



# Waste Collection Governance in Bosaso: Service Delivery, Accountability, and Community Participation

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## Summary

- » Waste collection in Bosaso has improved in recent years through stronger municipal oversight, the introduction of additional private service providers, increased public awareness, and the adoption of a waste collection bylaw. However, waste continues to accumulate in some public spaces, coastal areas, and underserved neighbourhoods.
- » Waste collection services are delivered through a partnership between Bosaso Municipality and private companies. The municipality is responsible for regulation, monitoring, and coordination, while private companies provide waste collection and transportation services. Despite these improvements, waste disposal still relies largely on open dumping and burning outside the city.
- » Service delivery has expanded across much of Bosaso, but access remains uneven. Low-income households and some peripheral communities continue to face difficulties accessing regular waste collection services, while financial and operational constraints affect the sustainability of service providers.
- » Community participation and public awareness have increased, contributing to improved sanitation practices and greater use of waste collection services. Nevertheless, improper waste disposal, inadequate infrastructure, limited public awareness, and weak enforcement of regulations continue to undermine service effectiveness.
- » Strengthening enforcement, expanding waste collection infrastructure, supporting vulnerable communities, developing a sustainable public landfill, and promoting closer cooperation among local authorities, service providers, and communities will be essential to achieving a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable Bosaso.

## About Somali Public Agenda

Somali Public Agenda is a nonprofit public policy and administration research organization based in Mogadishu. Its aim is to advance understanding and improvement of public administration and public services in Somalia through evidence-based research and analysis.

## About the Author

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## Introduction

Bosaso is one of the most economically important urban centres in Puntland and serves as the principal commercial port city in northeastern Somalia. It plays a vital role in regional trade through livestock exports, imports of consumer goods, and maritime commerce with Gulf countries. The city also hosts major educational institutions, markets, healthcare facilities, and expanding residential settlements, making it one of Puntland's fastest-growing urban areas (Puntland State of Somalia, 2015). Administratively, Bosaso comprises both urban and peri-urban settlements that continue to experience rapid population growth and increasing urbanisation pressures (UN-Habitat, 2024). Historically, Bosaso has also hosted large numbers of internally displaced people in camps and resettlement areas on the edge of the city (Bakonyi and Chonka, 2023).

Rapid urban growth has intensified waste management challenges. Solid and liquid waste management systems remain inadequate and continue to face significant operational and environmental constraints. Although efforts have been made to establish waste transfer stations and designated disposal sites, weak collection systems, poor wastewater management, and inadequate disposal infrastructure continue to affect urban sanitation and environmental safety (Adam-Bradford, 2013). Previous studies also indicate that waste frequently accumulates in public spaces and open areas across the city (Yusuf, 2019).

Waste collection in Bosaso involves multiple actors, including the municipality, private companies, informal waste collectors, and community groups. The Sanitation Department of Bosaso Municipality is formally responsible for planning, regulating, monitoring, and overseeing waste collection and disposal. However, limited municipal capacity and financial constraints have increased reliance on private companies and community-based waste collectors. Despite these arrangements, governance challenges persist, including weak institutional coordination, limited accountability, inadequate infrastructure, and uneven access to quality waste collection services (Mohamoud, 2025).

This governance brief examines waste collection governance in Bosaso, focusing on service delivery, accountability, and community participation. It analyses the current waste collection system, governance arrangements, the roles of local authorities and private actors, and community participation. The analysis draws on ten key informant interviews conducted remotely via WhatsApp with local government officials, waste collection service providers, and community members in Bosaso. The participants included eight men and two women representing different stakeholder groups involved in waste collection governance and service delivery.

## Waste Collection System in Bosaso

Waste collection in Bosaso has improved in recent years, according to government officials, service providers, and community members. Most

respondents agreed that the city is cleaner than in previous years due to stronger institutional efforts, increased public awareness, and the expansion of waste collection services. Nevertheless, waste continues to accumulate in some public spaces, coastal areas, low-income neighbourhoods, and rapidly growing settlements, indicating that important challenges remain. As one academic respondent observed:

*“The current situation is different from previous years in terms of how waste is managed in Bosaso. Greater efforts have been made by the community, youth, women, and the local administration to improve waste management and move waste outside the city.”*

Waste collection services are delivered through a partnership between Bosaso Municipality and private companies. The municipality is responsible for planning, regulation, supervision, licensing, and enforcement, while private companies collect waste from households and businesses. Respondents reported that two companies—Alla Aamin Waste Management and Anfac Waste Management—currently provide solid waste collection services in different parts of the city, while a separate company is responsible for liquid waste collection, including latrine and septic tank emptying.

Bosaso Municipality plays a central coordinating role by developing regulations, allocating service areas, monitoring company performance, conducting public awareness campaigns, and maintaining cleanliness in public spaces such as roads and open areas. Several respondents highlighted the recent adoption of a waste collection bylaw, which has strengthened the regulatory framework and improved cooperation between the municipality and service providers. As one local council member explained:

*“The municipality plays two main roles. The first role is to authorize, supervise, monitor, and regulate waste management companies.” Second, the municipality is responsible for maintaining cleanliness in public spaces, monitoring illegal dumping sites, cleaning major roads, and identifying and penalizing individuals who dispose of waste in unauthorized locations.*

Interviewees also noted that Bosaso Municipality played a key role in expanding service provision. One waste collection company had operated in the city for many years, but concerns emerged about its ability to meet the demands of a rapidly growing population. In response, the municipality introduced a second service provider and divided the city into operational zones to improve service coverage. Although the arrangement had received preliminary approval from the standing council, respondents noted that formal approval by the full municipal council had not yet been completed at the time of the study.

Private companies collect waste from households, businesses, markets, and institutions using designated collection vehicles and sanitation workers. Waste is transported to disposal sites located outside the city. However, respondents emphasised that the

absence of a publicly managed landfill remains a major challenge. Instead, waste is disposed of in open pits on privately owned land and is often burned, raising environmental concerns. As one service provider explained:

*“The new company was owned by a group of local elders, and its proposal, agenda, and operational approach were presented to the standing council. The proposal was reviewed before the standing council, and no competing applicant was reported during the process. The council then granted preliminary approval and the company began operations. At the time of the interview, the arrangement had not yet received formal approval from the full municipal council and continued to operate under the preliminary approval issued by the standing council.”*

A service provider representative highlighted current waste disposal practices and emphasized challenges related to the absence of a public landfill:

*“The waste collected from the city is transported to a location approximately 6 km outside Bosaso and disposed of in a large pit. One of the main challenges currently facing the system is the absence of publicly provided land for waste disposal. Instead, the waste is taken to privately owned land managed by the company, where it is disposed of and burned. The land is privately financed, and the company has invested in developing and maintaining the site.”*

Overall, respondents agreed that waste collection has become better organised, with broader service coverage and improved institutional coordination. However, significant challenges remain regarding waste disposal methods, service coverage in some areas, and the long-term sustainability of the system.

## Service Delivery and Infrastructure

Waste collection services are available across much of Bosaso through a combination of municipal oversight and private-sector operations. Respondents reported that the city has collection vehicles, sanitation workers, designated disposal sites, and neighbourhood-based service arrangements. Service providers and business representatives noted that markets and commercial areas receive more frequent cleaning because they generate larger volumes of waste.

The frequency of waste collection varies across the city. Commercial areas are typically served daily or six days a week, whereas residential neighbourhoods are generally served once or twice a week. As one business representative explained:

*“The companies usually work in the market area almost every day of the week, collecting waste six days a week, except Friday. They carry out large-scale work along all the main roads of the market, and their work is clearly visible and effective. In other neighborhoods, they usually collect waste only two days a week, because the amount of waste is relatively small and their available facilities are limited.”*

Several respondents noted that service delivery has improved following the introduction of a second waste collection company, which has increased competition and expanded operational capacity. However, delays in waste collection still occur, particularly during the seasonal migration period (June–August), when many residents temporarily leave Bosaso due to the extreme heat. Respondents attributed these disruptions to service interruptions, re-registration processes, vehicle breakdowns, and limited operational resources.

Despite these improvements, access to waste collection services remains uneven. Households able to pay service fees generally receive regular waste collection, whereas low-income households, vulnerable communities (such as IDPs), and some peripheral settlements experience less reliable access. Several interviewees noted that financial barriers limit service coverage and may contribute to improper waste disposal in public spaces.

Waste collection services are financed primarily through user fees paid by households and businesses. Most respondents reported that the standard household fee is approximately US\$5 per month, which they considered affordable for average households. However, concerns were raised about affordability for low-income families and vulnerable groups. Service providers also highlighted rising operational costs, including fuel, vehicle maintenance, equipment procurement, and unpaid service charges. In addition, the absence of a publicly managed landfill places an additional financial burden on private companies. Together, these challenges raise concerns about the long-term sustainability of waste collection services and underscore the need for stronger institutional and financial support.

## Community Participation and Accountability

Community participation plays an important role in supporting waste collection in Bosaso. Respondents emphasised that effective waste management begins at the household level through proper waste storage, disposal, and cooperation with service providers. Residents contribute by paying collection fees, preparing waste for collection, and participating in community clean-up campaigns organised by the municipality and community groups. As one academic respondent noted:

*“Community participation in waste management begins at the household level. If individuals manage waste within their homes and dispose of it in a proper and regular manner, rather than leaving it outside, and follow the intended collection system, the amount of waste across the city can be reduced.”*

Public awareness of waste collection has increased in recent years. Respondents attributed this improvement to awareness campaigns conducted by the municipality, waste collection companies, neighbourhood leaders, and social media. Nevertheless, many interviewees observed that awareness remains uneven. Improper waste disposal,

littering in public spaces, and limited participation in voluntary clean-up activities continue to be reported in some parts of the city.

Interviewees also indicated that coordination and communication between the municipality and service providers have improved compared to previous years, although accountability and service delivery challenges remain. Several respondents highlighted the importance of the recently adopted waste collection bylaw in clarifying responsibilities and strengthening oversight. One service provider explained:

*“With regard to the municipality, cooperation has also improved through the implementation of the Bosaso Waste Management Bylaw. This regulatory framework provides a basis for collaboration between the municipality and waste management companies and has strengthened coordination in service delivery.”*

Service providers also reported increased communication with residents, including responding to complaints and community concerns. However, respondents emphasised the need for stronger monitoring, enforcement, and follow-up mechanisms to ensure compliance with waste collection regulations.

## Key Challenges

**Financial Constraints:** Waste collection services rely heavily on user fees. Some households and businesses fail to pay service charges, undermining the financial sustainability of service providers. At the same time, low-income households and vulnerable groups often struggle to afford regular collection fees, limiting equitable access to services. Rising operational costs—including fuel, equipment, vehicle maintenance, and waste disposal—further increase financial pressure and may affect service continuity.

**Infrastructure Constraints:** Although waste collection services have improved, supporting infrastructure remains inadequate. Respondents highlighted the limited number of collection vehicles, the absence of a properly developed public landfill, and the minimal practice of waste recycling in Bosaso.

**Coordination Challenges:** While cooperation between Bosaso Municipality and private service providers has improved, coordination challenges remain, particularly in monitoring performance, enforcing regulations, and extending services to underserved areas.

**Limited Public Awareness:** Public awareness has increased but remains uneven across the city. Improper waste disposal, littering, and limited participation in environmental initiatives continue to undermine efforts to improve urban cleanliness.

**Environmental and Public Health Concerns:** Waste disposal continues to rely largely on open dumping and burning outside the city. Respondents expressed concerns

about the resulting environmental pollution, public health risks, and the long-term sustainability of current waste management practices.

## Conclusion

Waste collection in Bosaso has improved in recent years through stronger municipal leadership, greater private-sector participation, and expanded sanitation efforts. Respondents reported noticeable improvements in service coverage and urban cleanliness compared to previous years. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain, including unequal access across neighbourhoods, financial constraints, inadequate waste disposal infrastructure, and weak enforcement. Although community awareness and participation have increased, they remain insufficient to eliminate improper waste disposal. Continued improvements in governance, coordination, enforcement, and stakeholder collaboration will be essential to building a more effective and sustainable waste collection system.

## Policy Recommendations

To strengthen waste collection governance and service delivery in Bosaso, this brief proposes the following recommendations:

- 1. Strengthen enforcement of waste collection regulations:** Bosaso Municipality should ensure the consistent implementation of the waste collection bylaw through regular monitoring, inspections, and enforcement to improve compliance and accountability.
- 2. Expand public awareness and environmental education:** Continue awareness campaigns through schools, community meetings, local media, and neighbourhood leaders to promote responsible waste disposal and environmental stewardship.
- 3. Improve waste collection infrastructure:** Increase the number of waste collection vehicles, public waste bins, and recycling containers across neighbourhoods, markets, public spaces, and major roads to improve service accessibility.
- 4. Improve access for vulnerable communities:** Introduce targeted support mechanisms for low-income households and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who cannot afford regular waste collection fees, ensuring more equitable access to sanitation services.

- 5. Develop a sustainable public landfill:** Establish a properly planned and publicly managed landfill to reduce reliance on temporary disposal arrangements and improve environmental sustainability.
- 6. Strengthen stakeholder coordination and community engagement:** Promote closer collaboration among local authorities, service providers, community leaders, and residents to improve service delivery, information sharing, and joint problem-solving.
- 7. Promote recycling and resource recovery:** Invest in recycling and waste recovery initiatives to reduce environmental pollution, minimise waste volumes, and create economic opportunities through the reuse of recyclable materials.

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This governance brief is the eleventh in a series of District Council-driven research publications under our EU-funded project, *Increased Opportunities for Somali Citizens' Scrutiny of Fiscal and Financial Governance*, which examines critical issues related to fiscal governance and federalism at the district level. The topics explored in this series are identified through close collaboration with District Council members, and Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) representatives during workshops held in Bosaso, Adado, and Jowhar on a quarterly basis, ensuring the research remains grounded in local governance realities.