



Somalia Water and Land Information Management Programme  
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**Feature Article #12**

## The 18,000 Km Journey to Strategic Point Water Sources in Northern Somalia

A year after the launch of the Somalia Water Sources Information Management System – SWIMS and 750 records received from partners, many questions still remained unanswered about the status of water sources in Somalia. “... *that’s all we have for that region*” became a common phrase in response to partner’s requests for water sources data, until early 2008 when SWALIM decided to carry out a comprehensive inventory.

Planning started in April 2008 with representatives from line ministries, local and international organisations invited to strategise on the best approach. Great ideas were shared and it was eventually agreed that with the available resources, it was prudent to concentrate on strategic water points, which are key sources during dry period. The government ministries – Water and Mineral Resources (MWMR) in Somaliland and Agency for Water, Energy and Natural Resources (PSAWEN) in Puntland showed great commitment to the survey by dedicating their staff full time.

The survey was not an easy task at all. During the three months in the field, May to July 2008, the survey teams moved from the coastal areas with extremely hot climate to the mountainous areas with poor road network. From the GPS-tracked routes, over 18,000 Kilometres were travelled.



Some of the water points were so remotely located that the teams spent hours walking on rough terrain that they could hardly cover few water points in one day. The increasing fuel prices and flooding of seasonal streams during the survey period added to the challenges, but despite all these, the highly determined teams never gave up! At the end of the survey, 1,609 sources were visited; 1,038 in Somaliland and 571 in Puntland.

The survey data has since been entered into SWIMS, creating a database useful for long term monitoring of water sources and intervention activities. Agencies can access the data from our website, <http://www.faoswalim.org> or by emailing [enquiries@faoswalim.org](mailto:enquiries@faoswalim.org). Maps and other products of the survey are also packaged in a DVD which you can get from SWALIM.

Our survey focus now shifts to South and Central Somalia communities, where in addition to having the Juba and Shabelle rivers, point water sources still play a significant role in their day-to-day livelihoods.

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