



Joint Programme 2024 Final Report

Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in Small Island Developing States

Cover page

UNCT/MCO: Timor-Leste

Start Date of joint programme: 1/1/2022

End date of joint programme: 1/1/2024

Expected financial closure date: 3/31/2024

Agencies operationally closed the joint programme in the system : No

JP title: Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in Small Island Developing States

Thematic SDG Areas: Food systems transformation; Digital transformation; Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution;

Gender Marker: Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm)

Engine Room Activities: Shift in policy and regulatory frameworks; Building capacity at scale;

Total estimated expenditures: USD \$951,400.00

Total estimated commitments (including expenditures):

PUNOs co-funding and other contributions as applicable: 0

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Government focal point name, email and ministry/agency: Maria Odete do Ceu Guterres, Director General for Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Executive Summary

This is a summary of the most important achievements of the JP from its launch until its end date. Please highlight progress on the major results achieved that accelerated progress and system-level transitions for the SDGs, with reference to contributions to the CF outcome(s) and national/regional development plans and priorities, and/or related SDG targets, as well as information on any leveraging of additional financial resources toward the SDGs, within the framework of the Joint Programme. Please, provide key data, including on the number of the people that directly and/or indirectly benefited from the JP, and the broader impact, including regarding the institutional and financial sustainability to be ensured upon the closure of the JP.

The outcomes and outputs of the Joint Project demonstrate significant progress and strategic interventions aimed at strengthening both the supply and demand sides of the food system while enhancing resilience and protection.

Regarding Outcome 1, efforts have focused on reducing post-harvest losses and promoting local food sustainability. Notably, initiatives such as capacity building, technology integration, and market linkage have led to improved practices and reduced losses among value chain actors. Training programs involving 650 government officials and infrastructure enhancements, particularly through engagement with "Loja dos Agricultores," have facilitated market access and minimized post-harvest losses.

Moreover, the updated Cost of the Diet (CotD) analysis has shed light on the challenges of food affordability, particularly impacting adolescent girls and their unmet nutrition needs. The findings underscore the importance of promoting local food production and addressing gender disparities in access to nutritious foods.

With the investments made on National Food Control System Assessment, the country now has a comprehensive roadmap available to strengthen policies and institutional framework for food systems. Through advocacy by PUNOs, policy dialogue has been initiated with Ministry of Health for drafting of National Food Law, encompassing food safety and food labelling regulations, and related inter-ministerial responsibilities. These policy shifts are critical for food systems in Timor Leste, as they also contribute to Timor Leste achieving observer status for ASEAN and now WTO accession.

Outcome 2 emphasizes fostering healthy consumer behavior and promoting breastfeeding. Standardized training packages for health workers and national campaigns have been instrumental in building system capacities to promote optimal nutrition behaviors to address malnutrition challenges. In addition to this, policy shifts have also been facilitated including the regulation of marketing breastmilk substitutes, and roll-out of the national breastfeeding promotion campaign. The JP has further facilitated building in-country evidence on availability of unhealthy diets, which is an area with major data gaps for Timor-Leste until now.

Outcome 3 focuses on strengthening the resilience of national food systems. Market assessments and food security monitoring systems, which adopt the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) methodology, have been crucial in understanding market dynamics and assessing food insecurity levels, enabling more targeted interventions and decision-making processes. In addition, the Food System Assessment meticulously scrutinizes Timor-Leste food systems heavily impacted by extreme and successive climate shocks, delving into the intricate web of factors that influence production, distribution, access, and consumption of food. It offers insights into the strengths and vulnerabilities of the current systems, highlighting opportunities for innovation and growth. Furthermore, the ongoing Cost-Benefit Analysis contributes to identifying priority investments to improve the country's food security situation, that would deliver higher value for money and investment return.

Annual Progress

Overall progress against key results:

Output 1.1. A national dialogue led to the identification of key interventions, including capacity building, technology integration, and market linkages. Training initiatives benefited 650 value chain actors, who were subsequently registered with "Loja Agricultores," enabling them to access new market opportunities. Distribution of post-harvest equipment further enhanced infrastructure, leading to reduce spoilage and improved efficiency.

Output 1.2 focused on increasing local food sustainability and decreasing reliance on global systems. An update of the 2019 CotD Analysis highlighted increased food costs and limited availability, particularly affecting adolescent girls. The analysis informed the creation of a draft MEB and facilitated HGSF trainings, involving 655 stakeholders

across municipalities.

Output 1.3 concentrated on strengthening national capacity on food safety and surveillance systems. The first National Assessment of Food Control Systems laid the groundwork for collaborative efforts among multiple stakeholders. Capacity-building events and trainings on risk-based food inspection enhanced efficiency and coordination, fostering a more robust food control mechanism.

These initiatives, backed by comprehensive data and strategic collaborations, have significantly contributed to strengthening Timor-Leste's food system, reducing post-harvest losses, promoting local food production, fostering healthy consumption habits, and enhancing food safety and surveillance. Continued efforts and sustained investments are essential to further advance the resilience and sustainability of the nation's food system.

Output 2.1 of Timor-Leste's efforts to strengthen the demand side of the food system centered on fostering healthy consumer behavior, crucial for achieving SDGs 2.2.2 and 3.8.1. The MoH with support from the PUNO, established a standard training package for health workers, institutionalized under the INSP-TL. This five-day program, incorporating content from the FBDGs, aimed to enhance last-mile delivery of counseling on optimal nutrition behaviors and healthy diets. Notably, 23 officials were trained as part of a Tov initiative, anchoring the standardized package for wider dissemination across the country.

To combat malnutrition, a year-long National Campaign for Breastfeeding Promotion was launched in 2023, spearheaded by the MoH and supported by the PUNOs. This campaign, inaugurated by the President of Timor-Leste, focused on strengthening breastfeeding interventions across the six health-system building blocks. Policy advocacy efforts led to the promulgation of a National Decree Law regulating the marketing of breastmilk substitutes for children up to 36 months, enhancing regulations and safeguarding infant nutrition.

In parallel, the PUNOs collaborated closely with the MoH to streamline nutrition and food safety information systems for the country. Technical support provided by PUNO facilitated the review and update of the indicator's dashboard, aligned with the DHIS2 platform. This collaborative effort aimed to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of nutrition data reporting, ensuring robust monitoring and evaluation of nutrition programs.

Output 3.1 focused on enhancing the resilience and protection of Timor-Leste's national food systems, aligning with SDGs 2.1.2 and 13.1.2. Amidst challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, global conflicts, and climate change, the Government of Timor-Leste launched interventions under an economic recovery plan in 2022. This included the first Timor-Leste Market Assessment in May 2022, conducted in four municipalities using the Structure-Conduct-Performance approach and the MFI to assess various dimensions impacting food security.

Additionally, the first and second Timor-Leste Acute IPC analyses were conducted in 2022 and 2023, revealing alarming levels of food insecurity. Over 20% of the population was acutely food insecure from November 2022 to May 2023.

Main Challenges, adjustments and lessons:

The main challenges faced during the JP implementation period were the Presidential Elections in April/May 2022, which delayed the start of the project activities, as well as the Government Elections in May 2023, which led to a change in the Government structure. The transition period created changes in government priorities and difficulties in reaching relevant government partners which significantly affected the program's implementation. These factors led to delays in obtaining endorsements and prolonged the timelines for various activities.

Working through the new government structure has also posed a significant challenge. For example, in the case of the training on improved post-harvest practices, the JP relied on the government's willingness to allow their staff, who are TOT graduates, to dedicate time for extending the training to farmers groups in 3 municipalities targeted by the project. Due to their competing priorities, the training activities were significantly delayed thus allowing very limited time to deliver follow up support to the groups in a timely manner.

The information available on food loss and waste in the country which would have been useful as a baseline for the project for the selection of commodities to focus on was limited. Thus, a workshop was organized at the national level for key stakeholders to have a technical discussion to identify issues of agricultural post-harvest losses on 3 categories of crops and identify key interventions to reduce post-harvest losses. This activity was not part of the initial plan outlined in the project document. Consequently, it resulted in delays to scheduled training

activities, as the development of training materials could not begin without a definitive decision on the types of crops to be targeted.

Gender Activities

Gender Marker and activities undertook for gender equality

The JP is Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm). Evidence, data collection and analysis (e.g. gender assessments of programmes; policy briefs, costing for scale-up of social services);

Percentage (%) of women officials/service providers that have increased capacity : 51%

SDG Transitions Acceleration

- SDG Target 12.3.1: The ToT on improved harvest and post-harvest practices was conducted introducing best practices and technologies of harvest and post-harvest to reduce the loss of edible foods / PHL (Post Harvest Loss) along the supply chain. Reducing PHL is essential in enhancing availability and access to food, increasing incomes, and ultimately protecting the ecosystems.
- SDG Target 2.2.2: The ToT also integrated food processing to value-add perishable local agriculture product and produce organic and nutritious product to help the value chain actors generate more income. In addition, the Cost of the Diet analysis contributes to increasing local food sustainability and decreasing reliance on global food systems by promoting local food production, as it highlights the availability and cost of locally produced nutritious foods.
- The efforts to strengthen CODEX and food control systems also contributes to SDG target 2.2.2.
- The Cost-Benefit Analysis is expected to contribute to identifying priority investments to improve the country's food security situation, by outlining policies and investments that would deliver higher value for money, demonstrating a clear return on investment, thus contributing to SDG target 2.1.2.
- SDG Target 12.1.1: The project explored how direct market linkages can be enhanced between communities where food losses are high and potential buyers. The PUNOs provided support to street fruit vendors through training and small food processing facilities for juice making. This has helped reduce the amount of fruits wasted and at the same time increase their income. Improved post-harvest technologies also play an important role in enhancing smallholder families' food security down the line.
- SDG 3.8.1: National breastfeeding campaign facilitated reaching communities with messages on infant feeding and nutrition.
- SDG 12.1.1: The food control system assessment report serves as a roadmap to strengthen regulations for food safety.
- SDG 13.1.2: Timor-Leste adopts and implements national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
- The mobile and face-to-face food security surveys and Acute IPC analyses have been developed and adopted, contributing to the SDG Target 13.1.2.
- The involvement of government partners and UN agencies as well as CSOs on the food security and nutrition agenda, through the Acute IPC analysis, strengthened the coordination mechanism among different stakeholders contributing to the achievement of SDG target 17.16.1.

Annual Reporting on Results

Exit strategy, scaling, sustainability and next steps

As part of ensuring the sustainability of the JP supported interventions to reduce agricultural post-harvest losses, knowledge was transferred to key government officials from two main departments which are mandated to support farmers and other value chain actors on sustainable post-harvest management, agribusinesses development. They were then supported both technically and financially to pass on the knowledge and skills to the farmers and other VCAs during by applying the knowledge and skills they had obtained. They will be key resources to the Ministry of Agriculture to carry on/scale up the work in the future. On the other hand, trained farmers are formally linked to steady business and thus market is assured for their agricultural produce. Consequently, food losses will be mitigated.

After its creation in 2018 for the Chronic IPC analysis, the Timor-Leste Technical Working Group (TWG) was reactivated through the JP in 2022 and 2023 to carry out the first two Acute IPC analyses ever conducted in the country. The TWG is mainly composed of Government officials and led by the Food Security directorate of the country, resulting in complete government ownership of the analyses and increasing the chances of long-term sustainability of the application of the IPC methodology as a food security crisis forecasting tool.

The training package on healthy diets based on the food-based dietary guidelines has been institutionalized under the annual training calendar of the National Institute of Public Health (INSPTL). With this the training package is envisaged to be sustained through MoH and INSPTL, thus achieving sustainability of results.

Lessons and Best Practices (up to 500 words)

The implementation of the JP in Timor-Leste has yielded valuable lessons that can inform future development initiatives. Firstly, the significance of targeted capacity development programs cannot be overstated. By investing in the training and empowerment of government technical staff as IPC analysts to forecast food security crises and as trainers in improved post-harvest practices, the project created a sustainable foundation for knowledge dissemination. Additionally, the emphasis on policy integration and collaboration with government institutions has highlighted the importance of aligning project objectives with national priorities, ensuring ownership and continuity. For example, the strategic engagement with "Loja dos Agricultores" and the private sector underscores the critical role of market linkages in enhancing economic sustainability. These lessons emphasize the need for a holistic approach that combines capacity building, policy alignment, market linkages, and technology integration for sustainable and impactful interventions.

Close collaboration with National ministries and other partners has helped to reach communities at scale. For e.g. while the PUNOs supported MoH for the conceptualisation and launch of the National breastfeeding campaign, through a collaborative approach, other UN agencies and partner organizations working on nutrition joined hands to deliver the campaign in different municipalities.

Strategic Partnerships, Documents and Communications

Stakeholder groups you closely partner with, as part of your JP approach

National Government;Sub-national Governments;Civil Society Organizations;

Brief description of the nature of engagement. Outline the main outcomes and achievements resulting from the partnerships.

All activities have been conducted in close partnership with the government at national and subnational levels as well as with CSOs. The IPC training and analysis involved technical staff from various ministries, coming both from national and municipal levels, as well as national and international NGO officers. During the collection of price data for the Cost of the Diet analysis, and food security data for the household assessment that fed information into the 2023 IPC analysis, the PUNOs were closely working with government officials, particularly directors from the national government and Food Security Officers based in different municipalities.

Activities on output 1.1 concentrated efforts on reducing post-harvest losses through targeted initiatives, such as capacity building, distribution of post-harvest equipment, and market linkage initiatives. The project established partnerships with government institutions through Letters of Agreement (LoAs), further enhancing its reach and impact. These partnerships with government entities ensured alignment with national policies and strategies, strengthening the project's sustainability and scalability. The partnership's main achievements include improved market access, minimized losses, enhanced efficiency in post-harvest handling, and positive impacts on the agricultural sector's sustainability.

Additionally, the engagement with "Loja dos Agricultores" as a key partner significantly contributed to the project's success. The collaboration facilitated a direct procurement model, providing value chain actors, primarily farmers, with market access and improved logistics practices. The distributed post-harvest equipment, including silos, plastic crates, and tarpaulins, not only enhanced infrastructure but also played a pivotal role in reducing post-harvest losses. The engagement resulted in a significant reduction in post-harvest losses for paddy rice and maize, showcasing the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in achieving tangible outcomes.

Close collaboration with MoH and other relevant ministries helped to facilitate positive policy shifts for nutrition and food safety. For e.g., promulgation of the Decree law on regulation of marketing of breastmilk substitutes. Strengthened nutrition information systems for programmes under Ministry of Health is another key achievement. In addition, institutionalized training package on healthy diets is a unique strategic investment that is envisaged to be sustained by the national government in coming years.

Financial resources leveraged

90,000

Donor and Strategic events attended by JP in 2022

JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors event	Final/Closing Event. This can be the same as the strategic partners/ donor's event
Yes, in 2023	Yes, in 2024	No

Explanation if you have not held any key meeting/events for the above question.

N/A

JP contribution to SDG Financing

Drafted a bill,	Produced financing,	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in the	Improved effectiveness	Drafted policies/regulatory	Structured new
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strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal space for the policy in focus	costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or increase spending on the SDGs	management of programmes/schemes	(value for money; i.e. social impact of \$1 spent) of spending	frameworks or developed tools to incentivize private sector investment on the SDGs	financial instruments (public, private or blended) to leverage additional funding
No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Briefly explain how and in which area your JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing

Focus on LNOB cross cutting principles

Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
Yes	No	Yes	No

Provide any other comments or descriptions on how your JP contributed to cross-cutting issues and principles.

Beneficiaries

Number of beneficiaries

\$35,033.00

Percentage (%) of women benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of children & youth (0-24 years of age) benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of older persons (age 60 and above) benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of persons with disabilities benefited among the total number
75%	48%	0	0

Total number of government officials and/or other service providers that have increased capacity as a result of the JP: 1,093 government officials

Please briefly explain how people benefited from the joint programme

0

Did your JP support the localization of SDGs by moving SDG actions to the local level and enhancing abilities of local and regional governments to promote the SDGs?

Raised awareness (e.g. campaigns, communication strategy) ;Enhanced capacities of staff in the local and regional governments;Created hubs/coordination mechanisms with tools for tracking local outcome metrics and enhancing multi-stakeholder dialogues.;

Provide information of how your JP supported localization of the SDGs as outlined above:

n/a

Communications

Voices from the field

The JP produced Food Loss & Waste Video – with both farmers and government’s quotes in it.

Declaration

We hereby confirm that the information provided in this update is duly reviewed and approved by the RC and all PUNOs involved in the Joint Programme.