



From
the People of Japan



PROGRESS REPORT

Timor-Leste

COVID-Resilient Election in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project



Figure 1 Youth Reading a Voter Registration Information, Education, Communication (IEC) Produced by the Project

Project Information

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Reporting Period | 10 months (March 2021 to December 2021) |
| Start Date - End Date | March 2021 – March 2022 (in the process of applying for a no-cost extension up to March 2023) |
| Implementing Partner(s) | N/A – Direct Implementation Modality |
| Total Contribution | 4,000,000 USD (plus 360,000 USD from Government of Timor-Leste) |
| Project Location | 12 municipalities and Special Administrative Region Oecusse-Ambeno (RAEOA) |
| Project Beneficiaries | National Commission of Election (CNE) and Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) |
| UNDP Contact Person | Jonianto Monteiro, Head of the Democratic Governance Unit, jonianto.monteiro@undp.org |

Acronyms

| | |
|----------|--|
| AHDMTL | Assemble Association of People with Visual Impairment Timor-Leste |
| CNE | National Commission on Elections |
| CPD | Country Programme Document |
| CREPM | COVID-Resilient Election Plan and Manual |
| CSO | Civil Society Organizations |
| GMN | National Media Group |
| EMB | Electoral Management Body |
| IEC | Information, Education, and Communication |
| IUNV | International United Nation Volunteer |
| LOA | Letter of Agreement |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| PwD | Persons with Disability |
| RAEOA | Special Administrative Region Oecusse-Ambeno |
| RTTL | Radio and Television of Timor-Leste |
| STAE | Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration |
| TLGE | Transformative Leadership of Gender Equality |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNSCDF | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation |
| UNTL | National University of Timor-Leste |

I. Executive summary

The COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste project (herein ‘the project’) directly responds to the need for COVID-resilient elections to ensure continued and strengthened representative governance and successful elections in Timor-Leste, whilst safeguarding public safety. The project has four components; (1) support municipal Electoral Management Bodies’ (EMBs) offices to become COVID-resilient, accessible, and environmentally friendly; (2) address the underlying issues of long-term resilience to pandemics such as COVID by developing COVID-Resilient Election Plan and Manuals; (3) provide effective and innovative electoral and COVID-19 awareness communication; and (4) strengthen the participation and representation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PwDs) in politics.

Since the project inception in March 2021, noticeable progress has been made, despite a number of challenges.

Under Component 1, the project contracted a consultancy firm to conduct a feasibility study for the construction of six new EMB’s offices. The project also completed the design and technical documents for the renovation of seven existing EMB offices, and is currently in the process of hiring a construction company(ies) to carry out the work.

Under Component 2, the project established a partnership with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) in June 2021, who produced a policy paper¹ on key recommendations for legislative amendments to ensure COVID/pandemic safety measures are embedded into the legal electoral framework, followed by 4 high-level workshops which 111 (41% women) government staffs attended (EMBs, Ministry of State Administration, Ministry of Health, etc.)². The amendment and/or complement for the electoral law passed on 5th of January 2022, with the integration of 8 recommendations for COVID-preventive measures in the elections by International IDEA. The project also initiated the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the upcoming Presidential Elections in March 2022.

Under Component 3, the project signed an agreement with the National Press Council to conduct the capacity building for journalists on political/election reporting. For promoting the voter registration and COVID-safety measures for the elections, the project produced and disseminated five Information, Education, Communication (IEC) materials on COVID-awareness and electoral procedures. Approx. 48 percent of the population watched the TV announcements³. The print material reached approx. 26,945 persons, and 1,124 persons have been following the Joven Vota Facebook page⁴ (as per the 30th December).

¹ A COVID-Resilient Presidential Election for Timor-Leste in 2022 – Baseline Assessment and Recommendations prepared by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), September, 2021

² [UNDP-IDEA give inputs to stakeholders on COVID-resilience for 2022 Presidential Elections](#), Tatoli News, September, 2021

³ UNMIT (2011) *Timor-Leste Communication and Media Survey*, pp. 45-50

⁴ [JovenVota \(facebook.com\)](#)

Lastly, under Component 4, the project partnered with UN Women Timor-Leste to enhance women's participation and leadership in elections via Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality (TLGE) Training⁵. Moreover, the project increased the knowledge and capacity for political participation and representation, and COVID-safety, of 117 PwDs via a two-week training on Braille, including advocacy towards the EMBs for increased access to independent participation in elections for persons with visual impairments⁶.

Despite the progress made, the project has faced a number of challenges during the implementation in 2021. The three main challenges include 1) the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, 2) the devastating floods in April 2021, and 3) the Government of Timor-Leste's delayed adoption of new regulations for elections. The prolonged COVID-19 situation caused severe delays in recruiting and onboarding staff, as the country remained under a State of Emergency until November 2021, flights were infrequent and travel restrictions were, and remain, rigid, both at staff's place of departure as well as upon arrival in Timor-Leste. Additionally, Timor-Leste experienced devastating floods in April 2021, displacing 15,876 people and killing 41 people,⁷ exacerbating the already challenging circumstances and re-directing the government's priorities to focus on immediate response and recovery. The flood coincided with a spike in COVID-19 cases as those displaced in shelters were unable to maintain social distancing and access PPE. Against this backdrop, the Government of Timor-Leste, with the technical recommendations for COVID-safe elections provided via the project, finally passed the Decree on Presidential Election Regulations on 5th January 2022, laying a comprehensive legal framework for the upcoming Presidential Elections. The activities dependent on this law, such as the development of the COVID-resilient Election Plan and Manual (CREPM) and the COVID-resilient election training for EMB staffs, will therefore only fully commence now.

Considering the current political situation, there is a potential that a candidate does not get more than 50 % plus 1 of the total votes, thus, initiating a second round of Presidential Elections tentatively scheduled for 19 April (30 days after the first round)⁸. If this is the case, continued support is needed to ensure the continued practice of COVID-safety during the elections.

⁵ [UNDP-UN Women launch joint effort to promote women's participation in politics](#), Tatoli News, October, 2021

⁶ [UNDP-ADMTL offers Braille training to 120 visually impaired persons in Timor-Leste](#), Tatoli News, December, 2021

⁷ UN Resident Coordinator's Office Timor-Leste (2021) Timor-Leste: Floods, Response Summary (April – December 2021)

⁸ Government of Timor-Leste (2022) Electoral calendar for the election of the President of the Republic



Presidential Electoral Calendar

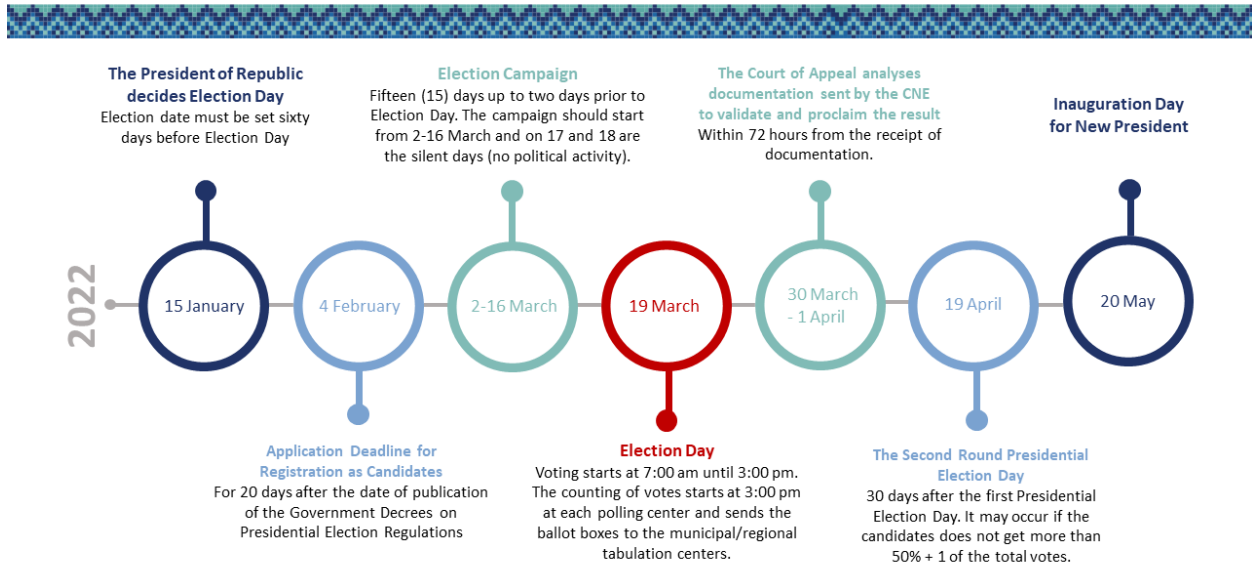


Figure 2 Timeline of Presidential Election

II. Background

As a small half-island post-conflict country, Timor-Leste is facing a number of development challenges despite noticeable progress since independence in 2002. These challenges have been further exacerbated by the outbreak of the novel Corona virus which resulted in a national State of Emergency between March 2020 and November 2021 and induced substantial negative socio-economic consequences for the Timorese people. On top of this, Timor-Leste is expecting a series of elections at the national and municipal level in 2022-2024, most urgently, the Presidential Elections in March 2022. This not only presents a risk for the spread of the virus as people gather for the election, but equally, hinders the continued practice of key democratic processes if not conducted, and thus, undermines representative democratic governance.

The project aims to (1) support municipal EMB offices to become COVID-resilient, accessible, and environmentally friendly; (2) address the underlying issues of long-term resilience to pandemics such as COVID by developing COVID-Resilient Election Plan and Manuals; (3) provide effective and innovative electoral and COVID-19 awareness communication; and (4) strengthen the participation and representation of youth, women, and PwDs in politics; in pursuit of informed, inclusive, and COVID-resilient elections. With the Human Security approach, the project adopts a people-centred, context-specific, comprehensive approach that engages international and national actors, with prevention, protection, and empowerment, at its core, to address the root causes of health and political insecurity. Namely, the spread of COVID-19 and its negative impacts on elections, and subsequent socio-economic consequences.

As a result of the project, Timor-Leste will be equipped to carry out COVID-resilient, democratic, and inclusive elections at both the national and municipal levels, most urgently the Presidential Elections in March 2022. This ultimately supports the sustainable development of Timor-Leste, the achievement of Agenda 2030, and the strengthening of accessible, accountable, and gender-responsive governance systems, institutions, and services at both the national and municipal levels.

The project is contributing to Timor-Leste’s sustainable development by joining efforts with the GoTL’s Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030, UNSCDF, UNDP Strategic Plan and SDGs:

Table 1 Contribution to the Government Priorities, UNSCDF, UNDP Strategic Plan and SDGs

| Project | GoTL’s Strategic Development Plan | UNSCDF | UNDP Strategic Plan | UN SDGs |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Expected Results 1 | By 2030, the strong bond between Timorese people and the environment will be restored and our natural resources and environment will be managed sustainably for the benefit of all | Resilience to climate change and sustainable management of resources (UNSCDF outcome 6) | Strengthen resilience to shocks and crises (Outcome 3) | SDG9 – Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure SDG3 – Good Health and Well-Being |
| Expected Results 2 | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Expected Results 3 | The public sector in Timor-Leste will be central to building trust in government, which is a prerequisite of nation building. | Accessible, accountable and gender-responsive governance systems, institutions, and services at the national and municipal levels (UNSCDF outcome 5) | Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development (Outcome 2) | SDG16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG5 – Gender Equality |
| Expected Results 4 | | | | |

III. Results

Output 1: Municipal EMB offices in all 12 municipalities and RAEOA are COVID-resilient, gender/youth/disability friendly and green

Activity 1.1: Construction of 6 new buildings for municipal EMB offices (3 STAE and 3 CNE)

Activity 1.2: Renovation of 7 existing Municipal EMB offices (STAE)

Activity 1.3: Technical advice to the EMBs on overall construction and management of Municipal offices, including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

The project hired a consultancy firm via the Bangkok Regional Hub Long Term Agreement holders to conduct a feasibility study for the construction of six (6) new buildings (Activity 1.1). This feasibility study includes a social and environmental impact assessment, and the development of drawing, design, Bill of Quantity (BoQ) and other technical documents for tendering. The project gives technical advices via the engineering team to ensure the buildings are COVID-19 resilient, accessible, and in line with UNDP's and national construction standards (Activity 1.3). For example, for accessibility and inclusion, the buildings will have separate toilet for men and women, handwashing station, rainwater harvesting system, solar system etc.

Considering the locations of the seven renovation sites by geographical context, and to reducing the risk of dependency on one contractor, the work is divided into three lots (Activity 1.2); Lot 1: renovation in Dili municipality, Lot 2: renovation in Aileu, Ainaro and Bobonaro municipalities, and Lot 3: renovation in Liquica, Baucau and Lautem municipalities. The technical assessment and preparation of BoQ for the renovation work has been finalized by the project's engineering team (Civil Engineer Specialist, Civil Engineer Officer, Civil Engineer Associate and Civil Engineer Intern).

In October, the Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (STAE) requested a minor change in location for one of the renovations work. Namely changing the renovation in Special Administrative Region Oecusse-Ambeno (RAEOA) to Dili municipality. The reasons for the request is to ensure that STAE's building in Dili is accessible and disaster resilient. Specifically, via; (1) installing hand washing facilities and outdoor waiting space for COVID safety during the upcoming elections, (2) enabling accessible for persons with disability by installing wheelchair ramps and toilet frames, and (3) ensuring resilience to natural hazards (specifically floods) by building an elevated storage space for essential electoral equipment as the April 2021 flood revealed that the building was vulnerability to natural hazards, especially flooding.

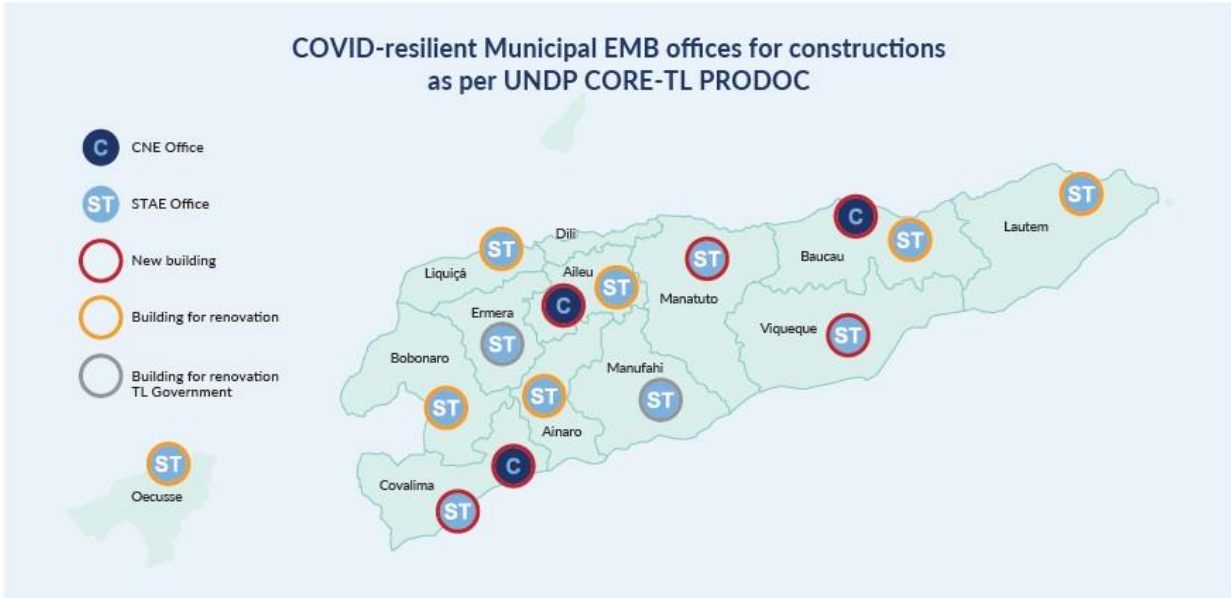


Figure 3. Map of Construction/Renovation Sites of EMB Offices as per the Project Document and Indicating the Location Change Requested by STAE (Oecusse to Dili).

Output 2: EMBs are equipped with a comprehensive plan and manual for COVID prevention and response for the upcoming elections, and its staff are trained accordingly

Activity 2.1: Develop a COVID-Resilient Election Plan and Manual (CREPM) including the assessment

Activity 2.2: Procuring COVID Response and Prevention Equipment

Activity 2.3: COVID-resilient Election Training and capacity building of the EMB staff, particularly those in municipalities Training of Trainer (TOT) and virtual learning session potentially with other EMBs)

Activity 2.4: Technical support to election logistics and procurement

A partnership with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) was established on the 1st of June to develop a CREPM (Activity 2.1). In pursuit of this, International IDEA conducted an analysis of the electoral policies and procedures, based on which they provided recommended amendments to the legal framework required to assure COVID safety. EMBs, in cooperation with UNDP and International IDEA, subsequently conducted 4 high-level workshops to further discuss the recommendations, where key government ministries participated (Ministry of Health, Ministry of State Administration, etc.) totaling 111 (41% women) participants. These recommendations were considered, and the Government Decree on Presidential Election Regulations were proposed by EMBs and submitted to the Council of Ministers in December 2021, incorporating 8 recommendations of COVID-safety measures in the elections. The Decree law outlines the legal framework for the upcoming Presidential Elections, based on which International IDEA, in cooperation with the EMBs, will finalize the CREPM and accompany training material, including practical mock-elections for hands-on learning (Activity 2.3). Additionally, International IDEA provided guidance on the specifications for electoral indelible ink procurements.

To complement the work of International IDEA, and to provide technical assistance, the project is in the process of hiring the National Health Public Officer. Despite several rounds of recruitments, no candidate has yet been selected, but the project is consulting the Ministry of Health to recommend candidates.

The project initiated the procurement of PPE for the upcoming Presidential Elections. Based on the recommendation from International IDEA, and at the request of STAE, the project is supporting the procurement of eight (8) PPE types (Activity 2.2 & Activity 2.4). The project is prioritizing procurements from the local market where available. However, due to lack of availability in Timor-Leste, some PPE, such as mask (NK95), thermometer and gloves, will be procured internationally using UNDP's regional long-term agreement holders. It is envisaged that the materials will reach Timor-Leste by the end of February. The items procured internationally and nationally are listed respectively in the table 1 and 2 below.

Table 2 The List of PPE Items Procured Internationally









| No | Type/Model | Item | Specification | Quantity (Tentative) |
|----|--|-----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. |  | PPE Package | Sterilized Material Hood, Clothing, Pants, Shoe covers with rubber seal | 660 |
| 2. |  | Mask KN95 | One Size fits Most, Color White, Non-woven Fabric, Filtering Rate $\geq 95\%$ (0.075 μm particles) | 5800 |
| 3. |  | Thermometer/ Thermo Scanner | Non-Contact Digital Infrared Forehead Thermometer | 1,600 |
| 4. |  | Gloves | | 2,900 |

Table 3 The List of PPEs Procured Nationally

| No | Type/Model | Item | Specification | Quantity (Tentative) |
|----|---|---|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. |  | disinfectant | | 60 |
| 2. |  | Hand Sanitizer | Alcohol Ethyl 25% 500 ml | 6,000 |
| 3. |  | Cotton Mask with Logos of STAE, UNDP, Japan | Cotton Mask/Traditional Tais | 6,000 |

| | | | | |
|----|---|--------------|---|----|
| 4. |  | Pump Machine | 16 litres capacity, Pump Pressure: 0.25-0.45 Mpa | 30 |
|----|---|--------------|---|----|

Output 3: Capacities of EMBs and media are enhanced to provide effective and innovative electoral and COVID-awareness communication and a participatory and interactive digital information platform for elections and COVID-19

Activity 3.1: Innovative voting promotion and COVID-awareness campaign

Activity 3.2: Capacity building of Journalists in political/election reporting

Activity 3.3: Support UNTL’s Social Science Faculty, in partnership with EMBs and the School of Science of Waseda University, to establish a participatory and interactive digital information platform for elections and COVID-19

Activity 3.4: Technical support and training for EMBs and Journalist

The project produced five (5) IEC materials for voter registration (7,000 brochures/4,000 posters/2 billboards/2 TV Public Service Announcements (PSAs)) (Activity 3.1). The PSAs were broadcasted on national TV stations such as Radio and Television of Timor-Leste (RTTL), National Media Group (GMN) and Education TV for one month and reached an estimated 48 percent of the population per week. COVID-safe electoral content has also been posted on the Joven Vota Facebook page where the project posts updates on regular basis, reaching approx. 26,945 people, of which 741 people engaged via shared and comments by (as of 15th December). Due to the delay of approval of the Government Decree on Presidential Election Regulations, some COVID-safe election IEC materials are pending, as they will align with the legal COVID-safety provisions as per the decree law.



Figure 4 IEC Materials for Voter Registration Developed and Distributed by the Project

A Letter of Agreement (LOA) between the National Press Councils and UNDP was signed on 23rd of December 2021. Based on the LOA, the National Press Councils will produce three (3) outputs related to capacity building of journalists on political/election reporting (Activity 3.2) in all municipalities and RAEOA. These include (1) developing National Guidelines for Journalists and Reporters on Campaigning and Elections, (2) training journalists based on the National Guideline, and (3) conducting awareness-raising campaigns on the National Guidelines (at the national and municipal level). The activities will be implemented between January and March 2022.

The project has been preparing a LOA with the National Commission on Elections (CNE) to establish a participatory and interactive digital information platform for elections and COVID-19 (Activity 3.3). Although it took time to select a professor to work with for this activity due to the specialized skills required, Professor Mitsuru YAMADA, belonging to the Faculty of Social Science at Waseda University and representative of Asia Human Community Research Institute in Japan, was recommended by CNE as the most preferred candidate for the partnership in the activity. Prof. YAMADA specializes in international relations, international co-operation, and peacebuilding, and has been researching Timor-Leste politics since its independence.

Output 4: Groups representing youth, women and persons with disability have enhanced capacities in political participation and representation

- Activity 4.1: Empowering women leadership in elections at the national and sub-national level
- Activity 4.2: Comprehensive civic and election education programme for youth delegates of Suco Councils

Activity 4.3: Advocacy, assistance, and capacity building for the PwD's to increase political participation and representation

Activity 4.4: Technical support and training for women, youth and PwD groups

The project has started to develop a set of TV programs to promote inclusive elections. The programs invite youth, women, and PwD to discuss politics and elections on an open and cooperative platform. It will be streamed on RTTL, GMN, and TV Education in February 2022. The programs will also serve as a capacity building opportunity for youth, women, and PwD to advocate for their rights and needs. It is envisaged that public engagement and outreach content, such as the TV programs, will increase the voter turn-out of youth, women, and PwD in the upcoming Presidential elections.

For youth engagement, the project has established a Facebook page "*Joven Vota*" (Youth Voting), which promotes COVID-safe election measures and youth participation in the elections (Activity 4.2). Now the Facebook page reached 1,124 followers (as of 30th of December), with a target of 3,000 followers by the Presidential Election in March 2022. The project will hold a "*Joven Vota*" event at Timor Plaza on 5th March 2022, aiming to increase youth's knowledge and capacity on politics and elections and disseminate information on COVID-safe election (Activity 4.2).

The project signed an agreement with UN Women Timor-Leste on the 11th of October to enhance women's participation and leadership in elections (Activity 4.1). UN Women hired a national consultant to compliment the implementation of Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality (TLGE) Training Program. A women-led civil society organization named 'Ba Futuru' was contracted as the partner organization for the TLGE training and audio-visual IEC production. Ba Futuru has extensive experience in women's empowerment and capacity development by providing training to more than 45,000 individuals nationwide over the last 16 years. The national consultant and Ba Futuru are jointly drafting and contextualizing the trainings as well as designing the IEC materials.

In close collaborating with Assosiasaun Halibur Ema Ho Difisienti Matan Timor-Leste (AHDMTL), a person with visual impairments organization, the project implemented "Braille Training for Persons with Visual Impairment to Access and Participate in the Election Process" (Activity 4.3 & Activity 4.4). The training was carried out for two weeks in three municipalities: Aileu, Manufahi and Lautem from 22nd of November to 4th of December 2021. In total, 117 persons with visual impairments from 12 municipalities participated, of which 44 people were women. Through this training, the participants increased their knowledge on COVID-safe election measures and election processes, in addition to the capacity building for Braille reading and writing (Figure 4 & 5).

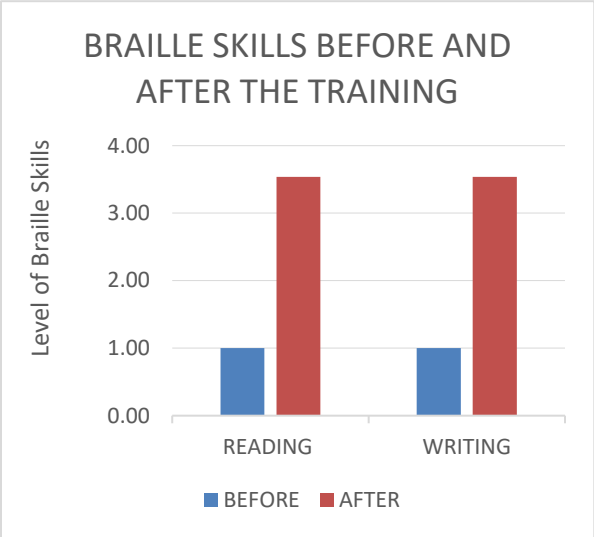


Figure 5 Level of Braille Skills in Reading and Writing Before and After the Training

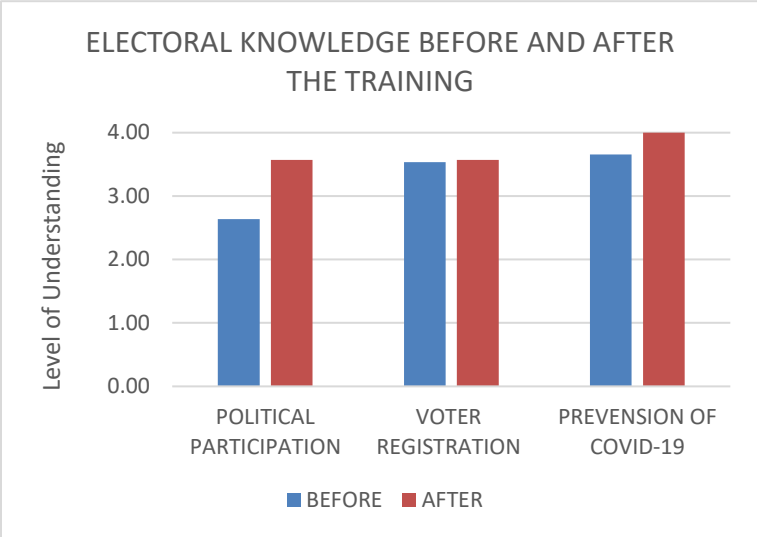


Figure 6 Level of Understanding and Electoral Knowledge Before and After the Training

As part of the training, the participants undertook a ‘mock election’ using Braille ballot paper, observed by STAE and CNE. Many PwDs, particularly people with visual impairment, could not vote independently and in secret, and occasionally fear that their assistants did not choose their desired vote⁹. Although Braille ballot paper are not available in the upcoming Presidential Election in March 2022, the training provided an opportunity to advocate to the Government to institute a decree law to allow the use of Braille ballot paper in upcoming elections. The same training is going to be implemented in February 2022 in RAEOA, in which 30 persons with visual impairment will participate in. Further activities and informative sessions on inclusive elections, e.g., for persons with hearing impairment and/or physical disability will be held in February 2022.

Additional Output

At the request of the Government of Timor-Leste, the project supported the procurement of the indelible ink for the prevention of dual voting, by the financial contribution of USD 360,000 from the Government of Timor-Leste. The sample of the indelible ink was tested by EMBs and UNDP on 1st of December and confirmed the quality for use in the next presidential election in March 2022. Based on the request from STAE, the project procured 12,600 bottles (50ml; 25% Silver Nitrogen) of indelible ink to EMBs, which arrived on the 22nd of December 2021. This is a critical component of ensuring credible elections, and International IDEA consulted both EMBs during the ink specification development to ensure COVID transmission was considered.

⁹ Ra’es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the UNDP 2018

Table 4 The Project's Achievement of 2021 against the Set Targets and Outputs

| Project Output | Project Indicator (number and statement) | Baseline for the project indicator | Final target for the project indicator (March 2022) | 2021 Milestone | 2021 Actual | Remarks Please use this space to explain why the project under/overachieved the set target |
|--|--|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|---|
| Project Output 1 <i>Municipal EMB offices in all 12 municipalities and ZEESM are COVID-resilient, gender/youth/disability friendly and green</i> | Indicator 1.1 <i># of municipal EMB offices are equipped with hand-washing station, outdoor waiting area, rain harvesting system, toilets for women and men, full access to PWD</i> | 0 (2020) | 13 | 10 | 0 | STAE requested to change the project location (from Oecussi to Dili). Feasibility study has been initiated, and technical specifications for renovations are ready. |
| | Indicator 1.2 <i>% of people satisfied with the municipal EMB offices, that are newly built and renovated including accessibility and COVID prevention measures</i> | 0 (2020) | 80% | 70% | N/A | It will be measured when the construction/renovation is completed. |
| Output 2 <i>EMBs are equipped with a comprehensive plan and manual for COVID prevention and response for the upcoming elections, and its staff are trained accordingly</i> | Indicator 2.1 <i>"CREPM for National and Municipal Elections" are developed</i> | No (2020) | CREPM for National and Municipal Elections are developed | First draft completed | First draft completed | Draft versions are ready, but were pending the approval of the Decree on Presidential Election Regulations by Council of Ministers |
| | Indicator 2.2 <i># of items procured for COVID prevention/response based on the CREPM</i> | No (2020) | TBD | TBD | 8 types items (please refer to the table 1) | It will all be procured by the end of February; exact quantities of each item will be confirmed upon delivery. |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|----------------------------|----------------------|---|
| | Indicator 2.3 <i># of EMB staff and other relevant institutions attending training (at least 40% women)</i> | 0 (2020) | 1,350 | 350 | 0 | It will be carried out in February, after the first draft of CPERM is completed. |
| Output 3 <i>Capacities of EMBs and media are enhanced to provide effective and innovative electoral and COVID-awareness communication and a participatory and interactive digital information platform for elections and COVID-19</i> | Indicator 3.1 <i># of IEC materials developed and distributed and/or broadcasted about election campaign and COVID awareness</i> | 0 (2020) | 35 | 15 | 5 | The delay of new regulation adoption and postponement of events delayed the production of IECs. |
| | Indicator 3.2 <i># of EMB staff and journalists attended the workshop/training (at least 40% women)</i> | 0 (2020) | TBD | TBD | N/A | The training will be implemented in Jan-Feb 2022. |
| | Indicator 3.3 <i># of people visited the digital information platform for electoral and COVID information</i> | 0 (2020) | 10,000 | 5,000 | 0 | The delay of hiring a digital transformation specialist is delaying the development/establishment of digital platform. Alternatives are being explored. |
| Output 4 <i>Groups representing Youth, Women and Persons with Disability have enhanced capacities in political participation and representation</i> | Indicator 4.1 <i># of women, youth, and persons with disability with increased knowledge and capacity for political participation and representation through training and seminar</i> | 0 (2020) | W: 1,000 Y: 1,000 D: 500 | W: 500 Y: 500 D: 250 | W:0 Y:0 D: 117 | The training/events continue in Jan-March 2022. |
| | Indicator 4.2 <i># of women, youth and persons with disability participating in elections as voters (UNDP CPD 3.1.2)</i> | Voters W:90% Y: N/A D: 2,524 (1,082 W) | Voters W:90% Y: 89% D: 8,000 (4,000 W) | N/A | N/A | It will be measured after the Presidential Election. |

IV. Lessons Learned

All activities are in process; however, some are behind the initial plan. There are three reasons for this delay: (1) the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) the April floods, and (3) the delayed adoption of the new Decree on Presidential Election Regulations by the Government of Timor-Leste.

Firstly, the project faced a challenge to bring international specialists/experts to Timor-Leste because of the complexity of travel and admission due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. This project involves various international and national specialists/experts to enhance the COVID resiliency and inclusiveness in the coming elections. However, the global pandemic of COVID-19 and strictly restricted admission of many countries making recruitment and onboarding difficult. The lack of physical access to Timor-Leste by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the international recruitments, which caused delays in the implementation of activities. Since October of 2021, nearly all members are onboard, which has and will continue to accelerate the project progress and enhance the quality.

Secondly, Timor-Leste experienced devastating floods in April 2021, which displaced 15,876 people and killed 41 people.¹⁰ As a result of the flooding, the government counterparts prioritize shifted to emergency response and recovery.

Lastly, the Government of Timor-Leste finally adopted the new Decree on Presidential Election Regulations only in January 2022, despite continued technical assistance and push for their approval prior to November to ensure adequate COVID preparations for the upcoming Presidential Elections. Considering that a number of activities are based on the provisions of the Decree, such as the development of CREPM (Activity 2.1) and the COVID-resilient Election Training and capacity building of the EMB staffs (Activity 2.3), they were stalled pending the approval. As such, the activities are being finalized and initiated as of January 2022.

¹⁰ UN Resident Coordinator's Office Timor-Leste (2021) Timor-Leste: Floods, Response Summary (April – December 2021)

V. Way Forward

The President of the Republic announced 19th of March 2022 as the Election Day for Presidential Election. Align with the schedule of electoral preparation, all activities shall continue in 2022. Considering the current political situation, there is a potential that a candidate does not get more than 50 % plus 1 of the total votes, thus, initiating a second round of Presidential Elections tentatively scheduled for 19 April (30 days after the first round)¹¹. If this is the case, continued support is needed to ensure the continued practice of COVID-safety during the elections.

Under Component 1, the international consultancy firm will conduct the feasibility study for the new six construction of EMB offices in February. The construction is expected to start in April and finalize in March 2023. The process of hiring a construction company(ies) will be completed, starting the renovation work in February to August.

Under component 2, the draft COVID-Resilient Election Plan and Manual (CREPM) will be reviewed and assessed by EMBs, finalizing it in the beginning of February. International experts from International IDEA are expected to come to Timor-Leste to implement the COVID-resilient Election Training to EMB staffs with the CREPM in February and March. The PPE procurement, both international and national, is expected to be completed by the end of February.

Under Component 3, the LOA between CNE and UNDP will be signed in February to establish the digital information platform for elections and COVID-19. It includes electoral promises and manifestos of political parties and candidates, developed by the engagement with Waseda University and the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL). The National Press Council will develop the National Guidelines for Journalists and Reporters on Campaigning and Elections and conduct the training and awareness-raising campaigns based on the Guideline in January to March.

Under Component 4, TV programs for promoting the inclusive election will be developed and broadcast in February. The project will launch an election information center on the ground floor of Timor Plaza on 24th January, where youth, women and PwD can access electoral information and COVID preventive measure, aiming to increase their knowledge and capacity for political participation and their voter turnout in the presidential election. For youth engagement, the project will hold a “*Joven Vota*” event at Timor Plaza on 5th March 2022, targeting the youth aged 17 to make an informed decision for their first time voting at the Presidential Election. The TLGE training for women’s engagement with UN Women will be implemented in Dili and Covalima municipalities in February to March. For PwD engagement, the Braille Training will continued in RAEOA in February, and informative sessions for persons with hearing impairment and physical disability will be held in February to March.

¹¹ Government of Timor-Leste (2022) Electoral calendar for the election of the President of the Republic

VI. Financial Status¹²

The financial status shows in the table below.

Table 5 The Expenditure up to 31 December 2021 against the budget as per the Project Document

| Output | Budget March 31, 2021 - March 31, 2022 | Commitments & Expenditures up to 31 December 2021 | Delivery Rate (%) | Remark |
|------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------|--------|
| Output 1 | \$1,580,000.00 | \$167,706.54 | 11% | |
| Output 2 | \$867,500.00 | \$320,745.37 | 37% | |
| Output 3 | \$432,500.00 | \$131,092.00 | 30% | |
| Output 4 | \$340,000.00 | \$146,478.91 | 43% | |
| Management | \$447,033.33 | \$217,343.43 | 49% | |
| 1% deducted for UN Levy | \$39,604.00 | 0 | 0 | |
| GMS (8%) | \$293,362.97 | \$78,669.30 | 27% | |
| Total | \$4,000,000 | \$1,062,035.55 | 27% | |

¹² Disclaimer: Data contained in this financial report section is an extract of UNDP financial records. All financials provided above are provisional.

VII. Visibility Achievements

Throughout 2021, UNDP and partners, following the Japan visibility guidelines, have communicated about the achievements and events of the project on a number of media channels. UNDP has also invited key stakeholders, such as the Embassy of Japan, to participate in such events.

Some of the notable visibility achievements in 2021 include, but are not limited to, the regular activity updates on the “Joven Vota” Facebook page (<https://web.facebook.com/JovenVota>) and on the UNDP Timor-Leste Facebook page (<https://web.facebook.com/UNDPTimorLeste>). Additionally, the project published four press releases about; (1) the project launch; (2) the agreement with UN Women for ‘women’s enhanced participation and leadership in elections’; (3) the Braille training for PwD for inclusive elections; and (4) the agreement with the National Press Council. Local media (e.g. news outlet TATOLI) also covered project events and achievements, including the CNE-STAE-UNDP workshops and discussion on legislative amendments for COVID-safe presidential election.



Figure 5 Braille Training for PwD for Inclusive Elections (Ms. Kazumi Yamada, Counselor of Embassy of Japan in Timor-Leste)



Figure 6 and 7 Media Coverage and Press Release

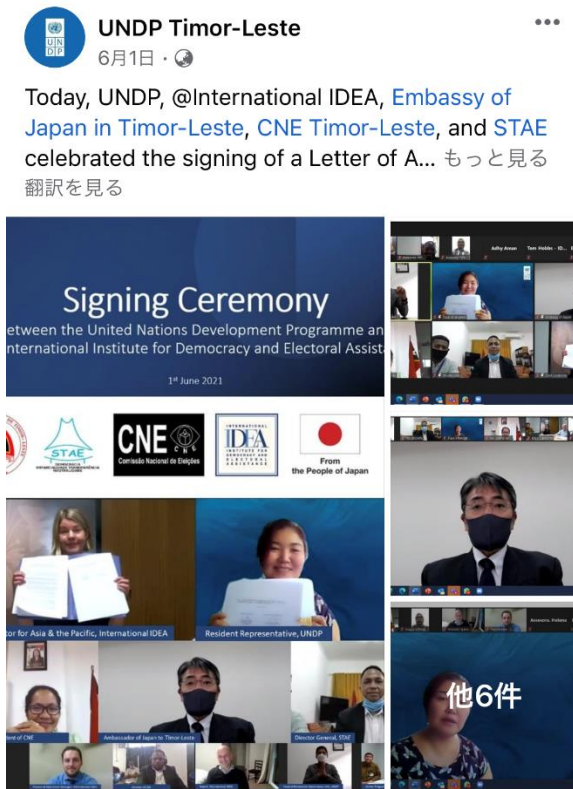
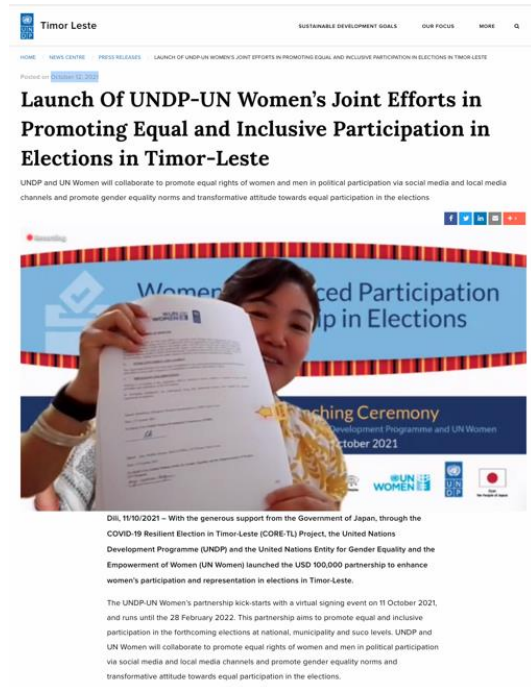


Figure 8 and 9 The posts related to the project on Facebook of UNDP Timor-Leste and JOVEN VOTA