



# Mashruuca Dowlad-Wanaag

## Badhan District Authority

### Capacity Assessment Report

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Technical Lead  
Ahmed Ali Mire

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Badhan District Capacity Assessment Report offers a detailed review of the institutional, operational, and governance capacities of the district authority and council. Conducted in early 2025 under the Dawlad-Wanaag Consortium, the assessment comes at a crucial time following Badhan's first-ever local elections in 2023. The report outlines key challenges, opportunities, and enabling factors across seven main governance areas.

Badhan, a Category A district in the Sanaag region with a population of around 134,000, relies mainly on pastoralism and subsistence agriculture—both highly vulnerable to climate change and water scarcity. Although the district aligns with Puntland's decentralization framework, geopolitical tensions and limited connectivity continue to pose significant obstacles. With newly elected local leadership in place, Badhan now faces the dual task of overcoming structural and technical limitations while fulfilling its democratic mandate.

The district scored just 56 out of 336 (17%) overall, revealing major deficiencies across core governance areas:

- **Governance and Leadership (17/48):** Weak planning, absence of formal decision-making processes, and minimal community engagement.
- **Human Resource Capacity (8/48):** Staffing shortages, informal hiring practices, and a lack of training. Only one staff member has received training in the past two years.
- **Service Delivery and Infrastructure (9/48):** Limited access to basic services like water, education, electricity, and healthcare.
- **Financial Management (6/72):** No external audits or participatory budgeting; poor revenue tracking and financial transparency.
- **Community Engagement and Participation (6/48):** Engagement is limited and lacks mechanisms for inclusion or public feedback.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation & Accountability (10/48):** No M&E system or performance indicators; public reporting and grievance mechanisms are missing.
- **Disaster Risk Management (0/24):** No preparedness or response strategies exist for natural or man-made disasters.

Despite these challenges, opportunities exist for reform. The newly elected council, which includes seven women, offers a foundation for inclusive governance. Community interest in participation is strong, and existing collaborations with humanitarian partners can be leveraged to strengthen service delivery and local accountability systems.

However, barriers remain. These include chronic underfunding, high staff turnover, low qualifications, and weak administrative systems. Geographic isolation and increasingly unpredictable weather caused by climate change further strain infrastructure and services.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Short-term (within current annual planning cycle):**

- Establish formal decision-making procedures and performance reporting systems to promote transparency and accountability.
- Recruit qualified staff based on merit and implement structured training programs as part of a broader performance management system.
- Launch inclusive community forums aligned with the district development framework.
- Introduce digital platforms for community feedback and engagement.
- Work with state authorities to institutionalize financial audits and introduce revenue tracking tools to improve accountability and credibility.

### **Mid-Term (during current council tenure):**

- Develop a district M&E framework with clear performance indicators aligned to state-level goals.
- Create a district-wide disaster risk management plan based on threat and risk analysis. Include infrastructure-based employment and cash response programs.
- Diversify revenue sources with a focus on land taxation and local CSOs managing donor-funded projects.
- Promote asset-based community development and public-private partnerships to stimulate the local economy and support MSMEs.
- Ensure women, youth, and marginalized groups participate fully in planning and accountability processes.

### **Long-Term (aligned with Puntland development strategies):**

- Sustainably increase core revenue through partnerships with CSOs and improved local taxation.
- Institutionalize legislative induction and executive training programs to retain skilled administrative and technical staff.
- Advance decentralization by implementing Law No. 7 and promoting MSMEs through local economic development.
- Strengthen procurement and policy frameworks to enable effective public-private partnerships.
- Partner with universities and development agencies to enhance ICT, governance, and public administration capacity.

This report provides a roadmap for Badhan District Authorities, Puntland institutions, and development partners to design and implement impactful, sustainable governance reforms. By addressing capacity gaps, Badhan can shift from a fragile structure to a model of inclusive, accountable, and responsive local governance.

# INTRODUCTION

Good governance is essential for effective service delivery, equitable resource use, and responsive policy-making. In Puntland, which is pursuing decentralization reforms, governance has become even more important for local districts such as Badhan. Located in the Sanaag region, Badhan is a key participant in this effort, although it faces a range of structural and operational challenges that limit its ability to implement decentralized services effectively.

The goal of decentralization in Puntland is to shift decision-making power from the central government to local districts like Badhan. This is intended to improve service delivery, strengthen community participation, and ensure that policies reflect the real needs of residents. By engaging local communities more directly, the system aims to build trust, accountability, and long-term stability.

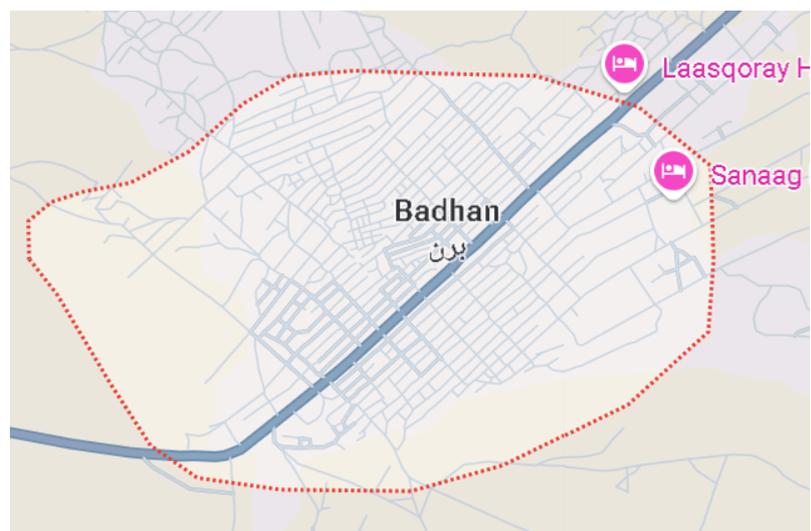
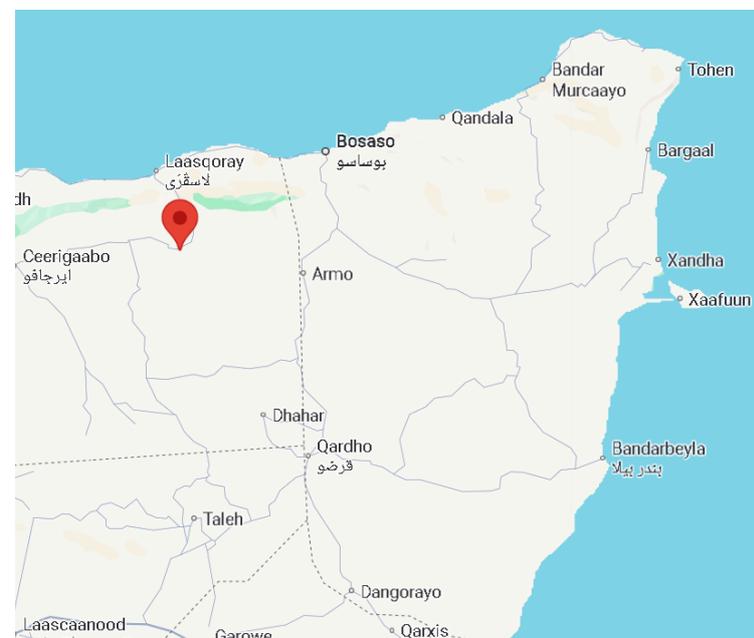
Effective decentralization depends on meaningful community participation and cooperation between different stakeholders, including civil society, local government, and traditional leaders. In Badhan, the district council plays a crucial role in giving people a voice, advocating for resources, and supporting the implementation of the District Development Framework (DDF) and associated community action plans.

Through stronger social accountability and inclusive governance, Badhan has the opportunity to build a system that empowers its people and makes local institutions more responsive, transparent, and efficient.

## OVERVIEW OF BADHAN DISTRICT:

Badhan is in the northeastern part of Somalia, in Sanaag region. It is approximately 180 kilometers from the port city of Bosaso and 100 kilometers from Lasqoray. The district is characterized by arid and semi-arid landscapes suitable for livestock grazing (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2021). However, Badhan faces challenges of water scarcity and land degradation, which negatively impact primary production (United Nations Environment Program, 2020).

Badhan's population is estimated at 134,008 people (WorldPop, 2020). Badhan's economy is based on livestock farming. Livestock products such as milk, meat, and hides are important for both local consumption and trade (World Bank, 2021). Agriculture, although practiced in limited areas with access to water, involves crops like sorghum and maize, mainly for subsistence. The challenges of un- and underemployment are exacerbated by the paucity of education causing further drivers of migration in addition to wider poor provision of basic services.



Climate change further complicates the situation, bringing unpredictable weather patterns, erratic rainfall and prolonged droughts undermining agriculture and livestock farming.

Governance in Badhan is functional, with district councils and local committees actively engaged in managing resources and addressing community needs. The district faces persistent challenges in resourcing, and equitable provision of basic services with the poor infrastructure, rugged terrain complicating efforts to deliver consistent governance and development interventions. Enhancing the capacity of governance structures and addressing infrastructural gaps will be essential to meeting the needs of Badhan's population. Despite these challenges, the district's natural resources, entrepreneurial spirit, and strategic location offer significant opportunities for sustainable development and regional integration.

In 2023 Badhan local elections resulted in the first elected council to assume leadership (Mire, 2024). 113 candidates from 7 political associations contested and 33 council members were elected to represent the district. Notably, the election saw the inclusion of female candidates, with 7 women successfully securing council seats (PEC, 2023). This marks a significant step toward gender inclusivity in local governance, reflecting Puntland's ongoing efforts to enhance women's participation in decision-making processes. The diversity within the council, including both male and female representatives, is the basis for inclusive decision-making processes assisting the defining and addressing of needs for all residents in Badhan district.

# FINDINGS

## DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

### Grade A

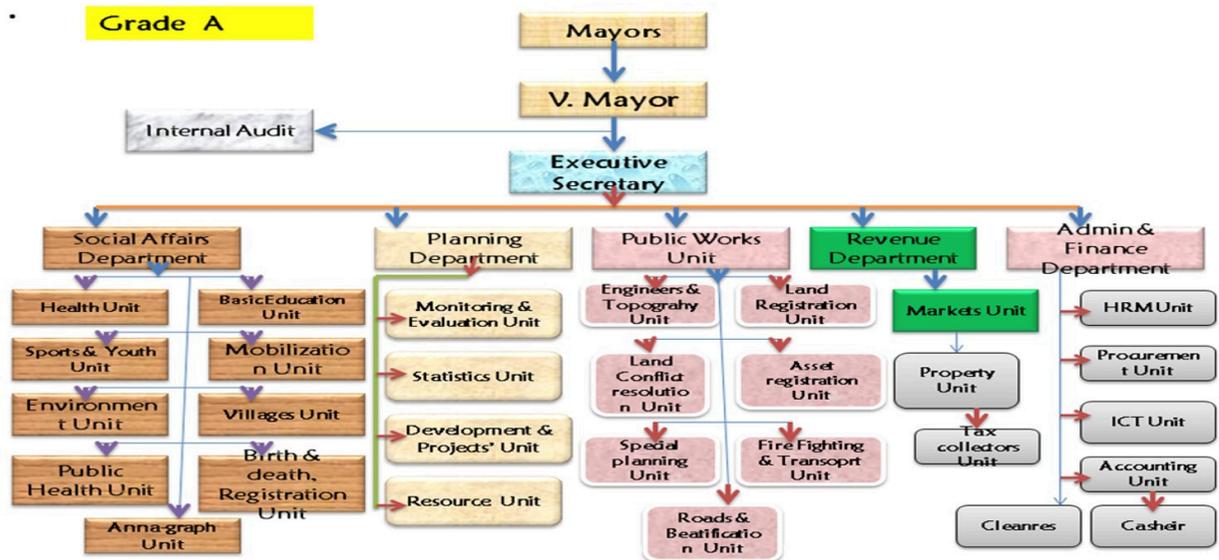


Diagram : MoIFAD District A Structure

Badhan District is categorized as a Grade A district, and its structure generally aligns with the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Democratization (MoIFD) framework. However, some differences exist. For instance, the Revenue Department operates as a unit within the Administration and Finance Department, instead of as a separate entity. There is also a Security Department, which is not standard but may reflect local security concerns. The district also has a Social Department with three units and a Public Works Department with two. The Planning Department remains underdeveloped and lacks the capacity to respond to urban and infrastructure planning needs.

The Executive Secretary, appointed by the Minister of Interior in accordance with Article 36 of Law No. 7, reports to the District Mayor. This individual oversees daily operations, manages finances and staff, and plays a critical role in ensuring smooth functioning of district services.

## DISTRICT CAPACITY ANALYSIS

The findings highlight significant gaps in governance, leadership, financial management, service delivery, community engagement, and disaster risk management. The analysis reveals critical weaknesses in resource allocation and governance structures, while also identifying opportunities for improvement through targeted recommendations.

# Badhan District Caapacity

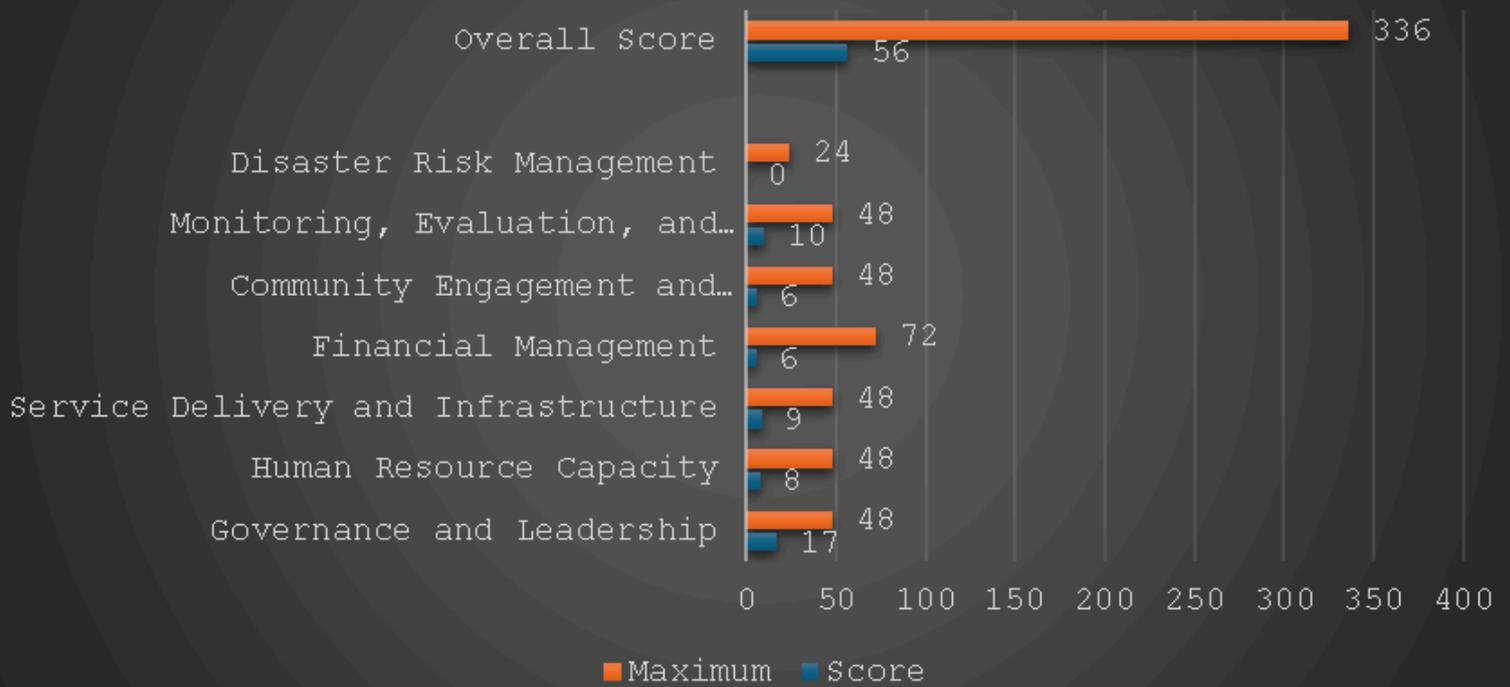


Chart 1: Badhan District Capacity Performance Scores Across Key Areas

## a) Governance and Leadership

### Score: 17/48

The district suffers from weak strategic leadership, lack of formal processes for planning and decision-making, and limited citizen participation. There are no written guidelines to define how decisions should be made or how policies should be implemented. Instead, decision-making is mostly ad hoc and often centred around public meetings, which are irregular and not always inclusive.

There is also a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities between councillors and executive staff. This contributes to inefficient collaboration and weak oversight of public programs. Community members have expressed a strong desire to participate in governance processes but feel excluded from formal planning and development activities. The absence of structured feedback mechanisms further weakens public trust in the local administration.

Improved training, role orientation, and formal policy frameworks are needed to strengthen institutional accountability, promote transparency, and ensure public officials are responsive to the needs of their constituents.

## **b) Human Resource Capacity**

**Score: 8/48**

The district's human resource capacity is significantly constrained. Staffing levels are insufficient for a Grade A district, and most departments are under-resourced. Staff recruitment often occurs informally, and many current staff lack the required qualifications or skills for their roles. As a result, service delivery suffers due to limited technical expertise and inconsistent execution of tasks.

Training and professional development opportunities are nearly non-existent. Only one staff member reported receiving formal training in the past two years. This lack of continuous learning and skills enhancement hinders productivity, lowers morale, and contributes to high turnover rates.

Moreover, the district lacks a formal human resource policy to guide staff management. There is no system for performance appraisal, promotions, or succession planning. Without structured oversight and incentives, staff motivation remains low and institutional memory is weakened.

Addressing these issues will require the development and implementation of an HR policy framework. Key areas should include transparent recruitment practices, clear job descriptions, training and capacity-building programs, regular performance evaluations, and career advancement pathways. These measures are essential to building a skilled, accountable, and motivated workforce that can meet the governance and service delivery needs of Badhan's residents.

## **c) Service Delivery and Infrastructure**

**Score: 9/48**

The district is struggling to provide basic services. Many residents lack access to clean water, electricity, reliable healthcare, and quality education. Though services like waste collection and business licensing are partially operational, they are inconsistent and often poorly coordinated.

Infrastructure is minimal and in poor condition. Roads are underdeveloped, public facilities are scarce, and access to remote communities is limited. Marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities, are generally excluded from planning and decision-making processes, exacerbating inequalities in service delivery.

The district council focuses on infrastructure such as roads and markets to promote economic development, while community members prioritize access to essential services. Aligning these priorities requires an inclusive, participatory planning approach. Collaboration with the private sector and NGOs can help address technical and resource limitations.

## d) Financial Management

**Score: 6/72**

Financial systems in Badhan are critically underdeveloped. There is no budgeting framework based on community consultation, and no public disclosure of financial information. The district does not conduct external audits or follow a formal procurement policy. Revenue tracking is rudimentary, and most funds come from a narrow and unpredictable income base.

Councillors and staff lack basic training in financial management, which limits accountability and efficiency. These deficiencies increase the risk of mismanagement, hinder planning, and prevent the district from accessing further funding.

Immediate actions should include establishing transparent budgeting and procurement processes, training financial officers, and introducing digital tools to track income and expenditure. Efforts to diversify revenue sources—such as land and business taxes or user fees—should be explored to reduce dependency on external funding.

## e) Community Engagement and Participation

**Score: 6/48**

The district has limited capacity to engage residents meaningfully in governance. Community participation is mostly restricted to ad hoc town hall meetings with little follow-up. Marginalized groups are often not reached at all. This excludes many voices from policy discussions and reduces the legitimacy and inclusivity of governance decisions.

Residents expressed a strong interest in being more involved, especially in service planning and monitoring. However, there are no formal mechanisms for collecting public feedback or tracking citizen complaints. To address these gaps, the district should:

- Establish regular community engagement forums at the village and sub-district levels.
- Use SMS, community radio, and digital apps to reach different population segments.
- Set up citizen feedback systems that include suggestion boxes, surveys, and grievance redress tools.

These steps will promote more inclusive governance and create stronger connections between the administration and the people it serves.

## **f) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability**

### **Score: 10/48**

The district does not have a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) framework. This results in weak project oversight, no performance tracking, and limited learning from past initiatives. Councilors and department heads lack experience with setting targets, collecting data, or using feedback to improve services.

The community pointed to a lack of transparency, and expressed frustration about the absence of follow-up after raising issues in public meetings. While some services are being delivered, there is no consistent way to measure impact or ensure responsible use of resources.

### **Recommended actions include:**

- Creating a district M&E policy with measurable indicators tied to service delivery goals.
- Training staff in data collection and analysis.
- Publishing quarterly reports and holding regular public meetings to review progress.

Digital tools like dashboards and mobile-based reporting systems can improve transparency and efficiency. Partnerships with NGOs and universities could support these efforts.

## **g) Disaster Risk Management**

### **Score: 0/24**

Badhan is extremely vulnerable to both climate-related and conflict-related disasters. However, there are no existing DRM strategies or response plans in place. The district lacks data on local hazards, and there is no coordination mechanism for managing emergencies.

Community members and district staff both emphasized the importance of having systems in place to reduce risks and respond to shocks such as droughts or disease outbreaks. The district needs to:

- Integrate DRM into its District Development Framework and community action plans.
- Conduct a local risk assessment and establish early warning systems.
- Develop employment-intensive programs, such as cash-for-work, that also serve as disaster mitigation strategies.
- Coordinate with humanitarian agencies and use mobile money systems to deliver emergency aid.

Establishing DRM capacity will not only protect residents but also improve the resilience and credibility of local governance.

## h) Staff Capacity

Based on the information provided, several key issues around staff qualifications, departmental structures, and professional development opportunities were identified.

Badhan District is categorised as Category A according to Puntland district categorisation. The district operates six administrative departments with 32 personnel of whom 25% are female three out of the six heads of department are female.

The total number of staff is disproportionately small for a district administration limiting the district's capacity to manage and oversee the functions effectively. Departments face significant staffing shortages, and the district requires to recruit additional personnel with the required expertise to handle the complexity of governance tasks.

Staff qualifications show a solid foundation in terms of Bachelor's degrees, the absence of staff with advanced degrees, indicates a potential gap in specialised knowledge. The staff's educational backgrounds cover various fields including community development, public administration, agriculture, and midwifery, which, in some cases, do not fully align with the specific demands of the departments they lead.

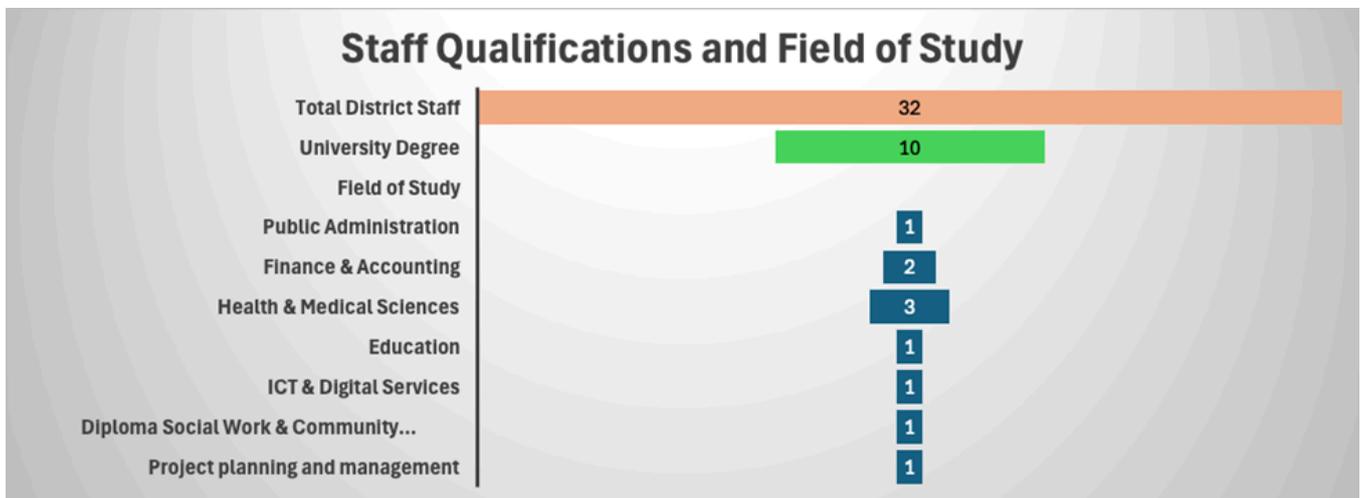


Chart: Staff Qualification and Field of Study

In terms of staff experience, the district is heavily reliant on personnel with less than 2 years of service, especially in departments such as Revenue & Taxation. This is compounded by high turnover rates, likely due to the limited opportunities for professional development and lack of advanced training. Consequently, the district faces difficulties in maintaining continuity in service delivery and institutional memory.

To address these issues, the district needs to recruit specialised skills in financial management, policy development, and ICT, while also developing retention strategies such as career advancement, mentoring, and improved working conditions to reduce turnover. This, allied to career path development, with continued blended learning opportunities, will develop people able to take forward systems in a structure reinforcing good governance based on individual and collective, organisational responsibility against agreed performance indicators.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Short-term: this being in the present annual cycle of planning delivery:**

1. Establish formal decision-making guidelines and public performance reporting systems (using social contract and accountability to build on this district audit/analysis).
2. Implement merit-based recruitment and defined training programmes for key personnel, noting the instigation of defined systems in established structures (to deliver on public performance reporting systems).
3. Launch inclusive community forums based on the social contract set out in the district development framework and associated plans.
4. Introduce digital feedback platforms fitting with a comprehensive multimedia approach for community engagement and accountability.
5. With state authorities, institutionalise financial audits and basic revenue tracking tools to reinforce district accountability and establish the credibility for further financial mobilisation to deliver on plans.

### **Mid-Term, this being during the tenure of the present council:**

1. Develop the M&E framework with key performance indicators (KPIs) fitting to District public performance reporting systems and Puntland State KPIs under wider strategic plans.
2. Create a district-wide disaster risk management approach built on threat and risk analysis and establishing how employment-intensive infrastructure programming and cash-based responses can fit into the disaster response district development approach, addressing underlying causes of cyclical crises.
3. Diversify revenue for core functions with a focus on land taxes and the district plus respected CSOs directly implementing donor funded programming.
4. Look at resourcing based on asset-based community development fitting in to the social contract and the development of public-private partnerships stimulating MSMEs in the local economy.
5. Engage women, youth, and marginalised communities in all planning processes (noting the initiatives on social accountability and how there is opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and development).

### **Long-term, fitting to the Puntland Development Planning and its commitment to wider strategic frameworks:**

1. Diversify revenue for core functions with district plus respected CSOs directly implementing donor funded programming.
2. Institutionalise legislative induction and skills updates (fitting with key Puntland State-wide umbrella organisations) and executive development programmes building administrative and technical staff retention and career path development.

3. Expand decentralisation through policy development and enactment supporting Law 7. Development of asset-based community development and local economic development further supporting MSMEs to be part of public-private partnership approaches, reinforcing self-reliance and the social contract.
4. Strengthen policy and procurement practice to facilitate public-private partnerships to address service delivery gaps and infrastructure needs.
5. Fitting with career path development and local employment generation, partner with universities and development agencies to enhance ICT, governance, and public administration capabilities.

## RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

- **Decision-Making Guidelines** - Formalized policies to guide transparent and consistent decision-making at all governance levels.
- **Merit-Based Recruitment Policy** - Implementation of transparent, merit-based recruitment policies to ensure the selection of qualified personnel.
- **Inclusive Planning Framework** - Policies to ensure marginalized groups (women, youth, persons with disabilities) are included in decision-making.
- **Financial Management Policies** - Policies to ensure regular external audits, financial transparency, and oversight in local governance.
- **Career Development Pathways** - Policies that establish clear promotion pathways for district employees to enhance retention.
- **Performance and Transparency** - Policies requiring public reporting on performance and service delivery standards.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** - Policies to formalize and regulate PPPs to improve infrastructure and service delivery.
- **M&E Framework** - Policies that require the establishment of a comprehensive framework for monitoring and evaluating service delivery.
- **Revenue Generation** - Policies to diversify revenue streams for local governments, including business taxes, property taxes, and service charges.
- **Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Unit** - Legislative support to establish a dedicated unit for disaster risk management at the local level.
- **Financial Management Policies** - Policies that mandate transparency in financial management, including budgeting, audits, and anti-corruption measures.
- **Disaster Risk Management Plan** - Policies that require districts to create, implement, and regularly update disaster risk management plans.
- **Technology in Governance** - Legislative support to facilitate the implementation of technology-driven governance systems and digital tools.



## Contact Us

[www.punsaa.org.so](http://www.punsaa.org.so)

[info@punsaa.org](mailto:info@punsaa.org)