



Project Newsletter| No. 1

DECENTRALIZATION

Strengthening Integral Local Development by Building The Capacities of Municipal Authorities in Timor-Leste Project



Project Board Meeting

Project Board (PB) meeting of the Strengthening Integral Local Development by Building the Capacities of the Municipal Authorities of Timor-Leste Project was held in December 21st, 2021. The Board members reviewed the progress made by Project after the last Board meeting in July 2020 and appreciated the progress, including the contribution to legislate the two important laws on decentralization reform in Timor-Leste, made by the Project during this challenging period. As well, the members provided strategic guidance for the remaining part of the Project.

The Board endorsed the annual work plan (AWP) 2021 and its implementation, and approved the AWP for 2022. The PB was co-chaired by Minister of State Administration (MSA) H.E. Miguel Pereira de Carvalho and UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Munkhtuya Altangerel. Other participants of the meeting included

Mr. Ramon Reigada, Head of Cooperation of the European Union (EU) and Director of National Authorizing Office (NAO) and Mr. Adelino Afonso de Jesus, Secretary-General of the National Parliament.

About project

Duration:
March 2020-March 2023

Government counterparts:

National Parliament, Ministry of State Administration

Total Budget:

\$3,986,050 (European Union/EU:\$3,586,050 and UNDP: \$400,000)

Beneficiaries:

At least 318 municipal staff, 65 Members of Parliament,
2 relevant national government level institutions,
At least 10 civil society organizations and grass-root citizens' groups

Co-Funded by:



EUROPEAN UNION





Policy Dialogue on Decentralization and Deconcentration

UNDP participated in the Policy Dialogue on Deconcentration and Decentralization Process in Timor-Leste hosted by the National Authorising Officer (NAO) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation (MNEC). The Policy Dialogue is part of an annual meeting bringing together the Government, EU and the other relevant stakeholders, including the development partners and civil society members, to discuss the progress and challenges on Deconcentration and Decentralization programmes in the context of Budget Support provided by the EU.

UNDP which carries out the complementary activities to the EU's budget support, presented the progress on the technical support provided to the Ministry of State Administration, the National Parliament and the Municipal Authorities and Administrations. The support include the legislative/policy framework for decentralisation, capacity assessment/building of municipal civil servants, the municipal data portal, COVID-resilience support.



Migration Portal Data to TIC Server

On 10th February 2022, signing ceremony of Memorandum of Understanding and Service Letter Agreement (SLA) with Ministry of State Administration (MSA) and Information Technology Agency (TIC) Timor L.P was organized.

The aims of MoU and SLA agreement is to facilitate migration of the portal data from Amazon Cloud server to the TIC Timor server. This will allow the Project to roll out the Portal at the municipality level in terms of data entry. This will also pave way for training the municipal officials on collection, entry, and use of data.

The Portal has two major objectives: (a) to support the local and national governments to make evidence-based decisions in planning, budgeting, and monitoring, (b) to empower the citizens with timely data and information so that they could hold their governments to account. The portal has been upgraded to version 2.0 to make the Portal user-friendly, dynamic, and interactive.



Parliament's Approval of the Draft Law on Decentralization

The National Parliament of Timor-Leste unanimously approved the Draft Law on Local Power and Administrative Decentralization which defines the territorial organization and administrative competencies of the respective organs. The Municipal Electoral Draft Law outlines the rules that govern the election of President, Vice President as well as the municipal assembly members. These Laws have been promulgated by President of Republic on September 21st, 2021.

The political consensus among all political parties in Parliament clearly demonstrates a strong commitment to the decentralization reform, and ensures the political ownership for the implementation of the decentralization in Timor-Leste.



Handing-Over of COVID-19 Preventive Items

Being the government closest to the people, municipalities have a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to providing their regular services. The Project handed over COVID-19 preventive items such as surgical masks, soaps, hand sanitizers, medical gloves, face shield, and disinfectant sprays to the Municipal Authorities (Baucau, Bobonaro, Dili, and Ermera) and Municipal Administrations (Aileu, Ainaro, Covalima, Lautém, Liquiça, Manatuto, Manufahi, and Viqueque) to continue their businesses by observing the health protocols. The municipal authorities appreciated the support.



Capacity Needs Assessment of the Municipal Civil Servants

The Project carried out capacity need assessments in the municipalities — Ermera, Aileu, Liquica, Baucau and Viqueque — to better understand the needs and gaps in Public Finance Management and information and communication technology. This was an essential step in providing the adequate support to improve the quality of local services in the municipalities and advancing the process of decentralization.

Director General for Administrative Decentralization, Mr. Belarmino Filemoneo Neves, in his remarks during the assessment, said: “With decentralization, municipalities will acquire more competencies and autonomy to develop their own planning, budgeting, accountability, monitoring and reporting.”

Administrator of Aileu, Abel da Conceição, said: “With more power to implement municipal programs and finances, it is important that the capacities of our municipal civil servants are enhanced — first, through an assessment such as this.”

President of Municipal Authority of Ermera, José Martinho dos Santos Soares, said: “This assessment is necessary so that, when the policy of decentralization begins, our Municipality will be ready to implement and execute our own programs and finances.”



TV Debate on Decentralization Laws

On November 29th, the Project filmed its first TV show in GMNTV attended by the members of Committee A from National Parliament - to explain in details the benefits of Decentralization and how it will impact the lives of Citizens in Timor-Leste.

These two legislative initiatives had technical supports from the Project.