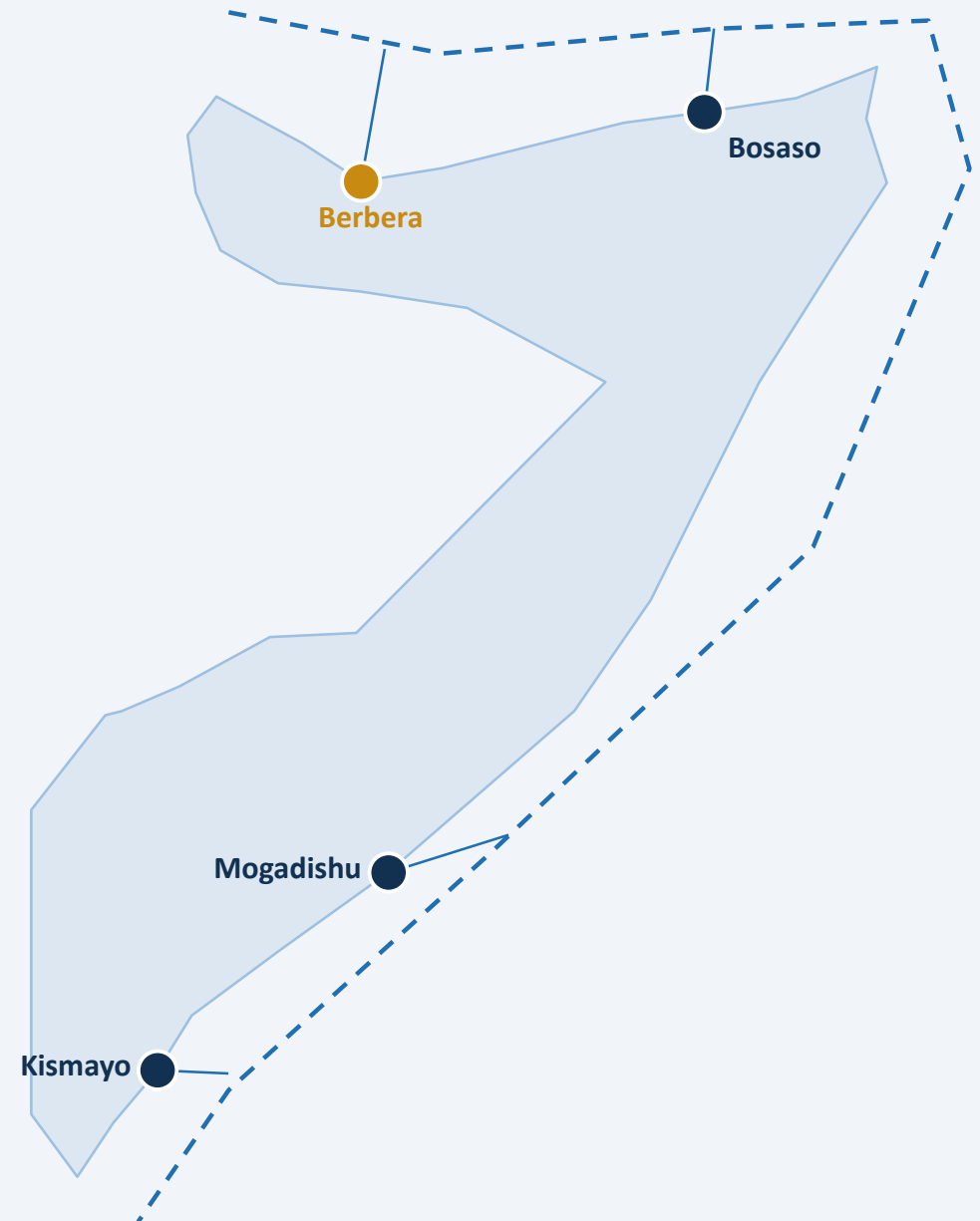


The Digital State Starts with the Internet

Building the Essential Infrastructure for Somalia's Digital Growth

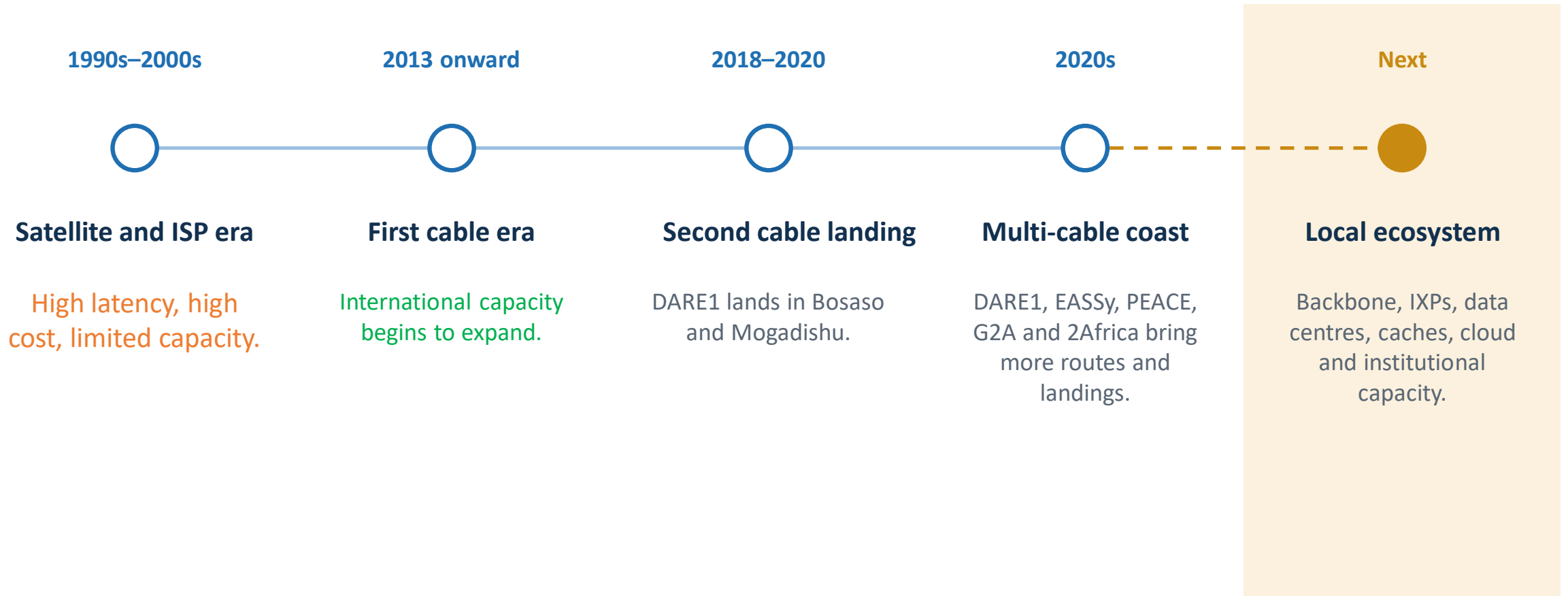
Ahmed Siyad
CEO, SomaliREN



Cable corridor and landing cities (stylized)

Somali Internet evolution

From scarce access to cable-era opportunity, but the ecosystem is still incomplete.



Why it matters for the digital economy

Every digital service depends on the Internet stack beneath it, from international cables to citizen services

5

Digital economy and state services

E-government · Digital ID · Education · Health · Payments · AI · Cloud

4

Applications and platforms

Local content · Data platforms · Research repositories · E-learning · Telemedicine

3

Hosting and local exchange

IXPs · Data centres · Caches and CDNs · DNS · Cloud edge

2

National connectivity

Metro fibre · National backbone · Redundancy · Open-access routes

1

International gateways

Submarine cables · Landing stations · Cross-border capacity

If any layer is weak, the digital economy becomes slower, costlier and less resilient.

Read the stack from the bottom up: each layer can only perform as well as the one beneath it.

Somalia: progress with a capacity gap

Adoption is growing. The deeper question is about quality, resilience and local capacity.

~28%

Internet adoption

Share of population online (World Bank / ISOC Pulse)

43/100

Resilience score

Internet resilience index (ISOC Pulse)

2%

Local cache share

Top websites reachable from an in-country cache

Adoption alone is not enough

A connected user may still face low speed, high latency or high cost.

Quality determines benefit

Cloud, AI, e-learning and public services need stable, high-capacity links.

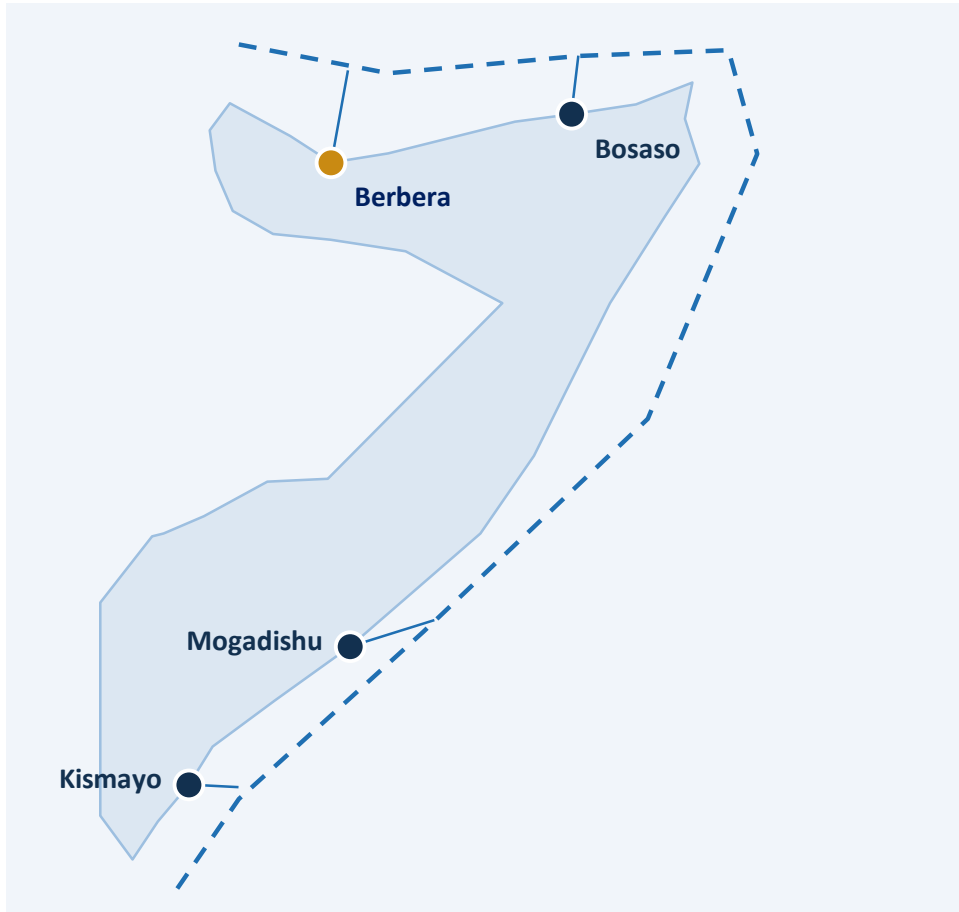
The local ecosystem matters

Without IXPs and caches, even local use often travels over international routes.

Sources differ on the exact numbers, but they agree on the priority: better quality, local infrastructure and resilience.

Somalia's cable geography

A long coastline is an opportunity: the task is to turn cable landings into national value.



Cable	Route and scope	Somali landings
DARE1	Djibouti – Bosaso – Mogadishu – Mombasa	Bosaso, Mogadishu
EASSy	Regional system along the East and Southern African coast	Mogadishu
PEACE	Asia – Europe – Africa, multiple landings	Mogadishu, Kismayo, Berbera, Bosaso
G2A	Gulf to Africa; fibre pair extension	Berbera, Bosaso
2Africa	Pan-African ring system (Bayobab landing partner)	Berbera, Mogadishu

Five systems now touch the Somali coast. The value comes from what is built behind the landing stations.

When Red Sea cables go dark

Somalia's position is strategic, and exposed to regional chokepoints.

>99%

of global Internet traffic moves through submarine cables. Faults are normal; conflict and chokepoints make them harder to repair and route around.



Anchors and fishing

Most faults are still caused by accidental human activity.



Conflict zones

Risk rises when ships cannot safely operate or repair cables.



Permits and delays

Repairs can take weeks or months in constrained waters.



Rerouting pressure

Traffic shifts to alternate routes, often with higher latency.

Counter-strategy

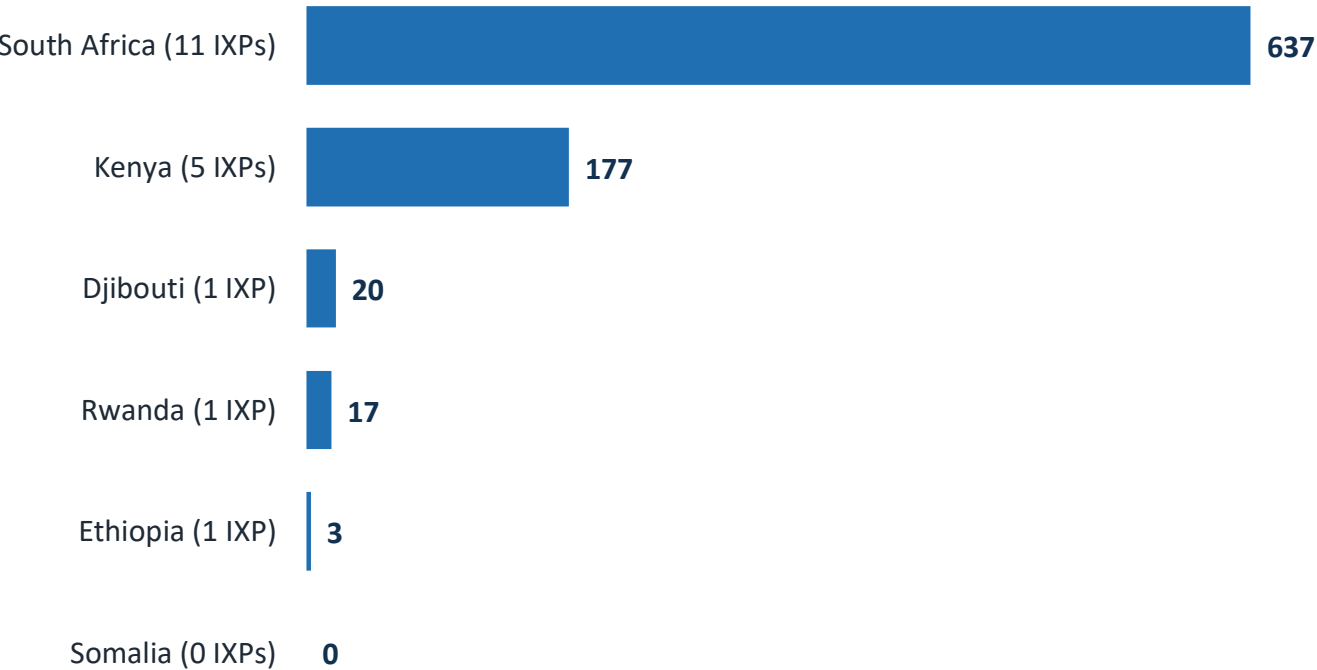
More routes.
Local exchange.
National redundancy.

Diversify cables, peer locally and plan for cuts as a normal event, not an exception.

Regional comparison: IXP ecosystem maturity

Somalia needs local peers (ISPs, mobile operators, banks, universities, CDNs and DNS) exchanging traffic in-country.

Peers connected at IXPs, by country



60

active IXPs across Africa

40

countries with an active IXP (Af-IX)

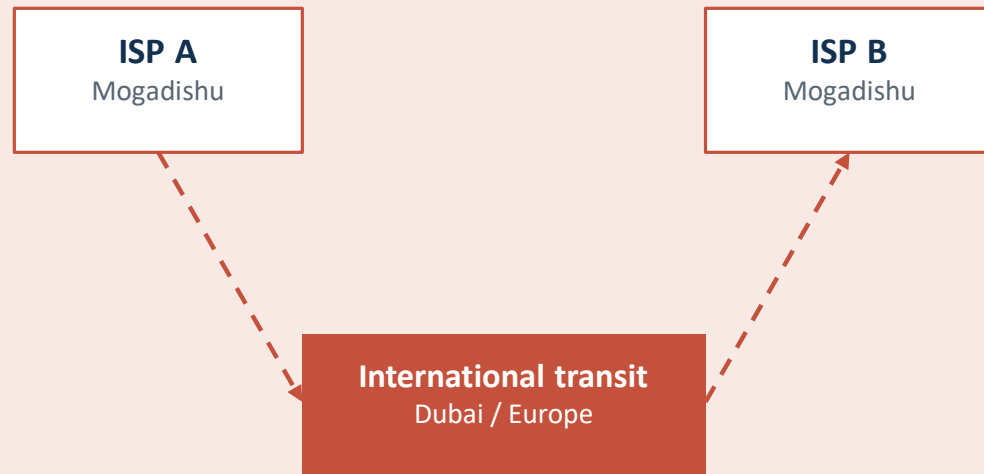
What it means for Somalia

Attract ISPs, mobile operators, universities, banks, CDNs, DNS services and regional peers to exchange traffic locally, so the corridor becomes a fabric.

Keeping Somali traffic in Somalia

IXPs turn long, expensive international paths into short local ones.

Without local peering



Local traffic detours abroad: higher latency, higher cost, less resilience.

With a strong IXP



Local peering, in-country

Local traffic stays local: lower latency, lower cost, higher resilience.

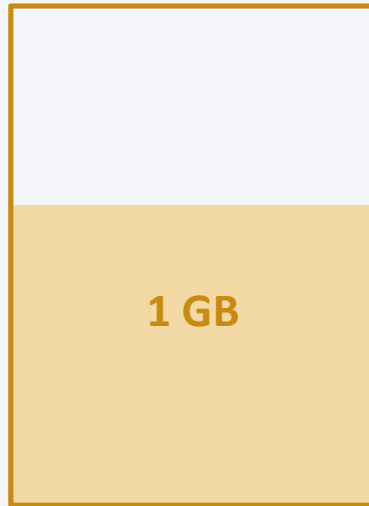
Capacity is not the same as data

A simple way to explain it to non-technical audiences.

Data

1 GB

Like the water in a tank: an amount you have or use.

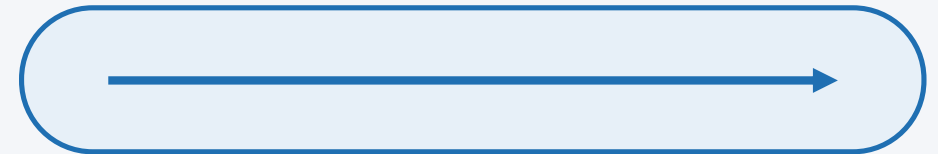


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Capacity (speed)

1 Gbps

Like the width of a pipe: how fast data can flow every second.

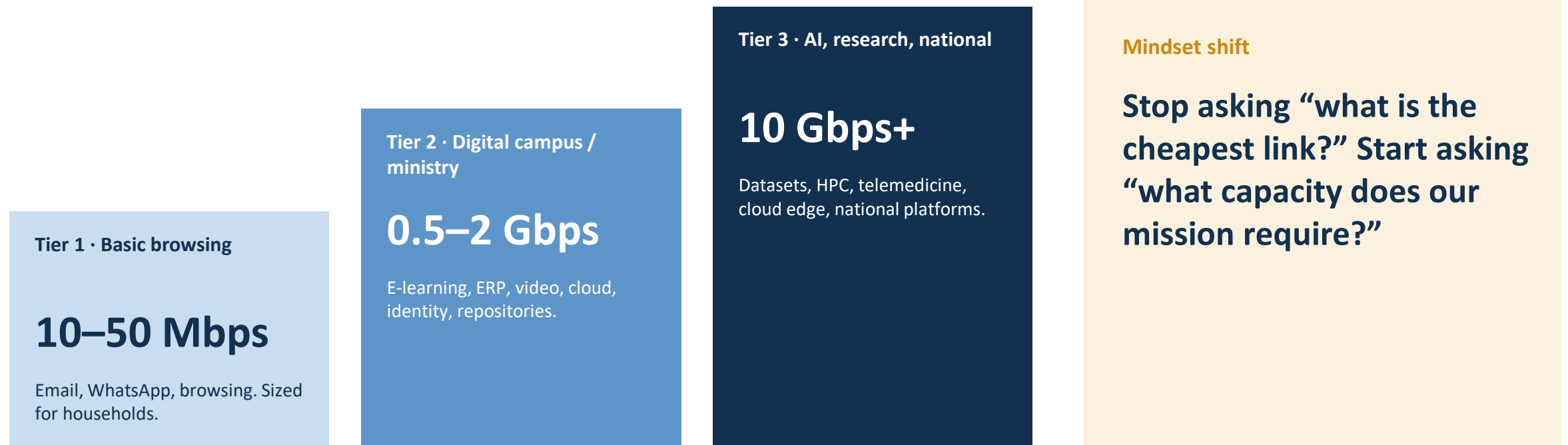


Both matter. Institutions need enough data and enough capacity at the same time.

Institutional capacity: Somalia's hidden bottleneck

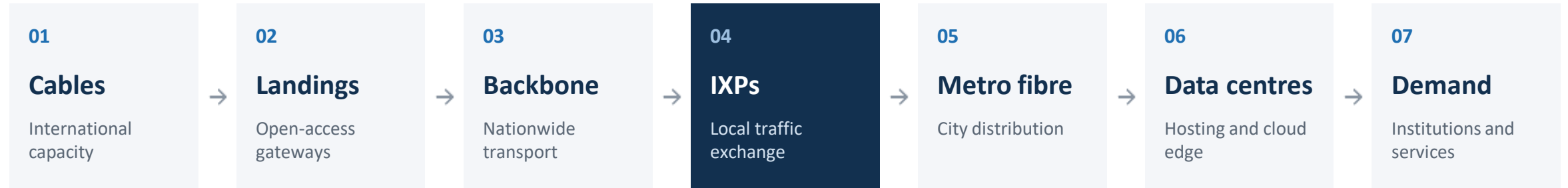
Many institutions still buy Internet like a small office, not like a digital campus or public-service platform.

A university, hospital or ministry with thousands of users cannot run on the capacity logic of a household.



The complete Internet ecosystem

Cables feed the chain. IXPs are where capacity turns into local value. Demand is what compounds it.



When a link is weak

Value leaks out

Traffic
rides abroad

Cost
is paid abroad

Latency
long paths

Value
leaves the country

When the chain is whole

Value compounds

Traffic
stays local

Cost
stays in-country

Content
local and live

Skills
compound

From duplication to sharing

Build once where possible. Compete on services, innovation and customer experience.

The duplication problem

- ✗ Parallel fibre along the same roads
- ✗ Separate towers in the same locations
- ✗ Repeated civil works and trenching
- ✗ High costs that slow rural expansion

Each duplicated trench is a school, a clinic or a tower that did not get built.

The shared infrastructure model

- ✓ Open-access backbone and ducts
- ✓ Neutral data centres and landing stations
- ✓ Shared towers and power infrastructure
- ✓ The IXP as a neutral exchange fabric

Operators compete on services, content and customer experience, not on siloed infrastructure.

For Somalia, sharing can reduce cost, accelerate coverage and free capital for service quality and innovation.

Priorities for a resilient Internet ecosystem

A practical agenda for policy makers, operators and institutions across Somalia and Somaliland.

01

Make IXPs work

Neutral governance, member onboarding, traffic transparency, caches and DNS.

02

Build route diversity

Multiple cable paths, cross-border routes, diverse landings and national rings.

03

Aggregate demand

Universities, government, banks and hospitals buy capacity strategically.

04

Enable sharing

Open-access ducts, towers, fibre and carrier-neutral data centres.

05

Host local services

Cloud edge, CDNs, government platforms and Somali content inside the country.

06

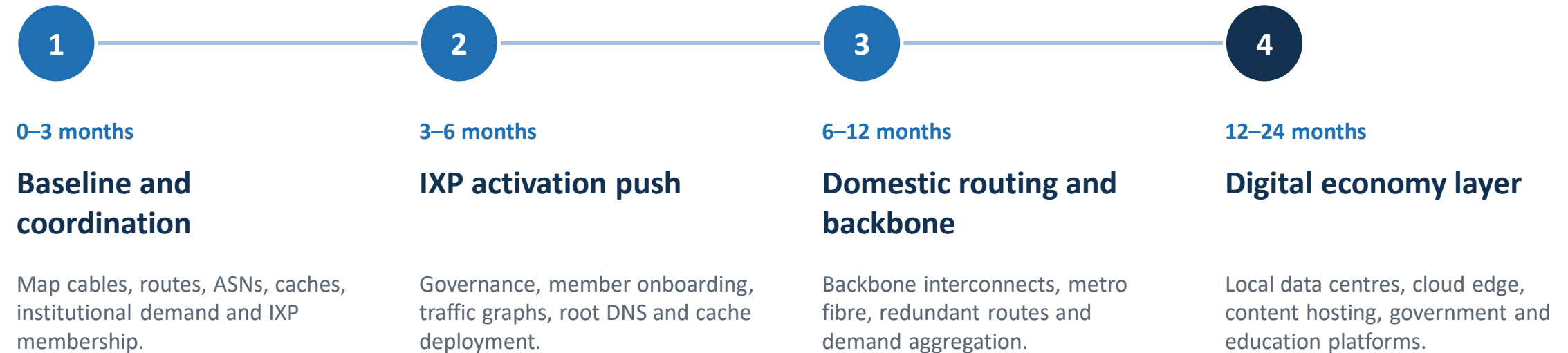
Build skills

Network operations, peering, cybersecurity, measurement and regulation.

These priorities are not a budget. They are a posture.

A 24-month roadmap

Move from infrastructure assets to a working national Internet fabric.



Measure success by what stays local: traffic, content, skills, value and resilience.

Call to action

Somalia can become a resilient digital gateway if we build the local ecosystem.

The question is no longer whether Somalia is connected to the Internet.

It is whether Somalia will keep more of its traffic, services, skills, value and innovation inside the country.

1 Treat IXPs as critical infrastructure

2 Plan capacity for the mission

3 Make local traffic exchange the default

4 Share infrastructure; compete on value

5 Build for cable cuts, not sunny days

The Internet is the layer under every sector. The conversation now is what we build on top of it.

Thank you

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