



**Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**  
**Ministry of Finance**  
**General Directorate for Analysis and Research**  
**National Statistics Directorate**



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## **COUNTRY PAPER BY TIMOR-LESTE**

The National Statistics Directorate (NSD) is under the Directorate General for Analysis and Research of the Ministry of Finance.

Human resources are the major constraint and therefore the major challenge in the development of the statistical activity in Timor-Leste.

This constraint relates to the number and to the qualifications of the staff.

The NSD has 18 permanent staff and 46 temporary staff.

9 out of the 18 permanent employees have a university degree (6 from Timorese university, 2 obtained the degree at Indonesian university) but none of them hold a degree in statistics, mathematics or more related fields to the skills required for the statistical work. The NSD does not have its own IT employee.

The temporary staff members are recruited on the basis of 3 months' contract. They are in general young staff with no related experience in the statistical activity. Few (around 6) have a university degree, however they lack experience on the statistical activity and, as they are temporary, they do not have access to training as the permanent staff have.

So, in the general, the employees lack the necessary skills to perform technical statistical activities, especially those related to the design of the surveys and data processing and data analysis. Up to now the NSD has been dependent on international assistance to design sample surveys and to do statistical analysis.

The staff members have however gained considerable experience in field work, since several surveys have been conducted since the independence of Timor-Leste, in 2002.

Significant additional training is necessary in different formats: scholarships to attend university studies abroad in fields connected to the statistical activity, to allow staff to work on a part-time basis so that they can take a university degree at Dili universities, training

actions abroad and locally (local training has the advantage of covering more trainees), on the job training, study visits to other statistical offices, etc.

Language is a major communication problem and constitutes a restriction to access training and knowledge.

Four languages are used in Public Administration, the two official languages, Tetum and Portuguese, and also the other two working languages, Indonesian and English.

In the daily work employees use their national language (Tetum) and quite often Indonesian as their working language. Portuguese is understood by most of them but only few can speak and write. Only few can also communicate in English.

This means that access to knowledge is limited and that only few can profit from the participation in international training actions namely those offered by the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP), ADB, UNFPA and IMF as they are run in English.

The language problem also limits the transfer of know-how from the international advisors working at the NSD.

Although, in general, most of the personnel have been attending either Portuguese or English courses, organized in most of the cases by the National Institute for Public Administration, a greater investment in learning languages is still necessary. Consequently, besides the training on statistical related issues, more Portuguese and English courses are needed.

The current situation as regards human resources has been well identified and described in the Statistical Work Plan for 2010-2019. Some major key recommendations were given as concerns the strategy for human resource management, which are broadly the following:

1. Designing a programme to disengage employees demonstrating less potential and low aptitude for further training from the statistics workforce through deployment to other government departments and ministries;
2. Improving the proportion of professional staff from the present 15% to 50% within the next three years by hiring two new graduates every year;
3. Training staff in up-to-date skills necessary for their job;
4. Developing long-term career potential through career broadening assignments; and
5. Creating a positive work environment which motivates and promotes productivity.

The NSD doesn't yet have administrative and financial autonomy, therefore the majority of the measures related to human resources are centralized by Government, which makes the process longer and with less flexibility.

But the strengthening of the technical capacity of our employees is a priority in our working plan and a great investment on training has already started and must be kept in the coming years. The NSD will work on the development of a training plan that clearly identifies the

training needs, both in core areas of statistics and on information technologies. Attention will be paid so that the training actions provide the statistical skills necessary to perform the activities planned.

During this last year 4 employees have been study at university abroad, 3 funded by UNFPA and one by the Timorese Government. One of those employees has returned to the office to work on 2010 Housing and Population Census.

Some of the employees have attended training courses abroad, mainly those organised by SIAP, ADB =, UNFPA and IMF. As only few communicate in English, only those can attend these international training actions. And, as a rule, only permanent employees can attend international training.

The NSD has agreed on a technical assistance programme supported by the ADB which has training has a major component. Within this technical assistance programme a twinning arrangement is foreseen with a neighbourhood statistical service (the Australian Bureau of Statistics) and we expect this will facilitate the organization of training actions and the exchange of experiences with a more developed statistical institute. The study tours to other statistical offices is one of the most effective way of improving staff qualifications as they are normally very practical and oriented to the needs of the visitors.

It is also foreseen the organization of a basic statistical skills course to improve statistics knowledge of the staff, and also computer and English language courses.

The NSD has also agreed with Statistics Indonesia on a higher training programme at statistical academy in Jakarta for the benefit of around 10 Timorese students per year. Those students should sign a commitment so that after ending studies they will return to Timor-Leste and work at the statistical office.

Since last year the public administration servants are evaluated for their performance during the year. For that purpose, in the beginning of the calendar year each employee should have his/her own objectives and activities to carry out defined so he/she is evaluated on his/her achievements by the end of the year. This is a recent procedure and there is a long path ahead to further improve and guide the activity of each employee to the achievements of the objectives defined, according to the work plan established for the organization. Nevertheless it represents an occasion to discuss on the performance of the employee, the objectives and general performance of the NSD and also to discuss and identify training needs.

This process should also liaise with the development career plan which in fact is not yet in place. Although the range of work at the NSD is considered attractive and challenging, it is hard for the NSD to retain the more qualified staff as remuneration in public administration is not enough attractive. Several international organizations are working in Timor-Leste and the more qualified staff, whatever is their domain of work, are of course attracted by those employers.

The NSD is nonetheless committed in the development of the technical capacity of its employees and to increase the number of qualified permanent employees in order to be able to gradually execute the statistical work programme with less dependency from international technical assistance.

The strengthening of the statistical capacities of line ministries which generate statistics (e.g. education, health, justice and migration) must also be taken into account and has also been addressed in the statistical work plan for 2010-2019. But it is true that up to now there is no National Statistical System in Timor-Leste and therefore the production of statistics is not yet well coordinate among the NSD and those line ministries. We hope that in the coming years we will be able to establish the basis for the development of the National Statistical System and to build the capacity of the NSD so that it can play its role as the central statistical office.

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