



GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

NEXUS Somalia



Introduction

NEXUS is a platform for civil society leadership to advance a new community-driven model of a partnership promoting peaceful, thriving, and empowered communities in Somalia and Somaliland. This unique consortium, led by eight pioneering Somali non-governmental organizations (NGOs), aspires to lead a locally-driven agenda for change, working in partnership with the Somali government, private sector, and international partners.

Founded in 2019, Nexus includes eight core members: **Centre for Peace and Democracy (CPD), Gargaar Relief and Development Organization (GREDO), Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (HAVOYOCO), KAALO, Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC), Social-Life and Agriculture Development Organisation (SADO), Taakulo Somaliland Community (TASCO), and Wajir South Development Association (WASDA).** The eight members bring together an average of over 23 years' experience, and programmatic and policy expertise covering peacebuilding, conflict resolution, protection and GBV, health services, youth engagement, humanitarian response,

WASH, livelihoods, cash transfers, education, and many more areas, thus facilitating integrated and coherent programming that links immediate relief with longer-term resilience and peacebuilding. Collectively, Nexus member organizations managed over US\$30 million in 2019 from more than 30 donors, to reach over 2.3 million people.

This paper will explain NEXUS' governance (chapter 1) and fund management (chapter 2) structure. In general, the structure of Nexus is designed to ensure south-to-south capacity and institutional development that leads to graduation of new members to core members after achieving set standards. International partners, Oxfam and Save the Children International have supported NEXUS since 2019, and have committed to a gradual transition of functions to the Nexus Platform during the first three years. Together, all organizations have signed an MOU to guide the partnership, and members contribute an annual \$6,000 per organization (\$10,000 for international organizations) to the NEXUS Common Fund to enable self-financing and resource mobilization.

1. NEXUS Governance Structure

Steering Committee: The NEXUS Platform Steering Committee is the governing board. The Steering Committee leads and oversees the strategic direction of the NEXUS platform. The Committee represents the views of the members of the Consortium and ensures that the Chairperson, Co-chair and the Secretariat fulfill their roles and responsibilities. The NEXUS Steering Committee is composed of three local/national members, Oxfam and Save the Children. Elections are held annually for the three local/national positions, on a rotational basis. The Steering Committee operates on a consensus-based model for decision making, in line with Somali tradition, where 3 members are needed to have a quorum.

Chairperson: The Chair of NEXUS Platform Steering Committee leads the platform and provides strategic leadership and governance oversight. The Chair is responsible for contributing to the development of high, quality, participatory programmes for the NEXUS platform. The Chair supports the NEXUS Platform Members, NEXUS Platform Steering Committee and Secretariat in building better rapport for overseeing fundraising and resource mobilization. The Chair is elected annually from committee members¹.

Secretariat: The NEXUS Secretariat takes its mandate from the Steering Committee, and is tasked with managing the daily strategic, programmatic and administrative functions of the Consortium, as well as canvassing partnerships and fundraising opportunities. The NEXUS Secretariat is led by a Director, and joined by an Institutional Development Unit (IDU) Manager and Program Development Manager. The Secretariat reports to the Steering Committee on the progress of implementation and presents

the Steering Committee with strategic and funding decisions for approval.

Fund Manager: Oxfam will receive and manage the funding (including overseeing risk and financial compliance of all members) from international donors, and carry out appropriate due diligence and risk assessment processes as necessary with all NEXUS members. This function sits with a full-time NEXUS Fund Manager. Oxfam operates in a way that is aligned with the long-term vision of transitioning out of this role with the objective of NEXUS core members receiving direct funding. Oxfam and the Nexus Core Members commit to a gradual transition and will together develop a set of agreed-upon milestones. Further details regarding the specific fund management structure are provided below.

Project Management Committee: The Project Management Committee (PMC) consists of representatives from the eight-core members, Oxfam, and Save the Children. The PMC is responsible for the delivery of Nexus programming, and reports to the Secretariat. The PMC will ensure effective support and oversight through regular quality assurance and results monitoring.

Learning and Innovation Lead: Oxfam manages an internal learning initiative in conjunction with Nexus Core Members at all stages of implementation, in particular, learning on the modality of the consortium and advancing of the localization agenda. This function sits with a full-time Nexus MEAL Coordinator, who also supports Nexus members with MEAL related to programme implementation. The Nexus MEAL Coordinator works closely with the MEAL Working Group, which consists of

¹ In January 2021, Centre for Peace and Democracy (CPD) was elected chair.

focal points for MEAL (Coordinators and/or Officers) for each Nexus member.

Organizational Development Lead: Save the Children International provides support to the IDU Manager for organizational development and systems strengthening of Nexus Core Members. In 2020, capacity assessments of all eight core members were undertaken by an independent consulting firm, using the comprehensive SCI due diligence tool. In 2021, NEXUS members prioritized their individual organizations' needs into Organizational Development Plans that identify strengths, opportunities for capacity sharing between partners, and institutional investments needed, both in terms of soft-investments (eg. technical advice, policy development) and hardware/infrastructure components (eg. equipment, systems and computer programs). The Organizational Development Plans form the basis for Nexus overall multi-annual strategy for the Institutional Development Unit.

Other Responsibilities of Core Members: In collaboration with the International Partners, the Nexus Secretariat and Core members will fulfill the following core functions of Nexus, with the aim of taking full ownership of the Nexus Platform after the initial inception phase:

- Lead the strategy formulation, design and implementation of Nexus activities;
- Ensure quality and impact of programs, including accountability and compliance;
- Support the research, learning and advocacy of the consortium at

national and international levels;

- Commit to implementation of capacity development plan developed for each member;
- Lead in the identification and selection of tier two members, and subsequent capacity development.

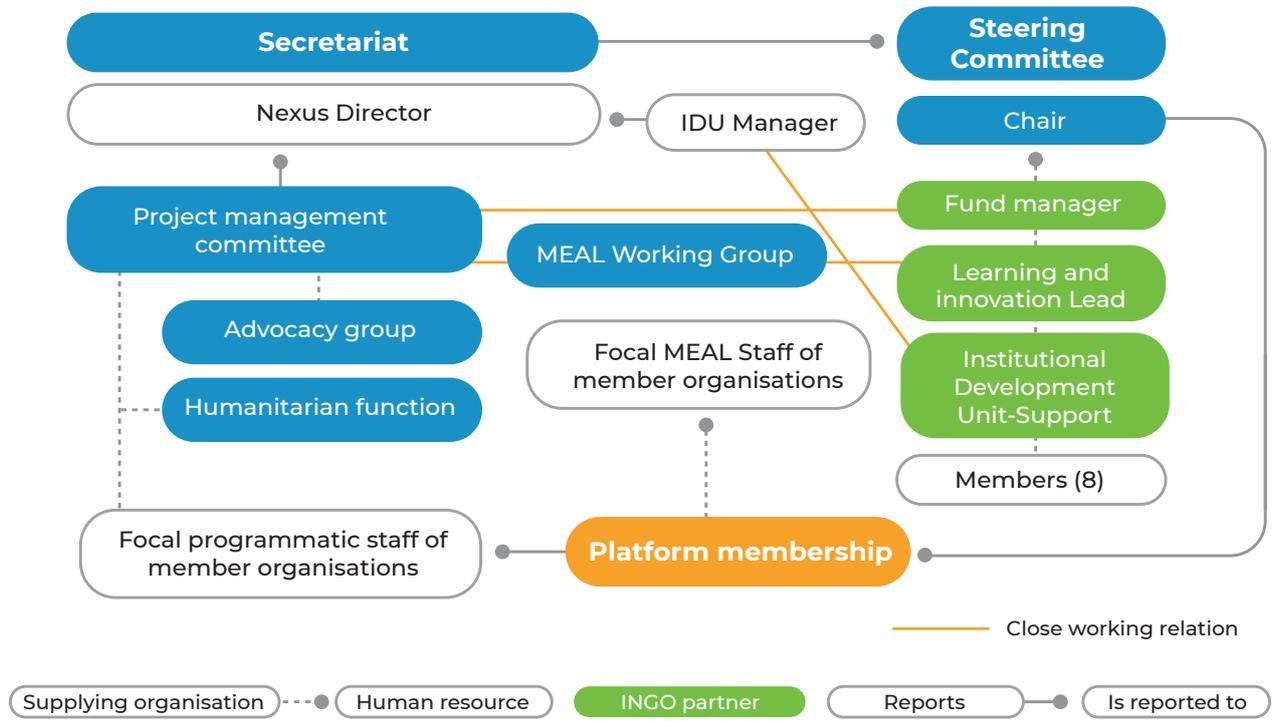
Expanding Nexus membership beyond current core members:

Nexus began with the eight Core Members who are among the most credible Somali NGOs with strong reputations and integrity in quality project delivery and broad geographic coverage. NEXUS will seek to establish a two-tier membership and will develop criteria for the recruitment of new members beyond the current eight with the commitment to support the graduation of new members to NEXUS Core Members. Geographic diversity, integrity and proven quality will be important eligibility criteria for future local members. During the first three years, NEXUS will reach out to a cross-section of local NGOs and Community-Based Organizations to involve them in thought leadership and knowledge sharing events, as well as advocacy efforts. In terms of a formal relationship, NEXUS envisions – with adequate funding – identifying 5 similar organizations that meet an agreed-upon criteria to offer institutional strengthening services.

Roles of Somali NGO Consortium (SNC) and NEAR Network:

SNC and NEAR Network will serve as informal advisors and advocacy partners of Nexus. NEAR may also provide technical support to Nexus in the development of the Institutional Development Unit and due diligence processes. [ture](#)

Nexus Platform Structure



2. Fund Management Structure

Donors directly funding national/local NGOs is something NEXUS members were aware would be challenging and in the short-term unlikely. Therefore, the Nexus platform sought out an international NGO to join as the fund manager – an intermediary role, which would both ease funding relationships and increase Nexus credibility towards international actors, including donors. During the inception phase of Nexus platform, the Nexus platform founding members assessed that they need an international partner as a platform member to receive mentoring and to win the trust of donors.

Nexus only work with international partners whose values would align with those of the platform and that have a strong track record in pushing the localization agenda, both as a global actor and as an actor in Somalia. Other pre-requisites are the ability to share ICR with NEXUS members as well as having an equal partnership.

Due to its history supporting Somali civil society, Oxfam was approached as the founding members concluded that only Oxfam implemented with partners as early as 2001. Nexus members felt Oxfam was strong in partnership, was willing to share ICR and was willing to support Nexus through initial seed funding to get started. The founding members believed Oxfam was a good fit as they trusted Oxfam as having similar values and commitment to shifting power. Once they engaged Oxfam, they were also happy to learn that something like this also was successfully tried in Myanmar by civil society there with Oxfam as the fund Manager ([Durable Peace Programme](#)).

In terms of the operationalization of this role, below is a diagram of the fund management structure. The Steering

Committee, of which the fund manager, Oxfam, is a member, is the governing body of any programme. As donor compliance and quality checks are a requirement for Oxfam to ensure risks are managed well, Oxfam recruited a Fund Manager and Finance Officer. The Fund Manager will be responsible for partner contracting, overall reporting, holding regular programme meetings with the implementing NEXUS members, briefing the NEXUS Steering Committee, and maintaining communication with the donors. The Finance Officer will be responsible for follow up with NEXUS members on financial matters, timely disbursement of funds, and capacity strengthening of Nexus members' finance staff.

As Oxfam also holds the Learning and Innovation Lead role, a MEAL Coordinator is responsible for coordinating and supporting the overall MEAL of Nexus programming, strengthening Nexus members MEAL staff, and ensuring cross-learning among the platform members.

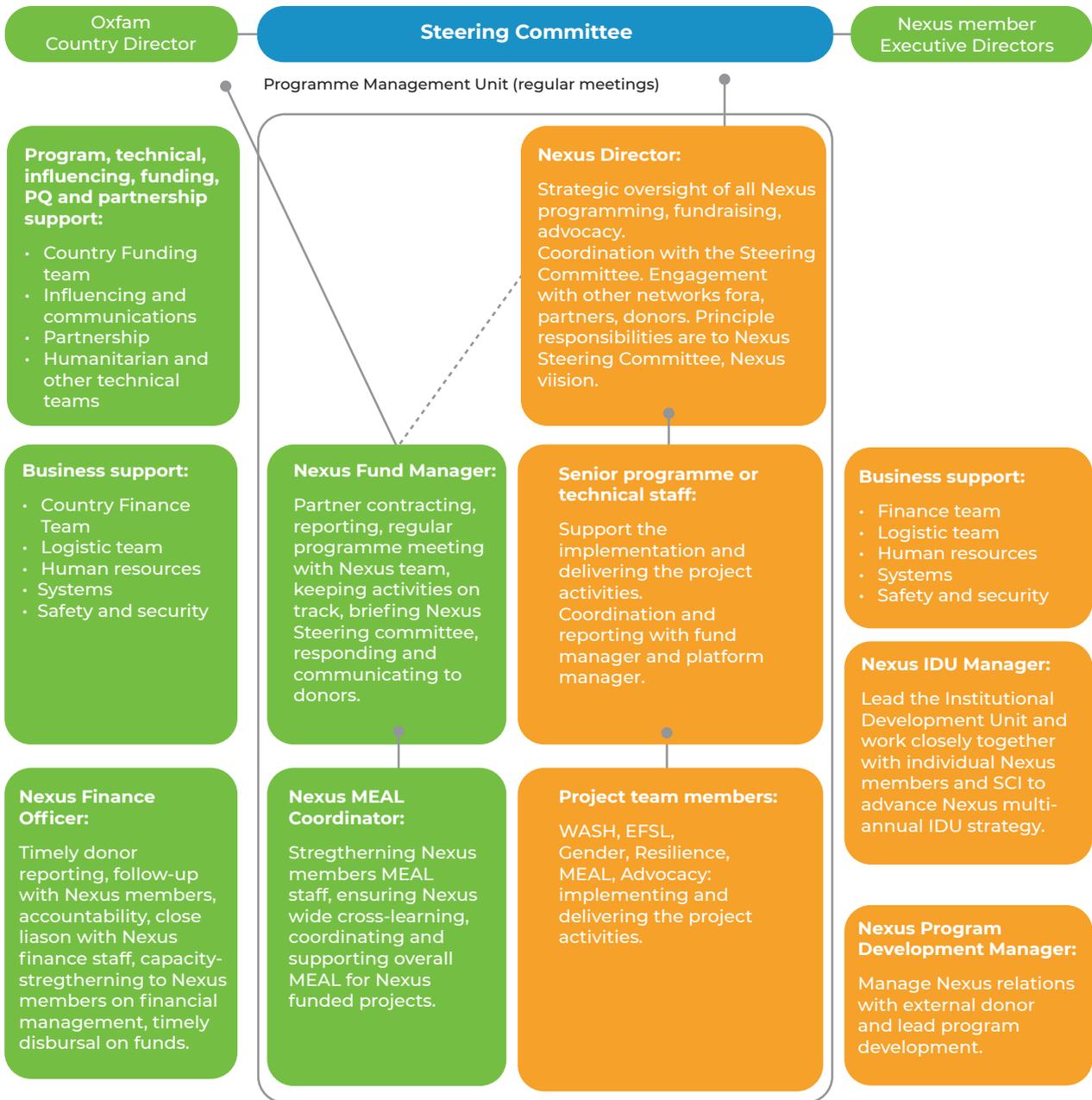
Additional existing roles within the Oxfam Somalia Country Office would be covered by a percentage contribution, which would support the implementation of Nexus programming when required. These roles are both operational e.g. Finance Manager's support and programmatic/technical such as WASH or Advocacy.

It was agreed between NEXUS and Oxfam that the total budget for Oxfam staffing to carry out the different roles is a maximum of 15% of the total direct costs of external grants.

The implementation of Nexus programmes lies with local Nexus members. There will be a contribution towards senior programmatic

staff who are placed within Nexus members, who would support coordination and quality

delivery of activities, and where applicable, provide capacities and expertise to NEXUS.



Acknowledgements

DRA 2.0.

The [Dutch Relief Alliance \(DRA\)](#) is a coalition of 15 Dutch aid organizations in partnership with the [Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) (MoFA). The structure of the DRA enables participating NGOs to respond to major international crises in a timely and effective manner. The DRA responds to humanitarian crises by designing Joint Responses (JR) drawn up and implemented by the members best placed to respond to a crisis. DRA Joint Responses are underway in, amongst others, Nigeria, the Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, Yemen, Sudan, the Syria region, and Somalia.

In 2019, the DRA initiated a pilot project, which “aims to stretch us in our thinking and imagination around collaboration, building on what we have achieved already”². In the initial phase, the successful applicant to the DRA Pilot programme is tasked to develop a process, which will lead to the implementation of a pilot that will test ways to take DRA JR experiences to a next level and further improve collaboration for increased effectiveness of emergency interventions. The ultimate goal of the pilot is to test if/whether putting in practice the Future DRA principles in a JR allows the DRA collective to improve cooperation between members to increase the effectiveness of emergency aid interventions.

In this context, DRA means the following by ‘Improvement’:

- Local ownership/leadership for sustainability of results
- Allow for long-term focus beyond emergency response
- Improved / increased impact
- Create possibilities for attracting additional funding

This pilot project was an opportunity for the Nexus platform to more clearly articulate and plan its humanitarian pillar of work. In doing so, the pilot developed intervention strategies that traverse the (traditional) boundaries of development, humanitarian and peace programming that have a more long-term perspective and bring continuity in responding to the many recurrent crises Somalia currently faces. Moreover, to overcome the structural inequities present in the Somali humanitarian system, the pilot mapped out pathways to shift power towards Somali humanitarian actors. Thus, moving from a predominantly internationally led humanitarian system in Somalia towards a humanitarian system where local organizations are in the driver’s seat.

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This paper is the result of a series of workshops attended by all Nexus members. Executive and Deputy Directors and Humanitarian staff included:

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² From the Call for Proposals DRA 2.0. document

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ABOUT NEXUS:

Nexus is a paradigm-shifting platform of Somali civil society, strategically investing in the institutions of civil society and government to lead the way in identifying, scaling and integrating community-owned and driven solutions to humanitarian, development and peacebuilding needs.



KAALO
Aid and Development Org.

