MLHCP
Mozambique Local Humanitarian Coordination Platform

MOZAMBIQUE LOCAL HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION PLATFORM (MLHCP)

AREA-BASED COORDINATION (ABC) IN CABO DELGADO

2026



WORKSHOP REPORT

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Pemba, Cabo Delgado | Mozambique

Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3
2. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES 3
3. ABC IN CABO DELGADO 4
Why coordinate 4
What ABC is 4
The role of local NGOs 4
ABC in practice in Cabo Delgado 4
4. INPUTS FROM THE CLUSTERS 6
Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) 6
Protection Cluster 6
5. KEY CONCLUSIONS 7
Local participation 7
Coordination system 7
6. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS 7
7. RECOMMENDATIONS TO HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS 8
8. THE PLATFORM'S ROLE IN FOLLOW-UP 8
9. ANNEXES 8
Annex 1: Guiding questions used in the discussion 8
Annex 2: Workshop agenda 8

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 24 September 2026, the Mozambique Local Humanitarian Coordination Platform (MLHCP) held a workshop in Pemba on Area-Based Coordination (ABC) with member organisations working in Cabo Delgado. The workshop was organised jointly with OCHA with inputs from the Protection and CCCM clusters, and brought together 30 participants from local and national NGOs from severity-4 districts with the highest levels of need. It aimed to deepen members' understanding of ABC and to agree how local organisations can play a stronger role in district coordination.

Local organisations are present across the priority districts and are often the first to know about new needs, protection risks and population movements. Yet their participation in district coordination meetings remains irregular: they lack the resources to attend consistently, they share information but have little influence over decisions, and meetings focus on activity updates rather than joint problem-solving. Participants also raised concerns about upholding humanitarian principles in district coordination.

MLHCP members agreed six follow-up actions: i) briefing member staff in the priority districts on ABC; ii) mapping which local organisations are present and active in each priority district; iii) a first district-level preparatory workshop to be help in Macomia prior to actual district meeting; iv) provide local NGO perspectives to the review of the district coordination Terms of Reference; v) using the next pooled fund allocation to support joint planning at district level; and vi) proposing MLHCP focal points in each priority district at the General Assembly in November 2026.



Participants in the ABC workshop, Pemba, 24 September 2026

2. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The MLHCP's National Convener opened the workshop by inviting members to share their experience of how coordination meetings take place and how coordination works at district level. This was followed by a presentation by OCHA on ABC in Cabo Delgado and inputs from the Protection and CCCM clusters, which were followed by a facilitated discussion using the guiding questions in Annex 1. The agenda is in Annex 2. The workshop set two objectives:

- Increase members' understanding of Area-Based Coordination as an approach to coordination.

- Strengthen the MLHCP's participation in district coordination mechanisms, including agreed processes and procedures.

3. ABC IN CABO DELGADO

Why coordinate

The presentation by OCHA on ABC in Cabo Delgado set out why coordination at district level matters: the large number of humanitarian actors, limited resources, challenges in operational access and information sharing, the need to avoid gaps, duplication and the politicisation of aid, and the need to improve collective results and accountability to affected populations. Participants added that coordination helps everyone know where each organisation works and scaling up the response by "walk hand in hand".

What ABC is

ABC has become a standard approach to coordination at the area level, based on recent global guidance issued by the Inter-Agency Standing Ciommittee (IASC) as part of the Humanitarian Reset. Under the global Terms of Reference published in March 2026, ABC is an operational coordination mechanism that:

- focuses on a defined geographic area rather than on individual sectors;
- is participatory and linked to national coordination structures;
- centres on identifying needs, protection risks and operational response priorities.

It aims to make the humanitarian response context-specific, community-centred, coordinated across sectors, accountable to affected people, and able to respond to rapidly changing needs and access constraints.

The role of local NGOs

Wherever possible, coordination of responses to humanitarian needs at the area level should be led by local and national actors. ABC promotes the leadership and engagement of local actors, valuing and strengthening their capacity. Leadership and co-leadership should be taken on by national and local NGOs where feasible, based on operational presence and capacity.

ABC in practice in Cabo Delgado

- **Geographic scope:** ABC currently operates through district-level coordination meetings in the eight priority districts identified by the severity classification of the 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, focusing on severity-4 districts with the highest levels of need.
- **District coordination meetings:** monthly meetings bring together government district authorities, local and international NGOs, UN agencies and sector partners to maintain a common understanding of needs, risks and response coverage, and to identify operational gaps and priority actions.
- **Joint area analysis:** covers population movements, priority humanitarian needs, protection risks, service availability and gaps, and access constraints.
- **Collective action:** includes district response prioritisation, inter-sectoral referrals, emergency response planning, and escalation of issues to provincial coordination mechanisms.

Current challenges

Participation and localisation

Inconsistent participation of local and national NGOs across districts; limited resources for local organisations to engage consistently; local actors often contribute information but have fewer opportunities to influence decisions; community representatives are not systematically involved.

From information sharing to collective action

Meetings tend to focus on activity updates rather than joint problem-solving, and district priorities are little used to drive collective action.

Community engagement and accountability

Feedback mechanisms are often organisation-specific and not systematically discussed in coordination forums. There is little evidence that affected populations influence district priorities, creating a risk of mismatch between community and response priorities.

Access and operating context

Insecurity and movement restrictions can limit humanitarian reach, while long distances and poor infrastructure affect service delivery.

Humanitarian principles

Several participants raised concerns about upholding humanitarian principles in district coordination, in particular the risk of politicisation of aid where coordination is closely tied to government structures..

Ongoing efforts to strengthen district coordination

Stronger coordination among humanitarian partners

Before district meetings with the authorities, it has been proposed that humanitarian partners operating in the district will consider meeting separately prior to the actual district meet to review the situation and emerging concerns, and to agree on priority needs, response priorities, critical service gaps, key protection concerns and common advocacy messages towards the local authorities. These preparatory meetings are where joint, principled positions could be formed before engaging the authorities. Local NGOs need to be part of them: they hold first-hand information on needs and protection risks, and their participation is the clearest test of whether ABC is becoming locally led. The MLHCP will encourage and support its members in each priority district to take part if these begin to take place and they could potentially host them as they are the ones that have offices at the district level .

Mapping local NGO presence and capacity

Focused on severity-4 districts: updating the mapping of local NGOs' operational presence, identifying organisations working in underserved localities, and understanding their sectoral expertise and geographic coverage.

Review of the district coordination ToR

Aligning with the global ABC ToR to strengthen roles and responsibilities, local NGO participation, community engagement and accountability, protection integration, joint analysis and prioritisation, information sharing and reporting, and links between district, provincial and national coordination structures.

Why local NGOs are well placed to strengthen ABC

- They maintain a continuous presence in communities before, during and after crises.
- They understand local social, cultural and conflict dynamics.
- They often have better access to communities that are hard for international actors to reach.

- They receive first-hand information on emerging needs, protection concerns and population movements.
- They have established relationships with local authorities, community leaders and civil society networks.

4. INPUTS FROM THE CLUSTERS

Two clusters that also coordinate at district level, CCCM and Protection, shared how their mechanisms work and where local organisations can contribute.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

The cluster has few partners, which explains the lack of regular meetings in some districts. Mechanisms in use include district-level meetings with service providers, meetings with management committees and direct meetings with communities. Only one partner joined a recent call. Two Platform members are active in the cluster.

Protection Cluster

Protection coordination operates at two levels, provincial and district, with more than 24 partners. The cluster has focal points in several priority districts, where meetings are organised as needed and report to the provincial meeting. The main challenge is irregular attendance by organisations at district meetings.

Opportunities for local organisations: local NGOs can convene district meetings themselves rather than relying solely on the cluster lead agency, which keeps coordination going even without funding. Members active in both clusters need support to engage effectively and to understand why consistent participation matters. The MLHCP can provide technical support to strengthen both mechanisms and secure more consistent member participation.



Discussion session on area-based coordination in Cabo Delgado

5. KEY CONCLUSIONS

Local participation

- Strengthen local NGOs' participation in district mechanisms.
- Value local knowledge of the context, communities, needs and protection risks.
- Create conditions for local leadership and co-leadership where feasible.
- Improve community participation and the use of feedback in setting priorities.

Coordination system

- Build a strong support system for coordination.
- Improve and standardise information sharing among partners.
- Consider designating a representative to facilitate district coordination.
- Strengthen organisation of and participation in clusters, and refresh humanitarian principles with Government staff.

6. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

The participants agreed the following actions. The Platform's Cabo Delgado focal point will consolidate the results and share them with coordination partners.

No.	Action	Lead	By when
1	Brief staff in the priority districts on ABC and on how local NGOs can strengthen their role in district coordination meetings.	NUDEC; AZMOC; ASBIL; CCM; Caritas	31 October 2026
2	Map which local organisations are present and active in each priority district, which sectors they cover and whether they attend district coordination meetings, and consolidate this into one Platform mapping.	APROCOSO; GSB; EIJ; AZMOC; IDES, consolidated by the Platform's Cabo Delgado focal point	15 November 2026
3	Bring together Platform members working in Macomia to agree how they will take part jointly in district coordination, as a first district-level example.	GCR	31 October 2026
4	Provide local NGO comments on the district coordination Terms of Reference under review.	Platform Secretariat, with members	When the draft ToR is shared
5	Use the next pooled fund allocation as an opportunity for members to plan jointly at district level.	Platform Secretariat	Next pooled fund allocation
6	Propose Platform focal points in each priority district, for decision by members.	National Convener	General Assembly, late November 2026

Together, the members leading actions 1 and 2 cover Ancuabe, Chiúre, Macomia, Mocímboa da Praia, Mueda, Muidumbe, Nangade and Quissanga, including the localities of Bilibiza, Erati and Moeda.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS TO HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Based on the discussion, the MLHCP asks coordination leads, cluster partners and donors to:

- Invite local NGOs systematically to the partner meetings held before district meetings with the authorities.
- Give local NGOs a substantive role in district meetings, including presenting analysis and co-leading where feasible, not only reporting activities.
- Cover the costs of local NGO participation in district coordination, such as transport and communication, through partnership agreements and pooled fund allocations.
- Bring community feedback from all organisations into district priority-setting.
- Keep humanitarian principles at the centre of district coordination, including through joint orientation with government staff.

8. THE PLATFORM'S ROLE IN FOLLOW-UP

In line with its functions of coordination, information sharing, capacity strengthening, facilitating access to funding and advocacy, the Platform will track implementation of the agreed actions through its Cabo Delgado focal point, report progress at the monthly members' meetings and at the General Assembly in November 2026, and share the consolidated mapping and progress with coordination partners in Cabo Delgado.

9. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Guiding questions used in the discussion

- **Local NGO participation and leadership:** What barriers limit meaningful local NGO participation in district coordination? What would enable local NGOs to play a stronger leadership role?
- **Community engagement:** How can community priorities and feedback be better reflected in district coordination and decision-making? What is working well, and what gaps remain?
- **Joint analysis and information sharing:** What information can local NGOs provide to improve district analysis and prioritisation?
- **Localisation in practice:** What practical changes would make area-based coordination more inclusive, accessible and locally led?

Annex 2: Workshop agenda

Time	Session	Content and speakers
08:00 – 08:30	**Introduction**	Outline of the key objectives and expectations of the workshop. *Nyararai Magudu, MLHCP National Convener*
08:30 – 9:30	**Area-Based Coordination (ABC): key concepts and current state of play**	Briefing on ABC under the Humanitarian Reset and overview of district-level coordination meetings in Cabo Delgado. *Tristan Arao, OCHA Pemba* *Abdul Macangira, OCHA Mueda* *Damian Lilly, MLHCP*

Time	Session	Content and speakers
9:30 – 10:30	**MLHCP engagement with district-level coordination meetings**	Perspectives on the participation of MLHCP members in district-level meetings, including challenges and opportunities. *Selected MLHCP members*
10:30 – 10:45	**Break**	
10:45 – 11:45	**Cluster coordination arrangements at the district level**	Perspectives from different clusters on their sub-cluster arrangements at the district level. *Selected clusters (e.g. Protection, WASH and CCCM)*
11:45 – 13:00	**Action plan and next steps**	Development of key recommendations and actions to strengthen MLHCP participation in district-level meetings. *Facilitated discussion – all participants*
13:00 – 14:00	**Lunch**	