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Type of ROM review	Projects and Programmes
Project title	Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste
Project reference	00119127
EU Delegation in charge	EU Pacific

Key information				
Domain (instrument)	Region			
DAC Sector	Human and Social Development: Gender Equality			
Zone Benefitting from the Action	Timor-Leste			
Type of Project/Programme	Geographic			
Geographic Implementation	Single country			
Contracting Party	Spotlight Initiative			
EU contribution	USD 9,900,000			
Project Implementation Dates <sup>1</sup>	Start Date	1 January 2020	End Date	30 June 2022
ROM expert(s) name(s)	Gabriela Leite Soares			
Field phase	Start Date	23 Sept. 2021	End Date	18 November 2021

Scoring overview: green (good) orange (problems) red (serious deficiencies)						
						
Relevance	1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 
Effectiveness	7 	8 	9 			
Efficiency	10 	11 	12 			
Sustainability	13 					

Persons interviewed and surveyed	Interviews/FGD	Survey
EU Delegation	2	0
Partner country government	9	5
RCO/ Spotlight Coordination Team	4	6
UN agencies	4	13
CSO reference group	1	9
CSO Implementing partners	11	5
Final Beneficiaries (FGDs)	6	0
Other	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>40</b>

Key documents <sup>2</sup>	Number
Essential documents	6
Other documents	2

<sup>1</sup> The period assessed for this assessment is 1 January 2020 to 30 October 2021

<sup>2</sup> Please consult Annex 1 for details on essential documents and other documents.

## A. ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSRG	Civil Society Reference Group
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSE	Comprehensive Sexual Education
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Australia
DV	Domestic Violence
EUD	European Union Delegation
EVAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
FONGTIL	Timor-Leste NGO Forum
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDS	General Directorate of Statistics, Government of Timor-Leste
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
KII	Key Informant Interview
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KP	Knowledge Product
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoJ	Ministry of Justice, Government of Timor-Leste
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, Government of Timor-Leste
MoH	Ministry of Health, Government of Timor-Leste
MSSI	Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Government of Timor-Leste
MTA	Mid-Term Assessment
NAP-GBV	National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence
NSO	National Statistical Offices
PwD	People with Disabilities
RC	UN Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
RUNO	Recipient UN Organisation
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SEII	Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion, Government of Timor-Leste
SoE	State of Emergency
UPMA	Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

## B. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Purpose and objectives of the Mid-term Assessment (MTA)

The purpose of the MTA is to assess the programme at country level as soon as it reaches the end of Phase I. This is done to take stock of where the Spotlight Initiative is vis-à-vis its initial programme and to assess new ways of working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The specific objectives are to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the programme, based on the agreed MTA questions, and to formulate relevant recommendations to improve subsequent project implementation.

As per the Terms of Reference, the MTA uses the EU Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) methodology as an approach to ensure that the results are comparable (across countries) and easy to interpret. However, the questions to be answered for the MTA are different from standard ROM methodology questions and were agreed to in advance by the EU and the Spotlight Secretariat. The 13 MTA questions are grouped by Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability, which form the main headings of this report.

The ROM methodology uses the following criteria for grading the questions:

**Table 1. Grading reference table for criteria and monitoring questions**

Qualitative	Grading reference table for criteria and monitoring questions
<b>Good/very good</b>	The situation is considered satisfactory, but there may be room for improvement. Recommendations are useful, but not vital to the project or programme.
<b>Problems</b> identified and small improvements needed	There are issues which need to be addressed, otherwise the global performance of the project or programme may be negatively affected. Necessary improvements do not however require a major revision of the intervention logic and implementation arrangements.
<b>Serious problems</b> identified and major adjustments needed	There are deficiencies which are so serious that, if not addressed, they may lead to failure of the project or programme. Major adjustments and revision of the intervention logic and/or implementation arrangements are necessary.

### Context of the Spotlight Initiative

The Spotlight Initiative was officially launched in Timor-Leste on 4 March 2020. It was designed to deliver a holistic response to violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the country.

Just weeks after the Spotlight Initiative was officially launched, the first COVID-19 infection was diagnosed in Timor-Leste and a State of Emergency (SoE) was declared. Domestic and international travel restrictions were imposed, and large gatherings were prohibited. This generated significant implementation delays, especially at the municipal level, where the programmes were only launched in August or September 2020.

Measures to respond to the crisis were put in place including virtual meetings. However, Timor-Leste does not have reliable internet connections, especially in rural areas. Moreover, the internet cost is high, making it inaccessible for many people.

Heavy rains in March and April of 2021 resulted in flash floods and landslides affecting all municipalities with the capital Dili and the surrounding low-lying areas being the worst affected. Flooding is not a new phenomenon in Timor-Leste and had already affected the capital Dili in the preceding year. The Spotlight Initiative reallocated USD 312,000 to flood relief including for the protection and support of women and children in evacuation centres and safe spaces.

In 2020, Timor-Leste experienced a period of political uncertainty after parliament voted down the proposed 2020 budget. Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak tendered his resignation in February and multiple rounds of inter-party negotiations followed until in June a new coalition government under Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak was sworn in, including the replacement of many key ministers and key officials which resulted in delays in the implementation of some of the Spotlight Initiative programmes.

Phase 1 of the Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste was recently granted a 6-month no-cost extension to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### Methodological approach

The MTA involved a combination of three data collection methods: Key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD), an online survey, and a document review. A total of 40 stakeholders (25 females, 14 males, and 1 other) completed the survey questionnaire for which about 50 invitations were sent (response rate about 80%). Respondents included representatives from the government, the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), recipient UN organisations (RUNOs), implementing partners (IP), the Civil Society Reference Group (CSRG), and the Spotlight Initiative Coordination Team.

For the qualitative data collection, information was collected through KII from a total of eight organisational settings – seven government institutions, 10 CSOs, three RUNOs, two members of the EU Delegation (EUD), four members of the RCO, including the Resident Coordinator and two members of the Spotlight Team, and one external partner. A total of 27 respondents participated in KIIs, including 14 (51%) females and 13 (48%) males with multiple respondents participating in the interviews with the EUD, some RUNOs, and one partner working in EVAWG.

Ten participants participated in the three FGDs (seven females and three males). The participants included duty bearers and first level service providers in the three municipalities: Bobonaro, Ermera, and Dili.

All the FGDs were conducted in-person. Some of the KIIs were conducted in-person, and some through Zoom interviews.

### Limitations and measures taken

Implementation of programme activities was delayed due to restriction of movements and flooding that occurred in April 2021. At the time of the MTA, activities had just restarted. This limited the ability of the MTA to capture extensive progress and achievements.

The MTA team used the latest result matrix (November 2021) shared by the Spotlight Technical team. The limitation is acknowledged.

Performance monitoring data were only available up to December 2020 and provided no information on progress against indicators.	The Spotlight Technical Team shared the latest result matrix (November 2021). The MTA team used the latest results matrix shared by the Spotlight Technical Team to respond to questions 7 and 8.
Stakeholders for KIIs and FGDs were identified by the contracting RUNO, presenting a potential selection bias.	Responses of all interviewed stakeholders as well as narrative responses of survey participants were triangulated in the analysis, thereby mitigating any potential selection bias.

## C. RELEVANCE

1. Does the action align to the principles of the Spotlight Initiative as listed in the Spotlight Initiative Fund TORs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Good - Good <input type="checkbox"/> Problems <input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies
<p><b>Programme Design</b></p> <p>During the design phase of the Spotlight Initiative, consultations were held with line ministries, civil society organisations (CSOs), women’s rights organisations and youth organisations working on ending violence against women and girls. Activities were designed in close collaboration with the Timor-Leste government and national CSOs. The Country Programme Document (CPD) carefully considered the local context, and activities were aligned with national policies, strategies and action plans, including the National Action Plan for Gender Based Violence (GBV NAP 2017-2020). The intervention areas are aligned with the key pillars of focus under the GBV NAP.</p> <p>This consultative process was valuable, allowing for identification of existing efforts in the field with an aim to avoid duplication. The CPD, for example, refers extensively to the Nabilan programme, funded by the Australian government, as well as the Together for Equality programme, funded by the Korean government. Specifically, the Spotlight Initiative was designed to fill gaps in these programmes and complement ongoing work.</p> <p>This was confirmed by responses to the online survey; over 70 percent of respondents felt that the Spotlight Initiative complemented other programmes addressing violence against women and girls in the country to either a considerable or to a great extent.</p> <p><b>Alignment to Spotlight Initiative Principles</b></p> <p>The Country Programme Document is well aligned with the Spotlight Initiative principles around leaving no one behind and strengthening the women’s movement.</p> <p>According to the online survey results, between 92 and 97 percent of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that the programme in Timor-Leste is aligned with the Spotlight Initiative principles. There was strong alignment (over 95 percent of respondents in agreement) with the principles of “promoting a human rights-based approach and are consistent with the principle of leaving no one behind”, “promoting an enabling environment conducive to gender equality”, and “applying a survivor-centred approach”.</p> <p><b>Gender Transformative, Human Rights-Based, and Inclusive</b></p> <p>There is evidence of strategies and activities that are gender transformative, gender-inclusive and gender-sensitive across the programme. Interventions utilised a range of modalities with a strong focus on education and training for youth and community members, health care workers and other key service providers on gender rights, sexual reproductive health, child protection and response to gender-based violence (GBV). Many activities include women, men, girls, and boys and aim to implement systems that will result in a long-term change in attitudes, knowledge, and behaviour. This included, for example, work with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) to include the Connect with Respect curriculum in its pre-secondary</p>	

curriculum reform, sensitising students aged 11-14 on issues of gender-based violence and harassment.

The application of a human rights-based approach by the Spotlight programme is supported by the Spotlight Learning Consortium of CSOs representing constituencies including men and boys, LGBTQI persons, people living with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), and a human rights group.

There is evidence across activities of a ‘leave no-one behind’ approach, with the involvement of organisations representing the LGBTQI community, people living with disabilities, youth, and women in the capital city of Dili as well as in the peripheral areas where the programme is implemented. Ninety-five percent of survey respondents believe that all relevant stakeholders are included in the programme. An additional 66 percent of respondents feel that marginalised and other left behind groups benefit from the programme to a considerable or to a great degree with 18 percent reporting to a moderate degree and 14 percent reporting not at all or to a small degree.

Adherence to the principle of ‘do no harm’ was ensured in programming under Pillar 5 in the collection and management of data, for instance in two research studies collecting data on VAWG in the context of the response to COVID-19. Interviewed stakeholders, however, reported deficiencies in the safety of safe rooms or spaces established with UNFPA support in prioritised health facilities.

### Key findings

- The programme interventions are well designed and reflect the Spotlight Initiative principles. They are context-specific, adopt a human rights-based approach, and are gender-transformative.
- The programme responds to national priorities and is aligned with the National Action Plan for Gender Based Violence.
- The programme was developed in consultation with government and CSOs (including representatives of marginalised groups) and with consideration of other large EAWG programmes (e.g. programmes funded by DFAT and KOICA).

### Recommendations

There are no specific recommendations for the alignment of the programme with Spotlight Principles.

<b>2A. Are the Initiative’s deliverables aligned with the UN agencies’ mandate, priorities, and expertise? Are the right UN agencies involved?</b> <b>2B. Are programmes implemented in line with the UN System reform?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Very Good - Good</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Problems</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Serious deficiencies</b>
<b>Are the Initiative’s deliverables aligned with the UN agencies’ mandate, priorities, and expertise? Are the right UN agencies involved?</b>	

Five UN agencies are involved in the Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste: UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, and ILO. Each agency contributes to the six pillars of interventions based on their respective mandate, priorities, and expertise as per Table 2.

**Table 2. Agreed Division of Labour for the Spotlight Initiative**

Outcome / Pillar	Contributing agencies	Focus of activities	% of budget
<b>1. Laws and Policies</b>	UN Women UNDP UNICEF	Analysing reach, impact, and gaps in the implementation of existing legislation on domestic violence (DV) and strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to develop and or revise legislation.  Strengthening the capacity of national partners in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence (NAP GBV).  Creating opportunities for rights holders to advocate for the closure of legislative gaps and influence legislative processes.	6%
<b>2. Institutions</b>	UNDP UN Women ILO UNICEF	Strengthening institutional capacities to implement the NAP GBV and supporting the inter-ministerial NAP GBV coordination. Improving the capacities of government ministries for integrating VAWG in sector plans and strategies as well as for gender-responsive planning and budgeting.  Supporting civil society monitoring of budgets and expenditures for ending VAWG.  Increasing the role of public and private sector employers' and workers' organisations in the prevention and response to DV.	18%
<b>3. Prevention</b>	UNDP UNICEF UNFPA UN Women	Developing a national VAWG prevention strategy and related advocacy and campaigns.  Working with caregivers, faith-based groups, young people and communities in the promotion of gender-equitable norms.  Creating safe school environments and a whole-school approach to prevent GBV.  Conducting research on the prevalence and behavioural impact of pornography.	31%
<b>4. Services</b>	UNFPA UNDP UNICEF	Ensuring access to health, legal and social services for women and girls who are subject to violence.  Supporting employers and workers to engage in ending VAWG and support survivors of DV.  Supporting systems for improved access to legal, health and social services and coordinated case management.	25%



<b>5. Data</b>	UNFPA UNDP UN Women	<p>Strengthening the capacity of partners in collecting, analysing, publishing, and disseminating data on VAWG.</p> <p>Supporting the mapping strategy for the 2020 census to lay the foundations for data collection on VAWG.</p> <p>Investing in ethical data collection for monitoring progress on commitments to end VAWG and to inform programmes of government and development partners.</p>	7%
<b>6. Women's Movement</b>	UN Women	<p>Mentoring of women's groups and grassroots feminist organisations in reflective practices on power and VAWG, programme development, M&amp;E and self-care practices.</p> <p>Strengthening peer support networks and community of practice for ending VAWG.</p> <p>Establishing a national forum to improve collaboration among groups and organisations working to end VAWG, document and share lessons and promising practices, and raise the visibility of CSO support.</p> <p>Enhancing the capacity of CSO in development, management and fundraising for programmes to end VAWG.</p>	13%

UN Women is the Technical Coherence Lead of the Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste, contributes to outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, and leads the coordination and advocacy of the UN system's work in advancing gender equality. The Programme Specialist hired by UN Women also leads the Technical Unit and has more than 20 years of experience in working on gender-based violence in Timor-Leste and overseas. UN Women's technical expertise in ending VAWG along with its extensive experience in working with the Government of Timor-Leste and its knowledge of GBV issues in the country makes it the appropriate agency to lead the Spotlight Initiative.

UNFPA contributes to outcomes 3, 4 and 5 and leads the advocacy and implementation of integrating sexual and reproductive health services in Timor-Leste. Prior to Spotlight Initiative, UNFPA also supported the Ministry of Health in developing a training guideline on GBV for health professionals. The UNFPA Programme Officer who leads the coordination of the programme activities has extensive experience in working in the health sector and in training.

UNICEF contributes to outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4. on legal frameworks, specialised services and protocols, prevention in particular with girls but also to break the inter-generational cycle of violence through work with families, schools and communities. UNICEF brings strong experience in communications for development and youth and is also responsible for coordinating the development of social and behavioural communications change (SBCC) materials challenging negative gender norms and raising awareness on VAWG.

UNDP contributes to outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The agency already supports the on-going justice system reform process in Timor-Leste and has a 20-year history of collaborating with Parliament, the judiciary and executive branches including the police, as well as human rights

institutions and the media in the development and implementation of legal and policy frameworks to combat GBV.

ILO is responsible for outcome area 2 on institutions and supports the implementation and extension of the Decent Work Agenda, which includes the adoption of the ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 on eliminating violence in the workplace.

There is little indication of any overlap or duplication among the activities of the five agencies, and they jointly have sufficient expertise to manage the agreed programme. However, concerns were raised by interviewed stakeholders that RUNO staff managing Spotlight Initiative activities of their agency did not always have sufficient experience in working on issues of violence against women and girls.

**‘I don't think that there has been a lot of expertise on violence against women and girls that has been brought forward from the agencies. At country level or at regional level.’**

### **Are programmes implemented in line with the UN System reform?**

The Resident Coordinator co-chairs the National Steering Committee and is a strong advocate of the Spotlight Initiative. The RCO takes an active role in coordinating the activities of the RUNOs together with the technical coherence lead of UN Women. More than 80 percent of online survey respondents rated the collaboration between the RCO and RUNOs, and the Spotlight Initiative team and RUNOs as either good or excellent. A further 90 percent of respondents rated the collaboration among the RUNOs as good or excellent.

In interviews, respondents noted a positive collaboration between RUNOs in managing the programme and sharing information and resources, for instance office space for the Spotlight Initiative team and joint missions to municipalities for monitoring activities. The Technical Committee, which includes the RUNOs and the RCO was rated as effective by 96 percent of survey respondents. Interviewed stakeholders commented that the Technical Committee makes relevant contributions to the Spotlight Initiative's programme in terms of coherence, implementation, monitoring, communications, and reporting.

However, some external informants noted that there are areas that could be improved, for instance the work on increasing community awareness on GBV. Here, it was felt that each agency organises and disseminates its own messages, and the quality of information and presentation could be improved with a more concerted effort for joint communication.

Interviewed government officials noted that they do not consider the Spotlight Initiative to be led by the United Nations or the RCO but rather by each RUNO in its specific activity area. They voiced a concern that it is sometimes difficult for government and implementing partners to obtain comprehensive information on progress of the programme. According to these respondents, the coordination meetings in which UN agencies and partners are present are often used by RUNOs to update each other rather than to inform partners about the status of the programme. In addition, some respondents, both within and external to RUNOs, mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic and the State of Emergency has at times constrained the possibilities of closer collaboration and joint activities.

Other stakeholders acknowledged that the Spotlight Initiative has increased the collaboration and coordination among the UN agencies and highlighted the important role of the RCO in this achievement. However, they also pointed to challenges related to the history and structure of each RUNO partner:

*‘We have to recognise that each agency has its own mandate, guidelines, procurement and contracting processes, and administration. As far as this managerial aspect is concerned, I’m not certain we are going to see standardisation. It would be very difficult to have a kind of coordination that puts all agencies on the same platform or integrating one with the other.’*

### Key findings

- The UN agencies are well placed to implement the Spotlight Initiative. There is little indication of overlap or duplication among the activities of the five agencies, and they jointly have sufficient expertise to manage the agreed programme. Concerns were, however, raised that many programme staff assigned by RUNOs to the Spotlight Initiative do not have prior experience of working on programmes for ending VAWG.
- The Resident Coordinator co-chairs the Steering Committee and is a strong advocate of the Spotlight Initiative. The RCO works closely with the RUNOs in managing the programme.
- There is evidence of good collaboration among the RUNOs, but interviewed stakeholders noted that there was room for improvement, for instance in the work of raising community awareness on GBV. Several government stakeholders noted that they did not see the Spotlight Initiative programme as a UN programme led by the RCO but rather as a collection of individual RUNO programmes.

### Recommendations

1. RUNOs should ensure that programme staff working on the Spotlight Initiative Programme is sufficiently trained and familiar with key frameworks and references for initiatives to end VAWG.
2. The Resident Coordinator’s Office, Spotlight Team and the Technical Coherence Lead should continue to facilitate and promote collaboration among RUNOs, identify areas where a more unified approach could be implemented, for instance in community awareness building, and help generate a more unified branding of the Spotlight programme as a One-UN initiative that could lead to longer-lasting strengthening of partnerships among the UN agencies.

<b>3. Does the action presently respond to the needs of the target groups / end beneficiaries? Are the necessary consultations taking place with key stakeholders?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Very Good - Good</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Problems</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Serious deficiencies</b>
<p>The design process of the Spotlight Initiative was very comprehensive and participatory across various sectors: Government, UN organisations, CSOs, and marginalised groups. A mapping exercise was conducted to review current activities and gaps. This has been effective in</p>	

avoiding duplication with existing activities in EVAWG in the country. For example, the Spotlight Initiative made a deliberate decision not to fund service delivery.

Most of the government officials at the national level participated in the design of the Initiative and felt consulted. However, some line ministries who participated in the design consultations questioned the benefits of the Initiative and felt that the UN agencies had preconceived ideas about activities and “pushed” the government to accept and implement these activities. Moreover, government respondents at sub-national level felt that the selection of locations for interventions were made without consulting them.

The EU Delegation was highly involved in the design from defining, reviewing, and analysing the programme plans.

The main civil society organisations involved in issues of women’s rights, gender equality, and GBV participated in the consultations for the design of the programme and their feedback was taken into consideration. This included LGBTQI rights organisations, youth organisations, and organisations of people living with disabilities. For instance, feedback during the consultations led to funding activities of organisations defending the rights of LGBTQI persons and people living with disabilities. One interviewed civil society informant noted:

*‘I myself was involved in the Spotlight programme design and I also saw representations of young women with diversity and young men with diversity involved; this was great.’*

To assess the responsiveness of the programme to ultimate rights holders, the online survey asked respondents to rate the level of involvement of girls, boys, women, men, and of people who are marginalised or discriminated in the design, implementation and monitoring of the programme. The majority rated the involvement of rights holders by selecting ‘to some degree’ or ‘to a major extent’. Table 3 presents the proportion of respondents who selected the rating ‘to a major extent’ for involvement by group and programme stage.

**Table 3. Involvement of rights holders in the programme ‘to a major extent’**

	Design	Implementation	Monitoring
Girls and young women	31%	39%	27%
Boys and young men	23%	29%	16%
Women over age 25	41%	47%	32%
Men over age 25	29%	37%	21%
People who are marginalised or discriminated	47%	52%	37%

One interviewed informant felt that consultations for the programme design were “superficial” and preconceived ideas about activities were presented, and a second commented on the limited reach of the programme activities.

*‘Marginalised and other left behind groups benefit from the programme to a small degree because now that project only implements in 3 municipalities in my country.’*

The challenge of reaching remote communities was reflected in a comment by a CS leader:

*‘One of the challenges is the lack of representation or involvement from the community in the rural areas. How could we hear from their perspective, if they lack the opportunity*

*to access the information, lack of access to court representatives such as an attorney, and lack of access to a public defender.'*

### Key findings

- Extensive consultations for the design of the Spotlight Initiative programme were held with government officials and civil society organisations.
- The majority of interviewed stakeholders and survey respondents felt that the process of programme design was inclusive and participatory and that the voices of rights holders including those belonging to marginalised groups were heard and respected.
- A majority of interviewed government representatives felt consulted in the design of the programme. However, the issue that the programme is only implemented in three municipalities of the country was mentioned as a constraint by several respondents.

### Recommendations

3. RUNOs and Implementing Partners should continue their efforts of including rights holders, especially those who are among marginalised and discriminated groups, in the implementation of the programme and pay particular attention to the participation of rights holders and their organisations in rural and remote areas.

<b>4. Do all key stakeholders still demonstrate effective commitment (ownership) and deliver accordingly?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Very Good - Good</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Problems</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Serious deficiencies</b>
<h3>Government</h3> <p>The Government is considered to lead the programme action effectively. The Prime Minister was consulted in the design phase and declared that he was a champion in the efforts to end VAWG. He nominated the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEII) to lead government participation in the programme. The SEII is leading the development of the National Action Plan for Gender Based Violence (NAP GBV) and is co-chairing the Spotlight Initiative Steering Committee. The SEII understands that gender inequality is a major development challenge for the country and is committed to the goal of gender equality. However, its resources are stretched as it is also the key government partner of other internationally funded gender equality programmes, notably the DFAT-supported Nabilan Programme and the KOICA-supported Together for Equality Programme in addition to its main domestic task of advancing the NAP GBV. Interviewed informants noted that the SEII does not have sufficient capacity and resources to effectively own and lead the implementation of the programme.</p> <p>It is noteworthy that SEII is not the most powerful line ministry in the country. Ownership and commitment by other line ministries, particularly those with stronger influence such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of State Administration are much lower.</p>	

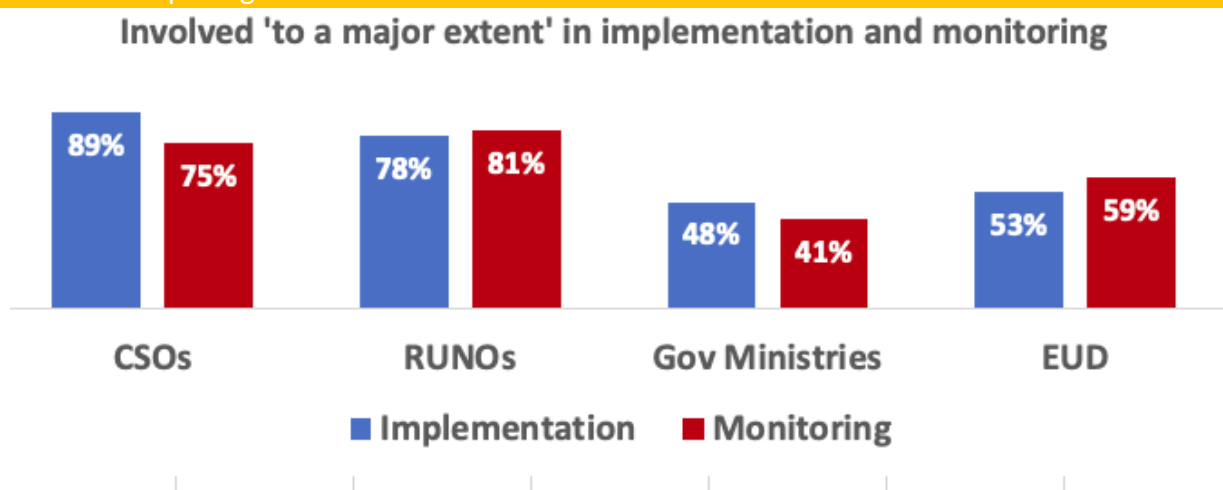
The priority accorded by these ministries to gender equality and VAWG was further eroded by emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the floods in 2021.

Shortly after the Spotlight Initiative was launched in Timor-Leste, a state of emergency was declared in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Contact and travel restrictions were implemented making it more challenging for the Government to engage actively. The need to respond to the major floods in 2020 and 2021 added an additional constraint. This has resulted in delays of executing funds from the Spotlight Initiative as well in decision-making and getting feedback from the government in a timely manner.

### Civil Society

Civil society organisations, including national NGOs, FBOs and CBOs and international NGOs and FBOs are key implementing partners and highly committed to implementation and monitoring of the programme. This commitment was confirmed in interviews with directors and staff of nine implementing partners. Many of these organisations have extensive knowledge and experience of working for an end to VAWG in the country. Interviewed CSO stakeholders noted that the Spotlight Initiative was often just a new label for activities that already made up a part of the core mandate of their organisation. In the online survey, respondents were also asked to rate the involvement of different partners, including CSOs, in implementing and monitoring Spotlight Initiative activities. Figure 1 presents the proportion of respondents who selected the rating of 'to a major extent' for the involvement of selected partners in programme implementation and monitoring.

**Figure 1. Involvement of selected partners in implementing and monitoring Spotlight Initiative activities**



### UN Agencies

The UN Agencies also demonstrate a great commitment to and ownership of the programme by allocating dedicated staff to the Spotlight Initiative. The UN Agencies provide technical guidance to CSOs and government in the implementation and monitoring of the programme. However, key informants noted that the horizontal and downward accountability of RUNOs could be improved. Respondents felt that RUNOs did not give sufficient priority to providing timely feedback and monitoring information to the Spotlight Technical Team and to partners. In the online survey, however, 92 percent of respondents indicated that they were satisfied

with the feedback on programme implementation that they receive. COVID-19 restrictions were cited as a barrier.

### **EU Delegation**

The Spotlight Initiative received strong support from the EUD in the design and implementation of the programme. The EUD, however, considers that its responsibility and role in steering the Programme in Timor-Leste is not adequately recognised. EUD respondents noted that ‘the UN and the EU are partners at the same level’ in the Spotlight Initiative and therefore suggested initially that the National Steering Committee should, in addition to the government chair, have two co-chairs representing the UN and the EU. This was, however, not accepted, limiting, according to respondents, the ability of the EUD to fully exercise its responsibility.

The EUD, nevertheless, feels a strong sense of ownership of the Spotlight Initiative. It exercises this ownership through processes that are parallel to the formal governance mechanism, for instance in bilateral meetings with the Spotlight Team in which the progress of the Programme is presented and discussed prior to the formal meeting of the Steering Committee. Informants of the Spotlight Team noted that this generated challenges because the EUD often asks for information that is not routinely collected and not included in the programme’s monitoring framework. They felt that there was a disconnect between the expectations and information requested by the EUD and the agreed framework of indicators and targets that are aligned with the global results framework of the Spotlight Programme.

### **Key findings**

- The Prime Minister expressed his commitment to the Spotlight Initiative, and the government commitment is implemented by the SEII. The SEII, however, has capacity and resource limitations which are further stretched by the response to flooding and COVID-19. This has resulted in delays of programme delivery and execution of funds. It is not seen as an ownership issue but rather an issue of institutional capacity.
- The UN Agencies and their civil society implementing partners are committed to the Spotlight Initiative. Some interviewed informants, however, noted that the accountability of RUNOs could be improved by more timely and systematic sharing of information and data with the Spotlight Technical Team.
- The EUD takes an active interest in its implementation. However, the EUD noted that it cannot fully exercise its responsibility for the Programme in the current governance structure. It has established a parallel reporting process with the Spotlight Team. The Spotlight Team, however, is challenged by this arrangement because information requests by the EUD are not always aligned with the agreed performance monitoring framework.

### **Recommendations**

4. In a possible Phase 2 of the Spotlight Programme in Timor-Leste, the National Steering Committee should review the budget allocation for government partners. The response to delays in budget execution in Phase 1 should be an increased focus on institutional



capacity support allowing government partners to implement their commitment to the programme.

5. The EU and the Spotlight Secretariat should review the guidelines for national-level governance structures to allow a more formal recognition of co-ownership of the Programme by highly engaged EUDs.
6. The RCO, the Spotlight Initiative Team and the EUD should review the format, process, timing, and content of progress information sharing among themselves and with partners and avoid parallel information streams of different formats and content.

<b>5. Is the programme Theory of Change well developed? Are the indicators to measure results well defined and relevant to measure the achievement of the objectives in line with the ToC?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Very Good - Good</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Problems</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Serious deficiencies</b>
<p><b>Theory of Change</b></p> <p>The Theory of Change (ToC) is well developed and adequately covers the six outcome areas, with a specific ToC designed for each outcome under the relevant Pillar. Assumptions are meaningful and relevant and align well with the defined activities. A shorter and more digestible version of the ToC was developed and translated into the official language of Tetun to be shared with implementing partners and facilitate understanding. The main challenge with the ToC is its ambitious nature in terms of expected outcomes within a relatively short timeframe and assumption of a high level of capacity among partners as well as the existence of well-functioning systems within the country.</p> <p><b>M&amp;E</b></p> <p>The global results indicators present some issues in adequately tracking progress and implementation. RUNO informants mentioned that the global indicators were not well adapted to the Timor-Leste context and failed to adequately consider existing levels of institutional capacity, including for reporting against global framework indicators.</p> <p>RUNOs also expressed concern that the global indicators are not able to fully capture the progress and achievements under each of the six pillars. For instance, there are no indicators that monitor training outputs, while training for the purpose of capacity strengthening is a major focus of many programme activities in Timor-Leste. Informants noted that the global indicator framework lacked nuance and did not provide a template for all data they considered important for monitoring progress. Another gap identified by respondents was the lack of tools and guidance provided by the Spotlight Initiative for tracking the indicators in the global results framework. These had to be developed locally but there are challenges. RUNO staff is diligent in reporting on the implementation of activities and the execution of budgets, but there is insufficient focus on linking this information to the Theory of Change.</p> <p>This is also reflected in a disconnect between information about the programme's progress requested for regular updates by the EUD and data that can be extracted from the</p>	



programme's monitoring framework. Informants noted that the global indicators are not sufficiently sensitive for monitoring and reporting the changes requested by the EUD.

*'We have a challenge; we are expected to demonstrate change, but the results framework that we are required to conform to does not help us do so. We are caught between expectations that are in themselves not clear, and mandated requirements that do not meet the expectations. We are kind of bouncing around trying to figure out how to present things.'*

### Key findings

- The Theory of Change is well developed and covers the six outcome areas. Stakeholders did, however, consider it too ambitious for a three-year programme.
- The global results framework does not capture the extensive capacity-strengthening work done by partners in Timor-Leste. It also was not accompanied by the necessary tools to apply it in order to monitor changes against the Theory of Change. Data on activities and expenditures reported diligently by partners are difficult to link to information that documents the achievements of the programme.
- There is a disconnect between the expectations of the EUD in terms of updates on the programme's progress and the data that are collected as a requirement for global performance reporting.

### Recommendations

7. In preparation for a possible Phase 2, the Spotlight Initiative M&E task group should agree on a performance monitoring framework that meets the requirements for global results monitoring and offers improved abilities to monitor activities and measure changes that are specific to the context in Timor-Leste.
8. Prior to the start of a possible Phase 2, the EUD and the RCO should agree on this expanded performance monitoring framework and accept it as an instrument to meet the information requirements of all partners.

<p><b>6A. BEFORE COVID-19:</b> Have all relevant circumstances and risks been taken into account to update the intervention logic? If there are delays, how important are they and what are the consequences? What are the reasons for these delays and to what extent have appropriate corrective measures been implemented? To what extent has the planning been revised accordingly?</p> <p><b>6B. AFTER COVID-19:</b> What are the consequences of COVID 19? To what extent have appropriate corrective measures been implemented? To what extent has the planning been revised accordingly?</p>	<div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Good - Good</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Problems</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies</div>
<p><b>Before COVID-19</b></p> <p>The Country Programme Document (CPD) is well embedded in the local context where despite having an extensive legal and policy framework as well as political appetite for gender equality,</p>	

there is still weak institutional capacity compounded by rigid gender norms that affect progress on gender equality. The 2016 Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and the Nabilan study were used as key data to inform the programme on the prevalence of domestic violence and intimate partner violence in the country. A detailed risk analysis was included in the Country Programme Documents, however the three main risks that affected programme implementation, the COVID-19 pandemic, the flooding in 2021 and the political changes in 2020 were not foreseeable and no mitigation measures were proposed. The updated risk assessment of the 2020 annual report included COVID-19 as a new risk, but not the 2021 floods (although this is not a rare event in Timor-Leste) and the political changes.

The programme was designed on the assumption that political changes in the government would not have a significant impact on programme implementation, however, these changes have resulted in changes of leadership and decision-making both at national and sub-national level. As a result, the Spotlight Programme team spent a considerable amount of time introducing the programme to new officials instead of working on the implementation of the programme. Most significantly, priority changes of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) affected halted plans to introduce the comprehensive sexual education (CSE), life skills and violence prevention as part of an ongoing school curriculum reform.

Furthermore, Spotlight Initiative is an ambitious programme with a very short timeframe to achieve the desired outcomes. This has affected the way the team operates as there is a significant pressure to deliver and there is little time for reflection on the broader theory of change or how each intervention can be most effectively implemented. The CPD risk analysis underestimated institutional capacity gaps among government and implementing partners that limited their capacity of timely implementation and absorption of programme funds.

While no mitigation measures were in place to respond to the floods of 2021, the programme has responded to this emergency through establishing child-friendly spaces in evacuation sites and communities and delivering psychosocial support activities.

Given that the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic became effective within a couple of months after the Initiative was launched, it is not possible to measure how interventions were adjusted before the pandemic.

### **After COVID-19**

Over 87 per cent of the online survey respondents stated that COVID-19 delayed programme implementation. Planned activities in municipalities were particularly affected by travel and contact restrictions, the launch of the Spotlight Initiative at municipal level was delayed until August 2020 and civil society activities did not start until the end of the first programme year.

The programme made adjustments by adopting virtual platforms for meetings and consultations with partners but the weak digital infrastructure, limited access to internet, and the high cost of online access limited the possibilities of moving to a virtual platform.

In recognising the increased risk of VAWG during situations of social contact limitations, the civil society and government programme partners revised their public messages accordingly. Additional training was provided to police officers for responding to domestic violence in the

context of COVID-19 restrictions, activities to prevent VAWG in quarantine facilities were launched, and personal protective equipment was procured and distributed to service providers. The Spotlight Initiative team offered flexibility to implementing partners to adjust their work plans and request for no cost extensions.

### **Key findings**

- The programme was well embedded in the local context and the CPD included a detailed risk analysis but did not include three major risks that affected and delayed programme implementation: The flooding in 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the government changes in 2020.
- Changes in the MoEYS halted the programme's efforts to include CSE, life skills and violence prevention in the school curriculum.
- The short timeframe available to implement the ambitious programme created pressure to deliver, while several programme partners have limited institutional capacity for timely absorption and implementation of programme funds.

### **Recommendations:**

9. In the 2021 annual report, the Spotlight Initiative Team should update the risk analysis to include the risk of major flooding and propose effective mitigation measures.
10. The National Steering Committee should prioritise resolving issues that have stalled programme implementation due to changes in government priorities such as the curriculum development for CSE, life-skills and violence prevention. If these cannot be resolved, alternate plans should be developed.

## D. EFFECTIVENESS

<b>7. To what extent has progress towards output targets been achieved? Is the quality of the outputs satisfactory?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Very Good - Good</b>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Problems</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Serious deficiencies</b>

### Achievement of results against the approved workplan

Performance data for Timor-Leste from the global database were only available up to December 2020 and not informative as milestones for the first year of operation were largely set at the level of baseline values. The Timor-Leste Spotlight Initiative team therefore provided the MTA with an update of results for 20 output indicators of the global framework as of November of 2021. Table 4 presents the targets and progress as reported by the programme. The progress was rated by the MTA based on the Programme's report with green (already achieved), yellow (substantive progress reported) or orange (little or no progress or unconvincing progress reported). It is of note that several output results are used repeatedly for reporting against distinct indicators. The table was further updated during the review process as it appeared that progress by UNICEF had not been communicated to the MTA team.

**Table 4. Status of Output achievement by November 2021**

Output Indicator	Target 2021 (as defined by the Programme)	Progress (as rated by the MTA)
<b>1.1.1</b> Number of new and/or strengthened laws and/or policies on ending VAWG and/or gender equality and non-discrimination developed that respond to the rights of women and girls facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination and are in line with international HR standards.	1 revised Penal Code 1 draft Child Protection Law 1 draft law relating to ILO-C190	Draft analysis of ILO C-190. Draft Child Protection Law Revision of penal code developed
<b>1.1.3</b> Number of draft laws and/or policies on ending VAWG and/or gender equality and non-discrimination which have received significant inputs from women's rights advocates within the last year.	1 draft law relating to ILO-C190 1 draft criminal justice law	Draft analysis of ILO C-190 with participatory workshop and inputs Support to draft Child Protection Law by UNICEF
<b>1.2.1</b> Number of evidence-based national and/or sub-national action plans on ending VAWG developed that respond to the rights of all women and girls, have M&E frameworks and proposed budgets within the last year.	NAP GBV revised and strengthened incl. evidence-based and perspectives of at-risk groups	Revision of the NAP GBV is underway
<b>2.1.1</b> Number of Government institutions that develop strategies, plans and/or programmes to prevent and respond to VAWG, including for those groups of women and girls facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination.	8 strategies, plans and programmes (5 at national level, 3 at sub-national level) developed for government institutions	Under development
<b>2.1.3</b> Number of strategies, plans and programmes of other relevant sectors (health, social services, education, justice, security, culture) that integrate efforts to end VAWG, including DV/IPV, developed in line with international HR standards.	15 strategies developed that integrate efforts to EVAWG.	National prevention strategy underway CSE under development Specialized programme for adolescent girls

<b>2.2.1</b> Multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms established at the highest level and/or strengthened composed of relevant stakeholders, with a clear mandate and governance structure and with annual work plans.	Inter-Ministerial Committee overseeing the implementation of the NAP GBV has an Annual Work Plan	Inter-Ministerial Committee has been convened, and annual work plan established, progress in overseeing of NAP GBV
<b>2.3.1</b> Proportion of dedicated and multi-sectoral programmes developed that include proposed allocations of funds to end VAWG, including DV/IPV, within the last year.	20 (under review)	16
<b>3.1.1</b> Existence of a draft new and/or strengthened Comprehensive Sexuality Education in place, in line with international standards.	CSE will be evidence-based, cover SRHRs, based on core values and human rights, be gender-sensitive and culturally appropriate.	The MoEYS has changed priorities following political changes
<b>3.1.2</b> Number of young women and girls, young men and boys who participate in either/both in- and out-of-school programmes that promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours and exercise of rights, including reproductive rights within the last year.	2,872 people will be reached (1,275 girls, in-school; 1,275 boys, in-school, 161 girls, out-school; 161 boys, out-school)	977 (417 girls and 270 boys; 174 women; 116 men)
<b>3.2.1</b> Number of women, men, girls, and boys who regularly attend community programmes to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours, including in relation to women's and girls' sexuality and reproduction, within the last year.	2,872 people will be reached (1,275 girls in-school; 1,275 boys in-school; 161 girls out-of-school; 161 boys, out-school)	290 (174 women aged 20 and over; 116 men aged 20)
<b>3.2.2</b> Number of people reached by campaigns challenging harmful social norms and gender stereotyping, within the last year.	300,643 people reached (140,213 women aged 20 and over; 140,430 men aged 20 and over; 10,000 girls; 10,000 boys)	661,612 (309,235 women; 371,846 men 10,308 girls; 10,285 boys)
<b>4.1.2</b> Number of women and girls with access to programmes developed to integrate VAWG, including DV/IPV, response into SRH, education and migration services.	To be decided	IP selected and activity in progress
<b>4.2.1</b> Number of women and girl survivors of violence and their families including groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that have increased knowledge of a) quality essential services, and b) accompaniment/support initiatives, including longer-term recovery services, within the last 12 months.	830	69 trained to support training on entrepreneurship for women survivors of violence
<b>5.1.1</b> Number of National Statistical Offices (NSO) that have developed/adapted and contextualised methods and standards at the national level to produce prevalence and/or incidence data on VAWG.	1	67 officers of GDS have enhanced capacity to analyse gaps on GBV data
<b>5.1.2</b> A system to collect administrative data on VAWG/HP, is in place and in line with international standards, across different sectors.	Strengthened system to collect data with regards to education and social services administrative data.	Re-design and development of administrative sectors is underway
<b>5.2.1</b> Number of knowledge products developed and disseminated to relevant stakeholders to inform evidence-based decision making.	6 in social services 2 in health 1 in the justice sector	Total 6 3 KP in justice sector 3 KP in health sector near final

<b>5.2.3</b> Number of government personnel, including service providers, from different sectors with strengthened capacities on analysis and dissemination of prevalence and/or incidence data on VAWG.	48 (24 women and 24 men in health, social services, education, justice, security, culture ministries)	67 staff from GDS, with training package to reach staff from other sectors
<b>6.1.2</b> Number of official dialogues with relevant government authorities with the meaningful participation of women's rights groups and relevant CSOs, including representatives of groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.	22	>10 CSOs advocate to support SEII; dialogue on gender and protection issues in the response to floods.
<b>6.1.4</b> Number of women's rights groups, networks and relevant CSOs with strengthened capacities to network, partner and jointly advocate for progress on ending VAWG at local, national, regional, and global levels, within the last year.	21	30 Organisations / NGOs
<b>6.3.1</b> Number of women's rights groups and relevant CSOs representing groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalisation that have strengthened capacities and support to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate their own programmes on ending VAWG, including DV/IPV.	21	30 women's rights organisations/NGOs

The ratings applied by the MTA in Table 4 are based on limited information extracted from the November 2021 performance update provided by the Programme. While they indicate that progress is being made on many output indicators towards achievement of the 2021 performance targets, most of them will not be reached by the end of the year. The delays experienced due to COVID-19, the floods and government changes can account for many of the delays. At least those coded in yellow may well be achieved during the no-cost extension period.

### Is the quality of outputs satisfactory?

The same results are in some cases entered as achievements against two indicators that are formulated to measure distinct outputs, for instance against indicators 3.1.2 and 3.2.1 and for indicator 5.1.1 and 5.2.3. There may be overlap among outputs, but reporting, for instance, on how many GDS staff have been trained in the use of training packages on data collection by other services is not a valid output for an indicator that aims to measure the capacity for data collection, analysis and use of staff in these services. The MTA acknowledges that the output indicators are developed at the global level and not by the Spotlight team in Timor-Leste

Interviewed informants were asked about their perception of the quality of outputs and in almost all cases stated that these were in line with expectations. However, nearly all interviews were conducted with informants who were responsible for overseeing or implementing the activities, and the data are therefore likely to be biased. Information collected in FGDs with service providers at the municipality level confirmed the perception of satisfactory quality of outputs, but the number of groups and the scope of activities covered in these discussions was limited.

### Key findings:

- Progress towards achievement of most output targets is reported by the Programme, however, in most instances it is insufficient to achieve the 2021 targets as identified by the Programme.
- Not all output results reported by the Programme provide clear information about the status of milestone achievement. In several cases identical output data are used to report against two indicators that are meant to monitor progress towards distinct outputs. The MTA acknowledges that the output indicators are developed at the global level and not by the Spotlight team in Timor-Leste

### Recommendations

11. The Spotlight Initiative team should review the achievements of output indicators and focus on working toward achieving the 2021 targets by the end of the 6-month no-cost extension period or revise the targets with an explanation as to why they are not relevant or not achievable, for instance due to contextual changes. (e.g. priority changes in the MoEYS).
12. The Spotlight Initiative M&E task group should review and revise the definitions used for reporting against the global results framework indicators to eliminate duplicate reporting of the same result against multiple outputs.

<p><b>8. Are the outputs still likely to lead to the expected outcomes? To what extent has progress towards the outcome targets been achieved?</b></p>	<div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Very Good - Good</b> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Problems</b> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Serious deficiencies</b> </div>
<p><b>Progress against the approved workplan by outcome area</b></p> <p>Performance monitoring reports and reports by interviewed stakeholders document progress on outcomes in all six pillars but most of them are reports of successful implementation of activities rather than changes at the outcome level. While it can be assumed that they will contribute to these outcomes, the evidence that this is actually happening is weak. The reported achievements are summarised in Table 5.</p>	



**Table 5. Key achievements and obstacles per Pillar**

Pillars	Key achievements in Phase I	Issues arising / obstacles to address in Phase II
<b>Outcome 1 Legislative and Policy Framework</b>	<p><b><u>Legislative and policy frameworks on VAWG in place, based on evidence and in line with international human rights standards</u></b></p> <p>Child Protection Law in reading phase at Parliament. Committee F signed the draft law in June 2021.</p> <p>Draft of Comparative Analysis between TL regulatory framework and the ILO Convention 190 and recommendation 206 on Eliminating Violence, with participatory workshop.</p> <p>Draft revision of the Penal Code awaits submission to start the legislative process.</p>	<p>Delay in discussion and approval of these laws by Parliament is anticipated because of preparations for the 2022 national election.</p>
<b>Outcome 2 Strengthening Institutions</b>	<p><b><u>National and sub-national systems and institutions plan, fund and deliver evidence-based programmes that prevent and respond to VAWG</u></b></p> <p>National and sub-national oversight mechanisms existed at baseline but have been revived at municipality level (Gender Working Groups); representatives from marginalised groups included at national level.</p> <p>Budget Analysis Steering Committee of SEII supported for integrating gender in 2022 budget planning.</p> <p>Gender-responsive budget planning in 20 line ministries supported by SEII.</p>	<p>Proportion of national budget allocated to prevention of GBV in 2020 and in 2021 was only 0.1%. Very low baseline on which to advocate for an increase.</p>
<b>Outcome 3 Prevention and Social Norm Change</b>	<p><b><u>Gender inequitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change at community and individual levels to prevent VAWG, including DV/IPV</u></b></p> <p>7 prevention strategies or initiatives developed including National Prevention Strategy for GBV, Connect with Respect; Social and Behavioural Change Strategy to prevent VAWG; Boys and Girls Circles; Gender Entrepreneurship Together training modules; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Toolbox.</p> <p>26 FBOs engaged in prevention of VAWG</p>	<p>Acceptance of intimate partner violence high at baseline among men and women (DHS 2016). 2021 survey in Bobonaro and Ermera indicates that it continues to be very high.</p> <p>Work on inclusion of CSE in schools stalled because of priority change in MoEYS.</p>
<b>Outcome 4 Quality Services</b>	<p><b><u>Women and girls who experience VAWG, use available, accessible, acceptable, and quality essential services</u></b></p> <p>In 2021, number of survivors of VAWG who sought help more than doubled from 2019 to 2020 numbers.</p>	<p>Few survivors of GBV use formal service providers to access justice.</p> <p>Security and quality of safe spaces for survivors of VAWG in health facilities is suboptimal.</p>



	<p>100 police officers in 3 municipalities trained on responding to GBV.</p> <p>Specialised programme for adolescent girls developed, including an adolescent-centered referral pathway.</p>	
<b>Outcome 5 Data Availability and Capacities</b>	<p><u><b>Quality data on VAWG collected, analysed and used.</b></u></p> <p>Data on VAWG from DHS 2016 were mapped and used to inform design for data collection for upcoming DHS 2021/22</p> <p>Data literacy training package is being prepared to integrate IPV and DV in administrative data of different sectors.</p> <p>Knowledge products for research and use of data in different sectors developed</p>	<p>Translating findings from knowledge products into policy change is challenging.</p> <p>Implementation of activities were delayed because technical experts recruited to support the activities were unable to travel to the country.</p>
<b>Outcome 6 Women's Movement</b>	<p><u><b>Women's rights groups and groups representing people facing intersecting forms of discrimination influence progress towards ending VAWG.</b></u></p> <p>National EVAWG Forum launched by SEII with Parliamentarians and municipal authorities.</p> <p>The number of civil society groups that have the institutional capacity to accept UN funds has increased.</p>	<p>The National Women's Network Rede Feto which manages the EVAWG Forum has governance challenges which may affect work in Phase 2.</p>

The table does not document many outcome achievements which is not surprising, given that activities under some of the outcomes had barely started one year ago. Several interviewed stakeholders were sceptic that even a full two-year implementation of activities as foreseen under Phase 1 would be able to generate measurable changes in some of the pillars at the outcome level, for instance in changes of norms, attitudes, and behaviours. Nevertheless, the Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste aims at effecting or contributing to changes in the six outcome pillars and reporting an aggregation of successfully delivered outputs is not sufficient documentation that this aim is being achieved.

**'The programme staff of the RUNOs are diligent and responsible in focusing on the activities and the budget but they don't link this back to the Theory of Change and ask: "how does it contribute to change". There is not enough leadership from the Heads of Agencies towards a convergence of talking about how we are contributing to the bigger change we are trying to achieve.'**

**Outcome 1:** Progress has been made in terms of drafting laws and shepherding them through legislative committees. But achieving changes in legislation is a long process that can easily be stalled or derailed, for instance, when Parliamentarians prepare for election and focus on issues that will win them popular votes.

**Outcome 2:** Efforts of sensitising ministries to gender-responsive budgeting and the need to allocate sufficient funds to policies and plans for ending VAWG have been made and are documented. Expectations should, however, not be exaggerated. Changes in government will require continuous renewal of the effort while multiple priorities are competing for a narrow fiscal space at national and municipality level.

**Outcome 3:** Changes in social norms are measurable and will presumably be measured in the upcoming DHS against the baseline of 2016. The contribution of the programme to any measured changes will be difficult to assess. There have been setbacks such as the stalled introduction of the CSE curriculum in schools. Some implemented activities, for instance the Connect with Respect programme for early secondary students has a solid evidence base.

**Outcome 4:** The reported number of survivors of violence who accessed services in 2021 more than doubled. This may be due to better access or improved reporting. In either case, a contribution of the Spotlight Initiative to this outcome can be assumed. It is an encouraging output result that merits further attention. Interviewed respondents noted that guidance and training manuals for health professionals were difficult to understand and lacked clear concepts. The quality and safety of safe spaces for survivors in health facilities was also an issue that was raised several times. A focus on these issues could potentially further improve the outcome result.

**Outcome 5:** It is difficult to assess the extent to which progress in the quality and use of VAWG data has been made. Training of GDS staff, especially for the design of the upcoming DHS may well result in the availability of more detailed and disaggregated information on GBV. Data use in policies and programmes is, however, still a critical outcome for which progress remains to be documented.

**Outcome 6:** Increased networking among groups representing people facing intersecting forms of discrimination such as people of the LGBTQI community has been achieved and is documented. The launch of the National EVAWG Forum indicates progress, although increased influence of these networks and the forum on policies and programmes still needs to be documented.

### Key findings

- Changes at the outcome level have, until now, only been documented for Outcome 4. For most other outcomes, there are indications that reported outputs will contribute to achievements of outcomes, but these have not yet been documented, although it is too early for such expectations. Under Pillar 5, only few of the outputs reported until now are able to raise expectations that outcomes may be achieved.
- Monitoring and reporting by RUNOs is too narrowly focused on activities and budget execution rather than on the main objective of achieving outcome changes.

### Recommendations

13. The National Steering Committee and the Heads of UN Agencies should reconfirm the importance of programme and M&E staff to focus attention on collecting and reporting

progress towards the achievement of outcomes beyond aggregated reports on successful completion of activities.

14. To consolidate and further increase achievements under Pillar 4, UNFPA should focus on improving training and guidance materials for health professionals on GBV and evaluate the work done on creating safe spaces in health facilities.

**9A. Do the government, implementing partners or RUNOs have sufficient capacity (financial, human resources, institutional) to ensure that implementation is going according to plan?**

☐ Very Good - Good

**9B. Are there any obstacles/bottlenecks/outstanding issues on the partners' or government side that are limiting the successful implementation and results achievement of the Initiative?**

☒ Problems

☐ Serious deficiencies

### Budget Execution

Data on expenditures and commitments by RUNOs were provided by the Spotlight Secretariat up to and including the third quarter of 2021 with a total budget execution of 60% as presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Budget execution by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

	Budget	Expenditure	Commitment	% Spent or committed
<b>UN Women</b>	3,411,497	1,371,529	1,475,151	83%
<b>UNDP</b>	2,488,706	812,593	522,899	55%
<b>UNFPA</b>	1,624,202	450,639	224,195	42%
<b>ILO</b>	657,076	198,688	209,495	62%
<b>UNICEF</b>	1,758,519	515,729	178,530 <sup>3</sup>	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,900,000</b>	<b>3,349,177</b>	<b>2,610,270</b>	<b>60%</b>

Budget execution rates initially suffered from a slow start during the first year of the programme due to contextual constraints but were able to increase during the second year. Budget execution increased from 42 to 60 percent between the second and third quarter of 2021, with a 49 percent increase in expenditure and a 37 percent increase in commitments. The country programme was furthermore granted a 6 month no-cost extension of Phase 1 to support the implementation of remaining activities.

Delays were also initially experienced in transfers and grants to implementing partners. CSOs interviewed confirmed that there were delays in receiving funds, which was compounded by

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF does not include payroll commitments or unadvanced disbursements to partners as commitments

further delays in spending these funds. Informants attributed these delays to contextual factors, including restrictions of movements within the country due to COVID-19 and flooding. The programme expenditure data for transfers to implementing partners shared by the Spotlight Secretariat with the MTA team for the third quarter of 2021 showed a considerable level of under-disbursement with only 21 percent of the budget of USD 4.14 million spent. The Timor-Leste Spotlight team provided the MTA with updated information as of October 29<sup>th</sup> that included a slightly lower revised budget (USD 4.04 million) but a much higher level of disbursement of 51 percent. This is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Transfers to Implementing Partners by October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

	Budget	Transfers to IPs	% Transferred
<b>UN Women</b>	1,660,242	1,172,568	71%
<b>UNDP</b>	669,920	316,012	47%
<b>UNFPA</b>	645,703	272,356	42%
<b>ILO</b>	324,975	136,922	42%
<b>UNICEF</b>	740,845	169,344	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,041,685</b>	<b>2,067,202</b>	<b>51%</b>

Of the USD 2.1 million that had been transferred to implementing partners within two months of the official end-date of Phase 1, only USD 1.1 million had been liquidated, i.e. 28 percent of the Phase 1 budget. This points to considerable constraints in the capacity of implementing partners to absorb Spotlight Initiative funds.

### **Obstacles to programme implementation: Government**

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions, natural disasters such as flooding, and limited human resource and institutional capacity were considered the leading causes of the low absorptive capacity of government at all levels. Moreover, government has many competing priorities, and decision making and getting feedback on key activities from government partners often took considerably longer than anticipated. This was further exacerbated by the state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by the emergency response to flooding, and by the government changes in 2021.

SEII is the leading government body for the design, execution, coordination, and assessment of policies for promotion and protection of gender equality in Timor-Leste and leads the National Action Plan for GBV. Although SEII is committed to the issue of gender equality, it has limited human resources.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is involved in the Spotlight programme through the training of health professionals on providing quality services to survivors of violence, as well as through creating safe spaces in health facilities for survivors. The MoH also has human resource limitations with only one staff member assigned to work on GBV in collaboration with partners. MoH capacity was further stretched by the response to COVID-19, including the roll-out of the

national immunisation campaign. The planned training of health workers on services for survivors of GBV could not be implemented and the activity to establish safe spaces was delayed due to setbacks in preparing the necessary communication as well as a lack of clear communication.

Similar delays were also seen with the other line ministries involved in the Spotlight Initiative, for instance the Ministry of Justice where USD 200,000 for the development of a data management system on VAWG has so far not been spent.

### **Obstacles to programme implementation: RUNOs**

In interviews, UN stakeholders frequently cited the pressure to deliver and focus on the visibility of the Spotlight Initiative as a hindrance to their work. Stakeholders also pointed out that RUNO programme staff often lack prior knowledge and experience for working on GBV.

**‘The number of staff is sufficient but the level of experience and capacity of RUNOs staff is variable.’**

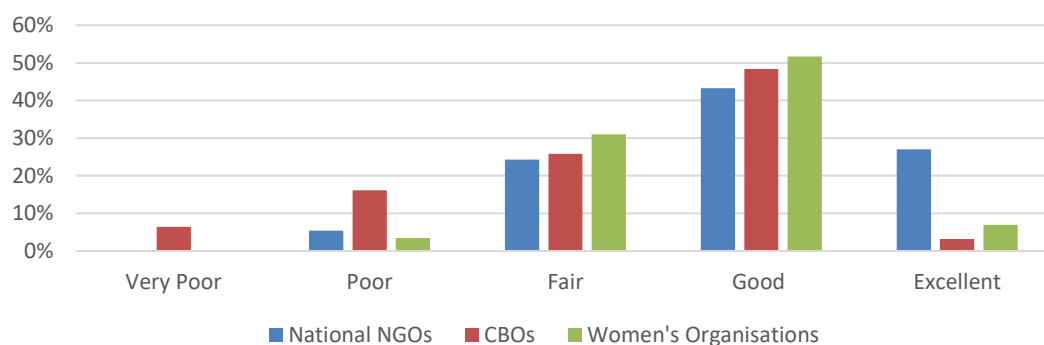
UN stakeholders further pointed out that the 18 percent ceiling on management costs was insufficient to effectively manage and implement programme activities. For most RUNOs, the cap reduced the capacity for full time staff to work exclusively on the Spotlight Initiative and required them to instead juggle Spotlight Initiative activities with existing programmes and commitments. The cap also required RUNOs to look at alternative strategies to ensure sufficient human resourcing, such as employing external consultants for programme management functions.

### **Obstacles to programme implementation: Civil society implementing partners**

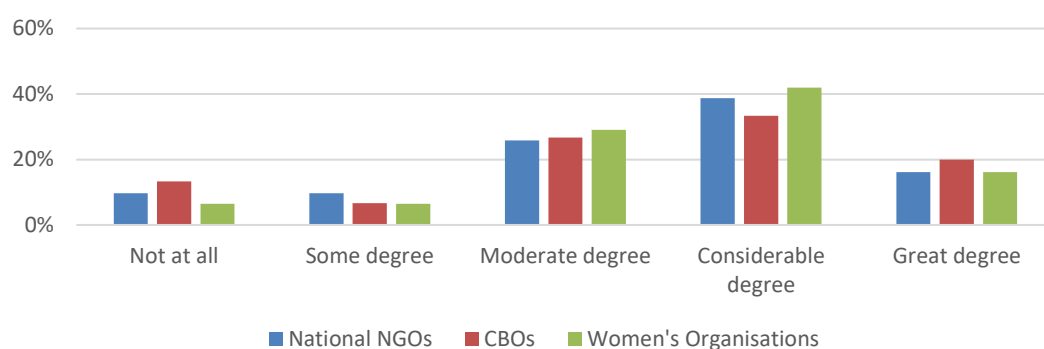
Survey respondents were asked to rate the institutional and human resource capacity for implementing the Spotlight programme among national NGOs, CBOs and women’s rights organisations on a scale from ‘very poor’ to ‘excellent’. On a separate 5-point Likert scale, they were asked to rate the capacity of these organisations for timely budget execution on a scale ‘not at all’ to ‘to a great degree’. Although the median ratings for both responses and for all three types of organisations was ‘good’, the ratings also show a large spread, especially for the capacity to absorb the allocated budget. Only slightly more than half of respondents thought that national NGOs, CBOs, and Women’s Organisations had the capacity to execute their allocated budget to a considerable or great degree.

**Figure 2. Ratings of institutional capacity and budget absorption capacity of civil society partners**

#### **Institutional and Human Resource Capacity to Implement the Programme**



### Capacity to Execute the Allocated Budget



Civil society was initially slow in spending allocated funds and there have been delays in the implementation of activities. As with the government, some limitations of the absorptive capacity were attributed to restrictions due to the COVID-19 response and to the flooding in April 2021. As a result, civil society partners were not able to travel and meet with beneficiaries in targeted municipalities.

Some interviewed civil society implementing partners complained that disbursement of funds took a long time, making it very difficult for them to implement activities as they were forced to borrow funds from other donor programmes to implement Spotlight Initiative activities. Some organisations also reported delays in signing their contract with no clear reason offered by their RUNO partner. The lack of clarity on timelines of programme and reporting caused stress for the staff of the organisation.

**‘There were some delays for us to sign our contract - not sure why. We were only able to sign the contract in January. By the time we finished one month of the activity, we were told the first quarter was done. We were asked to submit the report. Only one month and we had to submit the report. A little bit stressful a lot of pressure from donors to fast-track activities.’**

### Key findings

- Implementation of activities and absorption of the budgets by government partners and civil society implementing partners were delayed and the programme budget will not be executed within the regular Phase 1 period. A six-month no-cost extension has already been granted.

- The state of emergency declared in response to COVID-19 and the emergency due to flooding contributed to the delays, but there are also underlying capacity issues among civil society and government partners.
- Most RUNOs were delayed in their budget execution, particularly for transfers and grants to implementing partners. This was, to some extent, related to restrictions of movements within the country and the flooding.
- RUNO respondents reported that the administrative budget limit of 18 percent limited their capacity for programme implementation

### **Recommendations**

15. While focusing on implementing the remaining Phase 1 workplan during the no-cost extension period, the National Steering Committee should review the Phase 2 workplan and adjust plans and budgets based on an assessment of the absorption of Phase 1 funds by government and civil society partners.
16. RUNOs should consider the option of seconding consultants that are familiar with UN financial administration systems to government departments or to large implementing partner organisations to assist in overcoming administrative bottlenecks for partners to accessing Spotlight Initiative funds.

## E. EFFICIENCY

**10. Are the chosen implementation mechanisms (incl. choice of implementation modalities, entities, and contractual arrangements) adequate for achieving the expected results?**

☒ **Very Good - Good**

☐ **Problems**

☐ **Serious deficiencies**

### Recipient UN Agencies

The five Recipient UN Agencies work, to a large extent, with already established government and civil society partners in the areas of their mandate and core competence. This has leveraged established relationships of trust and organisational knowledge, generating efficiencies in the implementation of Spotlight Initiative activities. It has, however, also contributed to a perception expressed by some government stakeholders of working in a bilateral cooperation with their RUNO partner rather than being part of a national initiative jointly supported by the UN and the EU. One government stakeholder noted:

*‘It is better to do it like we did before with UNDP’s programme “Access to Justice” that gave us support.’*

It has also, in some cases, limited the potential for innovation, especially when, as pointed out by RUNO stakeholders, responsibilities for programme management by RUNO partners were allocated to staff with a large portfolio of responsibilities beyond the Spotlight Initiative and little familiarity with programmes responding to VAWG.

### National Implementation Modality

The government of Timor-Leste through the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEII) chairs the National Steering Committee in partnership with the UN Resident Coordinator. SEII is supportive, collaborative, and open to the activities implemented by the Spotlight Initiative. The SEII has given input and certain directions to the programme and received direct budget support for the implementation of activities. While contextual factors have affected the implementation of activities, government partners believe that this modality promotes ownership. Others, however, noted that government has maintained an ‘arm’s length approach’ limiting government ownership.

*‘Government has maintained an arm’s length approach and ownership is very limited. The fact that Steering Committee members questioned how Spotlight programmes are going to be implemented beyond Phase 2 is testimony that the programme is not yet fully owned to a sustainable degree.’*

Government changes in 2020 with the replacement of all ministers and many key public officials at national and subnational level who were involved in the design phase of the programme may have contributed to the perception of limited ownership. The main government partner, the SEII, remains strongly committed and involved. At senior level, all ministries participate in the National Steering Committee. At a more operational level, however, ownership by other ministries was not strong and likely weakened further after the government changes. This is also documented in the online survey responses. Less than half of respondents believe that government is involved to a major degree in implementation and monitoring of the programme. (See Figure 1, Question 4)



*'The programme belongs to the [partner RUNO] and the EU who forced us to implement it. We want [the partner RUNO] and the European Union to ask us like the government had asked us to do programmes on how to end violence. Spotlight is good but the benefit for us is not much.'*

One civil society respondent also commented on the role and ownership of SEII and other line ministries in the programme:

*'Government is active in the Spotlight Program because SEII has been working tirelessly to socialise the programme with other line ministries. The knowledge about ending violence against women and girls in other line ministries is, however, still very low.'*

### **CSO Implementation Modality**

The Spotlight Initiative supports 15 civil society organisations, many with extensive experiences in EVAWG programming. According to the budget, 39 percent of funds are being channelled through CSOs to conduct research on policies around gender-based violence as well activities around prevention in the targeted municipalities. Due to the limited number of organisations working on EVAWG under the Spotlight Initiative, some CSOs receive grants from several RUNOs for different activities.

Interviewed CSO representatives noted that CSOs have a strong voice in the programme and their contribution is a key to successful programming as illustrated in a survey response and in the response of an interviewed stakeholder:

*'CSOs have been involved from day one of the design and our voice is highly considered.'*

*'The programme's relationship with CSOs is very strong and meaningful in terms of providing overall strategic advice and valuable inputs ensuring that implementation is locally contextualised.'*

Some respondents criticised that the Spotlight Initiative works mostly with legally registered organisations. Interviewed stakeholders acknowledged that efforts are made to include organisations that represent marginalised populations. However, by only working with legally registered organisations, they felt that the programme missed an opportunity to collaborate with women activists who are not part of any legally registered organisation. On the other hand, the Spotlight Initiative also addresses capacity gaps of women rights organisations and networks through activities under Pillar 6.

Each RUNO uses a different procurement system, which at times has caused confusion. UNDP, for example, only issues small grants to civil society for less than one year. To some, this contracting arrangement makes it difficult to form an effective partnership. Other CSO respondents reported a lack of clarity around budgets and reporting. For instance, UN Women funded two organisations to jointly implement an activity. While this collaboration has been beneficial and contributed to greater efficiency, there have been miscommunications between the two organisations and with UN Women on reporting and accounting responsibilities.

### Key findings

- The national implementation modality is considered an effective modality to ensure that activities are government led. While contextual factors have delayed planned activities, the modality is appropriate to contribute to local capacity and ensure sustainability.
- Government leadership and ownership of the Spotlight Initiative are predominately exercised by one department, the SEII. Other line ministries participate in the Steering Committee and implement activities with their RUNO partner, but do not have the same sense of having a leading and decision-making role.
- The Spotlight Initiative has contracted CSOs that represent different marginalised populations and channels a significant amount of funds through CSOs. This is perceived by many stakeholders as contributing to the success of the programme. Most issues raised about CSO programming related to contracting modalities that differ among RUNO partners.

### Recommendations

17. During the remainder of the programme and in a possible Phase 2, the RUNOs with support of the National Steering Committee should increase their efforts to involve government ministries beyond the SEII in the Spotlight Initiative programme in a meaningful way, including by increasing capacity support to these ministries and by assuring that this cooperation is implemented with Spotlight Initiative branding.

<p><b>11A. How effectively is the Initiative managed?</b></p> <p><b>11B. How effectively is the Programme managed? Are the governance and management mechanisms for the Initiative at national level adequate and functioning as planned? Do partner government and other partners (please consider CSO and EU Delegation) in the country effectively participate in these mechanisms?</b></p>	<div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Good - Good</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Problems</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies</div>
<p>The MTA did not collect information in Timor-Leste about the management of the Initiative by the Spotlight Secretariat.</p> <p>During the design phase of the national programme, government advised the Spotlight Initiative against forming a Steering Committee because there would be an overlap of memberships with the NAP GBV Inter-Ministerial Committee led by SEII. This advice was however not followed. The National Steering Committee includes various line ministries. At the meetings, action plans are presented for feedback. Except for the SEII and EUD representatives, members of the Steering Committee generally do not have any engagement with the Spotlight team besides their participation in the meetings. The Committee meetings are convened by the RCO and are considered useful to ensure ownership by government and involvement of different line ministries. However, the Committee meets only twice per year and the discussions are rather formal because of its size and the participation of many ministries at high level. Interviewed stakeholders considered it a functional governance mechanism but not a mechanism providing leadership on issues of programme implementation.</p>	

The meetings of the Civil Society Reference Group (CSRG) are prompted by the Spotlight Technical Team. The CSRG discuss progress of activities. Its role in contributing feedback for corrective actions has been valuable. For instance, the group was involved in proposing adjustments to activities to respond to COVID-19 by developing messages that were shared with the public. CSRG members also serve as key contacts for the Spotlight Initiative within municipalities. Members from the group expressed that they would like to play a more active role in monitoring Spotlight Initiative activities.

The Resident Coordinator represents the UN and leads the Spotlight Initiative in the country. He is reported to be highly engaged in the programme, provides political leadership and is the main link with government in addition to co-chairing the National Steering Committee. The RC also meets regularly with the Technical Team and takes a close interest in operational issues.

In addition to the inputs provided by the RC and the Head of the RCO which are not captured in the Programme's budget and workplan, three RCO staff have a 30% allocation of their workload to the Spotlight Initiative: A coordination officer, a communications officer, and an M&E officer. The HR costs for all three are budgeted under the UNDP contribution to the Initiative which prompted one respondent to remark:

**'The downside is that the Spotlight Initiative, although well resourced, is not paying for these things.'**

Each of the five RUNOs employ a full-time national programme officer and a programme assistant paid from the Spotlight Initiative budget. UN Women, UNDP and UNICEF had budget to contract one additional programme officer, given they manage larger budget envelopes. In addition, UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA also contracted three international staff as Technical Coherence Lead (UN Women), Finance Specialist (UNDP) and M&E Specialist (UNFPA). For most of the time until May 2021, UNICEF only had only one programme officer, due to the difficulty in finding a suitable candidate and a resignation. With those savings made in 2020, UNICEF was able to contract a national Child Protection Officer in June 2021 to accelerate implementation.

According to the revised annual work plan for 2021, the RUNOs have 13 staff members working full time for the Spotlight Initiative under the EU budget. These include national programme officers or specialists, programme assistants, and one international programme specialist. In addition, the workplan lists 15 staff members paid from the UN Agencies' contributions to the Spotlight Initiative with time allocations ranging from 5 to 50 percent, including the three RCO staff who are working at 30 percent for the Initiative.

Many interviewed stakeholders noted that this level of human resource allocation is insufficient for the significant portfolio of activities and budgets managed by RUNOs, however the management budgets of RUNOs are limited to 18 percent. Interviewed RUNO informants also noted that not all programme staff have sufficient technical expertise and experience in programming for ending VAWG.

**'The main challenge is the insufficient human resources in RUNOs and the Coordination Team. Both really need more specialised staff. This is the main reason for the delays in**

**implementation. Unfortunately, the Spotlight Initiative could not hire more staff because of the limit of 18 percent for programme management costs.'**

The Delegation of the European Union (EUD) is significantly involved in steering the programme. Informants noted that the level of EUD participation in the Spotlight Initiative is much higher than in other programmes funded by the EU. The EUD takes a particularly strong interest in the visibility of the EU.

**'The EUD would like to make sure that whenever GBV is talked about, people recognise the EU as the main donor of programmes to address this issue.'**

The EUD, however, noted that its responsibility for the Spotlight Programme in Timor-Leste is not sufficiently recognised in the position of the EU Ambassador in the National Steering Committee. It does not consider that it has sufficient ability to exercise its responsibility through this membership and would have preferred a position as a second Co-Chair. As this was apparently not compatible with the programme design, meetings between the Spotlight Team and the EUD are organised preceding the National Steering Committee meetings.

### Key findings

- The National Steering Committee comprises various line ministries, the EU Delegation, and the UN. It meets twice per year and provides high level governance for the programme. Because of its size, the profile of its members, and the infrequency of its meetings, it is not a forum in which technical and implementation issues can be discussed in detail.
- RUNOs employ 13 full-time staff for managing the programme under the EU Spotlight Initiative budget. According to interviewed stakeholders, this is insufficient to manage such a large programme, although comments alternately referred to the number and the technical capacity of RUNO programme staff. The 18 percent limit on the RUNO's management budget were seen as the main constraint for the ability of RUNOs to adequately staff their programme for effective management, implementation and monitoring of activities.
- The EUD is closely involved in the governance of the programme, however, feels that its position as a member of the National Steering Committee does not allow it to sufficiently exercise its responsibility for the programme. To address this, a parallel process of bilateral meetings between the Spotlight Team and the EUD was established.

### Recommendations

18. In Phase 2, The National Steering Committee should consider establishing a technical sub-committee of RUNO programme staff, government, and civil society experts to allow more substantive discussions of the technical quality and evidence-base of implemented activities.
19. Based on the lessons learnt in Phase 1, the EU should review and raise the 18% ceiling for programme management costs of RUNOs.

20. The SEII, RCO and EUD should consider a more substantive role for the EUD in the National Steering Committee with the aim of avoiding the need for preparatory consultations between the Spotlight Team and the EUD that could be perceived as a parallel mechanism excluding the national programme leadership.

**12. Are the chosen implementation and coordination mechanisms (a “new way of working”, in line with UN Reform) contributing to efficiency?**

☒ **Very Good - Good**

☐ **Problems**

☐ **Serious deficiencies**

A large proportion of respondents to the online survey agreed somewhat or agreed strongly with statements about the effectiveness of cooperation among UN agencies according to UN reform principles as presented in Table 8.

**Table 8. Agreement with statements about implementation of UN reform**

STATEMENT	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL AGREEMENT
The UN Resident Coordinator effectively steers and oversees the action	33%	58%	92%
The Spotlight Coordination team effectively play their role of coordinating and ensuring collaboration between all stakeholders	26%	66%	92%
The co-location of the Spotlight Coordination Team (including staff from different RUNOs) in one office leads to greater efficiency	31%	61%	92%
RUNOs work well together to implement the action in an integrated way	31%	58%	89%
The collaboration among RUNOs leads to greater efficiency	32%	56%	88%
The RUNOs head of agencies are effectively engaged and supporting the Spotlight Initiative in the country	29%	65%	94%

However, survey respondents and interviewed informants also mentioned challenges. COVID-19 related contact restrictions and home office work reduced some of the efficiencies generated by a co-location office. Different systems among UN Agencies for contracting and procurement and different virtual communication platforms used by UN Agencies were also mentioned as constraints.

On the other hand, respondents pointed out that RUNOs pooled resources, for instance for field missions and coordinated many logistical tasks. The coordination team, with representation from the RCO and each RUNO, meets regularly. In addition, a unified and consolidated system used by all RUNOs has been established to track progress among implementing partners, and there is an M&E task force in which all RUNOs are represented.

A major achievement related to the implementation of UN reform principles pointed out by one respondent was the ability to achieve a ‘whole of government’ involvement in the issue of ending VAWG, although this has, according to interviewed government staff, not yet been fully achieved. The RC’s contacts as well as the close contacts of each UN Agency with government ministries could be further mobilised in support of the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative programme, for instance the contacts of UNDP with the Ministry of Justice or of UNFPA with the Ministry of Health.

### **Key findings**

- The implementation of UN reform principles in the Spotlight Programme in Timor-Leste has generated efficiencies through the cooperation of UN Agencies on many issues although there is still room for improvement, for instance through a closer alignment of UN Agencies' systems. The strong leadership by the RC has been key for this achievement.

### **Recommendations**

21. During the no-cost extension of the programme's Phase 1, the RC and the UN Heads of Agencies should take stock of efficiency achievements under the 'working as one' modality, document these as lessons for future programmes, and identify barriers that could be removed during Phase 2 programming.

## F. SUSTAINABILITY

**13. Is sufficient capacity being built so that local actors, such as government as well as CSOs, the women's movement and groups representing women and girls that face intersecting forms of discrimination, will be able to manage the process by the end of the Initiative without continued dependence on international expertise?**

☒ **Very Good - Good**

☐ **Problems**

☐ **Serious deficiencies**

Although the programme has not yet developed a separate sustainability plan, initiatives were undertaken with sustainability in mind. For example, most activities funded by the Spotlight Initiative are not new. They are existing activities and initiatives by the government and civil society under the National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence and were undertaken to ensure sustainability of the programme. Significant investment in strengthening the institutional capacity of CSOs are being made to support their ability to continue their work to end VAWG after the Spotlight Initiative has ended. This was clearly communicated to government and CSOs at the start of the programme.

### Government partners

Government, particularly SEII is strongly committed to the promotion of gender equality and supports the Spotlight Initiative activities but is challenged by limited human resource capacity. The proportion of the national budget allocated to the prevention of GBV has remained at or below 0.1 percent and the fiscal space for increasing this allocation is limited.

GBV and efforts to end VAWG in Timor-Leste have received increasing attention from international development partners. Programmes are being supported, among others, by DFAT, KOICA, the EU, and the US. These investments enable SEII to continue its policy work in response to GBV, while also supporting CSOs and other non-state actors in the implementation of prevention and service delivery. However, the many parallel internationally supported initiatives further stretch the capacity of the SEII, while the participation and engagement of other government ministries and departments remains limited.

Efforts by the Spotlight Initiative for more gender-responsive budgeting in all line ministries have, until now, not resulted in a notable outcome, but they are constructive in increasing the sustainability of efforts to promote gender equality and end VAWG, and therefore worth receiving continued and increased support in Phase 2.

### CSO partners

Strengthening the institutional capacity of civil society partners working for gender equality and the end of VAWG is pursued by the Spotlight Initiative programme, primarily under Pillar 6. Many of the CSOs partners have considerable experience of working in this area. The partnerships have been expanded to include non-traditional partners, such as faith-based organisations. CBOs with weak governance and management capacities are being strengthened and linked to networks to increase their ability for receiving funds from national and international sources. The spectrum of activists against violence is being widened by linking organisations representing the LGBTQI community, people living with disabilities and other marginalised or discriminated groups. These are all efforts that contribute to a sustained civil society response to GBV, but reported success is often fragile and quick returns should not be



expected. In this, as in other areas, the short duration of the Spotlight Initiative without perceptible efforts for any renewal after the initial three-year period threatens the sustainability of achieved results.

### **Key findings**

- The Spotlight Programme's support of pre-existing national initiatives against GBV and its focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of civil society partners are appropriate approaches for sustainable programming, although the short three-year timeframe of the programme limits the potential for sustainability.

### **Recommendations**

22. During the no-cost extension of Phase 1 and during Phase 2, the Spotlight Programme team should strengthen its support of the Budget Analysis Steering Committee of SEII under Pillar 2 with the aim of achieving progress in gender-responsive budgeting in line ministries and the Ministry of Finance as one of the pillars of a sustained response to GBV in Timor-Leste.
23. The EU should clarify as soon as possible if it intends to launch a follow-up programme to the Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste and outline the form this programme may take.



## G. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. PROGRAMME DESIGN

#### Main findings

- The programme interventions are well designed and reflect the Spotlight Initiative principles. They are context-specific, adopt a human rights-based approach, and are gender-transformative.
- The programme responds to national priorities and is aligned with the National Action Plan for Gender Based Violence.
- The programme was developed in consultation with government and CSOs (including representatives of marginalised groups) and with consideration of other large EAWG programmes (e.g. programmes funded by DFAT and KOICA).
- Extensive consultations for the design of the Spotlight Initiative programme were held with government officials and civil society organisations.
- The EUD was closely involved in the design of the programme and takes an active interest in its implementation.
- The majority of interviewed stakeholders and survey respondents felt that the process of programme design was inclusive and participatory and that the voices of rights holders including those belonging to marginalised groups were heard and respected.
- A majority of interviewed government representatives felt consulted in the design of the programme. However, the issue that the programme is only implemented in three municipalities of the country was mentioned as a constraint by several respondents.
- The Theory of Change is well developed and covers the six outcome areas. Stakeholders did, however, consider it too ambitious for a three-year programme.
- The programme was well embedded in the local context and the CPD included a detailed risk analysis but did not include three major risks that affected and delayed programme implementation: The flooding in 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the government changes in 2020.
- The national implementation modality is considered an effective modality to ensure that activities are government led. While contextual factors have delayed planned activities, the modality is appropriate to contribute to local capacity and ensure sustainability.
- The implementation of UN reform principles in the Spotlight Programme in Timor-Leste has generated efficiencies through the cooperation of UN Agencies on many issues although there is still room for improvement, for instance through a closer alignment of UN Agencies' systems. The strong leadership by the RC has been key for this achievement.

### Recommendations

- a) (Q3, R3) RUNOs and Implementing Partners should continue their efforts of including rights holders, especially those who are among marginalised and discriminated groups, in the implementation of the programme and pay particular attention to the participation of rights holders and their organisations in rural and remote areas.
- b) (Q6, R9) In the 2021 annual report, the Spotlight Initiative Team should update the risk analysis to include the risk of major flooding and propose effective mitigation measures.
- c) (Q12, R22) During the no-cost extension of the programme's Phase 1, the RC and the UN Heads of Agencies should take stock of efficiency achievements under the 'working as one' modality, document these as lessons for future programmes, and identify barriers that could be removed during Phase 2 programming.

## 2. GOVERNANCE:

### Main findings

- The National Steering Committee comprises of various line ministries, the EU Delegation, and the UN. It meets twice per year and provides high level governance for the programme. Because of its size, the profile of its members, and the infrequency of its meetings, it is not a forum in which technical and implementation issues can be discussed in detail.
- The EUD is closely involved in the governance of the programme, however, feels that its position as a member of the National Steering Committee does not allow it to sufficiently exercise its responsibility for the programme. To address this, a parallel process of bilateral meetings between the Spotlight Team and the EUD was established.

### Recommendations:

- a) (Q11, R18) In Phase 2, The National Steering Committee should consider establishing a technical sub-committee of RUNO programme staff, government, and civil society experts to allow more substantive discussions of the technical quality and evidence-base of implemented activities
- b) (Q4, R5) The EU and the Spotlight Secretariat should review the guidelines for national-level governance structures to allow a more formal recognition of co-ownership of the Programme by highly engaged EUDs.
- c) (Q11, R20) The SEII, RCO and EUD should consider a more substantive role for the EUD in the National Steering Committee with the aim of avoiding the need for preparatory consultations between the Spotlight Team and the EUD that could be perceived as a parallel oversight mechanism excluding the national programme leadership.

- d) (Q4, R6) The RCO, the Spotlight Initiative Team and the EUD should review the format, process, timing, and content of progress information sharing among themselves and with partners and avoid parallel information streams of different formats and content.

### 3. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

#### Main findings

- The UN agencies are well placed to implement the Spotlight Initiative. There is little indication of any overlap or duplication among the activities of the five agencies, and they jointly have sufficient expertise to manage the agreed programme. Concerns were, however, raised that many programme staff assigned by RUNOs to the Spotlight Initiative do not have prior experience of working on programmes for ending VAWG.
- The Resident Coordinator co-chairs the Steering Committee and is a strong advocate of the Spotlight Initiative. The RCO works closely with the RUNOs in managing the programme.
- There is evidence of good collaboration among the RUNOs, but interviewed stakeholders noted that there was room for improvement, for instance in the work of raising community awareness on GBV. Several government stakeholders noted that they did not see the Spotlight Initiative programme as a UN programme led by the RCO but rather as a collection of individual RUNO programmes.
- The UN Agencies and their civil society implementing partners are committed to the Spotlight Initiative. Some interviewed informants, however, noted that the accountability of RUNOs could be improved by more timely and systematic sharing of information and data with the Spotlight Technical Team.
- The global results framework does not capture the extensive capacity-strengthening work done by partners in Timor-Leste. It also was not accompanied by the necessary tools to apply it in order to monitoring changes against the Theory of Change. Data on activities and expenditures reported diligently by partners are difficult to link to information that documents the achievements of the programme.
- There is a disconnect between the expectations by the EUD in terms of updates on the programme's progress and the data that are collected as a requirement for global performance reporting.
- Government leadership and ownership of the Spotlight Initiative are predominately exercised by one department, the SEII. Other line ministries participate in the Steering Committee and implement activities with their RUNO partner, but do not have the same sense of having a leading and decision-making role.
- The Spotlight Initiative has contracted CSOs that represent different marginalised populations and channels a significant amount of funds through CSOs. This is perceived by many stakeholders as contributing to the success of the programme. Most issues raised

about CSO programming related to contracting modalities that differ among RUNO partners.

- RUNOs employ 13 full-time staff for managing the programme under the EU Spotlight Initiative budget. According to interviewed stakeholders, this is insufficient to manage such a large programme, although comments alternately referred to the number and the technical capacity of RUNO programme staff. The 18 per cent limit on the RUNO's management budget was seen as the main constraint for the ability of RUNOs to adequately staff their programme for effective management, implementation and monitoring of activities.
- The Spotlight Programme's support of pre-existing national initiatives against GBV and its focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of civil society partners are appropriate approaches for sustainable programming, although the short three-year timeframe of the programme limits the potential for sustainability.

### **Recommendations:**

- a) (Q2, R1) RUNOs should ensure that programme staff working on the Spotlight Initiative Programme is sufficiently trained and familiar with key frameworks and references for initiatives to end VAWG.
- b) (Q2, R2) The Spotlight Team and the Technical Coherence Lead should continue to facilitate and promote collaboration among RUNOs, identify areas where a more unified approach could be implemented, for instance in community awareness building, and help generate a more unified branding of the Spotlight programme as a One-UN initiative that could lead to longer-lasting strengthening of partnerships among the UN agencies.
- c) (Q5, R7) In preparation for a possible Phase 2, the Spotlight Initiative M&E task group should agree on a performance monitoring framework that meets the requirements for global results monitoring and offers improved abilities to monitor activities and measure changes that are specific to the context in Timor-Leste.
- d) (Q5, R8) Prior to the start of a possible Phase 2, the EUD and the RCO should agree on this expanded performance monitoring framework and accept it as an instrument to meet the information requirements of all partners.
- e) (Q10, R17) During the remainder of the programme and in a possible Phase 2, the RUNOs with support of the National Steering Committee should increase their efforts to involve government ministries beyond the SEII in the Spotlight Initiative programme in a meaningful way, including by increasing capacity support to these ministries and by assuring that this cooperation is implemented with Spotlight Initiative branding.
- f) (Q11, R19) Based on the lessons learnt in Phase 1, the EU should review and raise the 18% ceiling for programme management costs of RUNOs.
- g) (Q13, R22) During the no-cost extension of Phase 1 and during Phase 2, the Spotlight Programme team should strengthen its support of the Budget Analysis Steering Committee of SEII under Pillar 2 with the aim of achieving progress in gender-responsive

budgeting in line ministries and the Ministry of Finance as one of the pillars of a sustained response to GBV in Timor-Leste.

- h) (Q13, R23) The EU should clarify as soon as possible if it intends to launch a follow-up programme to the Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste and outline the form this programme may take.

#### 4. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS:

##### Main findings:

- The Prime Minister expressed his commitment to the Spotlight Initiative, and the government commitment is implemented by the SEII. The SEII, however, has capacity and resource limitations which are further stretched by the response to flooding and COVID-19. This has resulted in delays of programme delivery and execution of funds. It is seen not as an ownership issue but rather an issue of institutional capacity.
- Changes in the MoEYS halted the programme's efforts to include CSE, life skills and violence prevention in the school curriculum.
- The short timeframe available to implement the ambitious programme created pressure to deliver, while several programme partners have limited institutional capacity for timely absorption and implementation of programme funds.
- Progress towards achievement of most output targets is reported by the Programme, however, in most instances it is insufficient to achieve the 2021 targets as identified by the Programme.
- Not all output results reported by the Programme provide clear information about the status of milestone achievement. In several cases identical output data are used to report against two indicators that are meant to monitor progress towards distinct outputs. The MTA acknowledges that the output indicators are developed at the global level and not by the Spotlight team in Timor-Leste.
- Changes at the outcome level have, until now, only been documented for Outcome 4. For most other outcomes, there are indications that reported outputs will contribute to achievements of outcomes, but these have not yet been documented, although it is too early for such expectations. Under Pillar 5, only few of the outputs reported until now are able to raise expectations that outcomes may be achieved.
- Monitoring and reporting by RUNOs is too narrowly focused on activities and budget execution rather than on the main objective of achieving outcome changes.
- Implementation of activities and absorption of the budgets by government partners and civil society implementing partners were delayed and the programme budget will not be executed within the regular Phase 1 period. A six-month no-cost extension has already been granted.

- The state of emergency declared in response to COVID-19 and the emergency due to flooding contributed to the delays, but there are also underlying capacity issues among civil society and government partners.
- Most RUNOs were delayed in their budget execution, particularly for transfers and grants to implementing partners. This was, to some extent, related to restrictions of movements within the country and the flooding.
- RUNO respondents reported that the administrative budget limit of 18% limited their capacity for programme implementation

### **Recommendations:**

- a) (Q4, R4) In a possible Phase 2 of the Spotlight Programme in Timor-Leste, the National Steering Committee should review the budget allocation for government partners. The response to delays in budget execution in Phase 1 should be an increased focus on institutional capacity support allowing government partners to implement their commitment to the programme.
- b) (Q6, R10) The National Steering Committee should prioritise resolving issues that have stalled programme implementation due to changes in government priorities such as the curriculum development for CSE, life-skills and violence prevention. If these cannot be resolved, alternate plans should be developed.
- c) (Q7, R11) The Spotlight Initiative team should review the achievements of output indicators and focus on working toward achieving the 2021 targets by the end of the 6-month no-cost extension period or revise the targets with an explanation as to why they are not relevant or not achievable, for instance due to contextual changes. (e.g. priority changes in the MoEYS).
- d) (Q7, R12) The Spotlight Initiative M&E task group should review and revise the definitions used for reporting against the global results framework indicators to eliminate duplicate reporting of the same result against multiple outputs.
- e) (Q8, R13) The National Steering Committee and the Heads of UN Agencies should reconfirm the importance of programme and M&E staff to focus attention on collecting and reporting progress towards the achievement of outcomes beyond aggregated reports on successful completion of activities.
- f) (Q8, R14) To consolidate and further increase achievements under Pillar 4, UNFPA should focus on improving training and guidance materials for health professionals on GBV and evaluate the work done on creating safe spaces in health facilities.
- g) (Q9, R15) While focusing on implementing the remaining Phase 1 workplan during the no-cost extension period, the National Steering Committee should review the Phase 2 workplan and adjust plans and budgets based on an assessment of the absorption of Phase 1 funds by government and civil society partners.

- h) (Q9, R16) RUNOs should consider the option of seconding consultants that are familiar with UN financial administration systems to government departments or to large implementing partner organisations to assist in overcoming administrative bottlenecks for partners to accessing Spotlight Initiative funds.



## H. ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Spotlight programme documents (essential documents)	Availability
Country Programming document as approved by OSC	X
Country Budget as approved by the OSC (may also include revised budget)	X
Spotlight Country Programme Snapshot	X
Inception report	X
Annual report/s	X
Annex A Country Report (included in the Annual Report)	
Ad hoc (2nd Tranche) report (may also include provisional narrative report – 2 pager)	
Spotlight Initiative financial information on the <a href="#">MPTF Gateway</a>	X
Knowledge management workplan	X
National CSO Reference Group workplan	
CSO Reference Group Bios	X
Communication workplan	X
Stories directly from the <a href="#">Calendar</a>	X
<b>Other documents</b>	
Joint Steering Committee Slideshow Presentation 21 November 2021	
Results Matrix: Baseline, Milestones, and Targets 22 November 2021	

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Stakeholder group	Institution / organisation	Name	Position
Government	Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion (SEII)	Armando Da Costa	Director General
Government	Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI)	Florencio Pires D. Gonzaga	Director for Inclusion and Community Reinsertion
Government	Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI)	Manuela Oliveira Martins	Director of MSSI Ermera Municipality
Government	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS)	Afonso Soares	National Director of Planning and inclusion
Government	Secretary of State for Training and Employment (SEFOPE)	Aniceto Leto Soro	Regional Inspector of Workers SEFOPE
Government	Ministry of Justice	Marcelina Tilman	Director General
Government	Ministry of Justice	Flaviano Moniz Leão	Advisor to the Director General of Ministry of Justice
Government	Ministry of Health	Augusta Amaral	Chief of Maternal and Child Health
Government	Vulnerable Persons' Unit (VPU – Law enforcement)	Ricardo da Costa	Head of VPU
CSO Reference Group	Plan International	Dilyana Ximenes	Executive Director
Implementing Partner	CODIVA	Laura Afonso de Jesus	Executive Director
Implementing Partner	Arcoiris	Iram Saeed	Co-founders and Director
Implementing Partner	BELUN	Luis Ximenes	Director
Implementing Partner	Community Based Rehabilitation Network	Norberta Soares	Director
Implementing Partner	PRADET	Manuel dos Santos	Director
Implementing Partner	FOKUPERS	Natalia de Jesus	Staff
Implementing Partner	FOKUPERS	Maria Fatima Guteres	Staff
Implementing Partner	ALFeLA	Letizia Dos Reis de Assis	Staff
Implementing Partner	ALFeLA	Antoninho Marques	Director of ALFeLA
Implementing Partner	Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Yane Pinto	Country Manager
Implementing Partner	Alola Foundation	Maria Evelina Iman	Coordinator of Spotlight Initiative Program at Alola
EU	EUD	Paolo Barduagni	Social Sector Attache
EU	EUD	Karla Leitzke	Programme Officer Civil Society and Gender
RCO	UN	Roy Trivedy	Resident Coordinator
RUNO	UN Women	Kathryn Robertson	Technical Lead Spotlight Initiative

RCO	RCO	Ali Nasir	M&E Specialist for Spotlight Initiative
RCO	RCO	Hanna Stenbacka Kohler	M&E Specialist
RUNO	UNICEF	Felix Maia	Communications for Development Officer
RUNO	UNICEF	Andreza Maria Guterres	Adolescent and Youth Participation Officer
RUNO	UNFPA	Maria Amelia Barreto	Programme Analyst
External Partner	Asia Foundation	Anna Yang	Nabilan Programme
RCO	UN	Alex Tilman	Development Coordination Officer
3 FGDs	Service providers at municipality level		