Final Evaluation Report

COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project
2021 – 2023

This evaluation was commissioned by the CORE-TL project on behalf of UNDP Timor-Leste

This report has been prepared by:
Anthony London
Individual Contractor

Contract No.: 10057469
Version 3, 26 July 2023

Project/Outcome Information		
Project/outcome title	COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project	
Project Number	00134455	
Corporate outcome and output		
Country	Timor-Leste	
Region	Asia and the Pacific	
Date project document signed	19 April 2021	
Project dates	**Start**	**Planned end**
	22 March 2021	31 July 2023
Total committed budget	**USD 4,784,000.00**	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	**USD 4,559,407.23**	
Funding source	**Government of Japan** **Government of Timor-Leste**	
Implementing party	**UNDP Timor-Leste** **CORE-TL Project Team**	

Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project UNDP Timor-Leste	
Final/midterm review/ other	Final Evaluation	
Period under evaluation	**Start**	**End**
	22 March 2021	31 July 2023
Evaluators	Anthony London	
Evaluator email address	london17@gmail.com	
Evaluation dates	**Start**	**Completion**
	07 June 2023	31 July 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Abbreviations

ADTL   Associação Deficiência Timor-Leste
AHDMTL Associação Halibur Deficiência Matan Timor Leste
AJTL   Associacao Jornalista Timor-Leste / Timor-Leste Journalist Association
CE   Civic Education
CNE   Comissão Nacional De Eleições / National Election Commission

CORE-TL	COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste Project
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
EMB	Electoral Management Body
ETBU	East Timor Blind Union
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDEA	International Institute for Elections and Democracy Assistance
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
KDTL	Klibur Defisiensia Tilun
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LPAC	Local Project Appraisal Committee
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NIM	National Implementation Modality
PM	Project Manager
PNTL	Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste / National Police of East Timor
PPE	Personal Protection Equipment
PWD	Persons with Disability
RHTO	Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STAE	Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral / Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USD	United States Dollars
VE	Voter Education

2. Executive Summary

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) project has been effective in delivering on its objective to support to Timor-Leste electoral management bodies (EMB) prepare and deliver elections in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project worked in close collaboration with local authorities at the national and municipal level and engaged effectively with civil society organisations to implement activities that support and promote electoral stability in the country.

Key activities included capital expenditures to support STAE and CNE physical infrastructure, but also information communication technology (ICT) to support digitalisation of the electoral process, voter and civic education, and the procurement of indelible ink. Women and youth participation was addressed in conjunction with UN Women and local non-governmental organisations, as was media literacy with Timor-Leste journalists via targeted election coverage training.

The project sought solutions to buttress the strong tradition of high voter turnout in the country and took steps to maintain positive public participation. Project management procedures were closely adhered to and the project benefited from support from within the UN family, well-organised procedures, and monitoring and evaluation follow-up of activities. The ostensible link to COVID-19 resilience would have been tenuous in the context of a conventional electoral support project, however, given the circumstances at the time of project development and extremely uncertain conditions within which delivery was to transpire, it is logical that COVID-19 resilience was at the forefront of considerations. The relatively short initial twenty-four month rollout is also a by-product of the uncertainties at the time.

A wide array of interventions targeting civil society organisations, women, and youth – with an understanding of the value of cross-cutting activities – have been conducted efficiently and in line with best practices. Some activities clearly needed to reach more of the population – in particular vulnerable categories of the electorate – namely, persons with disabilities (PWDs), as well as wider contact with women's associations and the burgeoning youth population. It is recommended any future programming should consider the considerable opportunities to expand work with civil society organisations, legal analysis, EMB capacity building activities, and training for political actors in related to elections and media literacy.

3. Introduction

Between 1999 to 2018, Timor-Leste has held eleven elections successfully without major incidents of violence. Since independence, successful management of democratic elections has contributed to the achievement of a stable and democratic Timor-Leste. As the principal channel through which people choose elected representatives, elections are a powerful tool of expression, accountability and, fundamentally, human development and security.

However, COVID-19 pandemic posed a threat to safe and orderly electoral operations. Mandatory COIVID-19 restrictions in 2020, imposed by the Timor-Leste Government, resulted in disruption to preparatory pre-electoral period activities across the nation, including voter registration processes and civic/election education.

As a series of elections at the national and municipal level were planned in Timor-Leste in 2021-2024 – in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic – the CORE-TL project served to support the authorities in conducting these national and local elections. It is against this backdrop the CORE-TL Project provided technical and material electoral assistance, seeking to deliver activities in support of the Timor-Leste electoral programme. Among other objectives, the CORE-TL project aimed to consolidate the gains of previous electoral support projects and broader UNDP programmatic support in the area of democratic governance.

Within this context, as the CORE-TL project winds down, a terminal evaluation report is now presented to assess to the extent possible the impact of the intervention. In conjunction with UNDP Timor-Leste staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries, and under the general supervision of UNDP Timor-Leste, an Evaluator has conducted a decentralised final evaluation in line with the agreed Terms of Reference (ToR).[1]

The evaluation is designed to assess and evaluate all activities of the CORE-TL project, as defined in the project framework. The IC will assess also the impact and implementation of CORE-TL project deliverables, measuring these against project documentation, including project outcomes, outputs and indicators. This report summarizes the purpose and methodology with regard to the evaluation, as well as the findings, lessons learnt and recommendations, emanating from the evaluation exercise. This report also takes stock of the outputs delivered by the project since its inception until the current period.

4. Project Description

This evaluation report sets out findings from a documentary review of the work undertaken by UNDP and discussions with the National Elections Commission (CNE), Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (STAE), UNDP core staff, the UNDP CORE-TL team, and beneficiaries, such as non-governmental organisation (NGO) and civil society organisations (CSOs). The review identifies results achieved, interprets the evidence available and isolates lessons learned.

The report covers all five outcome areas of the project document and provides an assessment evaluation of the activities within each. These sections differed somewhat in the level of detail, a result of the varying degrees of implementation of activities that took place over the life of the project. Each area (and in some cases, subarea) is divided into an overview of planned and realized activities, followed by key findings and analysis of the evaluation.

The CORE-TL project budgeted in total resources USD 4 784 000 primarily from the Government of Japan and in part through Timor-Leste authorities.[2] The initial timeframe was

---

[1] See Annex I: Terms of Reference.
[2] The original project document listed USD 3 497 392.5, however this was raised to USD 4.784 million: 4 million from the Government of Japan, USD 754 000 from the Government of Timor-Leste and USD 30 000 in UNDP TRAC funds.

March 2021 to March 2022, but ultimately ran through two no-cost extensions to July 2023. It was initiated to enable the government of Timor-Leste to conduct elections in direct response to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 resiliency in terms of physical infrastructure, election planning and public awareness were presented as three major problems identified, in addition to the procurement of indelible ink and traditional capacity building in terms of access and inclusion for PWDs, youth, and women.

In this setting, the specific evaluation purpose is:

- To assess and evaluate the progress/achievement made by the project towards objectives as specified in the Project Document, Country Programme Document (CPD), UNSDCF, 2030 Agenda, and National Strategic Plan;

- To measure the contributions made by the project to the government's effort of COVID-19 prevention in elections;

- To measure the contributions made by the project in enhancing the accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness of democratic system and processes;

- To assess the sustainability of the project interventions; and

- To document main lessons learned, best practices and propose recommendations.

Additionally, peripheral benefits of the evaluation are, first, it offers the ability to test strategic assumptions at all levels of intervention. Second, the evaluation enhances accountability and provides evidence-based feedback for tactical decision-making and on the effective use of resources at UNDP's disposal. Third, the evaluation promotes organizational learning by creating opportunities for knowledge generation and sharing feedback loops on programmatic delivery. Findings identify training and capacity building needs of staff and key stakeholders.

As per the guidance received from UNDP, the evaluation places considerable focus on findings and recommendations – the overwhelming majority of these being designed for any follow-on activities or a future electoral assistance program. Recommendations are generally constructed specifically for UNDP; however, many are equally applicable to other project partners.[3]

Within the scope of the evaluation, cross-cutting categories are considered in terms of delivery impact on gender equality, female participation, and vulnerable/marginalized groups; these are found in more detail under section 8, *Findings and Analysis*.

5. Objective, Purpose and Scope

The objective of this evaluation is to measure capacity building support from UNDP's CORE-TL to the electoral management bodies if Timor-Leste, covering the period 22 March 2021 to

---

[3] For a full list of partner organisations, see Annex II: List of Partner Organisations.

31 July 2023. The assessment is intended to measure the impact of CORE-TL activities in support of progress towards the various projects' stated goals.

Specifically, the project evaluation objective is to:

- Assess the relevance of the project to the needs and priorities of national stakeholders, UNDP and project partners, its contribution to UN and national outcome level goals, its coherence with UN electoral assistance strategies and its responsiveness to electoral and political developments in the Timor-Leste context;

- Evaluate the performance of the project in its achievement of outcomes and outputs as defined in the project document and its appropriate utilization of resources;

- Establish the impact and sustainability of the project, and the extent to which its approach and implementation contributed to sustainable electoral management in Timor-Leste;

- Review the project design and management structures in terms of facilitation of project implementation; and

- Identify best practices and lessons learned and make clear and focused recommendations to enhance electoral assistance programming in Timor-Leste.

As for the evaluation criteria, the evaluation assesses the extent to which the project achieved impact or progress towards the achievement of intended goals. The results of the project focus on strengthening the capacity of STAE and CNE in conducting credible, inclusive, and transparent elections contributing to the broader outcome of making the institutions, systems and processes of democratic governance more accountable, effective, efficient and inclusive.

The assessment is designed to consider activities of the project that seek to align the work of stable electoral mechanisms to meet the needs of democratic governance. It distils lessons learned and offers recommendations with an aim to inform future UNDP interventions. This includes steps to identify needs and encourage UNDP to build upon existing procedures as it moves forward in providing assistance to Timor-Leste electoral structures.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide UNDP, project partners and stakeholders with an overall independent assessment of the performance of the electoral support project for the full lifecycle, from its inception to the time of the evaluation and the anticipated results of the closing months of the project. The evaluation serves an important accountability function in this regard, providing national stakeholders and partners in Timor-Leste with an impartial assessment of the results of UNDP governance support in line with national priorities, corporate strategies and UN electoral assistance policies.

Furthermore, the evaluation aims to assess the CORE-TL project's ability to effectively achieve key results. Through a systematic and comprehensive evaluation regime, the evaluation serves to provide feedback to management to enhance informed decision-making, evidence value for money, and improve programming both at the strategic and project level. The evaluation is a tool to provide evidence-based information on the project management cycle

that is credible, reliable, and enables the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes to improve programming.

Project activities from the CORE-TL project fall within the following five key outcome areas of this evaluation:

1. Municipal EMB offices in 12 municipalities are COVID-resilient, gender/youth/disability friendly and green;
2. EMBs are equipped with a comprehensive plan and manual for COVID prevention and response for the upcoming elections, and its staff are trained accordingly;
3. Capacities of EMBs and media are enhanced to provide effective and innovative electoral and COVID-awareness communication and a participatory and interactive digital information platform for elections and COVID-19;
4. Groups representing youth, women and persons with disability have enhanced capacities in political participation and representation; and
5. Indelible ink is procured for EMBs to carry out elections.

Additionally, the evaluation provides substantive recommendations for follow-on work of UNDP Timor-Leste in the area of elections assistance. The evaluation covers the full period of the project 2021 - 2023, including not only programmatic outcomes, but also institutional effectiveness in relation to the target beneficiaries. The information gleaned from the evaluation may be used to measure institutional performance and develop policy that is responsive and effective.

This evaluation was conducted over the period June to July 2023 for UNDP Timor-Leste's CORE-TL project. Its express aim is to evaluate project results and to a lesser degree, programme management, with the purpose to explore the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, coherence and any added value of the CORE-TL project over the period March 2021 to July 2023.

This evaluation is designed to assess the extent that the planned activities have impacted upon the intended target audiences and the overall effect these activities have had on beneficiaries. This includes examining the relationship with partner organisations and other relevant stakeholders. It also captures lessons learned throughout the process of project implementation, incorporates these into the context of managerial decision-making and, provides a set of recommendations to improve future programming.

The project final evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the UNDP Evaluation Policy and aligned with the principles of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.[4]

6. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

To measure change and impact the evaluation methodology employed is a combination of mixed methods designed to obtain triangulated results for the five project outcomes over March 2021 and July 2023. There is a use of qualitative methods with attention given to

---

[4] See Annex III: Pledge of Ethical Conduct.

revealing anticipated results, evaluating the relevance of the interventions, and capturing why change has or has not occurred as planned. A secondary objective is to examine the oversight and project management as conducted by UNDP CORE-TL over this timeframe.

The evaluation, as per the TOR, follows a set of criteria in line with OECD/DAC guidelines, as follows:

- Relevance and strategic fit of the project;
- Validity of the project design;
- Project progress and effectiveness;
- Efficiency of resources;
- Impact and sustainability of the project; and
- Gender and cross-cutting issues.

The evaluation assessed adherence of UNDP activities and products to the principles of human rights respect and social justice in the design, implementation and delivery of expected achievements. This includes the extent to which UNDP interventions treated beneficiaries as equals, identified and addressed issues of access, equity and equality, safeguarded and promoted the rights of minorities, and helped to empower civil society. The unintended impact on vulnerable categories was also considered in the design and assessment of interventions. Evaluations should interrogate the extent to which efforts were made to utilize a rights-based approach, to acknowledge and respect the rights of individuals as well as disadvantaged groups. The overall evaluation process, including design, stakeholder consultation, data collection, and dissemination of the evaluation report, has been carried out in alignment with these principles.

Moreover, the evaluation assessed institutional accountability for mainstreaming gender in all activities and products and assessed the extent to which these activities and products support the empowerment of women and girls and promoted gender equality. In the design and implementation of expected deliverables, evaluations must question the extent to which efforts were made to identify and strengthen opportunities for the inclusion of women and girls in the development process, and ensure greater representation of women and girls as stakeholders in the design and implementation of UNDP activities. The evaluation conducted gender-sensitive analysis, assessed levels of gender-mainstreaming of the programmes/activities and made specific gender-relevant recommendations.

Participation and inclusion represent the third cross-cutting aspect of the evaluation. It aimed also to assess the extent to which activities and products are participatory and inclusive. Assessment of the work of the CORE-TL project considered whether all stakeholders, including national counterparts and beneficiaries, were able to take active roles in project implementation and whether particular emphasis was given to the inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups. Similarly, the evaluation process involved all stakeholders, including programme managers and other implementing partners, in an inclusive manner in the evaluation design, data collection, and quality assurance process.

The evaluation data collection methodology incorporates assessment of cross-cutting issues to ensure linkages to cross-cutting values and goals are reflected in the evaluation

methodology and analysis. For instance, the evaluation methodology includes a number of assessment and data collection tools comprised of qualitative measures:

- A comprehensive desk review of relevant CORE-TL project documentation, including the Project Proposal and Project Evaluation Reports;[5]
- A quality review of project indicators;[6]
- Key Informant Interviews (KII)/Semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders;[7] and
- A focus group discussion/debriefing with the project team.

This was followed by an analysis of the findings and triangulation of data and information to arrive at an evidenced based analysis of outputs and potential outcomes. The COVID 19 restrictions prevented the consultant to engage with a wider number of stakeholders and undertake field visits that would have been ideal.

The evaluation objective is to measure CORE-TL's impact using both primary and secondary sources while taking into consideration two primary points of interest: project results and project management.

This evaluation was conducted with the full cooperation of UNDP Timor-Leste and the CORE-TL project team by an independent evaluator with full and unfettered access to beneficiaries, partners and relevant stakeholders; it represents an impartial and objective assessment of the project's work.[8]

7. Data Analysis

The precise scope of the data analysis combines elements of a retrospective assessment of UNDP-supplied programming, and a prospective look at opportunities and challenges for programming going forward. While the approach has many benefits, there are always some limitations to the degree the evaluation can review impact and outcome of particular activities, while at the same time identify opportunities and make recommendations for elections support within the broader Timor-Leste context. As such, the analysis is made at a more wide-ranging level, rather than going in depth into each initiative and activity. The decision to investigate one or more aspect of programming more deeply than others in the context of testing suppositions. This was a derivative of the findings from the initial document review and conducted through KIIs.

It is noted that due to the condensed schedule for fieldwork, some interlocutors were unavailable to meet with the evaluator. Again, necessary information was obtained and insight gleaned through other research methods or other interview subjects, and arranged

---

[5] The complete list of reviewed documents is found under Annex IV: Reference Documents.

[6] Under the rubric of SMART indicators, which are: Specific to the project objective, results and activities, Measurable either quantitatively or qualitatively, Available at an acceptable cost, Realistic so that they are achievable, and Time-specific within a measurable period.

[7] The complete list of interlocutors is found under Annex V: Meeting Schedule. Interview questions and the interview template are available under Annex VI: Exploratory Interview Questions and Annex VII: Interview Notes Capture Tool, respectively.

[8] For further information, please refer to Annex VIII: Evaluation Overview Matrix: CORE-TL.

for online web conferencing interviews at a later point. Albeit unlikely, this limitation may have impacted the breadth or level of detail in some areas of analysis and evaluation.

When measuring the impact of activities, the evaluation also may have been constrained by the availability of data collected by both UNDP and the implementing partners over the course the project – particularly as the closing date is 31 July 2023, after submission of this evaluation report. To the extent that data does not exist, the evaluation used the interview process to try and identify impact and results, and triangulate the outcomes listed in reporting documents.

8. Findings and Analysis

i. Project Implementation and Results

Findings and analysis for the following five key outcome areas of this evaluation are elaborated upon under this section.

The first outcome area is the aim to ensure **municipal EMB offices in 12 municipalities are COVID-resilient, gender/youth/disability friendly and green**. By and large the project was successful in achieving this goal. In total three STAE and three CNE offices were constructed. Another seven STAE offices, including the national headquarters in Dili were refurbished.[9] This included the STAE headquarter building. This achievement is considerable given the challenge of a two-year project timeframe and the cost of material available in the local economy – typically material is more expensive in an import market, such as Timor-Leste. There were also challenges of obtaining clean title for construction land, in one case observed, necessitating construction of a new building on newly acquired land, rather than refurbishment of an existing building.

Of the sites visited, the STAE building in Manatuto was not complete for the elections of 2022 and 2023; yet, it now stands ready to fulfil its electoral obligations in terms of technical education and STAE staff training. In comparison, the new CNE office in Alieu was not ready for the 2022 Presidential, but was prepared for the 2023 Parliamentary election. The STAE renovation in Liquica took less time, as would be expected. The refurbished building was ready for both 2022 and 2023 elections. Staff from both STAE and CNE testified that the buildings were more affordably constructed through UNDP.[10]

With their own buildings, staff noted an improvement in working conditions within to focus on delivery and service provision, and an elimination of the need to hire rooms elsewhere to facilitate training and interactions with the public.

Conversely, new construction had unfenced property and gravel parking lots that create barriers to access and potential security considerations.[11] The issue of unfinished yards and some buildings still lacking office essentials such as servers and ICT equipment, and office

---

[9] The six municipal STAE offices are located in Aileu, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Liquica, Baucau and Lautem municipalities.
[10] Of interest, on numerous occasions interlocutors mentioned that the buildings' foundations were constructed in a manner that a second floor could be added; this said, no one could explain under what circumstances this might transpire.
[11] Some new offices have already engaged security officers with this concern in mind.

furniture.[12] Of greater concern is the unfenced property and gravel parking lots, the latter which presents a physical barrier to persons with mobility issues.

On a positive note, new construction included greening through solar panelling and inclusion of bathrooms to accommodate PWDs, however, refurbished buildings did not receive solar panelling, missing an opportunity create greener municipal buildings. Nor were some bathrooms upgraded to accommodate PWD access. With the largest project outlay in terms of financial commitment, some USD 1, 580, 000, these issues could have been anticipated and incorporated with minimal additional cost in comparison to the overall expenditure.

The second outcome area, *EMBs are equipped with a comprehensive plan and manual for COVID prevention and response for the upcoming elections, and its staff are trained accordingly*, also evidences general success. In June 2021, International IDEA joined into partnership with the UNDP and Timor-Leste's two Election Management Bodies, STAE and CNE to support the CORE-TL project. This was in support of addressing underlying issues of long-term resilience to COVID-19 by developing a *Covid-Resilient Election Plan and Manual* for the electoral process along with subsequent training on the manual. This is also in relation to recommendations of an International IDEA study from September 2021, *A COVID-Resilient Presidential Election for Timor-Leste in 2022: Baseline Assessment and Recommendations*, two handbooks were published in February 2022 offering guidance through the *Polling Station Centre Presidents' Handbook* and another *Polling Station Secretaries Handbook* for the Presidential election, both of which expressly detailed changes to election procedures due to COVID-19.

As per the project strategy, UNDP was to support EMBs to engage more effectively with electoral stakeholders, such as the media and government departments involved in voter and civic registration. Overall, programs adhered to this strategy working closely with STAE and CNE and a variety of stakeholders. Some ten thousand new voters were registered under this initiative.

Accompanying cascaded training was also delivered by STAE used to prepare staff for the first round of the 2022 Presidential Election, including a training platform, the polling manual handbooks and a training video and mock election scripts. A series of COVID-19 prevention election flyers were published in 2022 as well as voter registration educational leaflets in 2023 and factsheets for both rounds of Presidential voting; all of this was achieved with UNDP support. In total, 473 EMB staff (44% women) were trained by the National Public Health Adviser about medical emergency responses.

To achieve the third outcome, capacities of EMBs and media were enhanced to provide effective and innovative electoral **and COVID-awareness communication and a participatory and interactive digital information platform for elections and COVID-19**. In conjunction with the CNE, the project supported digital transformation specialists engaged to support a digitalisation transformation platform. This included assistance in general ICT functions, development and design of ICT training models and delivery. There were also videos filmed

---

[12] This information is at the time of writing. However, ICT equipment and furniture are in delivery, which will be completed by the end of July 2023; the discrepancy from the original delivery plan are due to customs and import procedures within Timor-Leste.

in support of EMB training activities and voice verification activities carried out to support live streaming broadcasts of results.

One of the successful areas of the electoral environment in Timor-Leste is the freedoms and positive working relations of the media. The project built upon this base and interventions were targeted and well-received by media partners, specifically the Timor-Leste Journalist Association (AJTL) and the National Press Council.

Likewise, through cooperation with the AJTL and Press Council, a multi-institutional endorsed guideline for journalists was developed to support development of the country's journalist community.[13] Two hundred copies of each of the guidelines were published with CORE-TL support – enough to ensure nearly every professional journalist could receive a copy. Emphasis was placed on improving competences in journalism, especially in promoting inclusive elections in the country. The guidelines produced will ensure access to quality reporting in future.

Training workshops targeted basic online fact-checking, democracy and election coverage. Three meetings were held between AJTL and UNDP representatives, engaging with general theme of the training workshop, participants, speakers, concept notes, invitations and venue of the workshops. The training was indeed necessary for the country's journalists to combat election disinformation in 2023's legislative election. More than eighty participants equally men and women have taken part in the joint initiative.

Overall the programme was a success, with the knowledge that eighty-eight participants is a relatively small component of the journalist community, consisting of some 600 plus accredited journalists country-wide. The media bus also stands as an innovative initiative. However, training could well have been delivered on a wider basis.

In the fourth outcome, ***groups representing youth, women and persons with disability have enhanced capacities in political participation and representation***, the project again exhibited vision and awareness of problems facing more vulnerable categories of voters, However, the uneven project design translated such that activities in this regard were appropriate and on target, yet superficial. For example, of a USD 4.7 million budget, a mere USD 21 700 was allocated to activities implemented by the NGO Belun to promote conflict resolution, gender inclusivity, and youth engagement in nine municipalities, reaching 257 total participants. While deemed effective in delivery, utilising municipal level structures to support public outreach events involving religious communities, municipal administrators, the National Police of East Timor (PNTL), CNE and STAE staff, there was low village participation, low numbers of participants from PWDs groups, and long distances to travel for many participants to municipal centres – likely the reason for lower participation rates. Community radio was effectively engaged, as was presentation of a UNDP electoral video, however, the burgeoning youth population in Timor-Leste warrants greater funding streams to empower youth, prevent conflict, and buttress democratic norms.

---

[13] Matadalan Reportajen Eleitorál ba Jornalista no Mídia (Electoral Reporting Guidelines for Journalists and Media) 2022, and the Electoral Reporting Guidelines for Journalists and the Media (short version).

The experience of Belun reflects the uneven weight placed on project outputs. The amounts toward capital expenditure dwarfed expenditures of a capacity development nature. In some sense the context of the COVID-19 pandemic justifies stabilising up the EMBs in terms of facilities and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) – this is fully warranted – however greater consideration of inclusion and participation would benefit Timor-Leste. The generally high participation rate of roughly seventy-five percent tends to mask this issue. In some sense, the project sought to ensure stability through ensuring continuity of elections, sacrificing some level of civil society support and vulnerable category participation.

As a result of a quota system, Timor-Leste exhibits a higher ratio of female related representation compared to regional and international patterns. In Timor-Leste, as per the Parliamentary election results, 38.8 per cent of the seats (twenty-two of sixty-five in the National Parliament) are held by women. While this is commendable, as found elsewhere leadership and decision-making roles are held by men and women are largely marginalized from executive processes. Particularly, a lack of influence over decisions that bear a direct impact on their lives.

The project demonstrated awareness of these imbalances. In collaboration with UN Women, sixteen workshops for emerging women and men leaders from diverse backgrounds were conducted. Positively, the project exceeded the agreed outreach target, and in total 473 current and emerging leaders (250 women; 223 men) participated in the workshops respectively. In this delivery context, an initial target of 300 was exceeded: 375 women, youth and people with disabilities have enhanced knowledge on equal rights of women and men in participating in elections in Timor-Leste as voters and candidates. This included information in relation to the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, Municipal and Suco Elections. Additionally, four theater shows were organized to engage the wider public and disseminate essential election information – always a good practice to access local cultural practices to disseminate information, when appropriate.

As such, the project successfully mainstreamed gender into areas of programming, to the extent that it was a component of the project. However, there were limited opportunities for women to participate in specific activities focused specifically on gender in elections and politics, apart from the sixteen workshop and four theater shows conducted and media spots developed by UN Women. The total of 473 participants in the workshops whose enhanced capacity of women empowerment in elections; while not insignificant, is a relatively low number nation-wide.

Prima facie, an activity not commensurate with a National Implementation Modality (NIM), such as Timor-Leste, is a major procurement exercise. However, the fifth outcome, wherein **indelible ink is procured for EMBs to carry out elections**, in retrospect is a justifiable and, in some sense, logical activity for UNDP in the short-term.

With hindsight it is easier to contextualise the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The predominantly global shut-down to confront the rapid spread of the disease incurred challenges to programming that were realistically unforeseen. In this light, the CORE-TL project reflects these uncertainties and strove to accommodate COVID-19 priorities and basic human security realities in the context of a pandemic electoral cycle. At the time of project

development, real and credible concerns were considered when addressing the need to support Timor-Leste's ability to deliver elections. Likewise, the potential for instability was deemed real and, as such, the project was curbed to accommodate these factors; a shorter rollout with a number of outcomes that fall outside more traditional approaches to electoral support.

In reality, COVID-19 resilience is a cross-cutting issue that affects the entire population of Timor-Leste. With this in mind, placing it within the electoral support cycle was one way of offering concrete assistance to national authorities in a challenging time. Rather than being a central justification, COVID-19 resilience could just as easily have been one component of a convention electoral support intervention. However, if the project is considered an extension of UNDP, the efforts made to liaise with other UN agencies is evidence of the desire to deliver as one. The involvement of other UN actors, such as UN Women and the UNDP Timor-Leste Country Office in the provision of PPE to government authorities – including EMBs – should be seen as a holistic approach to COVID-19 resiliency. PPE was distributed in time for the 2022 Presidential Election.

Equally, medical outreach offered by the UN Medical Advisor represents a perceptive approach to contextualising the disinformation and legitimate fear that surrounded conditions of COVID-19 transmission. The advisor's attendance at public outreach events offered an opportunity to present COVID-19 protocols and safety measures at civic education sessions. This kind of added-value is a positive lesson for future medical emergencies.

It is clear that opportunity exists to engage and include in future programming with greater consistency women's associations. This would ensure a more gender representative approach and address a major cross-cutting issue. Women's roles in the political party system is widely on the margins and, despite progressive special measures for inclusion on party lists, more work is required to capacitate women in politics. Media literacy, financial management and fundraising, and public speaking/media relations skills are all avenues open to future electoral assistance. Parliamentary funds of USD 92 000 per seat – a constituency grant – could be used to allocate for youth and women's programmes – this would require advocacy with parliamentarians to demonstrate the utility of doing so and elucidate how applying these funds to address the needs of the most vulnerable would be advantageous.

Youth have lower prospects in Timor-Leste at present, evidencing a need to increase inclusion and raise their stake in the country through the ability to influence the outcomes of elections. The voting age of 17 is ahead of the curve in this regard. Similarly, engagement with the Associação Halibur Deficiência Matan Timor Leste (AHDMTL) for the blind, while appropriate, overlooked other PWDs facing challenges in terms of access during elections. Associations for members with physical and hearing disabilities also require support to participate fully in elections. With a project supported PWD/CNE/STAE study visit to Indonesia, this direction could have been enhanced beyond braille.

Programs in support of civil society organisations – including persons with disabilities – youth, gender, and media were largely addressed through both the EMBs and in coordination with civil society associations. UNDP worked closely with the relevant STAE and CNE departments and other project partners to deliver. However, this work had an election focus with less

emphasis on the underlying challenges in these areas related to elections and political processes. Accepting the mantra leaving no one behind requires wider engagement with youth, women and PWDs.

PWD inclusion activities delivered were largely relevant and effective – with the exception of AHDTML braille training that included the East Timor Blind Union (ETBU). Braille training was delivered to a limited number of participants. For example, of 9 601 PWDs in Timor-Leste, only 152 received training over the two weeks.[14] The simplicity of the numerical ballot with a punch mechanism indicates options could have been made available and training more simplified. The vast majority of visually impaired are braille illiterate and required travel to Dili, again presenting a unique set of challenges. AHDTML participation in the CORE-TL supported Feasibility Study on the Use Braille Ballot Paper by People with Visual Impairment During the Election, in conjunction with the Indonesian Election Commission in Jakarta, is a step in the right direction, but still, greater effort must be made in future to engage a wider range of non-governmental actors.[15] Local agents concur it could be done in a cost-efficient manner and would not be difficult to implement.

To be clear, any intervention in this regard is positive, however, a two-week crash course in braille reading is insufficient to achieve the result of greater inclusion. The circumstances of non-adoption of braille ballots is something that fell out of UNDP control, that being a political decision, however the number of trainees is well below the estimated affected population. Regardless, braille ballots were not available at the elections. Although approval was at the final stage, the ballot approval did not transpire and the investment in braille training – by no means wasted – did not achieve the desired impact.

Many other organisations, such as Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), Fuan Nabilon, Ahi Saun and Klibur Defisiensia Tilun (KDTL), and the Association for the Disabled of Timor-Leste (ADTL) were not included in the activities of the project.[16] A wider array of partners would intensify positive impact for PWD inclusion.

ii.   Project Management

In terms of project management, while activities that cover outreach and advocacy events are easily monitored and reported, measurement of results and long-term impact tends to be challenging.   Measurement of CORE-TL performance is available through quantitative evaluation data collection mechanisms, but the impact of activities requires a detailed and intensified internal evaluation platform that focuses not only on UNDP activities and results – what outputs the section controls – but also another set of impact indicators that explore actual change in beneficiaries' perceptions and behaviour as a result of UNDP programming. The project has successfully integrated monitoring and evaluation techniques at events and training sessions to evidence a concerted effort in this regard. Supporting UNDP and partner

---

[14] There is significant discrepancy in the figures here: information provided was that according to the 2015 census, 38 118 PWDs were recorded, 14 828 of whom are visually impaired. The 2022 inclusion survey cites the following: 2 043 visual impairment, 4 084 physical/mobility disability, and 1 507 with hearing impairment.
[15] Also in attendance were relevant staff form STAE and the CNE.
[16] Of note, ADTL was included in a Persons with Disability inclusion survey in 2022. This survey covered 252 villages in all fourteen municipalities and covered more than six thousand PWDs .

staff in project monitoring and evaluation practice techniques would be a worthwhile investment to support results-based management practices.

Although CORE-TL capacity building activities bear an arguably small geographical footprint it is prescient to look at solutions that incorporate digital platforms in a region with a significant youth population, sometime poor internet connectivity notwithstanding. Youth populations are increasingly reliant on new and digital media and electronic means of outreach, which also presents a cost-efficient means of promoting electoral-themed topics, such as conflict prevention, voter registration, voter and civic education.

High visibility CORE-TL initiatives cast a favourable light on UNDP and online promotion of fact sheets and newsletters is a positive occurrence. This practice should be maintained in the context of any future electoral assistance initiative. In some sense, the project stands as a paragon of efficiency within a difficult implementing environment. The project benefited from support from within the UN family – specifically in terms of PPE to the local authorities, use of UNDP Medical Doctor at events, and collaboration with UN women. The CORE-TL project exhibited adherence to well-organised procedures, and suitable monitoring and evaluation follow-up of activities.

The NIM used to administer the project was appropriate given the capacities within Timor-Leste EMBs. However, the use of NIM also shifted responsibilities for design and implementation of activities and prioritization of resources more to national EMBs, as opposed to any other partners. This is appropriate given the EMBs evident capacity. However, given the scope of the project, which included partnerships with other government agencies, the media, and civil society, broader consultation with all stakeholders would be appropriate. The Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) was not attended by any of these actors, for example.

On a similar note, the procurement of 22 608 bottles of indelible ink would normally be associated with a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). The unique circumstances of this large procurement exercise have been noted, but the hybrid nature of the project design might be avoided in future.

Several electoral events occurred during the project life-cycle, including two rounds of Presidential and another Parliamentary election. While unavoidable, this has the knock-on effect to limit the ability of STAE/CNE and other partners to focus on long-term institutional growth and staff capacity building.

UNDP did not deploy a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) for the full project duration, instead engaging a Project Manager (PM) to oversee delivery.[17] This was balanced by the use of electoral specialists as consultants for key deliverables. While unconventional, with the existing capacity within the EMBs and procurement heavy project document, this staffing configuration did not have an adverse impact on implementation. Depending on the future direction of UNDP electoral support, engagement of a CTA might be considered. The use of

---

[17] A CTA was on temporally on board during the two rounds of presidential elections in 2022.

the same key experts provided continuity and was important for the short-term capacity building activities within the project.

Partners, including the EMBs, consistently characterized UNDP as responsive to their needs, both in terms of timing and the substance of the response. Partners felt that their ability to continue many functions and activities would be jeopardized absent UNDP financial and technical assistance. Examples included EMB's ICT operations and trainings with the civil society. If UNDP were not involved, much of the work with PWDs would not have transpired.

Programming closely adhered to the Project Document activities, timeline and the annual workplan in the initial, 2022 Presidential election-period.

The project had considerable relevance and impact on election administration, including voter education (VE) and short-term support to ICT capacities of EMBs prior to the 2022 elections, work with various partners on public outreach, and support to the media, VE and civic education (CE) outreach. The project was less successful on capacity building activities, such as developing networks of women and youth or PWD inclusion.

There is value in giving consideration to enhancing risk assessment planning. The COVID-19 pandemic is a once in a generation event fraught with potentially serious consequences – in the context of elections, the potential to cause a catastrophic occurrence such as cancellation or indefinite postponement. Creating robust risk management contingencies would help to identify the level of risk for each project activity and would help justify why an activity was adopted to sustain resilience. This would assist UNDP in measuring programmatic influence based not only on activity implementation, but also on impact based on risk management; in other words, recognition and description of things it can control and things it cannot.

iii.   Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Activities were consistently supplemented by survey work, feedback forms and staff observation. A more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation impact would assist in the creation of baseline data from which to identify need. This practice could naturally flow into a Concept Paper for continuing projects. Establishing more baseline data will serve to differentiate between what changes are due to organic change and the impact of UNDP's project. That is, assist in the measurement of impact based on the CORE-TL team's involvement. Moreover, fresh baseline studies for new and innovative approaches would strengthen the planning of different interventions in terms of both financial and operational justification.

Consideration may be given to incorporating some available monitoring and evaluation tools in future endeavours, which might include:

- Monitoring and evaluation plans covering the course of the project cycle provide a more explicit means of verification, strengthen oversight, and enhance the ability to capture best practices.
- Greater use of survey methodologies to measure the impact of activities, in particular activities that are not one-off events.

- Individuated multi-year timelines for activities that have the potential to run consecutive project cycles.
- Establishment of baselines and benchmarks from which to measure progress, particularly as projects are designed to evolve over multiple years.
- Conduct of needs assessment studies for new programmatic interventions to inform programming.

It is recommended that the UNDP consider professional and external monitoring and evaluation training for project management staff in order to enhance this set of skills.

9. Sustainability and Added Value

Across the board, the very existence of UNDP has a stabilising effect on EMBs and electoral delivery as a whole. This was reiterated on numerous occasions over the course of fieldwork, not only by government EMBs, but also by civil society actors. What *prima facie* came across as odd under an objective review of project documentation – namely the heavy emphasis on procurement and logistics – tended to be justified in the context of the project's inception – a strong desire by the donor to approach electoral support through a COVID-19 mechanism fund with emphasis placed on direct logistic and construction support. The disbalance was an intentional direction, rather than an awkward approach to electoral support. In future, a more traditional balance of capacity building and perhaps targeted, but state-driven approach to building construction, and inedible ink procurement in particular, may be more sensible in the context of an electoral support project. In some sense, under a NIM configuration, UNDP is not in place to replace the function of the EMBs, but to offer targeted support and offer solicited expert advice in certain key areas.

With this duly noted, multiple sources described the stabilising influence of UNDP's involvement and the particular history of elections in Timor-Leste. Considering the UN conducted elections from 2002 to 2012, there is a residual impact in two ways.

First, the UN is a trusted partner by all actors and its name and reputation help stabilise the electoral environment. Political parties and the issue of quality indelible ink was highlighted on a number of occasions; the ink was mutually approved by the parties and EMBs, strengthening confidence in the overall process. Securing the inedible ink through UNDP – even though the money was provided from government funds – lent legitimacy to the election and veracity to the quality of ink. It was described as helping to nurture and entrench democracy. Undoubtedly, in Timor-Leste, the UN system promotes integrity and values, positive political influence, and to a lesser extent, but still of note, socio-economic stimulus of project funding streams. This reputation represents a clear added-value that another organisation could not provide.

Similarly, especially in the COVD-19 prevalence, added-value was complemented through a coordinated approach with other agencies of the UN system and the provision of PPE to government authorities.

Second, there is a legacy of UN directives – in the absence of a unified electoral law – still at play in the legal framework. This amounts to a familiar amalgam of laws and directives

governing electoral processes. For example, the law for the presidential election is different than that of the parliamentary, the Parliamentary Election Law of 2021, and some UN directives from the previous era are still in force. While any system functions well with the integrity of its members, there is an opportunity to better regulate the legal system governing elections in Timor-Leste. Options in this regard are available, be it harmonisation of existing or the drafting of new laws, but the space for legal reform and a better regulated governing legal framework is clear. This would also be an opportunity to scrutinise how the laws intersect with women, youth, and PWDs most of all.

Nonetheless, the enduring value of UNDP project implementation is in acknowledging the difference between changes that would occur in the absence of UNDP projects, such as the CORE-TL, versus the impact of the intervention.

With this in mind, UNDP's impact on sustainability must be evaluated through this paradigm. Sustainability has thus been achieved in some project areas through transfer of ownership to local and central authorities. This applies to the construction and refurbishment of STAE and CNE offices. There is some concern that government budget lines will need to be allocated for maintenance purposes and utilities, however, STAE and CNE officials were optimistic this would transpire. It also relies in some instances upon capacity built through concepts such as training of trainers (ToT) to carry on the work of the respective project. An understanding is that the CORE-TL team has consciously acknowledged that once capacity is established, beneficiaries share an obligation to the electoral process as stakeholders.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that there is recognition among many beneficiaries that sustainability has been and will be in the future be difficult to maintain without international assistance generally, and UNDP assistance specifically with regard to some future electoral priority areas.   Both the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and International IDEA have had a presence in Timor-Leste, however the former is sporadically engaged and the latter primarily present for short-term interventions. UNDP is the preferred partner on the ground.

Both STAE and CNE staff cite the accessibility the buildings provide, adding to competency of the institutions to deliver on mandates. More municipal buildings also contribute to the decentralisation movement afoot in the country. Some of this is purely of a financial nature, but in other cases, UNDP acts in some fashion as a generator, helping to create space for dialogue and interaction that would otherwise not be available. Greater support to civil society actors would stand as a step towards achieving sustainability based on building local capacity.

10. Lessons Learned

- Activities were designed within an electoral assistance project that offers assistance to EMBs and other beneficiaries over a period of two years, rather than an event-centred arrangement. However, the project had a relatively short-duration (prior to the final extension), which included two major electoral events, with a third village election around the corner. While UNDP provided valuable assistance to EMBs and other partners, it was optimistic that the project could take the desired electoral-cycle approach and focus adequately on substantive capacity building.

- Wide consultations among various interest groups were useful in explaining the manner that elections could be held safety. This also promoted conflict prevention. A holistic approach that drew CNE Commissioners, religious leaders, PNTL representatives and state officials paved the way for a social compact approach to election delivery.

- The COVID-19 pandemic is a central idea to justify and centre the project, however links to the electoral cycle are tenuous. In fact, COVID-19 formed a relatively minor component of the project, merely intersecting with regular programming initiatives. Based upon the recommendations of the LEARN project, there was enough basis to develop another electoral assistance project.

- The variety and number of activities the project envisioned supporting, including in diverse areas such as election administration, conflict mitigation, media and others, was extensive provided the short project timeline. Given available resources and the timeframe for delivery of these activities, this may have been impractical. UNDP likely overestimated what could be achieved in the given timeframe, and the relatively low numbers of participants compared to the nation-wide pool of potential participants is reflective of this reality.

- Good examples of impact on the electoral cycle are found when considering engagement with vulnerable groups. This noted, engagement was limited in the context of the project design. There may be value to explore ways that empower young women on the margins, or youth who are deficient in language skills or experience, but who crave opportunity to become involved in political life. There is a need to improve collaboration with all PWD groups and potentially liaise with EMBs for improvement in this regard.

- Project implementation may have benefited from attention to increased use of monitoring methodology. This must, however, be balanced against the time constraints of UNDP staff. However, there is room for additional monitoring methodologies that have the potential to regulate data collection for use in creating baseline figures, project benchmarks, and standardized practice of monitoring. Target indicators are set for project outputs – what the project would accomplish – but impact measurement could be improved through the development of outcome indicators – what impact will the action or output achieve.

11. Conclusions

The project CORE-TL played a significant role in supporting EMBs and other partners for both rounds of the 2022 Presidential and May 2023 Parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste.

Post-election Presidential election, UNDP continued to provide important technical assistance to STAE/CNE and other stakeholders, while adapting the overall project to reflect changing priorities and needs. With a total project expenditure of approximately 4.7 million USD over a two-year period, which encompassed support to national elections, the project

provided a significant number of outputs. Most interventions were relatively low-cost, apart from some capital investment and ICT expenses specific to election support. The delivery rate is on track to be one hundred per cent of the total budget by project end. Overall, assistance provided by UNDP was slightly skewed towards procurement and other material support and logistics, reflecting priorities in the context of COVID-19 resilience. Most weaknesses in the project stemmed from design: the overall weighting tended to reflect state infrastructure provision and less to electoral support.

Future UNDP electoral support programs in Timor-Leste must successfully address the issue of how to provide quality, value-added technical assistance to key partners, many of whom, including STAE and CNE, are already advanced in several disciplines. Projects should focus more on capacity building and assistance beyond the needs of any single election event and utilize UNDP electoral know-how and experience. More careful program design, including enhancing evaluation and monitoring staff capacity, will also be required to continue UNDP's relevance in this sector and to provide both project donors and beneficiaries value for money.

12. Recommendations

Outcome Areas	Explanatory Note
With acknowledgement that the operating environment is comparatively small, UNDP-TL might look to increasing its number of partners, thereby creating new entry points. This serves to diversify programming within fluid operating environments. Potential future programming needs to extend partnership with a wider array of organisations and reflect real timelines for operationalisation.	Designing many activities around a single or few key partners, such as EMBs, carries an inherent risk to implementation; any changes in key personnel, capacity issues or competing priorities may affect the ability of UNDP-TL to successfully carry out activities.

A suggested approach UNDP-TL may benefit from is conducting a stakeholder mapping exercise prior to designing future election support activities (may be carried out simultaneously with a needs assessment). Maintaining successful, existing partnerships is crucial, however, there may be additional partners – associations for PWDs, youth or women, for example – that could provide UNDP-TL and by extension the EMBs opportunities to develop new methodologies and reach wider audiences. It is crucial to partner with the right partners. |
| The project document could have made more explicit justification for the procurement of indelible ink. If included in future assistance, it needs to speak to why the government seeks procurement through UNDP. | Legitimate reasons have been provided for assistance to procure indelible ink as a result of interviews conducted. These need to be referenced in future programming initiatives involving procurements of such magnitude – USD 754 000.00. |

	There is value in exploring national ownership of future electoral procurement needs, particularly when government funds are utilised.
Of the three STAE/CNE buildings visited, only one was operational for the electoral period – for the recent Parliamentary election. A review of more realistic timelines is prudent.	That the construction works were accomplished over the project lifespan is a significant achievement. Nonetheless, it speaks to a skewed timeline in the project design phase.
UNDP-TL could provide additional value to voter education programming through greater application of media analytics, testing target demographics, message resonance, and outreach mechanisms. UNDP could also support STAE and CNE's measuring of impact of voter education materials through focus groups, surveys and other research methods.	
Disability and gender work should be a focus throughout the electoral cycle, not only in the immediate build up to elections. UNDP-TL should consider direct partnership agreements with CSOs to further advocacy and education related to inclusion and electoral participation of traditionally disadvantaged groups. Similarly, UNDP-TL should consider more direct and sustained relationships with institutions such as the police, media, and religious communities.	For example, women's political participation omitted media skills and media literacy as something relevant to shifting public space. There is again the opportunity for cascaded training when working with CSOs. Each municipality has a Youth Coordinator (under the National Youth Coordinator) who is well placed to carry electoral messages throughout the electoral cycle.
UNDP-TL and EMB staff operationalise 'Master Trainers' who should be included in follow-up and monitoring activities for cascade-style trainings. This would enable UNDP-TL and EMBs to better understand the effectiveness of current training programs and adjust as necessary.	Enhancement of cascading training is a proven method to deepen impact. For large training programs at the local level, UNDP-TL and EMBs might consider hiring external entities for monitoring. UNDP-TL should also include support for monitoring the implementation of such trainings in any future electoral assistance project.
Greater balance should be struck between capital expenditures and electoral capacity building. Any future intervention should seek to establish a finer balance between capital expenditure and procurement versus capacity building. It is important to avoid the appearance that a project is donor driven. Under COVID-19 conditions, UNDP could have considered a bridging project to address COVID-19 resilience full stop.	This recommendation is offered with the knowledge that the COVID-19 presented unforeseen challenges and uncertainties.
Project Management	**Explanatory Note**
Recommend consideration to host a UN Election Assistance Division needs assessment mission (NAM) in support of determining future electoral interventions.	A comprehensive needs assessment will more closely align the program with the current needs of key electoral actors and the political and electoral context in Timor-Leste.

It is good practice to conduct debrief and collect lessons learned through sessions with major stakeholders: research activities and assessments to inform project design. Similarly post-election reviews of voter education materials should be undertaken.	Lessons learned reviews are critical to improving future elections. Such reviews should take place as soon as possible post-election. Delaying the exercise detracts from the quality of stakeholder observations and recommendations, and the interest of audiences, including donors, may wane. Most importantly, key reforms may be delayed as stakeholders await the outcome of these initiatives.
The LPAC should be more inclusive. For broad stakeholder buy-in, the LPAC requires the participation of CSOs, the AJTL, PWD associations (such as AHDMTL, RHTO, ETBU, Fuan Nabilon, Ahi Saun and KDTL), existing youth and women's associations and even representatives from academia.	For sectors of overlapping jurisdiction, an agreement may be reached to control the number of participants while respecting involvement. Distribution of the project document beforehand offers an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide feedback. It is understood the LPAC was rushed due to the COVID-19 emergency – nonetheless, a broader base of participants may offer greater insight into the project orientation.
Project links to UNSDF, Outcome 6 on climate change and sustainable resource management are tenuous.	It is advisable to focus on governance and human rights priorities in the context of and electoral support project.
Project timeline in future must be carefully scrutinised to ensure the objectives, outputs and activities can be delivered in the given timeframe. It is unusual that two no-cost extensions were requested and introduced over the two years of the project, even if these were agreed to in principle. Each request and approval necessitates human resource time and commitment for not only the CORE-TL Team, but also administrative and financial staff charged with the administrative work flow.	Project is funded from a COVID-19 emergency fund – to be delivered within one year as stipulated by government of Japan. The donor understood it would be on a year-by-year basis and would be extended twice.
Greater scrutiny should be placed on the use of international consultants, in terms of where and when their expertise is most needed.	These are costly interventions which should be viewed as relevant by EMBs and other key project partners. This said, by and large the CORE-TL effectively engaged appropriate election expertise, a practice that should continue.
In addition to the Project Management Board, UNDP might consider an informal working group on elections as a project-supported activity, to provide a space for discussing electoral reform, preparations and other related issues with the various of stakeholders.	This would be at a technical level.
Future Programming	**Explanatory Note**
UNDP-TL should prioritize and expedite the launch of a further electoral support program especially when donors are committed to start. Ideally, activities would commence at least two to three years prior to the next national elections, preferably sooner.	All interlocutors have been unequivocal in support of a follow-on electoral support project. STAE states it needs investment to achieve its goals found in the STAE work plan.

	An electoral support project initiated close to an election should expect limitations on impact, cost effectiveness and sustainability. Funding my become available from Japan or South Korea, potentially in the context of a basket fund.
In general UNDP-TL has had greater impact and more cohesive engagement with STAE/CNE and other key partners by focusing less on the upcoming election events, placing more emphasis upon capacity building activities in future election projects, following a longer-term, electoral-cycle approach. This approach should continue within the context of any future electoral support intervention.	Evident EMB capacity to manage the electoral processes in Timor-Leste frees UNDP-TL to focus energies on targeted support and specific improvements in delivery. Interventions in support of election events in juxtaposition to electron processes tend to be higher-cost and less sustainable.
UNDP-TL might consider technical assistance for political parties. UNDP-TL might consider future programs with political parties in relation to technical issues related to elections, as opposed to broader party development. Examples might include trainings on suitable filing of complaints and appeals on electoral issues, complying with campaign laws and campaign finance rules, political campaign fundraising and financial auditing requirements, and conducting effective outreach and education on electoral processes.	This would require a thorough assessment of the risks associated in working with political parties and strategies to mitigate them.
With recognition of the value of a biometric approach to voter registries and integrity on election day – including the fundamental value acknowledged from Timor-Leste EMB representatives – evident resistance exists. A biometric feasibility study previously conducted provides a basis for incremental steps in creating a biometric data base.	The investment and introduction of biometric documentation is a recognised trend in electoral cycle management. Such a transition in Timor-Leste would transpire *in lieu* of procuring indelible ink. Exploration of the cost/benefit analysis could be considered within the context of a regional comparative example, as could a pilot project to test the viability. Any change in this regard would be best introduced incrementally. Considering adoption of a unique identity card system is topical in Timor-Leste there may be value in supporting a biometric pilot project to demonstrate its advantages, particularly in term of voter registry that has not been updated since 2005, and how this may supplement integrity an interface with electoral card production and any future national identify card initiative.
Future project support could explore the viability of establishing a national voter education centre – potentially in STAE headquarters. Similarly, a mobile voter education centre to process accessibility in more rural municipalities would also benefit the populace.	Voter education centres may also be permanently established in STAE municipal offices, although, admittedly, this would require space in the premises and a far larger investment.
Future electoral assistance should take the form of legal analysis and support in the harmonisation of electoral laws. A single electoral law that defines EMB roles would help in this regard. Engagement of a short-term legal advisor is recommended.	Laws differ for Presidential and Parliamentary elections. As well, some UN directives are still in place. Comprehensive reform of the electoral law would provide the opportunity to fully domesticate the electoral process in Timor-Leste.

	The Electoral Management Body Law of 2006 is dated and is considerably imported from Mozambique. A comparative study might be a way forward as the system is largely imported, or more efficiently, a review of complementarities that could consider a single unified EMB. A recent public opinion poll from 2019 indicated a majority of the population in support of this idea. Other areas of legal analysis would be to consider the breakdown of competencies between CNE and STAE. For example, accreditation is by law a CNE competency, however, a parliamentary decision of 2017 shifted this responsibility to STAE, not in accordance with existing regulation. CNE as an independent body – whereas STAE is a state organ – should be considered in this light.
With the knowledge it is likely insurmountable, (requiring 4/5s majority for any constitutional amendment), as part of electoral legal reform, exploring the possibility of unstaggering Presidential and Parliamentary elections would improve cost efficiency.	Approximately 10 million USD is spent per election – harmonising this cycle, if possible, while surely creating some complexity, would serve to significantly increase savings. An estimated 6+ million will be spent on upcoming first-time village elections. Village elections will have approximately 2500 polling stations (in comparison, there were 1500 for the Presidential). Municipal elections are due in in 2025 or 2026.
Future programming for media should include editorial staff as part of training and socialisation.	Of 600 journalists trained, none of them were editors. There are fifteen professional editors in the country, who maintain crucial decision-making power on content and depth of coverage.
Training for political parties and candidates individually, and through press offices. A failure to engage directly with political parties is an oversight that should be rectified. As a major force with the ability to destabilise elections, greater engagement in terms of parties' roles within democratic culture and in the conduct of electoral campaigning is important to convey.	Political parties are central to the conduct of elections and governance. Engagement is advised to ensure a stable electoral environment.
Recognise the importance of discussing the structure and arrangements for the implementation and management of any future project. UNDP should also consider the benefits and drawbacks of the implementation modality (Direct versus National), and the value of direct partnerships with various stakeholders.	UNDP should holistically look at programming needs, options and methodologies when designing any follow-on programming in the context of the future electoral cycle. Lessons learned are important, and prior successes should be factored into future program design. At the same time, there may be new approaches that could better address some of the underlying and persistent issues in elections in Timor-Leste.

|	
Possible greater involvement in activities to support police and security agencies in elections should be thoroughly considered at the project formulation phase. This will provide donors with a clear vision of the level and nature of support offered, and to whom. UNDP should hold specific, separate discussions with donors regarding any planned electoral security work.	Security personnel are key stakeholders in safeguarding orderly election campaigning and providing election day security.
In cooperation with AJTL and the Press Council, UNDP might encourage a recognition system for exceptional electoral reporting – a prize to incentivize quality reporting.	Continued work with the press institutions is always a valuable component of the electoral cycle. Work with this sector could include additional familiarisation with the existing guidelines and media literacy training for digital and social media.

13. Annexes

Annex I: Terms of Reference
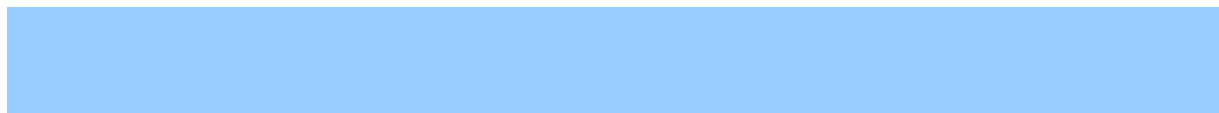
Annex I: Terms of Reference

UNDP CORE-TL Project Evaluation

UNDP

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FINAL EVALUATION

International Consultant to conduct a final evaluation for the "COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project".

POST TITLE: AGENCY/PROJECT NAME:

PERIOD OF ASSIGNMENT/SERVICE: COUNTRY PF ASSIGNMENT: STARTING DATE: LOCATION:

DUTY STATION:

Final Evaluator (International)

UNDP/COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) project
25 working days between 29 May 2023 and 30 June 2023 Timor-Leste

29 May 2023
Dili, Timor-Leste UNDP Timor-Leste

A. Background and Project Description

Ever since the 1999 referendum, which led to the independence of Timor-Leste, democratic elections have played an important role in marking the progress of Asia's newest nation. Timor-Leste has emerged as the number one in Southeast Asia in the Economic Intelligence Unit's 2018 Democracy Index. Among many other factors, the successful management of democratic elections has contributed to this achievement the most. As the primary means through which people express their preference and choose their representatives, elections are a powerful democratic tool of voice, accountability and ultimately, human development.

All elections in Timor-Leste are administered by two Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs); the National Electoral Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE). The CNE is an independent body that monitors and supervises the electoral process, with responsibility to respond to election-related complaints and the national tabulation of votes. STAE is responsible for the administration and organization of elections and is placed under the Ministry of State Administration (MSA). STAE's main functions are the technical operations such as managing a voter registration system and ballots, training electoral staff, political parties and party agents, and administering polling stations. .

Between 1999 to 2018, Timor-Leste has held 11 elections successfully without major incidents of violence. However, COVID-19 pandemic posed a threat to the electoral operation. A series of elections at the national and municipal level has been planned in Timor-Leste in 2021-2024 in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The mandatory COIVID-19 restriction in 2020, imposed by the Government, has a huge impact on the implementation of the pre-electoral period activities across the nation, including the voter registration process and civic/election education. With the limited access to bandwidth, election processes in Timor-Leste requires the gathering of people for registration, voting, civic/voter education, and so on.

This not only presents a risk for the spread of the COVID-19 as people assemble for the election, but equally, can hinder the continued practice of democratic elections entirely if not conducted, and thus, undermining democratic governance.

In response to this, UNDP has initiated the 'COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL)' project to ensure continued and strengthened democratic governance through COVID-resilient, informed, and inclusive elections. The project aims to support the Government of Timor-Leste to conduct COVID-resilient, informed and inclusive elections by five expected outputs:

- • (Output 1) Municipal EMB offices in 12 municipalities are COVID-resilient, gender/youth/disability friendly and green;
- • (Output 2) EMBs are equipped with a comprehensive plan and manual for COVID prevention and response for the upcoming elections, and its staff are trained accordingly;
- • (Output 3) Capacities of EMBs and media are enhanced to provide effective and innovative electoral and COVID-awareness communication and a participatory and interactive digital information platform for elections and COVID-19;
- • (Output 4) Groups representing youth, women and persons with disability have enhanced capacities in political participation and representation; and
- • (Output 5) Indelible ink is procured for EMBs to carry out elections.

  The project also contributes to Timor-Leste's sustainable development by joining efforts with the Government of Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UNDP Country Programme Document 2021-2025, UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and SDGs.

  The main development partner to the project is the Government of Japan with 4 million US dollars by Japan Supplementary Budget for COVID. The Government of Japan supports four components out of five. The other component which is procurement of indelible ink is funded by the Government of Timor-Leste with 694 thousand US dollars. The total project duration is two years and four months starting in March 2021 to July 2023 with a couple of no-cost extensions. The primary government partners are the National Commission of Election (CNE) and Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE). The project also targets journalists and unrepresented groups such as women, youth and people with disabilities as beneficiaries.

B. Propose and Objective of the Evaluation

The final evaluation will assess the implementation and the achievement made by the project against the project outcomes, outputs and indicators. In-depth analysis will be needed to review the results achieved under five outputs as outlined in the project document.

The analysis and recommendations presented by the evaluation will be useful to UNDP, STAE, CNE, development partners and CSOs in measuring the contributions made by the project and in designing future interventions for strengthening electoral system and processes in Timor-Leste.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are the following:

- • To assess and evaluate the progress/achievement made by the project towards objectives as specified in the Project Document, CPD, UNSDCF, 2030 Agenda, and National Strategic Plan
- • To measure the contributions made by the project to the government's effort of COVID-19 prevention in elections
- • To measure the contributions made by the project in enhancing the accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness of democratic system and processes
- • To assess the sustainability of the project interventions
- • To document main lessons learned, best practices and propose recommendations

C. Methodology of the Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the guidance, rules, and procedures established by UNDP as defined in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability,** and **impact** of the provided assistance to the partners and beneficiaries (i.e., CNE, STAE, Press Council, Civil Society Organizations, journalists, and community members) during the project cycle. The evaluation should also include cross- cutting issues, such as partnership strategy, gender, social inclusion, and environmental impact.

As for the criteria of impact, the evaluator will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. The impact of the project would focus on strengthening the capacity of STAE in conducting a credible, inclusive, and transparent elections contributing to the broader outcome of making the institutions, systems and processes of democratic governance more accountable, effective, efficient and inclusive.

The evaluator is expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis.

- • Desk review of relevant documents (project document, project annual work plan, project reports, STAE Electoral strategies and electoral operations plan, elections documents and observation and technical report/s etc.);
- • Briefing sessions with Development Partners such as Embassy of Japan in Timor-Leste, UNDP and the STAE and CNE as well as with other partners.
- • Interviews and meetings with partners and stakeholders (including gathering the information on what the partners have achieved with regard to the outcome and what strategies they have used); donors including the Embassy of Japan in Timor-Leste.
- • Field visits to selected project sites and discussions with project teams, project beneficiaries and major stakeholders.
- • Questionnaire Survey with beneficiaries and partners (as deemed necessary).

Key guiding questions are listed below.

- • To what extent were CORE-TL Project's technical and operational assistances relevant in addressing the needs and strategic priorities of STAE and CNE, including COVID-19 preventions in elections and contributing to UNDP CPD, 2030 Agenda and National Strategic Plan?
- • To what extent were interventions designed and implemented with gender and social inclusion analyses to enhance women, youth, people with disability and marginalized groups' meaningful participation in the electoral processes?

- • How relevant was the project in making STAE and CNE's electoral system and processes Covid safe, inclusive, credible and transparent?
- • To what extent was the project able to cater the needs of the beneficiaries in the changed context? How far was the project flexible If and when required an alteration of focus/strategy?
- • To what extend did the project advance any key national human rights, gender or inclusion policies and the priorities of UN, UNDP, including the UNSDCF?
- • How relevant was the geographical coverage by the project' intervention? **Effectiveness**

- • How effectively has the project been in enhancing the institutional and professional capacity of STAE to conduct Covid Safe, democratic, inclusive, credible and transparent elections?
- • Has the project achieved its outputs? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outputs?
- • Has the project implemented the activities with quality within the project time frame?
- • To what extent did the planned outputs contribute towards the achievement of the CPD

outputs and outcomes and UNSDCF outcome and what are the evidence?

- • Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame?
- • Did women, men, people with disability, youth and marginalized groups directly benefit from

the project's activities? If so, how and what was the impact?

- • How effectively were the project's interventions designed and planned in gender dimension?

Efficiency

- • To what extent have resources (financial, human, institutional and technical) been allocated strategically and efficiently?
- • How efficiently the communication around the project activities was managed?
- • Were the project inputs fairly distributed amongst different genders and communities while increasing access for the most vulnerable? What factors influenced decisions to fund certain

proposed activities, and not others?

- • To what extent did the coordination with other UN agencies and UNDP projects reduce transaction costs, optimize results and avoid duplication?
- • To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- • To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project

management?

Impact

- • To what extent did the project's interventions have impacts on the institutional/professional capacity of STAE, CNE and other electoral stakeholders? Is there evidence of knowledge transfer?
- • To what extent did the project's interventions have impacts on the conduct of elections in Timor-Leste?
- • Is there evidence of changes in elections' credibility, effectiveness and/or sustainability in Timor-Leste?
- • To what extent did the project's interventions have impact on the realization of the principle of universal suffrage and other principles of democratic voting rights, increase in political and democratic participation, legitimacy of the electoral systems, and consolidation of democracy in Timor-Leste?

Sustainability

- • Have the project's interventions enhanced the capacity of STAE/CNE and electoral stakeholders for sustainable use?
- • What is the level of ownership of STAE/CNE towards the project? To what extent will the STAE/CNE be able to sustain project's interventions (programmatically and financially) after the project phases out?
- • To what extent were the project's intervention to women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups' meaningful participation in politics effective for a long term?
- • Did the project's intervention support in drafting or amending of country's legal or policy framework of elections more transparent, participatory and/or inclusive?

Based on the above analysis, the evaluator is expected to provide overarching conclusions on the project results in this area of support, as well as recommendations on how the UNDP Timor-Leste Office would best direct development of programming, partnership arrangements, resource mobilization strategies, and capacities for similar electoral projects in the future in Timor-Leste.

D. Scope of the Evaluation and Time Frame

Under the overall supervision of the responsible officer of UNDP Timor-Leste, the Evaluator consultant will be responsible for the evaluation covering all activities as outlined in the framework of the project. 5

The evaluator is expected to conduct interviews and field missions for several municipalities under the discussion with stakeholders. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

- • Director General and Directors of STAE;
- • Minister, directors and/or advisers of State Administration;
- • President, Commissioners and/or directors of CNE;
- • Development Partners including the Embassy of Japan;
- • Partnering organizations such as IDEA, UN Women, National Press Council, etc.;
- • Local level stakeholders: STAE and CNE Municipal Directors;
- • Project staff (former and current); and
- • UNDP Country office Team.

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual Progress Report, project work plan and budget revisions, Quarterly progress reports, combine delivery report (CDR), any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. The project team will provide these documents to the selected evaluator.

The tentative schedule will be the following:

Desk review and preparation of design (home based) 2 days Briefing by Development Partner/UNDP 1 day

Finalizing design, methods and inception report and sharing with3 days reference group for feedback

Stakeholders' meetings and interviews
Field visit(s) outside Dili
Analysis, preparation of draft report, presentation of draft findings Stakeholder meeting to present draft findings
Finalize and submit report (Home Based) and review brief
Total

5 days 3 days 5 days 1 day
5 days **25 days**

E. Evaluation Criteria & Ratings

An evaluation of the project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Logical Framework/Results Framework, which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability,** and **impact.**

Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria:

- • Overall quality of the project design/programming
- • Overall quality of Monitoring and Evaluation
- • Overall achievements of the Project Outputs and contribution to Outcomes
- • Quality of UNDP Implementation as an Implementing Agency (IA)
- • Overall quality of Implementation / Execution
- • Sustainability of Financial resources
- • Institutional framework and governance sustainability

The Evaluator will assess the key financial aspects of the project utilization of funds. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures, revision of budget, donors' financial reports. The evaluator will receive assistance from the Country Office and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete assessment of financial reports which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

F. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS:

To facilitate the evaluation process, the project will assist in connecting the review team with STAE/CNE officials, development partners and key stakeholders. In addition, the project will provide operational and language support in organizing meetings and field visits, if necessary.

Key project materials will be sent before the field work and will be reviewed by the evaluator prior to the commencement of the field work. The evaluator will prepare and share the draft inception report before the field mission. The evaluator will be briefed by UNDP upon arrival on the objectives, purpose and output of the project evaluation.

The evaluator will assess the project based on interviews, discussions and consultations with all relevant stakeholders or interested parties. As a minimum indication, the evaluator should consult with implementing partners, other key government stakeholders, development partners and civil society representatives. UNDP will provide guidance in identifying, contacting and arranging for discussions, meetings with the stakeholders as required.

Comments received at a mission wrap-up meeting will be noted for incorporation in the final review report.

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP Country Office in Timor-Leste. The UNDP focal point will contract the evaluator and facilitate travel arrangements for the evaluation.

G. COMPOSITION, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE EVALUATOR

The international evaluator with the following expertise:

- • Advanced university degree in political science, social sciences, international development or related field.
- • At least 7 years of experience in evaluations in the field of governance, especially elections including

  technical advice at senior level, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation of electoral programs.

- • Sound knowledge of results-based management (especially results-oriented monitoring and evaluation)
- • Previous work experience working on elections in post-conflict countries (working experience in Timor-Leste

  is an advantage).

- • Ability to manage a team and ensure quality of a team output.
- • Fluency in English with excellent writing and communication skills.
- • Expertise in analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the review described

  above) for the report.

H. EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

The evaluator should deliver the following outputs:

- • Inception report detailing the evaluator's understanding of what is being evaluated, why it is being evaluated, and how (methodology) it will be evaluated. The inception report should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, evaluation tools, activities, questions being asked and deliverables.
- • Start of mission debriefing/meeting with UNDP (project and programme team including Resident Representative and deputy Resident Representative) on proposed methodology, design, and work plan and submission of the inception report to UNDP.
- • Note on field visit, interview and meeting with stakeholders, beneficiaries.
- • Exit presentation on findings and initial recommendations to UNDP.
- • Draft review report within 20 days of the start date.
- • Final report within 25 days of the start date of sufficient detail and quality and taking on board comments

from, with annexes and working papers as required.
The reports to include, but not be limited to, the following components:

- • Executive summary
- • Introduction
- • Description of the review methodology
- • Political and development context
- • Key findings
- • Lessons learned

• Recommendations
• Annexes: mission report including field visits, list of interviewees, and list of documents reviewed.

The Evaluator is required to discuss the full draft of its report prior to submission.

Annex II: List of Partner Organisations
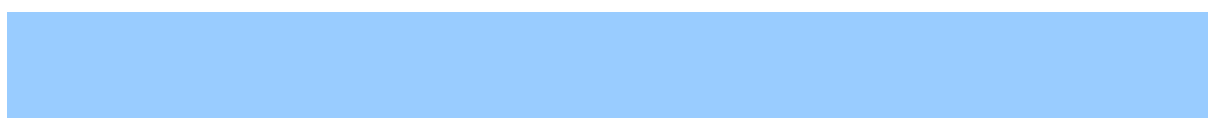
Annex II: List of Partner Organisations
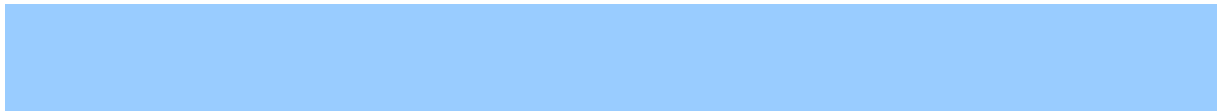
UNDP CORE-TL Project Evaluation

Version 1, 24 July 2023

List of UNDP CORE-TL Partner Organizations (2021 to 2023)

Name	Role	Type	Location
Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (STAE)	Electoral management body	Government	Dili
National Commission on Elections (CNE)	Electoral management body	Government	Dili
Embassy of Japan	CORE-TL Donor	Embassy	Dili
International IDEA	Supporting election handbooks and polling officers training	International NGO	-
Journalist Association Timor-Leste (AJTL)	Journalist training	CSO	Dili
Association Halibur Deficiency Matan Timor-Leste (AHDMTL)	Disability Organization, Braille training partner	CSO	Dili
BELUN	Youth inclusion, strengthening youth participation in elections and conflict prevention	NGO	Dili
National Press Council	Electoral reporting guideline and journalist training	Government Directorate	Dili

Annex III: Pledge of Ethical Conduct

UNDP CORE-TL Project Evaluation

UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION

By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.

INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- Honest and truthful in my communication and actions.
- Professional, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- Independent, impartial and incorruptible.

ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- Transparent regarding evaluation purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- Responsive as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- Responsible for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.

RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- Access to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- Meaningful participation and equitable treatment of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- Fair representation of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).

BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- Explicit and ongoing consideration of risks and benefits from evaluation processes.
- Maximum benefits at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- No harm. I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

_____ 13/06/23
(Signature and Date)

Annex IV: Reference Documents

UNDP CORE-TL Project Evaluation

Version 1, 24 July 2023

Document Title	Document Source	Production Date
UNDP Evaluation Policy	UNDP, (http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/policy/2019/DP_2019_29_E.pdf)	2019
UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation	UNEG, (file:///Users/anthonylondon/Downloads/2020%20Ethical%20Guidelines%20for%20Evaluation.pdf)	2020
Administrative Instruction on Evaluation United Nations Secretariat, Guidelines (ST/AI/2021/3)	United Nations Secretariat, (https://policy.un.org/sites/policy.un.org/files/files/documents/2022/Jan/evaluation_administrative_instruction_-_guidelines.pdf)	2021
UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluations	UNEG, "Norms and Standards for Evaluation", June 2016 (http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914)	2016
UNDP/COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project	UNDP	March 2021
CORE-TL | COVID-RESILIENT ELECTIONS COVID-RESILIENT PROJECT COVID-RESILIENT ELECTIONS IN TIMOR-LESTE Newsletter No. 1	UNDP	November 2022
COVID-RESILIENT ELECTIONS IN TIMOR-LESTE (CORE-TL)	UNDP, (https://www.undp.org/timor-leste/projects/covid-resilient-elections-timo-leste-core-tl)	2023

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) (2021-2025)	UN Timor-Leste	-
Country Programme Document for Timor-Leste (2021-2025)	UNDP Country Team	2020
TIMOR-LESTE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2030	Government of Timor-Leste	2010
Minutes of the Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting	UNDP CORE-TL	March 2021
Annual Work Plan	UNDP CORE-TL	2021 2022 2023
UNDP Timor-Leste Project Result Tracker for 2021-2022	UNDP CORE-TL	2021
PROGRESS REPORT Timor-Leste COVID-Resilient Election in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project	UNDP CORE-TL	December 2021 November 2022
Timor-Leste CO's Semi-Annual Reporting Template for Projects, January-June 2022	UNDP CORE-TL	June 2022
CORE-TL PROJECT BOARD MEETING 2022	UNDP CORE-TL	March 2022
CORE-TL PROJECT BOARD MEETING 2023	UNDP CORE-TL	February 2023
Project Extension Documentation	UNDP CORE-TL	2021 2022
A COVID-Resilient Presidential Election for Timor-Leste in 2022 Baseline Assessment and Recommendations	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)	16 September 2021

|		
International IDEA's Involvement in the COVID- Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project Final Report	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)	May 2022
Polling Station Centre Presidents' Handbook Polling Station Secretaries Handbook	STAE	February 2022
2022 Timor-Leste Presidential Election A Celebration of Democracy amid COVID-19 ANFREL International Election Observation Mission Report	ANFREL International Election Observation	June 2022
ANFREL Interim Statement on the 2023 Timor-Leste Parliamentary Elections	ANFREL International Election Observation	2023
European Union Election Observation Mission TIMOR-LESTE 2022 Final Report	European Union	2022
Feasibility study of Using Biometric Voter Registration in Elections Leveraging Electoral Assistance for Regionalized Nation-Building (LEARN) United Nations Development Programme Timor-Leste	Mokhtar HAMIDI	March 2020
UNDP-ADMTL offers Braille training to 120 visual impairment in Timor-Leste	https://en.tatoli.tl/2021/12/09/undp-admtl-offers-braille-training-to-120-visual-impairment-in-timor-leste/12/	December 2021
Feasibility study and development of construction Designs, drawings, and Bill of Quantities for Six Election Management Body in General Conditions of Contract Municipality of Aileu, Baucau, Covalima, Manatuto and Viqueque and	Nippon Koei, Philkoei International, Inc. and PT Indokoei International	-

General Conditions of Contract
and Technical Specifications

Narrative Report on Basic Online Fact-checking, Democracy and Election Coverage November 2022	Journalists Association of Timor-Leste (AJTL)	November 2022
Women's Enhanced Participation and Leadership in Elections (funded by UNDP Timor-Leste's Programme COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL)	UN Women	2022

Annex V: Meeting Schedule
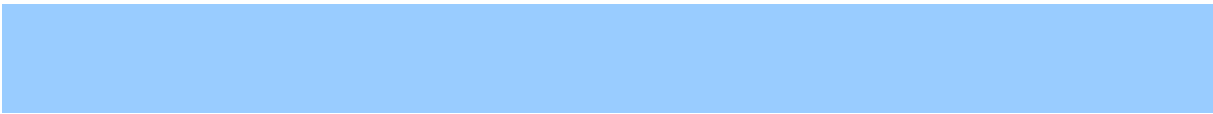
Annex V: Meeting Schedule

UNDP CORE-TL Project Evaluation

Version 3, 24 July 2023

MEETINGS

Participant	Position/Unit	Venue/Format	Date

Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE)			
Acilino Manuel Branco	General Director of STAE	Dili / In-person (no translation)	28 June 2023
Karceres Ximenes	Head of Electoral Education and Training Department STAE		
Mariano N.S. Soares	Director of STAE Manatuto	Manatuto / In-person	29 June 2023
Mariano do S. Martins	Director of STAE Liquiça	Liquiça / In-person	4 July 2023
National Commission on Elections (CNE)			
Jose Pereira Belo	President of CNE Timor-Leste	Dili / In-person	29 June 2023
Deolindo Deo Ramos	Director General CNE		
Nelio Guterres	Director of CNE Aileu	Aileu / In-person	4 July 2023
Strategic Partners			
Daishin Sasaki	Deputy Head of Economic Development Cooperation Project Focal Point, Embassy of Japan	Web conferencing	-
Adhy Aman	Senior Programme Manager, Asia and Pacific Region International IDEA	Web conferencing	-
Michael Maley	Senior Election Advisor International IDEA	Web conferencing	-
Flora Chan	Gender, Governance, Peace & Security and Disaster Risk Reduction Consultant UN Women	Web conferencing	-

Rigoberto Monteiro	Executive Director (former) National Press Council	Dili / In-person (no translation)	30 June 2023
Alberico da Costa Junior	Secretary General of Journalist Association Timor-Leste (AJTL)	Dili / In-person (no translation)	30 June 2023
Gaspar Afonso	Founder of Association Halibur Deficiency Matan Timor-Leste (AHDMTL)	Dili / In-person	30 June 2023
Luis da Costa Ximenes	Director Project Manager NGO BELUN	Dili / In-person (no translation)	30 June 2023
UNDP Project Team and UNDP Staff			
Tito de Jesus -Fillipe da Costa	Project Manager	Dili / In-person	4 July 2023
Yuka Mamekoshi	M&E Specialist	Dili / In-person	4 July 2023
Honorina Sarmento	M&E Focal Point	Dili / In-person	4 July 2023
Artemiy Izmestyev	Country Economist	Dili / In-person	4 July 2023
Auxiliadora dos Santos	Programme Analyst	Dili/ In-person	4 July 2023
Adeline Carrier	Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Timor-Leste	Dili / In-person	5 July 2023
Bruno Lencastre	CTA	Dili / In-person	5 July 2023
Paulo Amaral	Digital Transformation Specialist at CNE	Web conferencing	-
Dr. Maria Isaura Cebecas Soares	National Public Health Adviser	Web conferencing	-

Annex VI: Exploratory Interview Questions

UNDP CORE-TL Project Evaluation

Version 2, 24 June 2023

Target interview time: 60 minutes

Sample Evaluation Questions

Each question is designed to elicit a response that supplements the goal of the evaluation. It is important to consider explaining and being able to provide arguments for selecting evaluation questions, and list the criteria used to develop them. Evaluation questions are related to the UNDP evaluation policy criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and/or sustainability, as broadly outlined in the table below. The evaluation questions also address inclusion and equity, gender mainstreaming, and human rights considerations.

Evaluation Criteria	Main questions (in bold) and sample sub-questions
Relevance	**Is the project doing the right things?**
	- Were the needs of all relevant stakeholder groups identified?
	- Does the project address these stakeholder needs?
	- To what extent is the project aligned with relevant country and UNDP policies and strategies?
Efficiency	**How well are resources being used?**
	- Have outputs (e.g., number of trainees) been generated in a cost-efficient way (i.e., cost per unit of output), compared to similar activities carried out by other actors?
	- Were activities carried out on time and within the available budget resources?
Effectiveness	**Is the project achieving its objectives?**
	- Are short-term and mid-term outcomes being achieved for the targeted stakeholder group?
	- To what degree are outcomes being achieved and equitably distributed among the targeted stakeholder groups?
	- What major factors (i.e., obstacles, facilitators) influence the achievement of project outcomes?
Impact	**What difference does the project make?**
	- Has the project contributed to impact (i.e., long-term outcomes)?
	- What is the UNDP's contribution when considering confounding factors (e.g., activities of other organisations)?
	- What major factors (i.e., obstacles, facilitators) influence the achievement of impact?
Sustainability	**Will the benefits last?**
	- To what extent are the project benefits (i.e., the outcomes) expected to continue, or diminish, after project closure?
	- What are the major factors influencing sustainability?
	- Is some type of continued UNDP engagement warranted to ensure sustainability?
	- Does the project partner with other UNDP projects?
	- Does the project partner with other projects from international organizations?
Cross-cutting Criteria	
Participation and Inclusion	**Has an inclusion and equity perspective been integrated?**
	- Is the project aligned with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?
Gender Mainstreaming	- Is the project aligned with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and in support of UN Security Council resolution 1325?
	- Has a gender perspective been incorporated into project design and planning, implementation, outreach and participation of beneficiaries?

Human Rights and Social Justice	- Has a human rights and social justice perspective been incorporated into project design and planning, implementation, outreach and participation of beneficiaries?
Coherence	**How well does the project fit?**
	- What are the synergies of the project with other projects and policies in a country, sector or institution?
	- To what extent do other projects and policies internally or externally support or undermine the project, and vice versa?
	- How is the project related to projects from other departments / units?
	- Has the project been coordinated across UNDP executive structures, including the Secretariat?
	- Describe to what extent the project was coherent with the initiatives of other UNDP operations, institutions, and the Secretariat. Was the project co-ordinated with international organizations working on the same/similar issue prior to and during its implementation? Was the project coherent with any existing National Action Plans (NAPs)?
	-
Partnership	- If a joint project, what were the added benefits of the partnership (internal or external) to project delivery, sustainability and effectiveness? Are the benefits sufficient to justify future partnerships on this problem or other issues?
	- Were co-ordination, implementation modalities, financing and institutional arrangements clearly strengthening local ownership?
Added Value	- Did the project results and activities help define or reinforce UNDP's role in this particular theme/topic areas? Did stakeholders reflect on the value of this role – positively or negatively?
	- What concrete difference did the UNDP's involvement in the project make?
	- Did UNDP assume a clear role beyond provision of funding?
	- Could the project have been delivered by another organization?

Proposed CORE-TL Evaluation Questions

Relevance

- To what extent were CORE-TL Project's technical and operational assistances relevant in addressing the needs and strategic priorities of STAE and CNE, including COVID-19 preventions in elections and contributing to UNDP CPD, 2030 Agenda and National Strategic Plan?
- To what extent were interventions designed and implemented with gender and social inclusion analyses to enhance women, youth, people with disability and marginalized groups' meaningful participation in the electoral processes?
- How relevant was the project in making STAE and CNE's electoral system and processes Covid safe, inclusive, credible and transparent?
- To what extent was the project able to cater the needs of the beneficiaries in the changed context? How far was the project flexible If and when required an alteration of focus/strategy?
- To what extend did the project advance any key national human rights, gender or inclusion policies and the priorities of UN, UNDP, including the UNSDCF?

- How relevant was the geographical coverage by the project' intervention?

Effectiveness

- How effectively has the project been in enhancing the institutional and professional capacity of STAE to conduct Covid Safe, democratic, inclusive, credible and transparent elections?
- Has the project achieved its outputs? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outputs?
- Has the project implemented the activities with quality within the project time frame?
- To what extent did the planned outputs contribute towards the achievement of the CPD outputs and outcomes and UNSDCF outcome and what are the evidence?
- Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame?
- Did women, men, people with disability, youth and marginalized groups directly benefit from the project's activities? If so, how and what was the impact?
- How effectively were the project's interventions designed and planned in gender dimension?

Efficiency

- To what extent have resources (financial, human, institutional and technical) been allocated strategically and efficiently?
- How efficiently the communication around the project activities was managed?
- Were the project inputs fairly distributed amongst different genders and communities while increasing access for the most vulnerable? What factors influenced decisions to fund certain proposed activities, and not others?
- To what extent did the coordination with other UN agencies and UNDP projects reduce transaction costs, optimize results and avoid duplication?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Impact

- To what extent did the project's interventions have impacts on the institutional/professional capacity of STAE, CNE and other electoral stakeholders? Is there evidence of knowledge transfer?
- To what extent did the project's interventions have impacts on the conduct of elections in Timor-Leste?
- Is there evidence of changes in elections' credibility, effectiveness and/or sustainability in Timor-Leste?
- To what extent did the project's interventions have impact on the realization of the principle of universal suffrage and other principles of democratic voting rights, increase in political and democratic participation, legitimacy of the electoral systems, and consolidation of democracy in Timor-Leste?

Sustainability

- Have the project's interventions enhanced the capacity of STAE/CNE and electoral stakeholders for sustainable use?

- What is the level of ownership of STAE/CNE towards the project? To what extent will the STAE/CNE be able to sustain project's interventions (programmatically and financially) after the project phases out?
- To what extent were the project's intervention to women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups' meaningful participation in politics effective for a long term?
- Did the project's intervention support in drafting or amending of country's legal or policy framework of elections more transparent, participatory and/or inclusive?

Annex VII: Interview Notes Capture Tool
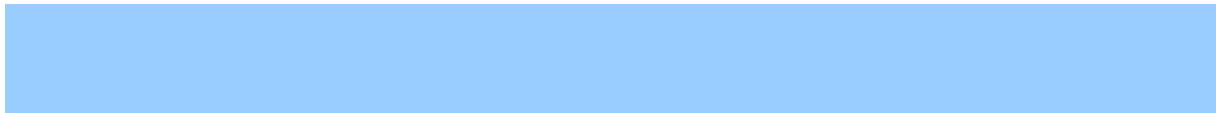
Annex VII: Interview Notes Capture Tool

UNDP CORE-TL Project Evaluation

Version 2, 24 June 2023

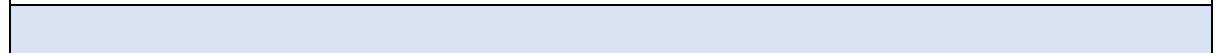| Descriptive data |
| --- |
| Interlocutor: (name/organisation/position/contact information) M/F/X: Date: Time: Start Time/End Time: Location of interview: |
| |

Introduction

		Yes/No
1	Do you understand participation is voluntary?	
2	Do you have any questions?	
3	If YES, have these been satisfactorily answered	

Interview questions

[Tailored list to be inserted prior to interview]

Interview notes

[insert notes here]

Question	Responses

Areas of Assessment addressed (check all that apply)

☐ Priority research questions
    ☐ Relevance
    ☐ Effectiveness
    ☐ Efficiency
    ☐ Impact
    ☐ Sustainability
    ☐ Other _____

☐ Key Element of Election Assistance
    ☐ Administration
        ☐ Training/Capacity Building
        ☐ Materials support/procurements
        ☐ Voter Registration
        ☐ Results Management
    ☐ Political Party Support
        ☐ New(Women/Youth) Candidates
        ☐ Capacity building
    ☐ Observation
    ☐ Electoral Dispute Resolution
    ☐ Conflict Mitigation
        ☐ Early warning/detection
        ☐ Peace Messaging
        ☐ Capacity Building (CSO, Police, other)
    ☐ Media Support
    ☐ Civic/Voter Education
        ☐ Motivational
    ☐ Youth Engagement
    ☐ Other:_____

☐ Other Key/ Cross-cutting Issues
    ☐ Persons with Disabilities
    ☐ Gender
    ☐ Youth/first time voters
    ☐ Other:_____

Headline(s)

[major take-aways from the interview]

Interlocutor: (name/position)	
Question	Responses

Annex VIII: Evaluation Overview Matrix: CORE-TL

Annex VIII
Evaluation Overview Matrix: CORE-TL

No	Project Name	Project Identification Number(s)	Evaluation Topic/Title	Purpose	Contributing Outcomes/SDGs	Type	Evaluator(s)	Managing Division/Office	Source of Funds	Allocated Budget	Project Start and End Date	Period under Evaluation	Evaluation Due	Status
1	"COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project".	134455	Assess the extent to which electoral activities supported by UNDP effectively promote ensure continued and strengthened democratic governance through COVID-resilient, informed, and inclusive elections.	The final evaluation will assess the implementation and the achievement made by the project against the project outcomes, outputs and indicators. In-depth analysis will be needed to review the results achieved under five outputs as outlined in the project document.	1. Asses the results of UNSCDF Outcome 5: Accessible, accountable and gender-responsive governance systems, institutions and services at the national and municipal levels. 2. Measure impact towards UNSCDF Outcome 6: Resilience to climate change and sustainable management of resources. Steps to achieve SDGS: SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	External Evaluation / Terminal Evaluation	Individual Consultant	UNDP - TL	Regular budget earmarked	$22,000	2021-03-22 - 2023-07-31	2021-03-22 - 2023-07-31	2nd Quarter 2023	Programmed

Week 1	Administraive						
Week 2		Prepatory Phase					
Week 3			Evluation Work Plan	Survey??	Data Collection		
Week 4						Inception	
Week 5							Interim Results/First Evaluation Report Draft
Week 6							Final Evluation Report