



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURAL OVERSIGHT IN TIMOR-LESTE: SURVEYS, RAPID DATA RESPONSE AND CAMPAIGN INNOVATIONS

The MAF of Timor-Leste launched a transformative initiative to enhance agricultural productivity and planning through the Sustainable Agriculture Productivity Improvement Project (SAPIP). Supported by a USD 21 million grant from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), the project aimed to improve smallholder farmers' productivity. Despite significant progress achieved since Timor-Leste's independence, the country continued to face significant human resource capacity constraints and a recognized need for a decentralized approach across all government institutions, including the MAF. The latter, in particular, requires accurate information on its activities and evidence-based analysis of its performance and the outcomes of the programmes it oversees. To address these challenges, the Government of Timor-Leste sought assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to develop an evidence-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System as a sub-component of the SAPIP. The system integrated planning, monitoring and reporting, using data-driven tools for decision-making. The project concluded successfully in December 2023, establishing sustainable, evidence-based agricultural management.



### WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project aimed to integrate planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting within the MAF by supporting all stages of the ministry's managerial cycle. A comprehensive Management Information System (MIS) was developed, incorporating three modules: (i) Module 1, supporting the planning and budgeting of activities within the MAF, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently; (ii) Module 2, facilitating timely monitoring and data collection, allowing for real-time adjustments and improvements; and (iii) Module 3, providing dashboards with analytics and visualizations to track progress against key performance indicators. The MIS was formalized through Standard Operating Procedures for the M&E plan and the Annual Action Plan and budget preparation in 2023, establishing its use across all Directorates National and Directorates General within the MAF.

A robust Capacity Development Programme was implemented, offering over 400 hours of training to MAF officers and covering core MIS-related skills, including M&E theory, statistics, Excel, and mobile data collection applications. Two learning modalities were introduced: weekly Training of Trainers sessions designed to empower MAF officers to train others, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and Complementary Learning Sessions, gradually decreasing FAO Technical Assistance support and enhancing the sustainability and ownership of the system within the ministry. Initially, 75 MAF staff participated in the programme which later expanded to over 300 participants. Extension workers also received hands-on training in Information Technology (IT)-supported data collection.

### KEY FACTS

**Latest Approved Budget**  
USD 1 180 445

**Duration**  
March 2018–December 2023

**Resource Partner**  
Government of Timor-Leste

**Partners**  
Ministry of Agriculture and  
Fisheries (MAF)

**Beneficiaries**  
MAF and its staff; people of  
Timor-Leste



# IMPACT

The project represented a significant innovation in Timor-Leste, providing the MAF with cutting-edge tools and capabilities for sustainable agricultural development. The project's innovative approach to capacity development and M&E System implementation substantially enhanced the sustainability of project outcomes and contributed to the institutional strengthening of the MAF. As per a minister's order issued in September 2023, the planning and costing of MAF activities are now conducted using the MIS, marking a new era of efficiency and effectiveness in Timor Leste's agricultural sector. Overall, the project fostered a more robust agricultural governance framework by embedding a culture of evidence-based decision making within the MAF. This transformation not only strengthens the ministry's capacity to plan, implement and monitor its programmes but also supports Timor-Leste's broader development goals of enhancing agricultural productivity, ensuring food security and improving rural livelihoods. This is expected to contribute to a more resilient agricultural sector that can adapt to future challenges and opportunities.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Conducted a comprehensive M&E capacity assessment of the MAF via focus group discussions and key informant interviews.
- Developed and implemented a survey, involving over 300 extension workers across 13 municipalities, to introduce the concept of MAF M&E System, MobileApp and dashboard, and to gather participant feedback.
- Conducted African Swine Fever (ASF) rapid data collection to support the ASF outbreak response, with results shared with various stakeholders including the Timor-Leste ASF task force, FAO Regional Office, FAO Indonesia, the European Union and Australian researchers.
- Supported the design of an IT-supported questionnaire and dashboard, providing data collection training and tracking the progress of the vaccination campaign for the Directorate National of Veterinary during the chicken vaccination campaign.
- Developed a comprehensive IT supported MIS for the MAF, encompassing not only the M&E System but also other critical functions, such as planning and costing of the activities in the mid-term perspective.
- Developed and implemented a comprehensive Capacity Development Programme focusing on M&E, IT and Excel skills, and on-the-job experiences, along with support in policy and regulatory navigation, leadership development and knowledge sharing to successfully implement the MIS.



## Project Title

Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation  
Capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

## Project Code

FAO: UTF/TIM/009/TIM

## Contact

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