



Fast Facts

Country: Timor-Leste

Duration: May 2005 to July 2008

Implementing UN Agencies: DESA

Other Implementing Partners: Ministry of Infrastructure; Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management

Budget: \$1,614,630

Key Words: Rural development; water; infrastructure; energy services

BACKGROUND

Timor-Leste's post-independence period was characterized by slow recovery and imbalanced economic growth, skewed substantially towards urban areas. Although 86 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, the expansion of infrastructure and energy services was almost entirely confined to the cities, in particular to the capital Dili. The absence of basic infrastructure, fresh water and irrigation systems compromised rural economic development, and family-based

subsistence farming continued to be the most common form of livelihood. As a result, agricultural productivity remained low, contributing to merely 21 per cent of the nation's GDP by 2005. In this context, providing rural communities with sustainable water- and energy supply schemes would not only help alleviate economic and food insecurities but also contribute to Timor-Leste's long-term economic growth and political stability.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project's overall goal was to increase agricultural productivity and contribute to enhanced economic and food security in rural communities in Timor-Leste. To this end, the project intended to (i) promote increased access to water and renewable energy services; (ii)

strengthen community-based management of water and energy resources; (iii) improve rural entrepreneurial skills; and (iv) support existing and new productive activities, including crops, livestock, fishing and eco-tourism.

BENEFICIARIES

Overall, the project reached approximately 18,000 inhabitants of the rural sub-districts of Atauro (Dili), Lacle (Manatuto) and Laulara (Aileu). Subsistence farmers participated in training in farming practices, cropping patterns, marketing techniques as well as irrigation management.

While community-based organizations and women's groups learned fishpond technology, local technicians and public sector officials received training on how to manage water and energy systems.