



DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION TIPS TOOLS INSIGHTS PRACTICES

In practice

PORTUGAL'S NEXUS RESPONSE TO CRISIS ESCALATION IN NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE

Key messages

Escalating insurgency in northern Mozambique has added to the country's challenges from previous crises. Portugal's integrated response combined rapid and flexible financial instruments in synergy with existing efforts, and together with the EU contributed to political and military stabilisation efforts.

Keywords

[Crises, fragility and humanitarian assistance](#) | [Partner countries](#) | [Partnerships](#)

Key partner

[Portugal](#)

Challenge

Already hit hard by devastating cyclones in 2019, successive crises were threatening to overwhelm Mozambique's – and its partners' – response capacity. In addition to high food insecurity and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, an armed insurgency in northern Cabo Delgado Province had displaced almost one million people and caused massive humanitarian needs. Portugal faced this multi-crisis challenge by adapting its different instruments to create synergies with longer-term recovery and development processes.

Approach

- **Channelling emergency contributions:** In 2019, Portugal quickly set up a [Mozambique Recovery and Reconstruction Support Fund](#) to direct contributions from Portuguese institutions and the private sector to civil society programmes.
- **Linking emergency response to existing efforts:** Portugal's rapid response instrument (IRR) for civil society emergency financing, created in 2018, had already helped during the 2019 cyclones. It was quickly applied to the Cabo Delgado crisis, directing financing to civil society partners already active in the region to integrate emergency food needs into their activities. Portugal also supported EU air bridge operations to deliver assistance to the most vulnerable populations.

- **Starting development right away:** Portugal had already agreed a large EU-delegated co-operation programme (+Emprego) for youth jobs training and placements in Cabo Delgado. Aware of the key relevance of youth employment in a context of radicalisation, both Portugal and the EU pushed ahead and launched +Emprego in 2020 in Cabo Delgado province.
- **Adapting private sector mechanisms:** Portugal adjusted the access conditions for private sector funding through guarantees to specifically encompass small businesses affected by the disasters, including COVID-19.
- **Mobilising peace and security expertise:** In view of the complex, inter-related development and stability issues in the north of Mozambique, Portugal expanded its defence co-operation programme. Under its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Portugal led the EU's diplomatic efforts and facilitated agreement for an EU non-executive military training mission (EUTM). In addition, it mobilised Portuguese defence forces to train Mozambican special forces and then took an active role in the EU training mission, including through supplying the mission force commander.

Results

- The IRR helped to prevent the conflict from spilling over into neighbouring Nampula and Niassa provinces by strengthening food security and registering internally displaced persons (IDPs). A focus on IDP youth helped mitigate pockets of exclusion in Cabo Delgado Province, addressing one of the drivers of the violence – youth recruitment by violent extremists.
- The +Emprego programme is expected to see up to 800 youth from the province enrolled in professional training. Portuguese actors involved in private sector financing intensified loan offers to businesses, improving socio-economic resilience to the conflict and illicit trade in northern Mozambique.
- The new European military training mission became operational in the second half of 2021, thanks to effective preparations.

Lessons learnt

- Delegating authority for approving rapid response instrument allocations to embassies and development co-operation staff in country can help fast-track decisions during a complex crisis. Larger IRR financial envelopes (Portugal's is currently EUR 250 000) would give this instrument greater impact, including in other fragile contexts.
- Channelling funds through NGOs already running development co-operation projects in the region and with solid knowledge of the context was effective. Periodic refresher trainings for interested NGOs via the NGO Platform in Portugal could broaden the scope of qualified NGO partners.
- Seeking synergies with existing interventions – the EU-funded employment programme and Portugal's military training programme preparing the ground for an EU military training mission – allowed the nexus approach to gain rapid traction for stabilisation.
- There is an opportunity for Portugal and the Mozambique EUTM to raise the profile of security sector governance, reform and civilian oversight in Mozambique for protecting longer-term development gains and making them more sustainable from a human security perspective.

Further information

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OECD (2020), *Development Co-operation Report 2020: Learning from Crises, Building Resilience*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f6d42aa5-en>.

OECD, *Conflict, fragility and resilience* (webpage), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience>.

To learn more about Portugal's development co-operation see:

OECD (2021), "Portugal", in *Development Co-operation Profiles*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/12c61cf7-en>.

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