TERRA LEARNING EVENT · 4 NOVEMBER 2026

Two-Way Traffic

How rural and urban Somalia sustain each other

Event summary: what we heard, and what we are taking forward



Isha Road and Baidoa town. Photo: Abdulkadir Mohamed/NRC

On 4 November 2026, the BRCiS Consortium and the Embassy of Sweden hosted **Two-Way Traffic**, an online learning event on the TERRA[1] Project, Sweden's first partnership with BRCiS (July 2024 to June 2026). It was also BRCiS' first project designed specifically around the links between rural and urban Somalia.

Participants came from BRCiS Members, peer implementers, UN agencies, research partners and Somali civil society, alongside Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, ECHO and AFD. This summary records what was said and who said it, and lists the questions we could not answer on the day. Links to the recordings and case studies are at the end.

70+ participants on the day	**30+** organisations represented	**3** breakout rooms, each led by the BRCiS Member that ran the pilot	**SEK 60m** invested by Sweden in TERRA across four districts

PART 1

Opening plenary

H.E. Hans Henric Lundquist, Ambassador of Sweden to Somalia

The Ambassador drew one lesson from TERRA above the others: **"communities do not live their lives according to categories we create."** Aid is organised into rural vs. urban, humanitarian vs. development, yet families move between village and town to farm, trade and support relatives, and food, money and information move with them. With development funding falling, Sweden wants to work with communities and through existing Somali systems, rather than build parallel structures.

Perrine Piton, BRCiS Chief of Party

Perrine set out TERRA's theory of change: when urban, peri-urban, IDP and rural locations are better connected, their markets better integrated, and their ecosystems managed jointly, resilience will grow. TERRA worked through three components: regenerative food production, rural–urban value chains, and early warning and early action. It was delivered through two years that included harsh drought, especially in Galkacyo and Jariban, and still exceeded its impact targets.

37.5% → 90.6% households with acceptable diets **Target: +30 points**	**USD 44 → 106** average monthly household income **Result: +140%**	**1 → 10 of 15** communities at medium resilience **Target: 50% · Result: 67%**	**77% → 84%** positive rural–urban integration **Baidoa fell, 72% → 68%**

Baseline (2024) to endline (2026), final evaluation. The Baidoa decline coincided with the conflict affecting the area at the time of measurement.

[1] Towards Regenerative Resilience and Climate Adaptation for Displacement Affected Communities in Somalia (TERRA)

One detail from the evaluation stood out: some IDPs trained in permagardening in town now plan to go back and farm the land they left in their villages, using the same techniques.

Cecilia Kleimert, Resilience Program Manager, Embassy of Sweden

Sweden came to BRCiS with two years left in its strategy period and a budget, and asked a simple question: **if you could design a two-year project, what would you do?** Because the idea came from BRCiS, the consortium owned it. Because Sweden's funding was layered on FCDO's long-term investment, BRCiS could test new approaches. Her message to other donors: play different roles, long-term and catalytic, and complement each other rather than duplicate.

She also credited BRCiS' learning culture: a year-one workshop assessed which activities gave the strongest results for their cost, and the plan changed accordingly. Donors can support this with flexible budgets, crisis modifiers and room for partners to fail.

PART 2

What we heard in the rooms

Through the **TERRA Challenge**, we asked BRCiS Members a specific question: what can we do only under TERRA? What had not worked in our rural-only or urban-only programming, and what becomes possible when you target the rural–urban link itself? Members designed answers with communities, competed for funding in a friendly contest within the consortium, and refined them through constant learning and reflection. Three pilots came out of that process, and each breakout room took one: a short presentation from the Member that ran it, then discussion. Questions raised aloud and in the chat are both captured below.

ROOM 1 · ISHA ROAD, BAIDOA · NRC

300 metres of road that reconnected 1,000 farmers to market

Presented by Nhamo Ndebele, with Anthony Dratre and Mohamed Hajinur (NRC)

A 300-metre section of Isha Road had been impassable to vehicles for years, cutting off about 1,000 farmers who supply much of Baidoa's fruit and vegetables. Fixing it was the top priority in the action plan of Isha's Community Resilience Committee. NRC rebuilt it in reinforced concrete with Baidoa Municipality and the Ministry of Public Works, using a local contractor, labour and materials. Travel time to market has fallen from between 30 minutes and 2 hours to 10–15 minutes, and post-harvest losses from about 25% to about 10%.

What participants raised

- **Why had nobody fixed it?** Paolo Paron (IOM) and Abubakar Aden (Concern) asked why such a lifeline had been left to decay, given large World Bank road investment in Baidoa. That investment went mostly to major roads in town, and a short section serving farmers outside the centre never rose to the top of the municipality's list. Runoff eroded the slope every season, so the repair bill kept growing. Anthony Dratre added that the masonry-stone roads the municipality could afford would always wash out there.
- **Layering onto government investment.** Mohamed Abdulle (FAO) argued that development actors should build on government and World Bank-funded programmes instead of running isolated interventions, with accountability on all sides. Municipal engineers co-designed and supervised the road, and the municipality committed to prioritise its maintenance.
- **Community control.** Abdullahi Gedi (NRC) suggested wider use of group cash transfers (GCT), with communities deciding and managing. Nhamo agreed for smaller investments, but a road needs engineering supervision.
- **Local benefit and governance.** Helena Roberts (British Red Cross) asked where materials and labour came from: Baidoa. Jody Henderson (Life & Peace Institute) asked how the Community Resilience Committee was formed; it is BRCiS' entry point to each community and owns the community action plan.
- **Beyond the market.** The road has also made health facilities and schools in town easier to reach, and brought more visitors to Isha Falls.
- **What comes next.** Paolo Paron (IOM) asked about solar street lighting. It was not part of the build, but NRC sees it as the next investment, for night-time trade and for women's safety. Mohamed Abdulle

(FAO) proposed solar-powered irrigation for low-income and IDP groups farming land away from the river, now that they have a reliable route to market.

> **"We are no longer isolated. We can access assistance, services, and markets more easily."**
>
> — Abshir Abdullahi Burale, farmer, Isha

STILL OPEN

- Who pays for upkeep? Mohamed Abdulle (FAO) put it mainly on the municipality, with communities contributing.
- Has the road changed prices, for consumers in Baidoa or at the farm gate? It has been open for more than a year, so this is worth measuring now.
- Who funds the remaining 400 metres to the main road network?

ROOM 2 · MILK CHAIN, GALKACYO · KAALO

Cooperatives, motorcycles and cooling hubs from village to town

Presented by Bile Warsame Salah, with Mohamed Hassan Nur (KAALO)

The idea came from community consultations in an area with a long history of milk production, as Bile explained to Loula Omaar (UN). Camel milk was carried for hours on foot in plastic containers, and much of it spoiled before reaching buyers, which caused disputes along the chain. KAALO worked on every link at once: three registered cooperatives with 150 members (mostly women), shared motorcycles, solar-powered cooling hubs in Bayra and Gobsho, a 50-member trade association, and a link to a corporate buyer, Nomad Dairy. The pilot cost about USD 150,000. Milk now keeps for 7–8 days, and 200 people along the chain have been trained in hygiene and handling.

What participants raised

- **"It is how the money is organised."** Peter Mwaura (HIJRA) pushed KAALO's lesson further: one investment created income streams for producers, transporters, hub operators and processors at the same time, and the multiplier along the chain matters more than the size of the budget.
- **Cost and return.** Naomi Njoroge (IOM) asked what the support cost per cooperative, what members now earn, and how earnings vary by season. KAALO shared the budget; earnings data is still a gap.
- **Private sector.** Salat Iddle (Save the Children) asked about private-sector engagement. Nomad Dairy put in its own investment, registered with support from the Ministry of Livestock, and now flies milk daily to Mogadishu and other regions.
- **Finance and youth.** Daud Jiran (Mercy Corps) and Rufus Karanja (Embassy of Switzerland) asked about youth and access to finance. Women and youth were the main participants in the chain. Links to financial service providers were not finalised before the project closed in June 2026, and KAALO is continuing that work.
- **Scaling and value addition.** Mohammed Ahmed (Save the Children) suggested packaged camel milk in large Mogadishu supermarkets such as Hayat, Aaran and Juba, to compete with imported milk. Naomi Njoroge (IOM) added fermented milk, common in Kenya, to hold value through the dry season, alongside the cheese and butter KAALO is exploring. On scale-up and sustainability, raised by Abdikani Osman Ahmed (NRC) and Mohamed A. Ali (World Vision), KAALO remains on the ground through other funding, and the Ministry of Livestock has asked for replication in Sanaag, Bari and Nugal.

> **"Our future milk business now looks more stable and promising, like a sunrise."**
>
> — Bashir Isse Jame, milk transporter, Gobsho

STILL OPEN

- What do cooperative members earn, and how stable is it between wet and dry seasons?
- Peter Mwaura (HIJRA) asked whether other communities have copied the model on their own. Several have asked; none has started yet.
- Who co-invests in the next hubs and cold chain, given Nomad Dairy wants more milk than the hubs supply?

ROOM 3 · BIOGAS, BARDHERE · CONCERN AND LIFELINE GEDO

A pilot that worked until the drought, and what it teaches about testing

Presented by Ahmed Dugal (Lifeline Gedo) and Abdulkadir Moalin (Concern). Facilitated by Sarah King (Concern), with Alio Abdinur Ahmed (Concern).

Families in Bardhere spent USD 20–30 a month on firewood and charcoal, or hours each day collecting it, while livestock manure went unused. The pilot built seven community-managed digesters: two of about 30 m^3 in year one, then five 12 m^3 units in year two. The smaller units needed shorter pipelines, produced gas faster and used less feedstock, with enough surplus to fill cylinders for more households. A survey during the drought found:

100% used biogas to cook in the past week	**97%** saw less smoke in the kitchen	**81%** spent less time collecting firewood	**93%** would recommend biogas to another household

The same drought also cut the water and manure the digesters need. In some households gas output fell and families went back to firewood.

What participants raised

- **Safety and liability.** Mohamed Hussein Nasib (IRC) asked who is liable if something goes wrong, and whether communities can manage alone. Reported problems were few, qualified engineers did the installation, and users were trained. Responsibility for daily operation, maintenance and safety is set out in a community agreement signed in front of the local authority and community committees.
- **Labour and payment.** Ahmed Hussein (FAO) asked how households share the work. Manure came from all homesteads with livestock, and a waste committee did most of the loading, then asked for a retainer. That clashed with the expectation that users would contribute voluntarily.
- **Drought.** Ifrah Abdirashid Haji (GREDO) asked whether smaller digesters face the same supply problem, and whether they meet household cooking needs. Said Abshir (FAO) raised the cost of bringing in manure from elsewhere. The digesters restart when fed again, but the dry season is still the central, unsolved problem.
- **Cost.** Cecilia Kleimert asked how to make the systems more cost-effective. Robin Mydlak (GIST) asked whether scaling in one location would bring costs down, and which complementary investments would help.
- **Targeting and conflict sensitivity.** Hared Osman (Life & Peace Institute) asked how the 96 households were selected without fuelling clan tensions or perceptions of favouritism. Selection criteria were agreed with community committees, and TERRA offered different opportunities for women, men, farmers and traders, so the pilot was one opportunity among many. Ng Chun Yu (IOM) asked whether the model could work for urban communities.
- **From household to business.** Alio Abdinur Ahmed (Concern) suggested linking digesters to Self-Help Groups, SMEs, restaurants and farmers so the system earns income, with a trained technician in each community.

> **"The shared management structure promotes teamwork, accountability, and mutual support."**
>
> — Shamso Sheikh Ibrahim, biogas user, Bulo-Cesan

STILL OPEN

- Sarah King put the room's central question: how do we judge a pilot that works in normal years but stops in a shock? Perrine's answer: the problem matters too much to drop.
- Household digesters, larger digesters at market sites with fixed water points, or clean cookstoves: which fits drought-prone areas best, and at what cost?
- Robin Mydlak (GIST) asked about IOM's biodigesters in Bergadiid. Ng Chun Yu (IOM) offered to check for comparable learning and share it.

PART 3

What the discussion added

We closed the plenary with five lessons TERRA has taught BRCiS: **plan for movement; small fixes can unlock whole systems; test through both seasons; put flexible money with communities; and measure the connections.** The rooms sharpened these, and added the points below.

1

Rural–urban links fall between mandates

Road money in Baidoa went to major roads in town, and the 300 metres connecting farmers to them went unfunded for years. BRCiS had worked in Isha and in the market without touching the road between them either. Community action plans find these gaps.

2

Organise the money along the chain

The milk pilot worked because one investment reached producers, transporters, hub operators and processors at once. Fund a single link, and the milk still spoils at the next one.

3

Trade runs both ways, and value addition is the next bottleneck

The bajaj never goes back to the village empty: milk sellers return with clothes and goods to resell. The next constraints are packaging, products that keep through the dry season, and finance for cooperatives and traders.

4

Agree who maintains and who pays before you build

Every room came back to this: road upkeep, the digester agreement, a waste committee asking for a retainer, cooperatives needing ongoing links to government and buyers. Where it was settled early, the work held.

5

Plan for the season a solution fails

Biogas did well in the drought survey and still stalled when water and manure ran out. No single solution has to work all year. Resilience comes from a set of options, such as smaller digesters, market-site systems, cookstoves and woodlots, and from targeting shared assets in a way that does not feed conflict.

PART 4

Questions we are carrying forward

Several of these feed directly into BRCiS' next programmes.

- **Paying for upkeep.** How do we agree maintenance before construction, and get fixes like Isha Road counted as resilience investments in donor and government budgets?
- **Evidence beyond outputs.** The road's effect on prices, for consumers and at the farm gate, and cooperative earnings across seasons.
- **Drought-proofing new technology.** Test biogas designs and alternatives through a full dry season, with costs per household, before scaling.
- **Measuring rural–urban linkages.** With GIST, BRCiS has worked on how to quantify a linkage and track whether it strengthens. We would welcome a follow-up session with others working on this.

PART 5

Learning Event Resources

Note: The breakout recordings are partial and miss parts of some presentations. For the full account of each pilot, see its case study in the interactive report, linked below.

Recordings	
Opening plenary recording	[LINK]
Room 1: Isha Road, Baidoa (NRC) recording	[LINK]
Room 2: Milk chain, Galkacyo (KAALO) recording	[LINK]
Room 3: Biogas, Bardhere (Concern and Lifeline Gedo) recording	[LINK]
Collective debrief recording	[LINK]
PowerPoint Slides	
Event slide deck	**ANNEXED**
Published Interactive Report	
Interactive report: Two-Way Traffic, how rural and urban Somalia sustain each other	[LINK]
Case study: Rehabilitating Isha Road in Baidoa	[LINK]
Case study: Strengthening the milk value chain in Galkacyo	[LINK]
Case study: From waste to biogas to cleaner air in Bardhere	[LINK]



Baidoa. Photo: Abdulkadir Mohamed/NRC



Galkacyo. Photo: Daud Muse/KAALO



Bardhere. Photo: Abdinasir Hassan/Concern

THANK YOU FOR JOINING

Resilience travels both ways

If life moves back and forth, our programmes should too.

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