



# Democratic Governance

## Support to the Timorese Electoral Cycle Project



### Objective

The overall objective of the Project is to help strengthen and widen the principles of democracy and good governance, enhance participation and thus contribute to political stabilization in Timor-Leste through the establishment of a framework for international assistance for the Timorese electoral cycle.

### Background

The elections held in 2007 were the first national elections in the post-independence period to be conducted by the Timorese election authorities, and as such represented an important step in the consolidation of democracy in the country. Administered by STAE and supervised by the CNE, the three national elections in 2007 were widely considered to have been free, fair and in line with international standards and national laws. Technical assistance to national election management bodies (EMBs) was made UNDP Electoral Project and also by the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). While STAE and CNE took charge of organizing and supervising these elections, their work was done with strong support from the international community. While this support, provided mainly during the electoral period, clearly helped enhance their institutional and human resources skills, it is generally recognized that true capacity development cannot take place in the run-up to an election, where the imperative is on operational details. Thus, longer-term support from donors in developing the capacities of the EMBs and political parties is still needed, particularly in the lead-up to the Suco and municipal elections. The shift in the UNDP approach from a short-term focus on the election event to one of working throughout the electoral cycle

- from post-electoral to pre-electoral to electoral - is particularly relevant in post-conflict situations such as Timor-Leste.

In 2008, therefore, the Project was revised to provide long-term support to assist the EMBs to create the conditions for wholly nationally-owned and credible electoral processes in the future and also to assist political parties to be better able to represent the interests of the population. The current Electoral Project has shifted from material assistance to a focus on human capacity and institution building. The main components of the project are as follows: support to electoral institutions; support to electoral processes including legal reform, voter registration and voter / civic education; and support to political parties.

### Key Intended Outputs

1. Enhanced capacity of the STAE and CNE to fulfill their administrative and supervisory mandates to organize and conduct free and fair elections. The Project aims to further build the capacity of

### Duration

December 2006 – December 2012

### Location

National

### Partners

Electoral Management Bodies:  
 • Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE)  
 • National Commission for Elections (CNE)  
 Political parties

### Total Budget for 2009

US\$1,660,057

### Unsecured funding

US\$857,000 (2009)

### Sources of funding

Up to 2008 Australia, European Commission, Ireland, Japan, Portugal, Sweden, UNDEF, UNDP, DGTF



Timor-Leste's EMBs (STAE and CNE), through technical assistance and advisory and training programmes, particularly in the lead-up to the Suco and municipal elections. Through this component of the Project, the electoral management bodies will be better able to fulfill their administrative and supervisory mandates and to organize and conduct free and fair elections.

2. Electoral laws and processes that enhance participation and free, fair and credible elections.

Assistance is provided through the Project to revise the legal framework for elections in Timor-Leste to ensure greater coherence across the full range legal instruments and institutional systems governing elections. Such legislative reforms are aimed at putting in place a system in which electoral claims and complaints are addressed and resolved fairly and efficiently. Through its support to electoral processes the Project has supported the update of the voter register in preparation for the upcoming Suco and municipal elections. Support to civic and voter education is also provided to the relevant electoral management body.

3. Institutional capacities of political parties strengthened and a more tolerant political environment promoted. The Project is continuing to work with political parties to help build their internal capacities through district level training and access to in-kind support at four District Political Party Resource Centers (Ainaro, Baucau, Bobonaro, Oecusse). The training programme for parties has included a focus on, inter alia: institutional organization; interelection functions; and campaign strategies. In addition, thematic presentations at district and sub-district level have been organized around the country.