SOMALIA

PDM REVIEW SOMALI CASH CONSORTIUM 2018-2024

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CCS	Cash Consortium of Sudan
CFM	Complaints and Feedback Mechanism
CMU	Consortium Management Unit
COOPI	Cooperazione Internazionale
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CWG	Cash Working Group
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DSAG	Data Saturation and Analysis Grid
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECMEN	Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs
FCS	Food Consumption Score
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HH	Household
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRF	Integrated Response Framework
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCSI	Livelihood Coping Strategies Index
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
MPCA	Multipurpose Cash Assistance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PDAD	Post-Distribution Aid Diversion
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategies Index
SCC	Somali Cash Consortium
SCI	Save the Children International
TV	Transfer Values
USD	United States Dollar
VRC	Village Relief Committee

ABOUT IMPACT

Created in 2010, IMPACT is a Geneva-based NGO and the largest independent data provider in contexts of crisis. We aim to support a range of stakeholders in making better, more informed decisions in humanitarian, stabilization, and development settings. We believe that a key pathway to better planning and decision-making is direct engagement with local communities and their leaders.
Through our team of assessment, data, geospatial, and thematic specialists, we promote the design of people-centered research and set standards for collecting and analyzing rigorous, high-quality data in complex environments. IMPACT also aims to foster partnerships and build capacities with key stakeholders.

ABOUT SOMALI CASH CONSORTIUM (SCC)

The Somali Cash Consortium is led by Concern Worldwide and includes ACTED, COOPI, DRC, IMPACT, NRC and SCI as partners. Through the Somali Cash Consortium (SCC) humanitarian aid has been provided through multipurpose unconditional mobile money transfers to Somali communities since 2018, reaching over 1.3 million Somalis to date. The consortium with its partners aims at improving the ability of vulnerable HHs to meet their basic needs and reduce consumption gaps through life-saving humanitarian unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) in the most in need regions in Somalia.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 2019 and 2024, Somalia experienced a series of compounding droughts and floods that severely disrupted food security and livelihoods across the country. Recurrent weather shocks, intensified by La Niña-induced poor rainfall patterns, and protracted conflict undermined the livestock sector, reduced cereal productivity, and increased poor households' reliance on purchased food. These overlapping crises contributed to persistently high levels of acute food insecurity throughout the review period.[1] By late 2024, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) had projected that Crisis-level (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity would become increasingly widespread through mid-2025, with Emergency-level (IPC Phase 4) outcomes expected in the Bay-Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral livelihood zone and in several internally displaced persons (IDP) settlements.[2] These projections were informed by the impacts of a significantly below-average 2024 deyr harvest and ongoing stagnation in livestock recovery following the extended 2020–2023 drought.

The overall food security trajectory during this period remained complex. While localised improvements occurred in southern agropastoral and pastoral zones, recovery in flood-affected riverine areas lagged and depended on the recessional off-season harvests in August and September. In contrast, northern and central areas continued to experience deteriorating conditions due to sustained drought. In aggregate, cereal production in 2024 was estimated by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to be 18% below the recent five-year average (2019–2023), a period already characterised by abnormally low output due to adverse climatic conditions.[3] In southern Somalia, the 2024 Deyr crop yield was nearly 45 percent below the long-term average, and the northwest's 2024 Gu harvest ended at more than 60 percent below the 2010–2023 average.[4] Meanwhile, livestock productivity was reported to have deteriorated in north-central regions during the July–September hagaa[5] dry season due to worsening grazing conditions and water scarcity. In the south, receding floodwaters and seasonal hagaa rains were expected to support off-season harvests partially. Given the dynamic changes in the Somali humanitarian context, including increased displacement, evolving security challenges, and shifting needs of vulnerable populations, it is time to review the trends of outcomes of MPCA delivered over the years, and review the trends of PDM processes and how it evolved. Moreover, as Somali context is continuously changing and new constraints emerged, an updated review is necessary to assess whether trends of outcomes from baseline and post distribution monitoring data show consistent improvement on key MPCA indicators, also to assess whether data evolution of PDM processes adapt to the rapidly changing operational landscape in Somalia. This will help ensure that the Somali Cash Consortium (SCC) remains accountable, transparent, and responsive to the evolving needs of its beneficiaries.

In light of SCC's commitment to continuous improvement, SCC's partner IMPACT, within the support of the SCC's Program Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (PMEAL) Department, conducted an internal review of trend analysis of Baseline/PDMs outcomes and processes. This review will help ensure that the system remains effective, accessible, and responsive to the needs of beneficiaries.

[1] FEWS NET. (2024). *Somalia Food Security Outlook Update, October 2024 to May 2025*. Famine Early Warning Systems Network.
[2] ibid
[3] FAO SWALIM. (2024). *Somalia Seasonal Crop and Food Security Assessment Reports*. Food and Agriculture Organization – Somalia Water and Land Information Management.
[4] ibid
[5] FSANAU SOMALIA

Intended impact

This review aims to ensure that MPCA interventions under SCC remain effective, responsive, and aligned with the evolving context of Somalia and the needs of the recipients of SCC's MPCA interventions. The analysis is guided by two key objectives. **Objective 1** focuses on enhancing understanding of the short-term impacts of MPCA interventions by examining changes in key outcome indicators such as income, expenditure, food security and livelihoods, debt, and savings. **Objective 2** is centred on refining the PDM process by identifying areas for improvement in methodologies, data collection tools, and sampling techniques. By examining changes in key indicators and assessing the effectiveness of PDM processes, the review will offer indicative insights into areas where improvements or adjustments may be necessary to enhance future interventions. These findings should be interpreted with caution as they are based on available data, as outlined in the limitations section.

Research Questions

1. How have the methodologies, sampling techniques, data collection tools, and analysis methods used in PDM activities evolved and changed between 2018 and 2025[6] in Somalia?

a. What triggered the changes to the PDM activities from 2018 onwards and how were lessons learned incorporated into the changes?

2. To what extent do the PDM methodologies and processes align with the Integrated Response Framework (IRF) and ECHO's reporting requirements?

3. What key strengths and lessons from PDM methodologies in other missions where IMPACT implement MPCA monitoring activities can be applied to improve the accuracy, relevance, and reliability of SCC's approach?

4. What are the perspectives of key stakeholders (the SCC, partners and IMPACT) on the effectiveness and evolution of PDM methodologies and what are the lessons learned from the changes?

5. How have adaptations to PDM methodologies during COVID-19, including remote data collection approaches, influenced data reliability and relevance?

6. What key trends in MPCA outcome indicators (e.g., FCS, LCSI, rCSI, meeting basic needs, satisfaction) have been observed since 2018, and how do these trends reflect the short-term impact of the MPCA?

    a) What measurable changes[7] have occurred in food security, livelihood coping strategies, resilience, and beneficiary satisfaction because of MPCA programming within the 3-month period of intervention?

7. To what extent have MPCA interventions consistently met program objectives since 2018?

[6] Until January 2025, when the modification Request 1 endline was conducted for the ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) 2024.
[7] Measurable changes in this context refer to quantifiable shifts in key outcomes that can be observed such as the FCS, LCSI, rCSI and beneficiary satisfaction metrics.

KEY FINDINGS

Objective 1: Assessing the Short-Term Impact of MPCA Programs

- **Food security improved post-distribution**: Across all years (2019–2024), households showed consistent improvements in Food Consumption Score (FCS) and reduced reliance on negative coping strategies (as shown by the reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) and the Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI). MPCA helped stabilise food access and reduce immediate distress.
- **Incomes and expenditures increased** after MPCA disbursement, indicating restored purchasing power and ability to cover urgent needs such as food, healthcare, and debt repayment. However, despite higher incomes, **savings remained very low**, and **household debt often increased**, especially in 2022 and 2024. This reflects a pattern of financial recovery that is shallow and unsustainable. Climate shocks (droughts and floods), conflict, and inflation reduce MPCA gains. These external shocks increased costs and disrupted livelihoods, particularly in the agriculture and livestock sectors, preventing lasting recovery.
- Rising global commodity prices and dependence on food imports further strained purchasing power despite cash assistance, reinforcing the need to link MPCA with mid-to-long-term initiatives through well-established referral mechanisms. In this context, the SCC's existing referral systems and linkages with Social Protection programs add significant value. However, the lack of well-established Cash Working Group (CWG) mechanisms to address commodity price volatility remains a gap, highlighting the role SCC can play in advocating for a functional and responsive system.

Objective 2: Evaluating PDM Methodologies and Processes

- SCC progressively refined its PDM methodologies, shifting from community-based targeting to vulnerability-based targeting to enhance data accuracy and program impact. This evolution included:
    - Vulnerability-based targeting, introduced in 2023, leveraged vulnerability scoring matrices to prioritize households most at risk, yielding sharper outcome improvement (a 66-percentage-increase in Food Consumption Scores and a reduction in rCSI from 21 to 8)
    - By 2023-2024, SCC adopted statistically robust methods and streamlined tools, reducing respondent fatigue and improving data reliability. Transitioning from Microsoft Excel to R statistical analysis software[8] further strengthened validation and reproducibility.
    - Structured cleaning logs and SOPs were implemented to address past inconsistencies, such as coding errors in LCSI metrics during HiP 2019.
- **The adoption of matched panel sampling in 2024—tracking identical households from baseline to PDM—markedly enhanced impact measurement accuracy,** revealing consistent improvements in Food Consumption Scores (FCS), Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI), and income-expenditure alignment. This approach addressed prior limitations (2020–2022) where shifting samples introduced noise, demonstrating that longitudinal tracking is critical for isolating program effects from external variables and meeting donor requirements for statistical rigor.

[8] R programming is a language and environment specifically designed for statistical computing, data analysis, and visualization. It's widely used among statisticians, data scientists, and researchers

- **Remote data collection** enabled continuity during COVID-19, but undermined representativeness in hard-to-reach areas due to network issues and security concerns. The key gaps identified by this PDM Review are the **underutilization of qualitative data and adaptive learning**. Despite repeated PDM cycles, findings often remained largely quantitative and lacked depth in explaining the "why" behind trends. Reports focused heavily on numeric outcomes without integrating qualitative insights, such as beneficiary perspectives or contextual factors influencing outcomes. As a result, program learning and course correction were limited.
- In regions with heavy and very limited access, known as hard-to-reach areas, SCC pivoted to remote data collection (phone surveys) during COVID-19. While remote tools improved efficiency and safety, they risked excluding households without connectivity or in insecure zones, potentially skewing representativeness. The persistence of high debt levels (63–66% of households in 2024) and stagnant crisis coping strategies in these areas highlighted the need for complementary interventions alongside MPCA, as well as deeper mixed-method monitoring to unpack contextual barriers to resilience. In the ongoing modification request 2 (MR2), IMPACT has conducted physical data collection using the direct nutrition referral approach in the stabilisation centres within the Banadir region. However, remote data collection is still prioritised for approaches within the hard-to-reach areas.

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INTRODUCTION

The Somali Cash Consortium (SCC) has been operational since 2017, with Concern Worldwide leading the consortium. Current members include ACTED, COOPI, DRC, NRC, SCI, and IMPACT Initiatives. Through the Integrated Response Framework (IRF), the SCC aims to provide multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to newly displaced populations and critically underserved individuals, including those in Operational Priority Areas (OPA), encompassing rural and urban areas that are hard-to-reach and have extreme access constraints. **Since 2018, the SCC has been supported by ECHO to implement lifesaving MPCA activities. Throughout the MPCA project lifecycle, IMPACT has conducted baseline surveys and Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) to assess and track the impact of these humanitarian interventions.**

The Integrated Response Framework (IRF) was introduced by the SCC in October 2022, following recommendations from the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). This framework marked a significant shift in the targeting approach employed by the SCC, transitioning from community-based targeting that relied on the village relief committees (VRCs) for beneficiary identification to vulnerability-based targeting involving standard verification surveys for assessing eligibility. Accordingly, the IRF is designed to ensure that the most vulnerable populations are accurately identified and effectively targeted. **Additionally, the IRF focuses on delivering rapid assistance with a 7-day timeline for accessible locations and a 14-day timeline for hard-to-reach areas.** However, as part of the Post-Distribution Aid Diversion (PDAD) workstream, 'IRF' (now 'Integrated First-Line Response **(IFLR)** ') is under review since the end of 2023. **New guidelines have been proposed in 2025 and are pending endorsement by the HCT.** Following the initial phase of the rapid response, where households receive the first cycle of MPCA upon registration (first-line response), the IRF provides support for up to a maximum of three months. The Consortium's Cash Monitoring Unit (CMU) then conducts a comprehensive verification process to assess the vulnerabilities of registered households, ensuring that only the most vulnerable remain eligible for continued support. Households that no longer meet the criteria are replaced by those that do and compose the second-line response.

Considering the ongoing shifts, caused by extreme weather, conflicts, and economic challenges in the Somali humanitarian context that have led to changes in the monitoring approaches of MPCA interventions implemented by SCC partners, it was essential to conduct a review of the outcomes of MPCA interventions over the years and assess how PDM processes have evolved. **As the context continues to change and new challenges arise, an updated review was needed to determine whether trends in baseline and PDM reflected consistent improvements in key MPCA indicators.** Additionally, this review examined the evolution of PDM processes and methodologies, understanding how they align with the IRF, ECHO's reporting requirements and the rapidly changing operational environment in Somalia. This assessment will ensure that the SCC remains accountable, transparent, and responsive to the shifting needs of its MPCA recipients, ultimately evaluating the effectiveness and short-term impact of its interventions.

SCC MPCA Approaches

Shifting from community-based targeting[9] to vulnerability-based targeting, the SCC and its partners implemented MPCA through four distinct approaches, each designed to ensure effective delivery to

[9] Community-based targeting (CBT) was the Somali Cash Consortium's original method for selecting households to receive Multipurpose Cash Assistance. It relied on local knowledge and participation: village relief committees, elders, religious leaders, women's representatives and IDP

households in need. MPCA is distributed through two modalities: **a pre-defined modality,** where all registered beneficiaries receive assistance simultaneously, **and a rolling-basis modality,** where disbursements occur in batches over time. The IRF approach (pre-defined modality) is activation-based, involving rapid needs assessments, household registration, and baseline assessments before cash distribution, with a second-line response to adjust eligibility. **The Hard-to-Reach (H2R) approach** (pre-defined modality) targets areas with limited humanitarian access, ensuring continuous support for enrolled households. **The Direct Nutrition Referral (DNR)** relies on referrals through health and nutrition partners, who are members of the Caafimad Plus[10] targeting households with malnourished children under five. **Finally, the integration of MPCA and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) (on a rolling basis) for those actors with the CCCM management responsibilities.** Each approach aligns with SCC's strategic objectives, ensuring MPCA reaches vulnerable populations despite operational constraints.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted **a mixed-methods approach,** utilising quantitative and qualitative research designs. The quantitative approach incorporated a desk review of the literature and relevant reports conducted through a secondary data review (SDR) to **answer Objective 1,** while the qualitative approach involved primary data collection through semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) **to address Objective 2 of this study.** The study focused on analysing trends in MPCA outcomes and PDM methodologies to assess their effectiveness and evolution over time.

For Objective 2, the KIIs were conducted remotely via Teams and comprised 5 interviews from the SCC and its partners and IMPACT country teams in different missions where MPCA monitoring activities are led by IMPACT Initiatives, such as Sudan and Yemen. The KII data collection took place between **2nd and 17th April 2025. The participants consisted of two KIs from SCC CMU, one each from Save the Children International (SCI), and IMPACT Sudan (supporting the Cash Consortium of Sudan)[11] and IMPACT Yemen, who had knowledge of humanitarian cash support implementation and the PDMS for monitoring and evaluating the cash-based programming.**

A Data Saturation and Analysis Grid (DSAG) was developed to synthesise themes and patterns from the interviews. The DSAG framework comprised three analytical layers: **Discussion topics, Discussion sub-topics, and data points. Discussion topics were aligned with the qualitative tool's questions, while discussion sub-topics and data points were generated inductively based on emerging themes from the transcripts.**

camp committees met to agree on selection criteria such as poverty status, displacement and household size. The committees identified and listed households considered most vulnerable, which were then verified and registered by SCC implementing partners—including ACTED, COOPI, DRC, NRC, Save the Children, Concern Worldwide and others—before cash transfers were made.

[10] A consortium of eight (3 national and 5 international) humanitarian organizations dedicated to providing emergency life-saving intervention to populations in the Hard-to-Reach areas of Somalia.

[11] These KI insights were dropped from the DSAG as the KI was new to the mission and had not worked on third-party monitoring activities. In addition, the Cash Consortium of Sudan (CCS) was recently founded and had not conducted most of the PDM. The only activity supported was the analysis and cleaning of the dataset, with most of the data collection being conducted by the implementing partners.

Objective 1: Assessing the Short-Term Impact of MPCA Programs

This objective will be achieved in two steps: first, by conducting secondary quantitative analysis; and second, by contextualising the findings using external factors and triangulating the data with information from the Integrated Security Phase Classification (IPC) reports and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). This approach will help explain the food security situation in Somalia during the review period from 2019 to 2024.

Step 1: Secondary Data Review (SDR)

This step involves secondary quantitative analysis of existing PDM data collected between 2019 and 2024. Data is systematically categorized according to the methodologies used during each round of collection to ensure methodological consistency. The analysis focused on identifying trends and patterns across key MPCA indicators, such as food security, expenditure patterns, and coping strategies. Additionally, it assesses how variations in beneficiary characteristics and external shocks, like security and economic crises, have influenced MPCA success or limitations. Findings referring to a subset of the total population may have a wider margin of error and a lower level of precision. Therefore, these findings may not be generalizable and should be considered indicative only. **Importantly, the results between the baseline and endline are measured and compared, allowing for a clear understanding of changes over time. This comparison provides valuable insights that can be effectively incorporated into reporting and program evaluation**.

Step 2: Contextualising Findings with External Factors

Review reports and further MPCA, Somalia contextual reports to understand how external factors (e.g., displacement, conflict, economic shocks, etc.) may have influenced the trends and variability in the outcomes observed in the PDM data.

Objective 2: Evaluating PDM Methodologies and Processes

Step 1: KIIs with SCC

The findings and conclusions presented in this report are based on a comprehensive desk review of key documents and communication records related to MPCA implementation and monitoring by the SCC. This included a systematic analysis of methodological notes, baseline and PDM datasets, monitoring frameworks, and internal reports spanning 2019 to 2024. In addition, the evaluation drew upon email correspondence with SCC partners and IMPACT HQ-level, as well as meeting minutes and technical recommendations shared during coordination and learning events.

Qualitative KIIs were conducted with 5 KIs, comprising the SCC implementing partner, the CMU, and stakeholders working on PDM in other IMPACT missions that conduct similar monitoring activities.

The KIIs followed a semi-structured format and gathered information on the perceived strengths and limitations of SCC's PDM methodologies, lessons learned from adaptations due to COVID-19 and post-pandemic and the adoption of the Integrated Response Framework (IRF) in October 2022, following recommendations from the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).[12]

[12] This framework marked a significant shift in the targeting approach employed by the SCC, transitioning from community-based village relief committees (VRCs) for beneficiary identification to standard verification surveys for assessing eligibility. Accordingly, the IRF is designed to ensure that the most vulnerable populations are accurately identified and effectively targeted. Additionally, the IFR focuses on delivering rapid assistance

Step 2: Comparative Review of PDM Approaches in Similar Contexts

IMPACT conducted a literature review of PDM methodologies used in other humanitarian settings, particularly Sudan and Yemen. It involved identifying similarities and differences in methodological approaches and assessed how lessons from other contexts can enhance the relevance and reliability of SCC's PDM system.

Challenges and Limitations

- The two study objectives are not linked together because they address different aspects of the SCC activities. **Objective 1 is focused on the outcomes** of the MPCA, specifically looking at trends and changes in these outcomes since 2018 using baseline and PDM assessments. This requires analysing the results and impacts of the programs over time. **On the other hand, objective 2 deals with the methodologies and processes used** to gather and analyse data, including the evolution of these methods and comparisons with other contexts. Both objectives can be used to understand the MPCA impact.
- During the ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) 2019 data collection, changes were made to the coding of response options in the Livelihood Coping Strategies Index (LCSI) section of both the full and condensed PDM survey tools. These modifications coincided with staff turnover, and unfortunately, the adjustments to the tools and coding processes were not well documented. As a result, it remains unclear whether consistent re-coding methods were applied across all assessment cycles. Due to this uncertainty, the assessment team worked to trace and verify these changes to ensure the accuracy of the LCSI results. The LCSI scores were not released. In the meantime, only the Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) were included in the report, as it relied on numeric responses that were not affected by the coding error. To prevent similar issues in the future, the team implemented robust record-keeping protocols and strengthened in-country management to improve oversight and ensure methodological consistency despite staff transitions.
- **Timing and contextual challenges affecting data quality:** Assessments were conducted at different times of the year, including during Ramadan, when food consumption habits change significantly. Due to delays in household targeting and registration, some of the baseline surveys took place during Ramadan. This affects comparability, as food security and expenditure-related indicators are influenced by seasonal, cultural, and market factors. Moreover, external shocks such as security issues, economic instability, and pandemics heavily impacted program outcomes, making it difficult to attribute changes solely to the intervention.
- **Data gaps, omissions, and selective reporting:** In the HIP 2019, delays in household targeting and registration caused the baseline assessment to overlap with Ramadan. Due to the altered food consumption patterns during the fasting period, key short-term food security indicators, including the Food Consumption Score (FCS), Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS), and rCSI, were excluded from surveys conducted during that time. This decision, while necessary, affected the

with a 7-day timeline for accessible locations and a 14-day timeline for hard-to-reach areas. Following the initial phase of the rapid response, where **households receive the first cycle of MPCA upon registration (first-line response), the IRF provides support for up to a maximum of three months**. The Consortium's Cash Monitoring Unit (CMU) then conducts a comprehensive verification process to assess the vulnerabilities of registered households, ensuring that only the most vulnerable remain eligible for continued support. Households that no longer meet the criteria are replaced by those that do and compose the second-line response.

consistency and comparability of baseline data. Additionally, in the HIP 2023 main caseload, indicators such as expenditure share, main income sources, and average monthly income were omitted from some endline data collections, especially in the main caseload for HIP 2023, due to operational constraint and the complexity of integrating these indicators within the existing data collection framework. This resulted in limiting the scope of analysis for indicators like consolidated approach to reporting indicators (CARI) and economic capacity to meet essential needs (ECMEN). Additionally, qualitative data from Key Informant Interviews may emphasise successful adaptations while overlooking failures, leading to potential reporting bias.

- **Recalling bias and institutional memory loss:** Long recall periods may result in selective memory or biased views from key informants, while high staff turnover over seven years has led to significant loss of institutional knowledge regarding past methodologies and processes.
- **Variation in timing between cash transfers and assessments:** Differences in the interval between cash disbursements and subsequent endline assessments may affect respondent recall, potentially impacting data reliability. This is specifically so for indicators like, household income and expenditure and LCSI, which are all based on a 30-day recall period, based on a 30-day recall period; a considerable duration due to which it may be difficult for households to remember their expenditures accurately and to such a degree of detail; hence it might have negatively impacted the accuracy of reporting on those indicators.
- The consolidated assessments for this cash review had different contractual and semi-contractual indicators, thus having different information collected during the project implementation period. This was addressed through integrated data analysis, where different datasets were combined and consolidated into one master list with relevant information and variables to inform the indicative findings. Overall, sufficient data entries were available for analysis and drawing key findings as indicated in this paper review.
- **Program variability due to changes in the humanitarian system in Somalia since 2022 under the PDAD workstream.** These changes prompted a shift from community-based targeting (CBT) to vulnerability-based targeting (VBT). In the initial implementation of VBT, specifically during the ECHO HIP 2022 and the HIP 2023 (where 72% of the HHs had received the first line response), IMPACT did not conduct baseline surveys, as some beneficiary households had already received their first cycle of assistance, instead, these assessments were referred to as first assessments. **In subsequent rounds, baselines are now conducted before the first cash disbursement. Despite the short VBT implementation windows (7–10 days), close coordination between SCC partners and IMPACT has allowed for greater flexibility and improved baseline planning within the set timelines.**

FINDINGS

Objective 1 Findings: Assessing the Short-Term Impact of MPCA Programs

As shown in Annex 1, data from 14 baseline and PDM datasets were used to generate insights for the SDR Review. The SDR contributed to addressing Objective 1 of this study. For both the baseline and PDM results, an average was taken from datasets collected within the same year. The SDR focused on food security and livelihoods (FSL) indicators. However, as noted in the ***"Challenges and Limitations"*** section, some data points are missing for a few indicators. It is also important to consider the broader context: Somalia experienced a prolonged drought, the most severe in nearly 40 years, followed by significant flooding during the Deyr rainy season in 2023. These seasonal variations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

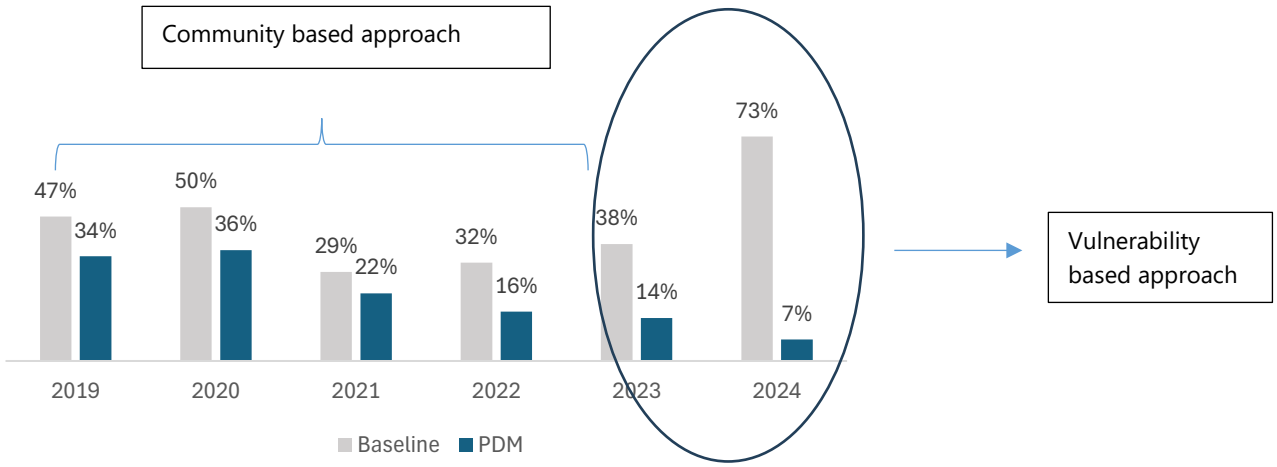
Food Security Outcome Indicators

This section aims to analyse trends between baseline and PDM data across the years since 2019, using the Food Consumption Score (FCS), the reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI), and the Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI). It seeks to enhance understanding of the short-term impact of the MPCA while also exploring the underlying reasons for year-to-year variations in trends between baseline and endline results.

Food Consumption Score (FCS)[13]

The FCS is designed to measure the quantity and variety of foods consumed in a household in the last 7 days. A poor (0-28) or borderline (above 28 to 42) score suggests food insecurity as the household is likely not consuming enough or varied enough food to meet their nutritional needs.[14]

Figure 1: 'Poor' consumption score trends by year (baseline and PDM data)



[13] The FCS categorization system presented here is based on the standards set by the Somalia CWG Recommended Indicators to align with the Somalia context. These cutoffs differ from the global standards of 0-21: Poor; 21.5-35: Borderline: >35: Acceptable. FCS cutoff levels in Somalia are higher (i.e. they require a higher frequency and diversity of food to be considered acceptable) and require a score above 42 to be considered 'acceptable'.

[14] VAM resource center, WFP

The short-term impact of the MPCA delivered by the SCC from 2019 to 2024 shows a generally positive trend in improving food security, as measured by the FCS. However, **the magnitude of improvement between baseline and endline varies significantly across the years.**

While the 2024 results stand out with a dramatic 66-percentage-point improvement—coinciding with SCC's shift to a vulnerability-based targeting approach—earlier years such as 2020 and 2021 show more modest gains. These fluctuations may not solely reflect program performance but could also be influenced by broader contextual and methodological factors. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 likely disrupted household economies and food access, potentially muting the impact of MPCA during those years. Similarly, recurring climate shocks, particularly droughts in 2022 and 2023, may have compounded household vulnerabilities and affected the comparability of results.

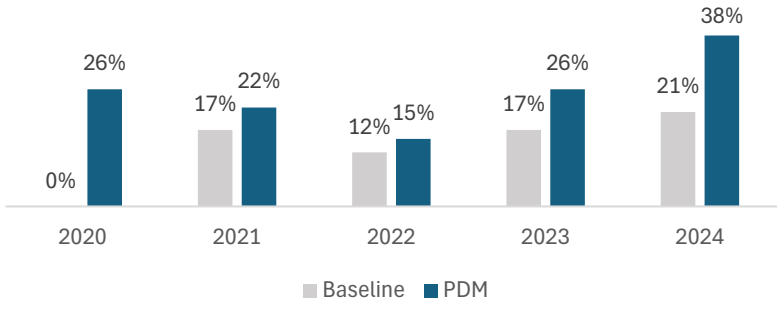
Moreover, variations in data collection methods, sample representativeness, or timing between baseline and endline assessments could also contribute to inconsistencies in the observed differences that have improved in 2024. These factors highlight the importance of interpreting year-to-year trends with caution, as external shocks and methodological nuances may obscure the true extent of MPCA's short-term impact.

Livelihood Coping Strategies Index (LCSI)[15, 16]

The LCSI data from 2020 to 2024 provides valuable insights into the short-term impact of the MPCA delivered by the SCC. The data tracks the percentage of households adopting different levels of coping strategies—**None**, **Stress**, **Crisis**, and **Emergency**—at both baseline and PDM stages.

The proportion of households reporting **no coping strategies** ("None") has shown a **gradual increase** from 2020 to 2023. In 2020, 0% of households reported no coping strategies at baseline, rising to 26% at PDM. By 2023, this had improved further, with 17% at baseline and 26% at PDM. This trend suggests that MPCA has helped reduce the need for households to resort to negative coping mechanisms.

Figure 2: LCSI 'None' category trend by year (baseline and PDM data)



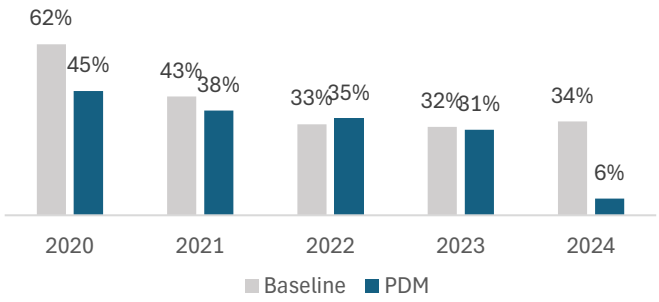
[15] LCSI scores are used to classify households into the categories of 'stress', 'crisis', and 'emergency'. Those households that do not report having employed any of the coping strategies considered within the LCSI are classified as 'none'. All livelihoods-based coping strategies employed by households in the previous 30-day period were reported on. For analytical purposes, however, each household's LCSI severity was classified based on the most severe coping strategy employed in the 30 days prior to data collection. Whether a household had already exhausted a particular coping strategy and could no longer continue to employ it was also considered.

[16] The 2019 LCSI data is missing, resulting in a lack of full trend continuity. Additionally, coding errors were identified in the LCSI section of the tools, and re-coding issues may affect the comparability of scores across years. The data is currently under review and has not been fully released.

The improvement in the "None" category is particularly notable in 2024, where the SCC shifted from a **community-based targeting approach** to a **vulnerability-based approach**. In 2024, the trend from previous years suggests that a shift from 21% in baseline to 38% in the PDM may have contributed to more effective targeting and better outcomes for the most at-risk households.

Looking at **Stress coping strategies**, which include less severe strategies like borrowing money or reducing food quality. In 2020, stress coping dropped from 62% at baseline to 45% at PDM. However, in 2022, stress coping **increased slightly** from 33% to 35%, and in 2023, it remained nearly unchanged (32% to 31%). **This stagnation may reflect the lingering economic effects of COVID-19, which disrupted livelihoods and increased household vulnerability**.

Figure 3: LCSI 'Stress' category trend by year (baseline and PDM data)



Crisis coping strategies, such as selling productive assets, showed **limited improvement**. In 2020, crisis coping rose slightly from 15% to 17%, and in 2022, it increased from 20% to 23%. Only in 2023 did we see a modest decline from 19% to 16%. These results suggest that while MPCA may help with immediate needs, it may not be sufficient to prevent households from resorting to more severe measures under prolonged stress.

Figure 4: LCSI 'Crisis' category trend by year (baseline and PDM data)

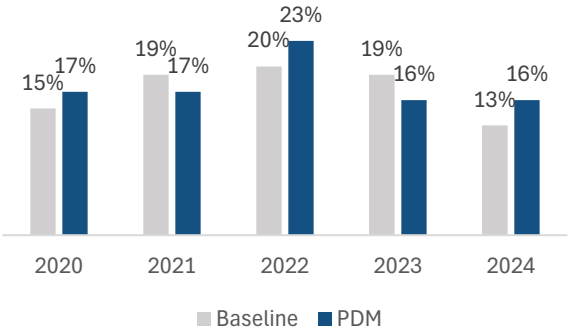
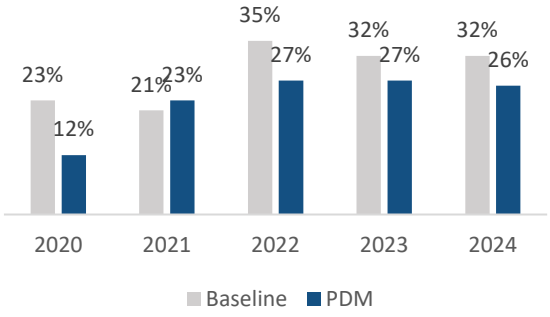


Figure 5: LCSI 'Emergency' category trend by year (baseline and PDM data)



In 2020, emergency coping (most severe strategies, such as begging or selling land, showed **mixed results**) dropped from 23% to 12%, indicating a strong positive impact of the MPCA. However, in 2022, it decreased from 35% to 27**%**, and from 32% to 27% in 2023. **These figures reflect the compounding effects of climate shocks, such as droughts, and global inflation driven by the war in Ukraine, which likely reduced the purchasing power of MPCA transfers.**

The LCSI data from 2020 to 2024 suggests that MPCA has had a positive short-term impact, particularly in reducing stress-level coping and increasing the number of households not resorting to any coping strategies. However, the **limited improvement in crisis and emergency levels** points to deeper

structural vulnerabilities that cash alone may not fully address. The combination of **external shocks** and **methodological changes** underscores the need for **context-aware program design**, **complementary interventions**, and **careful interpretation of year-to-year trends**.

The **variation in results across years** may not be solely due to external conditions. The **sampling and data collection methodologies** used in the early years (2020–2021) were relatively **new and evolving**, which may have introduced **inconsistencies or gaps** in how data was collected, who was surveyed, and when assessments were conducted. These methodological limitations could have affected the accuracy of baseline and PDM comparisons, especially in years when the differences were small.

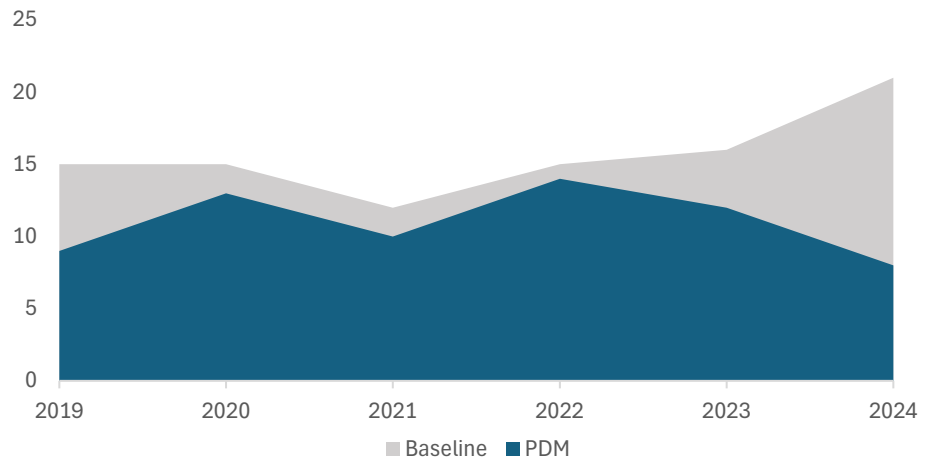
By **2023 and especially 2024**, the methodology appears to have **evolved**, with more refined tools, better-trained enumerators, and improved targeting and sampling methodology. This is reflected in the **stronger improvements** seen in 2024, particularly in the "None" category and the reduction in stress and emergency coping. The **shift to a vulnerability-based targeting approach** in 2024 likely enhanced the program's ability to reach the most at-risk households, contributing to a more meaningful impact.

Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI)[17]

The rCSI measures the frequency at which households rely on certain negative coping strategies (related to food consumption in the household) within the 7 days prior to data collection to cope with food insecurity. **Increases in average rCSI scores over time are considered negative as they imply increases in the reported use of household negative coping strategies (related to reducing food consumption)**, whereas decreases in average rCSI scores are considered positive. The rCSI thresholds are "0-3", Low, "4-18", medium and above 19, high.[18] **A lower rCSI indicates a more food-secure household and the use of more effective coping mechanisms to address food shortage challenges.**

Based on the rCSI data from 2019 to 2024, there is clear evidence that MPCA interventions by the Somalia Cash Consortium have contributed to reducing households' reliance on negative food-related coping strategies. The data shows a consistent decline in rCSI scores from baseline to PDM across most years, indicating positive short-term impact. For instance, in 2019, the average rCSI dropped from 15 to 9, and in 2020, from 15 to 13, reflecting moderate improvements. The most

Figure 6: Trends and differences in average rCSI scores: baseline vs. PDM by year



[17] It combines both the frequency of using coping strategies and their respective severity. Possible rCSI values range from 0 (no coping strategies applied) to 56 (all listed coping strategies are applied every day), with any score above 10 generally being considered to indicate frequent use of severe coping strategies. A higher score suggests a more severe level of food insecurity.

[17] Reduced Coping Strategy Index, People in Need

[18] Reduced Coping Strategy Index, People in Need

significant reduction occurred in 2024, where the baseline score was 21—the highest across all years, falling sharply to 8 at PDM. This dramatic improvement aligns with the implementation of a **vulnerability-based targeting approach** and a **robust data collection methodology**, which allowed for more accurate identification of at-risk households and better measurement of program impact.

In contrast, the years 2021 to 2023 showed smaller improvements. In 2021, the score decreased from 12 to 10, in 2022 from 15 to 14, and in 2023 from 16 to 12. These modest changes may be attributed to several factors. First, the **community-based targeting approach** used during these years may have diluted the impact by not consistently reaching the most vulnerable households. Second, **climate-related challenges**, such as droughts and failed rainy seasons, likely exacerbated food insecurity and limited the effectiveness of cash assistance. Third, **methodological issues**—including cases where baseline data was collected **after beneficiaries had already received cash**—may have distorted the true picture of MPCA's impact, underestimating the improvements.

The strong results in 2020 and 2024 also reflect the influence of external shocks and programmatic responses. In 2020, the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic led to more focused and responsive programming, while in 2024, the country was emerging from five consecutive failed rainy seasons, creating extreme vulnerability. **The combination of enhanced targeting, refined methodology, and acute need contributed to the significant reduction in rCSI scores in those years.**

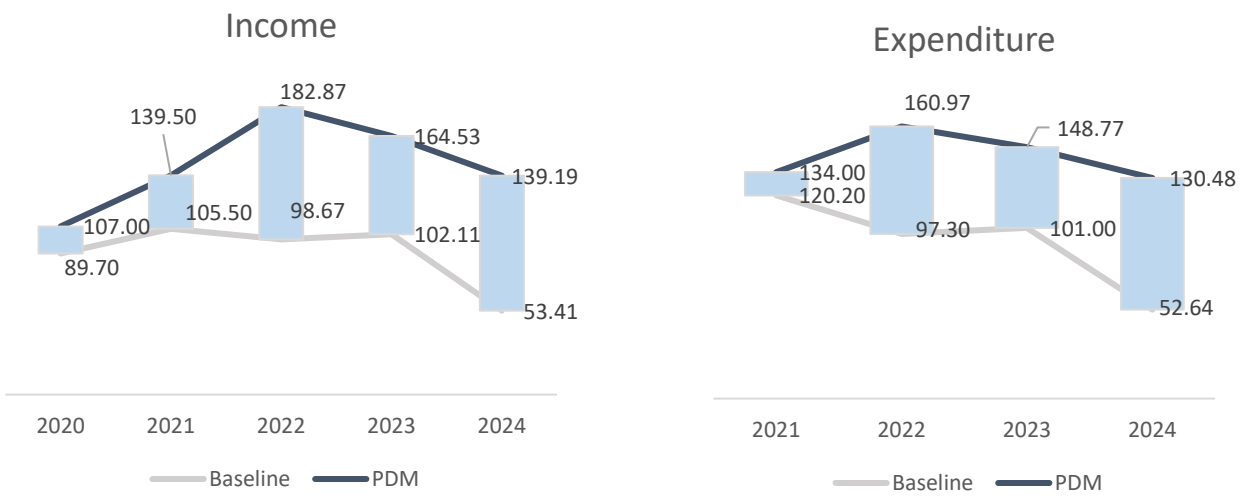
Overall, the data supports the conclusion that MPCA is effective in reducing negative coping strategies, especially when paired with accurate targeting and robust monitoring. **The variation in results across years highlights the importance of methodological consistency, timely data collection, and context-aware program design to ensure reliable impact measurement and meaningful support to vulnerable populations.**

Household Economic Indicators

Income and Expenditure

Across the five-year period, household income and expenditure both increased from baseline to PDM, suggesting that MPCA contributed to **immediate improvements in household purchasing power**. For example, in 2020, income rose from $89.70 to $107.00, and in 2021, from $105.50 to $139.50. These gains are particularly notable given the backdrop of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, which disrupted livelihoods but also prompted a **more targeted and responsive MPCA delivery model**. The urgency of the pandemic likely led to **faster disbursements and clearer targeting**, enhancing the program's effectiveness.

Figure 7: Trends and differences in average income and expenditure: baseline vs. PDM by year



In 2022 and 2023, income continued to rise—from $98.67 to $182.87 and $102.11 to $164.53, respectively—yet these years also saw greater variability in expenditure. For instance, in 2022, expenditure jumped from $97.30 to $160.97, and in 2023, from $101.00 to $148.77. **These increases may reflect inflationary pressures and rising food prices, partly driven by the global economic impact of the war in Ukraine and local climate shocks, including prolonged droughts. The disconnect between income and expenditure** in some years **suggests that while households received more cash,** the cost of basic goods may have outpaced income gains, **limiting the real value of MPCA.**

In 2024, income rose from $53.41 to $139.19, and expenditure from $52.64 to $130.48, showing a strong alignment between the two indicators. This year also marked the introduction of a **vulnerability-based targeting approach** and a **more robust data collection methodology**, **which likely improved the accuracy of impact measurement and ensured that assistance reached the most economically distressed households.**

Savings and Debt

Savings and debt data provide further insight into household financial behavior and resilience. In 2021, average savings dropped from $4 to $2, and the proportion of households saving declined from 12% to 8%, possibly due to post-COVID economic strain and limited program reach under the community-based targeting model.

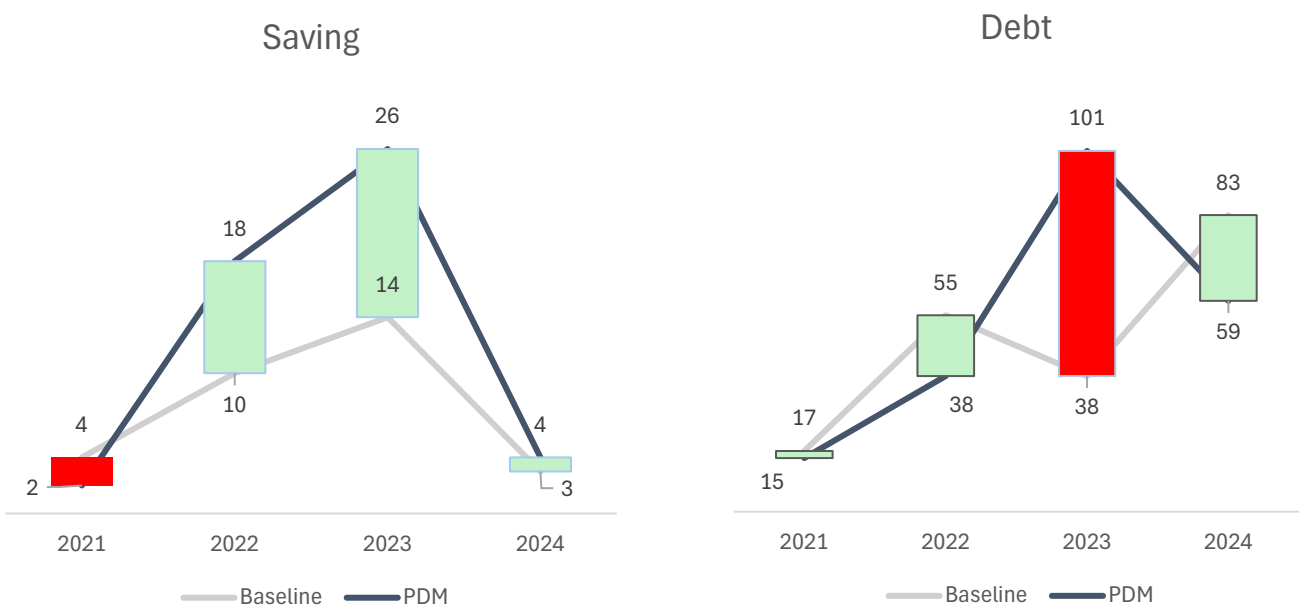
In contrast, 2022 and 2023 saw significant improvements in savings. In 2022, average savings increased from $10 to $18, and in 2023, from $14 to $26, with the proportion of households' savings rising to 14% and 18%, respectively. **These gains suggest that MPCA helped households build short-term financial buffers, even amid rising costs**. However, these years also **faced methodological challenges**, including instances where baseline data was collected after cash distribution, potentially inflating baseline figures and underestimating the true impact of MPCA.

Debt trends were more volatile, especially in 2021, where average debt decreased slightly from $17 to $15, but the proportion of indebted households rose from 20% to 24%, indicating that while some

households reduced debt levels, **more households were taking on new debt**. In 2022, debt dropped significantly from $55 to $38, and the proportion of indebted households fell from 49% to 21%, reflecting a strong positive impact of MPCA. However, in 2023, average debt surged from $38 to $101, and the proportion of indebted households rose from 16% to 31%, **possibly due to delayed disbursements**, **rising living costs**, **or targeting inefficiencies**.

In 2024, debt decreased from $83 to $59, but the proportion of indebted households remained high (from 63% to 66%). **This suggests that while MPCA helped reduce the amount of debt, many households remained structurally dependent on borrowing, likely due to chronic food insecurity and limited income-generating opportunities**.

Figure 8: Trends and differences in average saving and debt: baseline vs. PDM by year



The financial data from 2020 to 2024 illustrates that MPCA has had a **positive short-term impact** on household income, expenditure, and savings, while also helping to reduce debt in most years. However, the **effectiveness of the program varied**, shaped by both **external shocks** (COVID-19, climate change, global inflation) and **internal programmatic factors**, including **targeting strategies** and **data collection methodologies**.

The strongest results were observed in the years 2020 and 2024, marked by crisis-driven urgency and methodological clarity. In contrast, 2021 to 2023 faced challenges related to community-based targeting, data timing issues, and external economic pressures, which may have limited the observable impact of MPCA.

These findings highlight the importance of **adaptive program design**, **accurate targeting**, and **methodologically sound monitoring** to ensure that cash assistance not only meets immediate needs but also contributes to **longer-term financial stability** for vulnerable households.

Objective 2 Findings: Evaluating PDM Methodologies and Processes

Evolution of PDM Methodologies

Between 2019 and 2024, the methodological design underpinning PDM for Somalia's MPCA programming experienced substantial and necessary evolution. These methodological adaptations were not merely technical recalibrations, but rather strategic responses to operational realities, security constraints, and growing demands from institutional donors, particularly ECHO, for more reliable, valid, and impact-driven monitoring systems.

The earliest baseline and PDM frameworks, particularly from 2019 through 2021, were primarily exploring in designing phase. During this phase, baseline and PDM assessments were often misaligned due to mismatched samples—a result of either shifting implementation modalities or the inability to consistently track the same beneficiary households over time. For instance, in both 2020 and 2021, while random sampling techniques were applied in theory, the actual execution frequently deviated due to operational constraints, including delays in beneficiary registration lists and the overall shift from direct to fully remote data collection limitations caused by COVID-19. As a result, baseline and PDM datasets often reflected different households, undermining the internal validity of comparisons and limiting the reliability of observed programmatic effects.

Moreover, sampling during this early period leaned heavily on community-based techniques. Though community engagement aligns with ECHO's emphasis on localization and participation, these methods also present limitations in terms of statistical representativeness and vulnerability targeting. Households were sometimes selected by partners based on social proximity or accessibility rather than based on measurable vulnerability criteria, which diluted the focus on those most at risk. KIs noted that in hard-to-reach areas, enumerators often defaulted to convenience beneficiary selection due to insecurity, travel restrictions, or lack of internet and phone connectivity. This resulted in biases when it comes to PDM findings across geographic regions and demographic profiles.

By 2022, a methodological inflection point became apparent. A series of internal reviews, donor feedback loops (including ECHO midline reviews), and country-level technical reflections prompted a structured transition toward more standardized, statistically valid selection and sampling frameworks. Notably, the adoption of stratified random sampling with a 95% confidence level and a 7% margin of error marked a critical shift in methodological rigor. While this statistical threshold aligns with ECHO's Minimum Requirements for Cash Transfers Monitoring, field application was at times constrained by budget ceilings and logistical limitations in hard-to-reach locations, as acknowledged by SCC's PMEAL unit.

Crucially, by 2024, SCC embedded a matched panel sampling design into its methodology. This meant that the same households surveyed at baseline were consistently followed up during PDM phases. This marked a significant improvement in causal inference capacity, enabling the measurement of short-term impacts with higher precision and controlling individual household variation. Tracking the same sample over time also facilitated a more nuanced understanding of how MPCA affected household-level outcomes—particularly in food consumption (FCS), coping strategies (rCSI, LCSI), and economic behavior (income, debt, and savings). The methodological maturity achieved in 2024 now offers a robust

foundation for time-series trend analysis, difference-in-differences (DiD) estimations, and evidence generation that better informs adaptive programming and strategic decision-making.

In parallel, the evolution in data analysis tools—such as the transition from Excel to R statistical programming—enabled more consistent data validation, reproducibility, and inferential analysis. This shift also aligns with ECHO's guidance on reinforcing evidence-based programming and improving transparency in humanitarian monitoring.

Table 1: Evolution of methodologies and data quality

Year	Sampling & Data Collection	Targeting Approach	Key Methodological Changes
2018–2019	In-person and remote in the Hard-to-reach areas, inconsistent samples	Community-based	Tool-heavy, minimal harmonisation
2020–2021	Remote, low training quality	Community-based	Tools simplified; COVID-triggered shift to phone-based methods
2022	Remote, convenience sampling in HTR areas	Transition phase	Indicators updated (HHS introduced, DDS dropped); partner access gaps
2023	Enhanced remote methods and better partner coordination	Vulnerability-based	R and cleaning logs introduced, improved sampling frame structure Understanding the sampling methodology and examine it
2024	Enhanced remote, tracking same beneficiaries	Vulnerability-based	Updated and robust sampling methodology Statistically sound sampling (meeting the CL of 95%, MoE 7% in all rounds); Robust validation and SOPs

Integration of Programmatic Learning and External Influences

The iterative adaptation of PDM methodologies within SCC's MPCA framework did not occur in a vacuum. Rather, it was driven by a dual imperative: to operationalize call center-based learning and to respond to donor expectations—particularly from ECHO and the Somalia Cash Working Group—around data accountability, relevance, and use. This integration of programmatic learning and external feedback became most pronounced between 2021 and 2024, when SCC institutionalized a series of feedback loops, learning reviews, and technical workshops aimed at refining methodological design and implementation processes.

From a programmatic perspective, SCC recognized early on those methodological flaws—such as conducting baseline surveys after cash disbursement or delays in receiving beneficiary lists—compromised the integrity of its monitoring results. Such flaws had the dual effect of reducing the analytical utility of outcome indicators and diminishing the credibility of findings in the eyes of external stakeholders. Responding to these internal reflections, SCC launched targeted corrective actions in 2022, including:

- The establishment of standard operating procedures (SOPs) governing the sequencing of baseline surveys and disbursements.
- The development of accountability protocols for partners to ensure timely delivery of beneficiary lists.
- The institutionalization of data cleaning logs and validation checklists, drawing lessons from the Yemen Cash Consortium's multi-layered validation structure.

These adaptations were further catalyzed by formal donor evaluations and peer reviews. Specifically, ECHO's push for stronger alignment between MPCA results frameworks and IRF indicators triggered a methodological overhaul in 2023. SCC responded by streamlining its PDM tools, reducing survey length to mitigate respondent fatigue, while incorporating context-specific indicators such as the Household Hunger Scale (HHS), and disability-inclusive measures. Several indicators, like the Dietary Diversity Score (DDS), were removed based on field feedback indicating limited analytical value and challenges in accurate recall.

Key Informants reported that these changes were not only donor-driven but also grounded in operational learning. **Given the nature of baseline and PDM assessments, remote data collection has proven to be both cost-efficient and methodologically appropriate.** These exercises primarily capture standard quantitative indicators that do not typically require direct observation or complex qualitative probing. Conducting them remotely reduces operational costs, minimizes field access risks, and allows for broader geographic coverage without compromising data quality. **Furthermore, in most MPCA contexts, in-person data collection for baseline or PDM does not yield additional analytical value compared to remote methods, provided that enumerators are well-trained and tools are properly adapted to phone-based formats.** This approach aligns with both efficiency objectives and the principle of proportionality in humanitarian monitoring endorsed by ECHO.

Moreover, SCC recognized the gap in qualitative depth across its monitoring outputs. As noted by a KI from the CMU Programmed Unit, PDM reports were "overly numeric," failing to explore the underlying drivers behind indicator shifts. **Responding to this critique, by 2023, SCC began piloting mixed-method PDMs that included qualitative interviews and focus group discussions to triangulate quantitative results.** This approach aimed to bring the "voice of the beneficiary" into program decision-making, a principle closely aligned with ECHO's emphasis on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP).

Donor influences also shaped methodological developments through funding conditionalities and reporting expectations. For example, the introduction of PDM reporting templates with explicit disaggregation requirements (by sex, age, and disability status) drove enhancements in survey coding, enumerator training, and tool pretesting. The Cash Working Group's harmonization efforts further encouraged cross-agency coordination, resulting in shared indicators, aligned definitions, and joint seasonal analysis sessions.

Ultimately, the integration of programmatic learning and external influences created a feedback-rich environment in which methodological maturity was not only possible but necessary. While gaps remain, particularly in translating learning into real-time program adjustments and institutionalizing adaptive

management, the past three years have laid the groundwork for a more accountable, rigorous, and context-responsive MPCA monitoring system.

PDM Insights from IMPACT Country Teams: Strengths and Lessons SCC's Approach

A notable strength from Yemen[19] was the adoption of rigorous multi-stage data validation processes that relied on structured cleaning logs and continuous quality checks to enhance reliability. In Yemen, the simplification of PDM tools was seen to improve data quality and reduce the burden on respondents, particularly in fragile environments, **an approach that one SCC KIs also recommended.**

Coordination emerged as a critical enabler, where comparative reviews of indicators and tools were supported through active collaboration with the Cash and Markets Working Group. A strong stakeholder engagement and enumerator training in high-risk areas, both of which ensured continued data collection during periods of access constraints. Remote surveys, retained post-COVID, allowed for ongoing monitoring in insecure regions, although limitations in representativeness and depth were acknowledged.

These experiences reinforce the importance of flexible yet structured systems that prioritise essential indicators, maintain close coordination with local and inter-agency actors, and continuously adapt to context. They also highlight the need for qualitative components to complement quantitative tools—a lesson echoed by two SCC KIs—to enhance understanding of drivers behind outcome trends.

Translating these insights into actionable measures would requires specific operational adjustments:

- First, refining PDM instruments to include three to five context-specific questions would capture critical external factors – for example, adding "What percentage of your MPCA was spent on debt repayment due to recent price surges?" directly links economic shocks to program outcomes.
- Second, strengthening partner coordination demands concrete systems making sure that beneficiary list sharing within 48 hours of registration and standardized escalation protocols for data collection delays.
- Third, enhancing monitoring tracking and outputs through a transparent tracking system – such as a dashboard displaying real-time progress against indicators – would address accountability and visualization gaps.

Complementing these quantitative improvements, dedicating resources to conduct at least fifteen structured focus group discussions per cycle would surface the nuanced behavioural drivers behind trends, asking beneficiaries directly about decision-making processes like "What factors led you to prioritize medical expenses over food purchases this month?"

These adaptations collectively address the dual imperative of methodological rigor and contextual responsiveness.

[19] Yemen was strategically selected due to its active role in the Cash Working Group and its well-established expertise in remote monitoring practices, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Despite the PDM exercise being implemented through local partners, the insights from Yemen were considered highly valuable and relevant.

Stakeholder Perspectives on the Evolution and Effectiveness of PDM Methodologies

Key lessons emerged from this evolution. Most notably, stronger coordination structures have developed, cited by a majority of KIs, through **the establishment of ad-hoc workshops, regular PMG meetings, and improved communication and timeline management, including escalation procedures to address partner delays (as highlighted by two KIs).** These mechanisms have enabled more consistent and timelier implementation of PDM activities across diverse operational contexts.

Data integrity has also improved over time, with a KI noting the value of tracking the same households across baseline and endline for more accurate longitudinal insights. The simplification of tools mentioned by a KI, has contributed to better data quality and efficiency, especially in hard-to-reach or resource-constrained areas. However, one KI emphasised a gap in the use of PDM findings for adaptive programming and learning documentation, highlighting that while data systems have improved, feedback loops and decision-use integration still lag.

Two KIs further stressed the need to embed qualitative data collection into PDM processes to explain quantitative outcomes better and strengthen evidence for programming decisions. Likewise, another two KIs called for more streamlined internal communication and approval processes to reduce delays and improve operational efficiency. Collectively, these insights suggest that while SCC's methodologies have matured, particularly in coordination and tool design, there remains a need to deepen analytical capacities and strengthen learning systems to close the loop between data and decision-making.

Based on insights from Key Informant interviews and a comprehensive desk review, the IMPACT team assessed the evolution of methodological maturity and the use of data for decision-making over the years. The results indicate a steady improvement: from low maturity and limited data use in 2018–2019, to medium levels during the emergency pivot in 2020, progressing to high methodological maturity by 2023–2024, marked by advancements in validation, tool development, sampling, and targeting. Correspondingly, the use of data for decision-making also improved, reaching high levels by 2024.

Table 2: Robustness of IMPACT baseline-PDM process (2018-2024)

Year	Methodological robustness	Use of Data for Decision
2018–2019	Methodological robust	Low
2020	Low	Medium
2021	Medium (emergency pivot)	Low-Medium
2022	Medium	Medium- High
2023	Medium	Medium- High
2024	High (validation, tools)	High

Table 3: Scoring framework: thresholds for evaluation

Rating Level	Methodological Robustness– Thresholds	Use of Data for Decision – Thresholds
Low	-No standardised tools or sampling -Community-based or convenience sampling -Inconsistent baseline and PDM matching -No formal validation process	- Minimal use of PDM findings in program decisions - Reports remain unshared or descriptive - Little to no documentation of adaptations
Medium	- Some harmonised indicators - Partial use of statistical sampling (e.g., random sampling without confidence levels) - Baseline and PDM occasionally aligned- Limited QA (e.g., basic data checks)	- Some documented changes based on findings - Growing involvement of technical teams - Informal feedback loops exist
High	- Statistically grounded sampling Consistent tracking of the same beneficiaries- Harmonised tools across partners- Use of R or structured cleaning protocols- Clearly documented QA processes	- Evidence of findings shaping program design - Learning events or adaptation workshops - Feedback loops are formalised - Indicators or tools revised based on data

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lessons Learned

Over the course of implementing and refining the monitoring and evaluation systems for MPCA programming in Somalia (2019–2024), a number of critical lessons have emerged. These lessons reflect both operational realities on the ground and the evolving methodological capacity of the Somali Cash Consortium (SCC). Drawing from primary data sources, KIIs, and an in-depth review of process documentation, this section synthesizes the key insights that have shaped the evolution of PDM methodologies. Particular attention is given to what worked well, what constraints persisted, and how programmatic and methodological adjustments influenced outcome measurement. These lessons are essential not only for internal learning and strategic planning but also for informing broader sectoral practice and aligning with donor expectations around evidence-based, adaptive humanitarian response.

1. **The evolution toward tracking the same households from baseline to PDM, especially in 2024, significantly improved the ability to detect actual program impact.** In contrast, assessments from 2020–2022 that relied on differing samples introduced measurement noise and limited comparability, obscuring year-to-year trends. ECHO's emphasis on statistical rigour and internal validity was met through the 2024 matched panel sampling approach, which yielded clearer outcome trajectories in FCS, rCSI, and income-expenditure alignment.
2. **The transition from community-based to vulnerability-based targeting was a pivotal step**. VBT outperformed prior models by directing assistance to the most at-risk households, particularly female-headed households, households with persons living with disabilities, and those facing food insecurity linked to drought or displacement. The 2024 outcome data showed sharp improvements in FCS (+66 percent) and reductions in rCSI (from 21 to 8), reinforcing that

improved targeting enhances both efficiency and effectiveness—key metrics within ECHO's cash assistance performance framework.

3. A majority of key informants pointed to **enhanced coordination through Programme Management Group (PMG) meetings, technical working groups, and clearer SOPs as a primary driver of methodological improvements.** These coordination platforms facilitated the harmonization of tools, clarified focal points, reduced duplication, and ensured alignment between baseline data collection and disbursement timelines. ECHO guidance highlights coordination and harmonization as core principles of good humanitarian donorship; the SCC's improvements in this area are a step toward that ideal. Notably, the high turnover among key staff within SCC implementing partners in Somalia may have disrupted continuity and institutional memory, underscoring the importance of further strengthening coordination mechanisms to maintain consistency and quality across partners.
4. **Simplifying and better standardized tools to reduce respondent fatigue, particularly in protracted crisis settings, led to improved data quality.** Enumerators reported higher completion rates and fewer refusals after the length of surveys was reduced and indicator duplication was eliminated. Fragile settings—such as remote areas in Gedo and Bay—benefited from leaner tools, allowing for better reach without compromising analytical power. This lesson echoes best practices from other ECHO-funded operations in Yemen and South Sudan that prioritized 'essential indicators only' framework. This lesson learned can be reflected for SCC baseline-PDM Somalia through: Removing non-essential environmental questions that overlapped with other assessments, consolidating into single dedicated tools for baseline and endline (rather than multiple modality-specific versions), and eliminating duplicated indicators across survey modules.
5. While remote data collection enabled continuity during COVID-19 and periods of insecurity and proved its reliability after COVID-19. **Key informants stressed the importance of integrating KIIs and FGDs to capture underlying drivers of behavioral trends** in income use, food consumption, and debt patterns—elements not fully explained through numeric surveys. ECHO's evaluation guidance calls for mixed-method triangulation, which remains underutilized in current MPCA monitoring systems.
6. Despite gains in methodology, feedback loops into programmatic design remain weak. Multiple KIs noted that even when trends are identified—such as income-expenditure mismatches or debt surges—these insights are not always translated into real-time program adjustments. Moreover, documentation of lessons learned is inconsistent, and learning often remains siloed at individual or agency levels. **For adaptive programming to become institutionalized, SCC must establish formal learning capture and dissemination systems.**

Table 4: Summary of the lessons learnt and added value

Lesson area	Key insight	Added value
Household tracking & sampling	Tracking the same HHs from baseline to PDM (2024) improved comparability and demonstrated clearer outcome trajectories (FCS, rCSI, income/expenditure). Earlier years	Strengthens internal validity; aligns with ECHO's emphasis on statistical rigour. Panel sampling improves the measurement of true program impact.

	(2020–22) used differing samples, limiting trend analysis.	
Targeting approaches	Shift from community-based targeting to Vulnerability-Based Targeting (VBT) directed aid to female-headed HHs, people with disabilities, and drought/displacement-affected HHs.	VBT enhanced efficiency & effectiveness. 2024 data showed +66% FCS improvement and rCSI reduction (21→8). Reinforces donor cash performance frameworks.
Coordination & SOPS	PMG meetings, technical working groups (TWGs), and standard operating procedures (SOPs) harmonised tools, clarified roles, and aligned baseline & distribution timelines.	Better coordination reduced duplication and increased quality. Highlights need to strengthen institutional memory systems to mitigate turnover effects.
Tool simplification	Streamlined tools reduced survey fatigue, refusals, and duplication of indicators. Leaner tools improved reach in fragile contexts.	Higher data quality and completion rates. Aligns with best practice from other ECHO-funded crises (Yemen, South Sudan).
Mixed-methods integration	Remote surveys ensured continuity during COVID-19 but lacked depth. KIs stressed the need for FGDs/KIIs to explain drivers behind numeric patterns.	Would enhance the interpretation of food consumption, income, and debt behaviours.
Learning & feedback loops	PDM findings are often not systematically fed into program adjustments; learning remained siloed across agencies.	Weak adaptive programming capacity. Formal systems for capturing and sharing learning are needed to close the data-to-decision gap.

Recommendations

Building on the operational insights and methodological evolution outlined in the previous section, this section outlines a series of forward-looking recommendations aimed at strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of MPCA monitoring systems. These recommendations are grounded in empirical findings from the 2019–2024 evaluation period and are designed to address both persistent challenges and emerging opportunities. Where possible, they align with ECHO's guidance on quality cash programming, particularly in areas related to targeting, data quality, adaptive management, and coordination. The following recommendations are intended to inform IMPACT future programming cycles, enhance decision-making, and ensure that MPCA continues to respond effectively to the needs of vulnerable populations in Somalia. Thus, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **IMPACT Institutionalize longitudinal sampling:** Maintain consistent tracking of the same beneficiaries from baseline to endline to ensure internal validity and enable trend analysis.
2. **IMPACT to Integrate qualitative components into PDM frameworks:** Expand the use of FGDs and KIIs alongside quantitative surveys to understand the "why" behind indicator trends, especially for atypical or plateauing results. The FGD components will be included by IMPACT in

the currently ongoing assessments under Modification Request 2 (MR2), just after the PDM data collection is over. FGDs will be conducted after the PDM, focusing on CCCM activations and the rolling nutrition referral approach, prioritising Banadir and another Acted-supported location.

3. **Ensure timely data collection aligned with disbursement:** Enforce SOPs that prohibit cash transfers before baseline data is collected, thereby preserving the accuracy of impact assessments. SCC implementing partners should continue sharing beneficiary lists with IMPACT promptly to ensure baseline surveys are conducted before cash disbursements, maintaining best practice standards as adopted after the main caseload in the ECHO HIP 2023.
4. **Strengthening feedback loops for adaptive programming:** Develop structured learning events following each monitoring cycle, using standardized templates to document insights, flag programmatic implications, and agree on action points.
5. **Enhance enumerator training and retention:** Invest in periodic refresher training, particularly on interviewing techniques, ethical standards, and digital tools to improve data consistency and respondent trust. IMPACT has developed a pool of enumerators trained on the baseline and endline tools. This pool is updated regularly to adapt to data collections following rapid activations made during emergencies.
6. **Promote data harmonisation across partners:** Work with the Cash Working Group to standardise indicator definitions, response coding, and reporting cycles to facilitate comparability across agencies and geographies.
7. **Develop risk-responsive data collection protocols:** Incorporate contingency strategies for high-risk areas, such as hybrid phone/in-person models, and strengthen access negotiation capacities in fragile zones. IMPACT successfully piloted physical data collection under the Direct Nutrition Referral approach in Banadir and Deynile. Expanding physical data collection—especially for CCCM interventions in accessible areas where Acted is present—is recommended. However, this shift requires increased budgeting due to higher logistical costs.

Table 5: Suggestions and level of responsibility

Recommendation	Responsibility Level	How It Will Be Achieved
Institutionalise longitudinal sampling	IMPACT	Develop and apply panel-tracking protocols; assign unique household IDs to follow the same beneficiaries from baseline through endline for robust trend analysis.
Integrate qualitative components (FGDs & KIIs) into PDM frameworks	IMPACT	Add FGD/KII modules to PDM workplans and align timelines so FGDs take place immediately after PDM surveys. Under MR2, IMPACT will conduct FGDs on CCCM activations and rolling nutrition referrals in the Banadir region.
Ensure timely data collection aligned with disbursement	SCC CMU + Implementing Partners + IMPACT	Partners to share beneficiary lists promptly so baseline data is collected before disbursement, maintaining the best-practice approach adopted after the ECHO HIP 2023 caseload.
Strengthen feedback loops via structured	IMPACT + SCC Partners	Hold quarterly learning workshops after each monitoring cycle; document findings with clear action points and integrate recommendations into PMG meeting agendas for follow-up.

learning events/action points		
Enhance enumerator training and retention	IMPACT	Provide regular refresher training on interviewing techniques, ethical standards, and digital tools. Maintain and update a pool of trained enumerators for rapid activations and emergency assessments.
Promote data harmonisation (indicators, coding, reporting cycles)	SCC CMU + IMPACT	Issue a harmonised PDM indicator framework, standardise response coding and indicator definitions, and align reporting timelines across agencies through CMU coordination and the Cash Working Group.
Develop risk-responsive data collection protocols	IMPACT + SCC CMU	Expand hybrid phone/in-person approaches and strengthen access-negotiation capacity for fragile areas. Build on successful pilots of physical data collection under the Direct Nutrition Referral approach in Banadir and Deynile.

Financial considerations of data collection under different modalities

The choice between in-person, remote, or hybrid PDM methodologies carries important financial implications that affect cost-efficiency and sustainability. In-person surveys remain the most resource-intensive, with high transport, staffing, and logistical expenses, but they often deliver richer qualitative insights and higher response rates in low-connectivity contexts. Remote data collection, which has been widely adopted, significantly reduces field costs and exposure to security risks, yet it introduces airtime costs and depends heavily on network coverage and household phone ownership. Hybrid approaches combine the strengths of both methods, offering balanced costs and more representative coverage when properly planned. A cost-effective modality selection tool, factoring in budget constraints, coverage needs, and donor reporting requirements, would enable SCC and partners to optimise value for money in future PDM cycles.

Baseline and PDM as red-flag tools

Beyond tracking outcomes, baseline surveys and PDMs can serve as red-flag mechanisms to identify risks of aid diversion or misuse. By systematically comparing household responses with registration data, distribution records, and CRM feedback, teams can spot discrepancies—such as duplicate registrations, inconsistencies between reported and received transfers, or unusual response patterns.

In the ongoing Modification Request 2 (MR2), SCC and IMPACT monitor these red flags—especially around accountability and cash transfer receipt—to reduce the risk of diversion. This approach positions the PDM as both a learning and risk-management tool, strengthening accountability and donor confidence by enabling the SCC CMU and partners to investigate irregularities in real time.

CONCLUSION

The results and recommendations from the review focused on two primary objectives. **Objective 1** aimed to enhance understanding of the short-term impacts of MPCA interventions by examining changes in key indicators and assessing how beneficiaries were affected. **Objective 2** focused on how the SCC could refine its PDM processes, including improvements to methodologies, data collection tools, and sampling techniques.

The period from 2019 to 2024 represents a clear trajectory of progress in both the **implementation** and **monitoring** of MPCA within the SCC. What began as a fragmented monitoring landscape—characterized by community-based sampling, non-aligned baselines, and unharmonized tools—has evolved into a more statistically sound, methodologically consistent, and context-responsive PDM system.

This evolution has been paralleled by increasingly **targeted and adaptive MPCA programming**, which together have contributed to improved short-term outcomes for vulnerable households across Somalia. The strongest evidence of this convergence lies in the 2024 cycle, where programmatic and methodological clarity aligned. By tracking the **same households from baseline to PDM**, implementing a **vulnerability-based approach**, and applying more robust data collection and analysis protocols, SCC was able to demonstrate marked improvements in outcome indicators, recording a **66% increase in food consumption scores**, coupled by a **reduction in the rCSI from 21 to 8**, indicating a significant decrease in households' reliance on negative food-related coping strategies. Additionally, there was an **improved alignment between household income and expenditure**, indicating enhanced purchasing power and effective program targeting. Over the years, **household savings increased**, while **average household debt declined**, even amid persistent economic and environmental challenges. These findings affirm that when MPCA delivery is complemented by rigorous and coherent monitoring, the impact can be both meaningful and measurable, even amidst persistent external shocks such as drought, inflation, and conflict.

However, the evaluation also surfaces **critical gaps** that must be addressed to sustain and build upon these gains. While **quantitative data quality and representativeness** have improved significantly, particularly with the adoption of standardized sampling frames, cleaning protocols, and harmonized indicators, the **interpretive and adaptive dimensions remain underdeveloped**. The persistent underuse of qualitative tools has limited the Consortium's ability to fully understand beneficiary behaviors, vulnerabilities, and unmet needs. **As such, reports remain too focused on "what changed" without fully unpacking "why."** Additionally, while **coordination structures**—such as the PMG, ad hoc technical workshops, and interagency alignment via the Cash Working Group—have strengthened the PDM process, **operational bottlenecks remain**. Delays in beneficiary list sharing, communication breakdowns between registration, implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation teams, and uneven tool application continue to limit the efficiency and responsiveness of the monitoring system.

The experience of the past five years reinforces a central lesson: **high-quality monitoring is not only about better data—it is about better decisions**. If the SCC continues to build on its methodological foundation while embedding **qualitative inquiry, adaptive learning, and real-time feedback loops** into program design, MPCA in Somalia can move from a reactive safety net to a **proactive, accountable, and transformative mechanism** for resilience-building. Ultimately, sustained investment in **monitoring excellence**, **partner coordination**, and **evidence-based adaptation** will be key to delivering timely, impactful, and equitable assistance to those most affected by crisis and poverty across Somalia.

ANNEXE 1: Data collection timelines.

Humanitarian implementation plan	Baseline	PDMs
HIP 2019	**2019**	
	Mar-19	Dec-19
HIP 2020	**2020**	
	Apr-20	Dec-20
HIP 2021	**2021**	
	Sep-21	Mar-22
	2022	
	Feb-22	May-22
HIP 2022	Apr-22	Sep-22
	Jul-22	Nov-22
	2023	
	Feb-23	May-23
HIP 2023	May-23	Oct-23
	Jul-23	Oct-23
	Sep-23	Dec-23
	Dec-23	Mar-24
	2024	
HIP 2024	Jun-24	Nov-24
	Aug-24	Nov-24
	Sep-24	Jan-25

Secondary Data Sources used in this Review paper.

SCC Terms of Reference (ToR) for a review of SCC post-distribution monitoring activities (PDMs), December 2024

Review Paper on targeting shift in Humanitarian Cash Assistance for Somali Cash Consortium, IMPACT, May 2024

Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) 2025, OCHA, January 2025

Baseline Assessment Findings For Somali Cash Consortium's (SCC) Shock-Based Cash Assistance To Vulnerable Communities in Somalia, SCC, July 2024

Endline assessment findings for Somali Cash Consortium's (SCC) flood response (March 2024), SCC, June 2024

Somalia: Empowering Internally Displaced Persons through multipurpose cash assistance, ACTED, July 2024

Somalia: Supporting Flood Affected Somali households with mulitpurpose cash assistance, ACTED, April 2024

Identifying Gaps in Households Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (food and non-food) and the New Transfer Value Recommendation, FAO, GoS, REACH, et al, September 2024

Somalia: Cash Assistance Brings Relief to Flood-affected families in Jowhar District, NRC, October 2024

Endline Assessment Findings for Somali Cash Consortium's (SCC) flood response, IMPACT, June 2024

Somalia Cash Working Group M&E Workstream Harmonised Tool

First Assessment Findings for the Somalia Cash consortium (SCC) response to drought and famine prevention, IMPACT, June 2023 (ECHO HIP 2023)

Baseline Assessment Findings for the Somali Cash Consortium response to drought and famine prevention in Gedo region, IMPACT, July 2023 (ECHO HIP 2023)

Baseline Assessment Findings for Anticipatory action on flooding in Belet Weyne District – Evaluating Gu rain impact and projecting consequences of Deyr season, IMPACT, October 2023 (ECHO HIP 2023)

Final Assessment Findings for the Somali Cash Consortium (SCC) respoonse to drought and famine prevention in the Gedo region, IMPACT, October 2023

Post Distribution Monitoring Endline Assessment Comparative Report for the Somali Cash Consortium main caseload assessment (ECHO HIP 2023) (ECHO HIP 2023)

Baseline Assessment Findings for Somali Cash Consortium's (SCC) flood response, IMPACT, December 2023

Endline assessment findings for anticipatory action on flooding in Belet Weyne district: evaluating the impact of MPCA on urban-based vulnerable households, February 2024 (ECHO HIP, 2023)