

Final Report

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

Final Evaluation

Submitted to
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Mr. Omer Ahmed Awan & Ms. Lili Fatima C. P. Martins

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ACRONYMS

CPD	Country Programme Document
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DIM	Direct Implementation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INAP	Instituto Nacional da Administração Pública
IOB	Institute of Business
KII	Key Informant Interview
MSA	Ministry of State Administration
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee
PB	Project Board
QBS	Questionnaire Based Survey
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TL	Timor-Leste
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project “Strengthening Integral Local Development by Building the Capacities of the Municipal Authorities in Timor-Leste”¹ is implemented by UNDP. The project’s overall objective is to contribute to Timor-Leste's sustainable development. More specifically, it aims to support the deconcentration and Decentralization process, bringing governance, public administration, and services closer to people, for both women and men, giving special attention to the needs and priorities of people living in vulnerable situations. The Project has three major components: a. strengthened capacity of the National Parliament in Timor-Leste, b. improved capacity of municipal public servants to deliver services at the local level, c. improved capacity of local institutions to collect, analyze and use reliable and timely socio-environmental disaggregated data (development of a Municipal Portal).

This evaluation report contains findings, lessons learnt and recommendations from the final evaluation report of the UNDP Decentralization project conducted between November to December 2023. The evaluation adopted primarily two approaches including participatory and consultative approach and contribution analysis approach. The overall evaluation criteria were based on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria. Specifically, it evaluated progress towards achievement of outputs and objectives of the Decentralization project based on a set of criteria as outlined in the Final Evaluation’s TOR. These criteria include relevance/coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Below is a summary of the final evaluation findings.

Summary of Findings

A1- Relevance: The Decentralization project was found to be ‘Relevant’ to the national level priorities, UNDAF, UNSDC Framework, UNDP’s Strategic and Country Plans and SDGs. The relevance dimension of the project was found as one of the strongest attributes of the project. The project is also highly aligned and relevant with Article 72 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste ‘Local government is constituted by corporate bodies vested with representative organs, with the objective of organizing the participation by citizens in solving the problems of their own community and promoting local development without prejudice to the participation by the State’; Three of the objectives of the Decentralization of the Public Administration as stipulated in the National Strategic Development Plan; and to UNDAF (2015-2020) outcome 2 & 4, UNSDF’s Outcome 5 as well as with SDGs 1, 2, 5, 16 & 17.

A2 – Effectiveness: On the basis of assessment conducted for the 3 outputs, UNDP Decentralization project has shown significant progress in all 3 outputs. However, it is worth mentioning that the level of progress and achievement of the targets varies from one output to the other. Comparatively, Output 1 (Parliament Support) has shown immense progress with major targets achieved.. The progress towards output 1 was found as the strongest attribute of the project. Overall, the project has achieved major progress and success under Output 1, widely acknowledged and appreciated by the stakeholders. The success of this output is attributed mainly to the endorsement of the three laws on decentralization.

Significant progress has been made under output 2 in general and many initially partially achieved targets are completed during the last year which is widely appreciated by the Municipalities. Overall, Output 3 has shown considerable progress whereby some of the targets are overachieved as well by the time of the final evaluation. Initially

¹ Project is referred as UNDP Decentralization project in the Mid-Term Evaluation report

hindered by the delays, the development and implementation of Municipality Portal was found to be a major milestone achieved.

A3 – Efficiency: Overall efficiency of the Decentralization Project **was found as ‘efficient’** even though the level of efficiency varies from one component to the other including implementation arrangement, M&E, partnerships and budget efficiency.

A4- i) Project Board – Although the overall role of the project board was found ‘efficient’ in terms of periodic supervision of progress, discussing risks and challenges and take decisions, it is however, worth mentioning finding highlighted by the stakeholders that significant gap in the board meeting has resulted in slowing down the actual implementation of the project. There was a gap of almost 18 months found in 2 board meetings (Between July 2020 to December 2021). . The gap was attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and related logistical issues.

ii) PMU – Overall, stakeholders have shown acknowledgement and appreciation for the PMU’s project management role in general and coordination support in particular. Working in an evolving political environment, changes in political and administrative set up, covid pandemic etc., PMU has shown adaptive still efficient ways of coordination among multiple stakeholders. However, the overall efficiency of the PMU was found to be hindered by high staff turnover.

iii) M&E – The M&E function of the project, particularly in terms of progress reporting and field visits were assessed as one of the stronger links of the project implementation mechanism. The assessment indicated that the M&E team revised results framework has made it simplified with clearer linkages with the country level plans. Stakeholders have also shown satisfaction about UNDP’s M&E function, particularly the reporting mechanisms.

iv) Output Efficiency- Hindered by the Covid-19 Pandemic as well as considerable gap in PMB meeting, the overall efficiency of planned vs. actual results/targets, both in terms of time and completion, initially delayed but came on track in the later stages of the project. Nevertheless, there are slow progress in certain areas in the last year due to political and administrative changes in the country.

iv) Communication & Visibility – The project is backed by a well-documented communication strategy/plan. However, it was found during the stakeholder consultations that while visibility of output 1 (Parliament Support) & output 3 (Municipality Portal) have been widely acknowledged, the project interventions and activities under output 2 requires more and continued visibility and communication to the wider audience.

v) Budget Efficiency – Overall budget efficiency of the project considerably improved over the years whereby it was merely 45% in year 2020. Predominantly due to the challenge imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions. However it has considerably improved to over 90% in year 2021, 2022 and 2023.

A5 – Partnership Strategy: UNDP’s partnership strategy for the Decentralization project has been found as one of the stronger attributes of the project. As guided by the ProDoc and the Project Board, UNDP has developed and maintained multiple level of partnerships that includes government sector organizations, private sector entities and academia etc.

A6 – Impact: Although the impact of any project is usually assessed sometime after the completion of the project, UNDP’s decentralization project has yielded promulgation of the three laws on decentralization: Law on Local Power and Administrative Decentralization, and the Law on Municipal Elections. Stakeholders consulted validated and acknowledged the extraordinary support and contribution of UNDP/the Decentralization Project in this achievement.

These 3 laws, though being an integral targets of the project results framework, it has formed a long term foundation to guide the historic decentralization process in Timor-Leste.

A7 – Sustainability: Although due to the intrinsic design of the project whereby the primary objective of all 03 components/outputs is to build capacities of Government departments and community, there was a consensus found that sustainability of the project is a serious challenge and point of concern among the stakeholders. It includes financial and political risks to the continuity of the project as well as enabling sustainable ownership at all levels of the government.

A8 – Gender Mainstreaming, Youth, & PWDs: Ensuring gender equality, inclusion of youth and PWDs were found to be given considerable focus in the project, particularly with reference to the inclusion in trainings. Both at the design (Results Framework in Pro-Doc) and implementation stages, gender equality was given a priority to address the gaps observed and grievances reported during the capacity need assessment.

A9 – Lessons Learned

Based on the identified and discussed lessons learned for each output, following is a summary of key lessons learned for the overall project:

- ❖ **Resistance to Change & ICT skills-** The project with a major focus on building technology related capacity of civil servants is faced by continuous resistance, limited political will and time, particularly due to limited background in ICT skills, backed by years of service in non-technological mechanisms.
- ❖ **Political Change and Adaptability-** A project focusing on supporting policy and legislative development is hindered by any political and administrative change in the country. The project adaptability is highly dependent on the continued political willingness to carry forward the agreed project outcomes.
- ❖ **Connectivity-** Project with predominant focus on ICTs require uninterrupted, reliable and good bandwidth connectivity in Municipalities. It was found during stakeholder consultations and site visits that users face disruption in connectivity. It will cause considerable issue in accessing e-learning platforms etc.
- ❖ **One Centralized Partner for training-** For the long-term sustainability of a government supported e-learning certification, it is vital to give ownership and responsibility to single partner e.g. INAP instead of dealing with separate partners simultaneously e.g. CSC, IOB, Coursera etc. It will bring efficiency, avoiding duplication of efforts and less difficult coordination as well as authenticity and clarity for the trainees about the certification process.
- ❖ **Issue of sustainability and high turnover of ICT staff/ ICT equipment sustainability.** Without any clear and comprehensive agreed sustainability mechanism, both ICT staff and equipment retention will face issue of sustainability in medium to long term. To implement a reform project that required both technical as well as administrative support, high turnover results in loss of institutional memory as well as adverse impact on implementation efficiency.

A10 – Recommendations: Keeping in view that project has been able to showcase significant progress in taking the evolving agenda of decentralization in the country forward through legislative and policy support as well as capacity building of the government officials, it is recommended that a Phase II of the project should be developed and implemented with more refined and renewed focus to keep the momentum of effective implementation of

decentralization agenda forward. To create a visible impact in the Decentralization agenda and tangible outputs, it is recommended to develop a project for at least 5 years.

Project Design

- ❖ A more simplified and forward-looking project design and related results framework should be developed that is based on the achievements of the current project to the next stage and forward. It should be more focused on the ICTs and e-governance since the foundation has been set in the current project.
- ❖ Nevertheless, the capacity building component of the project should be continued as any ICTs/technology based intervention requires continued follow-up and long-term strategy.
- ❖ While there is a clear synergy found between this project and the 'one stop shop' initiative as well as an e-governance strategy id developed, both interventions should be combined under e-governance agenda to yield more holistic and synergistic results.

Based on these design recommendations, it is suggested to have not more than 2-3 outputs for the project

i) Output 1 - Capacity Building & Technical Support to Municipalities

- ❖ **ICTs training, use of portal and e-learning-** Continued training to municipalities in the areas of ICT skills, use of Municipality Portal, e-Learning platforms as well as e-Governance through One Stop Shop.
- ❖ **Public Service Certifications and courses-** It is recommended that only one relevant and authorized Government entity e.g. INAP should be given responsibility for planning, implementing, managing the training and certification process. **Trainings based on updated needs assessment-** It is also important to update the training needs assessment for municipalities to provide customized needs based training for municipalities.

It is also vital to have a clear strategy and policy approval to sustain ICT and Municipality Coordinators should be pursued now to ensure sustainability. It is also recommended that UNDP should negotiate with CSC and MSA to create small ICT/IT unit in each municipality with permanent ICT staff to ensure sustainability and ownership.

ii) Output 2 - e-Governance through One Stop Shop

It may involve following 3 components:

- ❖ **One Stop Shop (Physical) Back End Infrastructure (e.g. ERP implementation One Stop Shop Office)-** It will require complete digitization of administrative work at Government offices as well in One Stop Shop through interlinked ERP/MIS solution.
- ❖ **e-Government/Digital Services through One Stop Shop-** It will include provide digital government services to the citizens who will visit the one stop shop to avail government services.
- ❖ **One Stop Municipality Digital Platform-** This may include digital form of all municipality related services to the citizens as well to staff (e.g. Municipality Portal, e-Learning platform, e-Services (Final stage where all services are available online with no need to visit physical one stop shop. Consider linking e-Learning

platform with Municipality Portal to avoid multiple forums and have 'one stop platform' for municipality (Future e-Governance on stop digital window for Municipalities).

- ❖ While the project has shown certain design and implementation focus on mainstreaming gender, it is highly recommended to strengthen the focus on bringing more women, marginalized and vulnerable groups in all phases of project e,g i) **Project Design** (through consultations with these groups and including specific results indicators and targets) ii) **Project Implementation** (including these groups in all project interventions such as training, outreach, communication and awareness activities as well as facilitating in One Stop shop etc) iii) **Project monitoring and evaluation**- Including appropriate representation of these groups in regular progress monitoring and feedback mechanism as well as evaluation exercises

Implementation and Management

- i. **Keeping in view the UNDP may continue to support government in the implementation of long decentralization process, Project Management Unit for project should be strengthened** with more secure contract to avoid staff turnover. It will bring efficiency as well as assist in building institutional and knowledge memory;
- ii. The Project Board Meetings should take place more frequently, considering the complexities of context for planning and implementation of decentralization process.

Final Evaluation Report

Final Evaluation-Strengthening Integral Local Development by Building the Capacities of the Municipal Authorities in Timor-Leste

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Decentralization in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste is a village-based society where the majority (69%) of the population currently lives in rural areas with limited access to governance processes and service delivery. Some of the most pressing issues affecting rural communities are poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, access to and availability of basic services, and lack of capacity. Those who belong to the most vulnerable social groups, such as people with disabilities, women (particularly domestic violence survivors and single mothers), youth, children, the elderly, and people with mental illness, have the most serious challenges in accessing basic services. The problems highlight the importance of efficient and effective decentralization in the country to close these gaps at the local level.

The Constitution of the Republic of Timor-Leste has progressive provisions regarding Decentralization. In that it stipulates the principle of decentralization of public administration and the creation of local government vested with representative organs as the basis for territorial organization and management to: (i) encourage and organize public participation in addressing collective issues facing their respective community; and (ii) promote local development without prejudice to the participation by the State. To this end, the government have introduced several initiatives and reforms beginning with the definition of the municipalities and identification of their respective capitals in 2009, enactment of several Decentralization Laws including a decree law defining competencies of the municipalities in 2016 and Law on Local Power and Administrative Decentralization and Municipal Election Law in 2021.

1.2. Project Background

Given the limited access to governance processes and service delivery, the project aims to enhance the importance of efficient and effective decentralization to resolve the problems related to the service delivery in the country to fill these gaps at the local level.

Project Background

The project “Strengthening Integral Local Development by Building the Capacities of the Municipal Authorities in Timor-Leste” ²is implemented by UNDP. It aims to support the deconcentration and Decentralization process, bringing governance, public administration, and services closer to people, for both women and men, giving special attention to the needs and priorities of people living in vulnerable situations. The Project has three major components: **a. strengthened capacity of the National Parliament in Timor-Leste, b. improved capacity of municipal public servants to deliver services at the local level, c. improved capacity of local institutions to collect, analyze and use reliable and timely socio-environmental disaggregated data (development of a Municipal Portal).**

The project contributes to outcome five of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025 and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD). The outcome is about empowering the excluded people of Timor-Leste to claim their rights, including freedom from violence, through accessible, accountable, and gender-responsive governance systems. The initiative complements UNDP's governance efforts, particularly in parliament, elections, and rural poor and vulnerable populations' access to justice.

Co-funded by the European Union and UNDP, the total project duration is three years, starting from March 20, 2020. The total budget of the Project is 3.98M USD. The project is being implemented under the direct implementation (DIM) modality of UNDP in partnership with the National Parliament and the Ministry of State Administration (MSA). It covers 12 out of the 13 municipalities of the country. The Project Board (PB) provides strategic guidance and oversight to the project and is co-chaired by the Minister for State Administration and UNDP Resident Representative. The Board has representation from the National Parliament, National Authorization Agency, and the UNDP. The project is managed by a team of national and international staff, and the project staff are based in 12 municipalities.

1.3. Project objectives

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to Timor-Leste's sustainable development. More specifically, it aims to support the deconcentration and Decentralization process, bringing governance, public administration, and services closer to people, for both women and men, giving special attention to the needs and priorities of people living in vulnerable situations.

1.4. Project Outputs

- ❖ **Output 1:** Enhanced capacity of Commission A and C2 at the National Parliament to perform informed discussions and increase awareness of the Timorese population of the Decentralization process.

² Project is referred as UNDP Decentralization project in the inception report

- ❖ **Output 2:** Improved capacity of the local authorities to deliver public services including the development and implementation of computer-based modular courses for public servants.
- ❖ **Output 3:** Local authorities have improved access to municipal data for planning, monitoring, and better service delivery by using ICT tools.

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES & APPROACH

2.1. Evaluation Approach

This Final Evaluation primarily adopted two approaches that are, participatory and consultative approach and contribution analysis approach. The former was selected based on the requirement for the evaluation as outlined in the final evaluation’s TOR. This approach ensured close engagement with all relevant stakeholders including project management team, implementing partners and direct beneficiaries both male and female of the project activities. Through this approach, the evaluation captured the views of the direct beneficiaries and key stakeholders both on their initial thoughts and expectations, and their feedback following project intervention. Their overall views on project activities, inputs, progress, challenges, and risks to successful implementation were also documented and communicated through the findings of the report.

The latter approach sought to identify and confirm whether particular outcomes are attributable to a deliberate and well-thought-out process and actions guided by the theory of change the project adopts from the outset. In this regard, it sought to demonstrate, taking into account the ongoing efforts and any challenges both internal and external the project had to overcome or is currently dealing with, the causal link or the contribution the project has made through its programs and activities to particular outcomes the project has accomplished up to date. In turn, this informed and enabled the evaluation to further confirm the validity of the project design vis-à-vis the actualization of the theory of change in terms of a set of evaluation criteria as outlined in the project document.

2.2. Evaluation Criteria

The overall evaluation criteria were based on the OECD DAC criteria and are aligned with the (United Nations Evaluation Guidelines (UNEG) ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’ as well as UN – Independent Evaluation Office’s best practices. Specifically, it evaluated progress towards achievement of outputs and objectives of the Decentralization project based on a set of criteria as outlined in the Final evaluation’s TOR. These criteria include relevance/coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Under each of the criteria, the evaluation developed a series of key question to guide the inquiry into and the evaluation of the project’s progress and achievements.

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria

No	Criteria	Information to be captured
1	Relevance / Coherence	under this criterion, the evaluation will evaluate the extent to which the project’s goals and objectives is harmonized with Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan, UNDP Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals

2	Effectiveness	under this section, the evaluation will evaluate the extent to which the project's activities, outputs and objectives contribute to the country's programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan and national development priorities
3	Efficiency	focuses on the cost-effectiveness and timely delivery of the project outputs as well as the role of project management and structure on the delivery of project outcomes and objectives
4	Impact	Focuses on the assessing any evidence for long-lasting desired changes resulted from project interventions, project influenced policy making at different levels and how the project impacted the desired target actors?
5	Sustainability	Focuses on the institutions and the mobilization of required resources including financial resources to sustain the project achievements into the future

In addition, the evaluation also included assessment of the project's partnership strategy and cross cutting themes (**Annex B includes list of guiding questions for each of the criteria mentioned above**).

No.	Criteria	Information to be captured
5	Cross-cutting theme	Focuses on the project's contribution to other specific goals such as gender equality and women empowerment as well as for empowerment of youth and vulnerable communities
6	Partnership strategy	Focused on the strategies adopted by the project and relevant partners and assess the extent to which the current arrangement either contribute to or hinder the successful delivery of the program goals and objectives

2.3. Evaluation Objectives

This final evaluation is part of the project's ongoing efforts to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outputs. It forms part of the project's larger evaluation framework that includes a final evaluation of the project that will be aimed at assessing the performance of the project

since its inception. The evaluation covers the overall project duration from June 2020 to March 2024³ that includes the project extension from June 2022 to March 2024.

Final Evaluation Objectives

- ❖ 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 to realize decentralization reform.
- ❖ To measure the contributions made by the project in enhancing the accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, and inclusiveness in the government processes and decentralization reform.
- ❖ To assess the sustainability of the project interventions
- ❖ To assess the effectiveness and coherence of the coordination mechanisms in project implementation
- ❖ To document and/or harvest project outcomes and provide detailed contextual information and analysis on the thematic project areas
- ❖ To promote further accountability and transparency of and/or in the project and among key stakeholders
- ❖ To encourage greater ownership of project outcomes among all relevant parties involved in the project not least among the beneficiaries
- ❖ To bolster further collaboration among the project team, key stakeholders and the beneficiaries
- ❖ To document main lessons learned and best practices and propose recommendations.

2.4. Inception Meeting/Call

Upon the award of a contract, a virtual inception meeting was held on Monday, 23rd October 2023. The meeting was initiated with a brief introduction of the UNDP Decentralization project by the UNDP team. The overview was followed by discussions on expectations about key deliverables, and timelines. In addition, the inception meeting call served as an opportunity to discuss management approach and coordination mechanisms of the assignment and to request relevant important documents. After the meeting, UNDP also shared available information as well as documents pertaining to the UNDP Decentralization project for desk review and document analysis.

2.5 EVALUATION SCOPE

Based on the TORs, the scope of this evaluation covered following four categories of project progress:

³ The final evaluation took place in December 2023.

➤ **Project Strategy & Project Design:**

- ❖ Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions.
- ❖ Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- ❖ Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results.
- ❖ Review how the project addresses country priorities and takes stock of linkages with the DECENTRALIZATION project.
- ❖ Review decision-making processes. Results Framework/Log frame:
- ❖ Undertake a critical analysis of the project's log frame indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- ❖ Examine if progress so far has led to or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e., income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance, etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

➤ **Progress Towards Results:**

Review the log frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets; populate the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as described in the Guidance for Conducting Final Reviews of UNDP-Supported projects. Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective. By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

➤ **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management:**

It will include assessing the Management Arrangements, Work Planning, Finance and co-finance, Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, Stakeholder Engagement, Reporting and Communications.

➤ **Sustainability:**

- ❖ Assess overall risks to sustainability factors of the project in terms of the following four categories:
 - i. Financial risks to sustainability,
 - ii. Socio-economic risks to sustainability,
 - iii. Institutional framework and
 - iv. governance risks to sustainability

3.0 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The following sections provide relevant details about the **evaluation methodology** finalized based on the TORs for undertaking the assignment and findings from the Desk Review.

PREPARATION OF THE EVALUATION

3.1 Desk Review and Document Analysis

The foundation of the desk review was the background documents shared by the UNDP team. A review of the documents such as UNDP Decentralization project documents, results framework, revised framework and indicators, progress reports, minutes of project management board meetings, etc., facilitated a basic understanding of the project and enabled an effective assessment design.

Keeping in view some of the attributes found in the desk review and while evaluating the project under the basic criteria of the midterm review, the assessment was also based on 3 primary parameters.

The foundation of the desk review is the background documents shared by the UNDP team. A review of the documents such as UNDP Decentralization project documents, results framework, revised framework and indicators, progress reports, minutes of project management board meetings, etc., facilitated a basic understanding of the project and enabled an effective assessment design.

Keeping in view some of the attributes found in the desk review and while evaluating the project under the basic criteria of the final review, the assessment will also be based on 3 primary parameters:

- I. How has the UNDP Decentralization project performed so far with reference to its results framework, related indicators, and targets.
- II. How and if the project can cope with and realign with the evolving unforeseen impact caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic and/or any changing context that UNDP Decentralization project has experienced since its inception?

III. **The evaluation report will also assess and describe any lessons learned, challenges faced and furnish recommendations.** Capturing key lessons learned will be vital to inform any adjustments and realignment of the UNDP Decentralization project in future. Enquiring and documentation of lessons learned will be done through multiple sources to validate the findings and observations. This will include the key lessons learned that are already documented, findings and observations that will be gathered through KIIs, and documents review survey. The scope of assessment will be aiming at the following basic questions:

- ❖ How and to what extent, the key lessons learned so far have been documented and discussed?
- ❖ What didn't go so well and what can we learn from that?
- ❖ What should be done to improve the project planning and implementation in the remaining years of the project?

A basic list of documents reviewed during this stage is provided in the **Annex A**.

3.2 Programmatic Scope of the Assessment

The programmatic scope of the evaluation exercise primarily focused on assessing the projects' progress on key outputs, indicators and targets of the results frameworks.⁴

3.3 Development of Assessment Tools

The TORs and the Desk Review of the documents provided an informed foundation for the development of assessment tools. Keeping in view that stakeholder consultations involve high level government officials, parliamentarians as well as support of a National Consultant to fast-track data collection, a mix of data collection tools were adopted to gather data from multiple sources. Initially 4 data collection tools were envisaged. However, after consultations with the UNDP team and considering the communicated logistical issues to conduct Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), one tool was dropped and data collection used the following **three techniques**:

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS)
- Direct Observations/Site Visits to the Municipalities

The above-mentioned tools were user friendly and provided a combination of qualitative and quantitative information. **Annex B** provides a detailed '**Evaluation Questions Matrix**', relevant/related data collection methods and sources for the evaluation mission. These questions also provided the guiding basis for the interviews. It is also worth mentioning here that while formulating the evaluation

⁴ Results frameworks and related indicators are derived from the proDoc and revised results framework.

matrix, specific questions are developed across multiple criteria of the evaluation as well as specific criteria on gender to gauge the overall gender mainstreaming in the design as well as results of the projects (Please see Annex B).

DATA COLLECTION FROM THE FIELD

3.4 Data Collection

While undertaking the data collection process, it was ensured that both quantitative and qualitative information is gathered through a combination of primary and secondary sources. Data collected from one source was triangulated with the other to ensure accuracy and validity. An intelligent mix of both approaches offered more quality and depth to ensure greater understanding of the phenomenon. This, therefore, presented information about the nature, extent, effect, and impact of the issues in the targeted area.

3.4.1 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

To consult the relevant project stakeholders, key informant interviews were conducted. **Annex B** provides a list of questions that guided the independent key informant interviews under the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, cross cutting themes and UN's partnership strategy. As a minimum, following key stakeholders/categories were initially identified through the documents review:

- Representatives from UNDP Programme and project staff
- Representative from the Ministry of State Administration
- Parliamentarians
- Representative from the Civil Service Commission
- Representative from the Institute of Public Administration and
- Trainees/Staff of Municipalities etc.

However due to non-confirmation of KIIs schedule and unavailability of the staff, limited KIIs were conducted.

Complete list of stakeholder consultation is included in the Annex D.

3.4.2 Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS)

To further validate the collected data as well as to accommodate stakeholders that were not available or accessible for the KIIs, a Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) was administered to complement other data collection tools and to capture data from a range of stakeholders of the project. It assisted in further validating and triangulating data gathered from the range of project documents as well as data gathered

during KIIs. **Annex E** provides the basic set of questions for QBS, divided into 2 parts⁵: i) for UNDP project staff of decentralization project, ii) for beneficiaries (Municipality Staff). Municipality staff provided feedback on questions during the site visits of the National Consultant.

3.4.4 Direct Observations/Site Visits

To validate the support provided to the municipalities, site visits were proposed to make Direct Observations. It included visit to the project sites, observing work in progress as well as wherever possible, meet staff to assess their involvement, participation, and ownership of the project. **Annex C** provides preliminary screening questions for the data collection tool. National consultant conducted site visits to 3 Municipalities based on geographical coverage as well as to ensure that those municipalities are covered that were not visited during the mid term evaluation. The site visits assisted in the validation of the project interventions and beneficiaries' feedback about the projects.

Following 3 municipalities were visited:

- Ainaro,
- Ermera and
- Aileu.

3.5 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was intensive as it was gathered from multiple sources including field visits, KIIs and document reviews. It was aimed to analyze both quantitative (limited, such as budget data) and a lot of qualitative data from a broad stakeholder base, outcome, and various outputs. Analytical tools, particularly triangulation of data were applied which permitted comparisons. It involved taking data from multiple sources, finding themes, coding them, and then comparing or triangulating the data from different data sources and different data collection methods, It resulted in inclusion and use of only that data for compilation of findings, that have been validated from multiple sources.

Development of Evaluation Report

3.6 Presentation on the Initial Findings

Based on the initial data collected and analyzed through the data collection activities of documents interviews, QBS and site visits, a debriefing session was scheduled to be held on 1st December, 2023 at with UNDP to present the preliminary findings and seek inputs/feedback at the end of the field mission.

⁵ A combined QBS is included as Annex E. However separate QBS was circulated for each of the 2 identified category of respondents

However due to lack of any scheduled KIIs and unavailability of stakeholders, very limited data was collected during the field visit. It is now scheduled after the submission of the draft report.

3.7 Evaluation Limitations

Although the evaluation was conducted in a structured manner, the data collection phase faced certain limitations in gathering the data during the evaluation exercise:

- There was a considerable delay in recruiting the national consultant that resulted in very limited time to coordinate the data collection plan.
- There were very limited to no KIIs scheduled during the field visit of the international consultant.
- The representation and number of beneficiaries during site visit of a municipality were limited due to unavailability of staff.
- Despite efforts, the virtual KIIs were not arranged with unavailability of stakeholders as a main indicated cause.

To tackle these limitations, the evaluation methodology was initially designed in a way that survey was envisaged as an additional and back up tool to further validate data gathered from other sources. However, site visits and survey became the primary sources of the data collection backed by the available documents. Nevertheless, primary data collection through KIIs still remained limited.

4 EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Relevance

Finding: The Decentralization project was found to be ‘Relevant’ to the national level priorities, UNDAF, UNSDC Framework, UNDP’s Strategic and Country Plans and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Relevance dimension of the project was found as one of the strongest attributes of the project.

4.1.1 Relevance with the National Level Priorities

The Decentralization project is highly aligned and relevant with **Timor-Leste’s Constitution & Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2011-2030**. More specifically, direct linkages can be drawn with:

- ❖ Article 72 ‘Local government is constituted by corporate bodies vested with representative organs, with the objective of organizing the participation by citizens in solving the problems of their own community and promoting local development without prejudice to the participation by the State’.
- ❖ Three of the objectives of the Decentralization of the Public Administration as stipulated in the National Strategic Development Plan, i.e. (i) The promotion of the strong state institutions in the territory; (ii) The creation of the new opportunities for democratic participation; (iii) To ensure effective and efficient provision of public services.
- ❖ Strategy for Decentralization developed by the Ministry of State Administration (MSA) in 2019.

Since the three components of the project are strongly interlinked and build on each other, all related project were found to be highly relevant to the above stated national level priorities.

4.1.2 Relevance with UNDAF (2015-2020), UNSDCF (2021-2025) & UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025)

The Project was found to be aligned and contributing to the following outcomes of the UNDAF.

UNDAF Outcome 2: People of Timor-Leste, especially the rural poor and vulnerable groups, derive social and economic benefits from improved access to and use of sustainable and resilient infrastructure.

UNDAF Outcome 4: State institutions are more responsive, inclusive, accountable, and decentralized for improved service delivery and realization of rights, particularly of the most excluded groups.

UNSDCF (2021-2025)

Outcome 5: By 2025, the most excluded people of Timor-Leste are empowered to claim their rights, including freedom from violence, through accessible, accountable, and gender-responsive governance systems, institutions, and services at national and sub-national levels.

UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025)

UNDP is a key stakeholder involved in the decentralization process of Timor-Leste. The project therefore, benefits from UNDP's previous experiences and draws on lessons learned in the past.

More specifically, in this regard the project contributes to the following objective of the UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025) in the area of Governance

- ❖ Address emerging complexities by “future-proofing” governance systems through anticipatory approaches and better risk management.

CPD (2021-2025)

The following outputs of the Decentralization project are aligned with and contributing to the Timor-Leste CPD (2021-2025).

Output 3.1.: Excluded groups have increased participation and representation in democratic institutions and local governance processes.

Output 3.2: Capacity for planning, monitoring, and accountability of national and municipal institutions and CSOs improved.

4.1.3 Relevance with the SDGs

Objectives and outputs of the Decentralization project were found to have indirect linkages with SDGs 1, 2, 5 and 17. However, more effective and direct linkages and related contributions of the project were found with the **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.***

More specifically, the project was found aligned with the:

- **Target 16.6:** Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
- **Target 16.7:** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
- **Target 16.A:** Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.
- **Target 16.C:** Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

4.2 Coherence

Internal Coherence

Finding: The internal coherence of the Decentralization project with regards to its linkages and design synergies with other projects of the UNDP in the country as well inter output alignment was found to be strong. For instance, UNDP's role in the decentralization process of Timor-Leste has been crucial since early 2000s when UNDP in partnership with UNCDF provided technical support to the Ministry of State Administration's Local Development Programme (LDP), which was later scaled up in 2010. Moreover, the inter output alignment of the project was also found as stronger attribute. Output 1 was based on providing technical support to the Parliament to develop foundation laws on decentralization whereas the related output 2 and 3 are focused on preparing and sensitizing Municipalities as well as communities with enhanced capacities to implement these laws.

External Coherence

Finding: Through the Decentralization project, UNDP's external coherence to improve the cooperation and strategic partnership with the government, linkages with the national priorities defined in the UNDP Strategic Plan as well as SDGs was found to be stronger attributes of the project.

Finding: However, although a considerable number of established partnerships with external development actors are found, project's linkages and demonstrated synergies with other development actors and partners could have been further strengthened.

4.3 Effectiveness

During the evaluation exercise, the UNDP Decentralization project's results framework, defined in the project document along with the changes indicated in the minutes of the Board meetings (such as addition of sub-indicators) provided the basis for the assessment of projects effectiveness. It is worth mentioning that the results framework has a clearly and well-defined set of outputs with specific baseline and target indicators.

Overall Key Summary of Findings

Finding: On the basis of assessment conducted for the 3 outputs, UNDP Decentralization project has shown significant progress in all 3 outputs. However, it is worth mentioning that the level of progress and achievement of the targets varies from one output to the other. Comparatively, Output 1 (Parliament Support) has shown immense progress with major targets achieved.

Although progress under output 2 (Capacity Building of Municipalities) & Output 3 (Municipality Portal) have also made considerable progress since the midterm evaluation findings, some of the targets are partially achieved.

Output 1- Enhanced capacity of Commission A and C⁶ at the National Parliament to perform informed discussions and increase awareness of the Timorese population of the decentralization process

Output Indicator	Baseline	Final Target	Target achieved as of December 2023	Progress
Strategic Indicator 1.1: % Of MPs in Committees A and C better informed about policy options on decentralization (disaggregated by sex)	0	100% of MPs (women 36%) in committees A and C are better informed about policy options on decentralization	50% (8 women 62%, five men 38%)	The capacity of commission A and C were substantially enhanced in relation to the legislation of the three laws on decentralization, namely the Law on Local Power and Administrative Decentralization and municipal finance, and municipal elections.
Sub-indicator 1.1.1: # Of experts recruited to support informed and transparent parliament discussion.	0	3	3	3 experts are recruited completed
Sub-indicator 1.1.2.: # Of reports and technical documents developed to support the parliament debates regarding the decentralization framework.	0	3	3	3 technical reports are completed
Strategic Indicator 1.2: The extent to which the National Parliament has increased efforts to improve public awareness of decentralization. (Scale from 1 to 4) (a) at least 3 TV debates organized, 1 point; (b) at least 8 radio debates organized, 1 point; (c) at least 1000 booklets about the local power and the new legal framework distributed 1 point. (d) at least 20 civic education videos to keep citizens informed about Parliament business during the emergency state restrictions,	0	4 Points	3 Points	3 points
Sub-indicator 1.2.1: # Of TV debates to explain the content and impact of the decentralization legislative package distributed to	0	3	2	2 T.V. Debates have been conducted .

⁶ Commission A: Committee on Constitutional Affairs and Justice, and Commission C: Committee on Economy, Finance, and Anti-Corruption

civil society, scholars, and law students				
Sub-indicator 1.2.2: # Radio debates and Self-explanatory booklets about inclusive local governance and the new legal framework.	0	8 radio debates 1000 booklets	6 Radio debates 500 booklets	6 Radio debates 500 booklets were completed and distributed respectively
Strategic Indicator 1.3: The National Parliament maintains business continuity, crisis management, and engagement with the citizens, particularly during the crisis (Yes/No indicator))	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sub-indicator 1.3.1: # Of Parliament members attending virtual meetings	0	50	50	50 Attended using virtual softwares
Sub-indicator 1.3.2: # Of Press briefings organized by the Parliamentary Secretariat.	0	31	Over 31 # 1 Uma Komunikasaun	Over 31 Press briefings were conducted (once per week) since its construction inaugurated in 2021 # 1 Uma Komunikasaun was constructed

Summary of Findings

Finding 1: As indicated in the progress update above, most of the output related indicators and targets are either achieved or on the course to be achieved. **The progress towards output 1 was found as the strongest attribute of the project**

Finding 2: Overall, the project has achieved major progress and success under Output 1, widely acknowledged and appreciated by the stakeholders. The success of this output is attributed mainly to the endorsement of the three laws on decentralization: Law on Local Power and Administrative Decentralization, the Law on Municipal Elections, and the Municipal Finance. Provision of technical experts under this output enabled the project to enhance capacity of the Commission A to perform informed discussions on the Bills: Local Power and Administrative Decentralization, and Municipal Elections.

Finding 3: The establishment of Communication House (*Uma Komunikasaun*) has been assessed as a high-level success story, in terms of its impact, visibility and more importantly its sustainability. The project has provided technical support in the form of three (3) advisors, facilitating TV & Radio

debates, and press releases etc., also aimed to increase awareness among the general population about the Bills. Stakeholders have shown immense interest and suggestion for the continued support of the UNDP in both drafting of and implementation of the related laws and legal framework.

Output 2- Improved capacity of the local authorities to deliver public services including the development and implementation of computer-based modular courses for public servants.

Output Indicator	Baseline	Final Target	Target achieved as of December 2023	Progress
Strategic Indicator 2.1: Availability of gender-sensitive capacity needs analysis within municipal bodies focusing on public financial management and information and communication technology	0	Yes	Yes	Completed
Strategic Indicator 2.2 # Of Public/civil servants working at Municipal and National levels that finalized the course	0	240	241	598 Public servants have accessed Coursera courses The eLearning Coursera was launched and 445 total completions of all time, public servants who completed at least 1 course is 241.
Sub-indicator 2.2.1: # Of Computer-based training modules developed	0	6	10	7 modular courses and 3 translated courses were launched in April 2023
Sub-indicator 2.2.2: # Of Municipalities that have enabling environment for online capacity building of public servants through (a) computer labs and/or (b) video-conferencing facilities.	0	12	12	All 12 municipalities have been verified to have an enabling environment for online capacity building of public servants through (a) computer labs and/or (b) videos-conferencing facilities
Strategic Indicator 2.3: # Of Municipalities that are enabled to maintain COVID-19 protocols in their interactions with citizens.	0	12	12	Completed in 2021

Finding 1: Significant progress has been made under output 2 in general and many partially achieved targets are completed during the last year which is widely appreciated by the Municipalities.

The field visits in municipalities indicated widely acknowledgment and appreciation of e-learning courses of the project. The e-learning initiative has registered an outreach of 598 Public servants and completed 3,343 learning hours, 241 learners have completed at least one course. Currently, the following course are available on GTC platform.

Course	Current Progress (%)
1. Teamwork skill: communicating effectively in progress	100%
2. Foundation of diversity and inclusion at work Teachout	100%
3. Climate change and indigenous people and local communities	100%
4. Introduction to GIS Mapping	100%
5. Effective engagement of civil society in development	100%
6. Effective engagement of project planning and management	100%
7. Integra Jéneru iha dezvoltamentu	100%
8. TIK	100%

Finding 2: Although the concept of e-Learning platform is evolving under the project, it has shown some gaps to be addressed.

The issue of PFM module as indicated in the midterm review seems not to be fully resolved. It was linked with the role of IOB in customizing and facilitating sensitive technical modules like PFM was not perceived as relevant and/or appropriate by the related stakeholders. Moreover, the field visits in the municipalities indicated that Connectivity and skill to access Coursera as well as learning platform is still a challenge, hence require a clear implementation roadmap. Moreover, it was found that there is uncertainty and non-clarity about the Government’s ownership of these training courses as well as its effectiveness and benefits in terms of acknowledgement as a valid and eligible certification for civil servants. This gap also leads to have one appropriate and relevant government entity to manage this e-learning courses implementation and certification process.

Moreover, ensuring accountability and quality assurance in trainings were also highlighted as key gaps in the stakeholder consultation that some government officials are not taking full advantage of the opportunities available to fully participate in the training. Some merely sign and return without attending the entire session, showing a lack of focus on the training. Additionally, there are cases where officials registered for Coursera training but did not attend the sessions.

Finding 3: Need assessment exercises resulted in provision of basic ICT training to Municipal civil servants and deployment of ICT labs. This was found to be an unintended positive contribution of the project whereby the importance of building the foundation before high tech interventions have been realized.

More than 900 servants from 12 municipalities were reported to have benefitted from the training; of which 26 percent were women participants and 74 percent were men participants. The post-training assessments revealed participants’ satisfaction with the trainings and eagerness to gain ICT skills. The improved ICT skills of the Municipal civil servants are expected to significantly contribute to the effective implementation of the e-learning initiative as well as the Municipal Data Portal (MDP).

Output 3- Local authorities have improved access to municipal data for planning, monitoring, and better service delivery by using ICT tools

Output Indicator	Baseline	Final Target	Target achieved as of December 2023	Progress
Strategic Indicator 3.1 # Of Municipalities using Municipal Data Portal for planning, budgeting, and monitoring.	0	12	12	All 12 municipalities have been trained in Municipal data portal for planning and budgeting. And are currently using municipal portal
Sub-indicator 3.1.1: Municipal Data Portal has been developed, including satellite data and imagery.	0	Yes	Yes	The Municipal Portal version 2 has been updated to version 3 so as to deal with some of the challenges and remove bugs within the existing version
Sub-indicator 3.1.2: # Of Municipal civil servants and officials trained on data collection, entry, and use of the Portal	0	240	835	835 civil servants and officials are trained on data collection, entry and use of the Portal. 204 were females and 631 were males.
Strategic Indicator 3.2: # Of Visits to the Municipal Data Portal (monthly average)	0	100	10,309 Visitors average in the month of May 2023	10,309 Visitors average in the month of May 2023.
Sub-indicator 3.2.1: # Of campaigns to promote the use of the Municipal Data Portal among students, local governments, and local organizations.	0	2	12	12 campaigns were conducted (646 participants, 266 41% females, 380, 59% Males)
Strategic Indicator 3.3: # Of men, women, youth, and people with disability (PWDs) participating in local planning processes.	Average 311/municipality (19% women)	(Average of 360 people/municipality , 33% women; 33% youth; 2% PwDs)	540	540 Participants trained in local planning processes, of which 406 were women and 134 men and 17 PwD

Sub-indicator 3.3.1: # Of campaigns to promote women and youth empowerment at the local level.	0	12	12	A total 12 campaigns have been conducted and a total of 391 people, mostly women (52%), have been empowered around the issue of local development and local governance
Strategic Indicator 3.4: Availability of e-government strategy (Yes/No indicator)	0	Yes	Yes	The E-Governance strategy has been completed
Sub-indicator 3.4.1: # Of Municipalities equipped with online communication tools, such as Zoom and WebEx, for efficient coordination with the central government	0	12	12	Completed in 2021

Finding 1: Overall, Output 3 has shown considerable progress whereby some of the targets are over achieved as well by the time of the final evaluation. Initially hindered by the delays, the development and implementation of Municipality Portal was found to be a major milestone achieved whereby the project staff based in the municipalities have started to upload the local and non-technical information in the respective municipalities’ websites. More importantly the identified bugs in earlier versions are now removed through the newly launched version 3.0. Stakeholder consultations suggested that community members/students have already started using it.

Finding 2: Moreover, targets related to the training of the Municipalities staff, visitor’s traffic on portal were overachieved whereby municipalities widely acknowledge the importance and use of the portal, with some gaps to be addressed. More than 835 civil servants and officials are trained on data collection, entry, and use of the Portal. 204 were females and 631 were males. Field visits to the municipalities indicated that municipal civil servants and the focal point of the municipal portal have a good understanding of the portal's content. However, the focal point has a limited understanding of its operations and data collection until publication, despite training facilitated by UNDP and MSA. It was also found Effective technical support from UNDP within the municipality is still required. Some directors have noted difficulties with municipal portal operations due to certain focal points lacking an IT background. Additionally, it was also found that UNDP staff located in the municipality are inactive for various reasons, leading to ineffectiveness and incomplete data.

As far as publishing/uploading data on portal is concerned, it was found varied from one municipality to the other. For instance, the Aileu municipality reported the successful update of municipality data in the municipal portal, with many people having access to the information. In contrast, in the municipalities of Ermera and Ainaro, there has been no publication of data in the municipal portal up to the present.

Finding 3: Gender sensitive awareness campaigns were perceived as beneficial and important to motivate and sensitize stakeholders to use the portal. Additionally, a total of 391 people, (of which more than half are women – 52%), have been empowered around the issue of local development and local governance through campaigns in 12 municipalities to promote the use of the Municipal Data Portal among citizens, CSOs and educational institutions, and others.

4.4 Efficiency

Overall efficiency of the Decentralization Project was found as ‘efficient’ though the level of efficiency varies from one component to the other including implementation arrangement, M&E, partnerships and budget efficiency. The following is the assessment of efficiency under each sub-thematic area.

4.4.1 Implementation Arrangements and Output’s Efficiency

Overall project implementation mechanism is based on multi-layered mechanism. It includes:

i. Project Board

Finding: Although the overall role of **project board was found ‘efficient’** in terms of the periodic supervision of the progress, discussing the risks and challenges and take decisions, it is however, worth mentioning finding that significant gap in the board meeting has resulted in slowing down the actual implementation of the project. There was gap of almost 18 months found in 2 board meetings (Between July 2020 to December 2021). Nevertheless, the minutes of the board meetings indicated that all matters of concern were thoroughly addressed and directions/action items were provided. It was also noted that the gap was primarily attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and related logistical issues

ii. Project Management Unit

Finding 1: Overall, PMU’s project management role in general, and coordination support in particular has been widely acknowledged by the stakeholders. **Working in evolving political environment, changes in political and administrative set up, covid pandemic etc., PMU has shown adaptive still efficient ways of coordination among multiple stakeholders.**

Finding 2: However, the **overall efficiency of the PMU was found to be hindered by high staff turnover as well under resource composition.** For instance, in a project covering multiple thematic areas of parliamentary support, e-learning and online portal as well as 12 municipalities that are geographically dispersed, there is limited project staff like no project assistant and 1 M&E officer etc.

iii. **Output Efficiency**

Finding: Hindered by the Covid-19 Pandemic as well as considerable gap in PMB meeting, **the overall efficiency of planned vs actual results/targets both in terms of time and completion initially delayed but came on track in the later stages of the project.**

iv) **Monitoring & Evaluation**

Finding: The M&E function of the project, particularly in terms of progress reporting and field visits were assessed as **one of the stronger links of the project implementation mechanism.** The assessment indicated that the revised results framework has made it simplified with clearer linkages with the country level plans. The necessary M&E tools to collect, compile and analyze field data were found to be adequate and effective. It is reflected through concise results-based reporting in the annual reports. However if the overall progress of the project’s M&E system with reference to planned M&E plan in the proDoc is concerned, there are certain gaps that needs to be addressed. For instance, the results based tracking and risk management was planned to be addressed on quarterly basis. However the documents furnished indicated that it has been done on annual basis, primarily through board meetings, project reviews and reflected through the annual reports., it is therefore proposed to develop a simplified project monitoring dashboard that is accessible to all relevant stakeholders. This digital dashboard will provide Realtime progress monitoring against all outputs and indicators.

v) **Communication & Visibility**

Finding: The project is backed by a well-documented communication strategy/plan. However, it was found during the stakeholder consultations that while visibility of output 1 (Parliament Support) & output 3 (Municipality Portal) have been widely acknowledged, the project interventions and activities under output 2 require more and continued visibility and communication to the wider audience.

vi) **Budget Efficiency**

Finding: Overall budget efficiency of the project considerably improved over the years whereby it was merely 45% in year 2020. Predominantly due to the challenge imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions. However it has considerably improved to over 90% in year 2021, 2022 and 2023.

SOURCE	2020		2021		2022		2023	
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	Planned Budget	Actual Expenditure	Planned Budget	Actual Expenditure	Planned Budget	Actual Expenditure	Planned Budget	Actual Expenditure
EU	1,390,015.44	602,678 (43%)	812,531.80	782,188 (96%)	1,417,924.03	1,413,406.20 (99.7%)	849,823.14	787,278 (93%)
UNDP	100,000	60,957 (61%)	140,000	140,000 (100%)	128,322.80	128,322.80 (100.0%)	49,346.63	48,150.00 (98%)
TOTAL	1,490,015.44	663,635.00 (45%)	952,531.80	922,188.00 (97%)	1,546,246.83	1,541,729.00 (99.7%)	899,169.77	835,427.69 (93%)

vi) Partnership Strategy

Finding 1: UNDP's partnership strategy for the Decentralization project has been found as one of the stronger attributes of the project. As guided by the ProDoc and the Project Board, UNDP has developed and maintained multiple level of partnerships that includes government sector organizations, private sector entities and academia etc. Stakeholder consultations indicated a very strong and consensus-based trust and validation of UNDP's partnership development and management credentials in the project.

Following table provides a snapshot of some of the key partners for the project

Partner	Role
Ministry of State Administration	Lead Implementation Partner of the project to drive the decentralization agenda , particularly in municipalities that includes Data Portal and e-learning initiatives
INAP	e-Learning partner to facilitate the e-learning components of the project
CSC	e-learning partner for the certification of the training modules
COURSERA	e-Learning partners, providing online modules for training of the government employees, particularly at the municipalities
Parliament	To enable development, approval of necessary legislation/laws of decentralization
Tic Timor	Technology Partner for connectivity and Municipality Data Portal
IOB	e-Learning partner, primarily to translate online modules in Tetum

4.5 Impact

Although a project's impact is usually assessed few years after the completion of project, the stakeholder consultations and data collected had highlighted following key impacts that project has created during its implementation phase.

Finding: The Project has met most of the targets under output 1 mainly due to the promulgation of the three laws on decentralization: Law on Local Power and Administrative Decentralization, the Law on Municipal Elections and Municipal Finance. Stakeholders consulted validated and acknowledged the extraordinary support and contribution of UNDP/the Decentralization Project in this achievement.

The former law essentially approves the Local Power and Administrative Decentralization. It establishes the organization, composition and powers of the bodies of Local Power, as well as the legal framework for the administrative decentralization of the State. In particular, it defines the municipality as a public collective person, of population and territory, endowed with administrative, financial, patrimonial, organizational autonomy, and representative bodies that aim to pursue the interests of the respective populations, as a factor of national cohesion. The 3 laws, though being an integral target of the project results framework, have formed a long-term foundation to guide the historic decentralization process in Timor-Leste.

4.6 Sustainability

Although due to the intrinsic design of the project whereby the primary objective of all 03 components/outputs is to build capacities of Government departments and community, there was a consensus found that sustainability of the project is a serious challenge and point of concern among the stakeholders

Finding: The field visits to the municipality provided following feedback

- ❖ The UNDP Decentralization project faces questions of sustainability due to its limited 2 to 3-year life cycle, but it holds significant potential to influence policy-making at both local and national levels.
- ❖ Sustainability challenges arise from a poor internet connection for operational processes and accessing the municipal portal. Additionally, inadequate internet connectivity, coupled with limited time, hampers the participation of civil servants in courses offered through Coursera.
- ❖ Limited human resources in the municipality present a challenge, as there are 3-4 focal points for the municipal portal, but no permanent official for municipal portal administration. Individuals currently in these roles have received orders to terminate their employment contracts on December 31, 2023. The focal points include non-permanent staff and public administration agents. The majority of civil servants are aged 50 years and above, posing difficulty in accessing advanced technology for sustainable use in the future.
- ❖ The sustainability of the project is uncertain, with financial sustainability posing a notable challenge. The project should aim for comprehensive sustainability, covering financial, institutional, socio-economic, and resource aspects. Institutional sustainability is supported

through skills-focused training, while socio-economic sustainability relies on the effective use of the Municipal Portal, expected to be sustained by TIC Timor.

- ❖ Social and political risks reveal different perspectives on potential risks and emphasize careful consideration, particularly regarding changes in government priorities, policies, and stakeholder support. Exploring ways to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability, suggestions include further studies, new projects, building local ownership, fostering partnerships, developing sustainable financing mechanisms, and investing in monitoring and evaluation. Good collaboration with the government and the recruitment of permanent staff for Municipal Portal maintenance are highlighted. A clear project exit strategy ensures phased-out activities are ready for handover.
- ❖ The central theme revolves around transferring ownership of actions and impact to stakeholders. Municipal portal data management is handled by individual coordinators, emphasizing the importance of collaboration with local stakeholders for long-term sustainability. Ownership transfer is considered crucial, though concerns exist about contractual focal points. Activities are handed over to public civil servants with ongoing mentorship until full comprehension is achieved.

Finding: Due to its design, UNDP has been working directly with the government departments to build their capacities in the relevant thematic areas, there is no clear evidence found about any mechanism and KPIs to assess if the capacities are successfully built or not as well as sustained at the Municipalities after completion of the project (that includes sustaining Municipalities & ICT coordinators, ICT equipment/lab, master trainees of municipality portal, etc.).

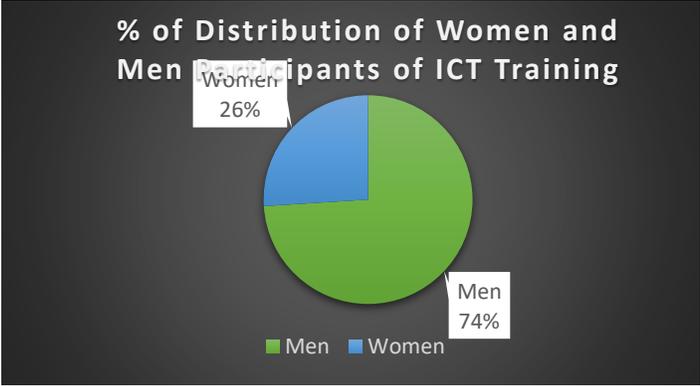
Although the introduction of positions for 12 Community Mobilizers and 06 Municipal Specialists to be placed in the Municipalities as per the requirement of the ProDoc to maintain and update the Portal system is encouraging to ensure a solid skill transfer, however, there is a danger of risking the overall sustainability in the light of anticipated reduced role/budget of UNDP. It is also likely that Municipality staff will require technical support beyond this programme intervention. Although an exit strategy has been successfully developed based on the MTR recommendations, it is suggested to have a more phased, gradual, and structured approach that is aligned with the exit strategy can mitigate the risk.

4.7 Cross Cutting Themes

4.7.1 Gender Mainstreaming, Youth, & PWDs

Ensuring gender equality, inclusion of youth and PWDs were found to be given considerable focus in the project, particularly with reference to the inclusion in trainings. Both at the design (Results Framework in Pro-Doc) and implementation stages, gender equality was given a priority to address the gaps observed and grievances reported during the capacity need assessment. More importantly, a specific

new strategic indicator has been included in the results framework to capture gender, youth and PWDs related data. More specifically, the number of men, women, youth, and people with disability (PWDs) participating in local planning processes has been added in the results framework. Moreover 12 workshops were conducted on women and youth empowerment in the decentralization process. A total of 391 people, mostly women (52%), have been empowered around the issue of local development and local governance.



As per the Law on Municipal Elections, at least 30% of the elected representatives in the municipalities will be women. Moreover, the Municipal Portal captures gender-disaggregated data for 127 out of 294 indicators. In terms of the ICT trainings, more than 20% participants were women.

With regards to PWD inclusion, it was reported that 540 Participants trained in local planning processes, of which 17 were persons with disability.

4.7.2 Poverty, environment, and Sustainable Livelihoods

While the project’s results framework and targets do not directly address the nexus of poverty, environment and sustainable livelihoods, the intended focus of project on facilitating decentralization process has indirect linkages with addressing issues of poor people and sustainable livelihoods by empowering poor and vulnerable communities and enhancing their participation in the decentralization process at grassroot levels.

4.7.3 Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change

The final evaluation did not find any direct link between the project and disaster risk management and climate change.

4.7.4 Crisis Prevention and Recovery Issues

Similarly, the final evaluation did not find any direct link between the project and issues of crisis prevention and recovery.

5 Key Challenges & LESSONS LEARNED

Although the decentralization project is on its course to complete its key results and targets, on the basis of the findings above, following key areas may pose challenge to the project outcomes

- ❖ **Resistance to Change & ICT skills-** The project with a major focus on building technology related capacity of civil servants is faced by continuous resistance, limited political will and time, particularly due to limited background in ICT skills, backed by years of service in non-technological mechanisms. Hence, it requires a continuous follow up training and communication mechanism to keep the motivation level high. As one of the solutions, portal's programming manual and guidelines can assist the users to utilize the tool even after the completion of the project. Moreover, ensuring commitment and ownership of Municipalities and stakeholder in all phases of project is vital to ensure long-term sustainability. More importantly, any reform in general and ICT related in particular requires a well thought-out of change management strategy from the beginning.
- ❖ **Political Change and Adaptability-** A project focusing on supporting policy and legislative development is hindered by any political and administrative change in the country. The project adaptability is highly dependent on the continued political willingness to carry forward the agreed project outcomes. Similarly, project dealing with decentralization process in a country from its preliminary stages requires flexibility and adaptability in every evolving scenario.
- ❖ **Connectivity-** Project with predominant focus on ICTs require uninterrupted, reliable and good bandwidth connectivity in Municipalities. It was found during stakeholder consultations and site visits that users face disruption in connectivity. It will cause considerable issue in accessing e-learning platforms etc.
- ❖ **Potential Interoperability Issue** – Isolated ICT solutions/components can create major issues on medium to long-term in implementing coherent e-Governance agenda (Municipality Portal, E-Learning platform, OSS etc.) Since the project has a clear focus on e-governance, silo digital tools and platforms will create immense challenge of interoperability and integration at later stage.
- ❖ **One Centralized Partner for training**

For the long-term sustainability of a government supported e-learning certification, it is vital to give ownership and responsibility to single partner e.g. INAP instead of dealing with separate partners

simultaneously e.g. CSC, IOB, Coursera etc. It will bring efficiency, avoiding duplication of efforts and less difficult coordination as well as authenticity and clarity for the trainees about the certification process.

- ❖ **Issue of sustainability and high turnover** of ICT staff/ ICT equipment sustainability. The deployment of ICT staff and ICT lab has effectively fulfilled the pre-requisites of implementing technology-based implementation of decentralization. However, without any clear and comprehensive agreed sustainability mechanism, this good work will face issue of sustainability in medium to long term/ To implement a reform project that required both technical as well as administrative support, high turnover results in loss of institutional memory as well as adverse impact on implementation efficiency.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In general terms, it can be concluded that the UNDP Decentralization project was relevant to the national and regional priorities, SDGs, UNDP's Strategic Plan and UNDAF. Moreover, the project's effectiveness varied from one component to the other and the level of progress and achievement of the targets varies from one output to the other. Output 1 has (Parliament Support) has shown immense progress with major targets achieved, and widely acknowledged & appreciated by the stakeholders. Whereas, although progress under output 2 (Capacity Building of Municipalities) & Output 3 (Municipality Portal) were delayed in the initial phase of the project, they got momentum back and achieved most of the targets

While decentralization is a consistent and high priority agenda of the government, the overall impact of the project could not be gauged in a project that has a time span of 4 years. Decentralization is an ongoing and evolving process in the country . Despite the main beneficiaries that are, municipalities have gained benefit from the project interventions in terms of capacity building, ICT infrastructure and e-learning initiative, the benefits could not only be sustained through ownership of all tiers of government to take decentralization agenda forward beyond the project. However, it is worth concluding that projects contribution in terms of three key laws of decentralization, particularly Finance Bill will have long term impact to carry on the momentum of decentralization journey in the country

Although project was able to establish and strengthen its partnership with the national and local government, the depth and scope of partnership with non-government partners like CSOs/NGOs, other development partners and private sectors was found to be limited. UNDP's well-established partnership with Government as well as its focus to build the capacity of local government departments has direct and positive impact on the sustainability of the project Moreover, while the project has shown certain design and implementation focus on mainstreaming gender, it is highly recommended to strengthen the focus on bringing more women, marginalized and vulnerable groups in all phases of project.**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the lessons learned and the key findings mentioned in the sections above, following is a set of recommendations for the UNDP Decentralization Project:

Keeping in view that project has been able to showcase significant progress in taking the evolving agenda of decentralization in the country forward through legislative and policy support as well as capacity building of the government officials, it is recommended that a Phase II of the project should be developed and implemented with more refined and renewed focus to keep the momentum of effective implementation of decentralization agenda forward. To create a visible impact in Decentralization agenda, it is recommended to develop a project for at least 5 years.

6.1 Project Design

- A more simplified and forward-looking project design and related results framework should be developed that is based on the achievements of the current project to the next stage and forward. It should be more focused on the ICTs and e-governance since the foundation has been set in the current project.
- Nevertheless, the capacity building component of the project should be continued as any ICTs/technology-based intervention requires continued follow up and long-term strategy.
- While there is a clear synergy found between this project and the ‘one stop shop’ initiative as well as an e-governance strategy developed, both interventions should be combined under e-governance agenda to yield more holistic and synergistic results.

Based on these design recommendations, it is suggested to have not more than 2-3 outputs for the project

i) Output 1- Capacity Building & Technical Support to Municipalities

- ❖ **ICTs training, use of portal and e-learning-** Continued training to municipalities in the areas of ICT skills, use of Municipality Portal, e-Learning platforms as well as e-Governance through One Stop Shop.
- ❖ **Public Service Certifications and courses-** It is recommended that only one relevant and authorized Government entity e.g. INAP should be given responsibility for planning, implementing, managing the training and certification process.
- ❖ **Trainings based on updated needs assessment-** It is also important to update the training needs assessment for municipalities to provide customized needs-based training for municipalities.

It is also vital to have a clear strategy and policy approval to sustain ICT and Municipality Coordinators should be pursued now to ensure sustainability. It is also recommended that UNDP should negotiate with CSC and MSA to create small ICT/IT unit in each municipality with permanent ICT staff to ensure sustainability and ownership.

ii) Output 2-E-Governance through One Stop Shop

It may involve following 3 components:

- ❖ **One Stop Shop (Physical) Back End Infrastructure (e.g. ERP implementation One Stop Shop Office)-** It will require complete digitization of administrative work at Government offices as well in One Stop Shop through interlinked ERP/MIS solution.
- ❖ **e-Government/Digital Services through One Stop Shop-** It will include provide digital government services to the citizens who will visit the one stop shop to avail government services
- ❖ **One Stop Municipality Digital Platform-** This may include digital form of all municipality related services to the citizens as well to staff (e.g. Municipality Portal, e-Learning platform, e-Services (Final stage where all services are available online with no need to visit physical one stop shop. Consider linking e-Learning platform with Municipality Portal to avoid multiple forums and have 'one stop platform' for municipality (Future e-Governance one stop digital window for Municipalities)-, it is highly recommended to revisit the strategy to implement and maintain all existing ICT tools that are related to decentralisation in silos. Rather 'one stop digital platform' (e.g. enhanced Municipality Portal) is highly recommended whereby all information, public services, e-learning tools etc should be available on 'single platform'. It will assist in avoiding medium to long term interoperability and integration issues. For instance, as a right step, the e-learning initiative will use the municipal portal as the vehicle to get into the Coursera plat form. In this regard, a landing page is being developed within the portal facility.

In general, it is also suggested have a clear and concise plan and quality assessment for connectivity in the targeted Municipalities- It includes reliance of TIC Timor's intranet facilities as much as possible. Where it is unavoidable to use internet, it is recommended to conduct regular connectivity quality assessment and service provider with better quality results should be given priority for uninterrupted connectivity.

Refined and More focus on women and marginalized, vulnerable groups

While the project has shown certain design and implementation focus on mainstreaming gender, it is highly recommended to strengthen the focus on bringing more women, marginalized and vulnerable groups in all phases of project e,g i) **Project Design** (through consultations with these

groups and including specific results indicators and targets) ii) **Project Implementation** (including these groups in all project interventions such as training, outreach and awareness as well as facilitating in One Stop shop etc) iii) **Project monitoring and evaluation**- Including appropriate representation of these groups in regular progress monitoring and feedback loop as well as evaluation exercises

6.2 Implementation and Management

Keeping in view the UNDP may continue to support government in the implementation of long decentralization process, Project Management Unit for project should be strengthened with more secure contract to avoid staff turnover. It will bring efficiency as well as assist in building institutional and knowledge memory; The Project Board Meetings should take place more frequently, considering the complexities of context for planning and implementation of decentralization process.

6.3 Sustainability

- i. The sustainability strategy should be complemented by a well-planned and targeted **'resource mobilization strategy'** to ensure timely financial sustainability of the programme.

ANNEXES

- Project Annual Reports 2020-2021
- Project Annual Reports 2021-2022
- Project Annual Reports 2022-2023
- Minutes of Project Board meetings
- UNDP (2021), Country Programme Document 2021-2025
- UNDP (2020, 2021), Project Board Meeting Minutes-‘Strengthening Integral Local Development by Building the Capacities of the Municipal Authorities in Timor-Leste’
- UNDP (2020-21, 2021, 2022), Annual Progress Reports- ‘Strengthening Integral Local Development by Building the Capacities of the Municipal Authorities in Timor-Leste’
- UNDP (2020), Pro-Doc ‘Strengthening Integral Local Development by Building the Capacities of the Municipal Authorities in Timor-Leste’
- UN (2015), UNDAF 2015-2019
- UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025
- Annual Work Plans
- Revised Results Framework
- MOUs with partners
- Project TORs
- Risk Log & Matrix
- Assessment Reports

ANNEX B Evaluation Criteria & Questions Matrix Checklist– UNDP decentralization project				
Evaluation Criteria	Key questions specific sub-questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/Success Standard
Relevance/coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the UNDP decentralization project aligned with the priorities, needs and Strategic Development Plan of Timor-Leste? • To what extent is the UNDP decentralization project aligned with the UNDP’s mandate, country priorities, UNDP Strategic Plan, and the sustainable development goals (SDGs)? • Is the project relevant for the main beneficiary? • How does the project support the specific needs of relevant stakeholders? • Has the Implementation of the project been inclusive of all relevant Stakeholders? • Were local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in project design and implementation? • Are there Logical linkages between expected? results of the project (log frame) and the project design (in terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, 	<p>UNDP project staff, partners, parliamentarians, municipality staff, Beneficiaries</p> <p>Project documents, annual reports, M & E documents</p>	<p>Key informant Interviews</p> <p>Document Review</p> <p>QBS</p>	Project’s results indicators

	<p>budget, use of Resources etc.)? Is the length of the project sufficient to achieve Project outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the UNDP decentralization project been appropriately responsive to political, legal and socio-economic development issues and challenges of Timor-Leste? • Does the project provide relevant lessons and experiences for other similar projects in the future? • How well did the UNDP decentralization project address the needs of the most vulnerable groups of the targeted beneficiaries? 			
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have the UNDP decentralization project objectives, 3 outputs and targets, as set out in the UNDP decentralization project Document, project's (revised) Results Framework, and other related documents, have been achieved? • To what extent the proposed legal instruments form project has been adopted and enacted and agreements currently in place; other policy actions initiated. 	<p>UNDP project staff, partners, parliamentarians, municipality staff, Beneficiaries</p> <p>Project documents, annual reports, M & E documents</p>	<p>Key informant Interviews</p> <p>Site visits</p> <p>Documents review</p> <p>QBS</p>	<p>Project results framework and related performance indicators</p> <p>Number of community members benefitted</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are some components better achieved than others? If yes, then Why? • Are the UNDP decentralization projects objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame? • What are the underlying rationales and assumptions or theory that defines the relationships or chain of results that lead initiative strategies to intended outcomes? • How effective has been the contribution of the UNDP decentralization project to improving capacities of the targeted municipalities and parliamentarians to provide effective public service delivery? • Are the UNDP decentralization project objectives clearly stated and contribution to results measurable? • Did women, and marginalized groups of targeted youth directly or indirectly benefit from the UNDP decentralization project 's activities? If so, how, and what was the impact? • Were any changes made in the UNDP decentralization project regarding approach, partnerships, beneficiaries so far? If yes, why? • How effective was the project in adapting to the challenges faced due to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic? Were there any adaptive measures taken and/or any risk mitigation mechanism in place? Did the project assist in responding to the 			<p>Number of projects planned, designed and implemented</p> <p>Indicators and related targets of the results framework are met</p>
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	challenges set by the Pandemic? If yes, how effective?			
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are outputs achieved within expected cost and time so far? • Could the activities and outputs have been delivered in fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity? • Is there major cost- or time-overruns or budget revisions? • How effectively funds from the program have been transferred to local partners and/or government? • To what extent was the management structure outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results • Is there a management or coordination mechanism for the partnership? • How frequently and by what means information is shared within the UNDP decentralization project stakeholders? • How many levels of decision making are involved in operational approval? • How efficient is the M&E system and to what extent did M&E mechanism provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly? • How useful was the results framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it? 	<p>UNDP project staff, partners, parliamentarians, municipality staff, Beneficiaries</p> <p>Project documents, annual reports, M & E documents</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>Documents reviews.</p> <p>QBS</p>	<p>Results Framework Indicators</p> <p>AWPs</p> <p>Planned vs. Actual Budget Allocation & utilization</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the project objectives? 			
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How sustainable has been the contribution of the UNDP decentralization project to improving capacities of the Parliamentarians and municipalities to ensure effective legislation and public service delivery? • To what extent the results of the project training activities and other activities for enhanced capacity, have brought systemic and sustainable changes in institutional capacities of the beneficiaries? • Was UNDP decentralization project sustainability strategy developed during the project design? • Is the project itself sustainable? (Financial, Institutional, Socio Economic and Resources etc.) • To what extent the mechanisms for sustainability and scale up are developed and considered that provides the basis for ensuring that positive results are sustained at local, provincial and national levels need to be considered in the project withdrawal strategy? • To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support? • To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the UNDP decentralization project team on a continual basis and shared 	<p>UNDP project staff, partners, parliamentarians, municipality staff, Beneficiaries</p> <p>Project documents, annual reports, M & E documents</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>QBS</p> <p>Site visits</p> <p>Documents reviews</p>	<p>Sustainability strategy</p> <p>Resource mobilization mechanism</p>

	<p>with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability? • Are there jeopardizing aspects that have not been considered or abated by the project actions? • Has ownership of the actions and impact been transferred to the corresponding stakeholders? • Do the beneficiaries have the capacity to take over the results of the project and maintain and further develop the results 			
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence of long-lasting desired changes resulted from project interventions? • Has the initiative influenced policy making at different levels? • Has the project impacted the desired target actors? • To what degree the has the project contributed to the development taken place with regards the overall project objectives? 			
Cross Cutting Issues and Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the UNDP decentralization project? • Is the gender marker data assigned to this UNDP decentralization project representative of reality? • To what extent has the UNDP decentralization project promoted positive 	<p>UNDP project staff, partners, parliamentarians, municipality staff, Beneficiaries</p> <p>Project documents,</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>QBS</p> <p>Site visits</p> <p>Documents reviews</p>	<p>Project Indicators on gender and other vulnerable groups (if any)</p> <p>Number of women, youth and marginalized groups benefited (gender</p>

	<p>changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were women and men distinguished in terms of participation and benefits within the project? 	annual reports, M & E documents		disaggregated data of beneficiaries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did UNDP decentralization project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach and the inclusion of vulnerable groups and people with disability? 			
UNDP Partnership Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective the UN partnership strategy and the partners are in providing added benefits for the UNDP decentralization project to achieve overall outcomes and outputs • To what extent have stakeholders been involved in UNDP decentralization project implementation? • Who are the major actors and partners involved in the project and how effective they were in project delivery? • To what extent partnerships/linkages between institutions/ organizations were encouraged and supported • Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which ones can be considered sustainable? 	<p>UNDP project staff, partners, parliamentarians, municipality staff, Beneficiaries</p> <p>Project documents, annual reports, M & E documents</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>QBS</p> <p>Documents reviews</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements?• Which methods were successful or not, and why?			
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ANNEX C-DIRECT OBSERVATIONS-DUE DILIGENCE EU DECENTRALIZATION PROJECT SITES- MUNICIPALITIES

PRELIMINARY EU DECENTRALIZATION’S PROJECT SITES-SCREENING QUESTIONS		SCORE/RATING	REMARKS
Infrastructure and Beneficiaries feedback	Does the visited municipalities have ICT lab/equipment/assistance fully installed and operational?	4	Municipalities visited have ICT lab fully installed and operational
	Are the staff members satisfied with the intervention of the project and do they validate increased capacity due to the project intervention mainly through training in general and ICT in particular, ICT backstopping, organizing events etc.?	4	Yes. Widely acknowledge the contribution of the project.
Functionality	Is the installed ICT equipment functional with up to date/targeted functionalities	4	Yes. Several applications including MS office, Adobe Acrobat reader, three different web browsers, zoom and team viewer have all been installed in each of the unit and they are all functional.
	Are any beneficiary already availing services and/or trained to use the functions of the installed equipment is their regular maintenance to the installed ICT equipment?	4	Yes. For meetings as well as e-learning
<p>4: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 3: Moderately Satisfactory (MS): moderate shortcomings 2 Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 1. Unsatisfactory (U): major shortcomings</p>			
<p>Overall Assessment and Note 4 All sites visited have computer lab fully installed with ICT installed equipment are functional with up to date / targeted functionalities. The labs are ready for use for staff training purposes. All lab is equipped with video conferencing facility and other equipment that will make online learning experience a comfortable and rewarding experience</p>			

KIIs of UNDP Staff - UNDP Decentralization Project in Timor-Leste

Person Name	Designation/Component	Stakeholder Type
Bruno Lencastre	CTA (Chief of Technical Adviser)	UNDP
Mario	Programme Manager	European Union
Joao Crisostomo	Communication Officer (National)	UNDP
Rui Ximenes	Municipal Coordinator	UNDP
Jonas Marcos Belo	IT Officer (National)	UNDP
Plinio Lourenco da Costa	Information and Technology	UNDP
Francisco P. R. Magno Ximenes	Municipal Coordinator	UNDP
Alipio Brito Simoes	Municipal IT Officer	UNDP
Paul Waiswa	M&E Specialist	UNDP

KIIs of Ainaro Municipality UNDP Decentralization Project in Timor-Leste

AINARO MUNICIPALITY	Name	Gender	Position
	Leovigildo Amaral Pereira	M	Municipal Administrator
	Rosa Olga Mendonca	F	Municipal Secretary
	Nivio Marcos de B. Magno	M	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Servasius Ikun Lau	M	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Leucrecia Guterres de Araujo	F	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Francisca Emilia Luruk	F	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Ruivo B. Magno	M	Director
	Eduardo A. Barros	M	Chief Department
	Bonifacio de Araujo	M	Director
	Helder dos Reis	M	Chief Department
	Eva Maria Magno da Silva	F	Technic of PDIM
	Oscar Araujo	M	Director
	Helena X. Magalhaes	F	Director
Manuel Ramos	M	Chief Department	

KIIs of Ermera and Aileu Municipalities UNDP Decentralization Project in Timor-Leste

ERMERA MUNICIPALITY	Name	Gender	Position
	Eusebio Salsinha	M	Municipal President Authority
	Constantino Exposto	M	Municipal Secretary
	Francisco	M	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Nila Paula de Jesus M. Lay	F	Director
	Carlos Alberto M. Babo	M	Chief Department
	Bacelar Correia Martins	M	Director
	Avelino M. Martins	M	Chief Department
	Mendes Alves	M	Director
	Joni dos Santos Alves	M	Director
	Armando Soares	M	Director
	Aquelina dos S. Soares	F	Director
Isabel dos R. Martins	F	Director	

AILEU MUNICIPALITY	Name	Gender	Position
	Feliz Maria de Oliveira	M	Municipal Secretary
	Sabino Molere	M	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Alberto dos Santos	M	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Jacinto do Rego	M	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Epifanio	M	Municipal Portal Focal Point
	Zeca Cardoso	M	ICT Official
	Januario Turquel	M	Director
Domingos Videgal	M	Director	

Survey- Questionnaire- UN/Project Staff Only

Name	Title, Department (if applicable)	Institution
Category of Stakeholder a) UNDP staff	Email Address	City

Introduction: The UNDP Timor-Leste is conducting the final evaluation of its 'UNDP Decentralization project'.

It examines UNDP's contribution to project results to ensure organizational learning and accountability. The evaluation is carried out by an independent international evaluation specialist and a national consultant.

Being responsible for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the project, you have been identified as one of the key stakeholders of the UNDP's UNDP Decentralization project, and we would like to receive your feedback on your experience with UNDP-supported project. Your feedback is valuable and will be used as part of the overall analysis together with other information and data collected by the consultant. You will send the response directly to the consultant.

Please provide feedback on the questions that you find as relevant to your organization's role in the project. Insert N/A (Not Applicable) wherever required.

1. RELEVANCE:

- ❖ To what extent is the UNDP Decentralization project aligned with national priorities, need and Strategic Plan of the Timor-Leste?
- ❖ Did the project anticipate and respond to identified problems of Parliamentarians and staff of municipalities, and was the design adequate to address these problems?
- ❖ To what extent has the UNDP Decentralization project been appropriately responsive to political and socio-economic development issues and challenges of Timor-Leste?

- ❖ How well did the UNDP Decentralization project address the needs of the most vulnerable groups of the targeted community?
- ❖ To what extent did UNDP Decentralization project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and youth, and the human rights-based approach and the inclusion of vulnerable groups and people with disability?

2. EFFECTIVENESS

- ❖ To what extent have the UNDP Decentralization project objectives, 3 outputs and targets, as set out in the project Document, project's Results Framework, and other related documents, have been achieved?
- ❖ Are some components better achieved than others? If yes, then Why?
- ❖ How effective is the Theory of Change? What are the underlying rationales and assumptions or theory that defines the relationships or chain of results that lead initiative strategies to intended outcomes?
- ❖ How effective has been the contribution of the UNDP Decentralization project to improving capacities of the parliamentarians and staff of municipalities for effective legislation and public service delivery?
- ❖ Did women, and marginalized groups of targeted youth directly or indirectly benefit from the UNDP Decentralization project 's activities? If so, how, and what was the impact
- ❖ Were any changes made in the UNDP Decentralization project regarding approach, partnerships, beneficiaries so far? If yes, why?
- ❖ How effective was the project in adapting to the challenges faced due to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic? Were there any adaptive measures taken and/or any risk mitigation mechanism in place? Did the project provide any support in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic? If yes, how effective

3. IMPACT

- ❖ Is there evidence of long-lasting desired changes?
- ❖ Has the initiative influenced policy making at different levels?
- ❖ Has the project impacted the desired target actors?

- ❖ To what degree has the project contributed to the development taken place with regards the overall project objectives?

4. EFFICIENCY:

- ❖ Are outputs achieved within expected cost and time so far?
- ❖ Could the activities and outputs have been delivered in fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity?
- ❖ Is there major cost- or time-overruns or budget revisions?
- ❖ Is there a management or coordination mechanism for the partnership?
- ❖ Are UNDP Decentralization project objectives and strategies understood by staff?
- ❖ How efficient is the M&E system and to what extent did M&E mechanism provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?
- ❖ How useful was the results framework (as well as the revised version) as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it?
- ❖ Were the risks identified in the UNDP Decentralization project document or process the most important and the risk ratings applied appropriately?

5. SUSTAINABILITY:

- ❖ How sustainable has been the contribution of the UNDP decentralization project to improving capacities of the Parliamentarians and municipalities to ensure effective legislation and public service delivery?
- ❖ Was UNDP decentralization project sustainability strategy developed during the project design?
- ❖ Is the project itself sustainable? (Financial, Institutional, Socio Economic and Resources etc.)
- ❖ Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of UNDP DECENTRALIZATION project outputs?
- ❖ What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?

- ❖ Has ownership of the actions and impact been transferred to the corresponding stakeholders?
- ❖ Do the beneficiaries have the capacity to take over the results of the project and maintain and further develop the results

6. Please list down the top 3 lessons learned?

6.1 Please List down top 3 challenges that have or may hinder performance of the overall project?

6.2- Please provide 3-5 high priority recommendations.

Survey- Questionnaire for the Beneficiaries

Name	Title, Department (if applicable)	Institution
Category of beneficiary 1. Municipality Staff/Official	Email Address	City

Introduction: The UNDP Timor-Leste is conducting the Final Evaluation of its ‘UNDP Decentralization project’.

It examines UNDP’s contribution to project results to ensure organizational learning and accountability. The evaluation is carried out by an independent international evaluation specialist and a national consultant.

Being a key staff in the municipality who have benefited from the UNDP Decentralization project, you have been identified as one of the beneficiaries of the project, and we would like to receive your feedback on your experience with UNDP-supported project. Your feedback is valuable and will be used as part of the overall analysis together with other information and data collected by the consultant. You will send the response directly to the consultant.

Please provide feedback on the questions that you find as relevant to your role and your organization’s role in the project. Insert N/A (Not Applicable) wherever required.

QUESTIONS FOR BENEFICIARIES (MUNICIPAL STAFF)

- ❖ Could you describe the key activities in the project that you benefitted from?

- ❖ Are the activities/outputs of the project relevant to the needs and priorities of organization?

- ❖ Could you describe any key successes of the project activity?

- ❖ Can you provide any 1-3 key strengths of the project activities that you benefited from?

- ❖ Can you provide any 1-3 weakness of the project activities that you benefited from?

- ❖ Can you highlight 1-3 key challenges/lessons learned that you as beneficiary have faced during your participation in the project activities?

- ❖ Could you help us in identifying that how the activity has brought difference in your work and capacity?
(Your situation before and after the project intervention/support)

- ❖ Do you have any recommendations?