

East Timor Ba Distrito Program

Strengthening human and institutional capacity in local governance and access to justice in Timor-Leste



PROGRAM INFORMATION

Dates: 2013-2017

Implementers:

Counterpart International and Tetra Tech DPK

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PURPOSE

USAID's Ba Distrito Program is focused on engaging subnational government bodies, community organizations, and the majority of Timorese who reside outside of the capital of Dili. The program is reaching approximately 100 village (suco) councils in five pilot municipalities (Baucau, Covalima, Ermera, Liquisa and the special region of Oecusse), putting citizens at the center of political discourse and access to justice efforts. The project will help facilitate local-level contributions to the wider vision of improved decentralized governance in the country.

OVERVIEW

The recent history of Timor-Leste has been marked by violent struggle and the hard-fought victory for the restoration of independence in May of 2002. Ba Distrito's focus on strengthening human and institutional capacity in local governance and rule of law seeks to ensure that the gains made in peace, security, economic growth, and human development in the years since its independence will be bolstered and further enhanced.

The Government of Timor-Leste (GOTL) has developed long-term justice sector and decentralization plans to improve local-level service delivery in rural areas. The successful realization of these plans will require steady political will, more robust organizational and human capacity at national and local levels, and greater ownership of the capacity building process.

OBJECTIVES

Counterpart International and Tetra Tech DPK have partnered to improve local government's ability to address community needs and increase its capacity to facilitate delivery of services more effectively, efficiently and sustainably. Working through local CSOs and in collaboration with the Government of Timor-Leste, Ba Distrito Program has the following objectives:

- Enhance the capacity of sucos (villages) to strengthen citizen participation and representation in local governance.
- Improve communication and linkages of sucos with district administrations, local GOTL line ministries, and other providers of basic public services at the sub-national level.
- Strengthen local justice sector institutions so as to increase access to formal and informal justice for marginalized citizens and the poor.

PROGRAM APPROACH

Ba Distrito builds on previous local governance and access to justice efforts. The Program will pilot new approaches to change attitudes, perception and skills of citizens to enable them to petition government and for the government to meet those demands. The Program expands justice services to more remote locales; strengthening vertical relationships among government service providers; increases community roles for identifying, managing and evaluating public services; creating and piloting the tools, systems and practices for better public service provision at the local-level.