

MERCY CORPS

Scope of Work

Initial Assessment: Civic Ecosystem, Stakeholder and Political Economy Analysis, with Conflict Sensitivity and GEDSI Lenses, Erigavo District

Consultancy title	Civic Ecosystem, Stakeholder and Political Economy Analysis Consultant
Program	Support to Civic Engagement around Community Cohesion, Inclusive Development and Responsive Local Governance in Erigavo (Wadajir Program)
Donor	Civic Engagement Facility (CEF)
Implementing partners	Mercy Corps (lead), SONSAF (sub-awardee), and SONSAF members GSDO, SDF, and SSO
Location	Erigavo District, Sanaag Region, Somaliland
Consultancy type	Individual consultant, with knowledge of Sanaag
Duration	Up to 25 calendar days (5–30 November 2026).
Closing date for applications	<i>October 30, 2026</i>

1. About Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is transitioning to Prosper Global. Learn more [here](#). As the transition is being implemented by location, you may see the Mercy Corps and Prosper Global names used concurrently during this period. This is an administrative transition, and our teams, programs and commitments continue without interruption.

Mercy Corps (Prosper Global) is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within, Now, and for the future. Mercy Corps (Prosper Global) has worked in Somaliland since 2005, maintaining an established office in Hargeisa, a team of Somaliland-based staff, and over two decades of operational experience in the area. Our programming spans multiple sectors and is framed by a high-level strategy for advancing resilience and peace. Seeing ability in vulnerability, we work with and through local communities, including IDPs and returning refugees, to address immediate needs of crisis-affected populations while supporting and strengthening systems that facilitate collective advancement towards long-term and inclusive socio-economic growth, peace, and prosperity. Grounded in core resilience principles of systems thinking, partnership and facilitation, and adaptive management, Mercy Corps' (Prosper Global) approach encourages crisis-affected populations, the private sector, government, and civil society to work together towards meaningful and lasting change. Our long-standing relationships with the local communities and administrative systems provide a strong understanding of political, clan, economic, and conflict dynamics, as well as an established platform for locally informed analysis, convening, and program delivery.

2. Program Background

Mercy Corps has extensive experience across the Horn of Africa, with an operational presence throughout the region. Through Mercy Corps (Prosper Global), our strategic focus is on dryland communities, with programming that addresses governance, social cohesion, market systems development, adaptation, climate change, and other key areas. Across a diverse portfolio of interventions, we support communities to build resilience and strengthen sustainable livelihoods.

In line with this regional focus, Mercy Corps (Prosper Global), in partnership with the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF) and its downstream partners—Sanaag Development Foundation (SDF), Sanaag Sisters Organization (SSO), and Gibilsame Sustainable Development Organization (GSDO)—is implementing a two-year Civic Engagement Facility (CEF) funded program **“Support to Civic Engagement around Community Cohesion and Inclusive Development in Erigavo”** known in Somali as the **Wadajir Program**. The Civic Engagement Facility (CEF) aims to expand civic space and strengthen citizen participation by enabling collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector around community cohesion, sustainable development, and other shared priorities. CEF works to expand civic space and catalyze collective action. Its core mission is to bridge divides, promote non-violent dialogue, and support locally led civic action that contributes to peace, inclusion, and sustainable development.

The WADAJIR Program is being implemented in Erigavo and surrounding communities, an area that has experienced significant political and inter-clan tensions, including violent clashes in late 2024 that displaced approximately 13,566 people and disrupted essential services. Although the peace agreement signed following the 2025 Grand Peace Conference helped reopen dialogue, challenges remain. Drought and water scarcity intensify competition over natural resources, while youth unemployment, limited civic participation, limited-service delivery continue to undermine trust and collective problem-solving.

Despite these challenges, Erigavo has strong foundations for peacebuilding, including traditional elders, religious leaders, and civic actors who have demonstrated their ability to mediate disputes and facilitate dialogue. The Program seeks to build on these locally rooted mechanisms and strengthen their links with formal governance structures rather than replace them. It will promote inclusive participation and representation across the clans of Sanaag Region, strengthen community–government engagement, and support locally led approaches to peace, social cohesion, and inclusive development, in alignment with the Somaliland National Development Plan III (2023–2027).

Goal: Strengthened peace, social cohesion and resilience in Erigavo by enabling inclusive, participatory community engagement and responsive, accountable local governance.

Outcome	Description
Outcome 1	Civic actors and networks have improved abilities to provide platforms and opportunities for peaceful dialogue and cooperation among communities.
Outcome 2	Improved mechanisms and capacities for inclusive participation in decision-making and development processes enable communities to identify and plan collective solutions to local problems.
Outcome 3	Local civic and governance actors have enhanced capacity, systems and incentives to respond effectively and transparently to community needs and priorities.

The program draws on Mercy Corps' COALESCE social cohesion approach, Interest-Based Negotiation and Mediation (IBNM), and the CATALYSE community mobilization cycle. CATALYSE begins with a "Prepare to Mobilize" phase, which depends on a sound understanding of the political, institutional, conflict and social context before communities are engaged. Partner staff were trained in these approaches at a Training of Trainers in Erigavo from 15 to 17 September 2026.

3. Purpose of Assessment

This assessment is the program's foundation. It corresponds to Activities 1.1.5 and 1.1.6 of the Program Description: a participatory inception assessment of the political economy, civic ecosystem, conflict sensitivity and gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), followed by validation of the findings with stakeholders.

In this context, we want to understand who shapes civic and public life in Erigavo, how decisions are made, and where the program could help, so that partners can engage communities and government with confidence. The findings will guide targeting, platform design, government engagement, grant criteria, and the program's conflict sensitivity plan.

This is a targeted assessment rather than an in-depth research study. Therefore, it should be treated as a rapid, inception-focused exercise that builds on existing evidence and prioritizes information gaps directly relevant to program decisions. SONSAF, GSDO, SDF, and SSO possess deep contextual knowledge of Erigavo, and partners have already generated valuable mapping during the ToT training. The consultant should build upon this existing foundation and secondary literature, collecting primary data only to fill critical knowledge gaps.

3.1. One connected analysis

Rather than running separate studies, the consultant is expected to treat the civic ecosystem mapping, stakeholder analysis and political economy analysis (PEA) as one connected analysis of the same set of actors, each answering a different question about them.

Areas	Core question	What it includes
Civic ecosystem mapping	Who is there?	The civic actors, networks, customary and religious institutions, women's and youth groups, private sector and informal structures in Erigavo, and how they connect
Stakeholder analysis	Where do they stand?	Each actor's interests, influence, legitimacy and likely support for, or resistance to, inclusive dialogue and participatory governance
Political economy analysis	Why do they act as they do?	The formal and informal rules, power relations and incentives behind those positions, especially around planning, budgeting and service delivery

A single actor dataset should feed all three areas, so the map, the stakeholder matrix and the PEA tell one consistent story. Two lenses then run across everything:

- **Conflict sensitivity:** how the context dividers and connectors interact with the actors identified, and how program choices about locations, participants, partners, staff, grants and messaging could affect them.
- **GEDSI:** the barriers and opportunities for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and displaced people, examined within each strand rather than as a separate chapter.

3.2. Key questions

The questions below are indicative. The consultant may refine them during inception.

Area	Indicative questions
Actors and relationships	Which civic actors, networks and informal structures are active in Erigavo, and on what issues? Who are the main constituencies, and whom does each trust? Which actors are seen as legitimate and neutral convenors across clan, gender and age lines? Which existing platforms (e.g., peace committees, elder councils) could the program build on rather than duplicate?
Power, rules and incentives	How are decisions about plans, budgets and services actually made by the municipality and line ministries? Who holds influence, formally and informally? What motivates government to respond to communities, and what holds it back? What commitments in the 2025 peace agreement create openings for development and engagement?
Positions and pathways	For each outcome, who are the likely champions, gatekeepers and potential actors who may support, constrain or oppose particular processes? What are realistic entry points, and how should each key actor be engaged?
Conflict dynamics	What are the current drivers of tension, including political, clan, resource and displacement-related factors? What divides and connects communities? What early warning signs should the program watch for?
Inclusion	What norms and practical barriers limit the participation of women, youth and marginalized groups? Where are positive norms and practices already present? How can the program widen participation without creating backlash or inter-generational tension?

4. Approach and Workplan

We expect a proportionate, participatory approach that works alongside partners. Applicants are welcome to propose improvements. Primary data collection should stay modest: around 10-12 key informant interviews (KIs) and 6-8 focus group discussions (FGDs).

Phase	Main activities	Days	Output
1. Inception and desk review	Kick-off with Mercy Corps and SONSAF; review of existing materials; gap analysis; design of tools in English and Somali; field plan; Do No Harm and safeguarding plan	5	Inception note
2. Participatory analysis and data collection	One-day workshop with SONSAF, GSDO, SDF and SSO to co-produce a first version of the actor map, stakeholder positions and dividers and connectors; KIs with municipal officials, relevant Ministry, elders, religious	9	Workshop summary

Phase	Main activities	Days	Output
	leaders, peace committee members, CSO, business, FGDs women and youth leaders, displaced people and marginalized communities; short consultations with other actors working in Erigavo		
3. Analysis, validation and reporting	Triangulation across components; validation session with Mercy Corps, SONSAF, partners and selected stakeholders, focused on what the findings mean for the program; final report	6	Validation presentation; final report
Total		20	

4.1. Building on what already exists

Before collecting new data, the consultant should make full use of:

- Partner knowledge and networks, including GSDO, SDF and SSO members' roles on the technical committee of the 2025 Grand Peace Conference and SSO's "Voices for Peace in Erigavo" campaign.
- ToT outputs: the historical timeline of peace and governance milestones (1991–2025), resource and community maps, and partner analyses of how they engage elders, youth and women.
- The Wadajir Program Description and concept note, including their context and relevant analysis report.
- Existing studies from UN agencies, research institutes and other actors in Sanaag, the 2025 peace agreement, and the Erigavo District Development Plan, where available.

5. Deliverables

#	Deliverable	Due
1	Inception note (max. 8 pages): approach, gap analysis, tools in English and Somali, field plan, and Do No Harm and safeguarding plan	Week 1
2	Validation presentation of preliminary findings and their implications for the program	Week 2
3	Draft assessment report (max. 25 pages plus annexes, with a three-page executive summary). Annexes: (a) civic ecosystem map and actor dataset in Excel, including stakeholder positions and engagement strategies; (b) conflict sensitivity risk and mitigation matrix, with dividers, connectors and early warning signs; (c) annex for sensitive political and actor analysis, for internal Mercy Corps use only	Week 3
4	Final assessment report, two-page brief, and agreed anonymized supporting materials for partners and, where appropriate, local authorities, plus anonymized interview notes	Week 4

We are looking for a practical report that partners will actually use. At a minimum, recommendations should cover: target locations and groups; criteria for selecting community representatives and convenors; design of multi-stakeholder platforms; government engagement

strategy and entry points; conflict-sensitive criteria for the grants; inclusion strategies; and key risks with mitigation measures.

The sensitive actor-level analysis, identifiable source information and detailed political economy findings shall be provided separately to authorized Mercy Corps personnel.

Mercy Corps will provide consolidated feedback within a week of receiving each draft. All data and products remain the property of Mercy Corps and may not be shared or published without written permission.

6. Management and Coordination

The consultant will report to **Wadajir Program Manager**, and work closely with the Mercy Corps program and MEL teams, Mercy Corps Peace and Governance technical advisors, the SONSAF Executive Director and program staff, the GSDO, SDF and SSO focal persons,

Mercy Corps will:

- share program documents, ToT outputs and a list of existing studies and contacts;
- facilitate introductions to local authorities, partners and community leaders where relationships already exist;
- organize venues for the partner workshop and validation session;
- provide security briefings and access advice in line with Mercy Corps security protocols; and
- review deliverables within the timeframe above.

The consultant covers all other costs and logistics, including transport, accommodation, communication and translation, unless otherwise agreed in the contract.

7. Required Experience and Skills

- Advanced degree in political science, peace and conflict studies, governance, development studies or related fields.
- At least 7 years' experience in political economy, governance, peacebuilding, or conflict analysis for international NGOs, donors, or research institutions.
- Demonstrated experience applying Do No Harm or conflict sensitivity frameworks, and in actor or network mapping.
- In-depth knowledge of Somaliland's governance systems, clan dynamics and civil society; experience in Sanaag is strongly preferred.
- Proven ability to facilitate participatory workshops with local organizations.
- Credibility and acceptability across Erigavo's communities, with a gender-balanced team.
- Excellent written English.
- Strong commitment to ethics, confidentiality, safeguarding, and data protection.

8. Ethics, Safeguarding and Conflict Sensitivity

This assessment touches on politically and socially sensitive issues in a contested setting, so Do No Harm applies to the assessment itself, not only to the program. The consultant and team will comply with Mercy Corps' Code of Conduct, safeguarding policies (including PSEA and Child Safeguarding) and data protection standards, and will:

- obtain informed consent and keep respondents anonymous;

- avoid questions or framing that could appear to take sides in contested political claims or heighten tension between groups;
- ensure the team's composition, choice of respondents and meeting locations are balanced and seen as fair across communities;
- store data securely and keep sensitive political and actor analysis in the annex for MC internal use only;
- share referral information for protection concerns in coordination with Mercy Corps; and
- pause or adapt data collection if security conditions change, in consultation with Mercy Corps.

The consultant shall collect only the information necessary for the assignment, obtain informed consent, anonymize records, and store data securely with access restricted to authorized personnel. Data retention, transfer and deletion arrangements shall be agreed with Mercy Corps before fieldwork. No assessment data or findings may be shared externally without prior written authorization.

9. How to Apply

Please send the following to iso-tender@mercycorps.org by *October 30, 2026*, with the subject line "Erigavo Wadajir Program Initial Assessment":

1. **Technical proposal** (max. 6 pages): your understanding of the assignment, approach, how you will use existing knowledge, workplan and team.
2. **Financial proposal** in USD, itemized fees and field costs.
3. **CVs** of the lead consultant and team members.

9.1. Evaluation criteria

Criterion	Weight
Understanding of the assignment and the Erigavo context	20%
Quality of approach, including use of existing knowledge and conflict sensitivity	40%
Relevant experience and qualifications of the team	20%
Financial proposal and value for money	20%
Total	100%

9.2. Payment schedule

Milestone	Payment
Approval of the inception note	30%
Approval of the final report, annexes and brief	70%

Payments depend on satisfactory completion of deliverables and are subject to applicable withholding taxes under local law.