



Independent Review of the COSACA Management Structure for the responses to Cyclones Idai & Kenneth **SUMMARY**

What is COSACA?

COSACA is a consortium of INGOs working together in Mozambique on disaster preparedness and response. COSACA comprises 3 organizations: CARE, Oxfam and Save the Children. COSACA was initiated by these INGOs and has been supported by a wide range of donors since its inception in 2007. COSACA's long-term vision is that by 2030:

- Communities are more resilient and less vulnerable to, and better prepared for, natural disasters
- Local and national authorities are prepared for, and responding to, emergencies when required

The Mozambique Humanitarian Context in 2019

In 2019 Mozambique was hit by two tropical cyclones in rapid succession. Cyclone Idai in March and Cyclone Kenneth in May. This combination of two cyclones in such a short space of time, both of which triggered cholera outbreaks, and one of which (Kenneth) impacted a conflict-affected area created a dual crisis of significant scale and complexity. This presented an extraordinary challenge for humanitarian agencies on the ground in Mozambique. This challenge was further accentuated by the ongoing drought across Mozambique which has prevailed for most of 2019, impacting food production nationally, as well as in some of the cyclone-affected areas.

By August 2019, there were 2.5 million people in need due to a combination of cyclones, flooding, conflict and drought. The UN Humanitarian Response plan appealed for US\$620 million to respond.



*Beira City following Cyclone Idai
(Photo: Simon Deprez, CARE International)*

Why do a management review?

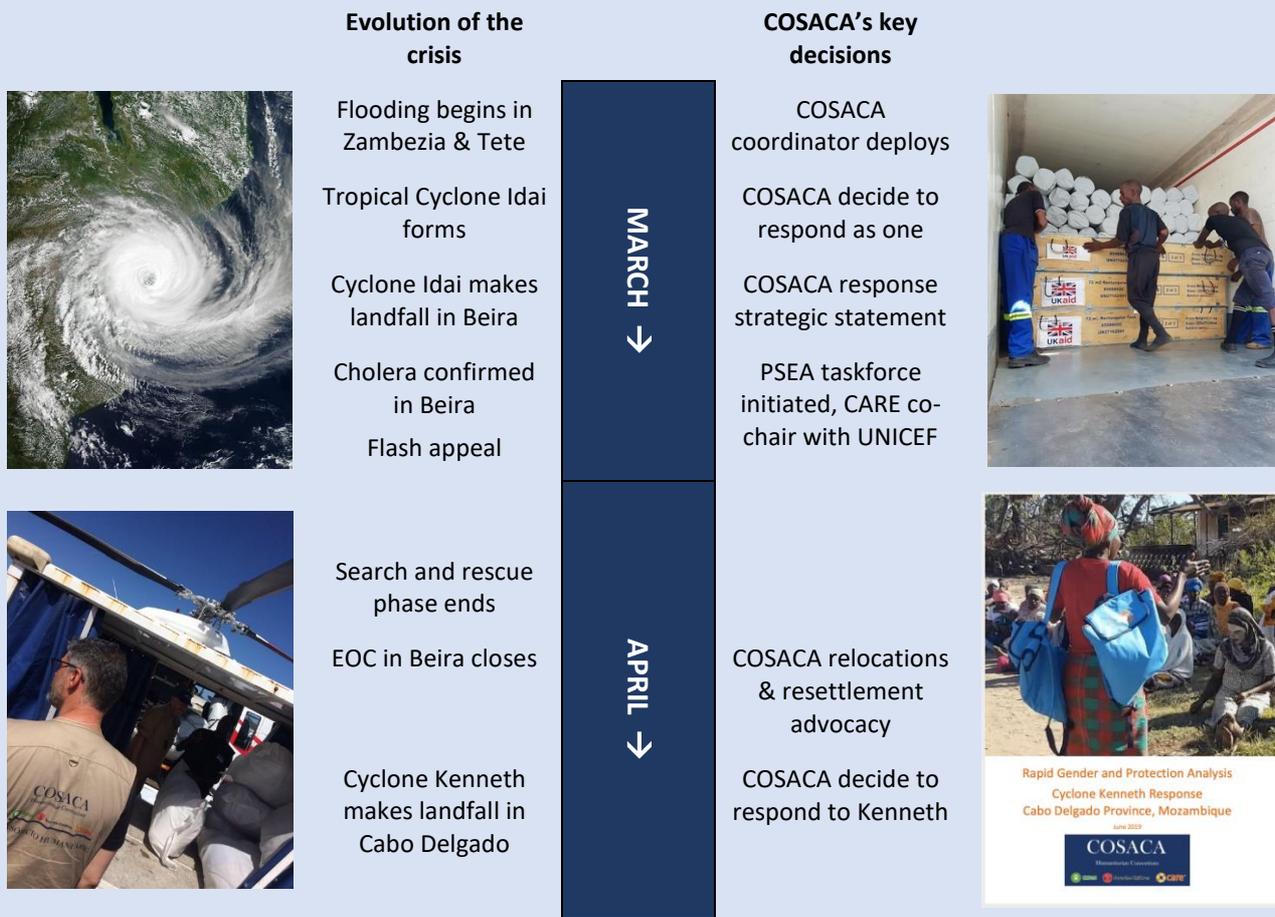
COSACA responded to both cyclones and has reached over 1 million people so far with humanitarian assistance. This was, without a doubt, the largest and most complex response program that COSACA has managed in its history.

After such an intense and challenging year in Mozambique, the management of COSACA recognized the importance of learning from this response. This learning is necessary for the purpose of developing and improving COSACA further, especially in light of the fact that cyclones such as Idai and Kenneth could represent the new normal for Mozambique based on most climate change science. This led to them commissioning this independent review.

The management review took place in December 2019 during which 35 persons involved in the response with COSACA agencies, key donors and some other humanitarian partners were consulted.

Response Timeline

A detailed timeline was assembled for the review, which is available separately. Some key decisions taken by COSACA summarized below (March and April 2019 only):



Key findings of the management review

Having explored the key decisions and their impact in a series of interviews, it is possible to summarize some of the accomplishments and challenges of COSACA in responding to the cyclones:

Accomplishments	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSACA made an early and bold decision to respond to Cyclone Idai together – as one consortium. • This decision was supported by the HQs and regional offices of each of the 3 COSACA agencies. • Donors quickly supported the COSACA response, especially those who had worked with COSACA before. • The early warning window was used well and as a result COSACA was amongst the first agencies to respond to Cyclone Idai in close coordination with INGC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSACA was not prepared for a response of this scale, especially in terms of the increased complexity of project management and internal coordination involved (several grants were secured by COSACA) • The global procedures of the three COSACA agencies for a large emergency were not fine-tuned to the COSACA response modality. • Like most major responders, COSACA found it difficult to gain an accurate understanding of needs in the first month of both cyclone disasters due to a highly challenging situation on the ground and limited of pre-cyclone data.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments in supply-chain preparedness and experience from previous emergencies were instrumental in getting initial assistance to affected people in the first 2-3 weeks. • The deployment of the COSACA coordinator into the heart of the Government-UN coordination in Beira had a significant impact on the overall coordination of the response in the first three weeks. It is also likely that this move helped accelerate the decision to request international assistance (and IASC system wide scale up). COSACA is seen by the Government as being “by their side” during the largest natural disaster that Mozambique has faced in modern times. • COSACA was able to leverage its position in the HCT in order to positively influence the approach that the Government of Mozambique and the UN took to the response on a number of key issues such as return/resettlement, gender and PSEA. • As of the end of 2019, the COSACA response to Cyclones Idai and Kenneth had reached over one million people and had generated over US\$ 50 million in funding, making COSACA a very significant responder in both cyclone responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the standard COSACA structure was applied key gaps at the coordination and project management levels could not be filled. As result of this it proved challenging for the three agencies to maintain coherent operational plans. Planning was more driven by the global requirements of each individual agency for a large response than the needs of COSACA. • There were challenges maintaining a flow of critical information amongst the key managers in COSACA. It did not prove possible to resource information management with additional staff. These challenges were exacerbated by the constant flux of surge staff. • The COSACA governance model does not have a dispute resolution mechanism or explicit means of managing agency performance. • COSACA’s efforts to work with local partners are not well recognized by the wider humanitarian community. • Whilst the first 9 months of the responses have been reasonably well funded, longer-term funding is proving challenging for both Cyclone Idai recovery and the long-term response required in Cabo Delgado.
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It is important to put the findings above in context and to ask how effective was COSACA in comparison to other international humanitarian agencies? From this point of view, a large number of the findings are consistent with the accomplishments and challenges faced by the other major international responders. COSACA marked itself out from the wider community in the following areas:

1. Being comparatively well prepared in terms of having prepositioned stock and a COSACA coordinator who helped kickstart the general coordination in Beira
2. Moving quickly to advocate on key issues
3. Ensuring coverage in Manica Province (which was quite neglected by actors)
4. Responding to Cyclone Kenneth and establishing a longer-term presence in response to the ongoing protracted emergency and protection crisis



Photo: Carolina holds her four-year-old daughter Ana in front of tents set up in a temporary camp where Cyclone Idai has caused catastrophic damage (names changed to protect identity) (Photo credit: Save the Children)

Lessons learned that will apply in future responses

Balancing global and local approaches. One of the overall goals of COSACA is to have a coherent and well-coordinated response across three agencies. This ideal of solidarity is challenging to maintain in a large emergency where INGOs tend to be competitive in how they raise funds and communicate at the global level. Additionally, a lot of work and preparation has gone into global agency procedures for large responses in order to ensure speed, quality and accountability. These procedures are not designed with the COSACA response model in mind. COSACA tends to have more autonomy in small and medium sized emergencies.

Managing the response. Simple coordination models and project design are preferable in the acute phase of a large emergency. It is also recognized that in the future COSACA coordination and information management functions need to be scaled up in line with the increased complexity of the response. Co-location of equivalent management staff in ops rooms will significantly increase teamwork, trust and collective understanding.

Preparedness. It is possible to be adequately prepared for large emergencies in the future if a geographical coordination model is adopted. However, if COSACA wants to be seen as a responder that can offer an integrated package of services, representative of the strength of each agency, at a single point of delivery, then a significant investment in building procedures for support this will be required and the cost-benefit may be an issue.

It would also be possible to standardize technical interventions where each COSACA agency has capacity and interest – for example food security and livelihoods, NFI distribution and delivery mechanisms for cash transfer programs.

Building upon the issues around return and relocation, it would be possible to develop red lines around humanitarian principles in Mozambique and / or context-informed guidance on protection programming and how to make protection central to humanitarian action in Mozambique.

The way forward – COSACA’s 2020 plan

1. Consolidate COSACA operation in Cabo Delgado to ensure strategic synergies and maximise efficiency
2. Maintain loose coordination for ongoing Idai recovery programs
3. Sustain coordination unit and have them invest in a preparedness process that builds on this review

COSACA’s work in 2019 was made possible by generous support of:

