

Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa

Regional Workshop Report
Blantyre, Malawi | 21-24 March 2022

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DiMSUR 
Disaster Risk Management,
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Executive summary

Building urban resilience is critical in view of the growing impact of hazards on cities in South-Eastern Africa.

In recognition of this notion, UN-Habitat launched “Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa” in 2020; a project designed to strengthen urban resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and the Union of Comoros.

The following report details the outcomes of a Regional Workshop for the project, held from the 21st to the 24th of March 2022; an event which offered the opportunity for project stakeholders to coordinate and learn from one another at the mid-point of the project cycle.

The workshop, organised by UN-Habitat in partnership with Oxfam, was a hybrid event, comprising in-person meetings in Blantyre, Malawi, alongside virtual participation online.

The event consisted of five components:

1. The opening ceremony of the workshop followed by regional and project updates from the four countries (Day 1 morning)
2. The 2nd Project Steering Committee / 7th DiMSUR Executive Board Meeting (Day 1 afternoon)
3. A project site visit to Zomba City (Day 2)
4. Thematic discussions on four areas relating to key issues emerging from project implementation followed by the launch of the UN-Habitat publication: “Regional Assessment on Urban Vulnerability and Resilience in Southern African Development Community Member States” (Day 3)
5. A Project Team Retreat for UN-Habitat and Oxfam (Day 4)

The workshop highlighted several key messages. Firstly, the region is increasingly subject to severe interconnected shocks which are difficult to manage. Secondly, finding solutions to these challenges requires expanding the regions technical expertise on disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. Third, solid waste management and drainage must be viewed as interlinked to improve implementation on the ground. Fourth, an enabling institutional environment, including introducing relevant legislation and policy, is critical to build urban resilience at the national level. Fifth, community engagement is central to generate both community buy-in and awareness on initiatives such as early warning systems and nature-based solutions. Lastly, stimulating regional cooperation and cross-fertilisation is essential to generate solutions.

Introduction

In a world increasingly subject to climatic shocks, building urban resilience is critical. Inter-country collaboration is vital to find solutions, particularly given the transboundary nature of events. Engaging actors at the local level, is even more so.

The following report details the outcomes from the second Regional Workshop for the project 'Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa', held from the 21st to the 24th of March 2022; an event which offered the opportunity for project stakeholders to coordinate and learn from one another at the mid-point of the project cycle.

'Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa' was initiated in 2020 to strengthen urban resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and the Union of Comoros.

The project, funded by the Adaptation Fund, is implemented by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the four governments, four cities Morondava (Madagascar), Zomba (Malawi), Chokwe (Mozambique) and Moroni (Comoros), alongside Oxfam and the Sub-Regional Technical Centre for Disaster Management, Sustainability and Urban Resilience (DiMSUR). For more information on the project and its main features see Annexes 1 & 2.

The workshop, organised together by UN-Habitat and Oxfam, was a hybrid event, comprising in-person meetings in Blantyre, Malawi, alongside virtual participation online. The final agenda is available in Annex 3.

High-level officials from the city administrations of Morondava, Zomba, Chokwe and Moroni, alongside representatives from the four national governments were in attendance, as well as members of the Project Steering Committee/ DiMSUR Executive Board, Adaptation Fund National Designated Authorities, UN-Habitat, Oxfam and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). For many, it was a chance to connect with colleagues in-person for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report is structured as follows: Section II contains a summary of the Regional Workshop, including its configuration, country and city level updates, the 2nd Project Steering Committee and 7th DiMSUR Executive Board meeting, participants site visit to Zomba, thematic discussions and the project retreat. Concluding remarks are offered in Section III. Additional information such as the minutes from each meeting are deposited in the Annexes.



FIGURE 1 | Family photo of the participants - Day 1

Regional Workshop

Regional Workshop

In compliance with the Project Steering Committee’s decision to alternate workshop locations throughout the duration of the project, UN-Habitat, with support from Oxfam, arranged to hold the event in Blantyre, Malawi. It was the first-time project stakeholders met in person since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This allowed for the inclusion of site visits to view project progress and engage communities – meaningful interactions missed during the pandemic. The Regional Workshop consisted of five components:

1. The opening ceremony of the project followed by regional and project updates from the four countries (Day 1 morning)
2. The 2nd Project Steering Committee / 7th DiMSUR Executive Board Meeting (Day 1 afternoon)
3. A project site visit to Zomba City (Day 2)
4. Thematic discussions on four key areas emerging from project implementation followed by the launch of the UN-Habitat publication: “Regional Assessment on Urban Vulnerability and Resilience in Southern African Development Community Member States” (Day 3)
5. A Project Team Retreat for UN-Habitat and Oxfam (Day 4)



FIGURE 2 | Participants engage in conversations ahead of the workshop’s launch - Day 1

The workshop had the following objectives:

- Conduct three meetings in one:
 - The Annual Regional Workshop for the project “Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa”
 - 2nd Project Steering Committee
 - 7th DiMSUR Executive Board meeting
- Bring key partners and stakeholders together from city, national and regional levels.
- Obtain project updates on the implementation of all three project components and discuss the way forward.
- Exchange best practices and reinforce knowledge exchange mechanisms at the regional level.
- Organise a site visit to Zomba to show progress on the city-level activities.
- Officially present the UN-Habitat publication: “Regional Assessment on Urban Vulnerability and Resilience in Southern African Development Community Member States”

Participants were invited to speak in their native languages. As such, English, French and Portuguese simultaneous interpretation was provided both in Blantyre and online.

Opening Ceremony

The Regional Workshop began at 9am Central African time with a series of opening statements. Mr. Ishaku Maitumbi, Senior Human Settlements Officer – on behalf of Mr. Oumar Sylla, UN-Habitat’s Director of the Regional Office for Africa – and Ms. Dailes Judge, Southern Africa Programme Director at Oxfam expressed their appreciation to participants, particularly representatives from the four country governments and city administrations, and to the Adaptation Fund for their continued support.

A series of statements followed from representatives of SADC, Madagascar, Mozambique, Malawi and Comoros. All voiced their concern regarding the current vulnerability profile of the region, highlighting the importance of the project given the current circumstances; the realities of rural-urban migration; the need to prioritize urban resilience; the importance of inter-country and departmental collaboration to combat challenges and find synergies for positive outcomes; and the role of governments to be both responsive and prioritize investments in risk reduction and preparedness, and help introduce the necessary policy environment for the creation of sustainable and resilient cities. For more details on the interventions see Annex 4.



FIGURE 3 | The Workshop took place in Blantyre, Malawi

Regional and Country Updates

The session on project updates was opened with a presentation from Ms. Fruzsina Straus, Project Manager for UN-Habitat, and Ms. Silvia Testi, Regional Project Coordinator for Oxfam. The presentation detailed the main milestones reached since the beginning of the project, including the establishment of National and City Project Coordination Teams (NPCTs and CPCTs), Oxfam’s administrative role as overseeing the regional component of the project, the submission of the first Project Performance Report to the Adaptation Fund, the success of monitoring missions to three out of the four countries and the progress made towards DiMSUR’s structuring, with the establishment of the physical office in Maputo and the recruitment of the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant. For more information on DiMSUR Activities, see Annex 5.



FIGURE 4 | Salima Hamada from the Comoros team presenting her country’s project updates

At this stage, the four countries provided national and city level updates on project progress. Each presentation lasted 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of Q&A and sought to provide:

- A review of progress including gaps or challenges
- A review of planned activities and a related chronogram
- A review of lessons learnt after 2 years project implementation

These findings were discussed in plenary by UN-Habitat and Oxfam project teams.

Malawi

Representing Malawi, Mr. Samuel Gama, Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), and Mr. Busta Chiona, Director of Health and Social Services, Zomba City Council, presented.

At the national level, Mr. Gama offered an overview of all activities, notably the development of national guidelines and policies directed towards a greener and more resilient Malawi. Training, capacity building and social engagement were highlighted as critical to achieve this vision. The government looks to finalize these guidelines and policies, integrating climate resilience in Safer Housing Construction Guidelines and to hold a working session on the development of an Annual Work Plan 2022/23.

At the city level, Mr. Chiona presented the seven sub-projects in Zomba on solid waste management, early warning systems, evacuation centres, riverbank focused interventions, nature regeneration, construction and rehabilitation of drainage, bridges and dams. In sum, 156,022 beneficiaries have been reached so far by the project in Zomba.

Both representatives shared that they have faced challenges in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, cyclone Ana and emerging issues related to on-site execution and engineering. In response, several solutions were proposed by UN-Habitat and Oxfam.

The Q&A session focused on mainstreaming gender inclusivity within processes alongside the safety and efficiency of installed infrastructures and the dual function of evacuation centres as safe havens as well as social spaces for communities.

Mozambique

Mr. Claudio Afonso, National Director of Climate Change at the Ministry of Land and Environment, and Mr. Sergio Zimba, Oxfam City Project Manager, presented updates for Mozambique.

At the national level, Mr. Afonso announced the establishment of the national project coordination and the multi-sectoral project focal point teams to assist with project implementation, the signing of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding among UN-Habitat, the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC), and the Ministry of Land and Environment (MTA), and the initiation of the implementation plans for each sub-project.

At the city level, Mr. Zimba showcased the four sub-projects in Chokwe: safe havens construction, solid waste management, early warning systems and drainage improvement, along with other capacity building activities. Each project had made considerable progress. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) training, safe programming training and community skill mapping were highlighted as a key reasons for success.

As the discussion turned to challenges, both representatives noted that administration and bureaucratic delays had been an issue but that appropriate solutions had been found.

The Q&A session highlighted the need for effective communication, disaster risk reduction, and vulnerability analysis and collaborative regional partnerships.

Union of the Comoros

Mr. Hamidi Soulé, UN-Habitat National Project Manager, and Ms. Salima Ahamada, Oxfam City Project Manager, presented updates for Comoros.

At the national level, the Comorian Government is developing terms of reference for a vulnerability study of Moroni's urban system, while working in collaboration with UNDRR and UNDP to review the country's national disaster risk management strategies. In addition, a CityRAP implementation is underway in Mutsamudu and Foubouni with active links being established with universities and local experts.

At the city level, progress is ongoing in Moroni with sub-projects, including drainage, community-managed rainwater harvesting systems, solid waste management and flood early warning systems. The training of municipal officials and community members for ensuring the sustainable management and/or maintenance of the implemented priority sub-projects is also underway.

Challenges emerged in relation to budgeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, rapid urban sprawl, the subsequent recalculation of costs, and local and intra-NGO delays. Participants

were assured that the team managed to solve these issues through coordination, anticipation and reallocating sections of the budget.

The Q&A followed to expand on shared issues relating to solid waste management and drainage and reinstated the integrated aspect of the project for the context of the multi-island country, making all islands beneficiaries of the interventions.

Madagascar

Mr. Tiana Randrianasoloarimina, Director General of Territorial Planning and Land Services at the Ministry of Land Use Planning and Land Services, Mr. Désiré Raharison, Mayor of Morondava, and Ms. Sandrine Andriantsimietry, UN-Habitat National Project Manager, presented Madagascar's updates.

At the national level, the team showcased the country's ongoing efforts to realize three key activities: a participatory risk and housing resilience assessment, the finalization of the National Strategy Document for Adaptation and institutional capacity building.

At the city level, the team outlined the main sub-projects in Morondava, including mangrove rehabilitation, urban greening interventions in high-risk areas, the establishment of a city-wide early warning system for floods and a set of infrastructural interventions, critical for increasing resilience and reducing pollution.

The progress of these two components was hindered by administrative delays, budget issues and local constraints such as rapid sprawl and informal construction. For this, an integrated approach was implemented to confront these challenges in a strategic manner.

For more information on the country updates, see [Annex 6](#).

2nd Project Steering Committee and 7th DiMSUR Executive Board meeting

The 2nd Project Steering Committee (PSC) and 7th DiMSUR Executive Board (ExBo) meeting began in the afternoon of the 21st, moderated by the Director General of Civil Security in Comoros Mr. Tackfine Ahmed, the outgoing – now former – DiMSUR Chair. The PSC/DiMSUR ExBo met to discuss the following agenda:

- The adoption of the minutes of the 6th DiMSUR Executive Board meeting
- The change of the DiMSUR Executive Board Chairperson from the Government of Comoros to the Government of Madagascar
- The endorsement of the newly appointed DiMSUR Executive Director
- A briefing on DiMSUR activities



FIGURE 5 | Mr. Tackfine Ahmed launching the meeting

Following the adoption of the minutes from the 6th DiMSUR Executive Board meeting, Mr. Tackfine Ahmed greeted his successor, Brigade General Elack Olivier Andriakaja, and actioned the handover. The newly appointed DiMSUR Executive Director, Mr. Nuno Remane, was then officially introduced and received full endorsement in his position from the ExBo.

Ms. Marcia Guambe, UN-Habitat National Project Manager for Mozambique, then updated the participants on DiMSUR activities since its inception in 2013, as follows:

- Six sessions of the DiMSUR Executive Board have been held since the Centre's establishment.
- Two Biennial Work Plans (2016 – 2020) have been developed and approved by the DiMSUR Executive Board.



FIGURE 6 | Newly appointed DiMSUR Chairman Mr. Elack Olivier Andriakaja

- DiMSUR's relationship with SADC continues to evolve and strengthen with plans for expansion to all 16 SADC Member States.
- The organisation has worked on four projects, three of which have been concluded:
 - Mainstreaming Urban Risk Management and Resilience in Southern Africa (2018-2019)
 - Strengthening Capacities for Reducing Urban Vulnerability and Building Resilience in Southern Africa (2018-2020)
 - Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-eastern Africa (2020-2024)
 - DiMSUR Office Host Agreement made with Eduardo Mondlane University in 2020

A full presentation on DiMSUR activities can be found in [Annex 8](#).

With all participants informed, the discussion turned towards strategic ways forward for DiMSUR. This included:

- A presentation and adoption of the draft DiMSUR Biennial Action Plan 2022-2024
- A discussion of the financial sustainability of DiMSUR
- An expansion of DiMSUR's membership to cover more SADC Member States
- Communications and outreach
- Additional business

Presenting of the DiMSUR Biennial Action Plan – available in Annex 9 – Mr. Remane explained to the PSC/DiMSUR ExBo that in conditions of heightened information uncertainty, as well

as more frequent and severe climatic shocks, DiMSUR itself is the solution. Its expertise and technical strength must be utilized to support nations to manage incoming shocks. The objectives were outlined as follows: to strengthen relationships with regional actors and governments, interact closer with projects, generate greater academic participation and legitimacy, and finally, to better demonstrate DiMSUR's capabilities, results and impact. To meet these goals, Mr. Remane stated that fundraising is key.

On this note, the discussion turned to DiMSUR's financial sustainability. The topic of membership fees was discussed as an important measure to ensure the Centre's financial future. However, no concrete action was decided upon. This topic will be tables again at the next Executive Board meeting.

To expand DiMSUR's membership, participants agreed that engaging SADC is a necessary but lengthy process. The impetus that surrounded the organization before the COVID-19 pandemic must be re-built to both engage previously interested states, and to pursue a longer-term strategy to include all 16 SADC Members States within DiMSUR's remit. However, the financial sustainability of this action remained a concern amongst participants.

Next, the PSC/DiMSUR ExBo moved to consider communication strategies. Participants aligned under the notion that sending a common message is critical to generate visibility and traction around the project. Raising awareness will require the collaboration of all stakeholders. It was agreed that creating a portfolio document, presenting DiMSUR's achievements to date for dissemination, would be beneficial.

As the discussion circled to a close, the Board members agreed to schedule an extraordinary session of the Executive Board to be held virtually in six-months' time and confirmed the next in-person DiMSUR Executive Board meeting for early next year in Maputo, Mozambique.

The complete minutes of the 2nd Project Steering Committee and 7th DiMSUR Executive Board meeting are available in [Annex 7](#).

Site Visit: Zomba

On the second day of the regional workshop, arrangements were made to bring all participants from Blantyre to Zomba City to visit project sites. Zomba City Mayor, Davie Maunde, alongside City Council representatives and community members presented progress on several interventions including a 1,655 m long drainage works in Sadzi Ward, the installation of gabion baskets on the Likangala River to prevent the riverbanks from eroding and flooding, and the construction of a bridge and a multi-purpose evacuation centre in Chambo Ward, employing 30 women and 4 men from within the community.

In discussion with workshop participants, community representatives expressed their eagerness to see the completion of the projects, particularly the construction of a bridge in Namalaka. The structure is extremely important as it will allow citizens to easily reach essential services such as education and health, as well as an evacuation centre that is being built nearby.

One key recognition from the visit, is that both the City Council and communities increasingly realise that the project is starting a process that needs to continue after its completion. For instance, as local stakeholders are witnessing the visible difference drainage works have made in their community, there is a desire to extend this initiative beyond to other areas to spread the positive impacts.

As the activities continue at the city level, raising awareness among the communities is key to ensure the sustainability of the sub-projects.

The site visit concluded with a group discussion led by the Mayor of Zomba, the Acting Chief Executive, Fred Nankuyu, representing Zomba City Council, and the Director of Disaster Risk Reduction for the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), Dyce Nkhoma. The role of the municipality in managing facilities once they are handed over to communities was discussed, including next steps and the resilience needs of the city, beyond the SEA Urban Resilience project. Leveraging the presence of DoDMA and generating vertical coordination on disaster risk reduction and resilience issues in the country were two key points.



FIGURE 7 | Community members and project partners inspect the Chambo Ward river focused intervention



FIGURE 8 | The Linkgala Bridge construction site



FIGURE 9 | Community members and project teams inspect the Linkgala evacuation center

Thematic Discussions

Thematic discussions began on the morning of the 23rd to facilitate real-time exchange of experiences and learning from the implementation of the city and national level components of the project. This directly contributed to the project's regional component which aims to ensure inter-country collaboration, cross-fertilization and the dissemination of lessons learned. The four thematic areas were as follows:

- Drainage and Solid Waste Management
- Early Warning Systems and Evacuation
- Nature-based Solutions and Community Mobilization
- Strengthening Policy and Legal Frameworks for Building Urban Resilience at the National Level

The session was hosted by the DiMSUR Executive Director Mr. Nuno Remane. Each section had two moderators and a rapporteur, chosen from among the participants. Furthermore, an expert for each thematic area was also invited (see Annex 10).



FIGURE 10 | Thematic discussions - Day 3



FIGURE 11 | Audience commentaries during the Thematic discussions session - Day 3

Thematic Discussion I | Drainage and Solid Waste Management

Solid waste management and drainage are integral to participants plans and strategies to build urban resilience.

The four countries, while different contextually, face similar challenges connected to solid waste management and drainage, including budget issues, the engagement of stakeholders, rapid urbanization and the responsiveness of host communities. Seeing solid waste management and drainage as interlinked emerged as a key recommendation – a salient recognition to develop strategies moving forward.

In addition, participants highlighted the need to better engage communities and municipalities. Several solutions were suggested, including youth training, financial incentives and enforcement through penalization, if necessary. Effective communication is a key aspect to achieve this goal and was agreed should be strengthened between the municipal, private and government stakeholders.

Recommendations included intensifying incremental awareness, source-collection and waste hierarchization as well as offering greater support to local initiatives and community-based structures for drainage.

Thematic Discussion II | Early Warning Systems and Evacuation

Amongst participants, early warning systems (EWS) and evacuation were considered vital to manage risks and increase preparedness to shocks – for both citizens and infrastructure.

Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique and Comoros face a litany of different threats including, eruptions, tsunamis, earthquakes, flooding, cyclones, all made more frequent and severe by the impact of climate change.

It was agreed that horizontal and vertical linkages between national and local systems must be strengthened to avoid instances where local settings are uninformed; inter-departmental government coordination between disaster risk management, water and climate change sectors is necessary to generate synergies; building trust within communities to construct and maintain confidence in EWS is key to ensure that they are effective; local knowledges on EWS should be investigated; contextualising EWS is critical for effective and timely warning; lastly, learnings from previous interventions must be taken into account to move forward.

Challenges posed include the existence of inaccurate EWS predictions which may erode trust within local communities, and the notion that disasters are by nature unpredictable, therefore, EWS must be able to adapt even when compromised.

Inter-country coordination and cross-fertilisation remained an overarching message of this session, critical given the transboundary nature of shocks affecting the region.

Thematic Discussion III | Nature-based Solutions and Community Mobilization

As the discussion turned towards nature-based solutions (NbS), community mobilization and awareness, participants were met with the following question: how can we re-define our relationship with the natural world?

Nature based solutions are widely recognized as an effective tool to reduce urban vulnerability. As a departure from reactive responses to climate change, their use is not only an effective strategy to improve resilience but to support cities attempts to improve biodiversity. It was agreed that more must be done to integrate ecosystem-based adaptation measures in urban policy and legal frameworks in the future – to work with nature, rather than against it.

In addition, several participants spoke on the way in which NbS can be leveraged to build back better after-shocks. Using a fallen tree to reconstruct a previously destroyed piece of infrastructure was one example, for instance.

Despite this, several concerns were identified: friction between different schools of thought, resulting disjointed approaches – e.g NbS verses Eco-disaster risk reduction; the delay attached to NbS in relation to its benefits; social justice concerns regarding issues of climate gentrification, exclusion and displacement; and the extent to which community ownership can be generated in areas where agricultural land is limited.

In reference to generating awareness, participants agreed that municipalities were critical stakeholders to ensure both effective monitoring and the sustainability of the intervention.

To further this process, academic partners have commissioned several learning programmes to highlight the link between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, drawing on experienced practitioners in the field. However, agreement prevailed that research can – and should – be better mobilized to better connect the science-policy interface.

Thematic discussion IV | Strengthening Policy and Legal Frameworks for Building Urban Resilience at the National Level

As participants began to consider how to engender better policy and legal environments for building urban resilience, all agreed that they are foundational for sustaining projects and initiatives and to incrementally build towards a more defined goal.

Malawi's policies towards urban resilience feature in several bills and legislations, such as their water and sanitation policy, national urban policy, disaster risk management bill and the 2063 agenda. In the other countries, similar bills and policies either exist or are in development. However, the four countries all faced shared challenges: operationalizing bills, obtaining funds for implementation and lacking capacity for city practitioners.

Participation, both in project development and for greater collaboration between different actors across sectors, was highlighted as key. Policies should look to build on current initiatives via an iterative process, not only offering national legislation but contextualized technical guidance to adapt strategies to the local context. Developing an urban culture which frames urban resilience as a way for communities to profit was a salient point of discussion.

Throughout the session, three factors remained key: integration, interlinkages and mainstreaming. State accountability and resource allocation for legal frameworks was considered vital to ensure a sustainable outcome for projects and foreign initiatives.

With the conclusion of the thematic discussions, Ms. Straus presented the UN-Habitat publication: 'Regional Assessment on Urban Vulnerability and Resilience in Southern African Development Community Member States' (available in Annex 11); a report which provides the basis for a much-needed Urban Resilience Framework in the region. It includes an examination of urban disaster risk and resilience within SADC, vulnerability profiles for each country, city level analyses of vulnerability, and measures to foster institutional and policy discussions. Participants welcomed the report's findings and expressed their intentions to integrate these insights into their current policies and plans of action.

Project Team Retreat

The last day of the Regional Workshop was dedicated to an internal retreat for the project's core team. It was a unique opportunity to discuss different topics related to the project in-person before leaving Malawi. In particular, the main objective was to enable an open discussion on the main issues that team members face on a daily basis, to align working methods, expectations and perspectives for the project, and to plan for future scaling-up.

The first session was dedicated to the exchange of lessons learned and experiences from each of the four countries. National and City Project Managers shared their thoughts on how successfully the project is being implemented, specifically referring to main bottlenecks, challenges and recommendations for future consideration. Multiple countries reported dealing with the same issues – the pace of implementation, the involvement of the national governments and communities – alongside others which were unique to specific contexts.

In addition, budgetary and resource mobilization strategies were deeply discussed, given both the challenges posed by the limited budget available especially for national and regional activities on the one hand, and the difference in cost from the project design to implementation on the other. The macro-economic impact of the war in Ukraine on African has been significant, especially the economic consequences of this crisis due to the exposure of these countries to international trade. The crisis has, among other things, aggravated the depreciation of currencies and increased the cost of imports, particularly food and energy the level of which is very high in some African countries. Coupled with the disruptions to post-COVID supply chains this is beginning to have a significant impact on price levels despite government measures.

Solutions and actions were discussed and agreed by the project team, emphasising the need for co-financing and the development of a joint fundraising strategy to be submitted – ideally at the next virtual Project Steering Committee/DiMSUR Executive Board in six-month time. A Resource Mobilisation Task Force was established to identify funding opportunities to fill financing gaps and for scaling-up the project, proliferating the best practices, and responding to new needs arising from the beneficiary communities in the future.

As the project heads towards the close of its second year of implementation, reporting and evaluation was also discussed, in the view of both the second Project Performance Report which needs to be submitted to the donor, and the mid-term evaluation of the project to be conducted by an independent entity in the coming months.

The internal retreat also allowed for a lively discussion between countries on their respective environmental and social management plans, issues and arrangements, and on gender issues, including reflections on how to better include women in consultations and other activities. This exchange was so fruitful that the idea of organising internal thematic discussions quarterly for country teams was proposed to learn from each other on how they are managing different issues.

The day concluded with a discussion of the development of a communications strategy, challenging given the lack of resources earmarked. Nonetheless, all participants agreed it is critical to capture the project's impacts, the personal-interest stories that are emerging, and results to generate fundraising and greater visibility.

For more details on the internal retreat, see [Annex 12](#).

Conclusions

The Regional Workshop provided a necessary space for stakeholders and project team members to collaborate, share practical insights and improve the current package of strategies and plans of action at both the national level and in Morondava, Zomba, Chokwe and Moroni. Project staff and participants were able to cooperate in-person with additional contributions online. Several themes emerged throughout:

- The growing uncertainty and difficulty associated with the increasing impact of natural hazards in the region, made more frequent and severe by the impact of climate change and aggravated by global insecurity.
- The need to expand technical expertise on disaster risk management and climate change adaptation and to better connect the science-policy interface.
- The need to view solid waste management and drainage as interlinked.
- The point that an enabling institutional environment, including introducing relevant legislation and policy, is critical to build urban resilience at the national level.
- The importance of community engagement to generate awareness on initiatives such as EWS and NbS.
- The significance of regional cooperation and cross-fertilisation to find solutions.

Such insights in discussion provide a sound platform to build upon; to strengthen urban resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation approaches in the region and to reduce the risks for the hundreds and thousands of people whose safety, security and livelihoods are affected.

Across Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar and the Union of Comoros, work continues towards this objective: to build climate resilience in Southern East Africa.

Annexes

Additional information about the project “Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa” can be found in the following annexes:

Annex 1 | [Project brochure – English – French - Portuguese](#)

Annex 2 | [Project Overview](#)

Annex 3 | [Workshop Agenda](#)

Annex 4 | [Opening ceremony minutes](#)

Annex 5 | [Project overview and regional component updates presentation](#)

Annex 6 | [Country updates presentation](#)

Annex 7 | [2nd Project Steering Committee and 7th DiMSUR Executive Board Meeting minutes](#)

Annex 8 | [Presentation on DiMSUR activities](#)

Annex 9 | [DiMSUR Action Plan 2022-2024](#)

Annex 10 | [Regional workshop thematic discussions – Interaction Report](#)

Annex 11 | [‘Regional Assessment on Urban Vulnerability and Resilience in Southern African Development Community Member States’](#)

Annex 12 | [Project team retreat minutes](#)

