



From
the People of Japan



PROGRESS REPORT

Timor-Leste

COVID-Resilient Election in Timor-Leste (CORE-TL) Project [November 2022]



*Figure 1 Mother preventing COVID-19 and her child after voting at the 2022 presidential election
by Ayumi Kimura (Communication Specialist)*

Project Information

Reporting Period	1 year and 8 months (March 2021 to November 2022)
Start Date - End Date	March 2021 – 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) Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE)
UNDP Contact Person	Tito Filipe da Costa, Project Manager of CORE-TL Project tito.dacosta@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. Background

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 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. 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.

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. 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				

II. Progress

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)

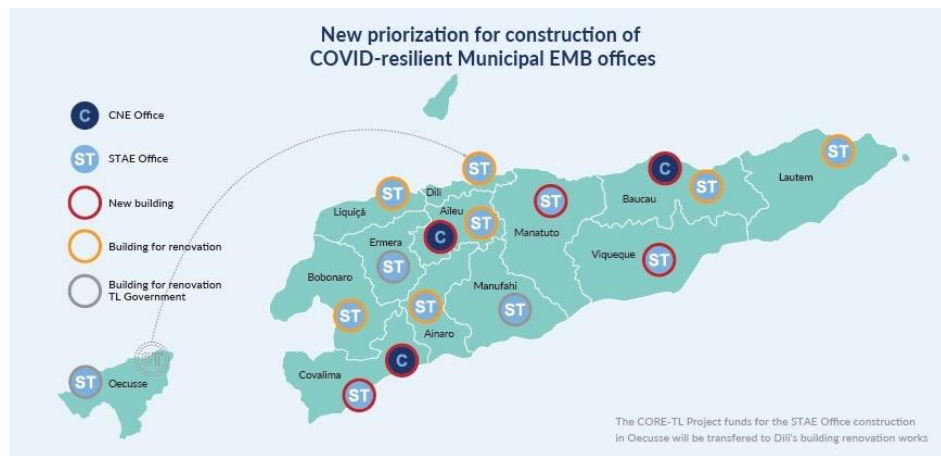


Figure 2. Location map of Construction/Renovation sites of EMB offices

The project is to construct 3 new buildings for municipal STAE in Covalima, Manatuto and Viqueque municipalities, and 3 new buildings for municipal CNE in Covalima, Aileu and Baucau municipalities (Figure 2). The feasibility study conducted by Nippon Koei Co., Ltd. specified a social and environmental impact assessment, and the development of drawing, design, Bill of Quantity (BoQ) and other technical documents for tendering for each building. It concluded that there are no major hindrances to the Design and Construction of the CNE/STAE Office Buildings. However, each site will require minor architectural and structural adjustments in its plans based on the location, orientation, shape, and environmental circumstances. In addition, certain Design Parameters will be in anticipation of adverse conditions, such as COVID, disasters, power outages, and water shortages. As water is a common shortage in all sites, all sites shall have an underground cistern of 3000 L, with an overhead tank of 600 L, as well as another overhead tank of 600 L for rainwater recovery. These are the resolutions per site are the following:

1. CNE Aileu – the long side will be facing the road per discussion and expectation of end users, and the structure shall be raised 600 mm from the natural grade line.
2. CNE Baucau – since there is an existing meeting room at the back, CNE Baucau will not have a meeting room, and shall likewise be raised 600 mm from the natural grade line.

3. CNE Covalima – this structure shall be raised 1000 mm from the natural grade line, and the existing structure shall be demolished to give way to the new building.
4. STAE Cova Lima – this structure has to be inserted between two existing buildings. This will also be raised 1000 mm from the natural grade line. However, the end-users have mentioned that the front existing building shall be demolished after this structure is erected. This demolition needs to be undertaken so that there will be sufficient vehicular access to the STAE Cova Lima, where the end-users have requested that the main entrance face the road.
5. STAE Viqueque – this structure shall be raised 1000 mm from the natural grade line since the existing lot is considerably lower than the road and the surrounding areas. In addition, due to the presence of an existing structure, the main entrance shall be oriented perpendicular to the existing road.
6. STAE Manatuto – due to its proximity to the coastline, this structure shall be raised 1500 mm from the natural grade line, and a light fence shall be erected in its perimeter for security as the area is open.

Based on the resolutions, the project’s engineering team provided technical advice to ensure the buildings are COVID-19 resilient, accessible for people with disability and in line with UNDP’s and national construction standards (Activity 1.3). With the endorsement of CNE and STAE to the construction designs, an Invitation to Bid (ITB) was launched on 19 July. However, due to the few applications, the ITB ended up being extended three times until 28 September, which delayed the contract process and the start of construction. Finally, through the judicious selection, UNDP made contracts with local constructors in November 2022. The construction period will be six months from the end of November to the end of May 2023. Thus, currently, the project seeks the No-Cost Extension for this activity, consulting with the Embassy of Japan in Timor-Leste.



Figure 2. 3D views of STAE office design in Covalima municipality

The renovation work of the STAE office locates in 7 sites; Dili, Aileu, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Liquica, Baucau and Lautem municipalities (Activity 1.2/ Figure 2). One site was changed from Oecusse to Dili as STAE requested which was approved by the Embassy of Japan in February 2022. The project launched the bids (Request for Quotation (RFQ)) for renovation work in June and made contracts with selected local contractors in September 2022. As of November 2022, the progress of renovation in each municipality is; 95% at STAE national office in Dili, 100% at the Aileu office, 90% at the Liquica office, 95% Bobonaro office, 100% at the Baucau office, 5% at Lautem office, 50% at Ainaro office. All renovation will be finalized in January 2023 at the latest. A handover ceremony of the STAE national Office in Dili will take place in December 2022.



Figure 3. Renovated STAE offices in Dili and Bobonaro municipalities

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). 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.), totalling 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 for COVID-safety measures in the elections. These key measures recommended by International IDEA included the issuing and wearing of masks for polling station staff, social distancing in queues and the polling stations, and the provision of hand sanitizer in polling stations and gloves for polling officials.

Through this partnership, the project developed manuals based on current Timor-Leste laws and procedures and incorporated Covid-safe practices as far as the existing laws and regulations allow. The series of manuals consist of (1) Polling Center Presidential Handbook, (2) Polling Station Secretaries' Handbook, Supplementary Notes for (3) Polling at Parallel Polling Centres, (4) Voting Abroad, (5) Voting by Persons in Hospitals and Community Health Centres, (6) Voting by Persons in Mandatory Isolation, and (7) Voting by Persons in Prison, which encompasses all voting situations on election day. The manuals supported the administration of credible elections and served to inform polling station staff of correct and Covid-safe procedures for election days. The manuals also cover the run-off elections and could serve as a basis of information for upcoming parliamentary elections. Election observers noted that the electoral procedures were largely followed by election officials.



Figure 4. COVID-Resilient Election Plan and Manuals developed by the project

The development of a Trainers of Training (ToT), an adult-learning capacity development program to ensure that information within the manuals was shared and absorbed across the country (Activity 2.3). 43 trainers (30% women) at the municipal and national level directly increased their capacity for the operation of COVID-resilient elections. The cascade training was conducted for all 16,200 polling station officials. Additionally, National Public Health Adviser from the project conducted COVID-prevention training in municipalities. 348 EMB staff (42% women) increased their capacity to respond to the COVID case and first-aid treatment in an emergency at elections. Furthermore, in a programme of civic education, the COVID-resilient election was introduced to EMB staff in all municipalities except Dili. 125 municipal EMB staff (46% women) were trained about the COVID protocol at elections that may be followed in subsequent elections such as the parliamentary election in 2023.

For election days, the project procured nine PPE items to STAE (Activity 2.2 & Activity 2.4). Based on the recommendation from International IDEA, and at the request of STAE, eight PPE items were handed over to STAE for the 1st round of the presidential election; 60 gallons of disinfectants, 6,000 bottles of sanitizers, 5,800 pieces of KN95 masks, 400,000 pieces of disposal masks, 30 pieces of pump machines, 660 sets of PPE-kits, 1,600 pieces of thermometers, and 2,900 pairs of disposable gloves (Figure 6). Additionally, receiving a request from STAE, the project provided additional PPEs for the run-off election, which were the same amount of 7 items except KN 95 masks that was replaced with 20,000 pieces of cotton masks. These PPEs were distributed to 1,200 polling centers over the country and properly used by polling staff and votes to follow the COVID prevention protocol on election days.



Figure 5. List of PPE handed over to STAE for 1st round of Presidential Election

The project provided on-demand technical support to enhance Covid-resilience and the integrity and credibility of the elections (Activity 2.4). These interventions helped to ensure that the electoral process did not become a super-spreader event, as evidenced by the Palacio das Cinzas (Ministry of Health) statistics that reported zero new Covid-cases two weeks after the election date¹. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this two-week window is vital for understanding community transmission after large-scale events as symptoms manifest between 2-14 days after exposure.²



Figure 6. Polling staff following the COVID-prevention measure at the 2022 Presidential Election

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/100064941300042/posts/346706300837411/?d=n>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

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

During September 2021 and January 2022, the project produced five (5) IEC materials to promote voter registration over the country (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 during the electoral period in February and March and reached an estimated 48 % of the population per week. The 2022 Presidential Election has 859,613 registered voters (48% women), increasing 116,463 registration from the 2017 Presidential election.



Figure 8. IEC for Voter Registration for 2022 Presidential Election

For election days, the project designed and provided 8 posters and 3 banners to the STAE for the promotion of COVID-prevention protocol. These were displayed at all 12,000 polling centers over the country on election days. Additionally, 3 posters, 3 flyers, and 4 billboards were produced and leveraged for voting promotions. The billboards were displayed in Dili city and other IEC materials were utilized to increase COVID awareness to voters at the national and municipal STAE offices. Totalling 20 videos and PSAs were produced as of 16th November 2022 under the project and posted on UNDP’s Facebook and youtube accounts. Among them, RTTL and GMN broadcasted 8 videos and 5 videos respectively by the

2nd round of the presidential election. Furthermore, the Project also produced 4 audio PSAs, which were played on community radios all over Timor-Leste. Community radio has the most expansive reach, estimating 90% of the population in the country.³ The election results were summarized in four factsheets, which presented the number of voter registration, voter turn-out and detailed electoral information such as the number of polling centers, stations, abroad voting locations and polling staff.



Figure 9. Billboard at Pateo for promotion of 2nd round of Presidential Election



Figure 10. IEC flyers for COVID-prevention protocol at 2022 Presidential Elections

A Letter of Agreement (LOA) between the National Press Council and UNDP was signed on 23 December 2021. Based on the LOA, the National Press Council developed the “Electoral Reporting Guideline for Journalists and the Media” for the 2022 Presidential Elections (Activity 3.2). It serves to ensure the journalists and media address the principles of peace journalism, responsibility for inclusive politics the electoral coverage. The “Electoral Reporting Guideline for the 2022 presidential elections” was developed and handed over to Timorese media and journalists on 14 March 2022. The guideline has been updated to a comprehensive electoral reporting guideline for the subsequent elections in Timor-Leste. The launching event was successfully conducted on 22 November 2022 with more than 100 participants from journalists and media outlets. Using the guideline, National Press Council will conduct journalist training to promote guideline adherence in December 2022.

Additionally, through a partnership with Journalist Association Timor-Leste (AJTL), the project conducted journalism training about fact-checking and democratic election coverage. Totalling 88 journalists (52% women) increased their capacity on combating disinformation on elections, including fake photos and fake videos on SNS, and in-depth analytical reporting on elections for its democracy.

³ RMTL, The state of community media and community radio in Timor-Leste; <https://www.rmtl.org/blog/2022/08/31/the-state-of-community-media-and-community-radio-in-timor-leste/>

Based on a request letter from RTTL through the Embassy of Japan in Timor-Leste, the project organized Media Bus, which provided transportation to journalists to expand their electoral coverage over the rural areas of Timor-Leste. For the first round of the election in March 2022, six media buses were operated by the National Press Council on the election day. 21 journalists from 19 media joined this programme and reported on the election in 12 different municipalities. For the second round of the election, the same six buses were operated for three days to follow up on two candidates' campaigns. 18 journalists from 16 media published about the campaigns of the 2nd round of the presidential election, which contributed to citizens making their informed decision for the 2022 presidential election.

Under the project, UNDP made an LOA with National Commission on Elections (CNE) on 4 February 2022 to establish a participatory and interactive digital information platform for elections and COVID-19 (Activity 3.3). A digital transformation specialist and an election digital information specialist were hired to develop the CNE's electoral platform (<https://www.cne.tl/>). 7 trained CNE IT staff manage the website, which enables the voters to access immediately to electoral information such as the election calendar, candidate information, statistical data of voting, and geographical map of the polling stations. As of November 2022, the CNE website reached 13,243 accesses, which will be continuously monitored until the end of the project. CNE with the project's support organized the Presidential Election Debate of 1st and run-off elections. It was broadcasted live on GMN TV and GMN Youtube streaming. As of November 2022, the 1st presidential election debate was watched for 177,767 times and the second session of the debate was watched for 96,281 times on GMN Youtube.

Collaborating with UNTL's Social Science Faculty and the School of Science of Waseda University, the project organized seminars for Timorese students (Activity 3.3). The seminar provided a lecture on "Peace Election/ Youth Engagement in Elections" by Professor Mitsuru Yamada from Waseda University, "Journalism on Elections" by a lecturer from UNTL, "Youth Participation in Politics in Timor-Leste" by a lecturer from UNDIL, and "Digital Transformation of Elections at CNE" by the digital transformation specialist from the project. The participants actively discussed the significants of youth's political participation and the digital transformation of electoral information in Timor-Leste. Totalling 237 students (55% women) including 22 people with disability from UNTL and UNDIL participated in the seminars and increased their capacities for youth representation and participation in politics.

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

Under the project, UN Women and UNDP have partnered to promote equal and inclusive participation in the forthcoming elections at national and sub-national levels (Activity 4.1). The programme interventions were designed in consultation with the Secretariat of State for Equality and Inclusion (SEII) and the National Commission for Elections (CNE), and have contributed to the implementation of the National Strategy on “Hakbiit Lideransa no Partisipasaun Feto iha Eleisaun 2021-2025” (Strengthen Leadership and Women’s Participation in Elections in 2021-2025). In collaboration with local authorities and civil society organizations, UN Women conducted 16 workshops for emerging women and men leaders from diverse backgrounds, and current leaders in local governance structures, including suco and aldeia chiefs from 8 municipalities (from Dili, Covalima, Baucau, Liquica, Ainaro, Ermera, Lautem and Manatuto). Totaling 473 current and emerging leaders (250 women; 223 men) participated in 16 workshops respectively. As a result of the workshops, the participants have enhanced knowledge of equal rights of women and men in participating in elections in Timor-Leste as voters and candidates, including Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, and Municipality and Suco Elections, as well as the increased knowledge of the processes of participating in these elections.

Furthermore, 4 theater shows were organized to engage the wider public in Timor-Leste and disseminate essential election information, including how to participate in the Presidential Election as voters. The interactive theater performance challenged prevalent discriminatory practices and promoted equal rights for women and men in political participation. The programme interventions have contributed as a segment of a larger effort of the Government, international development partners and civil society to promote the increase of women voter turn-out in the Presidential Election and other elections in Timor-Leste in the coming years.

For promoting youth engagement with the politics, the project organized a “Joven Vota” event at Timor Plaza on 5 March, targeting first-time voters in the 2022 presidential elections. 210 youth (69% women) from 11 municipalities (Dili, Ainaro, Baucau, Bobonaro, Covalima, Ermera, Lautem, Liquica, Mnatuto, Manufahi, and Viqueque) participated in the event and increased their knowledge of political participation and voting process with COVID-prevention measures. 90% of participants assessed the event as “excellent” and “above average” (Figure 12) and 58% answered the increased knowledge of the “right to

vote” from the event (Figure 13). The event was live-streamed on the TVE Facebook page, having 2,873 viewers as of November 2022. ⁴

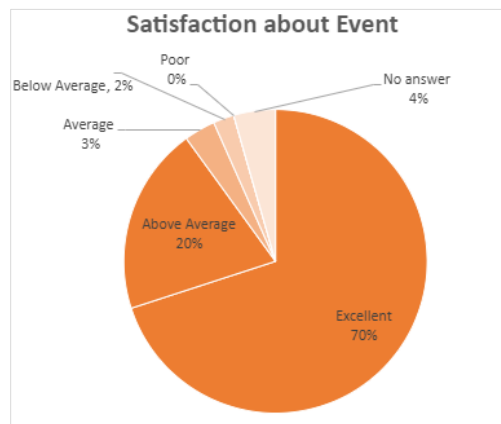


Figure 12. Satisfaction about Joven Vota Event

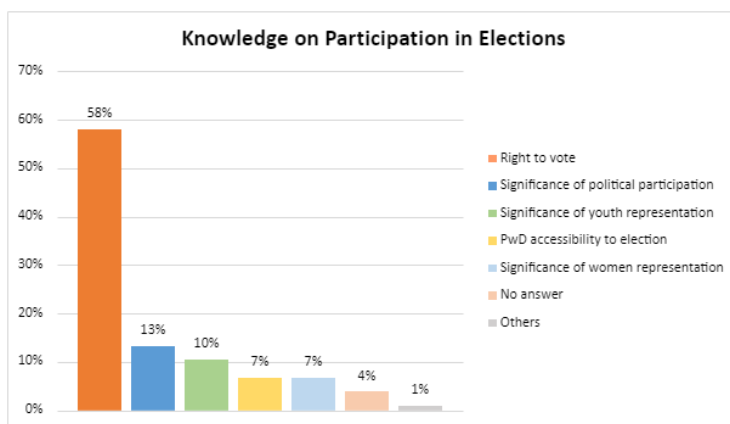


Figure 13. Increased Knowledge from the Joven Vota Event

The “Joven Vota” (Youth Voting) Facebook page created by the project has 4,633 followers as of November 2022, which promotes the COVID-safe protocol and youth participation in the elections (Activity 4.2). The page regularly posted on civic education and electoral information before the presidential elections and 38 posts including 18 videos in total reached 69,679 viewers with 8,435 engagements. After the presidential elections, the FB page started to promote voter registration for the upcoming parliamentary election in 2023. Additionally, the project established “Sentru Informasaun Eleisaun (SIE)” (Election Information Center) at the Timor Plaza from February to April. 333 people (50% women) visited SIE to receive electoral information such as the election calendar, voting process, parallel voting, and COVID-prevention measure at the elections.

The project made a partnership with a Civil Society Organization, Belun, to organize the 2-day workshops and Radio Talk show about inclusive elections at 8 municipalities and RAEOA (Ainaro, Bobonaro, Baucau, Covalima, Ermera, Lautem, Manufahi, Viqueque). In total 257 people (56% women), including 10 people with disability and 14 people from the LGBTI community, increased their capacities for political participation and representation. The workshops involved local authorities such as municipal CNE and STAE, presidents or administrators of municipalities and post administrative posts. The discussion with local authorities advocated advancing inclusive elections such as improved access for PwD to elections and addressing the discrimination against minority groups in the society.

For promoting an inclusive election, the project visited PwD organizations in Dili to conduct a briefing people with disabilities about their civic rights of political participation. 121 PwD (48% women) increased their knowledge of what kind of assistance they can receive from electoral staff and their rights to participate in politics. Furthermore, in close collaboration with Assosiasaun Halibur Ema Ho Difisienti

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/2289228521345667/videos/1177277552808178>

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 four municipalities: Aileu, Manufahi, Lautem and RAEOA. In total, 152 persons with visual impairments (40% women) from 13 municipalities participated. Through this training, the participants increased their knowledge of COVID-safe election measures and election processes, in addition to the capacity building for Braille reading and writing (Figures 14 & 15).

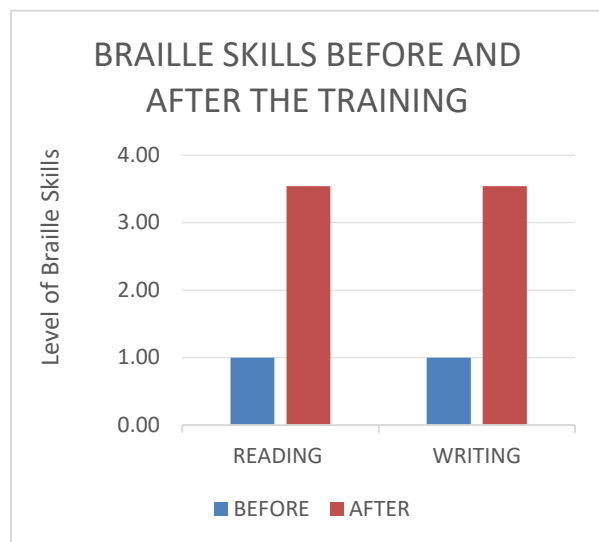


Figure 14 Level of Braille Skills in Reading and Writing Before and After the Training

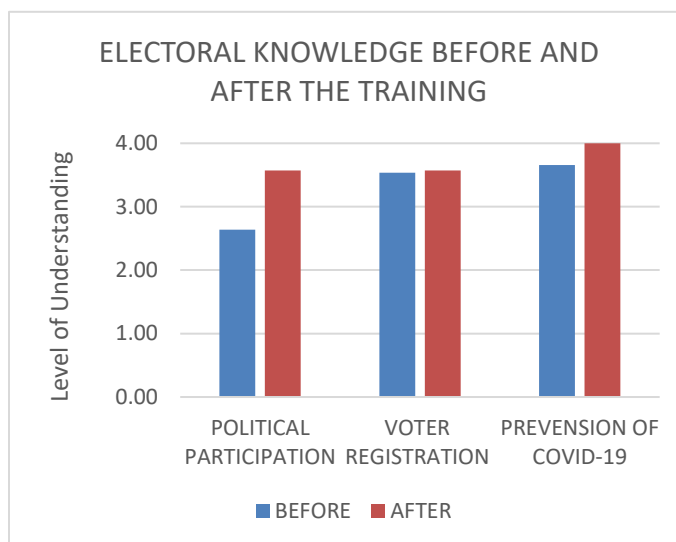


Figure 15 Level of Understanding and Electoral Knowledge Before and After the Training

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 vote⁵. Although the Braille ballot paper was not available in the 2022 Presidential Election, the training contributed to advocating for the Government to institute a decree law to allow the use of Braille ballot paper in upcoming elections. It resulted in the Government of Timor-Leste to conduct the monitoring visit at Indonesian Election Commission (KPU) on a implementation and management of Braille voting. The delegation team observed and assessed how the government of Indonesia operates brille voting and whether it is feasible in Timor-Leste. The four-full-day programme addressed both operational and technical aspects of the electoral system, including the concept and application of the braille ballot system, braille voting and counting. The delegation team has also visited the Indonesian Election oversight commission(BAWASLU) and a printing company that produces braille ballot papers (NetraPrinting). Timor-Leste’s EMBs will commit to implementing the braille voting system in the coming election, as the

⁵ Ra’es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the UNDP 2018

counterpart of the Indonesian Election commission expressed their willingness to provide technical support to Timor-Leste conducting brille ballot voting in the upcoming election.

Collaborating with the STAE and CNE, the project continued civic and voter education for youth in municipalities. It targets the first-time voters at the parliamentary election in 2023 to increase their knowledge of voting process and civil rights of participating in the elections. The civic education by the CNE reached 2868 youth participants (50.4% women), while the voter education by STAE had 891 youth participants (54% women). The participants have completed their preparation for participating in the next parliamentary election in 2023.

Additional Output

At the request of the Government of Timor-Leste, the project supported the procurement of indelible ink for the prevention of dual voting, through 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 1 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 for 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. As a result, there was no complaint about the indelible ink specification from political parties after the 2022 Presidential Elections.

The government initiated the preparation of the indelible ink for the 2023 Parliamentary election and requested UNDP for continuous support for the indelible ink procurement.

Table 2 The Project's Achievement of November 2022 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 Actual	November /2022 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	0	7	Renovation of 7 STAE office has been completed.
	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%	N/A	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	2 manuals and 5 supplementary notes completed	Achived
	Indicator 2.2 <i># of items procured for COVID prevention/response based on the CREPM</i>	No (2020)	TBD	9 items on process of procurement	9 items procured by 2022 Presidential Elections	Achived

	Indicator 2.3 # of EMB staff and other relevant institutions attending training (at least 40% women)	0 (2020)	1,350	0	627 (40% women)	The cascade training on COVID protocol at elections for polling staff reached 16,200 EMB staff
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	Indicator 3.1 # of IEC materials developed and distributed and/or broadcasted about election campaign and COVID awareness	0 (2020)	35	5	44	Achieved
	Indicator 3.2 # of EMB staff and journalists attended the workshop/training (at least 40% women)	0 (2020)	150	N/A	115	Journalist Training continues being implemented in December 2022.
	Indicator 3.3 # of people visited the digital information platform for electoral and COVID information	0 (2020)	10,000	5,000	13,243	Achieved
Output 4 Groups representing Youth, Women and Persons with Disability have enhanced capacities in political participation and representation	Indicator 4.1 # of women, youth, and persons with disability with increased knowledge and capacity for political participation and representation through training and seminar	0 (2020)	W: 1,000 Y: 1,000 D: 500	W: 0 Y: 0 D: 117	5542 people W:2,930 Y:6,403 D: 306 LGBTI: 14	Braille Training and Youth Engagement Activity will be continued up to the coming Parliament Election.
	Indicator 4.2 # of women, youth and persons with disability participating in elections as voters (UNDP CPD 3.1.2)	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	Voters W: 77.9% Y: N/A D: 6,264 (2,683 W)	

III. Lessons Learned

Project implementation faced a challenge in 2022, which was a prolonged process of selecting construction companies. The construction activity was arranged to implement in the dry season to facilitate material transportation and accelerate construction work. However, due to few applications, the advertising period should be extended three times, which caused a delay in the start of construction activity. COVID-19 and Ukraine war could cause to limit the international constructors to apply for this construction work in Timor-Leste due to the risk of high cost and instability of material supply and the limited options for travelling and transporting materials to Timor-Leste. The application requirement was relatively high for the local companies because of their limited IT and English knowledge and also their capacity to follow UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. All application process was carried out in English and online. Additionally, UNDP's Social and Environmental Standard was higher than the Timorese Government's standard in disaster risk and environmental impact management.

As a solution, the project visited each municipality to demonstrate the application process and encourage the local constructors to apply to the construction programme. It successfully increased the number of applications from local companies. In the end, the project successfully selected four qualified local companies for six lots of construction work. The period of construction work is six months to guarantee quality of construction align with the output as the buildings are equipped with COVID-resilient and disability-friendly access infrastructure, and thus their contracts with UNDP shall be up to the end of May. UNDP seeks for an endorsement of the no-cost extension of the project until 31st July 2023 from the Government of Japan.

IV. Way Forward

Timor-Leste expects to have a series of elections; a parliament election and village election in 2023, and a municipal election in 2024. The voter registration for the 2023 elections started in May 2022 up to one month before the election day. The coming parliament election day will be announced by the President of the Republic in January 2023. Align with the schedule of electoral preparation, all activities shall continue in January to July 2023 as UNDP seeks for an endorsement of no-cost extension of the project to achieve all outputs.

Under component 1, the new construction of 6 EMB offices has just started in December 2022. A ground-breaking ceremony will take place on 6th December in Suai, Covalima municipality to officially start the construction at all sites. The construction duration will be 6 months and completed by the end of May. It will make sure that new offices serve for the upcoming parliamentary election in 2023.

The project will continue other activities for the government of Timor-Leste to conduct COVID-safe, informative and inclusive elections for the next parliamentary election in 2023. COVID-prevention equipment such as PPEs, masks and sanitizers will be procured by the project to the municipal EMBs' offices. The project will be supporting the EMBs to produce COVID-awareness and inclusive elections campaign materials and content on media and handouts for the citizens. The journalist training on electoral reporting will be continued with the national electoral reporting guideline to increase the quality of information for the election. The promotion of youth and people with disabilities' participation and representation in elections will be continued through events and training/workshops in municipalities.

V. Financial Status⁶

The financial status shows in the table below.

Table 2 The Expenditure up November 2022 against the budget as per the Project Document

Output	Budget	Expenditure of 2021	Expenditures from January to November 2022	Provisional Budget 2023	Delivery Rate (%)	Remark
Output 1	\$1,580,000.00	\$148,599.75	\$1,162,066.45	\$ 249,357.28	82.9%	
Output 2	\$867,500.00	\$22,218.14	\$710,671.86	\$ 76,200.00	84.4%	
Output 3	\$432,500.00	\$58,985.94	\$320,310.30	\$42,590.08	87.6%	
Output 4	\$340,000.00	\$48,716.23	\$228,939.07	\$14,432.00	81.6%	
Management	\$447,033.33	\$138,243.87	\$222,877.33	\$126,055.88	80.7%	
1% deducted for UN Levy	\$39,604.00	\$ -	\$0.00	\$39,604.00	0%	
GMS (8%)	\$293,362.67	\$26,575.96	\$244,370.08	\$37,676.68	92.3%	
Total	\$4,000,000.00	\$443,299.89	\$2,889,235.09	\$585,915.92	83.3%	

⁶ Disclaimer: Data contained in this financial report section is an extract of UNDP financial records. All financials provided above are provisional.