebuilding Context and Rationale for PBF support (4 pages max)

a) Summary of gender-responsive **conflict analysis findings** as they relate to this project, focusing on the driving factors of tensions/conflict that the project aims to address and an analysis of the main actors/ stakeholders that have an impact on or are impacted by the driving factors, which the project will aim to engage. This analysis must be gender- and age-responsive.

Overall conflict dynamics as relevant to this project: The Somali society is divided into clans and their sub-clans, down to the individual family – offering a social and economic safety net for respective members. While united in religion, language, and customs, the clan system is both a source of identity and divide. Clans may unite in the face of threats but may also fight one another over grazing lands or multi-generational vendettas, with clan divide constituting a challenge to state formation efforts. This clan system and male dominated Somali society restricts women to the private domain, resulting in continued oppression, high prevalence of gender-based violence and women's de facto structural exclusion from decision-making.

Following Somalia's state collapse in the 1990s, the resulting power vacuum and local warlords fighting, Islamist groups presented an attempt to form a state that bridged clan boundaries and loyalties. Islam was used as a unifying force among the Somali society providing necessary laws and regulations required to bring order to Somalia's Muslim society. A short period of relative stability under the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) ended in the movement's dissolution in 2006. Out of the contested governing efforts by the UIC emerged the non-state armed group Al-Shabaab (AS), which uses violence to pursue its political goals inspired by a hardline interpretation of Islam.

International support spearheaded by the UN supported the emergence of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2012, which was established based on a 4.5 clan-based formula. While the formula allowed a political settlement to be reached and for an end to the violence, it also enshrined pre-existing power structures that contributed to a lack of social contract from the start. In areas it controls, AS attempted to create a parallel administration that offers justice through AS courts and basic service provision. The group performs the functions of a proto-state, i.e., it provides basis services, regulates societal relationships, extracts resources, and applies the extracted resources to further its objectives, including by violent means.

The conflict between the non-state armed group and the Somali Government began in 2006 when AS emerged as the radical youth wing of UIC and took control of large parts of Southern Somalia. AS continues to administer much of Southern Somalia, providing basic services, and governing the local population. Somalia's deeply hierarchical society offers opportunities only a few dominant clans. Prone to corruption and elite capture, the clan-based state perpetuates the exclusionary clan hierarchies and resulting grievances. In contrast, AS offers opportunities for social and economic advancement, particularly to those otherwise disadvantaged. Research[8] reveals that contrary to AS's formal ban on women working, the group relies heavily on women in business. AS capitalizes on women's structural marginalization by systematically offering them economic opportunities and grooming them as supporting members of the organization. One key area of employment offered to women by AS is teaching other women in Quranic schools, educating other, younger women in religious teachings. The idea of a Greater Somalia with unity and equality in faith is appealing to many and the promotion of "Sharia-compliance" fosters the group's local legitimacy. Attempts to defeat AS militarily continue to

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[8] Adam Smith International: Rehabilitation Support Team: The Invisible Women of al-Shabaab: Understanding the role of women in, and their influence on sons, husbands, and brothers in, the processes of joining al-Shabaab, defecting from al-Shabaab, rehabilitation, and reintegration (2019); International Crisis Group: Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency. Crisis Group Africa Briefing No. 145 (2019); UNDP: Women, Girls and Al-Shabaab: Primary Research from Somalia and Kenya. The Role of Women in Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa [2019, unpublished].

be prioritized by the Government despite mounting evidence that over-securitized approaches aggravate conflict drivers. Human rights violations by state security forces constitute the key trigger for joining non-state armed groups.

AS' perspectives on good governance opposed to current governance arrangements and statebuilding efforts: In 2021/22, Somalia faced a tense period of prolonged political impasse in the run-up to delayed elections and political power struggles over influence and resources leading to fragmentation of state institutions along clan lines and hampered collaboration with government institutions throughout. AS continued to capitalize on the Somali government's paralysis, utilizing it as an opportunity to build on for its anti-government propaganda and portraying the government as corrupt elites whose actions contradict the principles of the Islamic faith. In early September 2021, AS issued a press statement announcing the release of a 12 episodes documentary titled "How evil is their judgement", dissecting how the "infidel" Somali government is violating Islam. AS's subsequent documentary series aims at delegitimizing the Somali state by discrediting its governance structures to be based on man-made formal legal frameworks which, according to the group, is in violation of Islam. Featuring both AS leadership and AS ulema, the documentary series constitutes a religious sweeping swipe at Somali state-building efforts in general, with criticism raging from the constitution over the penal code to gender equality frameworks. At the same time, the documentary series offers nuanced insights into AS political positioning and legitimization strategies of good governance and service delivery in compliance with the group's interpretation of the religion. The documentary series was accompanied by a repeated invitation to Somali scholars, religious leaders, intellectuals, and all Somali Muslims who disagree with AS's arguments to join a dialogue on the concerned questions of state-building and good governance.

The timing of AS's emphasis on dialogue coincided with a moment of boosted morale by the Taliban take-over in Afghanistan perceived as related to prior negotiations. At the same time, the establishment of a Taliban Government put pressure on AS's typical black-and-white propaganda of labelling the Somali Government "infidel" for it is only Allah's prerogative to govern. A more nuanced explanation of why the Somali Government is apostate was hence an equally timely response to the Taliban triumph. The proclaimed differences between legitimate and illegitimate forms of governance are justified by referencing the application of the Sharia. The documentary videos consistently compare an illegitimate and "apostate" Somali government applying man-made legal frameworks with the legitimate rule of AS guided by the application of Sharia law.

The videos are testimony to AS on the one hand operating outside the legal and normative framework of the Somali state. On the other hand, the group uses its own ulema to interpret Islamic textual sources in order to legitimize its governance structure and behaviour, including acts of violence. Additionally, AS uses religious actors for recruitment purposes and to deliver justice at AS-run Sharia courts. This presents a unique entry point for credible Somali scholars to engage and shape the group through conversations about governance, rules on the conduct of hostilities, and conditions for negotiations and sustainable, mediated solutions.

Alternative/ non-violent approach to addressing above conflict dynamics: There is a shared understanding that Islam can be a unifying force and provide the ethical principles for building a peaceful future. Islamic scholars[9] play an important role within the Somali society to mediate local

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[9] Islamic scholars, often referred to as ulama (singular: alim), are individuals who have dedicated themselves to the study and interpretation of Islamic theology, law, and philosophy. They are considered authorities in various Islamic sciences, including fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), hadith (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), tafsir (Quranic exegesis), and aqidah (Islamic creed). Islamic scholars play a crucial role in the Muslim community by: 1. Interpreting religious texts: They provide explanations and interpretations of the Quran and Hadith, helping Muslims understand and apply religious teachings in daily life; 2. Issuing fatwas: Scholars may issue fatwas (legal opinions) on various matters, guiding Muslims on ethical, legal, and social issues in accordance with Islamic law; 3. Teaching and mentoring: Many scholars serve as

disputes (e.g., land disputes, family disputes, clan disputes, etc.) and reduce violence. Where armed groups legitimize their actions through religious arguments, spaces for religious consensus-building have the potential to shift armed groups' positions and behaviors, including vis-à-vis the conduct of hostilities in armed conflict, governance and human rights related matters. Religious scholars in Somalia have a unique potential in transforming the conflict, particularly because actors like AS justify their violence through religious narratives. AS relies heavily on religious figures aligned with their ideology to legitimize their actions, making the engagement of religious scholars in peacebuilding both strategic and crucial. The project's Theory of Change hinges on the idea that, if violence is ideologically justified, religious scholars are among the few who are positioned to challenge and potentially shift those narratives.

Definition of Ideologically Justified Violence in the Somali Context: In Somalia, ideologically justified violence refers to the use of religious or political beliefs to legitimize the use of force, control populations, or engage in conflict. This form of violence is often rooted in interpretations of Islamic principles that are manipulated to justify hostilities, governance practices, or the enforcement of specific socio-political systems. In this context, non-state actors like AS use Sharia-based governance and religious rhetoric to legitimize their control and acts of violence, particularly in regions where formal state structures are weak. This violence is not purely ideological but is intertwined with grievances over governance, exclusion, and resource access, making it a multi-layered phenomenon. While religion is a unifying framework for governance, its interpretations vary widely, contributing to divergent ideologies about how power and justice should be executed. Religious scholars are uniquely positioned to mediate these conflicts by offering consensus-driven interpretations of Islamic values of peaceful coexistence.

While their potential of working with religious scholars is significant, it is also essential to recognize the limitations and risks associated with engaging religious scholars:

1. **Conservative Views:** Somali religious scholars may themselves hold conservative or traditional views that are not always conducive to progressive peacebuilding, especially when dealing with issues such as gender equality or reforming entrenched societal norms.

2. **Fragmentation:** The scholars are often split into sub-groups based on different schools of thought (e.g., Salafi, Sufi), which can hinder collective action and consensus-building. This fragmentation can make it difficult to create an open space for dialogue and consensus-building around shred values of peaceful co-existence.

3. **Male Dominance:** Religious scholars in Somalia tend to be men, limiting the inclusion of women in discussions. This gender imbalance can perpetuate the exclusion of women from peacebuilding processes and limit the perspectives brought to the table.

Opportunities: Despite these risks, the unique position of religious scholars as respected figures within their communities presents a critical opportunity to build peace in a context where no other group can viably influence the ideological foundations of violence and create spaces for dialogue and consensus-building across societal divisions. While religious scholars are not without limitations, the potential they hold to create spaces for dialogue and transform the ideological justifications of violence makes them an essential part of any long-term peacebuilding strategy.

Male religious scholars: Male religious scholars in Somalia (*ulema* or *sheikhs*) play an important role in resolving disputes and reducing violence. They are considered neutral arbiters who use Islamic

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educators, teaching students in religious schools (madrasas) and universities, and mentoring future scholars; 4. Leading religious practices: Some scholars also lead prayers, deliver sermons, and provide spiritual guidance to their communities. Islamic scholars can belong to various schools of thought or traditions within Islam, such as Sunni, Shia, Sufi, or others, and their interpretations and teachings may vary accordingly.

principles of justice, fairness, and reconciliation to guide their mediation and arbitration efforts at various levels, from family conflicts to clan-based dispute. [10] Scholars' knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and customary law (*xeer*) enables them to provide solutions. Their rulings are often adhered to because they have authority and respect within the community, enabling them to de-escalate conflicts.

During times of violent conflict, religious scholars have participated in local and national peace conferences, advocating for ceasefires, disarmament, and dialogue between warring factions. Drawing on Islamic teachings on forgiveness and the sanctity of life, they played key roles in preventing revenge killings and blood feuds during clan-based conflicts. They have also issued fatwas (religious rulings) to condemn acts of terrorism and violent extremism, thereby delegitimizing violent actions taken in the name of Islam. For example, they have issued fatwas, thereby. Fatwas can address disputes, offering religiously sanctioned solutions that can prevent violence from escalating. These rulings often draw on both Islamic texts and local customs, making them highly relevant to the Somali context. Male religious scholars are critical in countering violent extremism in Somalia, using mosques, schools, and the media to educate people about the true teachings of Islam, focusing on peace, tolerance, and coexistence. By providing alternative religious narratives, scholars help to reduce the appeal of extremist groups like Al-Shabaab, which have exploited religious discourse to justify violence.

In many Somali communities, religious scholars work alongside traditional elders in governance structures known as xeer, where they provide religious legitimacy to decisions and resolutions. This collaboration is crucial in resolving disputes that could otherwise lead to violence. The integration of Islamic teachings with customary law helps to create solutions that are both religiously and culturally acceptable, ensuring broader community support.

Despite the high level of influence these scholars have, they face several challenges. Some religious scholars face threats from extremist groups like Al-Shabaab if they speak out against violence or promote alternative interpretations of Islam. In some cases, religious scholars may be co-opted by political factions, which can undermine their neutrality and effectiveness in conflict resolution. The ongoing instability in Somalia has often also limited the resources available to religious scholars, hindering their ability to carry out peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities effectively.

Scholars' engagement in resolving disputes and reducing violence is critical in Somalia where institutions are often weak or absent. By leveraging their religious authority and respect they enjoy with communities, they can foster peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

Importance of empowering women religious scholars to work alongside male religious scholars: During the project design workshop in 2023, there was a consensus among religious scholars of the network that women played an active role to increase the reach of the network. In Somalia, women religious scholars have played an important but often understated role in the preservation and transmission of Islamic knowledge, as well as in the social and spiritual life of the community. Their contributions span several areas, from education to social leadership, often in challenging circumstances. Women religious scholars, known locally as sheikhas or muallimas, have traditionally been involved in teaching, especially in the education of girls and young women. Their roles have often been centered around the home or within all-female learning circles, where they would teach the Quran, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), hadith (sayings of the Prophet), and other religious subjects.

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[10] This is to note that male religious scholars, despite their authority, may hold biases that affect their decisions, notably clan dynamics and culturally ingrained biases, particularly in cases involving women. This can lead to decisions that reinforce gender roles that disadvantage women. The network of religious scholars therefore offers a platform to challenge these biases by referring to Islamic scripture.

Women religious scholars often serve as mediators in family and community disputes, using Islamic teachings to guide negotiations and foster reconciliation. Their interventions are especially valued in disputes involving women, children, and family matters, where their understanding of both religious and cultural contexts is crucial. In some cases, women scholars have been involved in broader community conflict resolution efforts, particularly in areas where traditional male-led approaches might have been less effective. They bring a unique perspective, emphasizing the importance of compassion, justice, and social harmony as taught in Islam. They organize and lead prayer groups, religious classes, and community discussions that emphasize peace, forgiveness, and mutual respect. Their efforts contribute to creating a more peaceful environment by addressing grievances at the grassroots level and preventing small disputes from escalating into larger conflicts.

The scope of women scholars' involvement in dispute resolution and reducing violence is limited to traditional spaces for women/ societal restrictions on their public roles. For example, women scholars in Somalia have historically taken on the responsibility of educating girls in Quranic schools (dugsis) and madrasas that are often the primary source of education for young girls to read and recite the Quran, as well as to understand other aspects of Islamic practice and morality. Female scholars are also involved in teaching adult women to gain religious knowledge that they may not have had access to earlier in life. These scholars play a critical role in advising on family matters and mediating in conflicts, especially those involving women and children. Somali women religious scholars have increasingly engaged in advocacy for women's rights and social issues, addressing issues such as gender-based violence, child marriage, access to education, providing religious arguments against harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM). They use their religious authority to challenge these practices, providing religious arguments that emphasize the protection and dignity of women as fundamental Islamic principles. By educating communities about the rights of women and children in Islam, these scholars help to shift cultural attitudes and reduce violence against vulnerable groups.

Women religious scholars also face numerous challenges, including limited access to higher religious education and the ongoing impact of political instability and conflict in the region. Despite these challenges, many women continue to pursue religious scholarship and community leadership, often at great personal risk, to uphold their traditions and support their communities. While women religious scholars in Somalia are increasingly recognized for their contributions to peace and dispute resolution, they often face significant challenges, including cultural barriers. These barriers include "opposition from clan leaders, cultural beliefs that women cannot take up key leadership roles, the social stigma associated with women in political leadership, lack of women empowerment leading to low self-esteem and low self-confidence, and lack of support from community members and clan elders. Additionally, women are not allowed to move freely in public places as their rightful place is at home."[11]

Importance of empowering women's faith leadership: Women religious scholars are gaining more support as communities and international organizations recognize the importance of inclusive peacebuilding processes. By amplifying the voices and roles of women religious scholars has the potential to create a more sustainable and inclusive approach to resolving disputes and reducing violence. They are slowly gaining more recognition, both within the country and in the Somali diaspora. In addition, Somali women religious scholars are increasingly participating in global Islamic discourses, contributing their perspectives to broader discussions on Islam, gender, and society. This participation is crucial for ensuring that the voices of Somali women are heard and that their contributions to Islamic knowledge and social progress are acknowledged. Overall, women religious scholars in Somalia continue to play a vital role in their society, working to preserve and transmit Islamic knowledge, while also advocating for social change and the well-being of their communities."

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[11] https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/state_of_the_womens_movement_in_somalia.pdf

This project builds on lessons learned from UNDP-UNSOM previous phase of support to religious scholars:

a) Successes:

Facilitation of Dialogue and Peacebuilding: The network of religious scholars played a crucial role in facilitating local-level dialogue. The scholars acted as mediators, fostering consensus on shared Islamic values of governance and peaceful coexistence. Their efforts helped resolve local disputes and build trust in regions where state presence is limited. Importantly, the network's independence from direct government control allowed it to mediate between conflict parties without being seen as co-opted by political interests or clan bias,

Expansion of an Inclusive Network: The network expanded to critical regions and included diverse representation from various clans, schools of thought, age groups, and increasingly, women. This inclusivity strengthened its legitimacy and credibility in local communities. The scholars, as respected figures, created a space for religious consensus-building that transcended political affiliations, promoting a bottom-up peacebuilding approach.

Women's Inclusion in Religious Leadership: One of the significant successes was the increased involvement of women in the network. Women played an essential role, especially in gender-sensitive contexts, offering mediation and education through religious frameworks. This integration helped challenge norms and supported a more comprehensive approach to peacebuilding.

b) Challenges:

Internal Fragmentation and Ideological Differences: As a diverse network, the religious scholars sometimes faced internal divisions due to different religious interpretations and clan affiliations. These differences, while natural in such a pluralistic network, sometimes presented challenges in maintaining a unified stance on peacebuilding efforts.

Security and Personal Risks: Scholars operating in regions influenced by non-state actors face security risks. The risks associated with their roles as mediators can make it difficult for some to engage openly in dialogue efforts.

c) Recommendations for Future Phases:

Strengthen the Relationship with the Somali Government without Compromising Independence: The Somali government will continue its role as a shepherding entity, providing overall support while the network remains independent. Maintaining the independence of the scholars is essential for their ability to mediate impartially between conflict parties. The government can promote this by offering logistical support and ensuring that scholars have access to safe convening spaces, while refraining from using the network for counter-narrative purposes.

Foster Cohesion within the Network: Addressing internal divisions by encouraging dialogue among scholars on shared Islamic values of peace and coexistence will be vital for the network's cohesion. Facilitating these discussions will support scholars in overcoming ideological and clan-based differences as they arise, allowing for a united approach to peacebuilding. Developing a shared vision towards a peaceful Somali future and agency in their contribution to reaching this vision is key.

Support Women's Participation: Building on the progress made in the previous phase, future efforts should focus on further empowering female religious leaders. This can include expanding their roles within the network and ensuring that gender-sensitive approaches are integrated into broader peace efforts.

Mitigate Security Risks through Consensus-Building: Focusing the network's efforts on consensus-building rather than countering specific ideologies helps mitigate security risks. By positioning the scholars as impartial facilitators rather than adversaries to any party, they reduce the likelihood of

retaliation from extremist groups like AS. The approach of fostering inclusive dialogues rooted in shared Islamic values of peaceful coexistence ensures that scholars are not perceived as threatening or undermining any group's ideological stance. This consensus-building approach positions the ulema as **peacemakers,** whose role is to foster dialogue and understanding, rather than taking sides or attacking particular viewpoints. This serves as a natural mitigation strategy against the risks of targeting from conflict parties.

Analysis of Key Actors/Stakeholders in the Somali Conflict

1. **Al-Shabaab (AS)**

   a. **Role**: Al-Shabaab operates as a de facto governing authority in many parts of southern and central Somalia. In these regions, AS plays a significant role in providing essential services such as security, justice, and conflict resolution, often more effectively than state structures. Their control over these areas and their influence on local governance mechanisms have made them key actors in Somalia's conflict dynamics.

   b. **Impact on Conflict**: They have engaged in governance through extremist ideologies, which resonates with many communities. Facilitating, at the local level, dialogue processes towards building consensus on shared Islamic values of governance and peaceful co-existence will not allow AS to remain indifferent – rather, the group would have to engage where these dialogues touch upon its positioning on conduct of hostilities, negotiation flexibility, the protection of civilians, and related topics.

2. **Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)**

   a. **Role**: The FGS is the internationally recognized government in Somalia. It seeks to extend its authority over regions currently outside its direct control and is responsible for the state-building process. However, the government faces challenges due to limited capacity, and internal clan fragmentation and division.

   b. **Impact on Conflict**: While the FGS has made strides in institutional reform and governance, its limited reach, especially in rural areas, contributes to continued instability. While equipped with a clear counter-terrorism strategy and heavy reliance on military means to degrade AS, the government lacks capacity on complementary soft-power approaches that provide for a reliable vision of conflict transformation as the strategic end goal of their efforts vis-à-vis AS, and peacebuilding tools to achieve such end state of political settlement.

3. **Religious Scholars and Ulema Networks**

   a. **Role**: Religious scholars hold a unique and trusted position in Somali society as mediators and community leaders. Their influence is not limited to resolving inter- and intra-clan disputes, building on the uniting power of religion to bridge the societal clan-cleavages, but has the potential to foster more broadly dialogue and consensus-building around parameters of peaceful co-existence grounded in Islamic values. Scholars within the network, in particular, play a significant role in facilitating discussions among diverse groups, including non-state actors.

   b. **Impact on Conflict**: Religious scholars can bridge divides between the government, communities, and other actors, facilitating locally driven peace processes that align with shared religious and cultural values. Their involvement in peacebuilding has shown success in fostering trust and resolving local disputes. These scholars can contribute significantly to building a Somali-led vision for peace that respects cultural and religious frameworks.

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4. Clan Leadership

a. **Role:** Clan leadership remains a cornerstone of Somali governance and conflict resolution, deeply embedded in both social and political life. Clan leaders traditionally mediate disputes, maintain local order, and represent their communities in broader governance structures. However, their influence is heavily shaped by the 4.5 power-sharing formula, which allocates political power based on clan representation.

This 4.5 Power-Sharing system was designed to balance power among major clans and prevent dominance by any single group. However, it often perpetuates exclusionary clan hierarchies by giving more power to dominant clans while marginalizing smaller or less powerful ones. This formula institutionalizes clan-based inequality, embedding it into the fabric of formal governance, and placing clan leaders in a difficult position: they must navigate the tensions and grievances that result from this system.

In contrast to the clan-based governance system, AS offers a governance model based on equality in faith, where all Muslims are seen as equal under Sharia law, irrespective of clan affiliation. AS's approach has gained traction, especially among marginalized groups and clans and sub-clans who feel excluded from or within the formal 4.5 system. This ideological framework provides AS with a recruiting advantage, positioning them as a more inclusive alternative to the state's clan-based governance.

• **Impact on Conflict:** While the 4.5 formula aims to stabilize governance, it often exacerbates grievances by reinforcing clan-based inequities. Marginalized clans feel underrepresented in formal political structures, leading to local disputes and grievances over resource allocation, political representation, and access to services. These grievances, in turn, fuel cycles of conflict. Clan leaders, though traditionally peacebuilders, are constrained by their participation in a system that many perceive as unjust, limiting their ability to mediate conflicts effectively.

AS has strategically positioned itself as an alternative to the exclusionary clan-based governance system by promoting a vision of equality through faith. This appeals particularly to disenfranchised groups who see AS's governance as more just and inclusive. AS's ability to present itself as offering an egalitarian form of governance enables it to recruit from marginalized communities, thereby sustaining its influence and control in regions where formal governance is seen as biased.

The tension between the clan-based power-sharing system and AS's promise of equality creates a complex dynamic. Clan leaders who support the formal state structures are often at odds with AS's ideological stance, complicating their role as mediators. AS's model directly challenges the 4.5 system, positioning itself as a more equitable alternative, which undermines the legitimacy of clan leaders aligned with the state and exacerbates local conflicts.

Despite these tensions, religious scholars—who are respected across clan lines—can play a unique role in mediating conflicts rooted in these grievances. The ulema network offers a platform for fostering dialogue based on shared Islamic values rather than clan-based affiliations. By emphasizing unity in faith and peace, religious scholars have the potential to bridge the divide between communities loyal to the state's clan-based system and those who sympathize with AS's ideology. This approach could help mitigate the impact of the 4.5 formula by shifting the focus from clan identities to broader religious and community-based reconciliation efforts.

5. **International Community (e.g., UN, African Union)**

   a. **Role**: The international community, including the United Nations and the African Union, provides support for state-building, humanitarian assistance, and peacebuilding initiatives in Somalia. They provide funding for development and governance programs.

   b. **Impact on Conflict**: The success of peace initiatives depends on how well external actors align their support with Somali-led processes and respect local dynamics, designing state- and peacebuilding interventions in context-specific and conflict-sensitive ways.

6. **Local Communities and Civil Society**

   a. **Role**: Local communities, including civil society organizations, are the primary stakeholders in the conflict. They are directly impacted by governance structures, whether led by the FGS, AS, or clan leaders. Civil society groups, including women's and youth organizations, are increasingly active in peacebuilding efforts.

   b. **Impact on Conflict**: Communities often navigate between various governance systems, depending on the services and protection provided. Their support or opposition to different actors can shape the trajectory of local conflicts. Civil society, particularly women's groups, can play a critical role in advocating for peace and fostering dialogue at the grassroots level.

b) A brief description of how the project aligns with/ supports **existing** Governmental and UN **strategic frameworks**[12], how it ensures **national ownership**. If this project is designed in a PRF country, describe how the main objective advances a relevant strategic objective identified through the Eligibility Process. Elaborate on the catalytic nature of the project and how national ownership, including but not limited to, national and subnational entities are built in.

Alignment to Government priorities/ national ownership: The project is aligned with national peacebuilding priorities and commitments. The **ninth National Development Plan (NDP-9)** of the FGS from 2020 - 2024 states that "the security threat posed by AS is more of a political challenge than a military problem". The project is aligned to NDP-9 Outcome 4 ("People's trust among themselves and confidence in all levels of government restored"). Under the **National Reconciliation Framework (NRF)** the NDP-9 states: The NRF goal is to contribute to a sense of sustained peace and stability by laying the ground for genuine, comprehensive national reconciliation for the Somali people by restoring trust among themselves and increasing confidence in all levels of government institutions, resulting in peaceful coexistence, renewed relationships, and social and economic recovery. The NRF consists of five interlinked pillars, 14 milestones, and 85 activities to be implemented at national, Federal Member States (FMS) & Banadir Regional Administration (BRA), district, and village levels. The five pillars address three types of reconciliation: political, social, and religious. Political reconciliation issues include power-sharing, representation, the relationship between Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and FMS, federalism, devolution, resource-sharing and constitutional review issues, etc. Social reconciliation issues include historical grievances, disputed areas/lands, addressing the past, mistrust, suspicion, clan rivalry, active conflicts, displacement, destruction of traditional mechanisms, poor clan leadership, and the relationship between clan and state. The part on religious reconciliation relates to addressing issues such as sectarianism, violent extremism, fostering

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[12] Including national gender and youth strategies and commitments, such as a National Action Plan on 1325, a National Youth Policy etc.

a relationship between religion and the state, the status of religion, and the judiciary. The religious scholars in the network discuss and foster social consensus grounded in shared interpretations of Islamic scripture on issues across all three types of reconciliation, including those that are not directly related to religion.

The project also aligns to the **National Stabilization Strategy** on engaging communities in dialogue to address their legitimate grievances and develop confidence building measures. The strategy also emphasizes that "there is no purely security-military solution to the conflict, and a comprehensive civilian led approach across the stabilization strategy focus areas is critical to buttress and sustain the gains made in the security sector and through political dialogue."

The Somali Government's vision for delivering upon the **Comprehensive Approach to Security's Strand 4 on PCVE** is "to reach an end state where conflicts are addressed politically as opposed to through violence." [13] **The Somali National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (2016)** [14] introduces PCVE as an "essential and complementary element to the Somali government's efforts to address national security threats" [15]. Further, based on the national strategy, MERA has submitted its **PCVE strategy** to the cabinet for approval and adoption. As of 2022, the new government is taking a three-pronged approach to addressing AS militarily, financially, and ideologically. [16]

Alignment to UN strategic frameworks: The **UN-Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016)** encourages to "Engage religious leaders to provide a platform for (…) dialogue and discussion". In Somalia, where religion shapes conflicting worldviews, UNDP and UNSOM (now called UNTMIS), in line with the UN Secretary General's and UN-DPPA's recommendation to address armed conflict through mediation, have identified the religious scholars as pivotal for peacebuilding.

The project also contributes to the **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Somalia 2021-2025** (UNSDCF) outcome 1.3 ("All Somalis live in a peaceful, inclusive and cohesive society") and to **UNDP Somalia's Country Programme Document** (CPD) output 2.4 ("Enhanced peace and security through tolerance and dialogue) as well as **SDG 16** ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels").

The project will contribute to the following strategic objective identified through the PBF Eligibility Process:

- **Priority area 1 - National reconciliation:** The network supports social and political reconciliation.
- **Priority area 2 - Rule of law and transitional justice:** Religious scholars are playing a critical role in informal justice by resolving disputes and reducing violence (e.g., revenge killings in clan-based conflicts).
- **Priority area 3 - Democratic governance:** Religious scholars are providing a religious perspective towards promoting good governance based on the peaceful message of Islam.

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[13] Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS), Strand 4 on PCVE – Terms of Reference (2017), p. 1.

[14] The said strategy has been updated in 2019.

[15] Somali National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism (2016), p. 3.

[16] Federal Government of Somalia. Office of the Prime Minister: Government Programme 2022-2026 (August 2022) – the document prominently mentions the need to work with Somali religious scholars. C.f. Federal Government of Somalia. Office of National Security, Presidency: Somalia Counterterrorism Strategy 2022 (Draft) – the strategy mentions the role of the Somali Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs in collaboration with the Somali ulema in addressing AS ideologically.

- **Priority area 4** – Security Sector (Reform): By promoting the peaceful message of Islam to prevent violent extremism, the project promotes a non-violent approach to improve people's security.

Catalytic nature of the project: By enhancing the role of religious scholars to build peace at the local level and acknowledging the need for peacebuilding alternatives to address the protracted non-international armed conflict between the Somali Government and AS, this project proposes a bottom-up conflict transformation approach through religious scholars as insider mediators. By supporting the network of religious scholars, the project builds national capacities for peace that, if called upon, can contribute to transforming the conflict between the Somali Government and AS in the future. This project is therefore also an investment in the future, enabling religious scholars to foster a conducive environment for and support to a Somali-led negotiated solution to the conflict.

This project will also be catalytic because it will support the core interventions/ output 1of the larger Joint Programme "Islaamku wa Nabad: A Peacebuilding Approach to Address Violent Extremism in Somalia" by expanding the network and its geographical reach and strengthening the capacities of its members to work as insider mediators. This itself will enable the network to play a critical role in dialogue but will also provide a platform from which other planned interventions can be built in the future. Financial support from the PBF will also be crucial so that support to the network of religious scholars and related interventions can be shaped independently from the start, supporting the development of an environment conducive to peace, catalytically engaging other like-minded donors but also preventing any interference due to conflicting foreign policy agendas of potential donors.

The Swiss-Finish mission that supported the second design workshop for this project highlighted the need to jointly advocate for alternatives to counter-terrorism focused interventions to be reflected in budgetary considerations of development partners. The Finish Embassy in Nairobi therefore hosted a discussion on this approach with other embassies working on Somalia during this recent mission. The project is therefore envisaged to catalytically mobilize political and financial support from other development partners to expand this approach. This project will therefore also serve as a proof of concept.

UNTMIS transition: Security Council Resolution 2753 (2024) defines the transition mandate for the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) for the period from November 2024 until the end of October 2026. This Resolution also specifies the tasks that will be transferred during the first phase of the UNMIS transition. This includes the support to the FGS to implement Somalia's National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. By promoting religious dialogue, and by working with MERA and ONS, and other UN AFPs, this project will contribute to the transition of UNTMIS to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMS). The project will also provide an alternative/ non-military approach to addressing violent extremism and is therefore in line with the above Resolution that highlights "...the importance of consolidating the peace and security gains made in Somalia, recognising that military action alone will not be sufficient to resolve threats to peace and security in Somalia...".

c) A brief explanation of how the project fills any strategic gaps and complements any other relevant interventions. PBF funded or otherwise. Also provide a brief summary of existing interventions in the proposal's sector by filling out the table below.

By enhancing the role of religious scholars to build peace at the local level and acknowledging the need for peacebuilding alternatives to address the protracted non-international armed conflict between the Somali Government and AS, this project proposes a bottom-up conflict transformation approach through religious scholars as insider mediators. By supporting the network of religious scholars, the project builds national capacities for peace that, if called upon, can contribute to transforming the conflict between the Somali Government and AS in the future. This project is therefore also an

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investment in the future, enabling religious scholars to foster a conducive environment for and support to a Somali-led negotiated solution to the conflict. This project will closely work with UNTMIS during its transition process. The project will therefore fill a strategic gap as it will support this transition by strengthening the religious network and its collaboration with relevant national counterparts. A mission-funded PCVE Advisor, envisaged to work at least until the end of September 2025, colleagues from the UN Mission and UNDP will closely work with ONS, MERA and the Tubsan National Center for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism to facilitate this transition. Tubsan was established as an interagency government institution in Somalia in 2023 to tackle the challenges of recruitment and radicalization by AS, trying to implement strategies that go beyond security measures such as rehabilitation, reintegration and prevention of violent extremism.[17] With the history of failed top-down efforts perpetuating clan divides, this project fills another critical gap – guided by the UN-Secretary General's PVE Plan of Action recommending redoubling efforts to promote and sustain dialogue between warring parties. It introduces a bottom-up peacebuilding approach to address "violent extremism" through inclusive, community-based dialogue and consensus-building interventions.

Enhancing the role of religious scholars to address a broad spectrum of deeply entrenched root causes of conflict in Somalia: The network already addresses a broad spectrum of conflicts and root causes at the local level, including the complexity of the clan-based disputes and violent conflicts, socio-economic factors and the impacts of climate change that accelerate already existing disputes related to the access to natural resources. In addition to section I. c) (listing other projects that will complement the project), this project will support platforms for sharing technical inputs and experiences on topics such as climate change impacts (leading to an increased frequency of droughts), environmental impact of cutting down tries for charcoal and other relevant development challenges. Based on these technical inputs, the insider mediators of the network can use their improved technical knowledge and reflect on them, applying an Islamic perspective with regards to protecting nature/ environment, etc. Using Islamic scripture and the peaceful message of Islam will allow scholars to mobilize divided communities to work together, e.g., to build climate resilience and prevent conflicts over natural resources. Social dialogues convened by the network will be one way of enabling communities to identify, understand and address root causes of conflict.

With the network expanding horizontally, it can address a variety of conflicts (and related root causes) through more and more members of the network and in an increasing number of districts. Support to the vertical expansion of the network will enable it to not only address conflict drivers at the local level but increasingly at the FMS and federal level.

Direct engagement on gender issues related to the mandate of the UN is being undertaken with authorities and communities by the Women, Peace and Protection Programme (WPP) that was previously funded by the PBF and now continues in its second phase with support from the Somalia Joint Fund (SJF). WPP is currently also working in areas from where religious scholars come. This project will ensure synergies with the WPP project, for example to enhance collaboration between religious scholars (men and women) and WPP-supported women peace committees/peace networks, etc.

This intervention will also contribute to shaping genuine social cohesion in areas newly and recently recovered from AS in the medium and long-run. Supporting the network of religious scholars over time through this PBF-funded project will enhance their insider mediation skills. As they will increasingly be respected among community members as impartial and independent scholars that are not promoting political views, they will be better able to foster tolerance and dialogue. Eventually the strength and skills of the network members and their reputation might gradually allow them to also intervene in. Network members themselves have repeatedly stressed the argument of critical mass,

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[17] https://issafrica.org/iss-today/can-somalia-s-new-tubsan-center-secure-alliances-to-prevent-terrorism

pointing out that an increase in numbers constitutes the best protection against being singled out and targeted by AS for their work. Efforts to strengthen the current country-wide ulema network by ensuring a large enough group of religious scholars dedicated to the promotion of the peaceful and inclusive message of Islam will be taken forward by expanding into new locations of AS influence, both complementing and enabling communities' commitment to peace and social cohesion.

In the absence of a peacebuilding lens applied to the armed conflict between the Somali Government and AS, Somalia's state-building efforts will be constrained when development projects and programme interventions to sustain a peace will be implemented without addressing this armed conflict in the first place. Ad hoc reconciliation efforts are often aimed at resolving localized inter- and intra-clan skirmishes over resources, while state-building programming is largely separated from the conflict dynamics and as such unable to address the lack of government legitimacy. The approach risks ignoring lessons from similar contexts where jumping into "reconciliation" without conflict resolution has resulted in the failure of such processes.

Project name (duration)	Donor and budget	Project focus	Difference from/ complementarity to current proposal
State-building and Reconciliation Support	Somali Joint Fund (SJF) formally known as (MPTF) USD 27 Million over 4 years.	Reconciliation of inter communal conflicts at state levels.	The commonality between this proposal and the project is their quest for communal peace. But this proposal focuses on using the unifying power of religion to achieve peace through a bottom-up approach.
Women Peace and Protection (WPP)	PBF and Somali Joint Fund (SJF) formally known as (MPTF) USD 6.6 Millions	Support Women peace and protection and meaningful women participation in peace making process.	Collaboration on protection and promotion of women's rights and empowerment through religious leaders' networks, including religious actors' role in advocacy to address and curb gender-based violence. Mutually amplifying insider mediation efforts by the religious leaders and women networks in select programming locations.
Joint Justice and Correction JJCP	Netherlands: Total estimated budget: USD 16,334,989	Focus on promoting people-centered justice sector reform and service delivery.	Joint analysis of AS narratives on man-made legal frameworks as argumentation of portraying the Somali Government as infidel. Joint work towards increasing the legitimacy of justice provision and formal rule of law institutions by systematically engaging religious leaders and advancing understanding of the application of the sharia law through formal and traditional justice mechanisms. Synergies between the ulema-led social dialogues and learnings derived from the JJP's non-violent communications interventions enabling and guiding community conversations to be explored.

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Joint Police Project (JPP)	EU, and Japan USD 1.6 million. EURO 9 million.	Strengthening capacity of security institutions (Somali police/ community policing)	Joint advocacy for a paradigm shift from top-heavy security sector reform efforts to people-centred security sector governance. Human rights due diligence training for security forces in response to state heavy-handedness as tipping point for people to join AS.
Building a Foundation for Reconciliation (Build4R) - Trust, Justice and Security in Newly and Recently Recovered Areas	PBF 2024 pipeline project (still to be considered) USD 5 million. (potentially catalyzing n African Development Bank project over USD 25 million)	Building a foundation for reconciliation in areas newly and recently recovered from Al-Shabaab by supporting interim security arrangements, restorative justice and interim local governance	The proposed project in support of the religious scholars' network would complement Build4R once the network would have expanded horizontally to also reach respective districts where scholars can contribute to reconciliation
Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme (YEEP) Somalia (Global Programme on PCVE, of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism - UNOCT/UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)	Partners - TUBSAN, Global Community Engagement & Resilience Fund, Management Institute for National Development and UNFPA - Somalia and UNESCO Regional Office for EA	YEEP seeks to increase the peacebuilding potential of young people and their resilience against violent extremism by increasing their awareness of violent extremism trends and vulnerabilities	Opportunities to work together, linking youth targeted by YEEP with religious scholars to jointly promote the peaceful message of Islam
IOM Programming	IOM has been working with UNSOM (now called UNTMIS) since 2013 in supporting the FGS's National Programme for the Treatment and Handling of Disengaged Combatants	IOM recognizes the importance of promoting a meaningful, effective and inclusive participation of CSOs at the grassroots level	IOM can be an important partner beyond this project to work with religious scholars as the UNTMIS transition will proceed. While IOM and its partners follow an approach that is very different from the proposed project, coordination between this PBF project and IOM can create synergies and support the FGS's National Strategy and Action Plan for PCVE

II. Project content, strategic justification and implementation strategy (4 pages max Plus Results Framework Annex)

a) A brief description of the project focus and approach – describe the project's overarching goal, the implementation strategy, and how it addresses the conflict causes or factors outlined in Section I (must be gender- and age- responsive).

The project's overarching objective is to contribute to reducing ideologically justified violence within the Somali society by advancing dialogue between Islamic scholars, communities, state- and non-state actors to constructively address disputes and reduce violence. This proposed PBF intervention agreed with the Government (MERA and ONS) will build capacities of the religious scholars' network to act as a bottom-up infrastructure for peace[18] in Somalia, focusing on the roles scholars can play as community-based insider mediators.

It will do so by enabling the network:

(1) to expand its role in mediating and transforming local disputes and reduce violence;

(2) to build its legitimacy and influence gradually to play a larger role to reduce violence in Somalia in the future; and

(3) to formalize its consultation mechanisms to establish nation-wide consensus among Islamic scholars and actors of different doctrinal orientations on contentious governance issues, drawing from the peaceful message of Islam.

While the previous phase focused on creating fora for ulema to exchange on their roles and responsibilities as peacebuilders within Somali communities and to agree on a modus operandi of working together, moving forward, the network is envisaged to be supported by preparing religious scholars as insider mediators. If called upon by the Government in the future, the network can therefore play a critical role in a conflict transformation process addressing the protracted conflict between the Somali Government and Al-Shabaab (AS).

The project will reinforce and expand Somali religious scholars' and actors' ability to challenge the legitimization of political violence based on interpretations of Islamic Scripture. It does so through trust- and consensus-building, inclusive dialogue across political cleavages, and agreement on the peaceful message of Islam. Moreover, it will convene community-based social dialogues as part of a mechanism for establishing consensus on contentious governance issues that can be grounded in shared interpretations of Islamic Scripture.

By promoting religious dialogue, and by working with MERA and ONS, and other UN AFPs, this project will also contribute to the transition of UNTMIS to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMS) in the area of Preventing Violent Extremism. The project will support the UNTMIS transition in line with Security Council Resolution 2753 (2024) by supporting MERA and ONS to implement Somalia's National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. The project will focus on fostering national ownership in Government for this conflict transformation approach that provides an alternative to counter terrorism measures.

Religious scholars from this network are influential to lead peacebuilding efforts and engage with communities on the peaceful message of Islam.

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[18] "An infrastructure for peace (I4P) refers to a set of structures, mechanisms, resources, and processes established by a society to systematically promote peace and resolve conflicts non-violently. It is often created through partnerships between governments, civil society, and international organizations. These infrastructures are designed to prevent violence, manage disputes, and build sustainable peace.... The goal is to create a system where peace is continually maintained through active collaboration and dialogue, rather than relying on reactive or military responses." (OpenAI (2024). Response to "What is an infrastructure for peace?". ChatGPT. https://chat.openai.com/)

Fostering the network's influence and leverage: During a peacebuilding process workshop for this intervention for male and female Islamic scholars including employees of the Somali Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs (MERA) and the adviser to the Office of National Security (ONS) in July 2023, the consultation with Islamic scholars across Somalia revealed that they often act as mediators and peacebuilders in their communities and that they have leverage over politicians who do not contradict them publicly. They are often seen as transcending clan loyalties and can explore common ground regarding the different Islamic doctrinal positions in Somalia.

They also articulated that the International Community had "failed in peacebuilding because religious leaders were ignored". They pointed out the urgency for societal healing, e.g. by inviting those who committed atrocities to come in front of scholars of the network and ask for forgiveness.

The results from these consultations as well as the lessons learned from UNDP's and UNSOM past work in this area highlight the important peacebuilding role that independent Islamic scholars can play in promoting a peaceful society in Somalia. The Network of Islamic Scholars to be supported by this intervention includes scholars from different doctrinal backgrounds and different regions of Somalia.

Key features of the network are:

- ✓ **Accountability to Local Communities:** The scholars in the network are rooted in communities. A scholar's position in the community depends on his reputation. Many people in communities across Somalia consider such locally anchored Islamic scholars as trustworthy and respectable.
- ✓ **Gravitas and Connections to Work across Divisions:** The scholars already play a peacebuilding role on various levels of Somali society and are seen to be able to transcend clan differences at time. They want to upgrade their role in peacebuilding in Somalia and be active on all levels. The network can reach out to Islamic scholars in areas that are contested and even to those in areas that are controlled by AS. The network has not engaged scholars in areas controlled by AS to date, in order not to expose these scholars to risk (potential pressures coming from both sides of the conflict). Because scholars are usually among the most respected in their communities, they can speak truth to power.
- ✓ **Islam as Acceptable Framework for Talks and Imagining Statehood beyond Clan Divisions:** Islam constitutes an accepted framework for transforming the conflict in Somalia by addressing key factors, such as inequalities among clans at heart of limited government legitimacy or longstanding, yet ignored, grievances between clans. The scholars of the network are well placed to build a bottom-up consensus based on the Islamic texts for a future Somali state that allows addressing and mitigating such clan divisions. Note, however, that many tensions between clans are currently mediated by clan elders, even if certain Islamic scholars are also active on this level.
- ✓ **A Culture of Deliberation and Mutual Trust:** The scholars have developed a culture of deliberation among a network of 200 people based on mutual respect and constructively relating to differences among them (regarding their respective schools of thought – Salafi, Sufi, Shafi'i – and political allegiances). This allows them to speak frankly and effectively take decisions together.

Empowering women's faith leadership: In addition to an already diverse clan- and age representation, the network already includes 20% of women religious scholars. This can be considered a unique achievement in the context of ulemas in Somalia. Outside the network, women have an extremely limited role in the religious sphere, mainly focused on educating girls in madrassas. In an earlier phase of supporting the network, UNDP therefore supported women who aspired to be madrassa teachers, providing them with seed funding to set up their own madrassas and training them on Islamic principles related to conflict resolution and mediation. Over time, the network also supported their

induction and integration into the network. Some of the women supported by UNDP also took up roles in MERA or went for further Islamic studies.

Through this project, UNDP will support the network to further increase their level of inclusiveness, trying to include more women into the network as it expands horizontally and vertically. There are already many young/ youth scholars in the network. As the network expands, special emphasis will be put on including men and women scholars from different age groups. To foster a meaningful role of women among religious scholars, strengthening the quality of their participation is critical, especially in terms of improving women scholars' role in addressing disputes and reducing violence in areas that they are traditionally excluded from. To practically do this, barriers must be overcome to allow women to work alongside men religious scholars on a broader spectrum of mediation cases.

Horizontal and vertical expansion of the network: To increase its influence to resolve disputes and reduce violence, the network will continue to gradually expand horizontally (with an increasing number of network members and districts covered by them – see output indicator 1.2) and vertically (with apolitical and inclusive civil society umbrella organizations of the network envisaged to function at FMS level with support of this project – see output indicator 1.1.1). As it increases its influence vertically, the network is envisaged to increasingly address issues of regional and national concern in ways that the Government and AS cannot remain indifferent to the consensus established and showcased by the scholars. This can be done by providing a peaceful Islamic perspective (religious rulings) on such issues at the FMS and federal levels (e.g., in relation to the formal justice system, policies and legislation) at FMS and FGS level (vertical influence of the network - see output indicator 1.1.3). Clan divisions and how to deal with them is one "issue of national concern" that the network's peacebuilding infrastructure can address through consultations and decision-making involving Islamic scholars and actors across political cleavages. Other issues that can be addressed by the network as a result of its vertical expansion are the economic policies of the Government, education, the delivery of justice, land conflicts, dealing with floods and its socio-economic consequences, etc.

Mission transition, mobilizing support and nurturing ownership for this bottom-up conflict transformation approach: The project will be jointly implemented by UNDP and UNTMIS as part of the transition. The project will work in close collaboration with the mission's PCVE Adviser during the first year of UNTMIS transition to bring together PAMG, ROLSIG and HRPG of UNTMIS to provide political support, manage political risks and opportunities, increase awareness among Government, civil society and development partners that this approach can make important contributions to transforming conflict in Somalia. This will not only increase national ownership but also political and financial support for this bottom-up conflict transformation approach.

Ensuring the independence and diversity of the network: The provision of safe convening spaces will allow the ulema to strengthen their network, share experiences, and agree on next steps. Regular inclusivity assessments mitigate clan-biased funds allocation. Funding for the ulema network's activities is routed through the federal and state-level Ministries of Religious Affairs, to avoid donor visibility and thus preserve the legitimacy of the network, including to insulate it from AS propaganda. This implementation modality allows for the Somali Government to exercise oversight over the programme without controlling it or compromising the scholars' independence.

The selection of scholars joining the network membership is informed by an inclusive network composition, taking into consideration the scholars' religious knowledge, standing, and influence in the Somali community, as well as a balanced composition of network membership reflecting the different Islamic schools of thought present in Somalia, inclusive clan composition, age, and gender. In addition to the process above, at the establishment of the network, a meeting with UNDP-UNSOM team was organised with every "candidate" and due diligence observed via the consultation of various HRPG and Risk management Unit data bases. Over the last three years the network has now reach almost 220 members (20% of women) present in 16 districts all around Somalia. The selection process

for new locations for the expansion will be done in close consultation with the existent Ulema network members, the respective ministries of religious affairs at national and state levels and with the UNTMIS-UNDP team participating and performing the same due diligence. Currently the work of the members of the network has allowed a piloting in carefully identified newly recovered area (NRA) with the integration, selection, and verification of new members. As result of the due diligence process, the network does not include scholars who are known to be engaged in or support acts of violence. Hence, members of the network support non-violence and can share and discuss their religious views within the network. Notably, to reach its consensus-building objectives, the network must accommodate various Somali worldviews and does not exclude scholars holding positions that would, in counter-terrorism informed approaches, be stigmatized, dismissed or even criminalized as "extremist". The accommodation of different worldviews is essential for the network's dialogue and consensus-building role around the peaceful message of Islam, and how this message translates into regulations of peaceful co-existence governed by shared Islamic values agreeable to all (e.g., the Madina Charta[19]).

Scaling Up Local Consensus-Building Efforts to National-Level Peacebuilding: The project's approach to bottom-up conflict transformation is rooted in creating local consensus on Islamic values of peaceful coexistence. The challenge lies in scaling up these local dialogues to influence national-level peacebuilding processes, especially in Somalia's state-building trajectory. Several strategies can be employed to achieve this:

Engaging High-Level and Influential Religious Scholars: A key element of scaling up local consensus-building efforts is the gradual inclusion of high-level and more influential religious scholars beyond the current grassroots actors. High-level scholars, who represent various schools of Islamic thought, can bring further legitimacy and a broader reach of the project, shaping national-level dialogue processes around Somalia's state-building project. As the project progresses, more prominent scholars can be engaged to lend weight to local consensus-building outcomes, helping to bridge the gap between local and national levels. By involving scholars who already have influence at the national level, the project ensures that the voices of local communities are heard in national dialogues around peacebuilding and governance. By ensuring that religious scholars are actively engaged in national-level processes, their input on governance and state-building—rooted in local consensus—can shape broader policies.

Shifting the Dominance of Militarized Approaches: A critical goal of scaling up local peacebuilding efforts is to ensure that national peacebuilding policies, which are currently heavily dominated by military strategies aimed at degrading AS, begin to incorporate non-military, inclusive peacebuilding approaches. Local consensus-building efforts focused on religious values offer an alternative approach. By ensuring that religious scholars are central to these national discussions, the project can help influence national security strategies to prioritize dialogue and peacebuilding over military confrontation and advise on how soft-power interventions can meaningfully complement other approaches.

Providing Avenues for Political Mainstreaming of Non-State Armed Actors: One of the long-term goals of scaling up local consensus-building is to create avenues for the political mainstreaming of non-state armed actors who currently see violence as the only means of rejecting undesired state structures. By offering religiously grounded, non-violent alternatives, the project can demonstrate to

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[19] Prophet Muhammad drafted this charter/ constitution, "establishing a kind of alliance or federation" of the eight Medinan tribes and Muslim emigrants from Mecca and specifying the rights and duties of all citizens and the relationship of the different communities in Medina, including that of the Muslim (Constitution of Medina - Wikipedia). The Medina Charter serves as a reference for creating a multicultural society and promoting religious moderation. The Charter is considered the "first modern state constitution in the world and was instrumental in establishing a pluralistic society in Medina" (https://typeset.io/questions/what-is-the-significance-of-the-medina-charter-3o2ox97e93). The Charter emphasizes values such as unity, tolerance, and peace. It guaranteed social, political, religious, and cultural rights.

these actors that there are viable ways to engage in the state-building process without resorting to violence.

National Recognition of Islamic Values in State-Building: The project advocates for the incorporation of Islamic values of governance into Somalia's broader state-building process. By ensuring that Islamic principles of peaceful coexistence are recognized in national policies, the project fosters state legitimacy. This not only strengthens the connection between the state and local communities but also addresses grievances that lead to violence. As these values gain recognition in national policy frameworks, they create opportunities for peaceful state-building and help align national governance strategies with the aspirations of local communities.

By focusing on engaging high-level religious scholars, creating formal linkages between local dialogues and national policies, shifting the focus from military strategies, and opening pathways for non-state actors to engage politically, the project can effectively scale up local peacebuilding efforts to influence national-level state-building processes.

Sequencing of Project Objectives: Building Legitimacy First: The project's objectives—building the legitimacy of the ulema network, expanding mediation roles, and formalizing national-level consultations—will be implemented in a phased approach to ensure that progress is sustained and scalable.

1. Building Legitimacy at the Local Level (First Phase):

   - In this phase, the ulema network will focus on building trust and legitimacy within local communities, ensuring inclusivity across clans, genders, and religious schools of thought.

   - By organizing the network at the FMS level, scholars can strengthen their role as impartial mediators and set the stage for further expansion.

2. Expanding Mediation Roles and Organizing at the FMS Level (Second Phase):

   - Once trust is established locally, the network will expand its mediation role, tackling larger issues at the FMS level and addressing more complex conflicts, including regional disputes and governance challenges.

   - Strengthening the umbrella organizations at the FMS level will enable the network to unite and collaborate more effectively across regions.

3. Formalizing National-Level Consultations and Policy Influence (Third Phase):

   - In the final phase, the ulema network will engage in national-level consultations, ensuring that outcomes from local and sub-national dialogues influence national policy discussions.

   - Through platforms like the Annual National Ulema Conference, the scholars will help shape national peacebuilding dialogues, addressing key issues including the conflict with AS.

Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): The religious scholars and their network should be understood as integral components of Somali civil society. The network, along with the FMS level Umbrella organizations, functions as a CSO, driving peacebuilding efforts at the grassroots level and building capacity across the country.

1. **Religious Scholars and FMS Umbrellas as CSOs:**

   a. The ulema network and the FMS-level umbrellas are essentially civil society actors that facilitate local governance and conflict resolution within their communities. By engaging in mediation and dialogue rooted in Islamic principles, they contribute to the stabilization of conflict-prone areas and support peacebuilding efforts from within society.

b. This network of religious scholars operates independently from formal state structures, further reinforcing their role as civil society actors. The project's capacity-building support strengthens the network and the FMS umbrellas, allowing them to function more effectively as community-driven actors and processes.

2. **Financial Independence through Zakat:**

   a. While the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) normally encourages direct funding to CSOs, in this project, direct financial support to the ulema network and its umbrellas would undermine the long-term sustainability of the network. Zakat collection is a core mechanism through which the network achieves self-sufficiency, and reliance on foreign funding would weaken both community ownership and the scholars' ability to be seen as neutral actors.

   b. By focusing on building the capacity of these community structures to collect Zakat, the project ensures that the network remains financially independent, reducing dependency on foreign influence while reinforcing their legitimacy and sustainability.

3. **Capacity Building for community representatives:**

   a. The project supports the ulema network in building their capacity. This includes training in conflict mediation, governance, and organizational management. Through this, the network enhances its ability to engage effectively with communities, strengthening the role of civil society in peacebuilding.

   b. Additionally, the ulema network will be positioned to interact with broader CSO ecosystems in Somalia, creating synergies with local organizations focused on community development and governance. This broader interaction helps amplify the impact of the ulema's peacebuilding efforts at both local and national levels.

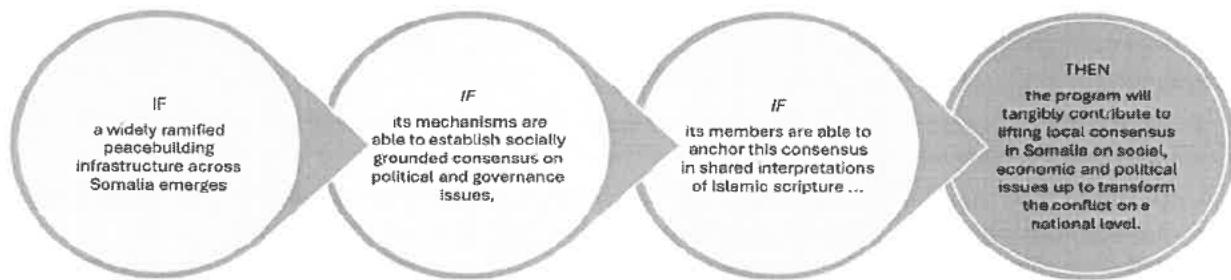4. **Interaction with International Religious Scholars and CSOs:**

   a. The project also supports the interaction of Somali religious scholars with international counterparts. Through partnerships like those with the Finn Church Aid (FCA), the ulema network can engage with religious scholars and peacebuilders from other countries, creating a platform for knowledge exchange and learning. This interaction enhances the scholars' capacity to address conflict by drawing on experiences and methodologies from other contexts.

   b. Furthermore, the ulema network will collaborate with local and international CSOs to address broader challenges, including governance and conflict resolution, while ensuring their role as impartial mediators is maintained.

b) Provide a **project-level 'theory of change'** – explain the assumptions about why you expect the project interventions to lead to changes in the conflict factors identified in the conflict analysis. What are the assumptions that the theory is based on? Note, this is not a summary statement of your project's outcomes.

This proposed project is designed to catalyze a larger programme called "Islaamku Waa Nabad: A Peacebuilding Approach to Address Violent Extremism in Somalia". By enhancing this bottom-up peacebuilding network of religious scholars (please refer to outcome 1 stated below that corresponds with output 1 of the larger Joint Programme), this network will provide a platform from where other interventions can be supported in the future (including with funds from other partners) to address violent extremism more comprehensively. Strengthen the network of religious scholars (as proposed as part of this PBF-funded project), will therefore catalyze interventions to be funded by other

development partners in the future such as standardization of religious education through the roll-out of a national peace curriculum (to foster communities' resilience against violence) and dedicated support for victims of extremist violence enabling societal healing and forgiveness processes.

This PBF-funded interventions will contribute to the following overall theory of change:

IF
a widely ramified peacebuilding infrastructure across Somalia emerges

IF
its mechanisms are able to establish socially grounded consensus on political and governance issues,

IF
its members are able to anchor this consensus in shared interpretations of Islamic scripture ...

THEN
the program will tangibly contribute to lifting local consensus in Somalia on social, economic and political issues up to transform the conflict on a national level.

c) **Provide a narrative description of key project components** (outcomes and outputs), ensuring sufficient attention to gender, age and other key differences that should influence the project approach. In describing the project elements, be sure to indicate important considerations related to sequencing of activities. Ensure that where relevant UN Community Engagement Guidelines are adhered to.

This proposed PBF intervention agreed with the Government will build capacities of the religious scholars' network to enhance their role in local conflict resolution and mediation. In addition, the project will also enable the network to build its legitimacy and influence gradually to possibly play a larger role in the future. If called upon by the Government in the future, the network can play a critical role in a bottom-up conflict transformation process addressing the protracted conflict between the Somali Government and AS.

A bottom-up peacebuilding infrastructure will reinforce and expand Somali religious scholars' and actors' ability to challenge the legitimization of political violence based on interpretations of Islamic Scripture. It does so through trust- and consensus-building, inclusive dialogue across political cleavages, and agreement on the peaceful message of Islam.

Community-based social dialogues on Islamic values of good governance and peacebuilding principles will inform policymaking and strategy-shaping to address conflict and strengthen governance. The project's overarching objective is to contribute to reducing the prevalence of ideologically justified violence within the Somali society by advancing dialogue to resolve conflict.

Recognizing that elite-led mediation efforts are often insufficient in addressing community grievances and structural drivers of conflict, growing emphasis lies on localized mediation and ownership of peace processes. Such insider mediators include local religious scholars whose mediation and peace-building capacity is rooted in the trust and credibility they enjoy in their communities. Since 2019, UNSOM (now called UNTMIS) and UNDP Somalia have supported the establishment of a country-wide

network of Somali religious scholars inclusive of different clans and religious schools of thought uniting over the common denominator of the peaceful and inclusive message of Islam.

Considering the complexity of the project, a dedicated risk matrix and risk management strategy has been developed under the Joint Peacebuilding Programme, and mitigation measures identified to ensure a robust Do No Harm approach. Programme impact is measured against the level of inclusivity and reach of the Islamic scholars' network, the level of scholars involved, the subjects of debate, consensus reached, and the responses and level of acceptance of consensus decisions by the parties to the conflict – the Somali Government and AS alike.

Outcome: Bottom-up Peacebuilding Network Enhanced to Address "Violent Extremism"

As indicated in the results framework, the incremental peacebuilding change envisaged by the project under this single project outcome is that:

- Communities and stakeholders perceive that disputes and violence have reduced with the help of the network of religious scholars
- Community members would use religious scholars as a reliable actor for dispute resolution, reconciliation, peacebuilding and the prevention of "violent extremism"
- The level of knowledge of the peaceful message of Islam has increased among network members and target communities

Output 1: Extending and Reinforcing an Inclusive Ulema Network

The support will extend the current network geographically, maintaining its diversity and aiming at increasing the meaningful participation of women (see output 2). The proposed intervention aims to support the work of religious scholars as community-based insider mediators convening inclusive community dialogues to build consensus on Islamic principles of governance acceptable to all. Building on their traditional role as trusted faith-based peacebuilders within communities, the ulema will create spaces for dialogue to explore ideas for solutions emerging from the concerned populations, while also being possibly acceptable to all conflict parties. The network of scholars provides for a space where visions for future governance arrangements can come up from the bottom. These conversations potentially generate momentum leading the key parties of the conflict to recognize and seriously engage with the views emerging from community dialogues. During the peacebuilding process design workshop in 2023, the network itself developed a vision for its role in the next 4 years that the project will contribute to:

- ✓ Support bottom-up consensus-building for a future, peaceful Somali state;
- ✓ Establish an institutional body of the network with a central coordination and branches present in the entire country;
- ✓ Establish a structure for the network to take decisions/ speak with one voice on different important matters;
- ✓ Become an actor in peacebuilding across all societal levels in Somalia that is accepted by all sides (known and trusted in communities around the country);
- ✓ United as a network for a bigger objective, putting aside small differences;
- ✓ Become self-sufficient as a network, working with their own resources;
- ✓ Islamic scholars able to present tangible achievements of their work to show to the community;
- ✓ Take a leadership role in encouraging good governance at various levels;
- ✓ Able to bridge differences between the government and communities.

Under this output, the network is envisaged to be reinforced and expanded in the already established locations with continued support to its members through the respective federal and state-level Ministries of Religious Affairs. This means building on the previous phase of the programme that

allowed to develop a first level of an inclusive platform for exchange and has shown its potential for consensus-building and preventing polarization.

Support will entail capacity enhancement and financial contributions to the activities of the ulema performing a range of critical programmatic responsibilities ranging from insider mediation, conflict resolution and conducting social dialogue to enhance social cohesion. The network will also be expanded to newly and recently recovered areas, working closely with MERA at FMS level and local governments. Government leadership in supporting the network will have two purposes: On the one hand, it fosters collaboration between religious scholars and government, increasing the legitimacy of the latter. On the other hand, the government can convene representatives of different schools of thought under a unifying umbrella in line with its responsibility to promote an inclusive Somali vision. The reputation of honesty and respectability of the ulema amongst the Somali community serves as an accountability mechanism for the allocated resources. In turn, the network of inclusive religious voices lends bottom-up legitimacy to Somalia's federal and state-level MERA. These ministries are uniquely positioned to enable such legitimate bottom-up process of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) dialogue to reach *ijma* (consensus) as the common basis for society and its governing principles.

Output 2: Empowering Women into Faith Leadership

The involvement of women constitutes a crucial prerequisite for the success of the ulema network's mediation efforts and will increase the network's local legitimacy and reach. Strengthening the roles and responsibilities of women within local communities towards faith leadership has the potential of increasing trust and community support to the evolving network of religious actors and deepen the network's own ability to involve all parts of communities into social dialogues and consensus-building. This will include from the outset conversations on the roles and responsibilities of women in contributing to and shaping the Somali society – not least considering that AS already invests into the economic empowerment of women otherwise sidelined by patriarchal social structures. Recent studies however, offer a more nuanced understanding of women's roles in relation to AS in Somalia. Research[20] reveals that contrary to AS's formal ban on women working, the group in reality relies heavily on women in business. Like how AS is perceived by many Somalis to gain support by drawing from men's grievances over lack of opportunities, AS appears to capitalize on women's structural marginalization. Considering Somali women's economic discrimination, AS systematically offers economic opportunities and engages them as supporting members of the organization. Women are supported to run businesses on behalf of AS, ranging from fundraising over money laundering to female-run businesses being taxed by the group. AS offers employment to women to teach other, younger women in the religious ideology of AS.

Activities will include the identification of women with prior religious knowledge and teaching experience, supporting them as madrassa teachers through the provision of training and financial support to open and sustain their own Quranic schools. As Quranic teachers, women will subsequently be supported in joining and contributing to the network. The female members will receive an inception training on insider mediation, conflict resolution and Islamic principles of governance. Women madrassa teachers becoming part of the ulema network will instill values of non-discrimination, inclusion, and equality. Carefully strengthening the roles and responsibilities of women within local communities towards faith leadership has the potential of increasing trust and community support to the evolving network of religious actors and widen the network's reach and impact in identifying and mediating cases related to the prevention of violent extremism. Equally, collaborating with the local

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[20] Adam Smith International: Rehabilitation Support Team: The Invisible Women of al-Shabaab: Understanding the role of women in, and their influence on sons, husbands, and brothers in, the processes of joining al-Shabaab, defecting from al-Shabaab, rehabilitation, and reintegration (2019); International Crisis Group: Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency. Crisis Group Africa Briefing No. 145 (2019); UNDP: Women, Girls and Al-Shabaab: Primary Research from Somalia and Kenya. The Role of Women in Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa [2019, unpublished].

ulema will increase the legitimacy of women working in the religious sphere and their ability to advocate for their rights from a position of religious legitimacy.

20 per cent of religious scholars in the network are already women. By ensuring representation of women in the network, their voices and views will be included, allowing for a more empathic and conducive reflection on women's participation in Islam from within the network. Transformative views must emerge from internal reflections of the network from an Islamic perspective and should not be driven by the project or external stakeholders (which could be perceived as foreign/ western interference). While women scholars providing guidance and preaching to women in their communities will be beneficial in raising women's awareness with regards to Islamic values of tolerance and peace, and aspects of good governance in Islam, this alone will not be sufficient.

Based on lessons learned during the implementation of this project, and the active participation of women in the social dialogue sessions and peace committees (WPP Project), the project envisages that empowering women into faith leadership, should not be confined to teaching girls/ younger women in madrasas only. This initiative will partner with the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers[21] that commissioned a study focusing on the unique entry points and opportunities that women faith-based mediators play within peace mediation processes in different conflict contexts. Building on this study, the project will implement the 'Empowering Women of Faith: Building Resilience, Leadership and Mediation Skills for Global Peacebuilding' training of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. This training will focus on increasing the capacity of Somali women of faith to bolster their skills around peace mediation, leadership and psychosocial support. The project will also explore other similar partnerships to enhance peer learning, e.g., collaborating with the King Mohammed the 6th Institute in Morocco that has done very interesting work in terms of supporting the production of ulema and women ulema guides on tolerance, authentic and peaceful Islamic discourse.

The project will offer platforms to discuss women participation from an Islamic perspective (allowing women and men from very different backgrounds to share their views and reach consensus). It will do this by introducing context-specific and -sensitive topics to be discussed by the network (e.g., "governance in Islam", the Medina Charter, etc.) that can lead to positive mind shifts among scholars, including on issue of gender equality. As observed in the past, this approach has been effective in allowing a change from within the network to increase the quantity and quality of women scholars' participation. The project will further apply this approach so that the network can gradually ensure the women scholars can work along men (or independently) to resolve disputes and reduce violence beyond traditional (family) spaces/ cases in which women normally mediate.

Output 3: Peer Learning on Peaceful Resolution of Extremist Views through Insider Mediation

Islam introduces, references and lauds peaceful conflict resolution, derived both from specific texts as well as from the fundamental principles of the religion itself. All members of the ulema network will be engaged in regular meetings focused on linking the roots of mediation and conflict resolution in Islam with expanding the knowledge of scholars in insider mediation and faith-based peacebuilding. A peer learning approach will be encouraged during which network members from different parts of the country come together regularly to share and discuss their mediation experiences, challenges, and successes. Particular attention will be given to increasing participation of women members of the network, building on output 2.

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[21] You can read more here- https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org/women-of-faith-based-peace-mediators/ and here- https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org/launch-of-training-on-religion-peace-mediation-and-leadership-for-women-faith-based-mediators/

Accordingly, the project will support activities aimed at facilitating peer-to-peer learning at FMS and inter-FMS levels and during an annual national conference. The project will also support the ulema learning and knowledge exchange with similar contexts to enhance the contents of their messaging's and improve on how to communicate with their respective audiences. The project has already agreed with the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, with its secretariat hosted by Finn Church Aid, to facilitate a learning exchange visit for the Ulema network with Omani religious scholars to share experiences from mediation cases and their work. that has done very interesting work in terms of supporting the production of ulema and women ulema guides on tolerance, authentic and peaceful Islamic discourse.

Output 4: Community dialogues on Islamic aspects of good governance acceptable to all

Considering the AS' perspectives on good governance that are opposed to current governance arrangements and statebuilding efforts as highlighted under section I. of this document (peacebuilding context), this output focuses on convening community dialogues on Islamic aspects of good governance acceptable to all. In addition to the opposing world views on governance issues between the FGS and AS, the way Somalia's current governance system and ongoing statebuilding efforts are perceived to affect the lives of different clans, sub-clans, people believing in different schools of Islam, etc. is also very different. Currently, there are limited spaces and platforms for groups wanting to express their grievances, disagreements and views (whether positive or negative) with regards to governance and statebuilding. Dialogues on Islamic aspects of good governance can therefore help in reaching societal consensus on good governance that can be shared by all Somalis. These dialogues can be convened together with other local community actors such as civil society groups, local authorities, etc.

In light of ongoing military efforts against AS, the need for engagement pathways out of the endemic armed conflict may become necessary at some point. The above-mentioned community dialogues can therefore contribute to preventing violent extremism. Credible and locally trusted ulema can create spaces for dialogue to explore ideas for solutions emerging from the concerned populations, while also being possibly acceptable to all conflict parties. The scholars of the ulema network will convene community dialogues on Islamic aspects of good governance that are acceptable to all sides. The network of scholars can provide for a space where a vision for the future can come up from the bottom, prompting different actors to position themselves towards emerging viewpoints. Convening such social dialogues grounded in religious values at the community level will contribute to the bottom-up building of a national vision for and *fiqh*-based consensus on governance acceptable to all.

Possible topics to open tracks for dialogues grounded in Islamic jurisprudence (allowing to work on concrete solutions for problems arising in armed conflict) may include questions related to governance:

- The Medina Charter (also known as the Constitution of Medina) that was drafted by the Prophet through a consultative process;
- The Concept of *Hisba* that relates to the moral and ethical oversight within the community;
- Citizenship in Islam, as conceived in the Medina Charter, is rooted in community participation, mutual obligations, and justice;
- Accountability principles in Islam;
- Respect of national borders;
- Attitudes vis-à-vis other Muslims / analogy with truces (*hudna*) in early Islam, concept of peace agreement, sharia arbitration etc.

The key role in this work lies in preparing the foundation, the common ground for dialogue and negotiated or mediated solutions in the long run. Protecting the integrity and independence of the scholars in the network will be crucial for a successful process. This implementation modality allows for the Somali Government to be the patron of the programme without controlling it or compromising

the scholars' independence. The intervention impact is measured against the level of inclusivity and reach of the Islamic scholars' network, the level of scholars involved, the subjects of debate, consensus reached, and the responses and level of acceptance of consensus decisions by the parties to the conflict. Activities under this output will also enable the expansion of social dialogues to newly and recently recovered areas.

Use Annex C to list all outcomes, outputs, and indicators.

d) **Project targeting** – provide a justification for geographic zones, criteria for beneficiary selection, expected number and type of stakeholders/beneficiaries (must be disaggregated by sex and age). Indicate whether stakeholders have been consulted in the design of this proposal. Do not repeat all outputs and activities from the Results Framework.

Geographic zones and criteria for beneficiary selection: The network takes gender and age considerations into account when deciding on membership[22]. As mentioned before, the network and the project work together to ensure participation of women, diverse clans, diverse Islamic schools of thought, etc. The network currently comprises of 220 members with presence in all 17 districts of Mogadishu and 15 districts in Somalia's Federal Member States – including all FMS capitals, religious hubs, and selected areas of AS proximity and influence.[23] As part of the horizontal expansion of the network, it is expected that the project will support the network in 10 more districts. The selection of new districts will be based on the feasibility of expanding and on how relevant the context of the district is for the work of the network.

Direct Beneficiaries:

1. **Religious Leaders:**

   a. The primary direct beneficiaries are members of the ulema network, comprising religious scholars from various regions, clans, and schools of thought across Somalia. The selection of these religious leaders is based on their demonstrated commitment to non-violence, their influence within their communities, and their capacity to mediate in local conflicts.

   b. **Criteria for Horizontal Expansion**: Expansion of the ulema network includes bringing in scholars from regions that are close to AS-controlled areas and those from conflict-prone regions. This strategic inclusion allows the network to remain relevant in addressing conflicts in sensitive areas while expanding the influence of peaceful Islamic principles.

2. **Women Religious Leaders:**

   a. A key focus of the project is the inclusion of female religious leaders who are empowered to play a broader role in mediation, conflict prevention, and governance. These women, previously confined to traditional societal roles, will work alongside men in addressing wider conflicts within their communities.

3. **Communities Participating in Dialogues:**

   a. Communities that participate in dialogues facilitated by the ulema network are also direct beneficiaries. These dialogues foster peace and conflict resolution at the local

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[22] Currently 20% of network members are women, some of whom are women madrassa teachers

[23] In Galmudug, the network is therefore active in Dhusamareb, Badho, and Wisil. In Hirshabelle, it works in Jowhar, Warsheikh, and Balcad. In Jubbaland, the network locations include Kismayo, Bardhere, and Ras Kamponi. In Puntland, *Itifaq* members are present in Garowe, Bossaso, and Galkayo. And in South-West State, the ulema work in Baidoa, Awdeegle, and Wajid.

level, allowing communities to address grievances through religiously informed, peaceful methods.

Indirect Beneficiaries:

1. **Wider Somali Population:**

   a. The indirect beneficiaries include the broader population of Somalia, particularly in regions where conflict is prevalent. By fostering local peace through religious mediation, the ulema network contributes to reducing violence and instability, thereby benefiting the wider community.

2. **Federal Member State (FMS) Level Governments:**

   a. FMS governments indirectly benefit from the ulema network's mediation efforts, which help to stabilize regions and reduce local-level conflicts. This allows FMS governments to focus on governance and development rather than addressing conflict-related disruptions.

Do No Harm Approach:

The project integrates a **Do No Harm** approach to ensure the safety of religious leaders and the communities they serve:

1. **Protection of Religious Leaders:**

   a. Religious leaders are frequently targeted in conflict zones. To ensure their safety, the project implements measures to protect the network's members, including:

      i. Avoiding visible external funding: To maintain their legitimacy and reduce the risk of being perceived as politically motivated, external funding for the ulema network is not visibly promoted. All support is routed through UNDP under the LoA with MERA, ensuring the network remains independent.

      ii. Neutral Messaging: Religious leaders are supported to promote a peaceful message of Islam that encourages coexistence without directly discrediting AS. This approach ensures that the network is seen as impartial and focused on peace rather than being aligned with counter-narrative agendas, which could put leaders at risk.

2. **Commitment to Non-Violence:**

   a. The religious scholars selected for the ulema network have all committed to non-violence as a core principle. This commitment is ensured through thorough vetting by MERA and UNDP, ensuring that scholars dedicated to peaceful conflict resolution are included in the network.

3. **Community Sensitivity and Avoiding Polarization:**

   a. When conducting dialogues, the project ensures that no community is marginalized or targeted in a way that could increase tensions. The selection of dialogue participants is inclusive, ensuring that all clans, religious groups, age groups, and genders are represented in peace discussions. Additionally, religious leaders are trained in insider mediation, which enables them to navigate sensitive topics without escalating conflict.

Switzerland supporting consultations and peacebuilding process design: In 2023, through its strategic partners (Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich and Cordoba Peace Institute), the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) supported an inception workshop in Mogadishu in 2023 for an Islamic scholar network supported by UNSOM and UNDP. During this workshop, Islamic

scholars from different FMS consolidated a shared understanding of their roles as peacebuilders in their respective communities. In 2023, the Swiss FDFA received a Somali Government mandate for the Swiss team (FDFA, CSS-ETH, and CPI) to support the work of this Islamic scholar network. The Swiss-Finish mission in July 2024 followed up to on the 2023 peacebuilding process design workshop in Mogadishu. The workshop brought together key members of the Islamic scholar network from across Somalia to clarify their role in the complex political context of Somalia, to showcase learnings emerging from their work, and to prepare for a vertical upscaling of their peacebuilding efforts. In parallel, the team supported by MFA Finland conducted diplomatic outreach Nairobi to increase the support base of the project. Currently, in September 2024, the Swiss-Finnish team of experts is convening a Religion and Mediation Course (RMC) in Zanzibar with a regional focus on the Horn of Africa where representatives of the Islamic scholars' network and the Government of Somalia will conduct both conflict analysis and process design exercises building on the experience of the network in the past years. On this occasion, they will get input from regional experts leading similar interventions along the Swahili-speaking coast.

III. Project management and coordination (4 pages max)

a) **Recipient organizations and implementing partners** – list all direct recipient organizations and their implementing partners (international and local), specifying the Convening Organization, which will coordinate the project, and providing a brief justification for the choices, based on mandate, experience, local knowledge and existing capacity.

This project builds on the experience and expertise of the past UNSOM-UNDP PCVE joint programme: In January 2016, the UN Secretary-General launched the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The Plan for Action also recommends greater coordination and integration of efforts to prevent violent extremism into activities of UN peacekeeping operations, special political missions and United Nations Country Teams, wherever relevant and in accordance with their respective mandates. Since Security Council Resolution 2358 (2017), UNSOM had a mandate to advise and assist Somalia in the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism. This mandate includes the support to coordinate PCVE activities, advise on specific thematic issues, share good practices and enable information exchange with other partners. Previously, before the establishment of UNTMIS, UNSOM was the only UN special political mission with Security Council mandate on PCVE. Working in close collaboration - to ensure programming and overall political direction are aligned and mutually reinforcing - allowed UNSOM and UNDP to gather extensive experience and lessons learned. UNDP and UNSOM conducted joint analysis and engaged with highest-level decision-makers within the Somali executive, legislative and judicial branches. This helped to gradually gain more political buy-in and backing for the peacebuilding approach towards addressing violent extremism in Somalia through strategic engagement of the religious environment, including support to dialogue and insider mediation interventions towards conflict transformation.

At the end of the first phase/ generation of the PCVE joint programme, lessons learned highlighted the important peacebuilding role that independent Islamic scholars can play in promoting a peaceful society in Somalia. The second generation of the joint programme, based on these lessons and building on previous experience, will increasingly focus on promoting dialogue through the work of religious scholars.

UNDP's Regional Service Center for Africa in Addis Ababa and the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) in Amman also presents an important asset for this project as it supports UNDP country offices through the regional PVE programme for Africa and Arab States 2022-2025.

Building on the above experience and partnership between UNSOM and UNDP will be critical as UNTMIS has now been given the transition mandate. Religious dialogue and support to religious

scholars will increasingly be supported by Government institutions such as MERA and UN agencies such as UNDP that is the recipient of project funds. The Somali Government's federal and state-level Ministries of Endowments and Religious Affairs (MERA) and the Somali ulema are the key implementing partners for the programme. They will be supported through dedicated program focal point positions at each MERA. Additionally, MERA civil servants will receive dedicated training and capacity building support to play a meaningful and sustainable role in the implementation of activities and realization of objectives for the programme duration and beyond. Civil society organizations will be engaged during implementation, particularly those that operate in areas where the network works. The network, that is part of civil society itself, will collaborate with civil society groups at the local level, for example when convening dialogues (output 1.4) and interacting with civil society groups at the local level to resolve disputes and create awareness on the peaceful message of Islam.

Partnership with Switzerland and Finland: Switzerland will continue to provide expertise (Process Design, Facilitation, Conflict Sensitive Research) and diplomatic outreach to support peacebuilding and mediation efforts in Somalia. The Federal Department for Foreign Affairs (FDFA) will support mediation process design and insider mediation training. It does this through providing in-kind support (travel, experts, etc.). Project interventions to be implemented with the Swiss team would include (among others) the provision of insider mediation trainings for religious scholars and relevant government counterparts who work with and support the network. This approach of parallel accompaniment and support to the network and these partners is expected to increase ownership for this conflict transformation approach.

The UN team under implementing this project will also try to coordinate and encourage other partners already working with (or interested in working with) religious scholars and/or on the prevention of violent extremism to support the transition of the mission and enhance linkages between Government and the network. While the network remains independent from the Government, MERA, because of its mandate, is already closely linked with the network and the ONS remains interested in the work of the network.

Agency	Total budget in previous calendar year	Key sources of budget (which donors etc.)	Location of in-country offices	No. of existing staff, of which in project zones	Highlight any existing expert staff of relevance to project
Convening Organization: UNDP	$720,000.00	UNDP Track funding:	Banadir, Jubaland, Southwest, Hirshabelle, Puntland, Galmudug	3 staff	
Implementing partners: Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs – MERA (FGS and FMS), Office of National Security – ONS	$100,000 $ 43,000	Finland ETH Zürich & FDFA Switzerland			

b) **Project management and coordination** – Indicate the project implementation team, including positions and roles and explanation of which positions are to be funded by the project (to which percentage). Explicitly indicate how the project implementation team will ensure sufficient gender or youth expertise. Explain project coordination and oversight arrangements and ensure link with PBF Secretariat if it exists. Fill out project implementation readiness checklist in **Annex A.1** and attach key staff TORs.

To ensure smooth implementation of project activities and coordination with all concerned stakeholders as well as with other interventions working on peacebuilding, the project team will be comprised of: Project Manager and, National Officer. The National Officer will be fully funded by PBF. The Project Manager will be partially funded from this project (40%). The Project Manager responsible for this project will divide time between this project and another project envisaged to be approved and funded to work on other peacebuilding issues (funded by KOICA). The project will work closely with UNDP and Mission colleagues that work on gender equality and women's empowerment, also drawing on experience of promoting the role of women religious scholars in similar contexts. The project will establish a project-level steering committee (SC) with the project's counterparts MERA and ONS. It will monitor project progress, provide strategic guidance and advise on how the project may need to be adapted and obstacles addressed. This SC will as far as possible include other stakeholders to enhance the role of the project of supporting the transition from UNTMIS to FMS, FGS and the UNCT. The project will consult with the PBF Secretariat team, RCO and the Mission on project implementation, impact, lessons learned and best practices.

c) **Risk management** – Identify project-specific risks and how they will be managed, including the approach to updating risks and making project adjustments. Include a Do No Harm approach and risk mitigation strategy.

Project specific risk	Risk level (low, medium, high)	Mitigation strategy (including Do No Harm considerations)
There is a risk that conflict in project target areas slows down/impedes implementation	High	This is a constant risk in Somalia. UNDP follows all guidance produced by UNDSS and will continue to implement all risk mitigation measures required by the UN Security Plan
There is a risk that religious leaders could be delegitimized as a result of their association with international donor support	Moderate	Implementation through the United Nations is in itself a mitigating measure to prevent accusations of interferences into the religious space and accusations of propagating a Western agenda. All project activities are implemented through the Somali government, in particular the federal and FMS-level MERAs. Those government entities will be engaged to publicly take ownership of the intervention.
There is a risk that political divisions between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States could lead to obstacles in a collaborative project implementation in furtherance of joint objectives	Moderate	Through its focus on coordination and collaboration between federal, state and local levels of government, communities and the Somali ulema, this intervention is designed to build and foster strong relationships at the technical levels between all local, FMS and FGS partners.
There is a risk that the work of the ulema network might be monopolized by a military agenda because of the ongoing focus of the military approach against AS and linked military mobilization efforts	High	The overlap between the social dialogue efforts and stabilization can be managed by leveraging on stabilization partners underwriting certain activities that may be difficult to otherwise implement, as well as utilize synergies as long as peacebuilding objectives are not in jeopardy by association.

There is a risk that the consensus-building among ulema might present challenges to achieving other project objectives – including empowering women and ensuring the inclusion of younger religious scholars into the network.	Moderate	The program has a strong in-built human rights and gender equality promotion, through inclusivity criteria and process design that ensures meaningful involvement of those otherwise disadvantaged groups. Addressing and discussing the role of women and youth in Islam will be supported by including topics that allow religious scholars to reflect on their (positive) role in Islamic scripture, which will help the network to address cultural barriers that lead to exclusion of women and youth.
Religious scholars may face threats from extremist groups like Al-Shabaab if they speak out against violence or promote alternative interpretations of Islam.	High	Focusing the network's efforts on consensus-building rather than countering specific ideologies helps mitigate security risks. By positioning the scholars as impartial facilitators rather than adversaries to any party, they reduce the likelihood of retaliation from extremist groups like AS
Currently highly fragmented and unregulated religious environment	Medium	Network members have put emphasis on discussing ideological differences within the network. This can contribute to reflecting on and bridging differences. Network members are committed to being united as a network to reduce fragmentation.

Possibility of retaliation against religious scholars	Medium	Recognizing the risks religious leaders may face due to their peacebuilding roles, and in order to address these risks effectively, the project will adopt a comprehensive approach, incorporating preventive, responsive, and supportive measures, while leveraging UNDP's established guidance on supporting implementing partners (IPs) in high-risk environments.
		
		1. Preventive Measures
		    Community-Based Protection Mechanisms: The project will coordinate closely with community-based protection mechanisms to ensure that scholars (male and female) work within their own communities, leveraging existing local protection systems. The community's trust in the ulema network can serve as a protective barrier, as scholars are seen as legitimate and respected figures. Engaging local leaders and clan structures will further enhance their informal security.
		• **Secure Communication Channels:** Utilize secure communication tools, such as Signal, to maintain regular check-ins with religious leaders, enabling safe reporting of threats. Disappearing messages and privacy settings will minimize risks of exposure.
		• **Training in Risk Preparedness:** If requested, UNDP will provide to ulema with training on security awareness, including digital safety and managing physical risks.
		
		2. Responsive Measures in Case of Retaliation
		• **Incident Monitoring and Documentation:**
		    ○ The project will use the **Human Rights Incident Form** to document retaliation incidents systematically, if any, capturing details such as the date, location, description of the incident, alleged perpetrators, and the immediate needs of the affected scholar.
		    ○ As required, the project will engage local community protection mechanisms to assist in immediate response and advocacy for justice.
		• **Rapid Response Protocol:**
		    ○ The project will conduct regular risk assessments to categorize threats as LOW, MODERATE, or HIGH, determining appropriate responses. These may include monitoring (LOW), relocation or cash

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assistance (MODERATE), or secure accommodation or safe haven (HIGH) as per UN protocols.

    o The project will mobilize UNDP's justice and security projects in affected communities to provide assistance in achieving justice for scholars who face retaliation, as and if needed.

- **Legal and Advocacy Support:** Collaborate with local justice mechanisms and CSOs to ensure legal representation and follow-up for affected scholars, addressing incidents through both informal and formal avenues.

3. Supportive Measures

- **Safe Relocation Options:** In collaboration with community leaders, arrange safe accommodations within trusted areas. If local solutions are inadequate, explore options such as secure havens in coordination with UN premises, following OLA guidance.
- **Psychosocial Support:** Establish peer-support systems within the ulema network and provide trauma counselling for scholars and their families affected by retaliation.
- **Community Advocacy:** Leverage the community's trust in the ulema network to advocate for justice, using public acknowledgment of scholars' roles to deter further retaliation.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Centralized Incident Database:** Maintain a secure, centralized database to track and analyse incidents systematically. This will support informed decision-making and adaptive risk mitigation strategies.
- **Community Feedback Loops:** Enable community reporting and feedback mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in the response to incidents. Use data to inform broader advocacy for the safety and recognition of ulema scholars.

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Potential risks associated with the participation of women and youth in project activities

1) Cultural and Social Barriers:
- Women's and youth involvement in decision-making and peacebuilding activities may face resistance due to traditional norms that limit their roles in public or religious spaces.
- Male-dominated ulema structures may inadvertently marginalize women's and youth voices.

2) Stigmatization and Retaliation:
- Women and youth actively participating in sensitive peacebuilding initiatives could be stigmatized within their communities, facing accusations of overstepping traditional roles.
- Risks of targeted violence, including threats and harassment, may increase

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1) Integration Rather Than Isolation:
Protections for female religious scholars will balance the need for additional support with the importance of ensuring they remain integrated within the broader ulema network. Female scholars will form a dedicated support group for peer mentoring and training, but this group will not operate in isolation. The focus will be on mainstreaming women into religious leadership roles while equipping them with the necessary protections and mentorship to enhance their contributions and their protection within and by the network structures.

2) Collaboration with UNDP Women's Participation and Promotion (WPP) Project:
- Coordinate with one-stop women's centers established under the WPP project to promote women's meaningful participation and empowerment through religious scholars' networks.
- Leverage these centers to amplify advocacy efforts led by religious scholars to address and curb gender-based violence (GBV).
- Foster mutually reinforcing insider mediation efforts between the ulema network and women's networks in select programming locations.

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for women and youth who take on visible roles. **3) Security Risks:** - Participation in public or semi-public dialogue spaces might expose women and youth to physical threats or retaliation from groups opposed to peacebuilding activities. - Travel to project locations for training or engagement might involve security risks, particularly in conflict-prone areas. . **4) Capacity Gaps:** - Women and youth may lack prior experience or training in peacebuilding, leaving them vulnerable to being overshadowed by more experienced and vocal participants.		**3) Safe Participation Framework:** - **Confidential Engagement:** Provide safe and discreet platforms for women and youth to voice their perspectives, such as separate consultation sessions or anonymous feedback mechanisms. - **Community-Based Protection:** Leverage local protection mechanisms, including clan and religious networks, to ensure safety during public engagement. - **Security Training:** Offer tailored safety and risk management training for women and youth participants to navigate potential challenges in peacebuilding spaces. **4) Countering Stigmatization:** - Promote positive narratives about women and youth involvement in peacebuilding through community awareness, highlighting their contributions as aligned with Islamic and societal values. - Identify and showcase respected female and youth role models within the ulema network who have successfully navigated similar challenges. **5) Capacity Building and Empowerment:** - Provide women and youth with targeted training in mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution to build their confidence and credibility. - Create mentoring opportunities where senior ulema members support female scholars and youth, fostering intergenerational collaboration and trust. **6) Security and Logistics:** - Prioritize safe transportation and meeting venues for project activities, particularly for women and youth traveling from high-risk areas. - Conduct travel risk assessments, where necessary, for vulnerable participants. **7) Monitoring and Evaluation:** - Use gender- and age-disaggregated data to track the inclusion and impact of women and youth in project activities. - Establish feedback mechanisms to identify emerging risks and adapt interventions to protect women and youth participants proactively.

d) **Monitoring and evaluation** – Describe the M&E approach for the project, including M&E expertise in the project team and main means and timing of collecting data? Include: a budget

break-down for both monitoring and evaluation activities, including collection of baseline and end line data and an independent evaluation, and an approximate M&E timeline. To ensure alignment, as relevant, indicators from the existing Strategic Results Frameworks or UN Cooperation Frameworks should be included. Fund recipients are obligated to reserve at least 5-7% of the project budget for M&E activities, including sufficient funds for a quality, independent evaluation. Projects are recommended to invest in community-feedback loops (including with women), Community-based monitoring systems or output and/or outcome data collection mechanisms.

Monitoring plan

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action[1]
Track results progress	Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analyzed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs.	Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.	Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management.
Monitor and Manage Risk	Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk. Monitoring will include field visit to assess the progress of the project activities.	Quarterly	Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken. Field monitoring results will be used to adapt project implementation as needed.
Learn	Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project.	At least annually	Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions.
Annual Project Quality Assurance	The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP's quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project.	Annually	Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance.
Review and Make Course Corrections	Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making.	At least annually	Performance data, risks, lessons and quality will be discussed by the project board and used to make course corrections.
Project Report	In addition to complying to PBF reporting requirements, progress reports will also be presented to the Project Board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk long with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period.	Annually, semi-annually and end of the project (final report)	PBF reporting and organizing project board meetings.

	The project's governance mechanism (i.e., project board) will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. In the project's final year, the Project Board shall hold an end-of project review to capture lessons learned and discuss opportunities for scaling up and to socialize project results and lessons learned with relevant audiences.		
Project Review (Project Board)		Specify frequency (i.e., at least annually)	Any quality concerns or slower than expected progress should be discussed by the project board and management actions agreed to address the issues identified.

[1] Monitoring and Evaluation activities will be charged through DPC and additional, dedicated M&E budget reflected as such in the RRF as and where required.

Evaluation plan:

Evaluation Title	Partners (if joint)	Related Strategic Plan Output	UNSDCF/CPD Outcome	Planned Completion Date	Key Evaluation Stakeholders	Cost and Source of Funding
Mid-Term Evaluation	RCO Somalia			TBC	Responsible Parties, Donors	40.000 USD
End-of-Project Evaluation	RCO Somalia			TBC	Responsible Parties, Donors	50.000 USD

Lessons learned from programming and the consultative processes with community and civil society representatives have allowed for the development of a qualitative assessment framework that applies a context-sensitive understanding of peoples' views – reflected, inter alia, in levels of trust in government, attitudes towards the other, empathy, compassion, a willingness to seek and find consensus, as well as attitudes towards the use of violence to reach one's goals. Such qualitative data collection is to be triangulated by quantitative data capturing the degree of violence prevalent in selected communities in areas of influence of non-state armed groups, correlated with a detailed conflict mapping and understanding of the various layers of violence in Somalia, including the conflict between the Somali Government and al-Shabaab, inter- and intra-clan violence, land disputes, disputes over resources, climate-change triggered conflicts, conflict related to political tensions between different state entities in a nascent federal system etc.

In consciously shifting away from a "countering extremism" perspective and moving towards a conflict transformation and peacebuilding trajectory in addressing "extremism", the program indicators are now a reflection of people-centered, process-oriented dialogue and consensus-building to capture the impact of activities towards reaching the overarching programme objective of reducing political violence. Instead of an ex-negativo focus on reducing levels of extremism which risk stigmatization and perpetuation of labels, the monitoring and evaluation framework is focused on measuring the reduction or absence of violence through positive peace indicators, such as the ability to create spaces for inclusive dialogue, diverse voices heard, consensus found on aspects of good governance, and such religious consensus-building translating into – for example – the participation of communities in forming local governance bodies, increasing levels of trust in and reliance upon government institutions and their basic service delivery offers.

The indicators selected in the results framework of this project are based on a broader framework to measure progress: The effectiveness of the project will be measured based on several key factors that assess the inclusivity, reach, and influence of the Islamic scholars' network. These

metrics focus on the involvement of religious scholars, the scope of the dialogues they facilitate, the consensus reached, and the acceptance of outcomes by key conflict parties.

1. Baseline Data:

- Geographical Control by Non-State Actors:
    - o Baseline data will capture regions controlled by AS and other non-state actors. This information will help track shifts in governance influence, particularly in areas where local dialogues facilitated by the ulema network are actively working to mediate conflicts.

- Violence Trends:
    - o Tracking the frequency and nature of ideologically justified violence will provide insights into how the project impacts local governance and conflict dynamics. This includes monitoring violent incidents.

- Community Perceptions:
    - o Surveys on the perceptions of local communities towards AS's governance and the Somali government's legitimacy can serve as a baseline for tracking changes in trust and allegiance, especially as scholars engage in peacebuilding efforts.

2. Indicators:

- Inclusivity and Reach of the Islamic Scholars' Network:
    - o The project impact will be measured by the level of inclusivity in the ulema network, assessing the breadth of representation across different clans, gender, religious schools of thought, and geographic areas.
    - o The reach of the network will also be tracked by the number of regions and districts where scholars are involved in mediating conflicts and facilitating peace dialogues.

- Level of Scholars Involved and Consensus Reached:
    - o Another critical indicator will be the level of religious scholars involved, from local to high-level scholars, and their engagement in shaping the peace dialogues.
    - o The project will also monitor the subjects of debate, and the level of consensus reached through these discussions, mapping key topics the scholars manage to reach consensus on across societal divisions.

- Responses and Acceptance of Consensus by Conflict Parties:
    - o The ability of the ulema network to foster agreements that are accepted by both formal state actors and non-state actors will indicate the program's effectiveness in building sustainable peace.
    - o The incorporation of local mediation outcomes into national policies and strategies for state- and peacebuilding will be tracked to assess the influence of religious consensus-building on governance.

e) **Project exit strategy/ sustainability** – Briefly explain the project's exit strategy to ensure that the project can be wrapped up at the end of the project duration, either through sustainability measures, agreements with other donors for follow-up funding or end of activities which do not need further support. If support from other donors is expected, explain what the project will do concretely and pro-actively to try to ensure this support from the start. Consider possible partnerships with other donors or IFIs.

Sustainability and Engagement with Additional Donors: This project will also serve as a proof of concept to catalytically attract future funding for this bottom-up conflict transformation approach. Efforts are underway to engage additional donors who can complement the project's ongoing initiatives and help scale its impact.

Ensuring the Ulema Network's Autonomy While Working with the Government: The proposal emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between bottom-up peacebuilding and collaboration with the government, particularly the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs (MERA). However, there is a recognized risk that the ulema network could be seen as being too close to government, especially if it appears overly dependent on government support or is used to promote the government's counter-narratives against AS labelled as the "ideological front". To safeguard the network's autonomy, several key strategies are embedded within the project's design:

1. **Autonomous Funding Structure:** It is important to clarify that the network's funding does not come directly from the Somali government. The network's activities are supported through direct payments made by UNDP under a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with MERA. This means that while the government provides logistical and overall support, it does not fund or determine the network's operations. This arrangement ensures that the ulema network maintains its independence.

2. **Self-Sufficiency Through Zakat Collection:** The long-term sustainability of the ulema network is grounded in its ability to become financially independent. One of the core strategies for achieving this is through the collection of Zakat (charitable donations). By tapping into traditional Islamic practices of giving, the network can ensure that it remains financially self-sufficient and community-supported, further distancing itself from reliance on government or external funding. The Zakat collection initiative also empowers the network to manage its own resources and maintain credibility with the communities it serves. The project encourages network members to actively engage in Zakat collection, which strengthens both their financial stability and societal legitimacy.

The practice of Zakat collection varies widely across countries. In Somalia, Zakat is typically disbursed directly from individuals to beneficiaries or through trusted scholars, following established religious traditions. Consequently, the network's steps towards greater financial self-sufficiency through Zakat collection in the course of this project builds on these existing practices and does not require the project to design new mechanisms for Zakat collection. Instead, the project will focus on providing organizational and structural support to strengthen the ulema network's capacity to manage these resources efficiently.

To ensure alignment with Islamic teachings and community trust, the network will maintain **clear transparency in the purpose of Zakat collection and allocation**, particularly for peacebuilding initiatives. Islamic scripture supports the use of Zakat for reconciliation and fostering social harmony under categories like "bringing hearts together" (Al-Mu'allafat al-Qulub) and "in the cause of Allah" (Fi Sabilillah), as outlined in Surah At-Tawbah (9:60). Peacebuilding efforts, such as resolving disputes, mediation, and community dialogues, align with these principles, which will be emphasized during community engagement.

The ulema network will ensure transparency in Zakat collection and allocation for peacebuilding through the following steps:

1. **Clarity of Purpose:** When collecting Zakat, religious scholars will clearly communicate the intended purpose, distinguishing funds allocated for peacebuilding initiatives from those for other traditional purposes, such as assisting the poor or debt relief. This will involve community awareness campaigns that frame peacebuilding within Islamic principles.

2. **Community Oversight**: Local committees composed of religious scholars and trusted community members will oversee Zakat collection and ensure it is used in line with its stated purpose. This includes documenting and reporting how funds are used for peacebuilding activities like reconciliation dialogues and conflict resolution efforts.

3. **Capacity Building**: Religious scholars will receive training in basic financial management and record-keeping to ensure transparency and accountability in handling Zakat funds. This training will emphasize conflict-sensitive fund allocation while aligning with Islamic values.

4. **Public Reporting**: Community reporting mechanisms, such as announcements during Friday prayers or mosque gatherings, will provide transparency on how Zakat funds are being allocated to peacebuilding efforts, reinforcing trust and accountability.

This approach ensures that Zakat collection for peacebuilding remains transparent, respects Islamic principles, and builds trust within communities while avoiding the need for separate funds. By maintaining clarity in purpose and accountability, the ulema network can sustainably leverage Zakat to contribute to social harmony and conflict resolution.

3. **Partnership with MERA Designed to Avoid Dependency**: The partnership with MERA is structured to provide overall support and coordination without creating dependency. MERA's role is to act as a facilitator, helping to create an enabling environment for the ulema to carry out their peacebuilding efforts. However, the ministry is not involved in the day-to-day funding or activities of the network, ensuring that the ulema remain free to mediate and lead dialogues independently.

The program strategy builds on the rationale of investing into religious leaders and actors as traditional builders of peace, trust, and unity within the Somali society. As such, supporting the ulema most of which have been excluded from Somalia's statebuilding and peacebuilding trajectory in fulfilling their traditional roles within Somali communities is an investment into social cohesion. The network members are supported to perform multiple amplifying peacebuilding functions while additionally cascading their knowledge and expertise to other religious actors in their growing sphere of influence. The program envisages contributing to uniting and regulating the currently highly fragmented and unregulated religious environment. Growing community support for the work of religious actors as peacebuilders is envisaged to gradually lead to community contributions that sustain the ulema network's programmatic activities. The close collaboration between MERAs and ulema contributes to trust building in government institutions. The overarching sustainability and exit strategy of the programme is to position the MERAs in a way that financial contributions from both Somali communities and foreign Islamic charities would eventually be routed through the respective ministries for tailored support of the Somali ulema across different schools of thought united in the promotion of the peaceful and inclusive message of Islam as Somalia's state religion.

IV.   Project budget

Provide brief additional information on projects costs, highlighting any specific choices that have underpinned the budget preparation, especially for personnel, travel or other indirect project support, to demonstrate value for money for the project. The proposed budget for all projects must include sufficient funds for an independent evaluation. The proposed budget for projects involving non-UN direct recipients must include funds for independent audit. Fill out **Annex A.2** on project value for money. Please note that in nearly all cases, the Peacebuilding Fund transfers project funds in a series of performance-based tranches. PBF's standard approach is to transfer project funds in two tranches for UN recipients and three tranches for non-UN recipients, releasing second and third tranches upon demonstration that performance benchmarks have been met. All projects include the following two

standard performance benchmarks: 1) at least 75% of funds from the first tranche have been committed, and 2) all project reporting obligations have been met. In addition to these standard benchmarks and depending on the risk rating or other context-specific factors, additional benchmarks may be indicated for the release of second and third tranches.

Please specify below any context-specific factors that may be relevant for the release of second and third tranches. These may include the successful conduct of elections, passage of key legislation, the standing up of key counterpart units or offices, or other performance indicators that are necessary before project implementation may advance. Within your response, please reflect how performance-based tranches affect project sequencing considerations.

Fill out two tables in the Excel budget **Annex D**. In the first Excel budget table in Annex D, please include the percentage towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) for every activity. Also provide a clear justification for every GEWE allocation (e.g. training will have a session on gender equality, specific efforts will be made to ensure equal representation of women etc.).

Totals				
	UNDP	Recipient Organization 2	Recipient Organization 3	Totals
1. Staff and other personnel	$ 339,000.00	$ -	$ -	$ 339,000.00
2. Supplies, Commodities, Materials	$ 211,955.86	$ -	$ -	$ 211,955.86
3. Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture (including Depreciation)	$ 186,634.11	$ -	$ -	$ 186,634.11
4. Contractual services	$ 140,000.00	$ -	$ -	$ 140,000.00
5. Travel	$ 295,969.54	$ -	$ -	$ 295,969.54
6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	$ 918,564.09	$ -	$ -	$ 918,564.09
7. General Operating and other Costs	$ 311,899.00	$ -	$ -	$ 311,899.00
Sub-Total	$ 2,404,022.60	$ -	$ -	$ 2,404,022.60
7% Indirect Costs	$ 168,281.58	$ -	$ -	$ 168,281.58
Total	$ 2,572,304.18	$ -	$ -	$ 2,572,304.18

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Performance-Based Tranche Breakdown					
	UNDP	Recipient Organization 2	Recipient Organization 3	TOTAL	Tranche %
First Tranche:	$ 1,028,921.67	$ -	$ -	$ 1,028,921.67	40%
Second Tranche:	$ 771,691.25	$ -	$ -	$ 771,691.25	30%
Third Tranche:	$ 771,691.26	$ -	$ -	$ 771,691.26	30%
TOTAL	$ 2,572,304,18	$ -	$ -	$ 2,572,304,18	

Annex A.1: Checklist of project implementation readiness

Question	Yes	No	Comment
1. Have all implementing partners been identified? If not, what steps remain and proposed timeline	Yes		
2. Have TORs for key project staff been finalized and ready to advertise? Please attach to the submission		No	ToRs are currently being drafted
3. Have project sites been identified? If not, what will be the process and timeline	Yes		
4. Have local communities and government offices been consulted/ sensitized on the existence of the project? Please state when this was done or when it will be done.	Yes		UNDP Consultations with government the Ulema are ongoing on regular basis during the implementation
5. Has any preliminary analysis/ identification of lessons learned/ existing activities been done? If not, what analysis remains to be done to enable implementation and proposed timeline?	Yes		Lessons learned from the previous phase of the project are considered In formulation of this project.
6. Have beneficiary criteria been identified? If not, what will be the process and timeline.	Yes		
7. Have any agreements been made with the relevant Government counterparts relating to project implementation sites, approaches, Government contribution?	Yes		
8. Have clear arrangements been made on project implementing approach between project recipient organizations?	Yes		
9. What other preparatory activities need to be undertaken before actual project implementation can begin and how long will this take?	N/A		Othe Preparatory activities will commence as soon as funding received
10. Did UN gender expertise inform the design of the project (e.g. has a gender adviser/expert/focal poir or UN Women colleague provided input)?	Yes		
11. Did consultations with women and/or youth organizations inform the design of the project?	Yes		
12. Are the indicators and targets in the results framework disaggregated by sex and age?	Yes		
13. Does the budget annex include allocations towards GEWE for all activities and clear justifications for GEWE allocations?			

Annex A.2: Checklist for project value for money

Question	Yes	No	Project Comment
1. Does the project have a budget narrative justification, which provides additional project specific information on any major budget choices or higher than usual staffing, operational or travel costs, so as to explain how the project ensures value for money?		No	
2. Are unit costs (e.g. for travel, consultancies, procurement of materials etc.) comparable with those used in similar interventions (either in similar country contexts, within regions, or in past interventions in the same country context)? If not, this needs to be explained in the budget narrative section.	Yes		
3. Is the proposed budget proportionate to the expected project outcomes and to the scope of the project (e.g. number, size and remoteness of geographic zones and number of proposed direct and indirect beneficiaries)? Provide any comments.	yes		
4. Is the percentage of staffing and operational costs by the Receiving UN Agency and by any implementing partners clearly visible and reasonable for the context (i.e. no more than 20% for staffing, reasonable operational costs, including travel and direct operational costs) unless well justified in narrative section?	Yes		
5. Are staff costs proportionate to the amount of work required for the activity? And is the project using local rather than international staff/expertise wherever possible? What is the justification for use of international staff, if applicable?	Yes		The project will have 3 staff, one national officer fully funded from this project, while the international project manager is currently funded from other funding sources. The third staff is proposed to an INUV
6. Does the project propose purchase of materials, equipment and infrastructure for more than 15% of the budget? If yes, please state what measures are being taken to ensure value for money in the procurement process and their maintenance/ sustainable use for peacebuilding after the project end.		No	
7. Does the project propose purchase of a vehicle(s) for the project? If yes, please provide justification as to why existing vehicles/ hire vehicles cannot be used.		No	
8. Do the implementing agencies or the UN Mission bring any additional non-PBF source of funding/ in-kind support to the project? Please explain what is provided. And if not, why not.		No	No Financial sources is being provided, however, UNTMIS is contributing technical support

Since the start of the project formulation. This support is expected to continue during the first year of project implementation. |

Annex B.1: Project Administrative arrangements for UN Recipient Organizations

(This section uses standard wording – please do not remove)

The UNDP MPTF Office serves as the Administrative Agent (AA) of the PBF and is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, the transfer of funds to Recipient UN Organizations, the consolidation of narrative and financial reports and the submission of these to the PBSO and the PBF donors. As the Administrative Agent of the PBF, MPTF Office transfers funds to RUNOS on the basis of the signed Memorandum of Understanding between each RUNO and the MPTF Office.

AA Functions

On behalf of the Recipient Organizations, and in accordance with the UNDG-approved "Protocol on the Administrative Agent for Multi Donor Trust Funds and Joint Programmes, and One UN funds" (2008), the MPTF Office as the AA of the PBF will:

- Disburse funds to each of the RUNO in accordance with instructions from the PBSO. The AA will normally make each disbursement within three (3) to five (5) business days after having received instructions from the PBSO along with the relevant Submission form and Project document signed by all participants concerned;

- Consolidate the financial statements (Annual and Final), based on submissions provided to the AA by RUNOS and provide the PBF annual consolidated progress reports to the donors and the PBSO;

- Proceed with the operational and financial closure of the project in the MPTF Office system once the completion is completed by the RUNO. A project will be considered as operationally closed upon submission of a joint final narrative report. In order for the MPTF Office to financially closed a project, each RUNO must refund unspent balance of over 250 USD, indirect cost (GMS) should not exceed 7% and submission of a certified final financial statement by the recipient organizations' headquarters);

- Disburse funds to any RUNO for any cost extension that the PBSO may decide in accordance with the PBF rules & regulations.

Accountability, transparency and reporting of the Recipient United Nations Organizations

Recipient United Nations Organizations will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to them by the Administrative Agent. Such funds will be administered by each RUNO in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures.

Each RUNO shall establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent from the PBF account. This separate ledger account shall be administered by each RUNO in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures, including those relating to interest. The separate ledger account shall be subject exclusively to the internal and external auditing procedures laid down in the financial regulations, rules, directives and procedures applicable to RUNO.

Each RUNO will provide the Administrative Agent and the PBSO (for narrative reports only) with:

Type of report	Due when	Submitted by
Semi-annual project progress report	15 June	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual project progress report	15 November	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
End of project report covering entire project duration	Within three months from the operational project closure (it can be submitted instead of an annual report if timing coincides)	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual strategic peacebuilding and PBF progress report (for PRF allocations only), which may contain a request for additional PBF allocation if the context requires it	1 December	PBF Secretariat on behalf of the PBF Steering Committee, where it exists or Head of UN Country Team where it does not.

Financial reporting and timeline

Timeline	Event
30 April	Annual reporting – Report **Q4 expenses** (Jan. to Dec. of previous year)
Certified final financial report to be provided by 30 June of the calendar year after project closure	

UNEX also opens for voluntary financial reporting for UN recipient organizations the following dates

31 July	Voluntary Q2 expenses (January to June)
31 October	Voluntary Q3 expenses (January to September)

Unspent Balance exceeding USD 250, at the closure of the project would have to been refunded and a notification sent to the MPTF Office, no later than six months (30 June) of the year following the completion of the activities.

Ownership of Equipment, Supplies and Other Property

Ownership of equipment, supplies and other property financed from the PBF shall vest in the RUNO undertaking the activities. Matters relating to the transfer of ownership by the RUNO shall be determined in accordance with its own applicable policies and procedures.

Public Disclosure

The PBSO and Administrative Agent will ensure that operations of the PBF are publicly disclosed on the PBF website (www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund) and the Administrative Agent's website (www.mptf.undp.org).

Annex B.2: Project Administrative arrangements for Non-UN Recipient Organizations

(This section uses standard wording – please do not remove)

Accountability, transparency and reporting of the Recipient Non-United Nations Organization:

The Recipient Non-United Nations Organization will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to them by the Administrative Agent. Such funds will be administered by each recipient in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures.

The Recipient Non-United Nations Organization will have full responsibility for ensuring that the Activity is implemented in accordance with the signed Project Document.

In the event of a financial review, audit or evaluation recommended by PBSO, the cost of such activity should be included in the project budget.

Ensure professional management of the Activity, including performance monitoring and reporting activities in accordance with PBSO guidelines.

Ensure compliance with the Financing Agreement and relevant applicable clauses in the Fund MOU.

Reporting:

Each Receipt will provide the Administrative Agent and the PBSO (for narrative reports only) with:

Type of report	Due when	Submitted by
Bi-annual project progress report	15 June	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual project progress report	15 November	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
End of project report covering entire project duration	Within three months from the operational project closure (it can be submitted instead of an annual report if timing coincides)	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist

Annual strategic peacebuilding and PBF progress report (for PRF allocations only), which may contain a request for additional PBF allocation if the context requires it	1 December	PBF Secretariat on behalf of the PBF Steering Committee, where it exists or Head of UN Country Team where it does not.

Financial reports and timeline

Timeline	Event
28 February	Annual reporting – Report **Q4 expenses** (Jan. to Dec. of previous year)
30 April	Report **Q1 expenses** (January to March)
31 July	Report **Q2 expenses** (January to June)
31 October	Report **Q3 expenses** (January to September)
Certified final financial report to be provided at the quarter following the project financial closure	

Unspent Balance exceeding USD 250 at the closure of the project would have to been refunded and a notification sent to the Administrative Agent, no later than three months (31 March) of the year following the completion of the activities.

Ownership of Equipment, Supplies and Other Property

Matters relating to the transfer of ownership by the Recipient Non-UN Recipient Organization will be determined in accordance with applicable policies and procedures defined by the PBSO.

Public Disclosure

The PBSO and Administrative Agent will ensure that operations of the PBF are publicly disclosed on the PBF website (www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund) and the Administrative Agent website (www.mptf.undp.org).

Final Project Audit for non-UN recipient organization projects

An independent project audit will be requested by the end of the project. The audit report needs to be attached to the final narrative project report. The cost of such an activity must be included in the project budget.

Special Provisions regarding Financing of Terrorism

Consistent with UN Security Council Resolutions relating to terrorism, including UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) and 1267 (1999) and related resolutions, the Participants are firmly committed to the international fight against terrorism, and in particular, against the financing of terrorism. Similarly, all Recipient Organizations recognize their obligation to comply with any applicable sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council. Each of the Recipient Organizations will use all reasonable efforts to ensure that the funds transferred to it in accordance with this agreement are not used to provide support or assistance to individuals or entities associated with terrorism as designated by any UN Security Council sanctions regime. If, during the term of this agreement, a

Recipient Organization determines that there are credible allegations that funds transferred to it in accordance with this agreement have been used to provide support or assistance to individuals or entities associated with terrorism as designated by any UN Security Council sanctions regime it will as soon as it becomes aware of it inform the head of PBSO, the Administrative Agent and the donor(s) and, in consultation with the donors as appropriate, determine an appropriate response.

Non-UN recipient organization (NUNO) eligibility:

In order to be declared eligible to receive PBF funds directly, NUNOs must be assessed as technically, financially and legally sound by the PBF and its agent, the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO). Prior to submitting a finalized project document, it is the responsibility of each NUNO to liaise with PBSO and MPTFO and provide all the necessary documents (see below) to demonstrate that all the criteria have been fulfilled and to be declared as eligible for direct PBF funds.

The NUNO must provide (in a timely fashion, ensuring PBSO and MPTFO have sufficient time to review the package) the documentation demonstrating that the NUNO:

- ➢ Has previously received funding from the UN, the PBF, or any of the contributors to the PBF, in the country of project implementation.
- ➢ Has a current valid registration as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization with a social based mission in both the country where headquarter is located and in country of project implementation for the duration of the proposed grant. (**NOTE:** If registration is done on an annual basis in the country, the organization must have the current registration and obtain renewals for the duration of the project, in order to receive subsequent funding tranches).
- ➢ Produces an annual report that includes the proposed country for the grant.
- ➢ Commissions audited financial statements, available for the last two years, including the auditor opinion letter. The financial statements should include the legal organization that will sign the agreement (and oversee the country of implementation, if applicable) as well as the activities of the country of implementation. (**NOTE:** If these are not available for the country of proposed project implementation, the CSO will also need to provide the latest two audit reports for a program or project-based audit in country.) The letter from the auditor should also state whether the auditor firm is part of the nationally qualified audit firms.
- ➢ Demonstrates an annual budget in the country of proposed project implementation for the previous two calendar years, which is at least twice the annualized budget sought from PBF for the project.[24]
- ➢ Demonstrates at least 3 years of experience in the country where grant is sought.
- ➢ Provides a clear explanation of the CSO's legal structure, including the specific entity which will enter into the legal agreement with the MPTF-O for the PBF grant.

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[24] Annualized PBF project budget is obtained by dividing the PBF project budget by the number of project duration months and multiplying by 12.

Annex C: Project Results Framework (MUST include sex- and age disaggregated targets)

Outcomes	Outputs	Indicators	Means of Verification/ frequency of collection	Indicator milestones
Outcome 1: Bottom-up Peacebuilding Network Enhanced to Address "Violent Extremism" The project also contributes to: - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Somalia 2021-2025 (UNSDCF) outcome 1.3: All Somalis live in a peaceful, inclusive and cohesive society - SDG 16 ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels").		**Outcome Indicator 1a:** *Communities and stakeholders perceive that disputes and violence have reduced with the help of the network of religious scholars* Baseline: Only qualitative research was conducted so far by a Third-Party-Monitoring company in Baidoa and Dhusammareb, applying a qualitative data collection approach, incorporating both desk review and field data collection through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). ⇨ Quantitative baseline still needs to be conducted at the beginning of the project Target: 10% increase	Qualitative research (FGDs/KIIs) to inform the design of a quantitative survey to be carried out in districts where the network works (data disaggregated by age, gender, district)	Quantitative survey developed (based on qualitative research) and baseline conducted
		Outcome Indicator 1b: *% of community members that would use religious scholars as a reliable actor for dispute resolution, reconciliation, peacebuilding and the prevention of "violent extremism"* Baseline: Only qualitative research was conducted so far by a Third-Party-Monitoring company in Baidoa and Dhusammareb, applying a qualitative data collection approach, incorporating both desk review and field data collection through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). ⇨ Quantitative baseline still needs to be conducted at the beginning of the project Target: 15% increase	Qualitative research (FGDs/KIIs) to inform the design of a quantitative survey to be carried out in districts where the network works (data disaggregated by age, gender, district)	Quantitative survey developed (based on qualitative research) and baseline conducted

Output	Indicator	Means of Verification	Milestone
	Outcome Indicator 1c: *Level of knowledge of the peaceful message of Islam among communities* Baseline: Quantitative baseline still needs to be conducted at the beginning of the project Target: 15% increase	Qualitative research (FGDs/KIIs) to inform the design of a set of culturally appropriate questions for a quantitative survey to be carried out in districts where the network works (data disaggregated by age, gender, district)	Quantitative survey developed (based on qualitative research) and baseline conducted
Output 1.1 Extending and Reinforcing an Inclusive Ulema Network	**Output Indicator 1.1.1:** *Apolitical and inclusive civil society umbrella organizations of the network are functioning at FMS level to coordinate Ulema to transform conflicts* Baseline: One FMS-level umbrella recently established in Galmudug but not yet operational. No umbrellas in other FMS. Target:5	Written charters that regulate the functioning and decision making of civil society umbrella organizations Membership data indicating the level of inclusivity in terms of diverse participation of clans and religious schools of thought Documentation of cases where ulemas under the umbrella engaged in conflict transformation (including cases that are published to share lessons learned and encourage replication by other ulemas) Qualitative and quantitative research providing information on how communities and stakeholders know and trust the work of these civil society umbrella organizations	First two civil society umbrella organizations of the network are functioning at FMS level
	Output Indicator 1.1.2: *Horizontal expansion of the network: # of districts that have members of the Network (including data on: # in newly and recently recovered districts, fragile and stable districts, and districts affected by ATMIS withdrawal; # of network members in total – disaggregated by gender and age)* Baseline: 16 Target: 26	Membership data indicating districts, gender and age	Network members active in five more districts

Output	Indicator	Means of Verification	Milestone
	Output Indicator 1.1.3: *Vertical Influence of the network: # of advocacy messages expressed in form of a common network position/ communique to address disputes and reduce violence at FMS and FGS level (and how many of those were adapted by decision makers at FMS and FGS level in terms of policy and practice)* Baseline: 0 Target: 15 by the end of the project	Documentation of statements/ communiques made at FMS/ FGS level, indicating the way it was shared, with whom, for which objectives, with which outcome	First advocacy message shared at FGS or FMS level (agreed by FMS umbrella(s))
Output 1.2 Empowering Women into Faith Leadership	**Output Indicator 1.2.1:** *# women supported to become female madrassa teachers and joining the network* Baseline: 20 Target: 40	Documentation of women supported who continue as madrassa teachers or in other functions related to the objectives of the network by the end of the project Membership data indicating districts, gender and age	First ten new women scholars join the network
	Output Indicator 1.2.2: # of cases being addressed to resolve disputes and reduce violence with joint participation of women and men from the network Baseline: No data available Target: 30% of all cases are addressed jointly	Documentation of mediation cases (at the beginning of project and end of project) indicating at least one woman and one man as mediator, including information on case and outcome	Documentation of mediation cases done during first 3 months of the project
	Output Indicator 1.2.3: *% of women and men scholars of the network perceiving that the role, influence and participation in the network is increasing* Baseline: Target: 20% increase	Survey among network members at the beginning and at the end of the project	Survey at the beginning of project conducted
Output 1.3 Peer Learning on Peaceful Resolution of Extremist Views through Insider Mediation	**Output Indicator 1.3.1:** *Experience sharing, mentoring and learning workshops for network members on insider mediation* Baseline: 1 Target: 7	Documentation of workshops conducted and documentation of experience sharing	First insider mediation workshop conducted in Somalia

Output	Indicator	Means of Verification	Milestone
	Output Indicator 1.3.2: *# of peer learning events conducted by the network/ network members to exchange n best practices and learn from each other on how to tackle extremist views* Baseline: 0 Target: 7	Documentation of peer learning events and documentation of experience sharing	First peer learning event held by the project
Output 1.4 Community dialogues on Islamic aspects of good governance acceptable to all	**Output Indicator 1.4.1:** *Number of social dialogues carried out in communities* Baseline: 0 Target: 26	Documentation of social dialogues, including topic covered	First social dialogue carried out
	Output Indicator 1.4.2: *Ulema experiences sharing workshops on social dialogues* Baseline:0 Target: 8	Documentation of experience sharing, including topic covered	First experience sharing workshop conducted
	Output Indicator 1.4.3: *Number of FGS- or FMS-level policies, strategies and legislative actions that reference or incorporate outcomes from local dialogues facilitated by the ulema network*	Documentation of experience sharing, including topic covered	