

Beat: News

Strengthening Somalia's Institutions to Improve Service Delivery to Citizens

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WASHINGTON, December 22, 2022 — The World Bank approved \$75 million in financing for the Somalia Enhancing Public Resource Management Project (SERP), which aims to support Somalia as it builds state legitimacy, reduces institutional fragmentation, and strengthens institutions for improved service delivery. The SERP is co-financed by both an International Development Assistance (*IDA) grant and a grant from the Somalia Multi-Partner Fund.

Although the long-term growth of the Somali economy continues to be held back by various climate-related shocks such as drought and floods, the COVID-19 pandemic, and frequent locust infestations, Somalia has a historic opportunity to turn the page on decades of conflict, fragility, and state fragmentation to accelerate poverty reduction and boost inclusive growth.

To help Somalia improve the capacity of its institutions and increase transparency and accountability in managing public resources, SERP will build on the success of previous operations. It is also designed to establish coordination mechanisms at different levels, engage closely with all stakeholders, and balance the advanced and ambitious governance agenda of the government with the requirements and challenges of a fragile, conflict-affected, and violent (FCV) environment.

"This project is an opportunity to consolidate and build on the reforms put in place through previous World Bank interventions," said Kristina Svensson, World Bank Country Manager for Somalia. "It will also address synergies and interlinkages between the existing programs throughout Somalia and will help the government achieve a harmonized agenda, which is essential for transparency as fiscal decentralization becomes established."

The project's main objective is to strengthen accountability, transparency, and institutional capacity in public resource management across participating entities by leveraging synergies between various reform elements in a symbiotic manner. This will be done by putting in place a coherent, consistent, and sustainable reform agenda for managing public finances and human resources. The improved outcomes of this integrated approach to reforms will contribute to greater trust in fiscal management. SERP will also offer an opportunity to enhance systems, staff skills, and effectiveness of civil service management to improve government capacity to deliver services to citizens.

"SERP will incorporate the lessons we have learned through recent engagement in Somalia and will therefore help the country achieve consistency, harmonization, economies of scale, and interoperability in managing public resources," said Jiwanka B. Wickramasinghe, World Bank Senior Financial Management Specialist. "It is designed to work across Somali governments so as to sustain a positive trajectory that will require predictable financing and improved institutions (among other factors) and that prepares for future financing opportunities once the country will be eligible for full and irrevocable debt relief."

For Somalia to address the broader challenges it is faced with, it will require continuing the reform momentum, anchored in the HIPC initiative. The government has embarked on a broad reform agenda in the areas of public finances and public sector management with several successes such as an updated legal and policy framework, automation, large and medium taxpayer offices and taxpayer identification in operation, and functional reviews completed in selected ministries, departments and agencies. This has laid a solid foundation and set the stage for the next phase.

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