

## AN OPERATIONAL GUIDE

### PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING SUSTAINABILITY PLANS FOR STRENGTHENING SOCIAL CONTRACT PROGRAMME

#### 1. Introduction

This learning document on effective partnership and shared ownership is part of a series under the Programmatic Learning Instrument (PLI). The PLI is an instrument designed to stimulate and facilitate cross-programmatic learning at both the program implementation level and the portfolio management level. This instrument supports co-created learning trajectories, where stakeholders jointly decide the learning objectives and the pathway to achieve them. Within the PLI framework, Media INK and the Knowledge Platform for Security and Rule of Law (KPSRL) are collaborating on a project titled "Learning Support for the Dutch SROL Program in Somalia."

The government of the Netherlands, through its embassy in Nairobi, supports the implementation of various programs within the SROL framework. The overarching objective of this SROL program is to contribute to the improvement of the social contract in Somalia and Somaliland. This is achieved through three different projects implemented by three different consortia:

1. Damal Program: *Implementing partners:* IDLO, NAFIS Network, Legal Aid Clinic (LAC), and Media INK. The program's objective is to improve the social contract through increased legitimacy of justice sector institutions in Somaliland.
2. Miisaan Program: *Implementing partners:* Interpeace, Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, and Media INK. The program's objective is to contribute to inclusively developed, locally informed, and widely supported transitional justice frameworks endorsed by key stakeholders in Somalia and Somaliland and integrated with national implementation plans.
3. Danwadaag Program: *Implementing partners:* VNG, Care, Free Press Unlimited, and Media INK. The program's objective is to improve the social contract through inclusive and transparent Disaster Risk Management.

The four-year SROL program in Somalia began in 2020. The consortia are currently in their third year and have gained a valuable trove of learnings. The primary aim of the PLI learning trajectory is to support Damal, Miisaan, Danwadaag, and the Embassy in fostering collaborative partnerships and facilitating inter-program learning exchanges.

This specific learning document focuses on how to sustain the strengthening social contract programs supported by the Netherlands government for Somaliland, it is imperative that the three programs are expanded and maintained, that government contributions will be sustained, that partnerships will be strengthened, that a comprehensive policy framework will be established, that community support will be gained, and that the program will be adaptable to changing circumstances. This document is a practical guide that provides direction to effective

sustainability. This document builds on the experience gained by the Damal programme. The Damal programme achieved noteworthy success in sustaining the programme achievements. These achievements include adding the social contract programmes such as the ADR (Alternative Dispute resolution) program in the National Development Plan (2023-2028) as a top priority; second-line ministries that the three programmes are working with plans to detail its contribution to the existing and expansion in the Implementation Plan in mid-2024.

The approach presented in this document were by the three SRoL consortia in a meeting held on the 25th of November in Nairobi. After stakeholder meetings were held, a draft guide was developed and distributed to participants for comment, and staff involved in implementing strengthening social contract programmes held meetings to share experience, document lessons learned, and acknowledge any challenges faced while working to address how to overcome them in future meetings. The key findings from these meetings were documented and then incorporated into the iteration of the guide, which includes updated matrices and strategic methodological adjustments to better engage stakeholders and provide more thorough planning opportunities and which seeks to increase the probability of successful country transition and sustainability of programme outcomes.

Achieving sustainability requires an approach geared towards the continuity of successful interventions from the outset of programmes. As programmes come to an end, it becomes increasingly important to maintain and further mainstream programme achievements within countries through strong Sustainability Plans. Sustainability is defined as the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. In order to maximize the likelihood of continued program outcomes, local stakeholders must actively plan the transition from strengthening social contract programmes and co-implemented activities to full country responsibility.

A key objective of this guide is to organize and inform key stakeholders about continued activities, sustainability initiatives, and roles and responsibilities. This guide is intentionally designed to be flexible to ensure responsiveness to local context, allowing for increased ownership of the planning and transition process.

## 2. An overview of sustainability

For the purpose of writing a sustainability plan, it is important to understand the current state of the programmes in relation to the four stages of service delivery. These stages will likely be core aspects of the interventions to be sustained, and each building block should be considered as a list of programme interventions is developed.



### STAGE 1

**Stage One** – Conceptual and design phase: This is further reviewed in the inception phase. To ensure the success of programmes and deliverables, staff and stakeholders need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills. In order to provide this support, trainings for staff may be developed, resources may be allocated for trainings, or important skills may be identified.



### STAGE 2

**Stage Two** - Community and stakeholder engagement: Development and implementation of the programmes require the involvement of several stakeholders and community members at the facility, district, regional and national levels. In order to ensure a successful program, it is important to identify and incorporate these contributors strategically based on stakeholder expertise and program needs.



### STAGE 3

**Stage Three** – Use of evidence informed decisions: Quality data is essential to the progress of a given program and ways to improve it. In order to gain stakeholder support, data is essential. To demonstrate program and organization efficiency, addressing challenges, and considering improvements, programs and organizations should be able to collect, interpret, and present data periodically.



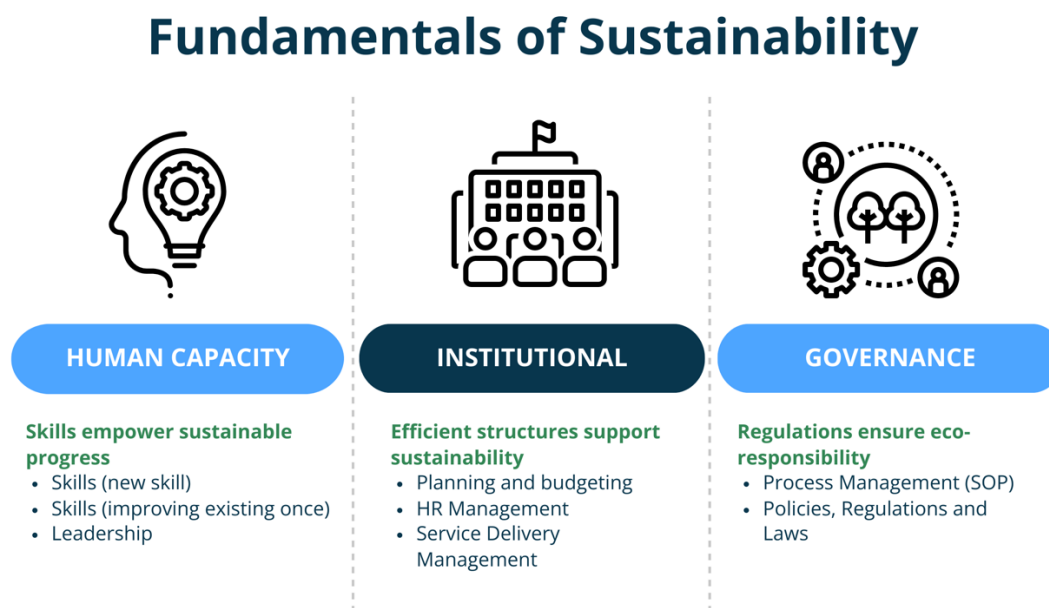
### STAGE 4

**Stage Four** - Learning and Sharing knowledge: The ability to continuously learn and share knowledge is crucial for building strong interpersonal relationships and fostering transparency. This involves tracking responsibilities, outcomes, and channels of communication between the different stakeholders.

### 3. Fundamentals of Sustainability

To design a comprehensive sustainability plan, there are three key elements to consider: human capacity, institutions, and governance. These categories provide the foundational basis for where and how strengthening social contract programmes interventions may be implemented and sustained. [Figure 1](#) shows interventions categorized across key elements, and the strategies involved in each. The identification and evaluation of specific strategies, resources and opportunities within these key elements will allow for the stronger strategies to be developed and move forward in the transition process.

**Figure 1:** Key elements and strategies to consider in sustainability.



### 4. When should sustainability plans be developed?

Key learning from the SRoL programmes is the importance of ensuring shared ownership on the programme objectives and implementation amongst all stakeholder in general and local communities and governments in particular. The EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) framework<sup>1</sup> has emerged and way to achieve shared ownership. EDI helps ensure participation of communities and other stakeholders from the start of programme. It leads to more contextually appropriate solutions and helps communities and in-country stakeholders become key drivers of their own development, resulting in long-term sustainability and greater impact.

At the beginning of the program or activity, sustainability, plans with an emphasis on EDI, must be considered. To achieve sustainability, programs must design themselves in a way that facilitates mainstreaming interventions and methodologies. Stakeholder involvement and shared ownership should be secured and the perception of foreign driven should be limited from the outset to ensure sustainability. In the wake of the introduction of methodologies and

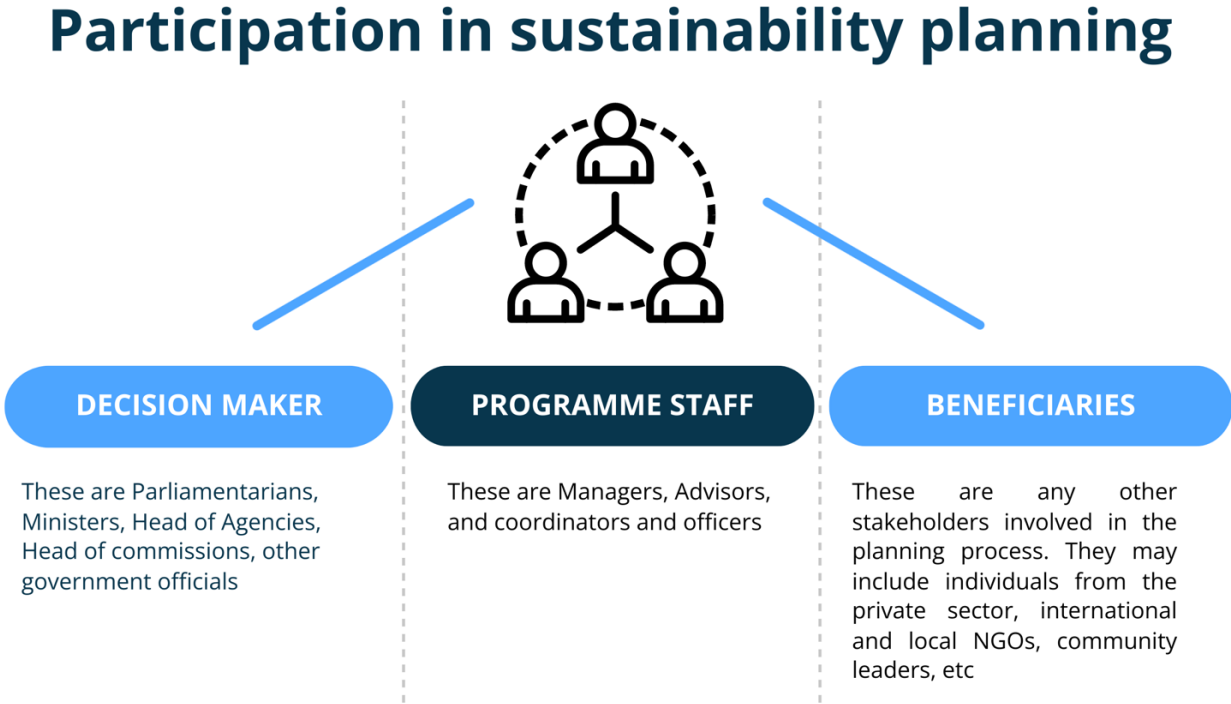
<sup>1</sup> Towards effective partnership and shared ownership. A learning product from the SRoL programmes in Somalia and Somaliland

implementation of interventions, and once positive results have been achieved, as well as stakeholders have experienced and become familiar with them, formalized sustainability plans can be developed. This will typically occur toward the end of donor assistance but should be carried out several months in advance of programme end to allow for co-design/implementation of the plan and a graceful exit. A policy dialogue style meeting with decision makers and program implementers should be held to develop these plans. The stakeholders can decide what interventions they wish to maintain, how and who is responsible for maintaining them at this meeting. will be responsible.

**5. Who should participate in sustainability planning?**

In collaboration with counterparts, participants should be selected for Sustainability Plan development meetings. In order to hold a successful Sustainability meeting, a minimum of 15 to 20 stakeholders should be present. These stakeholders should represent the diversity of voices and interests. It is important to consider the question who is at the table? And who is not. They are divided into four categories according to their function and role in the respective programmes as shown in figure 2:

Figure 2: Who should participate in sustainability planning?



## 6. What Questions to ask to achieve sustainability objectives

Within this context, sustainability can be viewed as the transfer of responsibilities, the execution of programme activities, the monitoring and evaluation of programme activities, the management of knowledge, and additional components that contribute to continuous improvement when external development partners (donors) are no longer able to provide technical assistance. Successful sustainability plans consider the impact of internal and external factors on overall performance after programmes phase-out. They should be robust, comprehensive, and developed with the participation of personnel at all levels within counterpart institutions. Plans should also include both immediate and long-term objectives. The government of Netherlands funded strengthening social contact programmes has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Information, Local Governments, regional offices, and community structures to test and implement interventions together. Outlining actionable steps before the close of the programmes will allow stakeholders to assume complete responsibility for the maintenance of previously co-implemented activities.

Sustainability Plans will vary from programme to programme based on each programme's specific activities and priorities. However, there are core components that will help inform programmes during their own plan development processes. The four key contextual areas, or stages, explore the plan's capacity to be implemented both at an individual and institutional level. Individual capacity is defined as the ability of local individuals to develop and maintain technical skills that are conducive to successful operations management and service delivery. Institutional capacity is defined as the ability of involved/partnering institutions to effectively operate the structures that manage and execute activities. Contextualized priorities set by countries in the guided activity will be used to define the goals of a Sustainability operational plan. Below are important questions to consider for each of the stages. During meetings with programmes stakeholders, these questions can be used to promote comprehensive discussions to identify objectives and priorities through programmes phaseout. Meeting facilitators may select relevant questions based on context and conversation direction.

### **Stage One** – *Conceptual and design phase:*

- What are the priorities for building individuals' capacity for Conceptual and design phase? What are the priorities at the institutional level?
- How can human resources policies and strategies be adapted to encourage staff to spend time improving service delivery?

### **Stage Two** - *Learning and Sharing knowledge:*

- What are the priorities for building individuals' capacity for peer-to-peer learning? Institutional capacity?
- How can we develop a sustainable system for peer learning and support?
- How can we develop staffs' skills in peer learning and support?
- How can we strengthen the skills related to gathering and sharing learning about implementation?

**Stage Three** – *use of evidence informed decisions:*

- What are the priorities for building individuals' capacity for measuring information? Institutional capacity?
- How can we strengthen providers' and data-staffs' skills in using data for management or improvement purposes?
- How can we shift away from "blame culture" and promote transparency when reviewing data showing poor performance?

**Stage Four** - *Community and stakeholder engagement:*

- What are the priorities for building individuals' capacity to engage with stakeholders and community members? Institutional capacity?
- What are the appropriate communities and stakeholders to involve? How can we increase their involvement?

## **7. Outline of the Sustainability Plans**

As previously mentioned, 15-20 key stakeholders will need to be engaged in the development of Sustainability Plans. These stakeholders should convene and meet as the programmes near the phase-out stages to engage in a dialogue focused on policy to determine which interventions should be sustained, who will sustain these interventions, how plans will be carried out, and what critical factors will affect sustainability. It is critical to emphasize that this is not a technical workshop but a policy discussion to adequately engage key stakeholders. The following outline provides a brief overview of the major components.

- A. **Context Analysis** - Description of the operating context and stakeholder engagement
- B. **Conceptualizing Programme Sustainability framework**
- C. (What) **Interventions and Results to be Sustained** - Understanding realities, recognizing challenges, opportunities and required resources.
- D. The **Strategic directions**
  - Policy integration
  - Long-Term Funding and Commitment:
  - Role of Public and Private actors:
  - Social and cultural considerations
- E. The **Conclusion**
- F. The **Implementation plan** (Annex)

## 8. What Is Being Sustained?

### Determining evidence-based interventions to be sustained

Programmes staff should facilitate a discussion with stakeholders during the policy discussion in which successful evidence-based interventions are presented. Each intervention should be reviewed individually by the group, and they should decide whether to continue its implementation after programme activities end. Ensuring continuity of evidence-based best practices is integral to maintaining and strengthening strong delivery systems.

It is the initial objective of the policy discussion to identify specific interventions that can be sustained. The Programme Manager should fill out Table 1 prior to stakeholder meetings, which will be reviewed/approved by consortium members and local counterparts, if applicable. It is imperative to complete this table throughout the implementation of a program in order to capture the interventions implemented by the program. Sustainability planning meetings can be conducted with stakeholders by projecting table 1 onto a screen and handing out individual copies. As the discussion progresses and interventions to sustain are identified, note-takers should update the programmed document to reflect the priorities agreed upon by the policy discussion participants.

**Table 1:** *Determining evidence-based interventions to be sustained.*

Key Questions	Interventions to be sustained	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Describe the results/gains achieved /expected to be achieved by the last year of the programmes?</li></ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What programmes generated products/tools (studies etc.) will be handed over to partners at programmes closure for sustainability?</li></ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>With what partners/organizations will you partner with and why?</li></ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What capacities do the partners need to facilitate the successful transfer of the programmes?</li></ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What resources (financial) will be needed to maintain programmes results? and Who will provide these resources?</li></ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Which benefits of the programmes can be sustained without continued financial resources?</li></ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Risk mitigation actions and measures?</li></ul>		



## 9. How are interventions and methods being sustained?

Designing Sustainability Plans requires understanding the circumstances counterparts will face when transitioning a programme. In order to implement sustainability plans, programs must identify the systems and resources necessary to sustain activities.

Participants should outline their individual skills and institutional support mechanisms for each element. In developing a sustainability plan, Table 2 can help guide the discussion and account for essential components that should be considered or incorporated. This could include tools (job aids, training processes, referral pathways, etc.) necessary for activities, required resources (trained professionals, financing, infrastructure, etc.), challenges to sustainability, and potential opportunities for new partners.

**Table 2:** *Detailing plans to sustain identified interventions.*

Intervention	How:		Where: Points of Integration	
	Individual Skills	Institutional Support	Key Points of Integration	Other stakeholders