

# A Challenging Year

## Loop's journey in 2024

### Annual Report

This is the fifth annual report for *Our Loop Stichting* (operating as “Loop” and “Talk to Loop”) and covers all of 2024.

This report is for the Loop Governing Board, the Loop Advisory Board and the partners invested in supporting Loop. This is a shorter and later report than all previous years due to the low staffing numbers and high workload to keep Loop operating throughout 2024 and in Q1 of 2025. It has been an exceptional year.

## Executive Summary

2024 started off with Loop being present in 6 countries in January, to taking a collective decision with the CEOs of the 6 host organisations and Loop Governing Board members to go into hibernation in February.

As a consequence the Loop lead had to lay off over 25 staff and all partners, in alignment with contractual notice periods and only three staff remained on short term contracts which were repeatedly extended as funding allowed. The technology team closed down the Loop platform and all paid services. Everything went into hibernation with a plan to restart as soon as funds allowed.

By April we had verbal agreements for sufficient funding for us to open up in Somalia only, with funding confirmed for 15 months. The funds were only signed and the first transfer to Loop made by September 2024. The remaining funds for Loop were to run out in October.

Between April and September the 3 person team continued to seek funding partnerships, identified and established a partnership with a new host organisation in Somalia, recruited 15 staff, recruited a new technology in-house team, began to rebuild and switch back on the Loop technology for the platform to run again.

We also attracted strong public support for Loop as a systems changing opportunity from a wide variety of actors across the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors around the world. Through this we built a strong base of evidence and support - including through video interviews, blogs and learning reports.

Due to the changing plans, there was not a normal strategy, but rather a Hibernation plan and then a [Coming Back Stronger Strategy](#). A new annual strategy was written in 2025 for 2025.

By December the core team of three were burnt out with a few staff needing to take leave. Recruitment and onboarding was an ongoing task with some failed recruitments and some short lived hires due to being the wrong person for the roles. A temporary manager was brought in to cover leave, but this was shorter than expected due to staff issues and funding pressures.

We entered 2025 with a relatively new team across all areas. We had funding for the full year for Somalia only and a strong fundraising strategy based on the year of learning about where interest lies. We had an emerging technology roadmap based on user priority services. We had a functioning platform, a clear organogram of how to best structure the team once up and running and a lot of work ahead.

The year unfolded as follows:

## Quarter 1 & 2, 2024:

### **Closing:**

In February of 2024, after receiving three pieces of negative feedback of 'secured' funding Loop had to go into hibernation to ensure we didn't go into debt as we only had funds for the three month notice period of staff and third party technology contracts.

We were also receiving threats in Somalia against our national host organisation from large and small actors who had received sensitive reports and didn't want to.

The Loop Governing Board and the 6 host organisation CEOs met in January to review the options and it was collectively agreed that hibernation was the only option.

### **Support:**

We announced this news directly to partners and key stakeholders and then publicly through a blog:

<https://talktoloop.org/blog-posts/loop-enters-hibernation-amid-pressing-challenges>

It included the following key messaging:

*'...despite our successes, we face significant challenges, primarily due to insufficient sector-wide support for partnerships and funding. While we have experienced strong support from communities and key actors, sadly we have also seen low levels of responses back to communities for both open and sensitive feedback as well as a small number of stakeholders impeding transparent accountability processes, including threats to our staff and host organisations, as a result of sensitive reports being referred to them.*

*While Talk to Loop has shown potential for considerable impact, and a strong demand from communities, we are currently unable to offer the level and quality of service we aspire to due to these overlapping concerns. Recognizing the importance of timely responses in feedback mechanisms, we therefore believe it is more accountable to withdraw from providing a service that cannot meet these expectations and the duty of care we aspire to, rather than contribute to the lack of trust or confidence in two way feedback mechanisms by communities.*

*While we see some of these push backs to true accountability as a success indicator, we also acknowledge that achieving change and garnering support takes time. Unfortunately, we have been unable to secure the institutional support and resources needed to sustain Loop effectively for long enough to build this necessary trust and partnership.*

*It is therefore, with a heavy heart that we must announce the immediate hibernation of our operations to ensure we manage our existing grants accountably. The technology will be hibernated, with a plan to be able to reopen it, in the best structure, to influence long term inclusion and accountability for people affected by crises.'*

We received widespread support and an acknowledgement that us going into hibernation was not just another failed innovation but a system not willing to support the much called for and much needed change. One of the most influential public support was in the Alliance Magazine written by Kate Moger and Rebecca Hanshaw: <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/loops-hibernation-needs-to-be-a-wake-up-call/> Some of the text includes:

*'It's a frustrating reality that while we advocate for systems change, vested interests often act as gatekeepers, perpetuating the very structures we aim to dismantle.'* This was a comment posted on LinkedIn from Adeso's Dawit Taddele Dessie in response to the announcement that Loop, the accountability platform, had entered hibernation.

*It would be too easy to dismiss Loop's situation as another 'failed start up'. Afterall, we know that over half of new businesses fail in the first three years, and that many non-profits are facing significant funding challenges. But Loop's hibernation shouldn't simply be characterised as another casualty of a challenging funding landscape or a crowded marketplace. At the root of it is something more insidious.*

*At best it exposes a hypocrisy, where the sector is happy to talk about accountability to communities but unwilling to get behind the independent tools required to deliver it. At worse, it reveals a sector determined to maintain the status quo, where efforts seeking to disrupt traditional power dynamics face resistance and push back. Or as noted by Loop in its statement where 'a small number of stakeholders [are] impeding transparent accountability processes, including threats to our staff and host organisations...'*

We also received many public and private endorsements for Loop on hearing that we were going into hibernation. Some can be found here:

<https://talktoloop.org/blog-posts/bold-endorsements-fuel-efforts-to--save-loop>

We hosted a fireside chat to explore why we went into hibernation and to answer the multiple questions arising. It was a conversation about the journey that led to the inception of Talk to Loop, exploring the motivations behind its creation, the milestones achieved, the learning that resulted over the past three years of implementation, the reasons and challenges behind the recent hibernation, and the potential for collective action to sustain our journey. The event was very well attended with some excellent questions and shared support. It brought a newfound energy, with over 170 people registered, 80 participants and others requesting the recording which can be found [here](#), and the questions asked and answered in this brief blog.

<https://talktoloop.org/blog-posts/q-a-open-fireside-chat-talk-to-loops-journey-as-a-systems-change-tool>

### **Learning for fundraising:**

The Loop team also did some research into stakeholders' views on how Loop should be funded. We did an anonymous survey to understand how a wide range of actors thought Loop should be funded (if at all) and how much they thought it would cost to run. Find the report here:

<https://talktoloop.org/blog-posts/in-pursuit-of-sustainability-encouraging-change>

Some of the findings included:

*In these early days of evidencing and trying to scale Loop we have been finding it hard to get funding to offer Loop as a collective service or public good in a sustainable way. We continue to explore potential revenue streams and costing brackets.*

*To support this thinking we did a survey to ask a range of actors about who they think should be paying for Loop and how much they would expect to pay. We sent the survey to actors across the spectrum of the Humanitarian, Development, Philanthropic and donor space. While it was a small sample it clearly shows that there is no one clear answer or costing that people / organisations are expecting.*

*For example: When we asked people what they thought it would cost to run a Community Feedback and Monitoring and Safe Reporting tool annually in each country, the responses ranged from \$2,000 per month at least to \$3 million (this budget included supporting 40 local organisations to mainstream Loop for one year as well).*

*40% respondents thought that donors should fund Loop as a public good. 1 thought UN and INGOs should fund it at the country level and 40% thought it should be part of program budgets of INGOs and UN Agencies. Only one respondent thought local organisations should pay for it.*

*When asked what budget lines you have available if you were to use it, 1 said: zero as we have our own mechanism. 1 said that they could include it in existing Safeguarding and HR budget lines. All others said they would have to fundraise for this specifically and include it in budget lines, for example as an extra hotline service cost in proposal writing.*

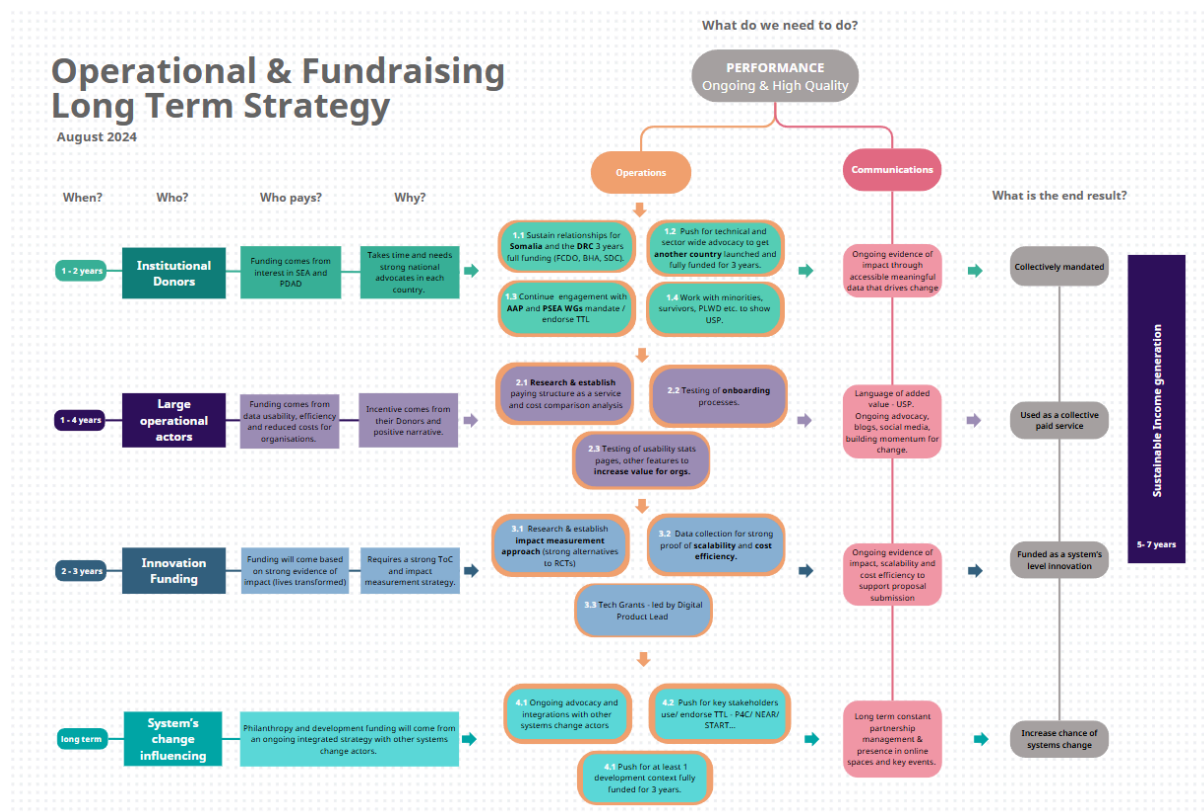
*We asked people, if it was 100% free would they be likely to use it? All said yes except 1 who said they had their own mechanism and didn't need anything else. 1 said yes but that there are other internal costs to consider to train staff, integrate it into systems etc. Nobody said it was not relevant to their work. Some comments included: 'If established in a country it is easier to make the case internally, especially if others are part of it.'*

*We continued to look for funding to run a professional cost benefit analysis and assess costs generally of Community Feedback Mechanisms and Sensitive Reporting, as well as data on the number of calls that can be managed by different approaches. We had a volunteer try to collect some representative data which was useful but not sufficient in itself for further evidence.*

*In addition to this survey we had a volunteer try to collect data for a comparative cost benefit analysis, but unfortunately it is difficult to reliably ascertain the true costs of various existing mechanisms being implemented in different locations and through different organisations.*

*Based on the numerous meetings, presentations, discussions and strong funding push, we developed a fundraising strategy. In this we identify the key stakeholders and when*

and how to engage them for funding through the Coming Back Stronger Strategy and longer term scaling lifespan of Loop. The full strategy can be found [here](#) or see the visual below.



In summary, we learnt through fundraising to come back stronger, that we had most interest from Institutional donors who wanted to use Loop to address existing issues they had with the lack of accountability of the current system they were funding. The motivation to fund Loop was to help get more Post Distribution Aid Diversion reports and as an adjunct more SEA reports in, when these were not being reliably received/ reported by Agencies or INGOs. It was very much about starting where the system is at and moving from there.

We could then extend to have large operational actors using Loop for similar purposes and build up sufficient evidence and hard data to successfully bid for larger, short term innovation funding.

We had no success getting funding from the systems change actors albeit the most positive public support and alignment of the problem identification. Nonetheless we believe it is important to stay aligned with this group of actors as that is where Loop has the greatest potential to have the largest systems change impact when it hits a certain scale, whether funding follows or not.

**Advocacy and communications:**

As part of our advocacy and communications about the unique role that Loop can play, the communications Lead also interviewed a wide range of people working across the humanitarian, development and human rights sectors to understand what they thought about the Loop platform. These can be found on our YouTube website and include: <https://www.youtube.com/@talktoloop>

Amanda - Rethinking Aid delivery efficiency

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8I0vIrZnSE&pp=0gcjCbIJAYcqIYzv>

Tsaaroh - Safeguarding and M&E Perspectives

[https://i.ytimg.com/an\\_webp/BcpJOKtdnoc/mqdefault\\_6s.webp?du=3000&sqp=CJ3Sn8IG&rs=AOOn4CLD\\_1CGGIAG4vpwzVGxq-R-t8T597g](https://i.ytimg.com/an_webp/BcpJOKtdnoc/mqdefault_6s.webp?du=3000&sqp=CJ3Sn8IG&rs=AOOn4CLD_1CGGIAG4vpwzVGxq-R-t8T597g)

Avianto - M&E governance perspective

[https://i.ytimg.com/an\\_webp/L-kIwYBxwpU/mqdefault\\_6s.webp?du=3000&sqp=CO\\_Mn8IG&rs=AOOn4CLCsYiyIGIn1rwYW\\_8zxruZB9My34w](https://i.ytimg.com/an_webp/L-kIwYBxwpU/mqdefault_6s.webp?du=3000&sqp=CO_Mn8IG&rs=AOOn4CLCsYiyIGIn1rwYW_8zxruZB9My34w)

Nanette - Global Systems Change

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OZ-MunKUoc>

Nurta - Local Minority Voices Perspective, Somalia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpkIhFIH3YM>

Geoffrey - Mapping and Community Collective Action

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSj2F1LgmsQ>

Lian - PSEA and Child Protection Perspective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDLziV2VGkc>

Maria - Shifting Power Perspective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CCPrF-g5sM>

Bashair - Diaspora Perspective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAGTbVHCLPI>

Richard - Third Party Monitoring Perspective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSp7cD4gV24>

Victoriia - Ukrainian National Organisations Perspective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7MFxJfjhjc>

Subilo - Gender Based Violence Specialist Perspective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDFGJak0K0g>

### **Systems review and improvements**

Alongside the communications and fundraising work, the technical leads also worked on reviewing and improving our policies, processes and documentation to answer recurrent questions.

One of these was articulating the importance of language inclusivity, what we had learnt so far and what we wanted to commit to going forward. Blog on language inclusivity:

<https://talktoloop.org/blog-posts/language-diversity-learnings-on-inclusivity-and-accessibility>

As part of this we articulated a specific Language strategy for Somalia in coordination with the Minority Rights Group and the University in Mogadishu. This country specific contextualisation of our approaches is something we plan to continue. Loop Somalia Language Strategy:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v-lYgP3HeCwhrH5FN3R-DpYQPUnjWrAHPtCGdHKuQu8/edit?tab=t.0>

### **Website:**

We revisited and updated the website to make it more focused on organisations working with communities, to make it cheaper and easier to manage by non technology specialists and to update all documents, specifically on the Resources page to help answer common questions: <https://talktoloop.org/resources>

For example we reviewed the Sensitive Feedback Framework with input from our specialist on the Advisory Board and other supporters.

[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66d09c3d470602563f53a069/670cd3e617436101fe9f6c75\\_Framework%20for%20Handling%20Sensitive%20Feedback.pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66d09c3d470602563f53a069/670cd3e617436101fe9f6c75_Framework%20for%20Handling%20Sensitive%20Feedback.pdf)

Due to feedback from UNHCR we updated our existing systems and articulated them in the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) format which they recommended:

[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66d09c3d470602563f53a069/670cd5fd264a6ede9a583657\\_Data%20Protection%20Impact%20Assessment.pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66d09c3d470602563f53a069/670cd5fd264a6ede9a583657_Data%20Protection%20Impact%20Assessment.pdf)

We also added an Annex on Somalia specific considerations.



We developed a template Data Sharing Agreement for ease of partnerships for those organisations which felt that they wanted to have one in place. No organisation used our specific template but rather asked for us to adapt to and adjust their standardised templates to meet our protocols. This was possible but our template remains available and accurate.

[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66d09c3d470602563f53a069/670cd5ef6ec5ff4392fb5a2c\\_Data%20Sharing%20Agreement%20Template.pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66d09c3d470602563f53a069/670cd5ef6ec5ff4392fb5a2c_Data%20Sharing%20Agreement%20Template.pdf)

## Quarter 3, 2024

### **Funding:**

We secured funding from the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) as part of their Third Party Monitoring (TPM) project Kulmis. Funds were routed through Particip (the lead for the TPM) to Loop as part of a larger accountability and data analytics project. These funds were an extension of the funds already received and might be extended into 2025 and beyond as part of the upcoming 4 year TPM project extension. Their focus was on Somalia but they also had projects in Ethiopia and Kenya/ Horn of Africa.

We secured funding from FCDO (British Government), as an adjunct to two Somali consortiums with NRC and Save the Children as the leads of over 10 members in each consortium. The funds for Loop were an addendum to the Save the Children existing funding FCDO contract and Loop was a subgrantee of Save the Children UK. This was a one year pilot with the possibility of an extension from October 2025 for an additional 2 years in line with the Gaashan and BRCiS consortium projects/ contracts.

Loop was given a small grant from the Oak Foundation, a philanthropic actor, specifically from the protection/ sexual exploitation and abuse specialist who saw the potential of Loop in this area of the sector. This helped considerably during a difficult period.

We also had funds from BHA, a branch of USAID. These funds were channeled through UNICEF as an existing BHA funded partner and the process to be approved for bilateral funding for 2025 and beyond was underway. There was an intention from BHA to continue to fund Loop longer term as a sector wide tool thereafter.

We were also in discussions with BHA and other donors in the DRC for Loop to open up in the Democratic Republic of Congo. There was an approved concept note, which was led by the INGO forum (FONGI) in the DRC, which included the forum's core work and

additional staff member working on Accountability to Affected People (AAP), as well as the costs to run Loop for a year. This concept note was going to be part funded by ECHO who already funded FONGI and to be cofunded by BHA/ USAID. This would give Loop the credibility and support of the network and the National network of Conaafohd (who had done a [survey](#) and supported the idea of bringing Loop to the DRC). The signing of this Concept Note was planned for early 2025.

We had interest from FCDO and SDC in Ethiopia. There was interest from ECHO in Sudan, all of which was under discussion up until 2025.

### **Come back stronger strategy:**

We developed a 'Coming back stronger Strategy' for 2024 to help articulate the direction of the charity in this temporary phase of coming out of hibernation. We articulated a three phased approach, starting phase 1 and 2 in Somalia and then extending when possible to other countries. The full plan can be found here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XmZkO2b1HmVv8\\_I0CIDwTKISYY0RL0Fn/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XmZkO2b1HmVv8_I0CIDwTKISYY0RL0Fn/view?usp=sharing)

The thinking addressed the various risks which had resulted in us having to go into hibernation, including the national structures, security and branding elements, so as to ensure a stronger more vocal systems level endorsement of our role.

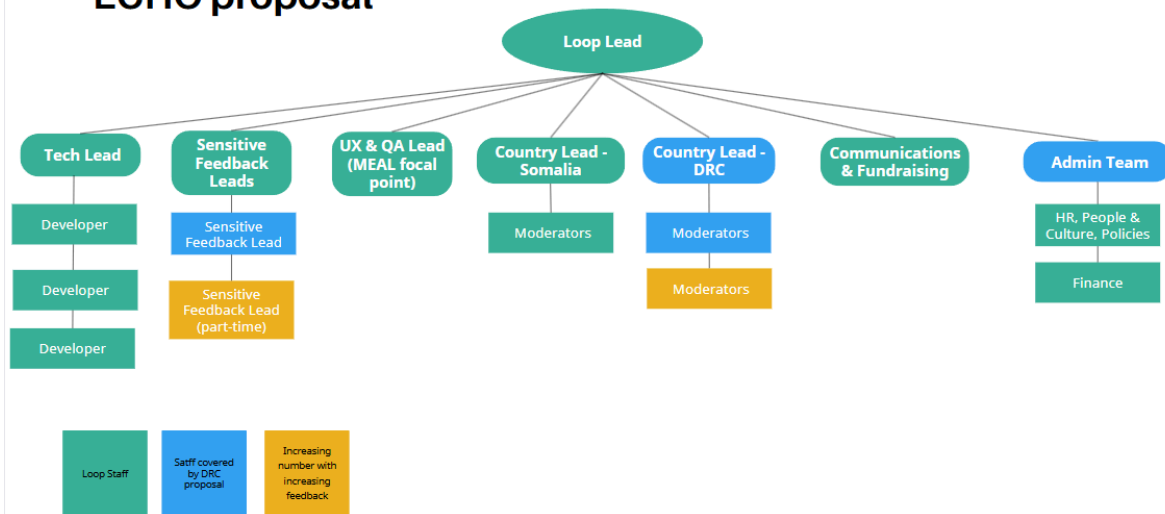
### **Partnership**

We established the groundwork of a strong partnership with Raagsan in Somalia. Raagsan is a female led, Somalian Social Enterprise, focusing on monitoring and evaluation with a presence across Somalia and Somaliland and is non operational. The handover from the Centre for Peace and Democracy went smoothly and we cocreated a Partnership Agreement, budget, job descriptions and a recruitment plan. When funding was signed we also signed a contract for the funding and specific deliverables included.

### **Building a team:**

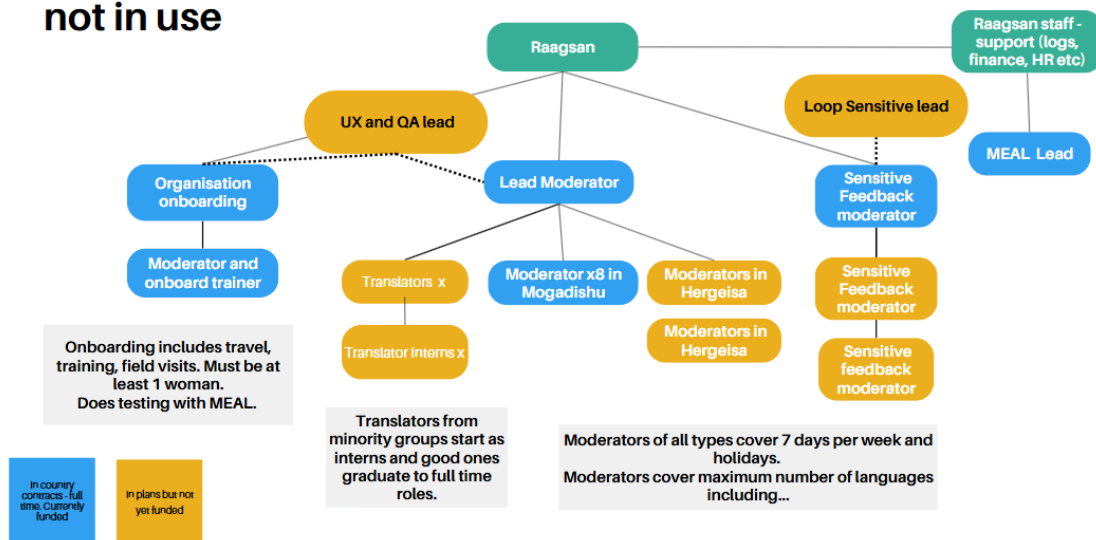
We recruited to the following organogram, focusing on the green boxes. With the blue boxes being dependent on getting additional funding.

## Talk to Loop Organisational Chart 2 - Somalia & the DRC - ECHO proposal



And in Somalia we recruited the following team in blue with the plan to grow as feedback and funding required:

## Talk to Loop Organisational Chart Somalia - Draft B - not in use



Once we had secured funding for a sufficient runway we opened up a recruitment to replace the Loop Lead with a person from the majority world to better represent the ambitions and ethos of the charity. We started research on how to register Loop in a majority world country for a stronger more representative approach long term. This recruitment process went into 2025.

## Quarter 4, 2024

The platform officially opened up again in Somalia with IVRR (Voice) and web in 4 global languages and 4 national Somali dialects. We received feedback in the last quarter of 2024 and had sufficient data to write a Q4 analytical report:

Q4 2024 short report

<https://talktoloop.org/blog-posts/executive-summary-report-q4-2024-somalia-and-somaliland>

Q4 2024 report, full length

<https://talktoloop.org/blog-posts/somalia-and-somaliland-quarter-4-2024-report-extended>

In Q4 of 2024 and Q1 of 2025 we developed an updated Monitoring and Analytical framework which helped to improve quarterly reporting. This will be reported on further in 2025.

## The outlook for 2025 in December 2024.

Going into 2025 we were in discussions with BHA for funding in Somalia for a number of years and had started the process to receive funding bilaterally by the end of 2026. UNICEF had agreed to act as a pass through for an additional year. We were ready to sign an extension of \$1 million USD in January.

We had an agreement from SDC for additional funding for 2025 and to then discuss a four year extension 2026 - 2029, through the leadership of Particip as part of the monitoring project Kulmis.

We had a partnership with FCDO, who were funding Loop through Save the Children, the lead for one consortium - Gaashan in Somalia and acting as a pass through for a second large consortium funded by FCDO in Somalia - BRCiS. These projects were three year projects and if successful the Loop service would be extended for the lifetime of both consortium projects and partners.

We were in discussions with the following actors in Somalia for partnership:

- the HC and the Risk Management Unit for closer coordination
- the World Food Programme to support their PSEA work
- The PSEA Coordination network to provide collective services for the network

- The AAP/ CEA working group to contribute to the Aggregator model and collective data.
- The Somali NGO Consortium
- The Minority Rights Group for a joint project with Canada Grand Challenges

The majority of the staff were new recruits and needed a strong induction process but the three main staff members needed a break over the new year period to come back fresh and help establish a strong, aligned and well positioned team and partnership into 2025.

## Financial Report 2024

We are a registered Charity in Holland. Our audited accounts are in euros, and are available on the website. The Talk to Loop financial accounts are reported separately and available on the website.