



Puntland
Development &
Research Center



PDRC REPORT

PUNTLAND

ELECTED DISTRICT

COUNCILS: ACHIEVEMENTS

AND PERSPECTIVES

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Acronyms

DDF District Development Framework

GIS Geographic Information System

KAAH Name of a Political Association

JPLG UN Joint Programme on Local Government and Decentralized Service Delivery

Mideeye Name of a Political Association

MOI Ministry of Interior, Federalism and Democratization

OPOV One Person One Vote

PDRC Puntland Development Research Centre

SinCad Name of a Political Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

12 months had elapsed since the election of new councils in the early local government elections, which were held in the three Puntland districts of Eyl, Gardho and Ufeyn. The public was jubilant and expected these elected councils to perform better than their predecessor government-nominated councils. In particular, people hoped that the councils will instantly start functioning and respond to their immediate needs such as delivery of basic services, and improvement of their livelihoods by supporting the production sectors of livestock, fishery, frankincense, etc. This study, therefore, focused on assessing the progress that the newly elected councils had made towards their tasked mission since their establishment. It also attempted to highlight the challenges that the councils had encountered and the lessons that could be learned from their experience. These lessons will serve both warning signals as well as exemplary illumination pathways for the future councils that will soon be elected in the remaining Puntland districts.

The early local government elections took place in the designated three districts on 25 Oct, 2021 and the results were declared the next day without any disputing petitions. However, their seating delayed 6 months with regard to the Ufeyn and Gardho districts, and 10 months in the case of Eyl district. This was due to Puntland government's diversion to participation of national level parliamentary selections as well as the national presidential election. Additionally, the Eyl council discerned a leadership conflict within the elected council members, who came from different competing political associations. At the time of the study, Eyl and Gardho district councils operated 5 months, while Eyl council had just managed to overcome its internal conflict, elected a Mayor and a deputy and took up office for only two weeks.

Institutionally, all three districts' municipalities are hosted in public-owned premises. However, Ufeyn district distinguishes with insufficient institutional capacity in both material and human resources, while Gardho and Eyl municipalities are well developed with advanced capacities as a result of continual support from the JPLG programme for a period of over 12 years and 8 years respectively. Ufeyn district is not a JPLG programme partner and therefore qualifies to be considered an especial case and proffered a tailored support arrangement. This can take the form of immediate incorporation of Ufeyn district into the JPLG target districts or granting it a special status, where funds are allocated to it in the spirit of a 'democracy Dividend'

The study examined the performance of the other two district councils of Ufeyn and Gardho¹ and found that the councils had:

- Invigorated the operations of their municipalities and strengthened revenue collection. They had devised concrete plans of collecting taxes from rural villages. They also charged new tariffs on previously untaxed items such as: houses, farms, trucks, water tankers, tip trucks, fire wood, milk, etc.

¹ Eyl Council was in the process of assuming office at the time of the study

- Formulated and disseminated their annual budgets to the public, which was the first time that municipality budgets were made public
- Conducted extensive public awareness raising and unleashed sanitation campaigns
- Visited the district's rural villages and determined their respective priority needs while urging them to pay taxes

The Institutional and Administrative Gaps

Below are the gaps identified in the study:

- The three district councils are new and lack technical capacities
- The councils are experiencing financial constraints and lack revenue collection skills or mechanisms
- The elected district councils are not getting any financial or incentives support as a 'Democracy Dividend' support from the Puntland government or the international partners

Recommendations/Proposed Interventions

- Inclusion of Ufeyn district in the JPLG programme, which had already built the institutional capacities of Gardho and Eyl districts. This can take the form, as earlier mentioned, of immediate incorporation of Ufeyn district into the JPLG target districts or granting it a special status, where funds are allocated to it in the spirit of a 'democracy Dividend'
- Provision of technical capacity building to the new elected district council
- Support in preparation of District Development Frameworks for the three districts
- Assistance in devising strategies and mechanisms of increasing revenue collection and looking for additional revenue sources
- Rehabilitation and/or extension of Ufeyn public physical infrastructures,
- Construction of an asphalted Garowe-Eyl Road
- Construction of a modern airport for Eyl district capital

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Context

In 1998, Puntland State formed as an offshoot of the protracted Somali conflict, when after 8 years of civil strife, no central government seemed forthcoming. Its founders had two intents when adopting this initiative: to establish an administration that maintains law and order in the subject regions, and to lay the ground for a future Somali federal democratic governance system. This was evidenced by the fact the Puntland Charter, which constituted the cornerstone of the established Puntland state, foresaw holding one person one vote elections after expiry of its three-year tenure. However, despite a number of attempts made, to date this goal was not wholly achieved. The incumbent Said Abdullahi Deni's government, which came to office on 8 January

2019, prioritized the issue of implementation of one person one vote elections and succeeded in holding early local government elections in 3 districts of Puntland to forestall Puntland wide elections.

These early local government elections were organized on 25 October 2021 at the districts of Eyl, Gardho and Ufeyn, where 499 candidates from 8 political associations competed in a closed list system for 87 seats. In the end, the political associations of KAAH, Mideeye, and Justice and Equity collected most of the seats by gaining 35, 25 and 20 seats respectively. It is noteworthy, that both women and youth benefitted substantially from this election. Whereas 147 women candidates, out of 499 overall candidates who vied for election, 23 of them won seats, which totaled 26% of all contested seats. This number denoted an increase of 383% in comparison to the women's representation in the previous councils of these 3 districts, which accommodated only 6 members altogether². With respect to youth, their representation dramatically increased to a degree that over 80% of the elected councilors in the three districts turned out to be under 35 years of age³.

Whilst Puntland State registered a historic milestone in holding free and fair elections since 54 years back, the initial seating of the respective three new councils encountered a number of impediments. These included Puntland Government's involvement in Federal level parliamentary selections, and the Somalia presidential election in which the President of Puntland, Hon. Said Abdullahi Deni, was amongst the candidates. After return from the federal level elections, the Puntland government turned its attention to operationalization of the elected councils. Although eventually council seating took place in the Gardho and Ufeyn districts ultimately electing their mayors and deputies, nevertheless, a critical conflict developed in Eyl district regarding the council's first seating and election of its executive committee⁴. Two feuding council groups from the same political association campaigned for election of a particular individual to the post of mayor. Subsequently, the Puntland President intervened and went to Eyl and had, on 3 Sept 2022, personally witnessed the council's first seating and election of a mayor and a deputy.

Purpose of the study

12 months had elapsed since the election of new councils in the early local government elections, which were held in the three Puntland districts of Eyl, Gardho and Ufeyn. The public expected these elected councils to perform better than their predecessor government-nominated councils.

² Post-Election Study – Puntland Early Local Governments Election, May, 2022

³ Ibid

⁴ Comparison between Clan Nominated Local Councils and Democratically elected Local Councils: Cases of Eyl, Ufeyn and Gardho, July 2022

In particular, people had hoped that the councils will instantly start functioning and respond to their immediate needs such as delivery of basic services, and improvement of their livelihoods by supporting the production sectors of livestock, fishery, frankincense, etc.⁵ This study, therefore, focused on assessing the progress that the newly elected councils had made towards their tasked mission since their establishment. It also attempted to highlight the challenges that the councils had encountered and the lessons that could be learned from their experience. These lessons will proffer both warning signals as well as exemplary illumination pathways for the future councils that will soon be elected in the remaining Puntland districts.

Contents of the Report

This report documents the performance of the newly elected district councils of Eyl, Gardho and Ufeyn since their formation. It examines the challenges met and the emerging gaps. Likewise, the report derives conclusions, and proposes relevant options, recommendations and lessons learned. The report consists of the following chapters:

- » Chapter 1: Introduction (this current chapter)
- » Chapter 2: Relationships and performance of district councils
- » Chapter 3: The district institutional capacity and gaps
- » Recommendations/Proposed Interventions and Conclusion

Methodology

The study had a duration of one month and commenced with desk study in which the researcher consultant reviewed existing literature, which PDRC, PUNSAA and TPEC had mainly produced. Next, the researcher designed the research tools, which explored the specific areas that the study would targeted. He identified the key stakeholders to be approached. The researcher had also developed a study work plan and a field work schedule and finalized them with the client. The field work followed and extended between 25 September and 10 October, 2022. Qualitative questionnaires guided the key informant and focus groups discussions, which took into account the gender perspective ensuring women representation in both categories. While key informant interviews had duration of 40-60 minutes, the focus group discussion prolonged to 90 minutes depending on the participation and knowledge of attendants. Overall, the discussions provided in-depth information on the performance of elected councils, shortcomings, challenges and applicable venues of moving forward.

⁵ Democratization in Puntland: The Way Ahead, A Policy Brief, May 2022

The study ensured that targeted respondents represented the various sections of the sought community members. These included: councilors, mayors, traditional and religious leaders, municipality personnel, youth, women, pastoralists, fishermen, business groups, frankincense collectors, Ministry of Interior, TPEC, representatives of political associations, PDRC outreach teams, PUNSAA, local media, etc. Altogether, the study met 13 key informants, and 14 focus groups (each 10 participants), which totaled 153 individuals. Of these 92 (60%) were male and 61(40%) were female. After conclusion of the field work, the team leader compiled a draft report which was submitted to PDRC and eventually presented to a one-day validation workshop. The study encountered some limitations, namely, limited secondary data, drought conditions, which hampered the scope of study and easy availability of some critical stakeholders such as the pastoralists.

CHAPTER 2: RELATIONSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE OF COUNCILS

Relationships among the Socio-Political Governance Structures in the District

Ufeyn District

The elected council of Ufeyn consists of 27 members of which 8 are female and thus for the first time achieving the aspired 30% women quota in contrast to the previous nominated council, which allotted only 2 members to women. Except for a few, the councilors are below the age of 35 years and have attained tertiary education level. Comparatively, the former councilors were of senior age and less educated. The council hitherto operates unabated. The level of engagement/ participation and interaction between the elected district council/administration and the citizens/ public in the district is optimal. The council enjoys trust and vast support from the citizenry and frequently consults and listens to their concerns and aspirations. It is composed of energetic youth members who are earnest to work for the people.

District	# of Females in Previous councils	# of Females in elected Council	Total of Council's Seats	% of Females in New Councils	% Increase
Ufeyn	2	8	27	30%	400%

In addition to the municipality, most government administrative and public institutions operate in Ufeyn district. These include: the offices of water supply, education, health, environment protection, livestock, interior and security, and the Ministry of Women Development and Family Affairs. The personnel running these offices possess limited capacity and require capacity building. The district is not included and does not benefit from the financial or technical assistance of the JPLG Programme. Hence has no capacity to formulate a District Development Framework document or annual plan. It characterizes with limited revenue and does not get any financial support from the central Puntland government.

The social governance structures are prone to cooperating with the new council and maintaining good relationships. Elders insisted that they had sponsored the council because they had wholly facilitated implementation of the OPOV elected. A good indicator of this, they added, was the commendable role played by their highest traditional leader, Beeldaaje Ali Farah, who was an outspoken vanguard of the democratization process and implementation of elections in Ufeyn district and elsewhere. Despite this, many informed notables confirmed that the traditional governance structures are covertly not happy with the new system because they feel it had undermined their authority of underwriting the political representatives. Since the public is so much enthusiastic about the OPOV, they added, elders cannot at the moment openly oppose the new council; nonetheless, a negative undercurrent trend prevails, which may in the long-term affect the functionality of the elected council.

Gardho District

The Gardho elected council comprises 33 members, of which 9 are female councilors (27%). The former elder-selected councils designated only 2 members to women, which was a common practice in all Puntland district councils. Except for 3 seniors in age, the rest of Gardho councilors are youth who are below the age of 35. Prior to this council, during the last 30 years, Gardho district was governed either by clan-nominated councils or Puntland government-nominated provisional mayors. These were accountable to their sponsors. However, for the first time, the elected council is accountable to the citizens, who elected them and is bound to respond to their concerns and needs.

District	# of Females in Previous councils	# of Females in elected Council	Total of Council's Seats	% of Females in New Councils	% Increase
Gardho	2	9	33	27%	450%

The council enjoys vast popularity among the public and maintains interaction and communication with the people. It started operation with zeal by conducting wide public sanitation campaigns on self-help schemes. Interaction is high and the council is seriously listening to the people. It conducts regular contact and communication with citizens, elders and had already visited rural villages to find out their concerns and needs. By this the council gained further popularity. The public responds whenever the council contacts them or calls for their support as declared by one elder:

“We the traditional governance structures welcomed the elected council and are working with them. We are relieved of a great burden of the task of selecting council members”.

However, a considerable number of other interviewees said that the relationship between the new elected council and the traditional leaders is nominal at the moment. And there is a latent discontent on the part of the elders who are not happy of transfer of power of council members’ nomination and inception of OPOV system.

Eyl District

The early local government elections took place at the designated three districts on 25 Oct, 2021 and results were declared the next day without any disputing petitions. The new council of Eyl consisted of 27 members with women gaining 6 members, estimated at 22% of total in comparison to the enduring 2 women member allocations in former councils. As in the other two districts, the Eyl councilors are predominantly young folks below 35 years of age. This council is different from the former ones, which were nominated from either the clan leaders or the Puntland Administrations. This means that this council truly represents the people because it is their choice and bears their stamp.

District	# of Females in Previous councils	# of Females in elected Council	Total of Council's Seats	% of Females in New Councils	% Increase
Eyl	2	6	27	22%	300%

The seating of Eyl District Council deferred 10 months as a result of a fierce competition to the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The clash developed within the KAAH Political Association council members, who had fielded the majority of council seats of Eyl. Consequently, one of the two contending parties took over the district premises and stationed loyal militia to obstruct the holding of a seating without their consent. The conflict prolonged and continued until the Puntland President, who leads the conflicting KAAH PA intervened, went personally to the district of Eyl and organized the first council seating on 3 September 2022, when the council elected a mayor and a deputy. At the time of this study, the council was in office for less than two weeks and were at their takeover phase. As such its performance could not be measured at that stage. Interviewees’ views

differed in relation to the cooperation between the new elected council and the social governance systems. While concerned elders insisted that they wholeheartedly welcome the elected council and were ready to provide utmost support, yet other social groups met hinted prevalence of an alternative tension between the council and traditional governance institutions because the OPOV system deprived them the power of nominating councilors and eventually the legislators.

On their part, ordinary citizens appreciated the elected council for a number of reasons. First, they declared this council came to office on their choice while the previous ones established on the choice of the clan elders or the Puntland administration. Second, the new council members are more educated and enthusiastic than the former old guard members. Third, this council is constrained to be accountable and to listen to the citizens and respond to their needs, otherwise the council will be replaced in the following election period. Fourth, the clan elders or the Puntland government cannot threaten to the elected council for dismissal or replacement as often happened to nominated councils because it is in office on the will of the citizens and, thus, the council will operate independently.

Performance of The Elected District Councils

The study explored the performance of the three elected councils to date. However, it was apparent that it was too early to measure the effectiveness of the councils. This was because, at the time of this study, the councils of Ufeyn and Gardho were only 5 months in office, while that of Eyl was in the process of establishing itself with a span of only two weeks in service. The interviewees met were unanimous in that it was too early to assess the efficacy of the councils. Nonetheless, below is submitted some of the achievements of Ufeyn and Gardho Councils:

Ufeyn Council

- The elected council consulted people and registered their needs
- Ufeyn council created 4 fundamental departments for the municipality, which did not exist earlier. Only the LG secretary functioned. The established four offices or departments were: revenue, social affairs, finance and administration and public works
- The council operationalized the municipality and strengthened revenue collection. It started preparations on collecting taxes from rural villages. Charged new tariffs on previously untaxed items such as: houses, farms, transport vehicles, water tankers, tip trucks, firewood, milk, etc.
- Conducted emergency water-trucking and food distribution to save the drought-affected pastoralists
- Organized many public meetings to raise awareness of public on collaboration with the council and the need to pay taxes
- Formulated and disseminated a council-approved annual budget to the public, which was the first time this was done

- Extended government authority by stationing 2 police officers in each rural village to facilitate collection of taxes
- Conducted sanitation campaigns in Ufeyn town
- Started numbering of Ufeyn houses and fed into a GIS system
- Met with frankincense collectors to convince them pay tariffs on frankincense products to increase the municipality revenue
- Collected \$10,000 from public to partake in contributions for rehabilitation of Ufeyn Primary School. CARE International Organization promised to contribute another \$10,000
- Created self-help account for both the locals and diaspora benefactors to contribute to the development of the district
- Supervised and assisted on-going projects



Ufeyn Primary School in Action



Gardho Council

- Regularly communicated with people
- Opened clogged roads and designed new roads at the peripheral areas of town, which were recently settled
- Continued implementation of on-going projects
- Visited rural villages and identified district priorities to formulate DDF
- Formulated, approved and disseminated the annual budget
- Passed the council's internal procedures and regulations
- Responded to drought by distributing food and organizing water trucking to rural villages and pastoralists.
- Reviewed the municipality personnel attendance system and introducing new work ethics and finger printing on attendance
- Contributed to beautification of Gardho city
- Improved sanitation by conducting wide-ranging sanitation campaigns in Gardho town
- Completed the registration of Gardho town houses to record in a GIS system
- Finalized the plan of relocation of the Gardho main vegetable market from the flood-prone site to a new safer and more opportune site

CHAPTER 3: DISTRICTS' INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND GAPS

Ufeyn District

Despite the fact that the Ufeyn municipality and other government offices do not operate in rented buildings but in public premises, nevertheless, these offices are inherited from the previous Somali Government and are extremely limited in space. This necessitates the need for additional buildings and extensions. Additionally, the operational material and human resources are insufficient. Although former nominated councils functioned in the district, however, the municipality structure is underdeveloped and only a secretary appointed by Puntland government operated with no subdivision departments. Ufeyn district is rated a Grade B district. Immediately after taking office, the elected council created 4 essential municipality departments of: Revenue, Social Affairs, Administration and Finance, and Public Works. The municipality staff numbers 40 persons.

District	Grade	# of Municipality Departments	# of Permanent Staff			Permanent staff	Temporary Staff
Ufeyn	B	Planning Dept.	Revenue Dept.	Social Affairs Dept.	Admin. and Finance Dept.	40	



Roomed Ufeyn Municipality Premises



As earlier mentioned in this report, the Ufeyn elected council formed on 26 October 2021, one day after election day, when results were declared. However, the first seating of the council took place more than 6 months later on 6 April, 2022, when a mayor and deputy mayor were elected, who came from the two opposition political associations of Mideeye and SinCad as a result of their grouping. This delay was substantiated by two factors; i) the Puntland government's involvement in selection of the Puntland Federal MPs and President Deni's competition to the Somali presidency Office; and ii) conflict among the 3 political associations, winning the seats in the Ufeyn council over who will be the mayor and deputy mayor. On the second session, the Ufeyn council elected a permanent committee, passed internal codes and the annual budget.

Apart from two training, one from MOI and the other from PDRC, the council has not received any meaningful technical, financial, legal or material support from neither the Puntland Government nor the international supporting agencies. An exclusion to this is the continuing sectoral technical and technical support that the International agencies provide in social services, which is in itself not sufficient. It was expected that the Puntland Government and the supporting international partners will put in place a post-election sustainability/support package aims at delivering the needs of the people in the three early-election districts. This was to promote democracy across the state/nation as one activist in Ufeyn remarked:

"I was one of the zealous crusaders of the OPOV elections in Ufeyn District. I expended tremendous efforts in its advocacy and realization. The election took place in Ufeyn smoothly. Unfortunately, we did not get our expectation, which was that the Puntland government and international agencies would provide financial and technical support to the new council. This did not happen".

On the other hand, no tangible revenue was collected from the district prior to the establishment of the elected council. This is evidenced by the fact that the related municipality department were non-operational before this council came to office. The council, therefore, tasked itself first and foremost to revenue generation and conducted public awareness raising on the need to pay taxes in order to access basic services. Furthermore, the council set up revenue collection offices in all the district villages. Whereas the 2022 annual budget of Ufeyn was estimated at \$85,000, the new elected council, immediately after its inception, raised the 2023 forecast budget to \$50,000.

The Ufeyn District's Development/ Infrastructural Gaps

The Ufeyn council is determined to enhance the basic service and developmental needs of the districts and its people. However, it urgently requires technical and financial support to achieve this goal. Ufeyn district is not a part of the JPLG programme that operated in Puntland for over a decade. This programme supported target districts, including Gardho and Eyl, in all technical and financial aspects. For example, it trained the municipality staff of the client districts, and formulated consecutive five-year District Development Frameworks (DDF) for each, which Ufeyn districts lacks. The Ufeyn Council identified the following gaps:

Software

- Limited technical capacity building of the municipality personnel as well as the district council
- Limited capacity of the district's other public administration institutions, particularly water sector personnel
- Deficiency of technical capacity on designing town planning and formulation of a District Development Framework (DDF)
- Limited Skill of basic services delivery personnel

Hardware

Rehabilitation and extension of public buildings. This include:

- the municipality premises
- the Ufeyn Primary School
- the police station, which is currently only two rooms located in large public fenced land
- construction of two additional water tanks to the main Ufeyn water storage facility located outside the town
- deficiency in repair pipes for the 16km long lifeline water pipe extending from the spring source to the town and surrounding water supply points
- Lack of a piped water system for Ufeyn town houses
- Absence of income generating schemes for women
- Absence of a community centre and a vocational school for women
- Poor condition of feeder roads leading to the neighbouring mountain range of Al-Miskeed where frankincense is produced, which constitutes, in addition to livestock husbandry, a main livelihood mainstay of this district.

Sectoral

- Environmental deterioration
- Limited support to the production sectors of livestock, frankincense and agriculture



The Main Water Storage Facility of Ufeyn District

Major Challenges Facing the Elected Ufeyn District Council

As the Ufeyn Council started operations, multifaceted challenges emerged. Among these were:

- A severe drought, which necessitated abandoning all developmental initiatives and concentrating on saving the lives of the affected pastoral community
- Limited financial resources/ revenue. The district is not at the main tarmac road transecting Puntland state to acquire revenue from vehicle traffic; nor is it located at a coast to get revenue from exploited marine resources
- High public expectation, who demand response to all their needs at once
- Practicing the new democratic system. 54 years had elapsed since an elected council assumed office and functioned
- Resistance, to a noticeable level, of traditional leaders to cooperate with the elected council because of a perceived loss of power
- Lack of financial support from the Puntland government and international agencies. The district leadership contends that it does not get any financial or technical support from the Puntland government, gets less support from the international agencies and, therefore advocates for inclusion into the JPLG programme
- Noticeable loyalty of members of district council to their respective political associations rather to the citizens' interests.



Ufeyn District Police Station

Gardho District

In Gardho district all basic public institutions host in own premises and are fully operational. The institutional capacity of the municipality and other public institutions is considerable developed. The municipality boasts with advanced material and human capacities attributable to the JPLG programme's supported for a period of over 12 years starting from the inception of the JPLG in 2010. As the Gardho District is rated Grade A, its municipality consists of 5 departments, which are: Planning, Social Affairs, Revenue, Administration and Finance, and Public Works. The workforce of Gardho Municipality is 82 permanent personnel, in addition to 23-28 temporary staff.

District	Grade	# of Municipality Departments	# of Permanent Staff				Permanent staff	Temporary Staff
Gardho	A	Planning Dept.	Public Works Dept.	Social Affairs Dept.	Revenue Dept.	Admin. and Finance	82	23-38

Similar to the Ufeyn case, Gardho council did not seat immediately after its declaration on 26 October 2021 but had an elapse of 6 months Puntland Government's involvement in the process of selection of Puntland Federal MPs and rivalry to the Somalia's presidential office. Currently, the elected council is in office for five months holding its first seating on 11 April 2022 to elect a mayor and his deputy. This was followed by a second seating convened on 19 July 2022 in which a permanent committee was elected and a number of bye laws passed.

With the exception of two training, Gardho council did not get any financial or technical support from the government. Previously, the district used to get an amount of USD 6,000 subsidy from Puntland Central Government. However, the officials informed that, since when the Deni government came to office, this fund was diverted to the Ministry of Public works for emergency repair and rehabilitation works to the main lifeline tarmac Bossaso-Galkayo Road, which was in bad condition. Furthermore, the officials added, this government ceased payback dividend on a number of tariffs levied at district levels by the Ministry of Finance. Likewise, although the international agencies provided commendable assistance to Gardho public institutions, particularly basic service delivery and to the municipality, nevertheless, the elected council argued that it expected additional support from both the government and international partners.

Despite its advanced stage, the Gardho Municipality's revenue is below expectation. This is because revenue is not collected from rural villages and is only limited to Gardho town and the traffic moving along the tarmac road passing through Gardho town and its district villages. The 2021 annual budget of Gardho Municipality levelled at \$635,000, while that of 2022 was estimated at a ceiling of \$740,000. When asked on his strategy on revenue collection, the new Gardho Mayor reiterated that the council was concerned about this, had conducted public awareness raising on

the importance of payment of taxes, and intended to immediately commence enforcement of tariffs at all the district villages and rural communities.

The Gardho District's Development/ Infrastructural Gaps

Gardho district is a long-time beneficiary of the JPLG programme and, therefore, possesses a developmental vision translated into successive 5-year DDFs defining its priorities. The duration of the last DDF is ending in the coming December and the new council is in preparation of a new DDF. It is holding consultative meetings seeking the participation and input of citizens. Despite this, the council stipulated the following noticeable gaps, many of which were noted in previous DDFs:

Software:

- Limited capacity of the new council
- The need to formulate a new DDF to replace the ending one, which is will expire in December 2022
- Lack of knowledge in diversification of revenue sources in order to increase of revenue

Hardware

- Location of Gardho Town's main vegetable and meat market at a flood-prone site
- A pressing need for town planning at the peripheral areas that were lately settled
- Poor feeder roads
- Many public buildings still remain in the hands of public squatters
- Poor lighting at Gardho town streets

Sectoral

- Lack of sanitation equipment and transport
- Inadequate support to the livestock sector, which is the district's main economic pillar
- Limited support to the agriculture sector

Major Challenges Facing the Elected Gardho District Council

The new elected Gardho District Council is facing the following challenges:

- A severe drought, which consumed the efforts of the new council
- Limited financial resources/ revenue.

- High expectation of public created by too many pledges made by the competing candidates and PAs to attract more votes during the fierce LG campaigning.
- Low professional capacity of elected council
- Lack of financial support from the Puntland government
- Existence of undesirable loyalty of some members of the council to their respective political associations rather to the public good.

Eyl District

The Eyl Municipality is hosted in its own public buildings and operates at full gear. Other basic public institutions also function at owned premises. But like other above mentioned districts some of these persevere operating in limited office space and need extension. These include: the police station, livestock office, guest house, and public market. Like Gardho district, Eyl municipality shared the privilege of being a partner in JPLG programme. It remained a partner for at least 8 years and thus received considerable basic technical and material assistance. The municipality is strong in material and human resources. It possesses sufficient equipment and its personnel are significantly trained as in Gardho district. Eyl district is rated at grade B level and its municipally comprises 4 departments; namely: Social Affairs, Planning, Administration and Finance, and Public Works with a workforce of 23 employees.

District	Grade	# of Municipality Departments	# of Permanent Staff				Permanent staff	Temporary Staff
Eyl	B	Planning Dept.	Social Affairs Dept.	Public Works Dept.	Revenue Dept.	Admin and Finance Dept.	23	-

Immediately after its formation, the Eyl elected council encountered a critical leadership rivalry both within the majority political organization of KAAH and among the three political associations winning the bulk of the councilors. Unlike the other two elected councils, which registered a delay of 6 months to hold the first seating and elect their leadership, it took 10 months for the Eyl council to hold its first seating, which was seated on 3 September 2022, and elected a mayor and a deputy under the personal patronage of the President, Hon. Abdullahi Deni. Within September, PDRC and MOI organized 2 induction training for the Eyl council in the locations of Eyl town and Garowe.

In addition to the JPLG, Eyl district constitutes one of the districts that regularly profited from the international assistance. Such agencies as Unicef, WFP, World Vision, ACF, NCA, UNDP, ILO have been providing multitude assistance in the areas of basic service delivery, security, fishery sector, livestock sector, institutional capacity building, emergency feeding, etc. As an example, the water rigs drilled in Dhiganle and Diilin are appraised among the projects that had impacted on the livelihood of the district's rural pastoral and village communities.

Regardless of the above, Eyl municipality is not successful in revenue generation. Like its peers, it is not collecting taxation from the rural villages outside the district capital. The municipality leadership argues that they are unable to charge tariffs at the rural villages for lack of sufficient municipality staff and police forces to put into effect citizens' payment of taxes. In reviewing the financial records, the study found that the annual revenue forecast of Eyl municipality for 2023 totaled \$60,000, while receiving supplementary contribution of \$240,000 from JPLG programme. The new mayor, who was in office for two weeks when the study visited the district, promised that the first activity that the council would embark on would be to conduct public awareness raising on tax payment and collection of taxes from the rural villages.

The Eyl District's Development/ Infrastructural Gaps

The new Eyl council has to get time to deliberate on a sustainable development vision/plan as it has just taken over office. The study noted that the council was hopeful that the Puntland government and the international partners will allocate 'democracy dividend' funds to encourage the three districts that held the elections as well as to incentivize voters in other districts. However, so far a support strategy plan was not visible. On the other hand, with the help of JPLG programme, the district had formulated a number of five-years plans described in its DDFs, the last of which is finishing two months after compilation of this report, in December, 2022. The new council promised that they will coordinate public meetings as well as expert interviews to identify the future priority needs of the district. In the meantime, the council discovered the following areas of priority:

Software

- Limited knowledge in revenue collection
- Inadequate municipality police to enforce collection of revenue
- Absence of public awareness on the necessity to pay taxes
- Limited technical knowledge in Land management
- Abundance of illegal fishing ships that are robbing the marine resources and destroying the Somali fishermen's nets at sea
- Deficiency in options of responding to the recurrent droughts
- Rampant unemployment and lack of income generating schemes

Hardware

- Poor condition of the Garowe--Eyl gravel Road
- Poor district of feeder roads linking rural villages and the district capital
- No air traffic due to nonfunctional dilapidated airport strip at Eyl district capital

Sectoral

- Untapped fishery sector and absence of a jetty at Eyl town to facilitate offloading of fishery products from the fishing vessels
- Limited support to the livestock sector
- Insufficient basic service delivery at rural villages

Major Challenges Facing the Elected Eyl District Council

The new Eyl council is experiencing the below challenges:

- Low professional capacity of the elected council
- Limited financial resources/ revenue.
- High expectation of public created by too many pledges made by the competing political associations and their candidates during the election.
- Absence of sufficient financial support from the Puntland government and international agencies.
- Loyalty of some members of council to their respective political associations or clan rather than to the public good

RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

Recommendations for Ufeyn District

Recommendations for Ufeyn District

Ufeyn district differs from the other two districts where elections took place in that it is not a beneficiary of the JPLG programme, which had built the institutional capacity of Gardho and Eyl districts. Therefore, Ufeyn needs to be considered an especial case and proffered a tailored support arrangement. This can take the form of immediate incorporation into the JPLG target districts or recognizing a special status for it, where funds are allocated in the spirit of a “democracy Dividend”.

The Ufayn District’s Development/Infrastructural Interventions

Software

- Provision of technical capacity building to the municipality personnel and the council
- Additional training to the district’s other public administration institutions, particularly water sector personnel
- Support in town planning and formulation of a District Development Framework (DDF)

- And Improvement of basic services delivery

Hardware

- Rehabilitation and extension of public buildings which include:
 - The municipality premises
 - The Ufeyn Primary School
 - The police station which is currently only two rooms
- Construction of two additional water tanks to the main Ufeyn water storage facility, located outside the town and which supplies the whole district
- Provision of repair pipes for the 16km long lifeline water pipe extending from the spring source to the town
- Installation of a piped water system into Ufeyn town houses
- Income generating schemes for women
- A centre for women affairs and a vocational school for women
- Improvement of the feeder roads leading to the neighbouring mountainous range of Al-Miskeed where frankincense is produced, which, in addition to livestock husbandry, constitutes one of the main livelihood mainstay of this district

Sectoral

- Enhancing Environment protection
- Supporting production sectors of live-stock, frankincense and agriculture

Recommendations for Gardho District

Gardho district is a long-time beneficiary of the JPLG programme and therefore possesses a developmental vision with successive DDFs defining its priorities in the sequential 5 year plans. The duration of the last DDF in ending in the coming December and the new council is in preparation of a new DDF organizing consultative meetings seeking the participation of contribution of the citizens. Furthermore, the council stipulated the following manifest priorities including those inherited from DDFs:

Software

- Capacity building of the new council
- Support in preparation of a new DDF to replace the ending one, which will expire in December 2022
- Assistance in strategies and mechanisms of revenue collection and looking for alternative revenue sources

Hardware

- Relocation of the Gardho town main flood-prone vegetable and meat market to a better place
- Extending town planning to the peripheral areas that are lately settled
- Improving feeder roads
- Finalizing and operationalizing the construction of the holding ground project adjacent to Gardho town
- Reinstating government public buildings in the hands of public squatters to be used for serving the people
- Tree planting and environment protection
- Installing solar lighting at Gardho town streets
- Setting up a GIS framework for Gardho town houses

Sectoral

- Improving basic services and acquisition of sanitation equipment and transport
- Supporting the livestock sector, which is main economic mainstay
- Assistance to the agriculture sector

The Eyl District's Development/ Infrastructural Interventions

The new Eyl council has to get time to deliberate on a sustainable development vision/plan as it has just taken over the office. The new council promised that they will coordinate public meetings as well as expert interviews to identify the future priority needs of the district. Currently, the council discovered the following areas of priority:

Software

- Assistance in strategies and mechanisms of revenue collection and looking for additional revenue sources
- Public awareness raising in payment of taxes and collaboration with the council
- Capacity building in land management
- Strategies of fighting the illegal fishing ships, which are plundering the marine resources and destroying fishermen's nets at sea
- Establishing response and mitigation mechanisms to frequent droughts
- Job creation opportunities and income generating schemes

Hardware

- Construction of an asphalted Garowe-Eyl Road
- Improvement of district feeder roads
- Construction of a modern airport at Eyl town

Sectoral

- Development of fishery sector including construction of a jetty at Eyl town to facilitate offloading of fishery products from the fishing vessels
- Development of livestock sector
- Improvement of basic service at rural villages





CONCLUSION

In October 2021, the Puntland State of Somalia succeeded in conducting early local government elections in 3 of its districts to pave the way for holding local government elections at a Puntland wide level. Although elections went well and were implemented on schedule, the emerging district councils met some hurdles, which delayed their operationality. At the time of this study, two councils were operational only 6 months, while the third was about to take over office. The objective of the study was to examine the current performance of the elected councils, their institutional capacity and emergent challenges.

The study found out that the councils⁶ retained the trust of the public, were dynamic and determined to serve their district. They had already embarked on self-help schemes, particularly in sanitation campaigns carried at the district capitals, and emergency response to drought-stricken pastoral communities. The councils reviewed their municipalities' organizational structures and made adjustments. They also started preparations for extension of taxation beyond the district capitals to the satellite rural villages. The councils strengthened public consultations and communication. Publicizing adopted annual plans posed a good example of the new councils' transparency and accountability perspectives.

Despite the above, the councils are encountering challenges, which obliges access of technical and material support from the Puntland central authority and the international community. These include, among others, institutional capacity building support to Ufeyn district, which is located at a rural setting, characterizes with limited local revenue and lacks JPLG support, in contrast to the other two districts, which were this programme's beneficiaries for almost 10 years. In addition, all the three elected councils need, to fulfill their mission, capacity building on their roles and responsibilities, leadership, etc.

⁶ This refers to the councils of Ufeyn and Gardho. Eyl council was yet to function

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Checklists

A) Key Informants

Socioeconomic and political history profile of the district

- » When was this district granted the administrative status and has it been territorially intact or annexed from another district? What district-grade type is it now?
- » What is the last estimation of the district population number?
- » Where do people rely on their livings and what economic potentiality does the district possess?
- » What is the availability/access/affordability level of services in the district (education, healthy, water and security/ judicial services)?
- » Did the district experience any recent communal/political/security/border conflicts?
- » Are there any external factors that have negative or positive influences on the socio-political and economic betterment of the district and its people?
- » What other interesting and important information is it to know about the geographical/political/social/economic significances and history of the district?

Socio-political governance structures in the district and inter/intra-relationships

- » Who are they and what is the presence, operationality, and capacity status of the different administrative/public Institutions operating in the district?
- » How are the indigenous social governance structures effecting the work, performance and decisions of the elected district council and leadership? How is the status of cooperation and intra-structural relationship between the co-operating political and social governance institutions in the district?
- » How are the newly elected district council and administration different than their predecessors in terms gender, age, education and in governance and leadership?
- » How is the level of engagement/participation and interaction between the elected district council/administration and the citizens/public in the district? – assess the practices of the former and perception of the later

3. Assessing the institutional and administrative capacity development status and needs of the district.

- » Does the district administration/municipality operate in with own or rental premises, and is it enough accommodate the working and meeting-space needs of the district?

- » Does the district municipality have the required operational material and human resources (systems, equipment, facilities, and people) to perform and serve citizens better?
- » How many departmental units and staff does the district municipality has?
- » What assistance does the district get from the Puntland government and local CSOs?
- » What assistance does the district from international agencies (INGOs, UN, donors)?
- » What are the district's areas of priorities? Which are the top development/ infrastructural project needs which the citizens do value as their priority challenges?
- » Does the municipality have a development vision/plan to address with the services and developmental needs of the districts and its people? If not, why?
- » What are the technical, legal, financial and skill capacity development gaps/needs of the district, which, if provided, could strengthen the administration's internal productivity capacity and external cooperation with citizens, the State, and the development/humanitarian partners?
- » When did the council hold its first seating? If late why? What was the agenda of the last session?
- » How much revenue did the district authority collect annually? Do you collect revenue from all the district villages and locations? If not, why? How and when do you intend to collect revenue from all the district villages locations?
- » What lessons can we learn from the Eyl problem regarding obstacles to seating of elected council and election of its executive committee?

4. Assessing public perception on the services and performance expected from the members and leadership of the district council they voted for

- » On what basis did you vote for your district councilor?
- » What was your understanding of the difference between elected and selected district administration? how do you wanted the former one to be different from the later one?
- » How do you assess/evaluate the performance and responsiveness level of the current district administration and leadership? What has changed?
- » What priority challenge(s) do you still want your elected district councilor or leadership to address and resolve?
- » Are you and your fellow community/party/clansmen ready to cooperate with and help succeed the new administration/councilors of your district?
- » What do you see as the major challenges/obstacles facing the new administration and what is it to do or assist them with to help overcome those challenges?
- » Did the government, political associations, and international partners have and/or put in place a post-election sustainability/support strategy plan towards the development needs of the people in the three early-election districts to maintain their relevance/support, incentivize voters in other districts, and promote democracy across the state/nation?
- » What is the rationale and ways in which Ufeyn can be a member of Puntland's JPLG-supported districts and receive equal attention and support through a tailored support arrangement?

B) Focus Groups

1. Assessing public perception on the services and performance expected from the members and leadership of the district council they voted for

- » On what basis did you vote for your district councilor?
- » What was your understanding of the difference between elected and selected district administration? how do you wanted the former one to be different from the later one?

Socio-political governance structures in the district and inter/intra-relationships

- » How do you assess/evaluate the performance and responsiveness level of the current district administration and leadership? What has changed?
- » What do you see as the major challenges/obstacles facing the new administration and what is it to do or assist them with to help overcome those challenges?
- » Are you and your fellow community/party/clansmen ready to cooperate with and help succeed the new administration/councilors of your district?
- » Did the district experience any recent communal/political/security/border conflicts?
- » Are there any external factors that have negative or positive influences on the socio-political and economic betterment of the district and its people?
- » How are the indigenous social governance structures effecting the work, performance and decisions of the elected district council and leadership? How is the status of cooperation and intra-structural relationship between the co-operating political and social governance institutions in the district?
- » How are the newly elected district council and administration different than their predecessors in terms gender, age, education and in governance and leadership?
- » How is the level of engagement/participation and interaction between the elected district council/administration and the citizens/public in the district? – assess the practices of the former and perception of the later
- » What are the district's areas of priorities? Which are the top development/ infrastructural project needs which the citizens do value as their priority challenges?

Annex 2: References

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