

AGENDA-BUILDING WORKSHOP REPORT

*Co-creating a Knowledge-in-Action Agenda for Just & Climate-Resilient
Water Management in Mozambique*

Host:	Dutch Climate Research Initiative (KIN)
Date & Venue:	Thursday, June 18, 2026 Montebelo Indy Congress Hotel, Maputo, Mozambique
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1. Sumário Executivo

A Iniciativa Neerlandesa de Investigação Climática (KIN) está a apoiar Moçambique no desenvolvimento de uma análise de transição do setor da água. O processo teve início em 2025 com a criação de uma equipa de projeto, que realizou uma reflexão inicial sobre os principais desafios enfrentados pelo setor da água em Moçambique. A análise diagnóstica resultante foi apresentada e discutida num workshop em dezembro de 2025, no qual os participantes identificaram áreas prioritárias para investigação adicional por meio de um exercício de aprofundamento (Deep Dive). Este Deep Dive incluiu uma extensa revisão da literatura, entrevistas com informantes-chave em regiões selecionadas do país e visitas de campo a locais de estudo de caso ligados a temas emergentes da revisão documental e das entrevistas. O processo culminou num relatório preliminar de análise de transição, que foi apresentado a um amplo grupo de partes interessadas para revisão e discussão.

Assim, na **quinta-feira, 18 de junho de 2026**, as equipas da KIN de Moçambique e dos Países Baixos, com o apoio da Iniciativa Neerlandesa de Investigação Climática (KIN), organizaram um **Workshop de Construção de Agenda** para apresentar a sua análise de transição centrada na “Gestão Justa da Água no Contexto das Alterações Climáticas em Moçambique”. O evento realizou-se no Montebelo Indy Congress Hotel, em Maputo. Co-moderado por Katrien van Krieken e Olga Mufanequisso. O workshop reuniu aproximadamente 50 profissionais da área da água, representando uma ampla gama de actores do setor, incluindo planificadores governamentais, académicos, organizações não governamentais (ONGs) e praticantes comunitários. O objetivo do workshop foi discutir a narrativa de transição da água desenvolvida por uma equipa de especialistas moçambicanos e co-criar uma agenda colectiva e acionável de conhecimento.

O workshop foi estruturado de modo a permitir que a contribuição para a construção da agenda fosse além de soluções meramente técnicas e abordasse as barreiras sociais, económicas, culturais e institucionais profundamente enraizadas que mantêm o setor da água em Moçambique num equilíbrio subótimo. Ao deslocar o foco de “o que o sistema diz” para “como o sistema realmente se comporta e produz”, os participantes mapearam bloqueios críticos e propuseram direções de rutura específicas.

Com base nas contribuições do workshop e no relatório actualizado da análise de transição, os resultados co-criados serão utilizados para informar a próxima Chamada para Propostas da KIN, que financiará consórcios colaborativos, orientados para a investigação-ação e implementação, destinados a informar o processo necessário para a mudança sistémica no sistema de governação da água em Moçambique.

1. Executive Summary

The Dutch Climate Research Initiative (KIN) is supporting Mozambique in developing a transition analysis of the water sector. The process began in 2025 with the establishment of a project team, which carried out an initial reflection on the key challenges facing Mozambique's water sector. The resulting diagnostic analysis was presented and discussed at a workshop in December 2025, where participants identified priority areas for further investigation through a Deep Dive exercise. This Deep Dive included an extensive literature review, interviews with key informants in selected regions of the country, and field visits to case-study locations linked to emerging themes from the desk review and interviews. The process culminated in a draft transition analysis report, which was presented to a broad group of stakeholders for review and discussion.

On **Thursday, June 18, 2026**, the KIN teams of Mozambique and the Netherlands with support from the Dutch Climate Research Initiative (KIN) organized an **Agenda-Building Workshop** to present its transition analysis centered on 'Just Water Management in the Context of Climate Change in Mozambique'. The event was held at the Montebelo Indy Congress Hotel in Maputo. Co-moderated by Katrien van Krieken and Olga Mufanequisso, the workshop convened approximately 50 water professionals representing a broad range of the sector's actors (including government planners, academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community practitioners). The goal of the workshop was to discuss the water transition narrative developed by a team of Mozambican experts and to co-create a collective, actionable knowledge agenda.

The workshop was structured in a way to enable the contribution to the agenda building, to go beyond purely technical solutions and address the deep-rooted societal, economic, cultural, and institutional barriers locking Mozambique's water sector in a sub-optimal equilibrium. By shifting focus from 'what the system says' to 'how the system actually behaves and produces,' participants mapped out critical bottlenecks and proposed targeted breakthrough directions.

Based on the contributions from the workshop and the updated transition analysis report, co-created outcomes will be used to inform KIN's upcoming Call for Proposals, which will fund collaborative, action-oriented research-and-implementation consortia to inform the process needed for systemic change in Mozambique's water governance system.

2. Workshop Context & Transition Methodology

Prior to the discussions of the workshop, a Mozambican project team had conducted extensive desk research and interviews over the preceding months to analyze why, despite having abundant water resources and robust legal frameworks, Mozambique continues to suffer from severe water insecurity and inequality that are exacerbated by climate threats. One of the conclusions of the analysis carried out was that the water system of Mozambique is not simply disorganized; rather, it is found in a *locked sub-optimal equilibrium* characterized by high external dependency, deferred maintenance, fragmented responsibilities, and vulnerability to escalating climate shocks.

Participants to the workshop were asked to review the findings of the analysis and request to propose solutions that go beyond the simply 'repair the boat' option (making incremental, short-term project improvements), but rather utilize transition-design methodology to 'change the route' - addressing the underlying structural relations between sectors, institutions, and practices. Discussions were systematically structured around **Seven Decisive Themes** that act as analytical lenses to guide systemic interventions.

THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF ISOLATED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

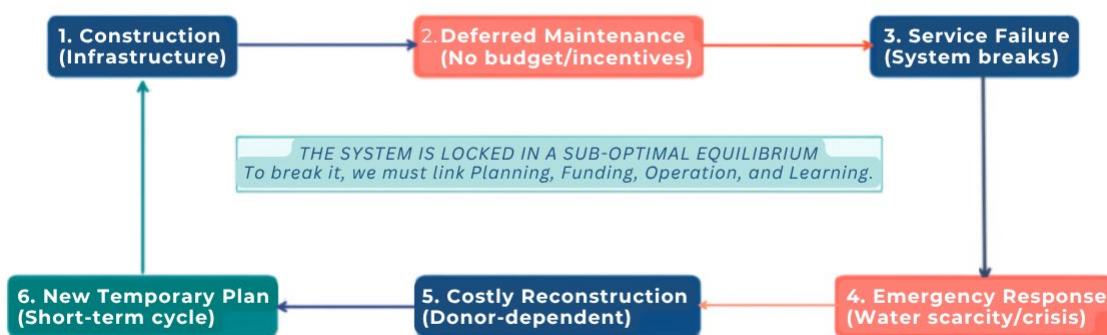


Figure 1: Recreating the Vicious Cycle of Isolated Infrastructure Projects (Adapted from KIN Deep Dive Presentation)

3. Systemic Barriers in Mozambique's Water Sector

(Round 1)

During the first breakout round, participants sat at mixed tables representing diverse disciplines to map the specific barriers using experiences from their daily practices against the Seven Decisive Themes. The discussions revealed profound systemic disconnects:

- Theme 1: Water as a Public Good.** Domestic consumers suffer from extremely high water costs, and unequal access is rampant, particularly in peri-urban and rural areas but also when comparing different geographies of the country. For example, concurrently, nearly all urban systems experience massive losses: technical and physical water losses (often reaching approximately 45% in urban networks) are compounded by severe consumer waste because of a lack of civic water-conservation education and clear, objective public messaging. This special topic of discussion led to suggestions of promoting collective surveillance and protection of water as a common good.
- Theme 2: Roles & Fragmented Institutions.** A critical regulatory vacuum exists. While the national Water Law foresees the creation of local Basin Committees (Comités de Bacia) to manage water resources bottom-up, the Council of Ministers has never approved the official regulations to make these committees functional. Consequently, local water management lacks autonomy, funding, and coordination. Additionally, transboundary basin management lacks operational hubs for real-time data sharing between neighboring countries. The current approaches to decentralization are not yielding results as local organizations have little or no funding to execute their mandates, because State Budget execution is centralized.
- Theme 3: Common Vision, Cooperation, and the Missing Piece.** Strategic planning is severely constrained by short-term, 5-year political and electoral cycles, leading to 'palliative' (temporary) fixes instead of 30-to-50-year binding master plans. In these discussions one of the groups **proposed a new category of barriers** that need further scrutiny: **Ethics and Corruption**, which was absent from the initial transition report. Participants argued that corruption is a 'cancer' that blocks progress and renders standard technical and financial planning useless. Furthermore, local and traditional community knowledge is systematically marginalized in favor of exclusionary technical jargon.
- Theme 4: Funding & the Cost of Inaction.** Water supply and agricultural irrigation are crippled by high electricity tariffs charged by the state electricity utility (EDM) for pumping water. Standard private operator management contracts are too short (historically only 3 years, recently

expanded to 15 years, but still insufficient) to attract investment by private operators. This has led to a persistent culture of waiting for external donor funding, with negligible domestic resource mobilization.

- **Theme 5: Climate Resilience.** Mozambique faces the harsh climate paradox of excess and scarcity - severe flooding in the wet season followed by intense drought. Infrastructure fails not because of bad design, but because of deferred maintenance (e.g., massive water systems costing millions of dollars are abandoned because of a lack of spare parts or unpaid electric bills). Additionally, there is weak local water precipitation and retention/storage capacity.
- **Theme 6: Intersections with Other Transitions (Nexus).** The Water-Energy-Food (WEF) nexus is highly vulnerable. In rural areas, in off grid systems high fuel costs restrict irrigation. Switching to solar pumping is cleaner but presents severe social challenges: solar panels are frequently stolen or vandalized unless local communities are actively integrated into co-managing and owning the physical assets, initial investment in solar is also very high. Gender inequality is also sharp: girls and young women walk long distances to fetch water, directly leading to school dropout and gender-based inequalities in development opportunities.
- **Theme 7: Water as an Engine of the Productive Economy.** There is a legal conflict between sectoral laws. For instance, Water Law states that everyone must pay for water extraction, but Energy Law provides a legal loophole allowing hydropower plants like the Cahora Bassa Hydroelectric (HCB) plant to avoid paying for the enormous volumes of water it utilizes to generate electricity. This denies the water sector critical internal revenues that could be reinvested in climate adaptation.

4. Pathways to Action (Round 2 Results)

In the second breakout round, tables transitioned from mapping barriers to identifying breakthroughs and research directions. These ideas form the foundation of KIN's upcoming 'Knowledge-in-Action' agenda:

Community-Led Climate Resilience: Four Pilot Initiatives

The climate resilience group formulated four distinct action-research pilot initiatives that bridge academic research with local community practices:

- **Gaza Province (Limpopo Basin):** Implementing Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) to address extreme seasonal water scarcity. This pilot focuses on mapping opportunities to sustainably extract shallow groundwater along ephemeral (seasonal) sandy rivers using solar-powered

pumps. Partners: Eduardo Mondlane University, Instituto Superior Politécnico de Gaza (ISPG), local community associations, and international universities.

- **Maputo City (Stormwater Management):** Developing integrated urban stormwater drainage and artificial aquifer recharge. By capturing and filtering wet-season runoff, this initiative aims to prevent peri-urban flooding in low-lying neighborhoods (such as Fomento) and store water for the dry season.
- **Maputo Industrial Water Reuse:** Establishing circular water systems by treating domestic wastewater and reusing it for industrial processes. This action-research initiative, in partnership with the water management utility (EMA), seeks to convince local industries to adopt recycled water, thus freeing up valuable potable water for domestic consumption.
- **Community-Based Land Planning:** Co-designing physical land planning and climate relocation frameworks with built-in community water and sanitation facilities. This pilot aims to stop the top-down relocation of vulnerable families that ignore their cultural and water resources need.

Governance, Funding, and Social Safeguards

- **Pre-Paid Meters with Social Safeguards:** To address water costs and system sustainability, groups proposed transitioning to pre-paid water meters, but under a strict human rights-based approach. Pre-paid systems must have legal, built-in social inclusion policy tariffs - such as municipal poverty certificates - to guarantee a basic daily volume of free, safe water for the most vulnerable households.
- **Special Energy Tariff for Water Supply:** Advocating for a policy breakthrough where the state electricity utility (EDM) implements a subsidized 'special social tariff' for pumping water, reducing operational costs and lowering the final water price for consumers.
- **Asset Co-Management to Prevent Vandalism:** Instead of securing solar pumps or wells with fences and guards, the breakthrough lies in co-management. Research is needed on how to successfully transfer ownership of equipment to communities, so ensure local ownership of assets, ensuring natural, community-led protection against theft.
- **Binding Long-Term Strategic Plans:** Establishing a legal framework that makes 30-year national water strategic plans legally binding across administrations, ensuring that incoming governments cannot derail ongoing long-term infrastructure and adaptation investments.

SEVEN SYSTEMIC LEVERS FOR JUST WATER TRANSITION IN MOZAMBIQUE

- **1. Water as a Public Good**
Universal rights approach, pre-paid meter safeguards, reducing physical & social waste
- **2. Roles & Fragmented Institutions**
Operationalizing Basin Committees, transboundary data-sharing hubs
- **3. Vision, Ethics & Integrity**
Binding long-term master plans beyond political cycles, anti-corruption safeguards
- **4. Funding & Cost of Inaction**
EDM special tariffs for water pumping, solar energy financing, 15-20 year concessions
- **5. Climate Resilience & Infrastructure**
Nature-Based Solutions, excavated community reservoirs, artificial aquifer recharge
- **6. Intersections & Nexus Transitions**
WEF nexus, gender safety (school retention), and community co-management
- **7. Engine of the Productive Economy**
Resolving inter-sector law conflicts (HCB vs Water Law), sustainable irrigation

Figure 2: The Seven Decisive Themes Adapted to Mozambique's Water Transition

5. Synthesis Matrix: Barriers, Breakthroughs, and Key Actors

The following matrix synthesizes the core barriers mapped during the workshop, the corresponding breakthroughs proposed, the critical questions requiring further action-research, and the key stakeholders that must be involved in the co-creation phase:

Transition Barrier Mapped	Proposed Breakthrough	Key Research / Learning Questions	Stakeholders to Convene
High domestic water costs; high energy tariffs (EDM) for pumping; short concession contracts.	Special EDM social tariffs for water supply; 20-year concession models; pre-paid meters with municipal social inclusion tariff policy safeguards.	How can pre-paid meters successfully be implemented that are not excluding the poorest? What models ensure EDM cooperation?	EDM, private operators, ARA-Sul, AURA (Regulator), local municipal councils, community leaders.

Basin Committees exist in law but lack functional regulations from the Council of Ministers; lack of financial autonomy.	Formulation and approval of operational regulations; establishing autonomous transboundary data-sharing and processing centers.	What financial and operational mechanisms can guarantee the autonomy and sustainability of local Basin Committees?	Council of Ministers, DNAAS, ARAs, SADC transboundary water units, academic researchers.
Ethics and Corruption proposed as a missing report category; 5-year political cycles derail long-term plans.	Binding 30-year strategic master plans; anti-corruption oversight boards; re-instating institutional integrity mechanisms.	How can we legally bind national water master plans across political transitions? What structural audits prevent fund leakage?	Oversight units, UTRESP successor, civil society coalitions, Ministry of Economy & Finance, academic experts.
Solar pump theft/vandalism; marginalization of traditional knowledge; girls walking long distances.	Asset co-management models (community-led solar ownership); integrating traditional knowledge; community relocation with WEF nexus.	How does transferring equipment ownership to communities affect protection against vandalism? How to integrate local knowledge?	Ministry of Agriculture, local communities, women's associations, solar energy private sector, UEM, NGOs.

6. Next Steps & Call for Proposals

The intensive discussions on June 18, 2026, successfully co-created a shared transition narrative and validated KIN's Global Transition Programme in Mozambique. The next step is a direct transition from *knowledge to action*. All the mapped systemic barriers, proposed breakthroughs, and research-action questions generated during this workshop will inform the process that KIN is leading in preparing the upcoming **Call for Proposals**.

The upcoming call will invite transdisciplinary consortia - composed of Mozambican academics, societal partners (NGOs, community groups), and private operators - to propose action-oriented, collaborative projects. In line with KIN's core principles, funding will prioritize consortia that demonstrate:

- **Equitable partnerships:** Co-leadership between local societal partners and scientific institutions, ensuring that traditional knowledge is valued equally alongside scientific research.
- **Systemic focus:** Projects that do not merely offer isolated technical fixes, but actively address institutional, economic, and political barriers.
- **Actionability:** Clear pathways for research to be put immediately into practice to benefit climate-vulnerable communities in Mozambique.

By establishing a '*coalition of the willing*' during the Maputo workshop, KIN has mobilized a vibrant network of professionals ready to pioneer this transition. The forthcoming Call for Proposals represents the concrete vehicle to drive these co-created ideas toward long-term systemic impact.