

## BORESHA III FINAL EVALUATION SUMMARY BRIEF

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The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and its consortium partners CARE International and World Vision International (WVI) with funding from the European Union (EU) are currently implementing the third phase of the Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa project (BORESHA) in the Mandera Triangle - Dollo Ado and Dollo Bay woredas of Ethiopia, Mandera county of Kenya, and Gedo region of Somalia. The project is being implemented between January 2022 and March 2023 (including three months no-cost extension). **The project's overall objective is to promote economic development and greater resilience, particularly among vulnerable groups.** At the near completion of the project, DRC contracted Kenbridge consultants to carry out a final evaluation to document the overall performance of the BORESHA III project against set goals, objectives/outcomes, and outputs as a result of project interventions, as defined in the project theory of change and results framework as well as document any lessons learned, expected as well as unexpected results or changes within and outside the project that impacted project delivery and impact.

**The final evaluation employed a mixed methods design combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to generate the necessary data and information regarding the project contributions.** Quantitative data were collected by administering household questionnaires to 400 randomly selected respondents from project beneficiaries (treatment villages) and non-beneficiaries (comparison villages). This was complemented by 45 key informant interviews, 25 focus group discussions, and observations of the 13 physical infrastructures constructed or rehabilitated through the project. The final evaluation assessed overall project performance through the Development Assistance Criteria (DAC) and took into consideration cross-cutting themes.

**BORESHA III is found to be highly relevant to the needs of the target population and their surroundings. The project stays in line with the aims and priorities of the three countries, the IGAD's cross-border frameworks, and it continues to promote economic development and increased resilience of vulnerable communities.** The project was relevant to the needs of the target population at the design stage and remains relevant. It gave attention to the integration of various key sector components in the designing stage relevant to addressing the priorities and needs of the targeted vulnerable population in the Mandera Triangle. The project was implemented at a time when the target households started employing negative coping mechanisms such as disposing of their livelihood assets like livestock, sending their children to live with their relatives, migrating from the rural villages to other areas, including across the border, looking for domestic work, and eating wild fruits due to ongoing drought. These coping mechanisms have a longer-term negative impact on household food security and ultimately their vulnerability to future shocks.

**In terms of effectiveness, from the analysis of the project log frame and comparison of the target versus achieved indicators and output targets, there is a relative achievement of most targets.** Under outcome 1, the project enhanced access to early warning information for better decision-making, built capacities for local DRR planning and implementation, supported integration of community plans into local government plans and continued to increase the uptake of index-based insurance as a risk mitigation strategy (in Kenya). Under outcome 2, the project continued to strengthen incomes and revenues for target communities, growing average household incomes from a baseline of USD 35.15 to USD 87.01 per month. Interventions resulted in improved access to services such as animal health and fodder and growth in local SMEs and employment opportunities. Rangeland resources were managed more sustainably and equitably and had increased productivity, and access to water increased during peak critical periods as a result of interventions under outcome 3. It is worth noting, however, that the achievement of the project objectives remains constrained by the effects of the shocks affecting the region, including the current drought as well as human and livestock epidemics, and stresses that include the current global economic crunch, inflation and soaring food prices. All these have contributed to a general decline in the resilience of households.

**As for the effectiveness, the stakeholders interviewed indicated overall satisfaction with the outputs produced by the project, and delivery against planned outputs. Stakeholder responses were very positive on the value of an integrated program, especially targeting both system-level and household-level interventions.** The project was efficient in ensuring that inputs were transformed into outputs in the most cost-effective way. The project built on previous phases, and a good understanding of the social, political, economic, and environmental dynamics of the context has contributed to its success. The delivery of the project by the consortium partners through the coordination of a steering committee, Project Management Unit (PMU), Technical Working Group (TWG), and Technical Implementation Group (TIG) with clear management, coordination and communication were noted to be a more robust way of implementing interventions of such a complex nature. The linkages created with other actors both formal and informal have greatly contributed to better and faster delivery of the project inputs. There was efficient control of the budget lines with an overall burn rate of 61% by the end of December 2022.

**The project was well coordinated, and activities were coherent with standards and procedures.** Coordination of the project was done at three levels: national level, county/district level and or Kebele/village (actual project implementation location) level. The three levels of coordination were found to be functional and beneficial to the project and were done through cluster coordination mechanisms and ad hoc meetings coordinated by the respective departments and administrations. Both the cluster and other coordination meetings were used to strengthen the linkages between the project activities and the many actors at different levels within the Manderu Triangle. Many aspects of the project components were found to be working towards the realization of the same objective. The consortium partners worked closely together and implemented activities in the same villages which led to the optimization of resources. The coordination mechanisms (steering committee, PMU, TWG and TIG) made it easy to make timely decisions and build consensus on processes. The project also coordinated with other NGOs and consortia working in the borderland areas.

**The project interventions overall had a lot of positive impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the beneficiaries. The evaluation team feels the project has laid positive foundations to help communities better prepare for and respond to disasters, and continue to build their resilience.** The project had an impact at the system and household/communal level, including in the short and long term. It enabled beneficiaries to be better able to deal with the negative consequences of shocks as household incomes improved, saving culture and savings increased and households were able to diversify their income and livelihoods through interventions such as VSLAs, support to businesses and livestock health and agricultural inputs. The savings culture was enhanced through the VSLA groups, business skills development and better access to financing. The infrastructure support will have long-lasting impacts on the lives of these communities, having helped to improve the overall quality of their life.

The project strengthened the capacity of NRM Committees, thus enhancing inter and intra-community dialogue interactions and better management of conflicts over the use of natural resources. Informal cross-border trade improved through the engagement of both formal and informal networks, consultations, and dialogue among the cross-border communities. The project restored rangelands sites through reseeded, check dams and sustainable land management approaches, contributed to better management capacities and cross-border engagement for efficient sharing of natural resources, and increased bonding social capital between groups (NRM, TBC, WUCs & VSLAs) and communities in each region as well as with cross-border communities. A separate impact assessment details the impacts accruing from the different interventions over the lifespan of all three phases of the BORESHA project, which began implementation in early 2018.

**The evaluation team feels the project has laid positive foundations to help communities better prepare for and respond to disasters, and continue to build their resilience.** The project promoted ownership by engaging with key stakeholders, local governments, and the private sector, as well as involving and building the capacity of local communities in the Manderu Triangle. It capacitated community-level service providers

and local structures embedded within the communities which continue to remain a resource within the community: their effect will remain long after the project has ended. The newly constructed or rehabilitated water points will address water needs, pushing many rural households to leave their places of origin to reach areas with permanent water sources. The project also worked with regional bodies like Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development ICPALD to put in place important cross-border level MOUs that will guide livestock disease information sharing across borders many years after the project ends. The relationships built across borders (e.g., tri-border business committees will also continue to exist and support trade in the long run.

As much as the project had a significant impact on household resilience in the Mandera Triangle, the results of the evaluation suggest that additional investments are needed to have a greater impact, protect, and sustain the gains made during the three phases of BORESHA. In institutionalizing the DRR planning process, there will be a need to train and engage local administrations in the CoVACA assessment and development of community adaptation action plans (CAAPs), synchronise the timing of the assessment and development of the plan with the government planning calendar to ease their integration into the government plans and work with communities on resource mobilisation for the implementation of the DRR plans. Additionally, deploying early warning systems through other community structures such as VSLAs, CAHW and CDRs, NRM committees, and TBCs will improve its institutionalization.

The establishment of a more sustainable supply system will ease the access to animal health inputs for producers and CAHWs/CDRs, while bundling of the IBLI with other livestock inputs such as animal health services and fodder may ease the cost of delivery of the product and make it more sustainable. The VSLAs will benefit from being targeted for the business grant facility or connecting them with financial service providers as they are unable to adequately enable savings and loans to members to support all their small enterprises. For TVETs, upscaling the enterprise-based TVET (EBTVET) approach by expanding the current cohort of EBTVEET could increase access and equity to skills training, especially in areas where there are no functional TVET colleges or vocational training centres. Other areas of support that will benefit the TVET graduates include strengthening opportunities for upgrading skills and diversifying from one skill area to provide them with more opportunities to earn income and meet the market demand. They could also be targeted for the business grant facility or connected with financial service providers and supported through the provision of information from rapid and regular labour market assessments.

Considering the success of the business grant facility (all of the businesses that were supported were operational at the time this evaluation was conducted) and the demand for access to credit and skills to start and grow their business, upscaling the grant facility is a potential key success area. Similarly, considering the success of cross-border institutions, there may be the need to integrate and combine the DRR, NRM and peace committees to strengthen synergies and avoid overlap. It is also important to incentivise better natural resource management e.g., by providing water and other support to communities that have shown a good approach to better managing their rangelands. To address challenges on the sustainability of operation and maintenance, and costs of running the machines for utilization of invasive species, these activities should be integrated with TVET skills training, including the supply, repair and maintenance of solar power equipment. Similarly, solarization will benefit fodder production and extraction of water from boreholes reducing the production and operation costs, respectively. As for long-term access to water, there is a need to strengthen policies that prioritise more investment in water systems infrastructure in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of the Mandera Triangle through public-private partnership investments and by designing and constructing ecologically-viable groundwater systems in model rural areas. This should be preceded by extensive groundwater assessments (geophysical and hydrological surveys).