Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa

Baseline Reviews – Summary

Oxfam

July 2022

Introduction

This summary contains the main results of the baseline reviews carried out for the Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa (SEA) project. Funded by the Adaptation Fund (AF), this four-year (2020–2024) project is being implemented by UN-Habitat in partnership with Oxfam and in collaboration with the Technical Centre for Disaster Risk Management, Sustainability and Urban Resilience, and the governments of Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and the Union of the Comoros.

Four baseline reviews have been carried out, one for each country, by Oxfam with a focus on the city level component which is specifically Oxfam's responsibility. The baseline reviews, although planned for the initial phase of the project, were started at the same time as the project activities and took longer than expected. For this reason, a mid-term target achievement level has been included, where possible, in the baseline data table.

The Baseline Review Reports are the first milestone of the project and form the backbone of the overall monitoring process. It was essential to check the initial conditions, confirm that the project still met the specific needs identified in the design phase, map out any necessary changes and lay the foundations for successful implementation.

Context

Africa is undergoing rapid urbanization that will result in almost 1.33 billion people living in cities by 2050 compared to 470 million at present. With a lack of local capacity to manage this rapid urban growth, much of the population expansion is taking place outside or in absence of official planning frameworks. A large part of the housing demand is being met by expanding informal settlements characterized by poor living conditions, a lack of access to basic services and infrastructure, and often located in areas exposed to natural hazards. Urban areas are generally more vulnerable to risks than rural areas due to denser populations, concentration of assets and variety of activities within comparatively smaller geographical areas.

Urban risks are exacerbated by the increasing severity and unpredictability of disruptive events caused by climate change effects. These events impact a range of different sectors and disproportionately affect people living on low incomes – especially women and girls, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, seasonal migrants and other marginalized and vulnerable groups. A direct correlation between poverty and vulnerability, and environmental risks is observed. Low-income groups in African cities are often excluded from decision-making, live in a permanent coping state and have the least resources at their disposal during crises.

About the project

The SEA Building Urban Climate Resilience project is assisting Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and the Union of the Comoros to strengthen their urban resilience including a mix of city level infrastructure initiatives and capacity building at local, national and regional levels. Four cities, each with different types of vulnerability, were selected in these countries for climate adaptation projects following a participatory resilience planning process.

The main objectives of the project are:

1. To develop capacities and establish the conditions to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change in vulnerable cities in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and the Union of the Comoros;
2. To promote inter-country experience sharing and cross-fertilization on the adaptation to transboundary climate-related natural hazards, and disseminate lessons learned for progressively building urban climate resilience in SEA.

The project is organized into three components, the first two contributing to Objective 1 and the third contributing to Objective 2.

Component 1 – city level: preparation, implementation and sustainable management of priority sub-projects. Activities include:

- In-depth environmental and social risks, and impact assessments of sub-projects;
- Developing or strengthening currently vulnerable physical, natural and social assets and ecosystems in response to climate change impacts including variability based on identified and prioritized needs. Overall, 23 sub-projects are being implemented in the 4 countries grouped into 6 thematic areas:
    1. Improvement of drainage capacity (all four countries);
    2. Establishment of early warning systems (all four countries);
    3. Improvement of solid waste management (all four countries);
    4. Construction of multi-purpose safe havens (Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique);
    5. Rehabilitation/protection of critical ecosystems and sustainable use of natural resources (all four countries);
    6. Improvement of human mobility through reconstruction/rehabilitation of roads and bridges (Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique).
- Training for municipal staff and community members on the sustainable management and maintenance of the priority interventions.

Component 2 – national level: tools and guidelines development, and training delivery. Activities include:

- Developing or adapting national guidelines/policies or proposing law adjustments for promoting urban climate change adaptation;

- Training of ministerial staff to respond to, and mitigate impact of, climate-related events in urban areas.

Component 3 – regional level: inter-country experience sharing, cross-fertilization and dissemination of lessons learned. Activities include:

- Sharing lessons learned and best practices online;
- Cross-country advisory and learning missions;
- Annual regional workshops for experience sharing.

Baseline reviews objectives

The project included, as an initial activity, implementation of the baseline reviews as a tool to verify the adherence and relevance of the project to the needs and the current context as well as to deepen the knowledge of the local reality and provide analysis data on which to build a monitoring plan. The specific objectives of the baseline reviews were to:

1. Verify that the project was still relevant to the needs of local communities and local government, and to the specific local context;
2. Identify any adjustments/changes that might be required in the approach and/or in the activities;
3. Map all the existing/upcoming initiatives that might be complementary and identify other relevant stakeholders and actors;
4. Collect baseline data against the indicators of the project and define the initial conditions to set up a system to monitor progress, compliance with AF principles, gender strategy and a human rights approach, and to evaluate the final impact.

The Baseline Review Reports also serve to prepare the foundation for the overall project monitoring and evaluation process.

Methodology

The methodology used for the implementation of the baseline review has largely consisted of the collection of information directly from communities and local government through ad-hoc meetings, interviews and focus group discussions. Data collection was completed through the review of existing official statistics and government documents.

Each country has adapted the methodology to their local context in such a way as to enhance the wealth of knowledge of both the community and the other subjects involved as much as possible.

Baseline reviews findings

1. Relevance of project activities

One of the main findings of the baseline reviews were that all proposed interventions are still relevant in their integrated approach, and they still respond to the needs and priorities of selected areas and communities due to their exposure to numerous weather-related hazards. This information is supported by social, environmental and technical analyses which indicate that appropriate infrastructure is necessary to mitigate these hazards.

Cyclones and floods, in particular, emerge as the strongest threats during the rainy season but safe havens and drainage systems are still absent, non-operational or insufficient in all cities, and gaps were noted in solid waste management and early warning systems. This impacts on transportation of goods, including food items, and movement of people in some areas of the cities because of stagnant water blocking roads due to insufficient drainage capacity and solid waste accumulation impeding the water flow.

These extreme events also add to the degradation of roads and bridges and cause life-threatening conditions especially for the vulnerable such as older persons, children and people with disabilities. Safe havens, early warning systems and rehabilitated roads are therefore of paramount importance to protect lives. The situation is even more crucial in slums where health conditions are already more critical and the spreading of water borne diseases such as typhoid are frequent. With regard to greening activities and ecosystem restorations, it is necessary to address the deforestation that characterizes these contexts in order to decrease vulnerability to cyclones and floods as well as to improve overall quality of life, the environment and generate ecosystem services which are very important for building resilience.

The baseline reviews also confirmed the necessity of building sustainability into interventions from the launch to beyond the lifespan of the project so that communities can enjoy the intended benefits for the longest time. Additionally, interventions must strive to empower local stakeholders to lead the development process from the beginning. Bringing groups and organizations together to collaborate in this way can change negative local power dynamics. The reviews also recommend development of a sequencing and layering plan for greater synergy and impact.

2. Challenges underlined in the baseline reviews

The baseline reviews took into account the main challenges that each sub-project can expect during its implementation with the aim of updating the risk analysis that had been carried out during the project's design phase. Essentially, the challenges anticipated during project preparation were confirmed, however, some challenges were highlighted during analysis sessions by the municipality, communities and key stakeholders. The challenges that are considered particularly significant and potentially undermining to the success and impact of the project are:

- Difficulty in accessing statistical data at the local level because of their absence or insufficiency at municipal level, and the complication of obtaining data from the technical services concerned;
- Rapid urban growth and land issues – urban areas, growing both in population and in land cover, pose increasing threats to the integrity of ecosystems and biodiversity. Urban populations increase the strain on already insufficient infrastructure bringing new governance challenges that need a rapid response;
- Social and political instability at local and national level – government restructuring and political instability may affect the institutions and ministries in charge of Disaster Risk Management and Reduction, and Land and Environment;
- Deteriorating extreme weather conditions can impact and/or disrupt infrastructural works;
- Overall, implementation is likely be affected by rising costs of construction materials due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. At the mid-term this challenge is further exacerbated by the geopolitical context since early 2022.

3. Adjustments and changes needed

Adjustments that became necessary at the initial stage of the project to adapt the interventions to changing needs were not substantial and did not alter the overall project approach. In some cases as in Madagascar and Malawi, it was necessary to build infrastructure in a new location because it had already been constructed by the government or through an intervention of other donors. In other cases, as was the case in Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique, it was necessary to reduce the size of the water drainage and safe haven interventions because the costs were higher than those estimated at the design stage.

It is important to emphasize that cost adjustment has been a very significant issue, probably the one that has had the greatest impact on the design of the sub-projects and the changes that have been proposed. Finally, as in the case of the Comoros, some structural changes were introduced to make the interventions more coherent and in keeping with local traditions and customs.

4. Mapping of upcoming and complementary initiatives and stakeholders

One of the objectives of the baseline reviews was to map all existing/upcoming initiatives that might be complementary, identifying other stakeholders and actors with which synergies could be established and duplication avoided. This exercise was very useful overall in order to provide the project team – and also the local municipality – with up-to-date contextual information. However, no significant initiatives at local level were found with whom it was essential to establish a relationship in order to properly achieve the project results.

5. Baseline data collection and setting the initial conditions

The core indicators table with baseline and mid-term value set up on the basis of the project's logical framework shows the baseline data collected and the status of progress in achieving the target at the mid-term of the project. The following table refers to Component 1 for which Oxfam carried out the baseline reviews.

Expected Result	Indicators	Baseline data	Targets	Performance at mid-term
Outcome 1 Municipal staff, communities and local stakeholders have successfully planned and implemented priority sub-projects for increasing the climate resilience of their city, and have acquired the required capacity to manage and maintain the realized investments.	Number of people that have access to resilient basic services and infrastructure. Number of people that have access to improved ecosystem services. Number of people that participated in the enhancement of the above (in line with AF indicators 3.1, 4.2 and 5).	10% of target 15% of target 15% of target 10% of target	Morondava: 11 communities (with 39,015 inhabitants) Zomba: 8 communities (with 122,239 inhabitants) Chokwe: 3 communities (with 45,873 inhabitants) Moroni: 2 communities (with 19,745 inhabitants)	Morondava: 10% of target (same as baseline value) Zomba: 6 communities (with 100,000 inhabitants) Chokwe: 3 communities (with 19,853 inhabitants) Moroni: 10% of target (same as baseline value)
Within this panorama, gender equity and justice are promoted at city level through the active involvement of women in the design and implementation of the sub-projects. An environment that recognizes the role of women and enables their empowerment is created.	Number of municipal divisions and staff with increased capacity to minimize exposure to climate variability risks (in line with AF indicator 2.1). % of women who – at different levels in the city – have actively participated in the implementation of the	0 0	4 municipalities 2 departments per municipality, at least 40% of staff 60% of the women in each of the 4 cities	Number of municipal divisions: Morondava: 1 department Zomba: 2 departments Chokwe: 5 departments Moroni: 2 departments % of women: Morondava: 42% Zomba: 52% Chokwe: 55% Moroni: 30%

	sub-projects. % increase of women who – at different levels and different sectors – are actively engaged in socio-economic development of their city.	Morondava: 42% Zomba: 52% Chokwe: 58% Moroni: 38%		% increased: not significant
Expected Output 1.1 Sub-project implementation plans developed with communities and municipalities, including detailed engineering studies. Gender perceptions, capacities and skills are taken into consideration and gender needs addressed in the cities sub-projects implementation plan.	Number of sub-project implementation plans developed. Number of sub-projects implementation plans that have a gender approach which clearly defines the role and responsibilities of women in their execution, and the gender needs addressed. % of women satisfied with the sub-projects implementation plan as responding to their needs and enhancing their roles.	0	23 sub-project implementation plans with all technical specifications for each planned investment/activity	Number of sub-project implementation plans: Morondava: 5 Zomba: 6 Chokwe: 2 Moroni: 2 All plans developed so far have a gender approach which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the women in their execution and the gender needs addressed: Morondava: 5 Zomba: 6 Chokwe: 2 Moroni: 2 Overall feedback from women involved in community mobilization is positive: Morondava: 100% Zomba: 90% Chokwe: 90% Moroni: not available
	Number of detailed engineering studies to	0	4 assessment reports, including risks and mitigation	Morondava: 4 Zomba: 1

	assess environmental and social risks prepared – in line with AF and national requirements.		measures per hard intervention	Chokwe: 1 Moroni: 1
Expected Output 1.2 Priority sub-projects are implemented in the 4 target cities mainly through community involvement as labour-intensive manpower. Women are actively involved and engaged in the implementation of the cities sub-projects and make sure that gender needs and perspectives are concretely addressed.	Number of municipal staff and community members mobilized/trained to ensure proper management/ maintenance of the realized priority actions (in line with AF indicators 2.1.1. and 3.1.1.) by gender. Number of women who have a leadership position in the implementation of the sub-projects implementation plan. % of the women who agree that gender needs (as in the sub-project implementation plan) are addressed.	0	16 municipal level training sessions (4 per city) – adequate female participation to be ensured 32 community level training sessions (avg. 8 per city) 60% women/youth	The number of community members comprises 50% women. Training was provided for: Morondava: 4 staff (1 w, 3 m) + 380 community members Zomba: 10 staff (2 w, 8 m) + 318 community members Chokwe: 4 staff (2 w, 2 m) + 563 community members Moroni: 7 staff Number of women who have a leadership position: not significant as sub-projects are not yet fully developed % of the women who agree: Morondava: 40% Zomba: 15% Chokwe: 58% Moroni: not available

Expected Output 1.3 Municipal staff and community members mobilized, trained and equipped for ensuring the sustainable management and/or maintenance of the implemented priority sub-projects. Women's role, qualifications and skills are enhanced and are included into the sustainability plan of the cities priority sub-projects.	Number of municipal staff and community members mobilized/trained to ensure proper management/ maintenance of the realized priority actions (in line with AF indicators 2.1.1. and 3.1.1.) – by gender. (At least) 50% of women have been trained and qualified. % of women whose qualification has been recognized and is reflected into the sustainability plan. % of women who have been trained to have an active role in the priority sub-projects.	0	16 municipal level training sessions (4 per city) – adequate female participation to be ensured 32 community level training sessions (avg. 8 per city) – 50% women/youth	The number of community members comprises 50% women. Training was provided for: Morondava: 4 staff (1 w, 3 m) + 380 community members Zomba: 10 staff (2 w, 8 m) + 318 community members Chokwe: 4 staff (2 w, 2 m) + 563 community members Moroni: 7 staff % of women qualified: Morondava: 40% Zomba: 15% Chokwe: 44% Moroni: 50% % of women with increased capacity: data not available as sustainability plans are not yet fully developed % of women who have been trained: Morondava: 40% Zomba: 15% Chokwe: 58% Moroni: not available