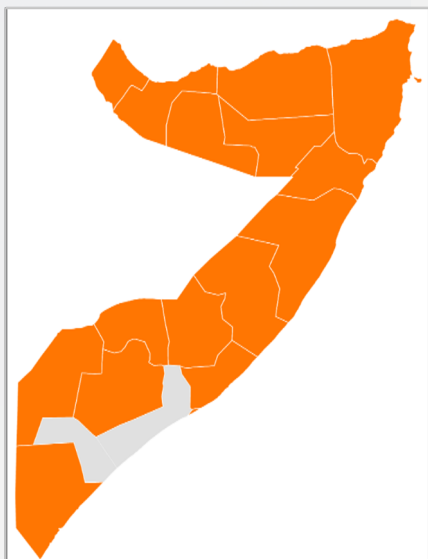




NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

SOMALIA

AREAS OF OPERATION: WASH



CONTEXT

The need for improved water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in Somalia remains critical, with an estimated 5.2 million people need life-saving assistance. Women, children, older persons, and displaced communities are disproportionately affected due to limited access to essential services.

- Only 52% of the Somalia's population has access to basic water.
- More than 5 million people lack access to safe and reliable water, with the greatest impact on vulnerable groups including women, children, the elderly, and displaced populations.

OUTCOMES/IMPACT

In 2025, NRC supported 157,122 people (54% female) with better access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services. This included:

- Wells, dams and other infrastructure, boreholes, built or rehabilitated.
- People assisted with better access to clean water.
- Households or communal latrines installed.
- People provided with hygiene and NFI kits.
- People provided with hygiene promotion training.
- People receive cash/voucher for water needs.

For the latest updates, please visit:
nrc.no/somalia

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HOW WE SUPPORT: WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE (WASH)

NRC Somalia provides integrated WASH solutions alongside other essential services. Our interventions prioritise access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation, and sustainable hygiene practices, supported by awareness programmes that contribute to immediate response and long-term resilience.

NRC's WASH approach

Access to safe water in Somalia is critical for daily survival, supporting drinking, cooking, hygiene, and livelihoods such as farming and livestock. Displaced communities specially those affected by conflict, drought, and flooding face significant barriers, which are further compounded by climate change.

NRC Somalia works to ensure sustainable water access by developing wells, dams, and boreholes, with an emphasis on solar-powered systems to improve efficiency and reliability.

Our approach integrates environmental sustainability, conflict sensitivity, and community resilience, while promoting long-term solutions through partnerships with the private sector.

We also strengthen sanitation and hygiene for displaced and vulnerable communities by providing both temporary and permanent sanitation facilities in IDP sites, schools, and health facilities.

Through equipment support and hygiene promotion training, we encourage safer practices and improve overall health outcomes.

Who we help

In Somalia, we focus on internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees, and vulnerable host communities, working across 16 of 18 regions.

NRC programmes and activities

Inadequate WASH access prevents displaced families from transforming shelters into homes and settlements into sustainable communities. Through improved WASH systems and hygiene promotion, we enhance dignity, reduce conflict risks, and support livelihoods.

Our WASH work is integrated with shelter, education, and food security programmes, delivered in collaboration with cluster and sector partners for a coordinated response.

Water supply

We improve access to safe water by constructing and rehabilitating boreholes, wells, dams, river intakes, rainwater harvesting systems, and piped water networks. Our systems include distribution infrastructure, tanker points, and solar or hybrid energy solutions to strengthen community resilience.

To promote sustainability, NRC works with the private sector and supports public-private partnerships, establishing community-led water committees for effective resource management. Environmental sustainability is integrated through hydrogeological surveys, salinity testing, and water-use modelling.

In emergency contexts, we ensure water supply through community voucher systems, water trucking, and storage solutions to address urgent needs.

Sanitation

We aim to improve hygiene standards and reduce disease risks among displaced communities. Our support includes low-cost emergency latrines, durable sanitation facilities in schools, health centres, and settlements, as well as effective waste management systems.

Where feasible, we apply community-driven, cash-based approaches and ensure latrines are accessible to persons with special needs (PSN). These efforts are complemented by the distribution of sanitation NFI kits and clean-up campaigns to promote healthier living environments.

Hygiene promotion

Our efforts focus on promoting positive public health practices by addressing waterborne diseases, sanitation, and environmental hygiene. Through awareness campaigns and practical activities—especially during high-risk periods—we engage communities across multiple platforms. We also provide training for health workers and community members and distribute hygiene kits as needed to reinforce safe hygiene behaviours.

Our partners



ENSURING THE AVAILABILITY OF SUSTAINABLE WATER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES DURING DROUGHT

Across rural Somalia, access to safe and reliable water remains a major challenge, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas where infrastructure is limited and communities rely on unsafe or seasonal water sources.

NRC addresses this by constructing boreholes, to ensure sustainable access to clean water for households, livestock, and livelihoods.

These interventions are specially critical in drought-affected areas, where water scarcity impacts health, food security, and overall resilience. By investing in durable, often solar-powered systems, NRC enables year-round water supply and reduces dependence on costly and unreliable water trucking.

Access to nearby clean water reduces the need for long, risky journeys specially for women and children and allows families to focus on education and livelihoods. It also improves hygiene practices and reduces the risk of waterborne diseases.

To ensure sustainability, NRC works with communities and local authorities to establish and train water management committees responsible for operating and maintaining the systems.

Through this approach, NRC not only provides life-saving water access but also strengthens resilience and supports long-term development in underserved rural communities in Somalia.